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**Transition to democracy in an authoritarian regime: A case
study of South Korea**

Chung, Eun Sung, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1990

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TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY IN AN AUTHORITARIAN REGIME:
A CASE STUDY OF SOUTH KOREA

by

EUN SUNG CHUNG

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty
in Political Science in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
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ABSTRACT

TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY IN AN AUTHORITARIAN REGIME: A CASE STUDY OF SOUTH KOREA

by

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Sponsors: Professors Dankwart A. Rustow and Donald S.
Zagoria

Reader: Professor Kenneth P. Erickson

The dissertation investigates the dynamic characteristics of South Korea's transition to democracy. After defining basic concepts such as democracy, and examining the theoretical aspects of democratic transition, it describes a short history of South Korea with emphasis on the regime transitions in 1960-1961, 1979-1980, and 1987-1988 which were also significant opportunities for the country to move towards democracy. The first two transitions miscarried; the third one was successful. Various factors are responsible. This study examines such factors as socio-economic development, political culture and external influences, and how these factors promote and impede the democratization of the country. The analysis of these factors is useful for a better understanding of conditions for democratic transi-

tion, but does not explain why these changes occur at a particular time. Later, therefore, the research turns to a genetic approach. It analyzes the dynamic aspects of South Korea's regime transitions as follows: (1) actors who directly seek to affect the transition process, for example, the ruling élites and their opposition; (2) the values and interests of these groups; (3) how they affect the actual processes of democratization. These processes are divided into five stages: the decline of legitimacy; the loss of self-confidence within the ruling bloc and its consequent disintegration; the emergence of the forces of democracy as a viable alternative; the actual transfer of political power; the consolidation of democracy. Finally, the dissertation explores the consequences of the process and the possible prospects for the future development of South Korea.

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In transliterating Korean words, I have followed in principle the McCune-Reischauer system of Romanization, except in cases where a different method has long been established, such as Syngman Rhee, Park Chung Hee, and so forth. Korean family names generally precede first names. In the footnotes, however, the order is reversed thus: Se-jin Kim, The Politics of Military Revolution in Korea.

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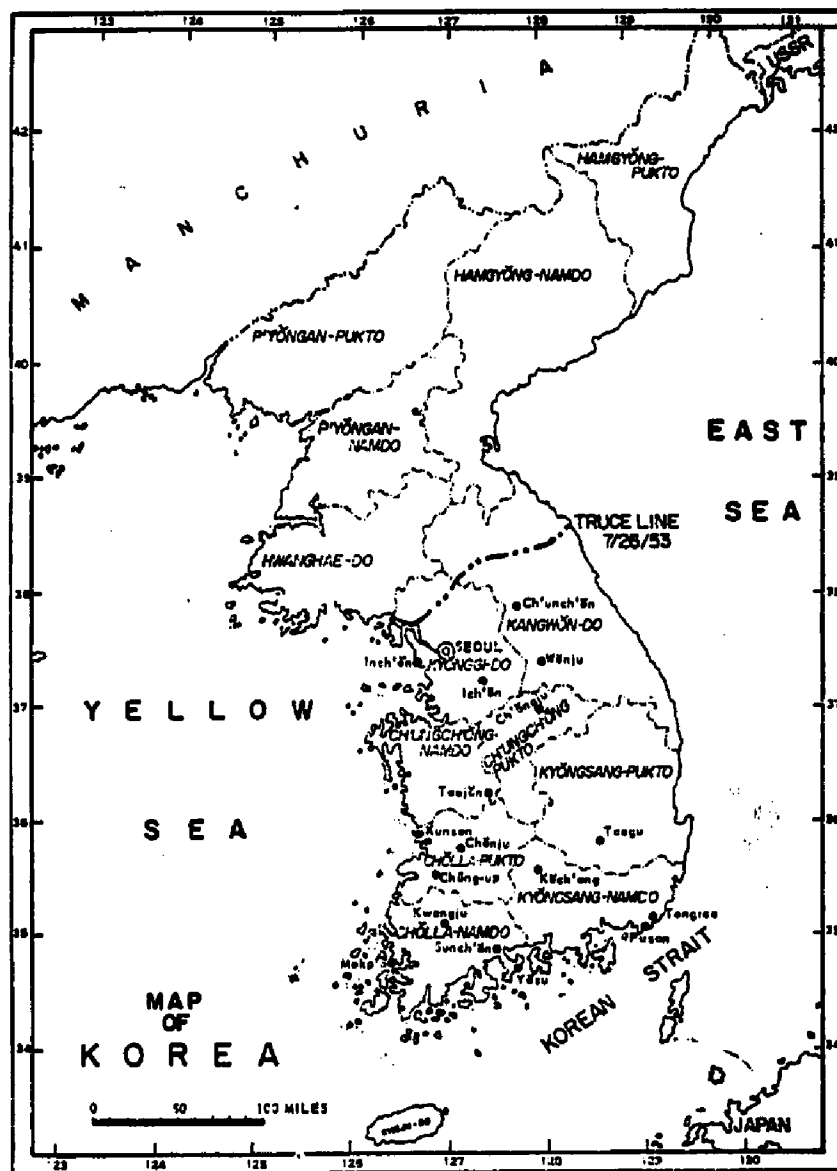
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ABBREVIATIONS

ACL: Anti-Communist Law
DJP: Democratic Justice Party (Minjông-tang)
DKP: Democratic Korea Party (Minhan-tang)
DP: Democratic Party (Minju-tang)
DPP: Democratic People's Party (Minguk-tang)
KDP: Korean Democratic Party (Hanmin-tang)
LAD: Law on Assemblies and Demonstrations
NDP: New Democratic Party (Sinmin-tang)
NKDP: New Korean Democratic Party (Sinhanminju-tang)
NP: National Party (Kungmin-tang)
NSL: National Security Law
PAL: Political Activities Law
PDP: Democratic Politics Party (Minjông-tang)
PSL: Public Security Law



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In the past decade or so, one of the most distinctive political phenomena in the world has been the movement from authoritarianism to democracy. Accordingly, the "transition to democracy" has attracted attention among political scientists as well as policy makers. During the 1950s and early 1960s, modernization theories were dominant among many scholars. In general, they focused on the preconditions for democracy such as economic development, social structure, and political culture.¹ These theories tended to produce a linear model of democratic development, which induced an optimistic view on the prospects for democracy in developing countries.² In the following decade, such optimism was

¹See: Martin S. Lipset, Political Man (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1959); Barrington Moore, Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966); Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, Civic Culture (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965).

²A deviation from the general tendency was Huntington's critique on the model of linear progression which discussed an "erosion of democracy" and political instability, rather than a "tendency toward competitiveness and democracy" in the modernization process of developing countries. See: Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 32-78.

replaced by pessimism, especially in response to the emergence of authoritarianism in many developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Correspondingly, the studies on the breakdown of democratic regimes and the nature of authoritarianism became salient.³ By the late 1970s and early 1980s, a more cautious optimism emerged as authoritarian regimes gave way to democracies in many countries, including Greece, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Uruguay, and the Philippines. Thus, a number of academic works on the transition from authoritarianism to democracy have appeared.⁴

³For the breakdown of democracies, see: Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan (eds.), The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1978); Robert K. Kaufman, Transitions To Stable Authoritarian Corporate Regimes (Sage Papers, Comparative Politics Series 1, No. 01-060, 1978).

For the nature of authoritarianism, see: Guillermo A. O'Donnell, Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1973); James M. Malloy (ed.), Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Latin America (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977); David Collier (ed.), The New Authoritarianism in Latin America (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); Amos Perlmutter, Modern Authoritarianism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

⁴See: John H. Herz (ed.), From Dictatorship To Democracy: Coping With the Legacies of Authoritarianism and Totalitarianism (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1982); Samuel Huntington, "Will More Countries Become Democratic?," Political Science Quarterly Vol.99 No.2 (Summer 1984); Guillermo A. O'Donnell (eds.), Transitions From Authoritarian Rule 4 Vols. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); Enrique Baloyra (ed.), Comparing New Democracies (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, Inc., 1986); Donald Share, "Transition To Democracy: Transition Through Transaction," Comparative Political Studies 19 (January 1987), pp. 525-548; James M. Malloy and Mitchell A. Seligson (eds.), Authoritarians and Democrats: Regime Transitions in Latin

In spite of such continuous concern among political scientists, there are some important areas to which not enough attention has been paid. First of all, the theoretical foundation of democratic transitions has not been sufficiently developed. Some scholars have made an attempt to build a theory or a model.⁵ However, only a few further theoretical studies have followed.⁶ Second, although there have been many studies on such countries as Argentina, Brazil, Greece, Portugal, Spain, etc.,⁷ areas other than

America (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987); Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset (eds.), Democracy in Developing Countries 4 Vols. (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1989).

⁵See: Dankwart A. Rustow, "Transitions To Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model," Comparative Politics Vol.2 No.3 (April 1970).

⁶See: A. Przeworski, "Some Problems in the Study of the Transition To Democracy," Working Paper No. 61 (Washington, D.C.: The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1979); Geoffrey Pridham, "Comparative Perspectives on the New Mediterranean Democracies: A Model of Regime Transition?" West European Politics Vol.7 No.2 (April 1984); Enrique A. Baloyra, "Democratic Transition in Comparative Perspective," in Enrique A. Baloyra (ed.), op. cit.; Donald Share, op. cit.

⁷The examples are as follows: (1) the Argentine case: Aldo C. Vacs, "Authoritarian Breakdown and Redemocratization in Argentina," in James Malloy and Mitchell Seligson (eds.), op. cit.; (2) the Brazilian case: Kenneth Paul Erickson, "Brazil: Corporative Authoritarianism, Democratization, and Dependency," Latin American Politics and Development edited by Howard J. Wiarda and Harvey F. Kline (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1985); Luciano Martins, "The Liberalization of Authoritarian Rule In Brazil," in Guillermo O'Donnell et al. (eds.), op. cit.; Riordan Roett, "The Transition To Democratic Government in Brazil," World Politics Vol.38 No.2 (January 1986); Donald Share and Scott Mainwaring, "Transitions Through Transaction: Democratization in Brazil and Spain," in Wayne A. Selcher (ed.), Political Liberalization

Latin America and Southern Europe, where there are fewer cases for empirical study, have been neglected by political scientists.⁸

The process of transition to democracy is still going on in many developing countries, including South Korea. In 1988, South Korea accomplished the first peaceful transfer of political power since its national independence in 1948; since then the country has been slowly moving toward a democracy. How and why did this happen, and what are the future prospects for democracy in that country? The main objective of this study is to try to answer these questions. This study is also an attempt to contribute to the solution of the two problems mentioned above: theoretical weakness and area partiality.

in Brazil (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1986); Thomas Skidmore, "Brazil's Slow Road to Democratization," in Alfred Stepan (ed.), Democratizing Brazil (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming); (3) the Greek case: H.J. Psomiades, "Greece: From the Colonels' Rule to Democracy," in John Herz (ed.), op. cit.; C.M. Woodhouse, The Rise and Fall of the Greek Colonels (New York: F. Watts, 1985); (4) the Portuguese case: Lawrence Graham and Douglas Wheeler (eds.), In Search of Modern Portugal: The Revolution and Its Consequences (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983); and (5) the Spanish case: Raymond Carr and Juan Pablo Fusi, Spain: Dictatorship To Democracy (Boston: George Allen and Unwin, 1981); Jose Maria Maravall, The Transition to Democracy in Spain (London: St. Martin's Press, 1982); Paul Preston, The Triumph of Democracy in Spain (London: Methuen, 1986).

⁸In the late 1980s, there were a few studies on Asia and Africa as follows: Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset (eds.), op. cit. Vol.2 (Africa) and Vol.3 (Asia); Eun Sung Chung, "Transition to Democracy in South Korea," Asian Profile Vol. 17 No.1 (February 1989).

A. Theoretical Considerations

1. Functional vs. Genetic Approach

During the 1950s and early 1960s, the so-called "functional" approach to transitions to democracy with a strong influence of modernization theories was dominant among many scholars. In general, the approach connects democracy with certain conditions such as socio-economic development and culture. The socio-economic explanation of democracy correlates socio-economic development with democracy. One of its basic assumptions is that socio-economic diversity, a by-product of socio-economic development, is the major source of political competition, an essential condition for democracy. S. M. Lipset discussed the correlation as follows: "Democracy is related to the state of economic development. Concretely, this means that the more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy."⁹ This view was also supported by other scholars such as Daniel Lerner, Phillips Cutright,

⁹Seymour Martin Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," American Political Science Review Vol.LII No.1 (March 1959), p. 75.

D. E. Neubauer, James Coleman, Robert W. Jackman, G. Almond and Bingham Powell.¹⁰

The cultural approach to democratic development considers the penetration of democratic norms and values into a society as a prerequisite of a functioning democracy. For example, Ernest Griffith and others identified the following five attitudes as essential for the maintenance of democracy: individualism, participation, integrity, economic order, and leadership.¹¹ Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba also subscribed to this view and described the positive relationship between culture and political democracy as follows:

"We shall therefore consider the way in which political culture affects democratic government...Is there a democratic political culture?...It is true...that the informed, involved, rational, and active citizen is more frequently found in the successful than in the unsuccessful democracies."¹²

¹⁰Daniel Lerner, The Passing of Traditional Society (N.Y: The Free Press, 1958); Phillips Cutright, "National Political Development: Measurement and Analysis," American Sociological Review Vol.28 (1963), pp. 253-64; Deane E. Neubauer, "Some Conditions of Democracy," American Political Science Review Vol.33 (1967), pp. 1002-9; James Coleman, "Conclusion," in Gabriel Almond and J. Coleman, The Politics of Developing Areas (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 536-544; Robert W. Jackman, "On the Relation of Economic Development To Democratic Performance," American Journal of Political Science Vol.17 (1973), pp. 611-621; and Gabriel Almond and G. B. Powell, Comparative Politics (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1978), pp. 19-23.

¹¹Ernest S. Griffith, John Plamenatz and J. Roland Pennock, "Cultural Prerequisites to a Successfully Functioning Democracy: A symposium," American Political Science Review Vol.L No.1 (March 1956), pp. 105-110.

¹²Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, op. cit., pp. 337-9.

In general, the cultural explanation of democracy presupposes that a democracy requires a democratic belief system in which individual citizens are well informed about public affairs, actively participate in the political process, tolerate different political views, and have a firm belief in a democratic rule.

The functional approach may be useful in understanding democratic change in South Korea; however, it is no longer valid as a "theoretical" approach. First of all, South Korea has developed rapidly not only economically but also socially. During the period of 1962-1985, the average annual growth rate of GNP was more than 8 percent.¹³ [See Table 2.1] The number of persons per 1,000 who registered in regular educational institutions almost doubled in the late 1970s, compared to the number in 1953.¹⁴ There has been a sharp increase in the number of radios, television sets, and newspapers and periodicals in circulation among the people.¹⁵ [See Table 2.3] Consequently, there have been

¹³Korean Overseas Information Service, A Handbook of Korea (Seoul: Seoul International Publishing House, 1987), p. 351.

¹⁴The number in 1953, 146, increased to 266 in 1975. Source: The Ministry of Education, Educational Statistics Yearbook: reciting from Se-jin Kim, "Han'guk Chôngch'ibalchôn ŭi Silchûngjôk Koch'al (A Study of Political Development in Korea)," in Han'guk ŭi Chôngch'ibalchôn kwa Kyôngje-balchôn (Political and Economic Development of Korea) (Seoul: Asian Research Institute for Public Policy, 1979), p. 163.

¹⁵The United Nations, Statistical Yearbook 1981 (New York: Statistical Office of the U.N., 1983), p.438 and 443.

some democratic changes in the South Korean people's political consciousness. Contrary to functional theory, however, political democracy was not achieved until 1987. This indicates that the correlation between socio-economic development and political democracy has been weak in the case of South Korea.

On the other hand, the fact of a direct presidential election in 1987 shows that the country is moving toward a democracy. Although it could be argued that the democratic transition might have been positively influenced by the country's socio-economic development, the functional view still does not answer the question of why the transition happened at a particular time. The functional approach is useful in discerning some factors facilitating the transition to democracy, but not useful enough for us to comprehend all the dynamics of the transition process. In brief, in spite of its usefulness, the functional approach is too static to view the complex phenomenon of regime transition in South Korea.

Dankwart Rustow pointed out the weaknesses of the approach and introduced a "genetic" approach as a possible alternative which can be summarized as follows: (1) "correlation is not the same as causation" and "a genetic theory must concentrate on the latter"; (2) "there may be many roads to democracy"; and (3) "explanations of democracy must

distinguish between function and genesis."¹⁶ Among those who attack the functionalist view as being too deterministic, Robert Dahl supports Rustow's view: "For the evidence simply does not sustain the hypothesis that a high level of socioeconomic development is either a necessary or a sufficient condition for competitive politics nor the converse hypothesis that competitive politics is either a necessary or a sufficient condition for a high level of socioeconomic development."¹⁷

In this study, the "genetic" theory that emphasizes the actual causes of transition to democracy is preferred over the functional view that the transition is conditional on certain requirements or functional preconditions. A genetic approach provides a more dynamic perspective. In fact, every political system is unique. By the same token, each political system's democratic transition process has its own characteristics. Therefore, a better knowledge of the concerned country's democratic transition can be acquired through a close examination of the actual political process: (1) its historical background, and (2) the major political actors and their roles in the process.

To sum up, the functional approach is useful, but it is insufficient to explain the actual causes and processes of

¹⁶Dankwart Rustow, op. cit., p. 346.

¹⁷Robert A. Dahl, Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), p. 71.

democratic transition. Therefore, this study deals with not only the functional prerequisites for democracy in order to grasp the fundamental elements of democratic development in South Korea, but also the actual causes and processes, along with major political actors and their roles, of South Korea's transition to democracy.

2. Democracy

"Democracy.....is a word with which we are all so familiar that we rarely take the trouble to ask what we mean by it. It is a term.....which has no 'referent'..... On the contrary, it is a word which connotes different things to different people, a kind of conceptual Gladstone bag which, with a little manipulation, can be made to accommodate almost any collection of social facts we may wish to carry about in it. In it we can as easily pack a dictatorship as any other form of government. We have only to stretch the concept to include any form of government supported by a majority of the people.....But if this is what is meant by democracy, then virtually all forms of government are democratic.....In order to discuss democracy intelligently it will be necessary, therefore, to define it, to attach to the word a sufficiently precise meaning to avoid the confusion which is not infrequently the chief result of such discussions."¹⁸

"Democracy" is an ambiguous word. Carl Becker is demonstrating here the necessity of defining the concept before discussing it. As John Dewey pointed out, "One of the most significant findings of the discussion of democracy is its conclusion that every nation now claims to be a

¹⁸Carl L. Becker, Modern Democracy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), pp. 4-5.

democracy," and various adjectives modifying the meaning of democracy have been used in many political regimes (e.g.: guided democracy, administrative democracy, people's democracy, etc.).¹⁹ South Korea also has been clothed with the so-called "Korean-style democracy (Han'gukchôk Minju-juûi)" under Park's "Yushin" (Revitalizing Reform) regime, which was based upon probably the most undemocratic constitution in the history of South Korea. It follows then, that to discuss the democratization of the country without examining the meaning of democracy, the very core subject of this study, is like building a house of cards. In order to avoid confusion, it is necessary to define democracy and the other auxiliary concepts such as transition to democracy.

a. Democracy: A Definition

Etymologically, democracy is a compound of two Greek words, "demos (people)" and "kratein (to rule)." The literal meaning of democracy--rule by the people--is probably the most elementary definition. In this way democracy is simply distinguished from monarchy (rule by one) and from oligarchy (rule by few). [See Table 1.1]

However, many different interpretations of how the

¹⁹Richard Mckeon (ed.), Democracy in a World of Tensions: A Symposium Prepared by UNESCO (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 63.

people rule and numerous historical models confirm how complicated and multi-faceted the notion of democracy is.

Table 1.1
Law-abiding and Lawless Forms of
Government, According to Rule by
One, Few, and Many²⁰

		Legality	
		Law-abiding (lawful)	Lawless (arbitrary)
Number of Rulers	Rule by one	Monarchy	Tyranny
	Rule by few	Aristocracy	Oligarchy
	Rule by many	Democracy or Moderate Democracy	Mobocracy or Extreme Democracy

Democracy comprises a set of ideals on the one hand and an actual form of government on the other hand. It connotes an end which a system of government pursues, and at the same time a method or means of achieving the end. In addition, democracy means not only government by the people but also government for the people. That is to say, the word democracy has various meanings so that we cannot define it easily. In any event, we are living in "the age of confused democracy" as Giovanni Sartori said.²¹

²⁰Plato, "The Politicus," in Ernest Barker, Greek Political Theory (N.Y.: Barnes and Noble, 1961), pp. 333-337.

²¹Giovanni Sartori, The Theory of Democracy Revisited Part 1 (Chatham, NJ: Chatham House, 1987), p. 3.

In spite of all the difficulties of defining democracy, at least a minimal definition should be made before proceeding with any discussion of democracy. Before a definition of democracy is made, it is important to review the basic views on democracy by other prominent scholars. S. M. Lipset defines democracy as "a political system which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for changing the governing officials, and a social mechanism which permits the largest possible part of the population to influence major decisions by choosing among contenders for political office."²² This view emphasizes the electoral features of a political system. In other words, "popular sovereignty" is the most important characteristic of democracy.

Political liberty is also a crucial component of democracy. Anthony Downs not only states that a democratic society must have "periodic elections, decided by majority rule, in which each voter casts only one vote," but also suggests that there must be one or more competing parties.²³ Gerhard Lenski identifies democratic political systems not only by "the extent of the electoral franchise" but also by

²²Seymour Martin Lipset, Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1963), p.27.

²³Anthony Downs, An Economic Theory of Democracy (N.Y.: Harper and Brothers, 1957), pp. 23-24.

the possession of political liberties.²⁴ Norberto Bobbio pointed out that the liberal and the democratic state were interdependent in two respects: in the direction that goes from liberalism to democracy, "where certain freedoms are necessary for the correct exercise of democratic power"; and in the opposite direction, from democracy to liberalism, "where democratic power is necessary to guarantee the existence and persistence of fundamental liberties." In addition, Norberto Bobbio said that historical proof of this interdependence was found in the fact that "when they fall, the liberal and the democratic states fall together."²⁵ All these views have a common feature: they regard "political liberty" as an important aspect of democracy.

Political liberty refers to the struggles of all individuals and groups to protest or support government policies or decisions. That is, political liberty is related to the aforementioned aspect of democracy, popular sovereignty. Liberalism and democracy are two sides of a single coin. In this sense, both popular sovereignty and political liberty are interdependent. If one does not exist, the other cannot prosper normally. For example, Robert Dahl distinguishes democracy as an ideal system from polyarchy as an actual form of government. In addition,

²⁴Gerhard Lenski, Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification (N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1966), p. 318.

²⁵Norberto Bobbio, "The Future of Democracy," translated by Frank Adler, Telos No. 61 (Fall 1984), p.3.

Robert Dahl characterizes democracy as "the continuing responsiveness of the government to the preferences of its citizens, considered as political equals."²⁶ He reserves the term democracy for a political system one of the characteristics of which is the quality of being completely or almost completely responsive to all its citizens. According to his definition, Robert Dahl describes two theoretical dimensions of democratization: "liberalization (public contestation) and inclusiveness (participation)." Dahl's view contains the two necessary characteristics of democracy, "popular sovereignty" and "political liberty."

To sum up, first of all, democracy is a certain form of government. Democracy as "an ideal," and democracy as "an attitude" or "way of life" is not being considered here, not only because of the difficulty of giving an operational definition of democracy as such, but also because those characteristics do not represent the essence of democracy, government by the people. Democracy is basically a form of government; that is, a form of political organization, a political method. Democracy indicates "a how, not a what."²⁷ Second, democracy is a form of government in which the sovereignty belongs to the people, not to a single person or a small group of people. Third, democracy is the

²⁶Robert A. Dahl, Pluralism: Participation and Opposition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), p.1.

²⁷Alf Ross, Why Democracy? (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952), p. 91.

form of government which affords the people political liberty, including freedom of dissent.

On the basis of the foregoing discussion, democracy is defined as "a form of government in which political power (sovereignty) belongs to the people and which confers political liberty upon the people."

b. Criteria of Democracy

The above definition of democracy is still too inexplicit to be used as a yardstick to distinguish democracies from non-democracies. A set of further criteria for democracy is required. Such criteria can be extracted through reviewing and summarizing the basic literature on democracy.

First of all, Robert Dahl says that democracy can exist if at least "eight institutional guarantees" are present.

They are as follows:²⁸

- [1] Freedom to form and join organizations
- [2] Freedom of expression
- [3] The right to vote
- [4] The right of political leaders to compete for support
- [5] Alternative sources of information
- [6] Eligibility for public office
- [7] Free and fair elections
- [8] Institutions for making government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference.

²⁸Robert A. Dahl, op. cit., p. 3.

Second, R. M. MacIver describes the criteria for ascertaining whether a system of government is democratic or not by asking five questions. MacIver says the system of government is not a democracy if the answer is "no" to any of the following five questions:²⁹

- [1] Can men freely and fully disagree with the policies of their government and still remain as secure as before?
- [2] Can they freely organize in favor of policies contrary to those of their government?
- [3] Can they freely vote against their government?
- [4] Can they vote their government out of power when there is a majority or plurality of votes against it?
- [5] Is there a constitutional requirement that elections to decide this issue shall be held at stated times or under stated conditions?

Third, Gerhard Lenski gives three basic characteristics of democracy:³⁰

- [1] Universal adult suffrage
- [2] The right of organized political opposition
- [3] The right of disadvantaged elements in the population to organize and engage in collective action in their own behalf.

Finally, Anthony Downs enumerates certain characteristics which, in practice, distinguish a democratic form of government from others:³¹

- [1] A single party (or coalition of parties) is chosen by popular election to run the governing apparatus.

²⁹R. M. MacIver, The Ramparts We Guard (N.Y.: The Macmillan Co., 1956), p. 97.

³⁰Gerhard Lenski, op. cit., p. 318.

³¹Anthony Downs, An Economic Theory of Democracy (N.Y.: Harper and Row Publishers, 1957), pp. 23-24.

- [2] Such elections are held within periodic intervals, the duration of which cannot be altered by the party in power acting alone.
- [3] All adults who are permanent residents of the society, are sane, and abide by the laws of the land are eligible to vote in each such election.
- [4] Each voter may cast one and only one vote in each election.
- [5] Any party (or coalition) receiving the support of a majority of those voting is entitled to take over the powers of government until the next election.
- [6] The losing parties in an election never try by force or any illegal means to prevent the winning party (or parties) from taking office.
- [7] The party in power never attempts to restrict the political activities of any citizens or other parties as long as they make no attempt to overthrow the government by force.
- [8] There are two or more parties competing for control of the governing apparatus in every election.

The common features of the above criteria can be summarized in terms of our definition of democracy: (1) popular sovereignty, and (2) political liberty.

Popular sovereignty consists of at least three elements: (1) free election, (2) fairness of executive selection, and (3) fairness of legislative selection.³² Free election implies the degree to which elections are free from corruption, coercion, unequal weighing of votes, as well as from abuses of the ground rules of free election such as universal suffrage and secret voting. The evaluation of free election can be made by asking whether or not alternative

³²This grouping was originally devised by Kenneth A. Bollen and Burke D. Grandjean. See: "The Dimensions of Democracy: Further Issues in the Measurement and Effects of Political Democracy," American Sociological Review Vol.46 (October 1981), p. 652; Kenneth A. Bollen, "Political Democracy and the Timing of Development," American Sociological Review Vol.44 (August 1979), p. 578.

choices exist, namely, the existence of competition, and whether or not elections are held at frequent intervals.³³ Fairness of executive selection indicates whether or not the chief executive is elected by the majority will of the people. Fairness of legislative selection connotes two points: how effectively the basic ideal of proportional representation is achieved in practice, and the effectiveness of the legislative body.

Political liberty includes three components: (1) freedom of expression, (2) freedom of group opposition, and (3) just and limited government sanctions. Freedom of expression indicates whether or not citizens have a right to seek out alternative sources of information; and whether or not people have a right to express themselves without risking severe punishment on political matters broadly defined, including criticism of officials, the government, the regime, the socio-economic order, and the prevailing ideology. Freedom of group opposition can be measured by the degree to which organized opposition is allowed to achieve various rights, and to which citizens also have a right to form relatively independent associations or organizations, including political parties and interest

³³Kenneth A. Bollen, "Issues in the Comparative Measurement of Political Democracy," American Sociological Review Vol.45 (June 1980), p. 376.

groups.³⁴ Government sanctions are actions taken by the government which curtail the political liberties of one or more groups of the people. Some sanctions, necessary for the survival of a society, can be justified, while others, including banning or harassing political parties, and arresting of opposition party members, must not be allowed.

Table 1.2: A Classification of Basic Views
by Elements of Democracy³⁵

Basic Views Elements of Democracy		Dahl	MacIver	Lenski	Downs
Popular Sovereignty	Fairness of elections	[3],[7],[8]	[3],[5]	[1]	[2],[3],[4]
	Method of Executive selection	[6]	[4]		[5],[1]
	Method of Legislative Selection	[6]	[4]		[5],[1]
Political Liberty	Freedom of the Press	[2],[5]			
	Freedom of Group Opposition	[1]	[2]	[2]	[8]
	Extent of Government Sanctions	[4]	[1]		[7]

³⁴Robert A. Dahl, Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy: Autonomy vs. Control (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), pp. 10-11.

³⁵The numbers shown in this table correspond to the above-mentioned enumerated criteria of democracy by the four scholars.

These six elements also involve the above-shown criteria for democracy by four scholars. [See Table 1.2] When any one of the six elements is absent, democracy cannot be fully developed. The above-mentioned six indicators of democracy can be operating criteria for determining whether a political regime is democratic or not, as well as for ascertaining its level of democratization.

3. Transition to Democracy

"Transition to democracy" is a dynamic term. It implies a political change from a non-democratic or authoritarian regime to a democratic one. That is, the concept itself contains the breakdown of an authoritarian regime on the one side, and the establishment of a democracy on the other.

a. Breakdown of Authoritarian Regime: Warning Signs

Since many dictators emerged in the Third World countries during the early 1960s, a dichotomous classification of political regimes (democracy vs. totalitarianism), which has been prevalent in political science during the 1950s, was seriously challenged, and the concept of authori-

tarianism as a new type of political regime emerged.³⁶ As the number of authoritarian political regimes--from patrimonial (e.g., Egypt under Nasser) to populist (e.g., Argentina under Perón)--multiplied, the concept of authoritarianism attracted attention among political scientists, including Juan Linz and Amos Perlmutter.³⁷ Juan Linz defined authoritarianism in terms of the absence of an "elaborate and guiding ideology" (diverging from totalitarianism), of "limited political pluralism," and of extensive--yet limited to a certain degree--exercise of power by an individual or a small group of people (e.g., the party, the state corporate oligarchy, or the military).³⁸ Amos Perlmutter defined it

³⁶There have been some early forms of authoritarian regime such as autocracy and tyranny. Perlmutter describes the difference between the early variants and modern authoritarianism as follows: "There is a clear distinction between modern and early notions of authoritarianism. The early version was rule by the few in the name of the few; modern authoritarianism is rule by the few in the name of the many." Amos Perlmutter, Modern Authoritarianism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 2.

³⁷Juan Linz, The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown and Reequilibration (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); Amos Perlmutter, op. cit.

³⁸He defined authoritarianism as a type of political regime, distinct from both democracy and totalitarianism, as follows: "Authoritarian regimes are political systems with limited, not responsible, political pluralism; without elaborate and guiding ideology (but with distinctive mentalities); without intensive or extensive political mobilization (except at some points in their development); and in which a leader (or occasionally a small group) exercises power within formally ill-defined limits, but actually quite predictable ones." Juan J. Linz, "An Authoritarian Regime: Spain," in E. Allardt and S. Rokkan (eds.), Mass Politics (New York: Free Press, 1970), p. 255.

as "a system of relationships between state and society and between political and societal sources of power," and as "a type of domination which is dependent on centralized executive control and coercion."³⁹ In brief, an authoritarian regime is a system of government in which political power resides de jure in the majority of the people, but de facto in one or a small number of people. Authoritarianism proliferates its official ideology less than totalitarianism; it also exercise less monopolistic control of various social elements. In this sense, authoritarian regime is a modern type of centralized state.

Since an authoritarian regime by its nature involve arbitrary rule, it constantly faces the problem of insufficient legitimacy.⁴⁰ Discussing the inability of authoritarian regimes to establish long-term legitimacy, Juan Linz pointed out the inevitability of legitimacy crisis "in any society that has developed beyond" the stage of "purely subject political cultures, with traditional rulers in the

³⁹Amos Perlmutter, op. cit., p. 24.

⁴⁰Legitimacy is defined as the people's consent to the political system. A broader definition by Fraga Iribarne, with which I agree, is as follows: "The legitimacy of a political regime is in essence a historical reality, which consists basically of the people accepting a political system as the most appropriate for their social conditions, at the present moment, in relation to past experiences, and as a hope for the future." M. Fraga Iribarne, Horizonte Español 1966 (Madrid, 1966), p. 18; reciting from José Amodia, Franco's Political Legacy: From Fascism To Facade Democracy (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1977), p. 22.

most narrow Weberian sense of the term."⁴¹ Since no regime can exist without support from the majority of the people, such vulnerability eventually generates the disintegration of the authoritarian regime. In this sense, the indicators of the decline of legitimacy are the initial signs of the authoritarian regime's collapse.

Among the most important warning signals are the death (e.g., Franco in Spain) or ill health (e.g., Marcos in the Philippines) of the leader; military defeats (e.g., the Argentine military junta in the Falklands/Malvinas war, and the Greek colonels in the Cyprus crisis); economic difficulty (e.g., the famine of the early 1970s in Ethiopia); and widespread corruption (e.g., Duvalier in Haiti).⁴² While these signs can be applied to any political regime transition, the symptoms unique to the breakdown of authoritarian regime are as follows: the social tensions between autocrats and democrats; violent anti-regime protests demanding democracy (e.g., the Philippines after Aquino's assassination on August 21, 1983, and South Korea in June 1987); the rise of the democratic opposition forces as an alternative; and conflicts within the authoritarian ruling bloc (e.g., friction--Paulo Maluf vs. José Sarney--within the ruling

⁴¹Juan J. Linz, "The Future of an Authoritarian Situation or the Institutionalization of an Authoritarian Regime: The Case of Brazil," in Alfred Stepan (ed.), Authoritarian Brazil (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 240.

⁴²Hans Binnendijk, "Authoritarian Regimes in Transition," Washington Quarterly 10 (Spring 1987), pp. 155-6.

party in Brazil; disunity--Chun Doo Hwan and Chang Se Dong vs. Roh Tae Woo and Chung Ho Yong--within the governing party in South Korea; and secession of the military--Defense Minister Enrile and General Ramos--from Marcos in February 1986 in the Philippines).

b. Paths from Authoritarianism to Democracy

For a better understanding of various types of transitions to democracy, it is useful to devise a conceptual framework. While all democratic transitions are different from one another, they can be classified roughly into four types, by the characteristics of the prime mover and by the pace of the transition process: (1) gradual transition by the ruling bloc; (2) gradual transition by the opposition; (3) rapid transition by the ruling bloc; and (4) rapid transition by the opposition. Such classification is illustrated by Table 1.3 as follows:

Table 1.3: A Classification of Transitions to Democracy

		Pace of Transition	
		Gradual	Rapid
Prime Mover	By the Ruling Bloc	(1)	(3)
	By the Opposition	(2)	(4)

The first category, gradual transition by the ruling bloc, includes the cases of the United Kingdom and some northern European countries. The ruling élites play a significant role in moving toward democracy and maintain their political power throughout the transition process. The existing social and economic systems commonly remain intact. Mutual agreement between the ruling bloc and opposition groups is often required, and usually reached. The Chilean democracy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, from the so-called "Liberal Republic" period (1861-1891) in which the power of the church and president considerably diminished until 1924 when the military intervened in politics, qualifies for this category. Spain after Franco's death in 1975, under Arias and Suárez (1976-1981), corresponds to the first type in some ways. Probably the gradual process of liberalization in Brazil, called *abertura*, initiated by the military since the inauguration of President Ernesto Geisel in 1974, has shown the first stage of such transition. Although the motives of the ruling élites vary, such transition is usually launched by the ruling élites only when they sense an insecurity caused by the pressure for democratic movement from the majority of the people. Nevertheless, it is a managed transition by the ruling bloc.

The second type is possible, but occurs only rarely. The breakdown of authoritarian regimes and the transition to

democracy are closely related each other, yet are separate phases. The disintegration of authoritarian regimes may bring immediately the birth of a new democratic regime, but not necessarily a successful democratic development. That is, the transition period is prolonged. This protracted process of democratic change is produced by the democratic force's weakness (in its actual power and/or in ideological enthusiasm) in carrying out its democratization programs, a weakness commonly caused by obstacles already existing in the society. These problems would include strong vestiges of the former authoritarian regime's rule, such as its military and its bureaucracy. Such aspects of democratic transition in Brazil since the January 1985 election as delayed democratic development under Sarney's limited leadership can loosely fit into the category of the evolutionary democratic change led by the opposition, if one considers the Democratic Alliance (AD: Aliança Democrática)--a coalition of the Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (PMDB: Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro) led by Tancredo Neves and the Liberal Front Party (PFL: Partido do Frente Liberal) led by José Sarney--as the major opposition force against the Social Democratic Party (PDS: Partido Democrático Social)--the principal successor in 1979 to the National Renewal Alliance (ARENA: Aliança Renovadora Nacional) that has been the single government party since its establishment in 1965.

The third type of transition, rapid democratic change led by the ruling elites, usually involves, in the beginning, either violent confrontations between the authoritarian government and the opposition groups, or a serious--seemingly not restorable--deterioration of political legitimacy. Later, the ruling bloc itself, usually after conflict between hardliners and moderates within the bloc, carries out democratic programs and plays a key role in the transition process. Finally, a new leadership, commonly more pragmatic and less ideological than the former leadership, emerges and continues to move toward democracy. Under this type of transition, there are no major changes in the existing social, economic and political institutions. The South Korean democratic change in 1987, Roh Tae Woo's surprising announcement for liberalization on June 29, and the first genuine presidential election in 16 years in December, can be included in this category. The Greek colonels' decision in July 1974 to transfer political power to the civilian government under Constantine Karamanlis, and President Bignone's February 1983 announcement of the plan for the transfer of political power to civilian government in Argentina to October 30, 1983, when Raúl Alfonsín was elected as president, correspond to early stages of this transition.

The patterns of the fourth type are various. They include revolution, coup, etc. The authoritarian regime

disintegrates rapidly, and democratic opposition forces replace the regime without delay. In this model, the next stage is usually the eradication of the remnants of the former authoritarian rule, such as purging those who have been closely involved in the previous government, punishing their corrupt acts and abuses of power, and abolishing authoritarian practices in various elements of the society. Subsequently, the new opposition force consolidates its democratic rule. The Democratic Party government, after the April 19 Students' Uprising overthrew the dictatorial Rhee regime in 1960, is a good example, although it failed to consolidate its rule. The Aquino government after the so-called "February Revolution" of the Philippines in 1986 and the revolutionary government (JGRN: Junta de Gobierno de Reconstrucción Nacional) in Nicaragua after abolishing Somoza's dictatorship in July 1979 are included in this category.

The above shown four-type classification is only an aid to the understanding of various transitions to democracy. It has many problems. Many cases do not fit in any of the four categories. They may correspond to one category in their early stage, and to another one in later phases. That is, there are many additional varieties produced by different combinations of those four types. Second, in some cases, it is difficult to draw a clear line between gradual and rapid transition. For example, political change in

Spain during the period of three years from Franco's death in 1975 until the approval of the new constitution in 1978, or even seven years until the Socialist party's success in the October 1982 general elections, can be regarded both as a gradual transition, and, at the same time, as a rapid one. In addition, not all transitions have been clearly led by either the ruling bloc or the opposition force. The prime mover of the transition can be a group including both sides. All cases are unique.

Despite several defects in the classification model, however, the typology is still useful. It is functional as a tool to understand the multifarious nature of democratic transitions by simplification. In addition, considering its numerous subtypes, it embraces virtually all cases. One category, for example, the rapid transition to democracy led by the ruling bloc, contains many different paths toward democracy, including, for example, democratization initiated by the civilian leadership, the military, etc.

c. Stages of Transition to Democracy

The concept of transition to democracy as political change from one regime to another implies that it is a process involving a series of different phases. A preliminary setting of the different stages of democratization is meaningful as a framework for analyzing the transition to

democracy in South Korea as well as in the other cases mentioned. The framework can be obtained from a comparative analysis of a few or more transitions to democracy.

Dankwart Rustow conducted a comprehensive study on transition to democracy; his theory of democratic transition includes four stages: (1) "national unity" as precondition; (2) "preparatory phase" in which the "dynamic process of democratization is set off by a prolonged and inconclusive political struggle"; (3) "decision phase" in which political rivals realize the "existence of diversity in unity" and reach a decision to coexist; and (4) "habituation phase."⁴³ On the basis of Rustow's four-phase theory, some findings of similarities in the different cases which occurred in the 1970s and 1980s, can be arranged in separate phases as follows: (1) decline of legitimacy; (2) conflict within the ruling bloc; (3) emergence of democratic force as an alternative; (4) transfer of power; and (5) consolidation of democracy. The first three stages, which can be included in Rustow's preparatory phase, are mutually related and do not necessarily occur in that time sequence.

The first stage is the condition in which the authoritarian ruling group loses support from the majority of the people. The reasons are varied. Among them are the death or assassination of the leader (e.g., Franco in Spain), scandals (e.g., Chun in South Korea), military defeat (e.g.,

⁴³Dankwart Rustow, op. cit., pp. 350-361.

the Argentine military and the Greek colonels), economic problems such as decline in growth rates (e.g., Iran in 1976) and high rates of inflation (e.g., Argentina in the early 1980s), and widespread abuse of power (e.g., Somoza in Nicaragua, Marcos in the Philippines and Duvalier in Haiti). All these factors are related to the ruling élites' loss of effective control over the society. Indirectly, but more profoundly, such factors as the socio-economic development and the penetration of a democratic way of thinking among the citizens also play a significant role in furthering this stage. In addition, the advancement of this stage affects that of the next two stages, and vice versa.

The second phase, conflict within the ruling bloc, involves the loss of self-confidence among the ruling élites, discord among them over strategic attempts to solve the legitimacy crisis problem and the rise of the opposition, and disunity within the ruling bloc. Sometimes the hard-liners prevail over the soft-liners, but usually the moderates take the initiative and execute liberalizing policies. Depending upon whether the hard-liners or soft-liners rise in power in the conflict, the paths toward democracy are changeable. When the hard-liners stay in power and suffer the loss of legitimacy, it usually worsens the situation and creates a more serious political crisis. That is, the transition is more likely to become a radical one. The soft-liners' dominance in the ruling bloc tends to.

develop as a gradual process. Additionally, the decline of legitimacy accelerates the development of this stage, and the existence of a strong opposition as an alternative has a significant effect.

The third stage, the rise of the democratic opposition force, is crucial not only because of its influence upon the first two stages but also upon the next two phases. Whether there is a clear and effective opposition force as an alternative or not affects significantly the legitimacy problem that the ruling bloc confronts. On one hand, it can lead to the ruling bloc's decision to liberalize the country because the ruling élites want to maximize the chance to maintain their influence in the democratization process. Look at what happened in South Korea in 1987. The reorganization of the opposition party with Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung as leaders expedited Roh's decision to liberalize. On the other hand, the opposition forces can succeed the ruling group and play a key role in the transition process. The best example is the Radical party in Argentina led by Raúl Alfonsín. In any case, the strong democratic opposition force is an important factor in the transition to democracy.

In the fourth stage, corresponding to Rustow's decision phases, the authoritarian regime disintegrates and transfers its power to the new government. In this stage, the leadership factor is particularly critical. When another

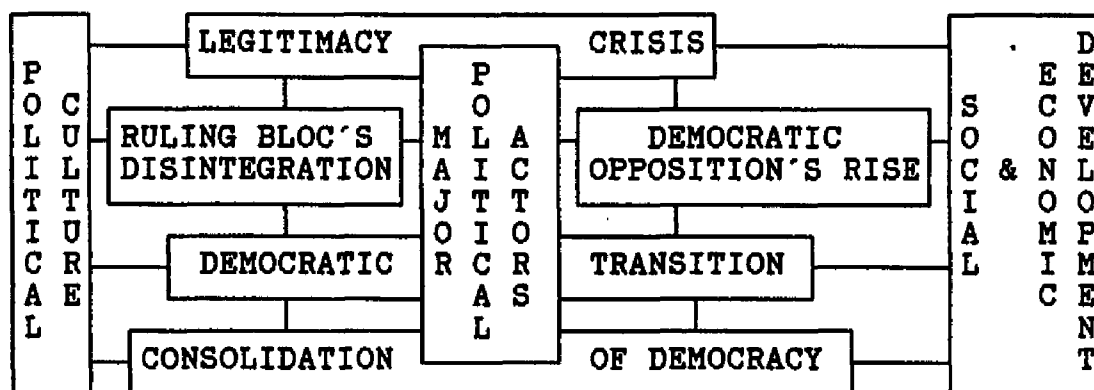
sector, usually the moderates, of the ruling bloc replace the former authoritarian regime and build a new government, the new leadership's delicate tactics in dealing with not only the opposition forces but also the former autocrats are essential. Adolfo Suárez in Spain is the clearest example. In addition, the characteristics of the opposition leadership are important. When the maximalists are in control of the opposition, most probably they would not tolerate the remaining parts of the former regime participating in the transition process. Thus the transfer of power is not likely to be peaceful. Therefore, a kind of "moderate coalition" is essential. This is also the same when the opposition democrats succeed to the former autocrats. They have not only to purge the past evils, but also to deal with them.

The fifth stage, consolidating democracy, is a time-consuming process. The new government's effectiveness in various parts of the society is required. The socio-economic and cultural factors are again extremely crucial. After the new democratic regime is established, the new government copes with various social issues, formulates public policies, and implements them. The new government's first task is to reach a certain level of equilibrium. Economic performance is pivotal. The bureaucracy plays a great role. Confronting the mounting demands from formerly oppressed sectors of the society, the new leadership has

both to concede to and to contain these demands. It is basically an evolutionary process.

To sum up, the explanation of different phases of democratic transition uncovers various factors of the transition to democracy as follows: (1) socio-economic development--i.e., industrial growth, education, mass media, etc; (2) political culture--i.e., participation, tolerance of different political views, firm belief in a democratic rule, etc.; (3) leadership qualities--i.e., negotiating skills, mass appeal, etc.; (4) various opposition groups--i.e., the opposition parties, students, the churches, intellectuals, etc.; (5) the ruling bloc--i.e., the military, the party, the bureaucracy, etc. The role of these factors in the process of democratization varies. Some of these factors promote the democratic transition, some impede it, and some do both. In this sense, transition to democracy involves many stages of development and various factors; that is, it is a dynamic and complex phenomenon.

FIGURE 1.1
A Framework for Analyzing Transitions to Democracy



The above figure illuminates how various factors of democratization are related. In the process of democratic transition, such elements as political culture and socio-economic development are important. They are environmental determinants that circumscribe the development of democracy. But their relation to the actual democratization process is often indirect or inexplicit. In comparison with those functional ingredients, major political actors such as the ruling elites and the opposition forces play a more immediate and dynamic role in the transition to democracy, particularly in the breakdown of an authoritarian regime, and the building of a new democracy and its consolidation.

B. Background Considerations: A Short History of South Korea

Since the history of South Korea traces back to more than four thousand years ago, it is not only extremely difficult but also unnecessary for this study to review the entire history of the country. Thus this study deals only with the contemporary history of South Korea after its establishment, a history which can be outlined as follows:

- [1] The Rhee Regime (1948-1960): The First Republic
- [2] The Second Republic (1960-1961)
- [3] The Park Regime I (1961-1972): The Military Junta (1961-1963) and The Third Republic (1963-1972)

- [4] The Park Regime II (1972-1979): The Revitalizing Reform Republic
- [5] The Chun Regime: The Fifth Republic (1980-1988)
- [6] The Sixth Republic (1988-)

1. The Rhee Regime (1948-1960)

The United States Armed Forces from Okinawa arrived in South Korea on September 8, 1945, with Lieutenant General Hodge, and established the United States Military Government. The American military government did not recognize any Korean political authority, and retained the existing Japanese administration, thereby provoking intense dissatisfaction among Koreans.⁴⁴ At that time, Korea was physically divided by the 38th Parallel, and was a contested area both internationally and domestically. Internationally, there was a contention between the United States and the Soviet Union. The American-Soviet Joint Commission on Korea, formed in January, 1946, was deadlocked mainly because of the rivalry between the two great powers. There was a domestic struggle between the rightist and leftist groups which led to internal political disorder. After three years of social chaos, the National Assembly was formed on May 10, 1948, in South Korea. On July 12, 1948, a new constitution was adopted, Rhee was elected president on July 20, and the

⁴⁴Kyung Cho Chung, Korea: The Third Republic (N.Y.: The Macmillan Company, 1971), p. 22.

establishment of the Republic of Korea was declared on August 15. This terminated the three years of American military occupation and consolidated the division of Korea.

This marked the early domination of South Korea by Syngman Rhee. On September 10, 1945, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was established in the North Korean region. The artificial division of Korea could not produce stability between the two separate governments. On June 25, 1950, the Korean war broke out and lasted until July 27, 1953, when a cease-fire agreement was signed. More dictatorial power was bestowed upon President Rhee during the war years, power which he kept even after the war ended. President Rhee amended the constitution (which limited the president to serve only two terms) in November 1955, a year before the end of his second term of office, to delete the two-term limit. Actually, the amendment failed to secure the 136 votes required for passage, with only 135 votes in favor of its approval. The next day, however, Rhee ordered the amendment passed, based on a new method of tabulating votes whereby two-thirds of 203 being 135.3, the fraction .3 was rounded off.⁴⁵ That frustrated most South Korean people as well as the opposition.

As the people's dissatisfaction grew, Rhee's administration became increasingly repressive, and civil liberties were more frequently violated. In the presidential election

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 29.

of March 15, 1960, Rhee ran unopposed because of the unexpected death of his opponent Cho Pyông Ok, the Democratic Party's presidential candidate. Meanwhile, the choice of vice-president was significant because of President Rhee's old age. His running mate, Yi Ki-bung, who was doubtful about his winning, conducted a rigged election. Both President Rhee and vice-presidential candidate Lee were elected by a majority. Immediately after the election, however, mass protests against the completely manipulated election continued. On April 19, 1960, massive student demonstrations started, and the entire country rose up against Rhee's dictatorship. Although Rhee performed a final action before his resignation, declaring a state of martial law, the military adopted an attitude of sympathetic neutrality toward the students. The April student uprising, the so-called April 19 Student Revolution, forced Rhee to resign and leave the country, and drove Yi Ki-bung and his entire family to suicide. This ended the Rhee regime.

2. The Second Republic (1960-1961)

One of the most popular slogans of the April 19 student uprising was "established generation, go away." It indicated that the student uprising was to abolish the repressive government and its evils, but not to participate in

politics. Moreover, the student groups were not politically organized. Immediately after overthrowing the government, therefore, they left politics in the hands of politicians from the Democratic Party, who were a part of the established generation in their definition. In the new legislative elections of July 29, 1960, the Democratic Party won easily as predicted. A new constitution including a parliamentary system was adopted. The President of the Republic became a figurehead devoid of real political power. The real executive power resided in a State Council headed by the Prime Minister. The National Assembly elected Yun Po Sun president and Chang Myŏn prime minister.

After the breakdown of the Rhee government, it seemed that South Korea was moving toward democracy. However, the new government was in a difficult situation. The economy worsened day by day while the people's demands were becoming greater and greater. Above all, the most serious problem was in the Democratic Party itself, a cutthroat intra-party conflict between the so-called "old faction" led by President Yun and "new faction" led by Prime Minister Chang. The intra-party strife hindered the government's effective control of the society. This made the South Korean people frustrated. Such dissatisfaction was symbolized by a popular saying among the citizens at that time: "The former governor is the wise governor." The phrase, preferring the stability under Rhee's authoritarian former government to

the social chaos under the new government, shows how dissatisfied the citizens were with the Democratic Party government. In short, the absence of an effective political institution (for which the intra-party factionalism was largely responsible), together with the economic difficulties such as a runaway inflation and a rapidly decreasing production, were the main causes of the fall of the Second Republic.⁴⁸ This also provided the military with an excuse to intervene in politics.

3. The Park Regime (1961-1979)

On May 16, 1961, a military coup d'état, led by Major General Park Chung Hee and a retired Lieutenant Colonel Kim Jong Pil, deposed the Chang government. The establishment of the military junta was welcomed by most South Korean people, since the citizens were already disappointed with the former government, and the young officers promised to save the country from social chaos and restore civilian government by mid-1963. The promise, at least the second

⁴⁸For the factional strife in the Democratic Party and party politics under the Chang government, see: Sungjoo Han, The Failure of Democracy in South Korea (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), Chapter VI; For the factionalism between "Old Faction (Kup'a)" and "New Faction (Sinp'a)" in the Democratic Party, see: Yŏng Sŏk Yi, Yadang Samsimnyŏn (Thirty Years of the Opposition Party) (Seoul: Ingan Publisher, 1981).

one, was not kept. First of all, the military junta established martial law, dissolved the National Assembly, and banned all political activities. At the same time, Kim Jong Pil, a relative of Park and the director of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, was building a new party, the Democratic Republican Party. On October 15, 1963, a presidential election was held. General Park, the candidate of the new party, won by a narrow margin over Yun Po Sun of the Civil Rule Party, despite Park's earlier pledge not to take part in a civilian government. Constitutional rule was formally restored with Park's inauguration as president on December 17. This was the end of the military junta and the beginning of the Third Republic.

The military leaders claimed that the military revolution was only a temporary suspension of democratic process, not of democratic characteristics. As Park wrote, "The aim of our revolution was to lay a solid foundation for rebuilding true democracy and to strengthen the autonomous ability of the people."⁴⁷ This was called an "Administrative Democracy," which means democracy by administrative means, not by political means.⁴⁸ With this as a justifying tool, the centralization of political power under President Park

⁴⁷Park Chung Hee, Our Nation's Path: Ideology of Social Reconstruction (Seoul: Dong-A Publishing Co., 1962), p. 208.

⁴⁸Kûnsik Yun, "Che Sam Konghwakuk (The Third Republic)," in Woontae Kim et al., Han'guk Chôngch'iron (Theory of Korean Politics) (Seoul: Pakyoungsa, 1981), pp. 281-282.

has been maintained. Such a notion of democracy certainly differs from the Western concept of democracy as well as from my definition.

Although the military government consolidated political power, there were many serious problems. One of them was how to fuel an economic regeneration. In 1962, the First Five-Year Plan for Economic Development began and a source of investment capital was urgently needed. Japan was the most accessible source of such capital, thus it became an incentive for the normalization of relations between South Korea and Japan for the military government leaders. In addition, the United States, whose desires stemmed largely from considerations of strategic security in East Asia, supported the normalization of relations between the two countries.⁴⁹ During the Korea-Japan normalization negotiations, a series of violent anti-government demonstrations broke out, led by a coalition of students, politicians, intellectuals, and journalists. A strong anti-Japanese sentiment among the Korean people was added to the variety of reasons for their opposition. However, the controversial treaty was signed in June 1965.

The Park regime restored stability again. Continuous economic development was an especially important factor in sustaining the regime. Park was re-elected in the May 3

⁴⁹Nena Vreeland et.al., Area Handbook for South Korea (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), p. 29.

presidential election in 1967. The result of the legislative election on June 8 was favorable to the ruling party, the Democratic Republican Party, although the opposition party, the New Democratic Party, asserted that there had been widespread election fraud. Meanwhile, the Constitution, promulgated on July 17, 1948 and amended on December 26, 1962, did not permit more than two terms for the presidency. But a constitutional amendment permitting Park to run for a third term was being prepared by a group of his subordinates such as Lee Hu Rak (Park's chief secretary) and Kim Hyŏng Wook (director of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency). The amendment was approved by a referendum on October 17, 1969. By this constitutional amendment, Park could be a candidate for president in 1971. Later he was reelected, winning a narrow victory over opposition candidate Kim Dae Jung, who, by criticizing President Park, his policies, corruption, and unequal distribution of gains from the rapid economic development, acquired unexpected popularity.

Park followed Rhee Syngman's example. Faced with increased political tension, Park proclaimed martial law on October 17, 1972, and immediately called for the preparation of a new constitution. The constitution, approved in a referendum held under martial-law restrictions, provided for a strong presidential power, and laid the basis for Park's

permanent presidency.⁵⁰ This Constitution, the so-called "Revitalizing Reform" Constitution, was the most undemocratic of the six constitutions proclaimed since South Korea became a republic. The Park regime faced strong opposition from various classes and inevitably became more and more repressive.

In 1979, one of the most important factors in sustaining the repressive government, economic progress, was in downturn. Inflation especially contributed to economic decline. A series of student demonstrations continued and in August, some 200 women employees of a recently bankrupt textile company occupied the headquarters of the opposition, the New Democratic Party, demanding that they be allowed to take over the management of the firm. On August 11, police broke into the headquarters, injuring scores of politicians, party workers, and others. The leader of the party, Kim Young Sam, said that two textile workers were killed.⁵¹ On October 5, Kim was ordered expelled from the National Assembly by a vote in which only pro-Government legislators participated. The entire opposition group of the National Assembly, including 66 members of the New Democratic Party, resigned to protest the expulsion of Kim. In the mean time, in the areas of Fusan and Masan, protests of university

⁵⁰Arthur S. Banks and William Overstreet (ed.), Political Handbook of the World: 1982-1983 (N.Y.: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1983), p.276.

⁵¹New York Times (August 11, 1979), p. 3.

students became more and more violent. A continuing series of student demonstrations exacerbated the problems of the Park regime. In the midst of this social disorder, Park was assassinated by Korean CIA Director Kim Jae Kyu on October 26. This ended the Park regime and opened a renewed chance for South Korea's transition to democracy again.

4. The Fifth Republic: Its Birth (1979-1980)

After the assassination of the president, the prime minister, Choi Kyu-hah, succeeded immediately, and there was a process of political realignment not only within the ruling party but also within the opposition. The process often caused political disorder. Kim Jong Pil, Prime Minister from 1971 to 1975 and a former director of the KCIA, was selected to head the ruling Democratic Republican Party (DRP) on November 12, 1979. But the disintegration of the party (mainly caused by a power struggle among the leading politicians such as Kim and Lee Hu Rak, a former head of the Presidential Secretariat) was obvious. Meanwhile, the New Democratic Party (NDP), the strongest opposition party, also had a serious problem, manifested by a bitter power struggle between former president Lee Chul Seung and new president Kim Young Sam. The disunity among politicians and the lack of a unified democratic force

provided the military with a chance to participate in the politics of transition.

On December 12 of the same year, Major General Chun Doo Hwan, the head of the Army Security Command, led a coup against his superiors and arrested a number of senior officers including martial law commander, General Chung Seung Hwa on charges of being involved in President Park's murder.⁵² Even though the new military leaders promised that the primary duty of the military was not intervening in politics but defending the country, it was evident that the younger generals would play a key role in the future of South Korean politics. Later, Chun Doo Hwan moved to place his own men in key posts left vacant after he arrested 16 leading officials.⁵³ This event was significant for the leadership of General Chun in domestic politics as well as in the military. Of course, the December coup did not necessarily mean the birth of another military authoritarian regime. There was still a chance of civilian rule, although it was slimmer.

Unfortunately, however, the political situation was not getting better. Choi Kyu-hah, the prime minister under

⁵²New York Times (December 13, 1979), p. 13.

⁵³The officers installed in major posts by General Chun include as follows: Major General Roh Tae Woo as Commander of Seoul Garrison; Major General Paek S&sk Chu as Commander of the Ninth Division; Ch'a Ho Kyun as head of Korean Central Intelligence Agency; General Yu Py&ng Hy&on as Chairman of Chief Joints of Staff; General Chung Chong Hwan as Home Minister. New York Times (December 15, 1979), p. 1.

President Park, who was elected president by the rubber stamp electoral college, the National Conference of Unification, restored Kim Dae Jung's civil rights in February, 1980. Kim Dae Jung had a number of followers in the opposition groups including the NDP. Since the NDP was expected to win the forthcoming election, the intra-party conflict between the incumbent leaders of the NDP and the forces represented by Kim Dae Jung became more and more intense. Such disruption of the NDP provided time for Park's followers including General Chun to regroup, and an excuse for the military leaders to intervene in politics.

During the period of political vacuum, students began to demand that martial law be lifted and the remnants of the Yushin (Revitalizing Reform) system of the Park regime be removed. Of course, General Chun, whose fate under a new civilian regime would have been precarious, did not accede to the students' demands. Chun's hard-line policy confronted the Kwangju uprising in May. After a bloody subjugation by military force, the progress toward the new military government was not blocked. President Choi of the interim government resigned on August 16, and Chun was elected president by the National Conference of Unification. The existing National Assembly was dissolved and its functions transferred to the Legislative Council for National Security. In the end, a new Constitution was approved by 92% of

the voters in referendum in October, and the Fifth Republic was born.

5. The Birth of the Sixth Republic: From Chun to Roh (1985-1988)

In the mid-1980s, some important changes have been brewing in the internal political arena of the Fifth Republic of Korea. Kim Dae Jung returned to Korea on February 8, 1985, after almost two years' exile in the United States. The New Democratic Party (NDP), organized just before the National Assembly election of February 12, 1985, appeared as the leading opposition, unexpectedly winning 29 percent of the votes, compared to 35 percent for the ruling party, the Democratic Justice Party (DJP). Various dissident groups against the military government, such as students, laborers and the churches demanded democratization. On March 8th of the same year, the government lifted the ban enacted in 1980 by the Chun regime which prohibited political activity of many prominent opposition leaders. The so-called "Wind of Democratization" started blowing in South Korea.

At the dawn of 1987, the year South Korea made a significant move toward democracy, there was an incident that has rearranged the political landscape in South Korea. A dissident student, Park Chong Chul, was tortured to death by

police. This made thousands of angry demonstrators pour into the streets, galvanized the fragmented opposition, and put President Chun in a defensive position. On April 13, President Chun suddenly altered the nation's politics by cutting off a yearlong debate between the DJP and the NDP on how to change the constitutional process of selecting his successor when he was to step down in February 1988. This decision exacerbated serious political tensions. Anti-Government protests spread as tens of thousands of South Koreans in major cities demonstrated against the decision. After a few months of civil disorder and political crisis, on June 29, Roh Tae Woo, chairman of the ruling DJP and the party's presidential candidate chosen by President Chun, announced dramatic and unexpected concessions to the opposition's demands including that the nation's next president be elected through direct elections. President Chun approved such sweeping democratic changes a few days later. This so-called "June 29 Announcement" ended South Korea's political turmoil, at least for a while. Later in the year, the main political parties agreed on the basic outline of a new constitution; a settlement that cleared a way for the nation's first direct elections in 16 years. The constitution was endorsed overwhelmingly by the South Korean people. In December, Roh Tae Woo won the presidential election over the two opposition leaders, Kim Young Sam

and Kim Dae Jung. This was the first peaceful transfer of power in South Korea; a significant step toward a democracy.

In February of the next year, Roh Tae Woo took office as president and formed his government. However, the DJP failed to capture a majority number of seats in the Thirteenth National Assembly election held in April. The government is no longer a single dominant political power, as it had been in the past two decades. The governing party has to discuss, conciliate, and coexist with the opposition, whether it likes or not. That is, the South Korean political system is moving towards democracy.

To sum up, since the establishment of the Republic of Korea in 1948, authoritarianism has been dominant for almost four decades. During those years, there have been at least three critical moments in which South Korea could have moved toward democracy. The first chance was after the breakdown of the Rhee regime in 1960, and the second one was after the demise of the Park regime in 1979. Both chances were lost. The third one, the democratic change begun in 1987, is in progress.

Reviewing the three regime transitions in South Korea, the furtherance from one stage to another can be understood through the interplay between the ruling groups and the

opposition, composed of a series of decisions by the decision-makers of both sides. Such decisions are not unconstrained actions but reactions to the environment or to the other's actions. To understand them necessitates not only a close analysis of various factors such as socio-economic and cultural development, but also an in-depth study of political factors including who the decision-makers are, what their values and interests are, and in what kind of situation they were at the particular time. This comprises the rest of this study.

CHAPTER TWO

FUNCTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE

A. Socio-Economic Factor

Since the emergence of the military government in 1961, South Korea has developed both economically and socially. First of all, its economy has grown rapidly. [See: Table 2.1]

Table 2.1
Economic Growth Rates of South Korea: 1962-1986¹

The Sequence of 5-Year Plan of Economic Development	Average Annual Growth Rates of GNP
The First Plan Period (1962-1966)	7.8%
The Second Plan Period (1967-1971)	10.5%
The Third Plan Period (1972-1976)	11.2%
The Fourth Plan Period (1977-1981)	9.2%
The Fifth Plan Period (1982-1986)	7.5%

The amount of GNP in South Korea was \$ 2.3 billion in 1962, when the military government initiated its economic development plan, and it kept growing to \$ 156.1 billion in 1988. The GNP per capita also multiplied, from \$239 in 1962 to

¹Source: Ministry of Culture and Information, A Handbook of Korea (Seoul: Korean Overseas Information Service, 1978), p. 477; Economic Planning Board, Korea's Economy Vol.1 No.1 (April 1985); Ibid., Vol.2 No.1 (January 1986).

\$3,728 in 1988.² In short, it is beyond doubt that the South Korean economy developed during the military ruling era.

Furthermore, several negative aspects deriving from rapid economic growth such as inflation, unequal distribution of wealth, external dependence and foreign debt, were sustained at a minimum level. For example, the share of national income of the bottom 40% declined from 19.3% in 1965 to 16.1% in 1980, while the percentage for the top 20% increased from 41.8 to 45.4.³ In addition, the increase of South Korea's foreign debt coincided with the growth of the country's economy. South Korea was ranked as the fourth largest debtor of foreign loans (the total amount of foreign debt was more than \$ 40 billion) in 1985.⁴ In spite of such deficiencies, however, the distribution of the economic

²Source: Chosun Ilbo New York edition (August 16, 1988), p. 29; Kyôngjegihoe gwon, Kaebalnvôndae ôi Kyôngjichôngch'aek (Economic Policy in the Developing Era) (1982), citing from Ch'ôl Hwan Chôn and Kyông Pak, "Kyôngjekaebal kwa Chôngbujudo Kyôngje ôi Chôn'gae (Economic Development and the Evolution of the Economy Led by the Government)," in Hyôn Ch'ae Pak et al., Haebang Sasimvôn ôi Chaeinsik (Reassessment of the Forty Years After Liberation) (Seoul: Tolbegye, 1986), p. 24.

³Source: Kyôngjegihoe gwon, Kongiông Kôrae Paeksô (Fair Trade White Paper) (1984), p. 103; citing from Hae Kûn Ku, "Han'guk kwa Taeman ôi Kyôngjebaljôn e Taehan Chôngch'ihakchok Chôpkûn (Politico-Economic Approach to the Economic Development of Korea and Taiwan)," in Hyôn Ch'ae Pak et al., Han'guk Sahoe ôi Chaeinsik (Reassessment of the Korean Society) (Seoul: Hanul, 1988), p. 137.

⁴Source: Economic Planning Board, Major Statistics of the Korean Economy (1983-1985); The World Bank, World Debt Tables (Washington, D.C.: IBRD, 1985).

gains in South Korea has been widespread compared to that of another developing countries. The inflation rate has been also stabilized. For example, the average of the annual changes in prices as reflected by the implicit GNP deflator during the period of 1961-1965 was 19.3 percent, and that of 1981-1985 declined to 7.8 percent.⁵

Second, many social aspects such as urbanization, education, and mass communication have also improved. The process of urbanization has been especially remarkable.

[See: Table 2.2]

Table 2.2
Changes of Urban and Rural Population: 1946-1980⁶

Year	Percentage of Urban Population	Percentage of Rural Population	Total Number of Population
1946	14.6	85.4	19,369,270
1949	17.2	82.8	20,188,641
1955	24.5	75.4	21,526,374
1960	28.0	72.0	24,989,---
1970	41.4	58.9	31,435,---
1975	48.5	51.5	34,688,---
1980	57.2	42.8	37,449,---

⁵Source: Economic Planning Board, Major Statistics of the Korean Economy 1983, 1984, 1985.

⁶Source: Unt'ae Kim, "Han'guk Chôngch'i ūi Sanghwangjôk Chokôn kwa Yôksajok Maengnak (Environmental Conditions and Historical Pattern of Korean Politics)," in Unt'ae Kim et al., Han'guk Chôngch'iron (Theory of Korean Politics) (Seoul: Pakyoungsa, 1981), p. 59.; Frederica M. Bunge (ed.), South Korea: A Country Study (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982), p. 61.

In addition, the education level of the South Korean people became much higher. The proliferation of mass media was noticeable; there was a sharp rise in the number of newspapers and periodicals in circulation, and the number of books published. The following table shows a substantial increase in the number of radio and television receivers, and daily newspapers in circulation per 1,000 inhabitants, and indicates the expansion of mass media in South Korea.

Table 2.3
Radios, Television Receivers, and Daily Newspapers
in Circulation per 1,000 Inhabitants: 1960-1978⁷

Year	1960	1965	1970	1974	1978
Radio	32	68	124	144	402
Television	0.3	1.6	13	48	108
Newspaper	57	64	138	175	168

Such rapid development of mass media played an important role in providing the people with public information as well as in shaping the political climate.

From a functionalist perspective, such development is a factor contributing to democratic development. Since the

⁷Source: United Nations, Statistical Yearbook 1971 (N.Y.: Statistical Office of the UN, 1972), p. 808; United Nations, Statistical Yearbook 1976 (N.Y.: Statistical Office of the UN, 1977), p. 895; United Nations, Statistical Yearbook 1981 (N.Y.: Statistical Office of the UN, 1983), p. 438, 443; Kwang Yŏng Ch'u, "1960-70 Nyŏndae ūi Han'guk ūi Sahoe Pyŏndong kwa Maesŭ Midŏ (Social Change and Mass Media of South Korea in the 1960s and 1970s)," in Social Science Institute (ed.), Han'guk Sahoe ūi Pyŏndong (Social Change in Korea) (Seoul: Sungkyunkwan University Press, 1986), p. 258.

positive relationship between socio-economic development and democracy has not been confirmed yet in the case of South Korea, this study tries to authenticate the correlation through analyzing how one of the indicators of socio-economic development, urbanization, as a correlated coefficient representing other socio-economic elements, and the democratization of South Korea are related. The hypotheses that will be tested in this section are as follows: (1) The more urbanized South Korea becomes, the more voters tend to support the opposition. (2) The increasing popular support for the opposition party promotes the transition to democracy in South Korea. When the second hypothesis is validated, testing the first hypothesis leads to a conclusion: "The development of urbanization is a factor contributing to the democratization of South Korea."

1. Urbanization and its Effect on the Dynamics of Electoral Politics: "Yŏch'on Yado"

In South Korea, there is a famous phrase about the pattern of the people's partisan support: "More rural people tend to vote for the governing party, and the more urban population for the opposition" (Yŏch'on Yado). This phrase was formulated to describe the different voting behavior that has recurred in all elections in South Korea between the voters in the rural area and those in the urban area. Table 2.4, an analysis of nine National Assembly elections

Table 2.4
National Assembly Elections by Distribution of Votes
for the Opposition Candidates and Regions: 1948-1985^a

Election Date	Name of the Party	AREAS ^b			
		Highest	Second Highest	Second Lowest	Lowest
May 10, 1948	KDP	Seoul	Ch'ungbuk Kyōngbuk Kyōngnam	Kyōnggi Chōnbuk	Kangwon Cheju Ch'ungnam
May 30, 1950	DPP	Chōnnam	Ch'ungbuk	Ch'ungnam	Kangwon Cheju
May 20, 1954	DPP	Ch'ungbuk	Seoul	Chōnnam	Kangwon Ch'ungnam
May 2, 1958	DP	Seoul	Chōnbuk	Kyōngbuk	Kangwon
July 29, 1960	DP	Seoul	Ch'ungbuk Chōnbuk	Kyōnggi Kangwon Kyōngbuk	Cheju
November 26, 1963	PDP	Seoul	Kyōnggi	Ch'ungbuk	Kyōngbuk
July 8, 1967	NDP	Seoul	Pusan	Kyōngnam	Ch'ungbuk Chōnbuk Cheju
May 25, 1970	NDP	Seoul	Pusan	Kangwon	Cheju
February 12, 1985	NKDP	Seoul	Inch'ōn	Kangwon	Cheju

^aSource: Ch'ōnju Yun, Han'guk Chōngch'i Ch'egye (Korean Political System) (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1979), p. 450; Yonhap News Agency, Korea Annual 1984, p. 59.; Chosun Ilbo New York Edition (December 12, 1987), p. B2.

^bCheju=Cheju-do; Chōnnam=Chōlla-namdo; Chōnbuk=Chōlla-pukdo; Kangwon=Kangwon-do; Kyōnggi=Kyōnggi-do; Kyōngbuk=Kyōngsang-pukdo; Kyōngnam=Kyōngsang-namdo; Ch'ungbuk=Ch'ungch'ōng-pukdo; Ch'ungnam=Ch'ungch'ōng-namdo.

in South Korea, is a classification of the major South Korean provinces ordered by the ratio of votes for the opposition party candidates among the total number of votes. It shows how significant the phenomenon of the "Yŏch'on Yado" has been in South Korea. In order to understand the outcomes of the nine National Assembly elections, it is necessary to know how urbanized the areas are. The two most urbanized areas are Seoul and Pusan, and the two least urbanized areas are Cheju and Kangwon. Among the nine elections, Seoul showed the highest ratio of votes for the opposition party for seven out of nine elections, and Cheju or Kangwon were not included in the lowest ratio only once. Table 2.4 shows that the "Yŏch'on Yado" phenomenon is obvious in Korean elections.

This phenomenon occurs in the presidential elections too. The three presidential elections during Park's ruling period show the "Yŏch'on Yado," although they are not as explicit as the legislative elections. [See: Table 2.5]

The "Yŏch'on Yado" phenomenon is well-known to the people of South Korea as well as to its political scientists. It was frequently mentioned in newspapers. For example, a Korean newspaper, issued immediately after the Twelfth National Assembly election of 1985, reported as follows: " This February 12 National Assembly election showed the predominance of the Democratic Justice Party

Table 2.5
The Percentage of the Government Party Vote in
Three Presidential Elections Under Park's Rule: 1963-1971¹⁰

	1963	1967	1971
Rural county (1)	55.7	56.7	61.0
Rural county (2)	54.2	54.7	59.1
Small city	41.1	54.4	53.2
Large city	40.1	54.7	48.5
Metropolis	41.5	55.4	41.8

Rural county (1): county with no administrative unit (ûp); population of largest town less than 19,999

Rural county (2): county with at least one "ûp"; population of the largest town between 20,000 and 49,999

Small city: population between 50,000 and 199,000

Large city: population between 200,000 and 999,999

Metropolis: population more than a million

in the rural areas and that of the opposition in the urban areas such as Seoul, Pusan, Taegu, Inch'ôn, and Kwangju."¹¹ Jae-on Kim and B. C. Koh also emphasized the different partisan support between the rural and urban voters in their analysis of the relationship between social development and electoral participation:

"The most striking pattern that emerges from the analysis of available aggregate statistics is the division of partisan support along the urban-rural dimension. That is to say, the relatively modernized sector (urban areas) has tended to support the opposition party, while the more

¹⁰Source: Jae-On Kim and B. C. Koh, "The Dynamics of electoral Politics: Social Development, Political Participation, and Manipulation of Electoral Laws," Chong Lim Kim (ed.), Political Participation in Korea: Democracy, Mobilization and Stability (Santa Barbara, California: Clio Books, 1980), p. 64, 67.

¹¹Hanguk Ilbo (February 14, 1985), p. 1.

traditional sector (rural areas) has, by and large, buttressed the ruling party."¹²

In addition, "Yŏch'on Yado" reappeared in the presidential election of 1987 and in the Thirteenth National Assembly election of 1988. In big cities such as Seoul and Pusan, the ruling party was weak. For example, Roh Tae Woo, the ruling DJP candidate, got only 24.4% of the vote in Seoul and 31.6% of the vote in Pusan in the 1987 Presidential election, and the DJP gained only 10 seats in Seoul and 1 seat in Pusan in the 1988 National Assembly election compared to 32 seats in Seoul and 14 seats in Pusan for the opposition parties. In mostly rural areas such as Kangwon and Ch'ungbuk, on the contrary, the ruling party was strong. Roh Tae Woo got 57.9% of the vote in Kangwon and 45.7% of the vote in Ch'ungbuk in the 1987 presidential election, and the DJP acquired 8 seats in Kangwon and 7 seats in Ch'ungbuk out of total 14 and 9 seats in the 1988 National Assembly election.¹³

All the statistics clearly show that the phenomenon of "Yŏch'on Yado" has been a recurring pattern in South Korean elections. In other words, the first hypothesis--the more urbanized South Korea becomes, the more voters tend to support the opposition--is validated.

¹²Jae-on Kim and B. C. Koh, op. cit. pp. 66-67.

¹³Source: Chosun Ilbo New York Edition (April 28, 1988), p.1; Newsreview (December 19, 1987), p. 5.

2. The Increasing Popular Support for the Opposition Party and its Relation to Democratic Development

What does the "Yŏch'on Yado" phenomenon imply? The answer is closely connected to the testing of the second hypothesis. Consequently, the relation of the opposition's rise to democratization should be discussed. If no relation is found between the rise of the opposition and democratization, then the first hypothesis is meaningless because the link between urbanization as one of the indicators of socio-economic development and democracy is not formed. The findings of this study, however, confirm that the second hypothesis is valid. This is supported by two arguments: (1) The South Korean voters' support for the opposition reflects their desire for democracy; and (2) The rise of the opposition is functional in South Korea's movement toward democracy.

Robert Dahl argues about the development of public opposition as an aspect of democratization:

"Since the development of a political system that allows for opposition, rivalry, or competition between a government and its opponents is an important aspect of democratization, this book is necessarily about one aspect of democratization."¹⁴

¹⁴Robert A. Dahl, Pluralism: Participation and Opposition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), p. 1.

Although Dahl has not insisted upon a direct relation between democratization and the development of public opposition,¹⁵ he tends to emphasize the role of the opposition in the democratization of a political regime. For example, he explains democracy as polyarchy, determined by two dimensions: "public contestation (liberalization)" and "inclusiveness (participation)."¹⁶ Dahl uses the term "public contestation" interchangeably, not only with liberalization, but also with political competition in which the existence of political opposition with substantial power is essential.¹⁷ The freedom of government opposition was an important element in our definition of democracy, and the foregoing discussion demonstrates the correlation between the development of the opposition and the democratization of a society.

However, the second hypothesis cannot be proven by such an a priori argument. Accordingly it is necessary to examine how the people's support for the opposition does indicate their desire for democracy in South Korea. Under the Park regime, the platform of the ruling Democratic Republican Party (Minjukonghwa-tang) was "political stabili-

¹⁵For example, he says as follows: "But the two processes--democratization and the development of public opposition--are not, in my view, identical." Ibid., p. 1.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁷"--in this case the 'degree of opportunity for public contestation' or political opposition--" Ibid., p. 235.

ty" and "economic progress." In contrast, the opposition New Democratic Party (Sinmin-tang) has consistently advocated democratization as the party's principle. The conflicting party platforms between the ruling party and the opposition also existed under the Chun regime. For example, the Third National Convention of the Democratic Justice Party was held on March 27, 1985, in the Chamsil Gymnasium of Seoul. In the convention, "Change and Development with Stability" was primarily emphasized.¹⁸ On the contrary, the new-born opposition party, the New Korean Democratic Party (Sinhanminju-tang), which appeared in the National Assembly election of 1985 as the strongest opposition party, adopted "Democratization (Minjuhwa)" as the first platform of the party. This was declared by the party's president, Lee Min Woo.¹⁹ Interviews with Roh Tae Woo, the DJP's chairman at the time, and Lee Min Woo, the New Korean Democratic Party's president, by the Kwanhun Club (an association of senior journalists) manifest the distinction between the political principles of the ruling DJP and the opposition very well.²⁰

¹⁸One of the largest circulating newspapers in South Korea described the scene as follows: "In the wave of pickets and outcry of slogans, the party convention began. As the party's interpretation of the February 12 election of 1985, 'Change and Development with Stability' was emphasized as the party's task for the future." Hanguk Ilbo (March 29, 1985), p. 3.

¹⁹Hanguk Ilbo (February 15, 1985), p. 2.

²⁰Hanguk Ilbo (April 10, 1985), p. 3; (April 15, 1985), p. 3.

The difference is clear. The DJP's platform was represented by "stability," and the opposition, not only the New Korean Democratic Party but also all the other opposition parties under different names, was advocating "democratization." In the National Assembly election in February 1985, the New Korean Democratic Party's pledge of democratization attracted the support of the South Korean people who were aspiring for more freedom and democracy. This finally resulted in the party's successful electoral outcome, and it became the major opposition party.

The rise of the opposition's power was certainly a factor promoting the development of democracy in South Korea. The opposition party was functional in checking and balancing Chun's authoritarian rule after the 1985 election. In the regime transition in 1987-1988 from Chun to Roh, the opposition's existence as an alternative played an important role in the ruling bloc's concessions to the people's demand for democracy (e.g., Roh's 8-point liberalization program announced on June 29, 1987). This indicates that the second hypothesis, that the rise of the democratic opposition is a factor facilitating democratization, is valid in the case of South Korea.

To sum up, the two hypothetical statements in the beginning of this section became proven hypotheses which lead to the conclusion that the socio-economic development of South Korea contributed to its movement toward democracy.

B. Political Culture

Political culture in South Korea is becoming democratic, and yet there remain many undemocratic attributes inherited from the country's authoritarian tradition. The first question to be asked in this section is what the characteristics of South Korea's political culture are. First of all, there are some democratic aspects in the Korean culture, in spite of its authoritarian Confucian elements. Such aspects can be found by an in-depth study of the Korean tradition. Even among the neo-Confucian scholars, Cho Kwangjo argued: "Heaven and man are the same.....Sovereign and the people are the same."²¹ This is the philosophy of "all men are the same." The philosophy, closely related to the concept of popular sovereignty, was developed by Cho (1482-1519) almost five hundred years ago. In addition, the concept of sovereignty has evolved in Korea, although it has developed differently from Western society where the notion developed gradually from state to popular sovereignty. In Korea, both concepts of state and popular sovereignty, have existed and

²¹Kwangjo Cho, Chôngam Sônsaeng Munip (A Collection of Chôngam [Cho Kwangjo]'s Works) Vol. 7; citing from Un T'ae Kim and Ch'angkyu Choe, "Han'guk Chôngch'i Munhwa ūi Chôn-t'ongjŏk T'ŭksŏng (Traditional Characteristics of the Korean Political Culture), " in Unt'ae Kim et al., op. cit., p. 146.

developed concurrently. On one hand, analyzing the essential rules of neo-Confucianism, such as the obligation of the ruled to be loyal to the ruler, which prevailed during the period of the Yi Dynasty (1392-1910), the concept of state sovereignty was dominant in the traditional Korean society. On the other hand, the notion of popular sovereignty has also existed. A good example is "Tonghak"--a national philosophy of Korea which synthesized Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. "Tonghak" was popular in the later period of the Yi Dynasty. The essence of the philosophy was "Men and Heaven are the same (Innaechon)." It also connotes that the people and their livelihood, not the king, are the foremost value on earth.

Second, more importantly, the concept of culture itself is not static but dynamic. That is, culture changes. For example, Almond and Powell defined political culture as a set of attitudes, beliefs, and feelings about politics current in a nation "at a given time."²² Cultural consideration of democracy, therefore, is concerned with the country's political culture at that time. Thus, changes in the South Korean people's belief system, as a political socialization process that has been going on for many years, reshaped the country's political culture. Since political culture helps form political orientations and the pattern of

²²Gabriel Almond and Bingham Powell, Comparative Politics (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1978), p. 25.

political predispositions, and to the same degree, political socialization forms the political culture, political culture and political socialization are inseparable. Therefore, by examining the process of political socialization and the changes in the Korean people's political attitudes, cultural aspects facilitating or hindering democratization of South Korea can be found.

1. Democratic Development of Political Culture

In order to investigate changes in the South Korean citizen's consciousness regarding democracy, a comparative analysis of the people's attitudes in different periods is very useful. Here let us use the different results of the 1967 and the 1971 public opinion polls. The outcome of the survey in 1967 is shown in Table 2.6 [See: Table 2.6]. The result of the 1971 survey shows that South Koreans put much more value on freedom in 1971 than they did in 1967. [See: Table 2.7]

Table 2.6
Democratic Attitudes of South Koreans--Survey in 1967²³

Questionnaire: Some say that individual freedom can be sacrificed for the purpose of rapid economic development. What do you think about this statement?	
Answer	% of the total number (1,515)
A full support	8.71
A moderate support	32.94
A little support	18.09
A little objection	8.19
A moderate objection	8.58
A full objection	22.51
No answer	0.99

²³Sûng Chik Hong, "Kyôngjebaljôn kwa Sahoeûisik (Economic Development and Social Consciousness)," Han'guk ûi chông-ch'ibaliôn kwa Kyôngjebaliôn (Political Development and Economic Development in Korea) Seminar Series Vol.3 No.1 (Seoul: Asian Research Institute for Public Policy, 1977), p. 41.

Table 2.7
Democratic Attitudes of South Koreans
--Survey in 1971²⁴

Questionnaire: Kap says that the speed of the economic development should not be slowed down even though democracy and freedom might be sacrificed. Ul says that democracy and freedom should not be sacrificed even though the speed of economic development might be slowed down. Which side will you take?	
Answer	Percentage of the total
Kap is correct entirely	16
Kap is correct by and large	21
No opinion/neutral	9
Ul is correct by and large	20
Ul is correct entirely	34

²⁴Yŏng Ho Yi, Han'gugin ūi Kach'ikwan (The Koreans' View of Value) (Seoul: Iljisa, 1975), p. 34.

The difference between the two surveys is clear. The result of the 1967 survey shows 39.28% for the dissenting party and 59.74% for the consenting party to the questionnaire. The 1971 survey shows that 54% supported Ul's statement (they can be equivalent to the dissenting party of the former survey); and that 37% of the total number supported Kap's opinion (they can be regarded as equivalent to the consenting party of the former survey). This indicates there was a change in the people's political consciousness regarding the desire for democracy. The latter survey shows an increase of almost 15% in the people's support of democracy. Meanwhile, some might suspect the validity of the interpretation because the two surveys did not directly question the people's desire for democracy but gave alternative choices of freedom and economic development. Considering that economic development was the major source of the legitimacy of the military government of Park Chung Hee, the questionnaire should be considered as significant in scrutinizing the people's aspiration for democracy.

Other surveys also indicate that the citizen's political behavior is becoming more democratic. First of all, the South Korean people have become more politically concerned. Three independently conducted surveys at different times on the same question demonstrate this. [See: Table 2.8]

Table 2.8
Concern with Politics among the South Korean Public:
1963-1985²⁵

Questionnaire: Do you discuss politics customarily?	
	Yes
1963 Survey	30.8%
1978 Survey	39.9%
1985 Survey	61.1%

In addition, the South Koreans became more rational in choosing their representatives. As shown in Table 2.9, for

Table 2.9
Democratic Changes in Voting Behavior: 1960-1985²⁶

Questionnaire: What is the determining factor in your vote, personal quality, party, or policy agenda?			
	Person	Party	Policy
1960 Survey	68.8%	5.9%	1.0%
1963 Survey	65.9%	10.4%	6.7%
1978 Survey	55.0%	2.5%	14.7%
1985 Survey	46.4%	22.1%	22.3%

²⁵Source: For the 1963 Survey, Ch'ôn Chu Yun, Han'guk Chôngch'ï Ch'egye (Korean Political System) (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1978), p. 375; For the 1978 survey, Sûng Hûm Kil, "Han'gugin ïi Chôngch'ïûisik Kujo Pyônghwa (Changes in the Political Consciousness of Koreans)," Han'guk Chôngch'ï Hakhoebo (Journal of Korean Political Science Association) 14 (1980), p. 95; For the 1985 survey, Sûng Hûm Kil, et al., Han'guk Sôn'gâron (Theory of Korean Elections) (Seoul: Tasan Pub. Co., 1987), p. 213.

²⁶Ibid., p. 218.

example, the percentage of the South Korean people who place more value on the candidate's policy agenda increased significantly, from 1% in 1960 to 22% in 1985, while the importance of personal preference in the South Korean people's voting behavior showed a slight decline.

To sum up, as shown in the comparison of the two public-opinion polls on one of the most important values of democracy, freedom, and also in the two other surveys on their political attitudes, the South Korean people became more politically conscious and more amenable to democratic values. Considering that political culture consists of the people's knowledge of the political system which circumscribes their political behavior and their political values, such changes among the citizens signifies the development of a more democratic political culture in South Korea.

2. Authoritarian Political Culture in South Korea

The characteristics of South Korean political culture have been usually described as authoritarian and submissive. Many Koreans, as well as foreign scholars, took a pessimistic view of Korean political culture and the Korean people's

consciousness.²⁷ For example, Nam Young Lee describes it as follows:

"Anti-democratic and authoritarian values, inherited from the country's Confucian past, considerably influenced the political attitudes and behavior of a majority of Koreans. As long as the Confucian system of values and beliefs remains strong, the Korean political culture is not likely to change."²⁸

In the analysis of Korean culture, at least two things have been commonly accentuated. One is a religious element, and the other is its historical legacies. In the Korean peninsula, shamanism was one of the earliest forms of religion. From the fourth century on, Buddhism dominated the country. From the fourteenth century on, neo-Confucianism prevailed.²⁹ The mix of the above three religions constituted the religious foundation of Korea. Neo-Con-

²⁷Hahm surveyed various theories which have attempted to explain Korean politics in general terms, and described as follows: "Another assumption is that whatever is wrong with Korean politics at present is due to bad influences from the past. A part of this assumption is the admission that democracy is not functioning very effectively at present in Korea. In other words, the assumption is that, if Korea had a 'good' political tradition, it would be enjoying effective democracy right now. Thus, all the theories unanimously agree in their negative evaluation of the Korean political tradition and its contribution to the present situation." Pyong-choon Hahm, "Toward A New Theory of Korean Politics: A Reexamination of Traditional Factors," in Edward Reynolds Wright (ed.), Korean Politics in Transition (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975), p. 329.

²⁸Nam Young Lee, "The Structure of Democratic Belief System: An Analysis of Political Culture in Korea," Korea and World Affairs Vol.7 No.4 (Winter 1983), pp. 653-654.

²⁹Gregory Henderson, Korea: The Politics of the Vortex (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 19.

fucianism, especially, had a great influence not only on the ethics of Koreans but also on their social and political settings because neo-Confucianism was adopted by Yi Sŏnggye, the founder of the Yi Dynasty, not only as a state religion but also as the general principles of the ruling system.³⁰ Confucianism is also closely related to an authoritarian and hierarchical family system.

Second, the legacy of the Japanese rule during the period of 1910-1945, with its authoritarian bureaucratic system, still remains, only in a different form, in the South Korean society as a factor impeding the development of democratic political culture. This corresponds to the "overdeveloped" state apparatus as an obstacle in the way of a post-colonial society developing a democracy, which is discussed by Hamza Alavi.³¹ Korea's history of adversity

³⁰The philosophy of Confucianism was well expressed in the Four Books of Ancient China (the Analects of Confucius, the Works of Mencius, the Doctrine of the Mean, and the Great Learning) and the Three Classics (the Book of Odes, the Canon of History, and the Book of Changes). The basic principles of Confucianism are represented by the "three bonds and the five moral rules in human relations (Sangang Oryun)," which consistently influenced the life of Koreans as well as their political philosophy. The five moral rules in human relations, the Confucian philosophy in a simple form, are as follows: (1) There should be affection between father and son. (2) There should be distinction between husband and wife. (3) There should be loyalty between sovereign and subject. (4) The younger should give precedence to the elder. (5) There should be faith between friends.

³¹Hamza Alavi, "The State in Post-Colonial Societies: Pakistan and Bangladesh," in Harry Goulbourne (ed.), Politics and State in the Third World (London: Macmillan Press, 1979), pp. 40-43.

handed down many legacies. Throughout its history, Korea has been invaded by its neighbors many times. In particular, Japan's occupation of Korea introduced various destructive practices, mainly caused by the Japanese attempt to colonize not only the territory but also the Korean people's consciousness. The Japanese colonizers enforced their policies by renaming Korean names to Japanese names, by worshipping the Japanese imperial household, and by prohibiting the use of the Korean language by all Koreans under Japanese colonial rule. By employing such ruthless policies, the Japanese tried to subordinate the Korean people's consciousness to theirs. In inflicting such policies on Koreans, various authoritarian methods in administering the government such as the so-called "Kwalyo Sungsang (Admiration for the government officials)" penetrated into Korean society. Even after Korea's independence from Japan, Japanese authoritarian legacies persisted, and functioned negatively in transforming the Korean people's political culture.

a. Indigenous Reform Aborted by Foreign Intervention

Since the Kabo Reform of 1894, the traditional society has dissolved; though its value system has eroded, its remnants still exist. Among these remnants, the authorita-

rian characteristics of Korean culture have been a major concern of many scholars. For example, Kibyôk Ch'a discussed authoritarian traditions of Korean culture and their relation to authoritarian political regime as follows:

"The emergence of an authoritarian political system in Korea is closely related to the authoritarian tradition of Korean political culture. Unlike the Western political culture in which the sovereignty of the state was dependent on the civil society or citizens themselves, the Korean cultural tradition made the people subject to the state...It is true that the authoritarian political culture of Korea is one of the most important reasons why an authoritarian political regime could make its appearance after the Korean liberation of 1945. Without an understanding of authoritarian characteristics of Korean culture, we will never grasp the real situation of authoritarian regimes in Korea."³²

Contrastingly, however, Japan, in which the authoritarian Confucian system has been dominant, has maintained its democratic political system since its introduction, although it was a democratic system with severe limitations upon the opposition. Why is Confucianism a problem in Korea? One way to answer the question is the absence of revolution in the modern history of Korea, as Barrington Moore suggested in his Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy. Compared to Japan's success in the Meiji Reformation, Korea's 1894 Reform had failed. One of the reasons for the failure was that the reform was not carried out by the Korean people, but imposed by a foreign power, Japan.

³²Kibyôk Ch'a, Han'guk Minjokchuûi ûi Inyôm kwa Silt'ae (Theory and Practice of Korean Nationalism) (Seoul: Kachi, 1979), pp. 135-136.

In the late 19th century, the Confucian "yangban" ruling system showed signs of decline. The inefficiency and corruption of the government was at its height so that the people could not tolerate any more. To make things worse, the economic invasion of Japan increased the impoverished conditions of rural areas. Finally, the internal and external tensions gave rise to an indigenous social and religious movement: "Tonghak Rebellion." "Tonghak" was anti-Establishment, which was a neo-Confucian social and political order, as well as anti-foreign. For example, the reforming programs of "Tonghak" were well described in their "Twelve Points." These are characterized as follows: (1) movement toward modernity, for example, abolition of the class structure such as slavery, and land reforms; (2) anti-Japanese; and (3) democratic in terms of demanding basic civil rights.³³ The philosophy of the "Tonghak Rebellion" is also represented by their catchphrase "Promote the national interests and provide for the welfare of the people (Poguk Anmin)." Although the movement was suppressed by authorities because of its reformist thrust, "Tonghak" gained popular support, mainly from the socially oppressed, impoverished peasants, and from some discontented scholars. The movement is regarded as the most important opportunity

³³For example, the final paragraph of the "Tonghak Manifesto" begins with a sentence as follows: "Sovereignty rests with the people. When the sovereignty weakens, the State decays." Kibaek Yi, Han'guksa Sillon (History of Korea) (Seoul: Ilchokak, 1968), p. 317.

to eliminate the social, economic, political, and cultural abuses of the existing government under a dynastic rule through the voluntary will of the people.

Unfortunately, however, it failed. China dispatched troops to aid in the repression of the rebellion, and Japanese forces also intervened. This was the spark that ignited the Sino-Japanese War. After the war, the victorious Japanese established their hegemony over Korea and dictated to the Korean government a wide-ranging series of reforms, the so-called "Kabo Reform" in 1894. These reforms were obviously intended to promote the economic and political modernization of Korea, as well as its social and cultural reformation. However, they lacked the most important element for their success; the zeal of the people. The reforms were not supported by the general public because they were not introduced at the people's initiative, but rather by the enforcement of Japan. The Korean people regarded such reform as an oppression by the Japanese, not as an advance, even though most programs of the reform included the demands of the "Tonghak." In order to preserve themselves from Japanese domination, the Korean people tried to keep their old rules rather than accepting the Japanese imposition of new rules. Therefore, this monumental attempt to modernize Korea came to naught. In this way, nothing came of the chance to renew the people's consciousness which was still entrapped in the backwardness of neo-Confucianism,

and included the internalization of an authoritarian political culture.

b. Authoritarian and Hierarchical Family System

Some scholars have pointed out that the family might have lasting influence on some aspects of political attitudes.³⁴ In the theory of political socialization, the family is an agent of political socialization. Children's attitudes tend to resemble those of a parent. Namely, when the family system is authoritarian and hierarchical, the children raised under such conditions are likely to be also authoritarian or subjective, compared to those who grew up with more active participation in family government.

Family relationships in Korea have been governed by Confucian principles, especially, by the first and second rules of the "five moral rules in human relations" which call for closeness between father and sons, and separation between husband and wife. The father was the ultimate source of authority. He was supposed to control all members of the family, and children were supposed to be obedient to their father. Filial piety was a virtue. Parents arrange

³⁴e.g.: Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, Civic Culture (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965), pp. 267-268; Gabriel Almond and Bingham Powell, Comparative Politics (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1978), pp. 87-90; Kent Jennings and Richard Niemi, The Political Character of Adolescence (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), chapter 6.

marriages, and they plan their children's careers. This provided the basis of patriarchal society. Seniority in the generational rankings on the family tree determined hierarchical positions of two men who belonged to the same lineage. The relationship between the members of a kin group was regulated to a large extent by both traditionally derived customs and Confucian principles of morality.³⁵ It is useful to analyze the "five moral rules in human relations" more carefully in order to find out why Confucianism is closely related to the hierarchical family system and authoritarian political culture. For example, the fourth of these rules, that the younger should give precedence to the elder, shows the hierarchical human relations by seniority. The second rule, that there should be loyalty between sovereign and subject, symbolizes distinctions between the ruler and the ruled. This is against the first component of democracy, popular sovereignty. The legacy of such traditions constitutes the "subject" political culture, one of the major three types in Almond and Verba's threefold classification of political cultures.³⁶

Parental authority and political attitudes are interrelated. [See: Figure 2.1]

³⁵Bae-ho Hahn, "The Authority Structure of Korean Politics," Edward Reynolds Wright (ed.), Korean Politics in Transition (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975), p. 292.

³⁶Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, op. cit., pp. 16-18.

Figure 2.1

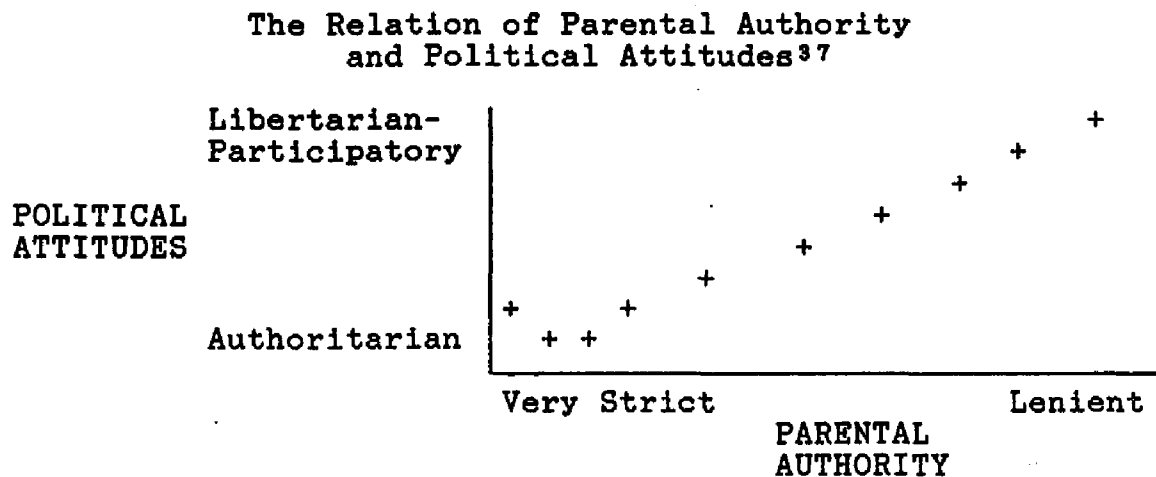


Figure 2.1 indicates that children raised under strict parental authority tend to develop authoritarian political attitudes. Meanwhile, South Korean families have maintained a very strict parental authority system. The philosophy of "loyalty and filial piety" became an official national principle of education during the period of the Park regime. Love for one's own land and for one's parents are theoretically good traits. In practice, however, they often functioned in Korea as guardians of the traditional authoritarian family system.

Nowadays, Korean political culture is often characterized as a "participant subject." That is to say that there still remain subject attitudes among Koreans towards governmental authority. The authoritarian and hierarchical

³⁷Jong Oh Ra, "The Impact of Religion on Political Socialization," Korea and World Affairs Vol.4 No.3 (Fall 1980), p. 481.

system of the Korean family, for which Confucianism is largely responsible, has contributed to such attitudes.

c. Submissive Attitudes of the People toward the Government

Korean society during the period of Yi Dynasty was organized into three social classes: (1) the ruling class known as the "yangban," which consisted of those who are at the top of the social hierarchy, such as noblemen and bureaucrats; (2) the common people known as the "sangmin," to which the majority of the peasants belong; and (3) the low-born class known as the "chônmin," the lowest of all social groups which comprises state and private servants, boatmen, farm serfs, and butchers.³⁸

In the Yi Dynasty, the word "yangban" was used to denote the two ranks of officials, civil on one side, military on the other. The "yangban" were the officials, and descendants of high-ranking officials, who formed a landed aristocracy. The class theoretically contained within its boundary the officer-level bureaucracy. The class distinctions of the Yi Dynasty were mainly affected by neo-Confucian doctrines. Confucianism was adopted by the

³⁸The social classes of the Yi Dynasty also can be divided into four groups as follows: (1) the "yangban," the ruling class; (2) the "chungin," a small middle class, consisted of professionals hired at the lower levels of government; (3) the "sangmin," the common people; and (4) the "chônmin," the low-born class. Gregory Henderson, op. cit., p. 36.

élites of Yi Dynasty as a convenient device to achieve their ultimate goals such as consolidating a dynastic rule, and winning the support of the reform-minded young Confucian scholars who had been critical of the Buddhist-dominated Koryŏ Dynasty which had been overthrown by a military coup. Thus, since the birth of the Yi Dynasty, the ruling group made great efforts to spread neo-Confucian doctrines by making Confucianism a state religion. They were evidently successful in unifying the people in the beginning of the Yi Dynasty. The new ideology of Confucianism penetrated into Korean society throughout the period of the dynasty (1392-1910). The social hierarchical system governed by the precepts of Confucianism has dominated Korean society since then.

Among many negative aspects of such a hierarchical society, the so-called "admiration for the government officials" (Kwalyo Sungsang) was important. The traditional custom of putting government or its officials above the people has been often mentioned by historians and social scientists. The most popular term for the custom is the so-called "respect for the officials and disrespect for the people" (Kwanjon Minbi). Even these days, abuse of the "Kwanjon Minbi" obviously exists. The abuses can be divided into two aspects. One is "from below to above" and the other is "from above to below." The former refers to the subjective attitudes of the people towards bureaucrats, and

affects the voting behavior of the citizens. In the rural area, where such subjective attitudes still remain to a larger extent than in the urban areas, the voters are easily affected by the interference of bureaucrats in elections. The latter aspect refers to the authoritarian attitude of bureaucrats towards the people. Often the bureaucrats of South Korea behave not as civil "servants" but as a "privileged" group. Such abuse is common even among low-ranking public employees.³⁹ In short, the "Kwanjon Minbi" is a "double-sided evil." The problem is that such undemocratic attitudes still exist.

This study has so far analyzed such major functional requirements for democracy as socio-economic and cultural development, and their role in the democratic movement in South Korea. On one hand, those factors have been functional in promoting democracy. As the economy developed, the society became more differentiated, specialized, and univer-

³⁹It has been one of the important sources of the people's dissatisfaction with the government. Such abuse has been frequently criticized by journalists as well as by the citizens. For example, an editorial staff member of Hanguk Ilbo, Tuhûm Cho, in his column, gave several examples of the abuse and concluded: "When will the 'respect for the officials and disrespect for the people (Kwanjon Minbi)' disappear? Who on earth will pay careful attention to the voice of the powerless people?" Hanguk Ilbo (April 1, 1985), p. 5.

salized, and the citizens became more informed, more concerned politically, and more rational. This indirectly facilitated the democratic development of South Korea. On the other hand, economic growth also generated many negative aspects. One of these is a close tie between the business élites and the government. Economic growth affected the democratization of South Korea negatively by providing a stronger basis for the authoritarian government. In addition, although the South Korean political culture has developed in a more democratic way, it still contains many authoritarian elements, such as a hierarchical family system, and political orientations subject to the government. That is, the socio-economic and cultural factors neither totally promote nor completely impede the democratization process in South Korea.

As has been stated above, the functional explanations of democracy are insufficient to prove completely any cause-and-effect relation between the functional prerequisites and democratic development or to provide a dynamic perspective on the transition to democracy. This necessitates the examination of various political factors such as political actors and their roles, and of the dynamic aspects of the actual processes in the transition to democracy.

CHAPTER THREE

POLITICAL ACTORS

As its history demonstrates, South Korean politics can be appropriately defined as "crisis politics." All regime transitions were made under crisis circumstances. Conflict between authoritarian ruling élites and the opposition groups brought critical moments in the country's political development. Coping with such crises, dictatorial military regimes came into being in 1961 and 1980, and a more liberalized form of government was born in 1988. The question of why the outcomes of the first two crises and of the last one were different is significant for understanding the causal factors of the transition to democracy in South Korea. The answer can be obtained by examining the constituents of both the ruling bloc and the opposition force. In addition to the South Korean national leaders, the ruling bloc consists of the military, the bureaucracy and the business elites. The opposition force is made up of students, laborers, the churches, and the opposition parties. Acting as a go-between for both sides, the middle class plays its common role of stabilizer, although it sometimes acts as a central force for political changes.

A. The Ruling Bloc

1. The Leaders

Among many elements that have determined South Korean politics since its establishment in 1948, one of the most significant factors was the political leadership of Rhee Syngman, Park Chung Hee, Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo. Especially under an authoritarian system, the leaders, as a single most important determinant, played a dominant role in shaping the political landscape of South Korea. The former dictators exercised their absolute power in virtually all aspects of the state apparatus. Thus, it is worthwhile to consider the leadership factor and to look at their family and social backgrounds, their personal characteristics and career histories, and their role in the democratic or nondemocratic features of the government.

a. Rhee Syngman

Rhee Syngman struggled for Korea's national independence during the Japanese rule of Korea. After liberation in 1945, he became the first president of South Korea and dominated the initial stage of South Korean politics with his authoritarian rule. The legacies of his dictatorship

include many negative features: (1) authoritarian practices; (2) lack of endeavor in clearing away the abuses of 36 years of Japanese rule and failure to chastise those who condoned the Japanese imperialism, mainly because of Rhee's need of them as his own power resources; (3) political repression; and (4) corruption. These characteristics of the Rhee regime had a demoralizing influence upon future South Korean politics and even became a long-term cause of the birth of authoritarian military rule in South Korea after his ouster.

Rhee Syngman was born on March 26, 1875, at P'yongsan-kun, Hwanghae-do, an only son. His family was a fallen nobility, "yangban." When he was three years old, his family moved to the outskirts of Seoul. He went to a village schoolhouse and learned Chinese literature, which constituted the greater part of the curriculum in the Korean education system at that time. From the age of thirteen, he took the state examination for selecting civil servants every year, an occupation most respected at that time and a vehicle to the upper class; he failed his examination every time. When he was nineteen, he gave up the exam and entered the Paejae School which had been founded by an American missionary. After graduation, he became an editor of the Daily News and wrote many reform-oriented articles. Involved in the Independence Association, led by Sô Chae P'il, he was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1898 and served in prison for seven years. In 1904, he went to the

United States to appeal to President Theodore Roosevelt, against the Japanese scheme of annexing Korea. After his appeal failed, he decided to stay in the U.S. and study. He received a B.A. from George Washington University in 1907, an M.A. from Harvard in 1908, and the Ph.D. from Princeton in 1910, the year Korea was officially annexed to Japan. Later, he went to Hawaii where he joined in the independence movement. In 1919, he became the first president of the Korean provisional government in exile in Shanghai. Later, he returned to Hawaii and continued his independence movement until 1945, when Korea was liberated from the Japanese occupation, primarily by contacting politicians, journalists, and diplomats, and by explaining the desirability of Korean independence from Japan. After returning to Korea, Rhee Syngman assembled his party. Ironically, many pro-Japanese élites participated. He was elected president of Korea in 1948. From then on, he remained an autocrat until his regime was overthrown by the popular movement in 1960. He was exiled to the United States and lived in Hawaii until his death in 1966.

Rhee's mother was the strongest influence in his childhood. She was a very affectionate person and Rhee was her pride and love. Rhee seems to have kept his mother's affection in his mind for a lifetime. Sometimes, for Rhee, the country was identified with his mother. His unsurpassed aspiration for national independence can be also explained

by his longing to go back to the country where the memories of home and his mother were.¹ Rhee's unofficial diplomatic activities in the United States contributed not only to the making of American friends, but also to developing his ability to express himself and to persuade the people. He was well-known as an excellent public speaker.² Later, this ability facilitated his advancement in political competition against his opponent, Kim Ku, who was never eloquent. Rhee is also known to have been a dogmatist. He believed that he was always right and never acknowledged himself to be in the wrong.³ This aspect of his character was demonstrated in his selection of the government élites. He recruited them not for their competence but for their loyalty to him. Later in his ruling period, he was surrounded only by sycophants, who always emphasized only the positive aspects of his rule, so Rhee Syngman was kept unaware of the people's discontent with his government until the so-called April 19 Student Uprising ousted him.

In brief, Rhee's personality can be described as both tenacious and self-righteous. Such characteristics were

¹Rhee Syngman's personality and its relation to his life history through "identity symbol" are well described in Sung Cho Han, "Han'guk Chôngch'i ūi Yôngdoja (Korean Political Leaders)," in Unt'ae Kim et al., Han'guk Chôngch'iron (Theory of Korean Politics) (Seoul: Pakyungsa, 1981), pp. 507-509.

²Robert T. Oliver, Syngman Rhee: The Man Behind the Myth (New York: Dodd Mead and Co., 1954), p. 3.

³Ibid., pp. 517-519.

formed through his childhood and various life experiences. Some aspects of his personality functioned aids in his rise to power. After seizing power, however, these aspects also facilitated the induction and preservation of an authoritarian rule. Simply, any opposition was repressed because of his self-righteousness. In addition, such traits obstructed his chances of hearing some good, but often unpleasant, advice. Finally, his over-confidence prevented him from acknowledging any massive protest against his rule and applying precautionary measures. His personal traits are in many ways responsible both for his dictatorship and for its end.

b. Park Chung Hee

Park Chung Hee became a national leader after a military coup on May 16, 1961. He was a reformer during the early period of his rule, then became a dictator until he was shot to death by his own subordinate in 1979. The remnants of his authoritarian military dictatorship include: (1) inveterate practices of political repression and maneuvering behind the scenes; (2) collusion of government and business elites; (3) proliferation of military attributes such as command-comply relationship in the social structure, including schools (i.e., between teacher and students), and business organizations (i.e., between

employer and employees); and (4) anti-politics. Park's military background was responsible for these undemocratic aspects of his rule. In short, the military regime was based not on the people's acceptance of it but on the primitive source of power, coercion.

Park Chung Hee was born on November 14, 1917, at Sangmo-ri, Kumi-myon, Sönsan-kun, Southern Kyöngsang province. He was the seventh and last child of a poor farmer. He entered Kumi Public School in 1926. He was at the top of the class for six years of elementary education, except for the fourth year when he was second, and had shown leadership as the head of his class. In 1932 he entered a normal school in Taegu. He was not only a good student but also active in sports such as kendo. In school years, he was an introspective person hardly displaying his emotions. After graduation in 1937, he became an elementary school teacher in Munkyoŋg. Later, he went into Manchuria Military School, graduated first in the list, and finished a one-year program of the Japanese Military Academy in 1944. In July, he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the army and participated in a number of military operations sweeping communist guerrillas. After the end of Japanese occupation, he joined and graduated from the Korean Military Academy as one of the second graduating class. In 1946, he became an instructor of the Korean Military Academy and had an opportunity to be acquainted with the Eighth graduating class,

some of whom later became the nucleus of the 1961 military coup. During his military career, he was well known as a well-disciplined, incorruptible, and able officer. He served as an artillery commander in 1953, an artillery school's superintendent in 1954, the Seventh Division commander in 1957, the chief of staff in the First Army in 1958, the Sixth Military District commander in 1959, and a Munitions base commander in 1960.⁴

In 1960, Park was one of the military officers who resisted the orders from his superiors to take part in rigging the March 15 presidential election.⁵ His scrupulous behavior made him popular among young army officers. When a purge campaign against corrupted officers became a hotter issue in the military, especially after the Rhee government was overthrown, Park became the leader of a group of young army officers who supported the purge. However, the purification movement in the army, "Chôngkun," was abortive, mainly because of the unwillingness of top-level officers. Since then, the reformative young officers realized the need of a more fundamental change within the military. With such

⁴Chong Sin Kim, President Park Chung Hee: A Biography (Seoul: Han-lim Publishing Co., 1979); Mok Ku Chông, Park Chung Hee: A Biography (Seoul: Kyoyook Pyonglonsa, 1966); Kwang Mo Chông, Ch'ôngwatae (Blue House) (Seoul: Omunkak, 1967).

⁵Seung Cho Han, op. cit., p. 547; Chae Chun Kim, "5.16 Hyôngmyôngsa nûn Tasi Ssûyôjyôyahanda (The History of the May 16 Revolution Must Be Rewritten)," Shin Dong-a (October 1983), p. 215.

unstable circumstances in the military as well as in civil society, Park, who had been concealing his intention for at least a few years and waiting for the right moment, led a military coup on May 16, 1961 and seized political power later.

He is a taciturn and ambitious man. These characteristics, which apparently helped the success of the military coup in which a well-planned and unexpected attack on the government was essential, seem to have been formed in his childhood. The young Park Chung Hee was very much influenced by his father, a very stubborn and stouthearted person.⁶ Such characteristics served as a model for Park Chung Hee and helped develop his resolute character. His reticence and imperturbability were well known among his classmates.⁷ He was a man of deeds and not of words. These characteristics explain well the success of the 1961 military coup d'état in which conspiracy and intrepidity were crucial. On the other hand, however, the authoritarian aspects of his nature, such as his stern position against the opposition groups and his use of harsh means of repression, indirectly induced the overthrow of his regime. In other words, those personality traits that brought him to power ultimately were

⁶Chong Sin Kim, op. cit., pp. 42-47.

⁷Tong Sŏng Pak and Ko Ryung Sim (eds.), Yŏmyŏng ŭi Kisu (Forerunner of Dawn) (Seoul: Kyoyook Munhwasa, 1964), pp. 45-49.

his undoing, and in the rise and fall of the Park regime, his personality played an important role.

c. Chun Doo Hwan

Chun Doo Hwan was a soldier, a loyal supporter of the Park regime, and an authoritarian ruler. His rise to power itself was filled with such immoral acts as attacking his own superiors and subjugating the civilians by force (e.g., the Kwangju Insurrection). Later, many incidents such as financial scandals (e.g., Chang Young Ja scandal) tarnished his seven-year presidency until 1988 when he stepped down.

Chun Doo Hwan was born on January 4, 1932, at Hapch'ôn, Southern Kyôngsang province. In his childhood, he gave in to no one, not even his own elder brother, Ki Hwan.⁸ His family was so indigent that his parents could barely send Doo Hwan to an elementary school. Despite these difficulties, he graduated from Hido Elementary School in 1947 and entered Taegu Technical Middle School in the city of Taegu. In 1952, he entered the Korean Military Academy, where he met colleagues such as Roh Tae Woo. That was also the year

⁸Such "never-lose" character of Doo Hwan's known to his brother and uncle was described as follows: "Uncle, Sanghi, also knew Doo Hwan's personality very well. Doo Hwan had a temperament that never gives in....[Ki Hwan (Doo Hwan's elder brother)] knew that his brother would not stop until he surrenders, so he pretended to fall down." Kûm Sông Ch'ôn, Hwanggang esô Pûgak kkaji (From Yellow River To North Mountain) (Seoul: Dongseo Munhwasa, 1981), p.17 and p.22.

when the Rhee government took the advice of General James Van Fleet, the newly appointed commanding general of the United States Eighth Army, to lengthen the curriculum of the academy from two years to four. Chun graduated from the academy in 1955. His military service includes his assignment as Company Commander of 72 Regimental of the 25th Division in 1958, as a Battalion Commander of Capitol Garrison in 1967, as the Regimental Commander of the White Horse Division in South Vietnam in 1970, and as Special Offensive Commandant in 1972.⁹ In 1975 he was picked to serve as Company Commander by Ch'a Chi Ch'ol, the chief secretary to President Park at the time of his assassination. Through Ch'a's recommendation Chun was transferred to the First Division and became a Brigadier General in 1978. While serving as Commander of the First Division, his officers and enlisted men found an underground tunnel near the DMZ. President Park rewarded Chun by raising his rank to Major General, and in 1979 appointed him to the key position of Army Security Command, which is responsible for military counter-intelligence. After the assassination of President Park on October 26, 1979, Chun began to strengthen his position in South Korea when he launched the "December 12 coup" against his senior military general and leader of the moderate wing of the armed forces, the Martial Law

⁹His experience of the Vietnam war would have particularly affected his viewpoint of national security: a weak civil government can lead to the ruin of a country.

Commander Chung Seung Hwa. He emerged as South Korea's military strongman in the military junta organization. His power base was laid in his position in the Special Committee, as the head of the Standing Committee, and as Chief of Army Security Command. After consolidating his power in the military with support from some other military leaders (i.e: Major General Roh Tae Woo, Commander of the Capitol Garrison Command at that time; Major General Chung Ho Young, Commander of the Special Forces at that time; General Lee Hee Sung, Army Chief of Staff and Martial Law Commander at that time; Lt. General Hwang Yŏng-si, deputy Martial Law Commander at that time; etc.), Chun established himself as the new political leader of the Republic of Korea.¹⁰

Despots often conceal their dictatorship in the name of democracy. Chun was an autocratic political leader during his years (1980-88), but it is hard to find any statement which contains a viewpoint against the basic ideal of democracy. Considering Chun's advocacy of the "politics of reconciliation" and the "politics of dialogue," he also values democracy. In one of his interviews by foreign correspondents, for example, he said: "If there is criticism of the government, we will meet and handle it with tolerance.

¹⁰For a short biographical sketch of President Chun, the author referred mostly to Young Jeh Kim, "ROK's New Outlook: The End of Authoritarianism?," Asian Profile Vol.9 No.6 (December 1981), pp. 547-548; Harold C. Hinton, Korea Under New Leadership: The Fifth Republic (New York: Praeger, 1983), pp. 56-57.

We will conduct a continuing dialogue to further mutual understanding and promote national unity and reconciliation. This is my basic political philosophy."¹¹ But what he said did not correspond with what he did.

It seems that there is no better way to understand Chun's character tendency than by comparing what he particularly emphasized in his speeches with what he did during his life. First of all, he had a generally conservative tendency. In his public speeches and interviews, for example, he rarely omitted one thing, his respect of the Korean traditions. The following statements are his.

"The homeland is not ours alone. It is an invaluable bequest from our ancestors."--from his inaugural address on March 3, 1981

"Constitutionally Korea has had a series of efforts and errors. At times, we have simply pursued unattainable ideals. To assimilate democracy we must strengthen our democratic institutions and ideals within a framework of our culture and of our domestic and international circumstances."--from an interview by Far Eastern Economic Review¹²

It is clear that Chun has a tendency to place a value on traditions which often contradict democratic values. Of course, some democratic traditions have existed in Korea. However, they were still "for the people," not "by the people." His notion of democracy was the Korean traditional political philosophy of "people as sovereign (Minbon),"

¹¹Jae Hoon Shim and D. Davies, "Searching for Order, Unity and Discipline: Interview/Chun Doo Hwan," Far Eastern Economic Review (January 30-February 5, 1981), p. 20.

¹²Far Eastern Economic Review (January 30, 1981), p. 22.

connoting the government for the people through the king's mercies, not by the people, as we have defined democracy.

Second, he placed great value on faithfulness. He devoted his loyalty to President Park, and this helped him in his road to success. When he was a regimental commander in Vietnam, he often wrote letters showing his loyalty to President Park.¹³ After he came back from Vietnam, President Park appointed Chun as an assistant to vice-chief of the Presidential Security Office, which was a highly political position. Later, Chun became the commander of the Army Security Command, one of the most crucial military positions and always reserved for the one the President trusts most. After Park was assassinated, Chun's position as the head of the military's intelligence organ played a crucial role in making him a new political leader, largely due to the position's advantages such as accessibility to important information. He was also very loyal to his close associates. Once he trusted a person, he always tried to keep his faith. These characteristics helped him in making allies in the army who later supported him in the 1979 coup and in the consolidation of his power. He was too generous, however, in handling his associates' wrongdoings, such as their irregularities and corruption. This made Chun Doo

¹³Chin Pae Kim, "Pak Chônghi, Chôn Tuhwan, No T'aeu: Pigyô Yôngu (Park Chung Hee, Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo: A Comparative Analysis)," Series No. 5 Chosun Ilbo (June 2, 1988), p. 6.

Hwan become a very unpopular leader while he was in power, and also tainted him with numerous corruption charges against his associates and relatives.¹⁴ Again, Chun's personality was a significant factor both in his rule and in contributing to its end.

d. Roh Tae Woo

Roh Tae Woo is the first president of the Sixth Republic of Korea. He was a soldier for about thirty years. After retiring as army officer, he involved himself in civilian politics. He had been the so-called "second man" during the Fifth Republic period and another unpopular presidential candidate with a military background until June 29, 1987, when he announced a wide range of concessions to the opposition and his resolution to liberalize the country. His announcement was overwhelmingly welcomed, by the people as well as by the opposition forces. The decision opened a new era of Korean politics and enhanced his chance to

¹⁴The corruption allegations on Chun Doo Hwan's relatives became an issue after his successor, Roh Tae Woo, took his office. The relatives involved in irregularities and their charges are as follows: (1) Chun Ki Hwan (elder brother)--exactng a purchase of the Noryangjin Marine Products Market, etc.; (2) Chun Kyung Hwan (younger brother)--corruption cases of Saemaül Movement headquarter; (3) Chun Woo Hwan (Cousin)--bribery case on issuing a Casino permit; (4) Chun Soon Hwan (Cousin)--bribery case on issuing a golf course permit; (5) Chun Jae Hwan (Cousin)--bribery case on issuing a permit for used car sale; and (6) Lee Ch'ang Sök (Brother-in-law)--Tong-il Company's illicit gains. Chosun Ilbo New York Edition (November 14, 1988), p. 13.

attract enough of the people's votes to win the 1987 presidential election, the first genuine direct presidential election since 1971. He is a prudent, steady, and yet resolute person. His life demonstrates such qualities.

Roh Tae Woo was born on December 4, 1932, at Kongsan-myon, Talsông-kun, Kyôngbuk; now Sinyông 1 dong, Tong-gu, Taegu. His father, Roh Pyông Su, was so tall and good-looking that he attracted public attention. He was one of a few people who could play the violin and skate. He was also an official of the Kongsan-myon township office. In 1938, when Roh Tae Woo was six years old, his father was killed in a traffic accident. His mother, Kim T'ae Hyang, became a widow at the age of 30. She was a faithful daughter-in-law as well as a devoted mother. In 1939, Roh Tae Woo entered Kongsan Elementary School where he spent six years. After graduation, he went to Taegu Technical Middle School. Later he transferred to Kyôngbuk Middle School. During his school days, he was a music lover and a reticent and reliable model student. After the Korean war broke out in 1950, he volunteered as a student soldier and later entered a military police academy where he graduated first on the list. After serving as a military policeman, he entered the Korean Military Academy in 1952. In 1955, he was a member of the Eleventh graduating class of the Academy whose numbers also included Chun Doo Hwan, Chung Ho Yong and Kim Pok Tong. His military services included: a platoon leader,

a company commander of the Kwangju Infantry School, a six-month education of psychological warfare at a special combat school in North Carolina, U.S.A., a ROTC instructor at Seoul National University in 1960, a Counter-intelligence Corps officer, a head of a counter-intelligence department in 1966, a battalion commander in the Capital Division, a battalion commander of the Wild Tiger detachment unit in Vietnam, a senior adjutant of the Chief of the General Staff, a regimental commander, a brigade commander of an airborne unit in 1974, an assistant to the vice-chief of the Presidential Security Office in 1978, and a commander of the White Horse Division in 1979. After the December 12 coup in 1979, led by Chun Doo Hwan, Roh Tae Woo became a commander of the Metropolitan Army, often regarded as one of the most crucial military positions in the army. As the Fifth Republic was established, he became the commander of the Army Security Command and retired from military service in 1981 in order to participate in politics as the minister of State Affairs. Later, he took charge of various governmental offices, including the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 1982. In 1983, he became the chairman of the ruling Democratic Justice Party and later the president of the party and presidential candidate.¹⁵

¹⁵Hyo Chin Oh, Sam Kim kwa No Tae-U (Three Kims and Roh Tae Woo) (Seoul: Sejong Publishing Co., 1987), pp. 282-312.

Roh Tae Woo is regarded as a moderate: a steady and rational person who likes to listen rather than to assert himself. The following quotation demonstrates these characteristics of his personality:

"Bright heads run to rise rapidly in the world but fall over a precipice. I like a steady man who walks step by step."¹⁶

In addition, his patience in his childhood is well-known.¹⁷

However, he makes decisions quickly whenever necessity occurs, as his June 29 Announcement implies. His prudent and patient personality seems to conflict with such decisiveness, but the firmness of his character in decision-making has been recognized by his colleagues. For example, one of his classmates in the Korean Military Academy, Kim Sik, described Roh as follows: "Representative Roh seems to be slow in action because he is quiet, but he is not. When there was an emergency call for gathering, he was always the first one who got to the drill ground. He is prudent and reticent, but also quick in action."¹⁸ Moreover, he is clever and skillful. He was the second man to Chun Doo Hwan for seven years of the Fifth Republic. To maintain such a position, he would have to have been not too outstanding, yet effective in exercising his leadership, a very delicate

¹⁶Ibid., p. 313.

¹⁷Han Chong Yŏl, Roh Tae Woo's classmate in his middle school days, described him as "a patient and persistent student." Ibid., p. 290.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 296.

and difficult position to maintain. To have survived in such a position means that he must be a very moderate and yet tactful politician. Such personal resources helped Roh rise to political power, and knowledge of these resources provides us with an insight into his role in the transition to democracy in 1987.

2. The Military

Guillermo O'Donnell, who studied the rise of authoritarianism in Latin American politics, presented three patterns of authoritarian political rule: oligarchic, populist, and "bureaucratic-authoritarian."¹⁹ Some Korean scholars included the Fifth Republic of South Korea in the category of an authoritarian type of political order.²⁰ Bureaucratic authoritarianism is regarded as "a type of authoritarianism characterized by a self-avowedly technocratic, bureaucratic, non-personalistic approach to policy making and problem

¹⁹Guillermo A. O'Donnell, Modernization and Bureaucratic--Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics (Berkeley: University of California Institute of International Studies, 1975).

²⁰For example, Kihl explained O'Donnell's classification and said as follows: "The Fifth Republic of South Korea is a mix of the oligarchic and bureaucratic authoritarian types of political order." Young-whan Kihl, "Korea's Fifth Republic: Domestic Political Trends," Journal of North-East Asian Studies Vol.VI No.2 (June 1982), p. 38. Kim also viewed the Fifth Republic in a similar perspective. See: Young Jeh Kim, op. cit.

solving."²¹ South Korea does not fit in this bureaucratic-authoritarian category mainly because the personality factor of South Korea's recent leaders has been and still is very effective in policy making.

There are more models worth considering. One of them is a "corporatist authoritarianism." It is characterized as follows:

"The army, as...[a] guarantor of the authoritarian order,...prefers a 'technical' supportive relationship between the state and social groups, rather than a relationship based on alliances with broad social groups."²²

The above-mentioned characteristics of "corporatist authoritarianism" explains the nature of the military regime in South Korea accurately. However, it is not free of weakness. According to Perlmutter, the corporatist state is a division of modern authoritarian systems--classified on the basis of the locus of political power which can be identified by determining which political or functional structures provide recruits for the top political leadership--and it is dominated by a coalition of conservative or reformist politicians, the military, technocrats, and bureaucrats. The party should be merely an instrument of the "despot" or

²¹David Collier (ed.), The New Authoritarianism in Latin America (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 400.

²²Fernando Henrique Cardoso, "On the Characterization of Authoritarian Regimes in Latin America," in David Collier (ed.), Ibid., p. 36.

the "corporatist oligarchy".²³ Considering the relatively strong party politics in South Korea, however, the South Korean military regimes do not fit in this model either.

There is one more appealing model, that is, the "praetorian state," or military dictatorship. Perlmutter explains it as follows:

"The praetorian state takes three forms: personal, oligarchical, and corporatist. The military dictatorship is often buttressed by an auxiliary structure, a military party, whose major sources of support and recruitment are the military, state bureaucrats, and technocrats."²⁴

The above explanation is a precise description for the case of South Korea. The Park regime under the "Yushin" Constitution is suited to the first form: personal-praetorian. The Chun regime is somewhere between the second and third ones. That is, in studying the Park regime, the personal character of President Park is a very important factor. For the Chun regime, some oligarchical structure of political power by a ruling class (i.e.: bureaucrats, military leaders, and business elites) would be more important.

The South Korean military has been not only the most effective organization in command of physical force, but also continuously concerned with civilian politics since 1961. Even after the democratic change in 1987, the military's intervention in politics is always possible

²³Amos Perlmutter, Modern Authoritarianism: A Comparative Institutional Analysis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 38.

²⁴Ibid., p. 39.

whenever the military believes that there is a serious threat to national security resulting from civilian disorder. In short, the military has been the center of political power, the primary ruling group. Even under the Roh regime, the military remains as the strongest pressure group. In this sense, it is worthwhile examining the various aspects of the military.

a. The Political Role of the Military in South Korea

Prior to the Japanese annexation of Korea in 1910, Korea had its own military force mainly comprised of the army and the navy. Since its national sovereignty had been denied for thirty six years until its liberation in 1945, no independent military force existed in Korea, except for various armed organizations for national liberation which, at that time, dispersed into the territories of China and Russia. After the establishment of the Republic of Korea, the army and the navy were organized on September 5, 1948 in South Korea, and the total number of armed forces in 1950 was 94,974 in the army, 6,956 in the navy and 1,897 in the air force.²⁵ The number increased rapidly after the Korean

²⁵Tong Hi Yi, Han'guk Kunsu Chedoron (Theory of the Korean Military System) (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1982), p. 244..

War broke out in June 25, 1950. It became 661,000 in 1953, the fourth largest in the world.²⁶

The background of military officers was varied, but can be loosely classified as follows: (1) those who were officers of the national liberation armies in Manchuria and Siberia (e.g., Yu Tong Yôl, Song Ho Sông, etc.); (2) those who were in the Japanese army, such as graduates of the Japanese Military Academy and student's corps soldiers (e.g., Song Yo Ch'an, Ch'ae Pyông Dôk, etc.); (3) those who had their education in Manchuria such as graduates of the Manchurian Military School (e.g., Park Chung Hee, Chung Il Kwon, Lee Han Lim, Paek Sôn Yôp, etc.); and (4) those who were refugees from North Korea.²⁷ Immediately after independence, the first group with experience in the liberation struggle took high positions in the newly born army. Later, however, the second and third groups, who were related to the Japanese army, replaced them, largely due to the outcome of the power struggle between Rhee Syngman and Kim Ku, who was a national hero.

President Rhee Syngman made use of the difference of backgrounds among officers for his political interests, and removed some military leaders who tried to be politically neutral, such as Lee Chong Ch'an and Choe Kyông Nok, from

²⁶Ibid., p. 261.

²⁷Se-jin Kim, Politics of Military Revolution in Korea (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1971), p. 43.

their positions. This provoked a split among the intra-army factions. In addition, many high-level officers became corrupt. Corruption among military officers in general was well known, at that time, both to the people as well as in the military itself.²⁸ This deepened the problem of disharmony within the military. Above all, in early years when the military was expanding very rapidly, chances for promotion were many. Since the expansion stopped after the Korean war, however, promotion opportunities became scarce.

This generated many dissatisfied officers, especially young officers who were field grade officers whose way of promotion was blocked by the top-level officers. Later, it became an immediate and internal cause of the military coup in 1961 led by Park Chung Hee and some members of the Eighth graduating class of the Korean Military Academy. These young officers, who led the 1961 coup d'état, took government positions and became the ruling élites during Park's military rule. Under the Park regime, especially during the "Yushin (Revitalizing Reform)" period, the government was a replica of a military organization. Park ruled the government as well as the country as if he were a commander.

During his rule, there were some achievements. One of them was a revitalized economy. The GNP grew almost ten percent every year during the Park era. This enhanced the

²⁸John P. Lovell, "The Military and Politics in Postwar Korea," Edward R. Wright (ed.), Korean Politics in Transition (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975), p. 166.

legitimacy of military rule. As President Park's dictatorship continued, however, his endeavor became marred and weakened. Political legitimacy declined as Park and his subordinates revised the constitution for a permanent dictatorship, the so-called "Revitalizing Reform" (Yushin) system. In 1979, Park was assassinated by one of his aids, Kim Jae Kyu, director of the Korean CIA, who was concerned about the people's aspiration for democratic change during the year's serious political crisis and was also upset by being isolated, by Ch'a Chi Ch'ol, chief of the Presidential Security Office, from President Park.

Under the state of emergency after Park's death, a group of young generals mostly composed of the members of "Hanahoe (One-Heart Club)," a meeting of politically active military officers mainly consisting of the graduates of the Korean Military Academy, led by Major General Chun Doo Hwan, undertook a military coup against their seniors and seized political power. Among Perlmutter's three types of military rule, in this sense, the Chun regime corresponds to the second one: oligarchical-praetorian. First of all, Park and Chun were different in terms of how to seize power. In the May 16 military coup, Park had been the only general, and most of the other leaders were field grade officers. Park was the leader from the beginning and he was the center of all power until his death. Contrastingly, Chun seized power through the December 12 coup against his senior military

general, Martial Law commander Chung Seung Hwa, with the help of his colleagues who were already generals at the time. Their assistance was also crucial when Chun consolidated his regime. For example, confronting serious crises such as the Kwangju insurrection, those generals united their efforts to repress the people's uprising. In fact, Chun and most of his colleagues were graduates of the Korean Military Academy in 1955. They, not just Chun, were the nucleus of political power throughout the period of Chun's rule.

Chun's military rule ended as a new more liberalized form of government under Roh, Chun's successor, was established in 1988. It was originally initiated by Roh's decision to liberalize the country. To understand how such a decision was made, it is necessary to examine the internal conflicts in the ruling bloc, especially in the military élites.

The intricacy of military factionalism in the South Korean military manifested itself as early as in 1981 (e.g.: removal of Park Se Chik, the former Major General and the leader of the twelfth graduating class of the Korean Military Academy, from his post in the Metropolitan Defense Command in 1981).²⁹ Such factionalism has been represented

²⁹The incident suggested the staff appointment in the military as the immanent elements of internal conflicts and of ongoing power struggle in the military. Young Whan Kihl, Politics and Policies in Divided Korea: Regimes in Contest (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, Inc., 1984), pp. 84-85.

by the existence of two segments: hard-liners and soft-liners. The former group, including Chun, consisted of Kwon Ik Hyôn, Kwon Chông Tal, Chang Se Dong, Hô Sam Su, Hô Hwa P'yông, etc. The soft-liners were Roh Tae Woo, Kim Pok Tong, Chông Ho Yong, An Mu Hyôk, Kim Yong Kap, Yi Ch'un Ku, etc.³⁰

Under such critical conditions in June, 1987, the hard-liners adjusted their former strict position on, for example, the reopening of discussions on critical issues of constitutional change, or on the use of more repressive means to control the opposition forces such as an emergency decree if the situation did not get better due to such small concessions.³¹ Roh, representing the soft-liners, was well aware that the use of emergency measures would inevitably produce a catastrophe; would disintegrate his own stature as a candidate for the nation's leader and that of the Democratic Justice Party, his only legitimate power background; and would ultimately diminish the chance for his control over the process of political change. During the period of political crisis in June, therefore, Roh contacted his allies. Among them were Kim Pok Tong, the former superin-

³⁰On the analysis of military factionalism, see: Tongnip Sinmun [Korean Independent Monitor], February 5, 1982. On the relation between the hard- and soft-liners and its effect on Roh's decision, see, Shin Dong-a [New East Asia], May 1988.

³¹New York Times (June 25, 1987), A1; Hanguk Ilbo (June 27, 1988), p. 7.

tendent of the Korean Military Academy and former chairman of the National Mining Industry, who was also Roh's classmate of the Eleventh graduating class of the Korean Military Academy and his brother-in-law, and Chung Ho Yong, the former commander of the Army Special Forces and former Defense Minister, who was also a member of the Eleventh graduating class of the Korean Military Academy. In addition, Roh met many important figures of the press and the academy, heard from them about how desperate the South Korean people's longing for democratic change was, and eventually reached a conclusion that there was no other choice than to concede. Later in the month, Roh decided to propose far more wide-ranging concessions than anyone had expected.

To sum up, South Korea has been under military governments for at least twenty-seven years. As Marek Thee pointed out in the "structural systemic features" of militarism, the South Korean military established the government "in the wake of" coup d'état; became the ruling force in the state and government; and deviated from the basic rules of democracy by running an authoritarian government, denying civil rights and using repressive measures.³² That is, the

³²Marek Thee, " Militarism and Militarisation in Contemporary International Relations," in Asbjorn Eide and Marek Thee (ed.), Problems of Contemporary Militarism (N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1980), p. 20.

military played a negative role in developing democracy in South Korea.

b. Anti-political Aspects of the South Korean Military

Among the military, an anti-political attitude has prevailed. Morris Janowitz characterized the military's professional and political ideology as consisting of the following four aspects: (1) a strong sense of nationalism and national identity, with pervasive overtones of xenophobia, (2) a strong "puritanical" outlook and an emphasis on anti-corruption and anti-decadence, (3) an acceptance of collective public enterprise as a basis for achieving social, political, and economic change, and (4) an "anti-politics" outlook.³³ Janowitz pointed to the fourth point as the most pervasive theme. The anti-political attitude of the military prevailed under the rule of Park and Chun. For example, on the night before he retired from active service as a soldier to be a candidate for president, President Park said to Yun, one of his subordinates:

"As the president of the Democratic Republican Party, I am planning to make a disciplinary political party. There should be no dispute and "the tail that wags the dog (Hagûksang)" will never be allowed...Look at the opposition party. Ordinary party members criticize the leader of the

³³Morris Janowitz, The Military in the Political Development of New Nations: An essay in Comparative Analysis (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 63-67.

party. I want to make a disciplined and coherent party, as far as I lead the party."³⁴

The military estimates that the accomplishments of civilian politicians are few because of useless discussions and too lengthy procedures that inhibit decisions. Military leaders have spent most of their lives in the military where the disciplinary and hierarchical organization is regarded as efficient and as a virtue. The above statement by Park, who was a military dictator for 18 years, is an exact example of this attitude. On the contrary, however, democracy is "by discussion" and its relationship to party politics cannot be separated. Democracy can only be developed in a society which allows free discussion and different views. Therefore, such "anti-political" attitudes of military leaders fall into the category of factors which hinder the democratization of Korea.

3. Bureaucracy

The bureaucracy in South Korea can be characterized as authoritarian internally and the faithful tool of the political leader externally. Grounded in the Confucian tradition, government service has been regarded as the most honored profession in Korea. The tradition produced the so-

³⁴Ch'lyông Yun, Minjông ūro-Kanŭn Kil (A Path toward the Civilian Government) (Seoul: Sungmoonkak, 1963), pp. 302-303.

called "admiration for the government officials (Kwalyo Sungsang)," and the "respect for the officials and disrespect for the people (Kwanjon Minbi)." Such undemocratic attitudes of the bureaucracy toward the people provided the foundation of the authoritarian bureaucratic system in South Korea.

There are two main questions which will be discussed in this section. They are: (1) what is the role of bureaucracy in South Korea? (2) what are the characteristics of the bureaucracy?

The influence of the bureaucracy is considerable not only because of its size but also because of its potential power.³⁵ Writing on the Latin American countries, Gary Wynia says:

"The potential power of bureaucrats is evident when we recognize that no matter how noble a government's goals or how sophisticated its development plans, it accomplishes little without the support of administrators. Bureaucrats are supposed to be the servants of political officials, but political officials often find themselves the captives of their administrators. They rely on the administrators when they design policies as well as when they implement them. If

³⁵Its size is noticeable. At the end of October 1973 there were about 448,000 public officials in South Korea and the number has continued to grow due to the steady expansion of governmental functions. As of December 31, 1976, there were 382,503 national civil servants and 85,181 local civil servants. In 1981, the total number increased to about 600,000. Nena Vreeland et al., Area Handbook for South Korea (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), p. 162; Ministry of Culture and Information, A Handbook of Korea (Seoul: Korean Overseas Information Service, 1978), p. 375; Rinn-Sup Shinn, "Government and Politics," in Frederica M. Bunge (ed.), South Korea: A Country Study (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982), p. 175.

bureaucrats disagree with official policy or find it threatening to their organizational interests, they have recourse to many weapons, which they can use to sabotage the government's effort. It is imperative, therefore, that political officials not sit back and assume that their programs will succeed simply because they are needed. If they do not closely supervise program implementation, making sure that policy goals are met and services delivered, their best efforts will likely come to naught."³⁶

Wynia's remarks apply equally well to South Korea. It is true that the impact of bureaucrats, especially on the country's public life and economic development, is great. Also, South Korean bureaucrats play an important role not only in public life and economic development but also in many fields of real politics. In addition, the South Korean bureaucracy has own uniqueness; it is not firmly based on rationalism, universalism and impersonalism, while most regimes of the Western democratic system are. This necessitates an examination of the characteristics of the bureaucracy in South Korea.

Cho characterized South Korea's public administration and the behavior of the bureaucracy as personalism, generalism, class-consciousness, and rule by public servants.³⁷ Paek cited authoritarianism, familism, fatalism, emotional humanism, and formalism as characteristics of the South

³⁶Gary W. Wynia, The Politics of Latin American Development (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 62.

³⁷Sŏkchŏn Cho, Chochiknon (Theory of Organization) (Seoul: Pommunsa, 1977), pp. 48-51.

Korean bureaucracy.³⁸ It has often been pointed out by many Korean scholars that the bureaucracy can be characterized as authoritarian and hierarchical. On one hand, the bureaucracy has an authoritarian attitude toward the people; on the other hand, it is a faithful tool of the government leaders.

As a vestige of the Confucian tradition, government service has been regarded as the most honored profession. Such tradition produced the "admiration for the government officials," and it created a peculiar system of the "respect for the officials and disrespect for the people" (Kwanjon Minbi) in South Korea. Finally, this tradition contributed to producing the authoritarian attitude of the South Korean public officials toward the people. Their attitude towards government leaders, however, was totally the other way round. From the time of the first military coup in 1961, the extremely hierarchical character of the military organization--in which vertical relations were emphasized most and subordinates were to obey orders from their superiors--penetrated into the bureaucratic system. In general, the bureaucrats operate as if their foremost duty is to do what their superiors (of whom the President is the top) order them to do, rather than to behave as civil servants.³⁹ That

³⁸Wanki Paek, "Han'guk Haengjông Haengt'aeron (Theory of Administrative Behaviors in Korea)," Unt'ae Kim et al., op. cit., pp. 434-437.

³⁹Dongsuh Bark, "The Korean Bureaucracy and Political Development in Korea," Korea Journal Vol. 18 No. 1 (January 1978), p. 14.

is, the South Korean bureaucrats became a faithful tool of the government leaders.

This problem originates in the absence of local self-government, especially the undemocratic method of recruiting the bureaucrats: by appointment. The principle of local self-government was formally recognized in the Constitution of 1948, and the elaborate Local Autonomy Law was enacted in 1949. During the 1950s the Rhee government undertook only limited experiments with local government. After Rhee was ousted in early 1960, the government of the Democratic Party took steps to implement the Local Autonomy Law. When the military seized control in the 1961 Coup, however, local councils were ordered disbanded, and the office of local government units was made an appointive one. Since then, local governments have operated under the Law Concerning Temporary Measures for Local Autonomy, adopted by the military government of 1961. According to the temporary law, the functions of all local assemblies were suspended, and the administrative heads were made appointive offices.

Village heads (rijang) in charge of the smallest administrative divisions (ri) are named by the head of the township. Heads of towns (ûpjang) and townships (myônjang) are appointed by the county chief. County chiefs (kunsu) and mayors of ordinary cities (sijang) are recommended by the provincial governor for formal appointment by the President. And provincial governors (tojisa) and mayors of

special cities such as Seoul and Pusan are appointed by the President upon the recommendation of the Prime Minister.⁴⁰ Thus, the President has virtual overall control over the appointment of local government chiefs. That is to say, the Korean bureaucrats are separated from the people, and the central government is the top of the hierarchical system of bureaucracy and controls the system. Therefore, the bureaucrats obey orders from their superiors in a system, in which the ultimate superior is the President, not the will of the people. This system originates in the absence of local self-government.

In 1987 President Roh pledged to implement a new local autonomy law. A local self-government system was scheduled to be put into effect in late 1989. However, the previous undemocratic characteristics are still extant and will be so for the time being. In short, the characteristics of the South Korean bureaucracy, authoritarian to the people and submissive to the government leaders, are factors hindering democratization of South Korea.

⁴⁰Administratively, local government is divided into nine provinces and four special cities--Seoul, Pusan, Taegu and Inch'ŏn--which enjoy provincial status. A province (to) is subdivided into country (kun), city (si), town (ŭp), township (myŏn), village (ri). A city is divided into several boroughs (ku) and a borough is divided into a number of sub-blocks (tong).

4. Business Elites

The so-called "honeymoon" relation of the South Korean business élites with the government has been maintained at least for the past two decades. After Park seized political power in the early 1960s, his government spurred rapid economic growth in order to enhance its political legitimacy. One of the military government's strategies for the attainment of this goal was to develop Japanese-style giant enterprises and to make them boost the export-oriented economy by manufacturing labor-intensive goods. Accordingly, many conglomerates (e.g., Hyundai, Samsung, Lucky-Goldstar, Daewoo, etc.) emerged in the late 1960s and 1970s, and flourished later. For example, in 1985, the top eight conglomerates were responsible for almost a half of the total amount of export, \$ 30.28 billion, in the year.⁴¹ Expecting not only the government's various favors but also its effective inhibition of militant labor unions, the business élites of those big enterprises, called "Chaebol," supported military rule by various means, from providing the governing party with political funds to placing many retired military officers and senior bureaucrats in the upper echelons of their companies.

⁴¹Peter K. Kang, "Political and Corporate Group Interests in South Korea's Political Economy," Asian Profile Vol.16 No.13 (June 1988), p.216.

The rapid growth of the South Korean economy is well known. The economy achieved and maintained an average annual GNP growth rate approximating the very high rate of 10 percent from the early 1960s until the late 1970s. GNP per capita in 1987 is almost \$3,000, a highly respectable figure for a developing country. There are many contributing factors. The government's economic development programs were well planned and successfully carried out. There were many able entrepreneurs. Technology imports from developed countries were important, too. Among many factors, cheap labor was the most significant. The rapid economic growth was largely due to the growth of exports. For such an export-oriented economy, cheap labor played a crucial role. Such a labor system has been sustained. For example, even in 1985, 37% of the total working force were paid under 200,000 Korean Won, less than US\$ 250, as their monthly income.⁴² This means that the South Korean laborers have endured the pain of low wages for the sake of the country's economic growth.

In addition, the economic growth produced a "lopsided" development, for example, the unique structure of the economy such as the extreme "corpulence (Pidae)" of large enterprises and the unequal distribution of national income among the people. For example, the GNP in 1984 was \$81.1

⁴²Source: Ministry of Labor, 1985 Nv&ndo Chikchongby&1 Img&msilt'ae Chosabogosg& (Survey Report on Wages By Occupation in 1985), p. 22.

billion, and the amount of sales by the only 10 largest conglomerates was \$54.1 billion.⁴³ This means that the amount of sales of 10 "Chaebol" groups constituted almost two-thirds of the GNP in South Korea. In addition, the income shared by the lowest 40% of all households in 1970, 19.6%, declined to 16.1% in 1980, while that of the highest 20% increased from 41.6% to 45.4% in the same period.⁴⁴

The government and the preferred industries have worked for their mutual benefit. On one hand, the government could be legitimized by the achievement of economic growth. On the other hand, business élites could get continuous protection such as fiscal, monetary and tariff policy preferences. However, such protection and preferences are secondary. The decisive move that the business élites most wanted from politics was the government's repression against militant labor unions. The military government under Park and Chun used various repressive measures to control laborers. Legally organizing independent labor unions and collective bargaining was severely limited. In effect, the

⁴³For the amount of GNP, Hanguk Ilbo (March 25, 1988), p.1. For the amount (converting Korean Won into U.S. dollars at that time's exchange rate, \$1=805.3) of sales by the 10 largest conglomerates, Hanguk Ilbo (March 22, 1988), p.1.

⁴⁴Source: Kyōngje Kihogwon (Economic Planning Board), Kongjōng Kōrae Paeksō (Fair Trade White Paper) (1984), p. 103; from Ch'ŏl Hwan Ch'ŏn, "Kukche Kyōngje ūi Ch'ejil Pyōnhwa wa Han'guk Kyōngje (Changes in International Economy and the Korean Economy in the 1970s)," in Hyōn Ch'ae Pak et al., Han'guksahoe ūi Chaeinsik (Rethinking the Korean Society) (Seoul: Hanul, 1988), p. 137.

government agencies such as the Korean CIA and the Ministry of Labor Affairs supervised labor-union activities.

For the business élites, the more the government can contain laborers' extreme demands, the happier businessmen seem to be. For the government, a controlled and undemanding labor force has been important for political stability, as well as continued outward industrial growth as a source of its legitimacy. Although the labor movement during the period of 1987-1989 strengthened the position of the South Korean laborers in society as well as in labor-management relations, there was no fundamental change in the close relationship between the government and business élites.⁴⁵ In brief, under the mutual benefit system of the government and business élites, it has been inevitable for the business élites to support the authoritarian political leaders of the former regimes. This is another factor impeding the democratization of South Korea.

B. The Opposition Forces

1. Dissidents

⁴⁵For more information about the relationship between the government and laborers in South Korea, see "Laborers" section in the latter part of this chapter.

a. Churches

In South Korea, it is known that there are approximately ten million Christians. Christianity was introduced into Korea as early as the late Sixteenth century, but it did not have a substantial impact on the political scene until the March 1 Movement in 1919: an essentially peaceful, nonviolent, nationwide anti-colonial movement.⁴⁶ After the nation's independence, the number of Christians rapidly grew more than tenfold.⁴⁷ The growth in the number of Christians has been accompanied by their increasing political role. Christianity's role has increased not only because of the growth in its numbers, but also because many political leaders were Christians. For example, the first president, Rhee Syngman, was an elder of a Methodist church. Former president Chun was a Christian himself. In addition, the two prominent opposition leaders, Kim Dae Jung and Kim Young Sam, are also Christians.

⁴⁶Of the 33 signers of the "Korean Declaration of Independence of March 1, 1919," some 16 were Christians. Robert A. Kinney, "Students, Intellectuals, and the Churches: Their Roles in Korean Politics," Asian Affairs (January/ February 1981), pp. 182-183.

⁴⁷After the nation's independence in 1945, there started an "explosive time." Protestant Christians in 1945 numbered less than 400,000. Their number grew rapidly to well over six million by 1980. The number of Catholics, who numbered about 200,000 in 1945, grew to an estimated 1.2 million by 1981. Ibid., pp. 184-185.

Under the Rhee regime, most political leaders of the governing party were Christians. In addition to President Rhee, Rhee's vice-president, Yi Ki-bung, and his family members were Christians. The Minister of Internal Affairs, Choe In Kyu, was a deacon of a Presbyterian church. At that time, the churches were regarded as closely connected to the government. After the so-called April 19 Student Movement in 1961, President Rhee resigned and went into exile, Vice-president Lee's family killed themselves, and Minister Choe was sentenced death and executed later. After the end of Rhee's regime, the South Korean churches reviewed their intimate relationship to the immoral government, and realized how negative their role was in the society.⁴⁸

Under the Park regime, therefore, the churches opposed the authoritarian government and emphasized their Christian responsibilities and concerns about the society in the light of their Christian convictions. One of the Christians' interests under the repressive government was the human rights problem. The human rights issue was raised for the

⁴⁸Such change in the South Korean churches is well expressed in Reverend Kim Jae Jun's article as follows: "April 19 Movement was a bright light coming out of a total darkness. The churches saw themselves in the light. Some believers even claimed that the churches are completely responsible for all the evils the Rhee regime made." Chae Chun Kim, "4.19 Ihu'ui Han'guk Kyohoe (Korean Churches after the April 19 Movement)," Kidokkwo Sasang (Christian Philosophy) (April 1961), p. 145; citing from Sŭng Hyŏk Cho, "Democratization and the Role of the Korean Churches," Hyŏng Yun Pyŏn et al. (eds.), Han'guk Sahoe Paliŏn kwa Minjuhwa Undong (Social Development and Democratic Movement in Korea) (Seoul: Chungam-sa, 1986), p. 166.

first time by Korean churches in 1973. This issue entered not only the domain of religion and humanitarianism but also that of politics. Correspondingly, the churches became involved in politics, and many church-based organizations with social concerns came into being. The Korean National Council of Churches's Human Rights Committee organized in 1974 is the best-known organization. In addition, there were the Korean Students' Christian Federation, the Council for Urban Industries, the Catholic Peasant Society, etc. Those organizations became closely connected to their relevant dissident groups.

In the late 1970s, the churches became more involved in the political arena as the legitimacy of Park's dictatorship declined considerably. In March 1977, a number of church and opposition leaders, including Chi Hak Sun and Ham Sôk Hôn, proclaimed the Charter of the Restoration of Democracy. In 1978, the National Council of Human Rights Movement incorporating not only the church-based dissident groups but also non-Christian organizations was founded. In 1979, the Urban Industrial Evangelist Mission was deeply involved in the Y.H. incident, occupation of the headquarters of the opposition New Democratic Party by women workers from the Y.H. Trading Company, which initiated a series of anti-government demonstrations that resulted in the demise of the Park regime. In addition, Christian leaders and some opposition leaders such as Yun Po Sun and Kim Dae Jung

organized the People's Council for Democracy and Reunification. These cases indicate that Christians and their various organizations were deeply allied with various anti-government groups. Even under the Chun regime, the churches continued their support of democracy and their link with the opposition.

In addition to many politically active Christian groups, clergymen (e.g., Cardinal Stephen Kim Su Hwan and Reverend Lee Moon Young) themselves have been advocating human rights and have become dissenters against the authoritarian governments. Through their spiritual and organizational relations with the opposition forces, and because of their own concern with such issues as human rights, the churches became one of the social forces demanding democratization in South Korea.

b. Students

Looking back upon the contemporary history of South Korea, there is no doubt that the role of students has been very influential in the political arena. For example, there have been 2,258 political protests from the beginning of national independence to the end of the Third Republic, more than a half of them were initiated by students, and one of

them led to the downfall of the Rhee regime in 1960.⁴⁹ Representing the conscience of the nation, the university students protested against the undemocratic Park regime, and their protest was an important factor in the breakdown of the regime in 1979. In 1987, they initiated the first phase of the 1988 democratic change. Political participation of students considerably increased during the period from the late 1970s to mid-1980s. For example, among many social groups, 274 (35.2%) of the 778 political prisoners in 1978 were students. The percentage of students among the total number of political prisoners increased more than two times in 1982, 306 (73.4%) of the 417, and to 83% in 1986. Considering that the percentage of church leaders decreased from 44.5% to 3.1%, this was a substantial surge.⁵⁰ Evidently, student activism is still one of the most crucial factors of South Korean politics.

⁴⁹Shin conducted a statistical analysis of political protests in South Korea statistically and the government's response to them, during the period of 6 regimes (U.S.; First; Interim; Second; Military; and Third). Myungsoon Shin, "Political Protest and Government Decision Making: Korea, 1945-1972," American Behavioral Scientist Vol.26 No.3 (January/February 1983), pp. 400-402.

⁵⁰Source: World Council of Churches, Human Rights in the Republic of South Korea (Geneva, 1981); Korea Communique (February 15, 1983), pp. 32-40; Republic of Korea, Ministry of Legal Affairs, reported in Choongang Ilbo (June 21, 1986). Citing from: Wonmo Dong, "University Students in South Korean Politics: Patterns of Radicalization in the 1980s" Journal of International Affairs 40 (1987 Winter/Spring), pp. 238-239.

Such active participation of students in political life, however, does not necessarily lead to democratization. For example, the 1960 "April 19" student revolt overthrew the autocratic Rhee regime, but the students went back to their schools immediately after the uprising. They could demolish an authoritarian government, but could not directly participate in the political process. The students did not see that democratization is like building a house named democracy, and that demolishing an old house is not building a new house. Hence, the factor of student protest should be carefully considered and evaluated.

In the 1970s, admitting the problems in the students' movement in the 1960s, student activists not only continued their efforts of direct participation in politics such as political protests, but also emphasized the proliferation of their idea into other social groups including the working class. In the "Students' League of Democratic Youth (Minju Ch'ongnyŏn Haksaeng Yŏnmaeng)" Incident in April 1974, in which a number of student movement leaders demanded social justice and protested against the government, the issue of the so-called "Minjung (the masses)" became a major concern of the student movement. In 1979, student protests in Pusan and Masan areas became an immediate cause of Park's declining legitimacy and his assassination.

In the 1980s, student activist groups became more organized and their concerns also became more various. The

most popular issues in the early 1980s can be described as anti-governmental and the demand for democracy. In 1985, the "Chôn Hak Nyôn (National Students' League)" tried to create a national-level student organization and led a number of protests against the government. The "Sammint'u (Committee of Struggling for the Masses, Democracy and National Reunification)" founded in April in the same year was active in its anti-government movement, especially on the issues concerning the Kwangju Uprising. In May they led the occupation of the U.S. Cultural Center building.⁵¹ From then on, an anti-American movement began to develop among many student activist groups.

In 1986, the student activists were divided into two groups: the so-called "Chamint'u" and "Minmint'u." The "Chamint'u," an abbreviation of the Committee of Struggling for Anti-American Liberation and Anti-fascist Democratization, and the "Minmint'u," abbreviated from the Committee of Struggling for Anti-Imperialism, Anti-Fascism, the Nation and Democracy, were different in many aspects such as their theoretical background, their perspective on society, and the tactics necessary to achieve their goals.⁵² Despite

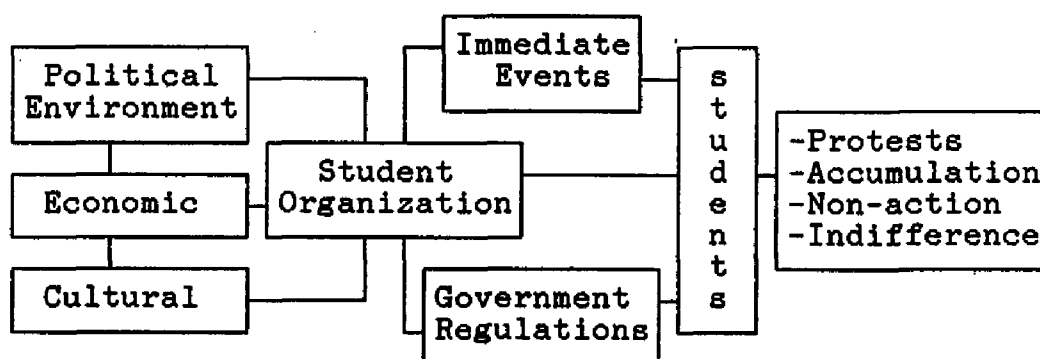
⁵¹Ilsonjung Editorial Department, Haksaeng Undong Non-jaengsa (History of Student Movement Debates) (Seoul: Ilsonjung, 1988), pp. 102-3.

⁵²For example, the former group views the South Korean society in terms of neo-imperialism, and the latter, monopoly capitalism. The former regards the imperial powers as the source of contradiction in the South Korean society, while the latter sees the national bourgeoisie as such. For

their disagreement in many issues, they took a leading role in the later democratic movements led by students.

Students' activism in South Korea can be explained by various factors: (1) political environment--external and internal (e.g., the Vietnam war, the decline of the military government's legitimacy, etc.); (2) student organizations--their leadership, solidarity, and emotional conditions; (3) economic factors--frustration (relative deprivation), unequal distribution of wealth; (4) meaningful events (e.g., political scandals, unjust policies, etc.); (5) cultural factors--value system; and (6) effectiveness of government regulation. A model can be drawn as follows:

Figure 3.1: An Explanatory Model For Student Protests in South Korea



Students' demands and criticisms have been varied according to the political situation at the time. For example, they have demanded a more equal distribution of incomes, the right to object to certain foreign policies,

details, see: *Ibid.*, pp. 125-30.

academic freedom, etc. Among these demands, the most often cited was democratization. Since the government élites understand the possible spillover effects of student activism on the public and the opposition, fear that a widespread student revolt can ignite a general uprising of a critical moment, and know that the students' demand for democracy strengthens the position of the opposition party, they never take the student factor lightly. In this sense, students have become a balancing factor which checks any extreme movement of the government against democracy. Although only a few student leaders have gone on to important political roles, students are contributing to democratization by checking the authoritarian government's abuse of power and by promoting the power basis of the opposition.

c. Laborers

Historically, the labor movement in South Korea has been highly politicized and has played a significant role in domestic politics during the period of the military rules under Park Chung Hee and Chun Doo Hwan. On one hand, it prompted the process of declining political legitimacy of the Park and Chun regimes and the breakdown of their authoritarian rules. On the other hand, it contributed to enhancing the position of the opposition forces such as the students, churches and opposition parties. These elements--

the decline of political legitimacy of the ruling bloc and the rise of the opposition forces--were crucial in political regime changes: from Park's personal military dictatorship to Chun's military oligarchy in 1979, and from Chun's military authoritarianism to the Roh-Tae Woo regime in 1987.

(1) Politicized Laborers versus the Government Repression:
A History of the Labor Movement in South Korea

Until the late Nineteenth century, the traditional feudal system was dominant in Korean society. A capitalist mode of production had not yet been developed; thus, neither a working class nor capitalist-worker relations in their modern terms could exist. Under such a situation, any organized labor movement was infeasible. Although there were a number of labor activities during the Japanese occupation (1910-1945), they were not well organized and their issues were mainly political. The labor movement was rather a part of the Korean nation's struggles for independence against the Japanese rule, with underground movement as its typical form.

Labor organizations came into being during the period of U.S. military government (1945-1948), but they were preoccupied with political concerns rather than with the laborers' interests. The leftist National Conference of the Chosun Labor Unions, the so-called "Chônpyông," was founded on November 5, 1945. Chônpyông led the labor movement for a few years after its foundation, using general strikes as

its main tactic. But its ultimate goal was political, that of promoting a socialist movement. Challenging Chônpyông's domination in labor activities, the rightist Federation of Labor Unions for Promoting Korean Independence, the so-called "Noch'ong" was found on March 10, 1946, by the combined efforts of the U.S. military government, several South Korean rightist politicians, and businessmen. There was a continuous friction between the two organizations. At the end of the U.S. military government, Noch'ong's battle against Chônpyông was effective enough to destroy the leftist labor organization.

The labor activities by politically oriented labor organizations in the early stage of labor movement in South Korea left a legacy that exerted a bad effect upon the development of a labor movement later. Even after the establishment of the Republic of Korea in 1948, for example, the leadership of labor unions often consisted of politicians, who were usually associated with the government in some way or another. Labor unions became a kind of auxiliary structure of the government bureaucracy, a situation which blocked any autonomous activities.

To make the situation worse, the Korean War broke out on June 25, 1950, lasting until July 27, 1953, when a ceasefire agreement was signed. During the War years, more dictatorial power was bestowed upon President Rhee. Labor unions, as well as the other social groups, became inactive.

Although a new law concerning labor unions was adopted in 1953, and the All-Federation of Korean Labor Unions was established in 1954, the Federation kept a close tie with the Rhee government so that labor movement could not be activated.

After the April 19 Student Uprising in 1961, which overthrew the Rhee regime, the Democratic Party government succeeded and South Korea moved toward democracy. Accordingly, labor movement was reactivated. As the political pressure on labor unions was removed, the demands of the workers were disclosed. The All-League of Korean Labor Unions was newly organized. It expanded its organizations and participated in various labor disputes.

On May 16, 1961, however, a military coup d'état, led by Major General Park Chung Hee and a retired Lieutenant Colonel Kim Jong Pil, deposed the Democratic Party government. The military junta under Park's control was established. The military junta issued martial law, dissolved the National Assembly, and banned all political activities. It continued this repression until constitutional rule was formally restored with Park's inauguration as president on December 17 of the same year. The military leaders kept claiming that the military introduced a temporary suspension of democratic process, not of democratic characteristics; but the centralization of political power under Park was maintained.

Although the military government consolidated political power, there were many serious problems. One of them was how to fuel an economic regeneration. To enhance the political legitimacy of their rule, the Park government spurred rapid industrialization. But this rapid economic growth was done often at the expense of the South Korean workers. The welfare of laborers was neglected under the banner of economic development. The laborers worked in poor working conditions; for example, they endured long working hours and unsafe working places, as well as low wages. In addition, the fast-growing economy deepened the economic disparity between the business owners and the workers. Thus, the number of labor disputes which occurred, and the number of workers participating in them, increased considerably. For example, during the period of 1963 to 1971, an average of 154,288 workers took part in, on the average, 103 labor disputes per year. Facing such labor instability, the government used harsh restraining measures to suppress the disruptive elements in the working class.

First of all, the repression against independent labor unions was notable. All labor unions were disbanded on May 22, 1961. The All-League of Korean Labor Unions (Han'guk Noch'ong) was installed. It was not a voluntary group organized by workers themselves but a bureaucratic arrangement imposed from above, in which a little autonomy was allowed. In any event, the government's restrictive control

of independent union activities was largely responsible for the development of the union as a bureaucratic organization.⁵³ Second, various legal restrictions under the name of national security (e.g., the National Security Law, the Law concerning Special Measures for Safeguarding National Security, etc.) were employed. The government agencies including the Korean CIA and the Ministry of Labor Affairs checked labor union activities such as organizing unions and collective bargaining. In addition, the business owners' bribery, along with the government's coercion, made many union leaders corrupt and even apostatize from the workers. Therefore, the labor movement in South Korea under the Park's military regime was weakened, both by being subject to the government's various repressive measures, and by lacking leadership.

In 1979, one of the most important factors in sustaining the repressive government, economic progress, was in decline. A series of student demonstrations continued. In August, some 200 women workers of a recently bankrupt textile company, Y.H. Trading Co., occupied the headquarters of the opposition party, demanding that they be allowed to take over the management of the firm. On August 11, police broke into the headquarters, injuring scores of politicians,

⁵³George Won and In-Hwan Oh, "Grass Roots Democracy: The Case of the Korean Labor Movement," Sociological Perspectives Vol.26 No.4 (October 1983), pp. 399-422.

party workers, and killing two workers.⁵⁴ This, the so-called Y.H. Incident, ignited a massive protest against the Park government in the areas of Pusan and Masan, a protest which became more and more violent. In the midst of this social disorder, Park was assassinated by Korean CIA Director Kim Jae Kyu on October 26. This ended the Park regime and opened a renewed chance for the country's transition to democracy. On December 12, however, Major General Chun Doo Hwan, the head of the Army Security Command, led a coup against his superiors successfully and later seized political power by being elected president.

Under the Chun regime the suppression of labor union activities continued. In the beginning of his rule, a new labor law, passed by the interim Legislative Council on National Security in 1980, put severe restrictions against organizing labor unions. It also banned a third party, including not only political organizations but also the federation of labor unions and student-turned workers, from intervening in labor union activities aimed at breaking away the linkage between labor movement activists and other opposition groups such as students and the church, most notably Protestant missionaries. The law, named the Labor-Employer Council Law, was put into effect in January 1981. Since then, the Chun regime passed various labor laws (e.g.: the Labor Standard Law, the Labor Union Law, the Labor

⁵⁴New York Times (August 11, 1979), p.3.

Dispute Settlement Law, the Labor Committee Law, etc.).⁵⁵

In short, following the Park regime's labor policy, the Chun government used repression against the workers in order to contain the demands of the South Korean laborers.

To sum up, the history of the labor movement in South Korea is one of contention between politicized laborers and the ruling bloc (including the government leaders and the business élites). Under the government's repression, actual as well as legal, the solution of labor problems within the system was infeasible. Without political resource to gain their ends, the South Korean workers were limited to tactics of collaboration or confrontation.

(2) Laborers as Powerful Pressure Group

After Park Chung Hee seized political power in the early 1960s, one of the primary concerns of his government was how to spur a rapid economic growth. The military government was quite successful in carrying out this goal. Thus South Korea became more industrialized and its society developed in many aspects. First of all, the modernizing process continued, the number of working-class people multiplied. For example, the percentage of laborers, including white-and blue-collar workers, in the total manpower was

⁵⁵On labor legislation, see: Nobuo Nakagawa, "Problems Confronting the Struggle for Democratization in Korea," Gekkan Shakaito (Tokyo: August 1981), pp. 173-181; citing from Young Whan Kihl, "Korea's Fifth Republic: Domestic Political Trends," op. cit., p. 54.

36.4 (about 304 millions in number) in 1963; and it increased to 49.1 (722 millions in number) in 1981.⁵⁶ In other words, the total number of wage-earners increased more than two times in less than twenty years.

Second, workers became more aware of their situation and more politically conscious. As South Korea developed economically, its benefits extended to all the layers of society. Among those benefits were a raised educational standard and the diffusion of mass media communication. Such development in the society contributed to the political socialization process and to the growth of the people's consciousness.

Eventually, the growth of the workers' consciousness enlarged their influence, both actually and potentially, in the political arena. It was largely due to the increasing number of labor unions, shown as follows:⁵⁷

Table 3.1
The Number of Labor Unions: 1981-1986

1981	2,141
1982	2,191
1983	2,238
1984	2,365
1985	2,534
1986	2,658

⁵⁶Kwan Mo S6, Hv6ndae Han'guk Sahoe Gi Kveg6pkus6ng kwa Kveg6ppunhwa (Class Structure and Stratification of Modern Korean Society) (Seoul: Hanul, 1984), p. 48.

⁵⁷Soo-Kon Kim, Han'guk Gi Nosamunche (Understanding the Labor Management Problems in Korea) (Seoul: The Korea Economic Daily, 1987), p. 101.

The number of labor unions multiplied from less than 3,000 in June 1987 to 6142 in January 1989. Their membership also increased from about 1 million to 1.7 million during the same period.⁵⁸ In addition, labor protests also increased considerably. For example, in 1987, there were 3,750 labor disputes.⁵⁹ With such strong worker resistance, the ruling bloc painfully experienced how decisive the role of labor was in maintaining political stability as well as in continuing economic prosperity.

Furthermore, labor unions became more directly involved in politics. For example, the All-League of Korean Labor Unions installed a committee dealing with political matters. In the 1980s, a number of candidates for the National Assembly, with labor union backgrounds, were elected. More importantly, many labor unions became well organized by many capable leaders. In short, the laborers became one of the most powerful pressure group in South Korea.

(3) Workers' Discontent and the Decline of Political Legitimacy

South Korean workers, the country's single largest social group, have many reasons to be one of its most discontented classes. Their working conditions are inade-

⁵⁸Chosun-Ilbo New York Edition (April 26, 1989), p. 30.

⁵⁹New York Times (February 19, 1989), Section 3, p.10.

quate. Their wages are low. In 1981, for example, the South Korean laborers worked for less than one seventh of U.S. workers or one sixth of Japan's workers.⁶⁰ Even in 1985, 37% of the total working force in South Korea were paid under 200,000 Korean Won, less than US\$ 250, as their monthly income.⁶¹ Second, they have almost the longest working hours in the world. They work an average of 2,700 hours a year, 40% more than Americans and 25% more than the Japanese.⁶² Third, they work in very poor working environments. For example, the average number killed or disabled from industrial accidents in a year was about 15,000 in the early 1980s.⁶³ This indicates how extremely unsafe their working places are.

Such poor working conditions may not be necessarily linked to the workers' discontent with the ruling bloc, including the government and business leaders. In South Korea, however, they are closely related. The government has imposed a low-wage policy upon the workers in order to boost its export-oriented economy, and has used strict regulations to restrain their autonomous union activities.

⁶⁰Chin-Kyun Kim, Han'guk Sahoe ūi Pyōndong (Changes in the Korean Society), edited by Social Science Institute (Seoul: Sungkyunkwan University Press, 1986), pp. 76-77.

⁶¹Ministry of Labor, 1985 Nvōndo Chikchongbyōl Imgūm-silt'ae Chosabogosō (Survey Report on Wages By Occupation in 1985), p. 22.

⁶²Business Week (September 5, 1988), p. 46.

⁶³Chin-Kyun Kim, op. cit., p. 79.

The South Korean workers' discontent was a reaction to the government's repression of their social, economic, and political interests.

The South Korean military government carried out its policy of rapid industrialization aimed at enhancing its political legitimacy. Ironically, however, such economic policy was mainly responsible for the workers' discontent with the government. In fact, the government's strategy for rapid economic growth was to develop Japanese-style giant enterprises and to make them boost the export-oriented economy by manufacturing labor-intensive goods. Cheap labor was crucial for the success of such economic program. To contain the laborers' demands, the government used repressive measures. This caused the workers' displeasure and the decline of political legitimacy.

As South Korea became more socio-economically developed, the workers became more and more cognizant of their situation, especially of the state-capital alliance in labor repression. Eventually, the South Korean workers' dissatisfaction with the ruling bloc deepened.

For example, a survey of some 720 industrial workers from fourteen large companies in the areas of Masan, Ch'angwon, Kôche, P'ohang, Ulsan, Kumi, Inch'on, Pusan and Kwangju, was conducted by the Korean Society Institute. The

results of a few relevant questionnaires in the survey are as follows:⁸⁴

- (a) "South Korean business élites have gained their profits at the sacrifice of laborers."

Consenting party: 95.3%

- (b) "Which social group has the most negative effect on the democratization of Korean society?"

- (1) The military: 30.2%
- (2) Chaebol: 16.1%
- (3) The ruling party: 14.8%

As the above survey result shows, the South Korean workers have little faith in either the government or the business élites. The survey illuminates how dissatisfied the laborers are with the ruling bloc.

In addition, the increasing number of labor disputes, shown in Table 3.2,⁸⁵ corroborates the fact of labor unrest.

Table 3.2⁸⁵
The Number of Labor Disputes: 1982-1987

1982	88
1983	98
1984	113
1985	265
1986	276
1987	3,749

⁸⁴Hyông-jun Pak, "Nodongja Uisik, Irôhke Pyônhago Itta (Workers' Consciousness, It's Changing This Way)," Wolgan Chungang (June 1989), pp. 385-387.

⁸⁵Source: The Association of Korean Business Administrators, Labor Economics Annual Statistics (1986); Korean Management Information Center Monthly Business Affairs and Management, 1988; Kyông-sôk Yu, "Ol Pom Nosapunkyu Ŭi Munche Chindan (A Diagnosis of the Labor Problems in This Spring)," Wolgan Chungang (June 1989), p. 367.

Considering that the working class constitutes about a quarter of the whole population in South Korea, and that the major issues raised by the workers in the labor disputes were not only economic but also political, especially anti-governmental; the decline of the government's legitimacy is obvious.

(4) The Link between the Laborers and the Opposition Groups

Facing the ruling bloc's repression of the workers' autonomous labor union activities, the workers needed support from the opposition groups in order to protect their own interests. Thus, the workers kept a close relation with the other opposition groups, including the church, the students and the opposition parties. As a result, on one hand, the laborers became more deeply involved in politics and their political influence also increased. On the other hand, the laborers' alliance with political opposition groups added an extra pressure on the ruling bloc to liberalize the country.

First of all, the church was one of the opposition groups that opened a tie with the laborers. In light of their Christian convictions, the churches emphasized their Christian responsibilities and concerns about society. Therefore, the churches became involved in politics; and many church-based organizations whose social concerns included labor problems came into being. Among them, the

Urban Industrial Evangelist Mission, the so-called "Tosi Sanôp Sônkyohoe," was one of the most active groups participating in labor issues. The Mission was founded in 1957 for the purpose of evangelizing the workers. The mission group realized how bad the labor situation was. Later it tried to solve various labor problems; to back the workers' activities, including organizing labor unions and their efforts for better working conditions; and to educate the workers in order to enlighten them about their situation. For example, the Mission members played a leading role in organizing labor unions in many industrial companies such as Wonp'ung Woolen Textile Co., Bando Co., Tongil Textile Co., Control Data Co., etc. They also participated in several labor disputes, especially in the 1970s. The Y.H. incident was one of them.

Second, the so-called "Nohak Yôndae" (Worker-Student Alliance) was another characteristic of the labor movement in South Korea. Korean students have been sympathetic with the laborers and have always been sensitive to labor issues. Students often held anti-government protests demanding the eradication of repressive labor laws and the guarantee of the basic rights of workers. Eventually, many student groups had a direct relation with the workers and sometimes acted in concert with each other in protesting against the government. For example, there was a street demonstration in Seoul on March 16, 1986, by the members of the "Chôn Im

T'u" (The National Committee of the Workers Struggling for Wages) and the "Min Min T'u" (The Committee of Students Struggling for Anti-Imperialism, Anti-Fascism, the People and Democracy), one of the leading student activists' groups that year. In addition, the South Korean students regarded the working class as the "forerunner" of social reform; they tried to educate the workers through many channels including giving evening classes; some students even became labor movement activists after graduation. Although some criticize that the students' involvement in labor issues had a negative impact on the independent labor movement, their moral support was certainly a factor which contributed to activating the labor movement, as well as to changing the workers' political consciousness.

Third, since the workers struggle for their welfare was not only against the business élites but also against the government, labor union leaders had some connection with the opposition party as a political channel through which they could articulate their interests. The opposition party, on the other hand, was in need of the workers' support in order to challenge the government more effectively. In the mid-1980s, for example, the opposition New Korean Democratic Party regained its bargaining position with the government by acquiring 29.3% of the popular vote in the Twelfth National Assembly election held on February 12, 1985, and by later acquisition of the second biggest opposition, the

Democratic Korea Party in April of the same year. This opened the negotiation between the governing and opposition parties on various political issues including constitutional revision. The inter-party conversation, however, was not successful in reaching any decision. The ruling Democratic Justice Party was reluctant to make any concession to changing the existing constitutional system. To challenge the government stance, the opposition party used the so-called "outside (Chang-we)" approach of public rallies. In the effective exercise of the "Chang-we" tactics, the support from other dissident groups, including the laborers, was crucial.

To sum up, the political influence of the labor movement in South Korea was significant. It promoted the decline of political legitimacy of the Park and Chun regimes, and the increase of the opposition's political influence.⁸⁸ Since the legitimacy crisis of a political system is the genesis of regime changes, and the existence of strong opposition forces accelerates the regime transition process as shown in the cases of democratic transition

⁸⁸For example, the Y.H. incident initiated by labor movement of some 200 textile workers gave rise to mass demonstration in two Southern cities, and finally generated the breakdown of the Park regime in 1979. In 1987 the laborer's participation in the so-called June Protest, as well as several other anti-government demonstrations, contributed to forcing Chun's party to concede to the opposition's demand for democracy and to inducing Roh Tae Woo's liberalizing program in the year that ultimately brought the democratic political change in South Korea.

in Southern Europe (e.g.: Greece in 1974), Latin America (e.g.: Argentina in 1983), and Asia (e.g.: the Philippines in 1986); the role played by the labor movement was critical in South Korean regime transitions.

2. The Opposition Party

In spite of the lack of success in obtaining political power through its competence, and despite various setbacks since South Korea was established in 1948, the opposition party has maintained its existence under many different names (i.e., Democratic Party, New Democratic Party, etc.).

During the period of the Second Republic (1960-1961), when the opposition, the Democratic Party, was the governing party for the first and only time in the history of South Korea, the Democratic Party's inability to control its intra-party factionalism and to solve economic problems disappointed the people. Eventually the military took over and the party vanished. Since the abolition of the Rhee government as an aftermath of the April 19 Student Uprising in 1960, the Democratic Party formed provisional government and proceeded with a democratizing change. However, there was a serious intra-party problem. The party was divided into two factions: the "Old Guard (Kup'a)" and "New Faction (Sinp'a)." The former was led by President Yun Po Sun and

the latter was headed by Prime Minister Chang Myon. The two factions became estranged during their ruling period. This cleavage, as well as inefficiency of the government, became a decisive factor leading to the "May 16" military coup in 1961.

Yi, a prominent senior journalist, argues that President Yun's connivance had facilitated the success of the coup. For example, Yi says that, on the day of the coup, Chargé d'affaires Green of the U.S. embassy called on President Yun, and said:⁸⁷

"This is an official order from the U.S. government... The number of soldiers available in Seoul is estimated at 3,600. If forty thousand men are mobilized from the north region and lay siege to them [Park's revolutionary army], their surrender is a matter of time. Now Prime Minister Chang disappeared. The Presidency is the only remaining organ to order it. Please approve the order."

President Yun rejected Green's mobilization plan against the coup and let the revolution army forces go unchallenged. Yi reports another incident which confirms that President Yun knew the plot beforehand. Dong-A Ilbo carried an article which claimed that President Yun had already been informed by General Yu Won Sik--who was one of the generals involved in the coup--about the plot before the day it took place. In addition, Defense Minister Hyôn Sôk Ho maintained that "All I can say now is it was possible to suppress the coup if President Yun intended to do it." Such views were

⁸⁷This was taken from the former President Yun's statement. Reciting from, Yông Sôk Yi, Yadang Samsimnyôn (Thirty Years of the Opposition Party) (Seoul: Ingan, 1981), p. 97.

generally accepted by most of the Democratic Party members as well as the general public.⁸⁸ Prime Minister Chang, later on, reconsidered those days and said:

"President Yun was expecting the coup. That is why he could say, 'Here came what should come,' as soon as he heard the news."⁸⁹

To investigate whether or not the President was informed is not the real concern of this study. Those disputes even after the coup indicate how serious the factionalism within the party was and how it contributed to the success of the 1961 military coup. In addition, the party became more and more incapable of managing the national economy. The people's antagonism was brewing primarily because of the government's ineffective economic policies for which the intra-party factionalism was largely responsible. This gave a good excuse for the military to intervene in politics.

Under the Park regime, the opposition with a new name, the New Democratic Party, contended against the governing Democratic Republican Party for government office, but failed on every occasion. There was an opportunity in 1979, when Park was assassinated. The military intervened again, through the December 12 coup in 1979, and ended the possibility of the New Democratic Party's rise to power. However, the opposition party was not free of any blame. In 1979,

⁸⁸Ibid., pp. 99-105.

⁸⁹Ibid., pp. 104-105.

there were at least 11 factions in the New Democratic Party.⁷⁰ This extreme factionalism was not a new problem. Even before the assassination of President Park, the party did not have a single voice to the public so it had difficulty in gaining political power. One faction was led by Lee Chul Seung, the other by Kim Young Sam. The former's line favored an attitude toward the governing party on the basis of the "logic of reconciliation (T'ahyôp)" and the latter's was the "logic of confrontation (Taegyôl)." The difference of principles was symptomatic of disunity in the opposition. It led the party to fail in getting popular support before the assassination and to be ineffectual in coping with the rapidly changing political situation at that time. Ultimately, it provided more time for the military to consolidate its power so that later it could intervene in politics again. In this sense, the opposition's disunity is

⁷⁰They are as follows: (1) Yi Chôl Sûng line--Song Wan Yông, Ko Chae Ch'ông, Han Yông Su, Im Chong Ki, Cho Se Hyông, Chin Su Chong, etc.; (2) Ko Hûng Mun line--Chae Mun Sik, Yi Taek Ton, Yun Chul Ha, Kim Hyôn Ki, etc.; (3) Sin Do Hwan line--Yi Sang Sin, Sin Sang U, Om Yông Tal, Kim Chong Ki, Kim Chang Hwan, etc.; (4) Lee Chung Hwan line--Kim Su Hwan, Kim Che Man, etc.; (5) Yu Ch'i Song line--Hwang Pyông Man, Sin Dong Jun; (6) Kim Young Sam line--Lee Min Woo, Pak Han Sang, Hwang Nak Chu, Pak Il, Pak Yong Man, Kim Dong Yông, Yi Pil Sôn, Kim Hyông Kwang, Mun Pu Sik, etc.; (7) Minsa Club--Yi Ki Taek, Oh Chung Po; (8) Chaju Club--Cho I Hyông, Chông Dae Chôl, etc.; (9) Chamin Club--Yu Han Yôl, etc.; (10) Pak Yông Nok line--Han Kôn Su, etc.; (11) Kim Chae Kwang--No Sûng Hwan, Yi Yong Hi, Cho Chung Yôn, etc. The factions from (1) to (5) belong to Yi Chôl Sûng's "force (Pudae)." Ibid., p. 320.

largely responsible for missing the important opportunity to move toward democracy in 1979.

Under the Chun regime, the opposition gained an impetus in the mid-1980s and began to rise as a strong contender for political power. In the February 12 National Assembly election of 1985, the newly organized New Korean Democratic Party won 29 percent of the vote, compared to 35 percent for the ruling Democratic Justice Party.⁷¹ The opposition party gained momentum and became stronger in terms of its organization and the people's support.

Facing the best chance to gain political power in 1987, the first direct presidential election in sixteen years, however, the same old problem of polarization within the party--mainly the outcome of disunity between two opposition leaders, Kim Dae Jung and Kim Young Sam--shattered the aspiration of the people as well as of the party. The two Kims contended against each other so that the candidate of the governing Democratic Justice Party could win the presidential election in December of the year. Recognizing that the total votes won by the two Kims unquestionably outnumbered their opponent Roh Tae Woo, their failure in deciding on a single candidate from the opposition and their running for national leadership against each other was

⁷¹However, the Democratic Justice Party captured 148 seats out of 276, while the New Korea Democratic Party received only 67--reflecting the distortions of a proportional representation system rather than any convincing mandate. New York Times (March 11, 1985), p. 19.

entirely responsible for the unsuccessful attempt of the opposition to gain political power.

In April, 1988, the result of the Thirteenth National Assembly election, revitalized the opposition, and the ruling party lost its legislative majority for the first time in the country's history. Three divided opposition parties outnumbered it in the Assembly, by 174 seats to 125. This will likely force the ruling party to learn the arts of concession and conciliation, and the opposition parties to practice the politics of coalition. All are basic to democracy. In brief, the rise of the opposition contributes to the development of democracy not only because the opposition advocates democracy, but also because its growth provides politicians with a chance to become accustomed to democratic procedures.

CHAPTER FOUR

FROM PERSONAL DICTATORSHIP TO MILITARY AUTHORITARIANISM

The Emergence of Rhee's Personal Dictatorship

The history of two Koreas commenced soon after Korea liberated herself from the 36-year colonial rule of Japan on August 15, 1945. In August of that year, most Northern provinces were occupied by the Soviet army. American troops landed on September 8, and later were in occupation of the region south of the 38th parallel. However, they were not ready for their assignment. On one side, the U.S. Army officials not only lacked information but also had too little time to prepare for their task. On the other, the abrupt advent of the liberation process induced political turmoil in Korea: the number of political groups increased with rapidity and many of them claimed the readiness of Koreans for self-government, in contradiction to American rule. Faced with such problems, the American military government, headed by General Hodge, retained the Japanese system of government, including the police and bureaucracy. Many pro-Japanese officials, including those who were regarded as traitors by the Korean people, and the Hanmin-

tang (Korean Democratic Party) members, often defined as the "conservative landowning class," were appointed as political advisors to the American military government.¹ More than 70 percent of the Japanese police force, including the Chief of the Police Bureau, remained intact in the name of maintaining the public peace.² This not only spurred the Korean people's discontent against the American military government but also aggravated the inter-party strife, especially between the leftists who were against such American policies and the pro-American rightist political groups.

After almost three years of complicated domestic politics, there was a general election on May 10, 1948, and 198 legislators of the Constitutional Assembly were selected. The Constitution was promulgated on July 17. According to the constitutional provisions, the Assembly selected Rhee Syngman as the first president, a new administration was organized, and the establishment of South Korea was proclaimed on August 15, 1948.

The newly established government soon confronted challenges from various political groups. First of all, in early 1949, the Korean Democratic Party (Hanmin-tang), which helped to elect Rhee as the president, was renamed as the

¹Nam H8n Song, Haebang Samsimny8nsa (Thirty Years' History After Liberation) (Seoul: Sungmoongak, 1975), pp. 132-133.

²Hy8k Tong Kim, Mi Kuni8ng ha8i Ippob8iwon (The Legislative Council Under the American Military Government) (Seoul: Pobwoosa, 1970), pp. 10-15.

Democratic People's Party (Minguk-tang), and turned against President Rhee. This was mainly because Rhee, who sensed a threat to his rule from the Hanmin-tang's strength, deliberately kept its party members from major governmental posts. Furthermore, many of the Korean Independence Party (Handok-tang) and the Democratic Council (Minhyŏp) members, who had advocated the South-North negotiation before the establishment of the separate governments and boycotted the first election, participated in the second general election on May 30, 1950, and easily outnumbered all the other parties.³ Consequently, the conflict between the president and congress became evident in South Korean politics.

The vulnerability of the president, however, vanished largely due to the Korean war (1950-1953) in which the president's strong leadership was needed. As the next presidential election of 1952 was approaching, President Rhee, whose re-election under the existing electoral laws was impossible, planned a change of the presidential election system from election by the National Assembly acting as the electoral college to direct election by the people. The Rhee government introduced a bill amending the constitution including such changes, but it was rejected by

³The result of the election was 57 seats to the Rhee supporters, 24 seats to the opposition Democratic People's Party candidates, and 126 Independents. The domination of Independents indicates the success of the Handok-tang and Minhyŏp members in the election who did not represent any political party. Ch'ang Chu Mun, Han'guk Chŏngch'iron (Theory of Korean Politics) (Seoul: Ilchokak, 1965), p. 277.

a vote of 143 to 19, on January 18, 1952.⁴ That is, the impossibility of Rhee's election in the National Assembly was reconfirmed. However, the government declared a state of emergency on the pretext of purging communist guerrillas from the Assembly and coerced the Assemblymen (e.g., arresting ten Assemblymen and accusing them of involvement in international communist party activities) into passing a new bill which included the holding of a direct presidential election on July 4, 1952. On August 5 of the same year, Rhee was reelected as president. It was a rigged election in which the police and bureaucrats intervened. All these events took place under the war-time government.

In July 1953, an armistice was concluded. Later a new bill amending the constitution to empower Rhee to be the candidate for a third term was prepared by the governing Liberal Party (Chayu-tang). The bill was rejected by a vote of 135, one vote short of the two-thirds of the 203 votes present on November 27, 1954. Unreasonably, however, the ruling Liberal Party members revoked the decision, asserting that 135 can be two-thirds of 203 by rounding it off to the nearest integer. Thus, after two days, the rejected bill was passed and the foundation of Rhee's permanent personal dictatorship was established by freeing Rhee from the former two-term restriction.

⁴Ibid., p. 278.

A. The Downfall of Rhee Regime: The Decline of Legitimacy, the Opposition's Rise, and its Collapse

The breakdown process of Rhee's authoritarian regime continued as soon as his dictatorship was inaugurated. As the people's anti-government sentiment grew, caused mainly by the government's corruption and its repressive measures, the legitimacy of the Rhee regime declined. The opposition's position increased as Rhee's supporters lost their confidence in him.

In 1955, the Democratic People's Party was reorganized and renamed as the Democratic Party (Minju-tang). For the May 15 election of 1956, the newly organized party nominated Sin Ikhi and Chang Myŏn as candidates for president and vice-president. The governing Liberal Party candidates were Rhee Syngman and Yi Ki-bung. The Democratic Party's election slogan, "Can't live, let's change (Mossalgetta, Karaboja)!" reflected the shaky position of the Liberal Party government. This created a great sensation among the South Korean people, who detested the protracted personal rule of Rhee and the corruption of his government. However, the untimely death by apoplexy of the Democratic Party presidential candidate, Sin Ikhi, during his campaign trip to the Southwestern region, on May 5, 1956, a few days before the election, assured Rhee's victory. The Progressive Party (Chinbo-tang) candidate and only viable contender

for presidency, Cho Pong Am, was not as widely known to the people as Rhee. Consequently, Rhee was easily reelected, receiving 56 percent of the popular vote. In the vice-presidential election separately held, however, the opposition candidate, Chang Myŏn, was elected. The election implied that the South Korean people were turning against the Liberal Party. In addition, considering the old age of Rhee, a vice-president selected from the opposition was significant.

After the election, members of the "non-mainstream (Pijuryu)" group within the Liberal Party attempted to reform the party, failing mainly because the party's chairman, Yi Ki-bung, who had been regarded as the principal figure of the irregularities of the party and the police, and yet who was trusted by Rhee so that he could stay in his position as chairman in the party, resisted the reform effort.

In 1958, the National Assembly election was held and was again replete with election frauds.⁵ In spite of all the election frauds, which were aided especially by the police, the Liberal Party lost many seats. This reconfirmed the party's deteriorating stature. In addition, the party's

⁵For example, the number of election lawsuit cases was 105, and the winning of at least 10 governing party candidates was later invalidated by a court order. Kŭn Sik Yun, "Han'guk Chŏngbuhyŏngt'ae (Korean Governments)," in Un T'ae Kim et al., Han'guk Chŏngch'iron (Theory of Korean Politics) (Seoul: Pakyoungsa, 1981), p. 257.

fraudulent actions in the election were severely criticized by the press as well as the opposition party. This expedited the declining process of the Rhee government's legitimacy.

Later, the remorseless government and its party leaders introduced a new bill--a revision of the National Security Law enabling the government to control the press--and passed the law, along with other proposals such as a revision of the Local Autonomy Law and the next year's budget, by coercive and ignominious means. The government drove the opposition legislators out of the Assembly Hall by force, confined them to a basement dining room, and passed the laws in a three-minute committee meeting consisted of only ten Liberal Party members. As such strong-arm tactics became more and more frequent, the legitimacy of the Rhee regime considerably decayed, enough to make Rhee and Lee doubt the possibility of their winning in the next presidential election in 1960.

In 1960 many South Koreans were disappointed by the death of Cho Pyông Ok, the Democratic Party's presidential candidate and Rhee's strongest rival. Once again Rhee's reelection was guaranteed, and the vice-presidential election became the major issue. On March 15, 1960, the election was held and was again a completely rigged election through the intervention of the police and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Rhee was reelected, and Lee, the Liberal

Party's vice-presidential candidate who has been defeated by the Democratic Party's candidate, Chang Myŏn, by more than 200,000 votes in the 1956 vice-presidential election, was also elected by a great margin.⁶ The Democratic Party members accused the government of interference in the election and fabrication of its result. Anti-government demonstrations followed the election in major cities. At this point, a particular incident ignited a massive protest.

In early March, the body of Kim Chu Yŏl, a student killed in the election day disturbance, was found on the seashore at the city of Masan. This made thousands of angry students pour into the streets. Later, the riots extended into other Southern cities and culminated in the massive rally of April 19, in which not only students but also the citizens, including soldiers in army uniform, protested against the government.

The widespread people's uprising initiated by the university students against the Rhee regime, the so-called "April 19 Students' Uprising," finally overthrew the government. Rhee's cabinet resigned on April 21, and Rhee withdrew from his party position as head of the Liberal Party on April 24. It was an attempt to shift the blame for the election fraud and the harsh anti-riot measures from

⁶Rhee received almost two third of the total votes. Yi Ki-bung won the vice-presidential election by gaining 8.4 million votes over Chang Myŏn's 1.8 million votes. Sungjoo Han, The Failure of Democracy in South Korea (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p. 28.

Rhee to his party and cabinet members.⁷ However, this effort failed, and the National Assembly voted unanimously on April 26 to order Rhee to relinquish the presidency. On April 27, he resigned. On April 28, Yi Ki-bung and his family died in a suicide compact. Foreign Minister Hô Chông became a leader of a new interim government and the Rhee regime ended.

B. The Failure of Democracy Under the Second Republic

The demise of the Rhee regime opened a new chance for South Korea to move toward democracy. The Democratic Party, the only alternative political group for taking the reins of government with the extensive support of the general public, naturally became the prime mover of the democratizing process, as it was called by various social groups. Before fulfilling the people's demands, however, it was a matter of

⁷More than 200 persons had been killed by the police in the disturbances in April. "At least 127 persons, many of them young students, were killed and more than 700 injured in rioting in Seoul, Pusan, Kwangju, Taegu and Taejon on April 19 as South Korean National Police opened fire...The Health Ministry conceded 154 deaths as a result of riots from April 19 to 26." Facts On File Vol. XX-No. 1017 (April 21-27, 1960), p. 137.

immediate necessity to dispel social unrest and to install public order.

Although political stability was a necessary condition to carry out the consolidation process of democracy, the new Democratic Party government was unable to establish political order primarily because of its incapacity to solve the party's domestic problem, a factional strife between the so-called "new faction (Sinp'a)" and "old faction (Kup'a)." The government was also ineffective in dealing with serious social problems such as the upheaval of militant social groups (e.g., radical students, reformist political parties, and labor unions), and economic downturn (e.g., a runaway inflation and unemployment). Poor economic performance by the Democratic Party government was a particularly crucial factor in the decline of its political legitimacy. The serious economic situation is described as follows:

"From December 1960 to the beginning of April 1961, crippling inflation beset the already hard-pressed families of fixed incomes and industrial production showed continuous decline. During that period the price of such an essential item as rice went up 60 percent, while other items such as coal and oil jumped more than 23 percent. Also, production from November 1960 to the end of February 1961 dipped more than 12 percent. Furthermore, in the months of March and April the severe 'spring hunger (Ch'ungung)' of the peasants further compounded the grim economic situation."⁸

In fact, political legitimacy of a government is very much dependent on the people's consent to it, often in

⁸Citing from: Se-jin Kim, The Politics of Military Revolution in Korea (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1971), pp. 28-29.

return for its good performance in terms of fulfilling their demands, most importantly their economic demands. At any rate, such social and economic uneasiness as well as the conflict in the governing party motivated a group of young discontented military officers to design a scheme to take over the incompetent civilian government, and resulted in a military coup in 1961 that brought an end to the Second Republic.

The Interim Government of Hô Chông

The driving force of the April 19 Revolution, students, could not be the main body of the government. That is, they overthrew the immoral Rhee regime, but could not replace it and operate the government. The only legitimate successor was the Democratic Party, which had been struggling against the Rhee regime for years as the leading opposition party. However, the party did not assume government office immediately after Rhee's resignation. There was an interim government headed by Hô Chông, the acting President appointed by Rhee before his leaving. This interim government, which not only provided the followers of Rhee with a chance to participate in the political process and affect the new government but also indicated the intra-party conflict within the Democratic Party, presaged the failure of the Democratic Party government to consolidate democracy.

First of all, the interim government was, by its own accord, unenthusiastic in punishing even those who were responsible for the election fraud and opening fire against the rioting students. The interim government sent Rhee and his wife into exile in Hawaii. The lukewarm attitude of the Hô Chông government towards the wrongdoing of the Rhee regime allowed Liberal Party members to keep their position in the National Assembly where they could affect the transition process.

This not only tarnished the revolutionary characteristics of the April 19 Student Revolution but also hindered the Democratic Party's autonomy in proceeding with establishing a new government. The leaders of the interim government, who were Rhee's supporters, were not concerned about their role in the installation of a new democratic government; they were preoccupied with building a political system under which their security and welfare could be protected or the least damaged.

1. The Disruption of the Democratic Party

The Democratic Party confronted many obstacles in assuming the helm of the government. Such problems were primarily caused by the conflict between two intra-party factions: the "old faction" headed by Yun Po Sun and the

"new faction" led by Chang Myŏn. This factional strife enervated the Democratic Party in making political decisions and implementing them, and it eventually generated the military's intervention into the area of politics.

The factional division existed in the Democratic Party long before the Rhee regime's collapse. The core members of the "old faction" were Yun Po Sŏn, Kim To Yŏn and Yu Chin San, who had belonged to the main-stream of the party since its initial formation, the Hanmin-tang. The "new faction" headed by Chang Myŏn was a newly growing force.⁹

It is known that Chang Myŏn, who was the vice-president under the Rhee regime since 1956, resigned on April 23, a few days after the April 19 Student Uprising, not because of

⁹The origin of the Democratic Party traces back to September 8, 1945, when the Korean Democratic Party (Hanmin-tang) was organized. After the liberation from the Japanese rule, the Hanmin-tang was established as a counterpart to the People's Republican Party (Inminkonghwa-tang), a Communist line party, by such political figures as Song Chin Woo, Chang Tŏk Su, and Kim Pyŏng No, who had close connection with the capitalist and land-owning classes under the Japanese occupation. Several Hanmin-tang members also cooperated with the American military government, often as advisors. Since the result of the 1948 National Assembly election was not favorable for the party, the Hanmin-tang reinforced the party by absorbing Sin Ikhi from the Korean Independence Party (Handok-tang) and Chi Chung Chun, and later renamed the party as the Democratic People's Party (Minjukungmin-tang). The reorganized party changed its name again in 1955 to the Democratic Party by assembling various political forces such as members (e.g., Chang Myŏn) of the Hŭngsadan, originally formed by Koreans who were exiled in the United States during the Japanese rule, Liberal Party defectors, and some Independents. In the Democratic Party, generally, the members from the former party, the Democratic People's Party, were referred to as the "old faction (Kup'a)" and the newly affiliated members as the "new faction (Sinp'a)."

the reasons he gave but because of his ambition to generate his faction's rise to power.¹⁰ In other words, Chang's resignation was based on his premeditated scheme. At that time, it was most probable that the next government would be a parliamentary system, in which the president is a mere symbol of power. If Chang had kept his position as vice-president when Rhee stepped down, he would have been automatically the next president through the provision of laws which would give the prime minister post to the "old faction" under the ground rule which did not allow either faction to hold both posts. The "old faction," therefore, interpreted Chang's resignation as a stratagem of the "new faction" to secure him as prime minister in a new parliamentary system.¹¹

In any event, Chang's resignation was a pivotal decision. If Chang had kept his position and succeeded Rhee as president, his Democratic Party could have taken over the Rhee government and exerted its influence in the transition

¹⁰Chang Myŏn justified his resignation as follows: "The reasons why I resigned the vice-presidency can be summarized by the following three reasons. First of all, my principal goal was to press for President Rhee's resignation.....The second reason was an ethical one. Although I was the vice-president from the Democratic Party, different from the President's, it was obvious that I was the vice-president under his government.....Third, I thought that I'd better not give any impression that I took over his position by making use of his tragedy." Yŏng Sŏk Yi, Yadang Sasimnyŏn-sa (The Forty Year History of the Opposition Party) (Seoul: Ingansa, 1987), pp. 89-90.

¹¹Ibid., p. 91.

process from the beginning. Unfortunately, however, Chang's resignation brought in Hồ Chông's interim government in which Rhee's supporters could exercise their reactionary influence in building a new government. In this sense, the intra-party factionalism within the opposition party, not the former government élites, was largely responsible for the emergence of the provisional government.

There was a general election held on July 29, 1960, under the interim government, and the outcome was a definitive victory of the Democratic Party which won 175 of the total 233 lower house seats.¹² Considering that there were 49 independent members, the National Assembly was dominated by the Democratic Party. This meant that either faction of the party could hold a majority in the National Assembly by drawing half of those Independents on to its side.

The "old faction" was divided by two groups; one led by Yun Po Sôn and the other by Kim To Yôn. Having difficulty in choosing a single candidate for the prime minister position, the "old faction" decided to try to take both presidency and prime minister. The so-called "Committee of 23 Members for Promoting the Capture of Political Power" was organized for this purpose.

In early August, Yun Po Sôn was chosen as the president. This was originally proposed by the "new faction,"

¹²Sûng Hûm Kil et al., Han'guk Sôngôron (Theory of Korean Elections) (Seoul: Tasan Publishing Co., 1987), p. 43.

expecting its leader, Chang Myŏn, as prime minister. The new president Yun Po Sŏn, who had the power to appoint the prime minister, however, designated Kim To Yŏn, another "old faction" leader. According to protocol, Chang Myŏn who was the party's chairman should have been nominated. This decision frustrated the "new faction" members. Since the president's appointment had to be approved in the National Assembly by a majority of the membership, the "new faction" members tried to reject the nomination in the National Assembly meeting. The crucial factor was the votes of Independents.

Meanwhile, some 20 Independents decided to act in concert with their interest and requested Kim To Yŏn and Chang Myŏn, prospective candidates for the prime minister from the old and new factions, to answer a written inquiry on August 14. The inquiry consisted of five questionnaires concerning the minority group's rights in the National Assembly and the composition of the new cabinet. Kim did not regard it seriously while Chang was sincere in answering the questions. This resulted in the Independent group's resolution to reject President Yun's nomination of Kim as prime minister and impaired his approval. Furthermore, the "old faction" was a loosely organized coalition as it was symbolized by two leaders: Yun and Kim. In the Assembly votes, there were at least five to six defections from the "old faction." Consequently, Kim's approval was rejected by

a close margin. How Kim's nomination was rejected in the National Assembly votes is shown in Table 4.1 as follows:

Table 4.1
Factional Split among the National Assembly Members
on Kim To Yŏn's Candidacy
(Speculated)¹³

	Old-faction members	New-faction members	Independents	Total
For Kim	91	0	21	111
Against	6	90	16	112
Total	97	90	37	223

Later in the month, President Yun appointed Chang Myŏn as prime minister. Disturbed by their defeat in the first vote, the "old faction" members attempted to reject the appointment but failed.

This factional rivalry continued even under the Chang government. Among the old-faction members, there was a strong demand to form a new party by splitting the Democratic Party. This intra-party crisis was settled in a meeting of the leaders of the two factions on August 21, in which Chang conceded a few positions in the new cabinet to the "old faction." Soon after the meeting, however, Chang confronted a strong objection from his faction members and filled all the 13 new cabinet positions with only "new faction" members or its supporters, excluding the "old

¹³Citing from Sungjoo Han, op. cit., p. 121.

faction" members. Eventually, the "old faction" formed the New Democratic Party (Sinmin-tang).

In addition, there was a dissenting group in the "new faction" itself. Chang's new government, therefore, was unable to have a parliamentary majority. This generated a political deadlock not only in the National Assembly but also between the president and the cabinet. The outcome was a weak government incapable of making laws, implementing economic policies, or maintaining political stability.

On May 16, 1961, a military coup overthrew the Democratic Party government. Antagonism between President Yun and Prime Minister Chang was a factor facilitating the success of the military's revolt against the new Democratic Party government. Although he was informed of the conspiracy in advance, President Yun did not use any preventive measures against the coup mainly because of his miscalculation that the military's overthrow of Chang's cabinet would lead to his gaining of actual political power.¹⁴ When General Park met President Yun on the day of the coup, Yun's first reaction was well expressed in his statement, "What should come came." On one hand, the statement can be interpreted as Yun's dissatisfaction with the Chang government. On the other, it is believed that Yun viewed the military revolt as

¹⁴For more information about President Yun's questionable behavior after the May 16 military coup, see: Yōng Sōk Yi, op. cit., pp. 174-185.

a chance to crush the "new faction" and to build a new government under his authority.

That is, the factional conflict within the Democratic Party not only generated the ineffectiveness of the Chang government and the decline of the government's legitimacy, but also became the immediate factor facilitating the success of the military coup. In short, the first chance for South Korea to become a democracy after twelve years of Rhee's personal dictatorship failed mainly because of the disruption of the Democratic Party.

2. The Deluge of Various Social Groups

During the period of the Second Republic, various social groups such as militant student organizations, labor movements, and reformist political parties called upon the Chang government for more reforms. Their demands were often unreasonable. This aggravated social chaos and finally provided the military with an excuse to justify their intervention in politics.

First of all, frustrated by the Chang government's ineffectiveness and its lack of eagerness in social reform, the students, the driving force of the overthrow of Rhee's authoritarian regime, one which was often regarded as the "fourth branch," so named for its relative importance in

South Korean politics, participated in politics. The defeat of most progressive candidates in the general election of July 29 especially disturbed the students. Among the disappointed students, a student organization called the National Unification League (Minjokt'ongil Yŏnmaeng) was established. The student groups frequently brought out too unrealistic--at least under such a precarious political situation at that time--issues, such as their demand for a meeting of the North and South Korean students to discuss national unification.¹⁵ Such revolutionary demands of the students caused some conservative elements of the society, especially the military, to worry about the possibility of an ideological imbroglio in South Korean society in which anti-communism had prevailed since 1948. Furthermore, the military's alarm was heightened by the immediate reaction of North Korea to

¹⁵Such demands are shown in the resolution adopted by the League as follows: " (1) The older generation must take full moral responsibility for the nation's division, and recognize the right of the younger generation to speak out on the unification issue. (2) In preparation for the forthcoming nationwide elections, all the political parties in the South must band together to challenge the Communist Party. (3) The government must streamline its foreign policy in preparation for national unification, and should be ready to consult with representatives of both the United States and Soviet Russia. (4) Negotiations must begin for the immediate inauguration of communications between the North and South." Dong-A Ilbo (November 2, 1960); quoted from Se-jin Kim, The Politics of Military Revolution in Korea (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971), p. 32.

the call of the students, and by the Chang government's ineffective handling of the situation.¹⁸

In addition, the breakdown of the Rhee regime which had applied harsh measures against leftist movements, provided various reformist politicians with a chance to revive their political activities. The Socialist Mass Party (Sahoedae-jung-tang) was organized during the period of the interim government by former members of the Progressive Party (Chinbo-tang), that had been destroyed after its chairman, Cho Pong Am, who was Rhee's opponent in the 1956 presidential election, was executed under the Rhee government in 1959. Later the leaders of the Democratic Reformist Party (Minjuhyöksin-tang), Sô Sang Il and Lee Tong Hwa, joined the Socialist Mass Party. The other reformist parties were the Korean Socialist Party led by Chun Chin Han, the Socialist Reformist Party (Sahoehyöksin-tang) headed by Ko Chông Hun, etc. These parties participated in the July 29 National Assembly election and gained only a few seats; in other words, they were almost completely defeated.

Having found no effective channel to affect the political course, the leftist parties often relied upon non-

¹⁸North Korea announced a seven-point message via Radio Pyongyang including such proposals as a free election throughout all parts of the country without the U.N. supervision and the immediate reduction of the military to 100,000. Han'guk Hyôngmyông Chaep'ansa P'yônch'an Wiwon-hoe, Han'guk Hyôngmyông Chaep'ansa (Records of the Korean Revolutionary Court's Trials) (Seoul: Dong-A Seojok Co., 1963), vol. I, p. 218; reciting from Se-jin Kim, Ibid., p. 32.

institutional means such as street demonstrations. As street violence was intensified in late March and early April of 1961, the Chang government arrested a number of leaders of the reformist political groups. The activities of reformist party agitators, and their cooperation with some student groups, generated enough social and political instability in South Korea to cause a sense of insecurity in the conservative sectors of the society such as the military and the police.

To aggravate the situation, the number of labor unions, which had not been allowed to function autonomously under the Rhee regime, increased rapidly, and numerous labor disputes broke out after the April uprising. [See Table 4.2]

Table 4.2: The Number of Labor Disputes in 1960¹⁷

Causes	Wage Increase	Working Conditions	Job Security	Delinquent Wage Payment	Right Collective Bargaining	Total
I:*	7	1	2	5	14	29
II:**	51	25	24	22	67	189

* 1960, prior to April 19

** 1960, after April 19

In short, the rapidly increasing power of the social groups and their unrealistic demands, along with the

¹⁷Source: Haptong Yōngam (1961), p. 282; reciting from Sungjoo Han, op.cit., p. 189.

government's incapability to deal with them, drove the South Korean society into political crisis. Such social chaos was conducive to the failure of democracy.

C. Military Intervention in Politics

Since the corrupt activities of senior military officers were well-known during the Rhee regime period, discontent against such unprincipled practices had been rising among some junior officers.¹⁸ After the April 19 Uprising, the corrupt top military officers became the target of criticism. In addition, stagnation of promotion up through the ranks in the army since the 1953 Armistice Agreement intensified the dissatisfaction among junior officers. Such uneasiness among young officers eventually took the form of the "Chôngkun (Reform in the military)" movement. On May 8, 1960, several junior officers, mainly consisting of the eighth graduating class of the Korean Military Academy, made public their demands as follows:

1. Calling to account the top military officers who countenanced the rigged election of March 15, 1960;
2. Punishing the generals who made fortunes illicitly;

¹⁸John P. Lovell, "The Military and Politics in Postwar Korea," in Edward R. Wright (ed.), Korean Politics in Transition (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975), p. 166.

3. Eliminating the unable and dishonorable officers who are in the commander level;
4. Guaranteeing the political neutrality of the military;
5. Improving salary conditions.¹⁹

Several army officers who took a leading part in the movement were consequently discharged from their ranks; later, most of them, including Kim Jong Pil, became the core members of the May 16 military coup in 1961.

Furthermore, there was an incident called "Hakûksang (Overpowering seniors by juniors)." A group of junior officers called for the resignation of Lt. Gen. and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Choi Young Hee, who had been criticized by the junior officers. The Hakûksang incident resulted in Choi's resignation and the dismissal of the young officers. In this situation, the Chang Myôn government replaced Lt. Gen. Choe Kyông Nok, the Army Chief of Staff who had supported the discipline of dishonest officers, had kept a political neutrality even under the Rhee regime, and had been widely respected by many junior officers, with the opportunistic Lt. Gen. Chang To Young who was known as having a very disreputable record. This unpopular choice intensified the disappointment of the junior officers and exacerbated the disquiet in the military. Moreover, the chaotic situation in politics and in the society encouraged the junior members in their dissatisfaction.

¹⁹Han'guk Hyôngmyông Chaep'ansa P'yônch'an Wiwonhoe, op. cit., p. 916.

Under such critical conditions, a group of military officers led by Major General Park Chung Hee known as an uncorrupted officer, a retired Lieutenant Colonel Kim Jong Pil, and a retired Marine Major General Kim Tong Ha, planned a military coup d'état. Prime Minister Chang Myŏn was informed of signs that some in the army circles were plotting a military revolt. Thus, he asked the Army Chief of Staff Chang To Young about the authenticity of such information. Chang To Young, who was opportunistically involved in the plot, assured Prime Minister Chang that there was no such possibility. Chang Myŏn, who could not pay careful attention to such problems in the military largely due to his excessive troubles from the intra-party conflict, and whose channels for exerting his influence on the army were very limited, did not further the investigation. This left the Chang government totally unprepared for the military disturbance on May 16, 1961.

At predawn hours on May 16, 1961, the rebellious forces rolled into Seoul. The main targets were radio stations and government buildings. At 2:00 A.M., Prime Minister Chang was woken from sleep by a phone call from General Chang To Young. It was the first news that Prime Minister Chang heard about the coup. At first, he tried to take refuge in a place where the U.S. Embassy staffs stayed and then concealed himself in a convent at Hyehwa-dong, Seoul. At 5:00 A.M., an announcement in the name of General Chang To

Young that the military authorities had taken over the government was made by the Revolutionary Army.²⁰ General Chang himself, however, was flustered about which side he should take.

Under such a critical situation, timing and decisiveness were crucial. The civilian government lost on both these counts because of the disappearance of the highest decision maker, Prime Minister Chang Myôn. In addition, President Yun Po Sun, the head of state who could issue orders for the mobilization of the armed forces to crush the

²⁰The six pledges by the Military Revolutionary Council, along with an announcement, were as follows: "(1) Anti-communism will be the cardinal point of national policy and the nation's anti-communist alignment, which has thus far been no more than a matter of convention and a mere slogan, will be rearranged and strengthened. (2) The United Nations Charter will be observed and international agreements will be faithfully carried out. The friendly ties with the United States and other Free World nations will be further strengthened. (3) All corruption and past evil practice in this country will be wiped out and fresh and clean morality will be pursued in order to redress the degenerated national morality and spirit. (4) The condition of national life which is on the brink of despair and starvation will be quickly ameliorated and all-out efforts will be made for the reconstruction of a self-reliant national economy. (5) In order to implement the long-cherished national desire to reunify the divided land, all-out efforts will be directed towards making the nation capable of coping with communism. (6) As soon as such tasks are accomplished, we will ready ourselves to turn over the reigns of power to new and conscientious politicians and return to our original duties." Park Chung Hee, "What Has Made the Military Revolution Successful?" Korean Quarterly Vol. III No.1 (Summer 1961), pp. 18-19.; reciting from Se-jin Kim, op. cit., p. 94.

revolutionary forces, privately favored the coup d'état.²¹ President Yun's action is believed to have resulted from his regarding the Democratic Party as an enemy, and from his misjudgment of the future political course that the military officers would return to barracks and the whole affair would take a turn favorable for him and the New Democratic Party organized by his former faction--"old faction"--members. In fact, Park Chung Hee, at the meeting with President Yun on the day of the military coup, assured the revolutionary force's loyalty to President Yun.²² The next morning, President Yun dispatched his letters to the frontier commanders ordering them not to employ any military action

²¹In the morning of the revolt, the Minister of Defense Hyŏn Sŏk Ho, who was forcibly accompanied by the leader of the coup d'état, Major General Park Chung Hee, met President Yun and asked him to "cope with the emergent situation." President Yun's initial reaction was a criticism of the Democratic government, saying that the military revolution was "the only way to save the country." Later, at about 10:30 A.M., the commander of the U.N. forces in Korea General Carter Magruder visited President Yun and proposed a plan to mobilize a division of the U.S. troops and a detachment of the Korean First Army to defeat the revolutionary army. But President Yun opposed it. Yŏng Sŏk Yi, op. cit., pp. 174-175; Walter Briggs, "The Military Revolution in Korea and Its Leader and Achievement," Korean Quarterly Vol.V No. 2 (Summer 1963), pp. 31-33.

²²This is clearly confirmed by Park's remark regarding the coup in the same light with "Injo Panjŏng," a coup d'état in 1623 that replaced Kwanghae-gun, King Sŏnjo's son from one of his concubines and heir, with his nephew whose posthumous title is Injo. The coup was an attack by the so-called "Western Faction" against the "Northern Faction" which was in disorder due to its intra-factional strife between two parts: the Great and Small Northerners. For details, see: Woo-keun Han, History of Korea translated by Kyung-shik Lee (Seoul: Eul-Yoo Publishing Co., 1970), pp. 300-301.

against the revolutionary forces.²³ At any rate, President Yun's assistance was a decisive factor in the Revolutionary Army's success.

On May 18, when the situation was clearly in favor of the Revolutionary Army, Prime Minister Chang appeared from hiding and turned over the government to the Military Revolutionary Council. A small number of the revolutionary forces, about 3,600 compared to the ROK army of 600,000, overturned the weak Democratic Party government. The military junta emerged and quickly consolidated its power. This finally ended the civilian government, as well as South Korea's opportunity for democratic change, and initiated the new era of the military government led by Park Chung Hee (1961-1979).

To sum up, the first chance for South Korea to move toward democracy, the regime transition from Rhee's personal dictatorship to the Democratic Party government, was lost. A democratic rule was established, but the new government miscarried in the consolidation phase. The economy was a total failure, and politics was a die-hard confrontation and no compromise. This provided the military with an excuse to

²³Han'guk Kunsu Hyŏngmyŏng Wiwonhoe, op. cit., p. 260.; reciting from Se-jin Kim, op. cit., pp. 97-98.

intervene in civilian politics. In May 1961, there was a successful military coup led by General Park Chung Hee. From then on, Park maintained an authoritarian rule until he was assassinated by his subordinate in October 1979.

Among many factors responsible for the failure of democracy, the intra-party conflict within the ruling Democratic Party and the authoritarian military's intervention in politics were crucial. This confirms my definition of democratic transition that the transition to democracy is an ongoing process including not only the breakdown of authoritarian rule but also the establishment of democratic rule, a stable one. In other words, the three important factors (decline of legitimacy, rise of the democratic opposition, and disunity of the authoritarian ruling bloc) for the collapse of the authoritarian regime discussed in Chapter 1 can be also applied to the process of democratic consolidation. That is, successful democratic transition requires a democratic institution which can draw its support from the majority of the people and effectively check the reemergence of authoritarianism.

CHAPTER FIVE

FROM MILITARY DICTATORSHIP TO MILITARY OLIGARCHY

Historical Background

During the period of the military junta (1961-1963), all political activity was prohibited. Many politicians were blacklisted. Numerous businessmen were investigated on charges of illicit gaining of personal wealth. A number of generals were retired or imprisoned. Meanwhile, Park Chung Hee consolidated his power. For example, on May 19, Park established the Supreme Council for National Reconstruction. The Council functioned as the central policy-making organ. Initially, the Council's chairman was Lieutenant General Chang To Yŏng, but he was a mere figurehead. Later in July, Chang, was allegedly accused of being involved in a counter-coup plot, and he was replaced by the actual leader of the junta government, Major General Park Chung Hee.

After the May 16 coup in 1961, it was necessary for the leaders of the junta to have an organizational foundation for maintaining their power. The junta leaders' striving to build a firm political organization involved another case of internal power conflict between the two most important

figures--other than Park--of the revolutionary force, Kim Jong Pil and Kim Tong Ha. The former Kim, Park's nephew-in-law and confiding subordinate, was the director of the Korean CIA, which was created about a month after the coup. The main function of the Agency was gathering intelligence, particularly concerning counter-coup attempts in the military.¹ Kim Jong Pil proposed the organization of a political party named the Democratic Republican Party, which was necessary for the new military leaders' maintenance of political power. Marine Major General Kim Tong Ha, whose aid was crucial in the May 16 coup, opposed Kim's proposal. He opposed the proposal mainly because of the new party's function in Kim Jong Pil's interest as well as in prolonging the military rule. Kim Tong Ha and his close ally, the Commander of the First Field Army, Park Im Hang, were later court-martialled. The two incidents, ousting the intra-military factions of Chang To Yŏng and Kim Tong Ha, indicated the downfall of the Northerners in the military.

Park consolidated his power by eliminating opponents not only outside the junta but also from within the revolutionary forces. For example, the junta removed forty generals so that only six of the thirty-two members of the Supreme Council of National Reconstruction remained in

¹During the junta period, the Korean CIA uncovered thirteen cases of revolt, or planning to revolt, against the junta leaders. Se-jin Kim, The Politics of Military Revolution in Korea (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971), p. 112.

position by early 1961.² In July 1961, Park became the chairman of the Council. In March 1962 he was the Acting President. On December 26, 1962, a new constitution was adopted by a popular referendum. To be consistent with his initial pledges, Park announced, on February 18, 1963, that he had no intention of participating in civilian politics. Yet on March 16, he made an unpopular proposal, a referendum on extending the junta rule for four more years. Due to the opposition from the general public and from the United States, the plan was nullified and a presidential election was scheduled in October. Park retired from the army, ran for presidency as the Democratic Republican Party candidate, and won the election by a close margin--1.5% of the total votes--over the opposition candidate Yun Po Sun. It was a fair election. On October 26 of the year, the Sixth National Assembly election was held and the Democratic Republican Party won 110 seats, almost 70% of the total seats. The Park regime was born.

The first concern of the Park government was the revival of the national economy. Economic planning was the essence of the government's economic policy. The first five-year economic development plan (1962-1966) was carried out. Having many problems such as capital shortage in its initial phase, the Park government began negotiations with

²Chong-Sik Lee, "Historical Setting," in Frederica M. Bunge (ed.), South Korea: A Country Study (Washington, D.C.: American University Foreign Area Studies, 1982), p. 33.

Japan on diplomatic normalization, hoping for an inflow of Japanese capital. In 1965, the year the Korean-Japanese normalization treaty was signed, there was strong opposition against the government's signing of the treaty from students as well as from the opposition parties. The government's decision to send 45,000 combat troops to Vietnam also caused numerous student demonstrations. Although such anti-government protests created political instability whose degree of seriousness sometimes endangered the very foundation of the Park regime, the government managed to control the situation.

In the 1967 presidential election, President Park was reelected by defeating the New Democratic Party candidate, Yun Po Sun, with ease, compared to the 1963 election. The constitution amended in 1962 under the junta, however, prohibited a third term for Park. To lengthen his rule, Park amended the constitution on December 22, 1970. Thus, Park could run for the third presidential term. The 1971 election was closely contested. The New Democratic Party candidate, Kim Dae Jung, won 45.3% of the total votes; but he was defeated by Park Chung Hee who gained 53.2% of the total votes. Considering Park's winning in the Kyongsang provinces, the Southeastern region of South Korea, of 1.5 million more votes than Kim acquired, his re-election by a margin of less than one million votes altogether indicated

the decline of his popular support on the national level.³ In addition, in the Eighth National Assembly election held on December 31, 1970, the ruling Democratic Republican Party gained 48.9% of the total votes and 113 seats, compared to the opposition New Democratic Party's 42.5% and 89 seats. This was a considerable decline from 139 seats in the Seventh National Assembly election.⁴ The rise of the opposition in the Assembly, from 45 to 89 seats, became a significant threat to Park's stable position.

Facing such an unstable situation, Park proclaimed a state of martial law on October 17, 1972. He suspended the constitution, annulled freedom of expression and assembly, banned political activity, dissolved the National Assembly, closed all the universities, and restricted the civil rights of the people. Later on October 27, Park proposed the most undemocratic constitution in Korean history. It enabled his permanent rule, granted him power to issue emergency decrees at his will, and provided him with authority to control one-third of the National Assembly through giving him a privilege to recommend--virtually appoint--a negotiating group of 73 Assemblymen called "Yujŏnghoe."

This so-called "Yushin (Revitalizing Reform)" constitution was adopted by referendum on November 21. The con-

³Sŭng Hŭm Kil et al., Han'guk Sŏngŏron (Theory of Korean Elections) (Seoul: Tasan Publishing Co., 1987), p. 55.

⁴Ibid., pp. 51-53.

stitution was justified as necessary for promoting the cause of national reunification, coping with rapidly changing international environments, and establishing a "Koreanized" democracy. On December 23 of the year, Park was elected for a six-year term by the electoral college, which was called the National Conference for Unification, whose president was Park himself. This opened a new era of Park's personal dictatorship, and his permanent rule was practically secured.

A. The Demise of Park's Military Dictatorship: Legitimacy Crisis, Internal Conflict of the Regime, and its End

1. Decline of Legitimacy Under the Park Regime

The opposition forces--church groups, students, intellectuals, and some journalists--criticized Park's authoritarian "Yushin" constitution and often demanded its abolition. First of all, on April 22, 1973, some members of the Urban Industrial Mission and the Korean Students Christian Federation distributed printed materials calling for a restoration of democracy and freedom of the press, and attempted a demonstration against the government. With this

as the starting point, many Christian groups such as the National Council of Churches began their anti-government battle against Park. Second, on October 2 of the year, some students of Seoul National University demonstrated against the government demanding (1) democratization; (2) termination of economic dependence on Japan; (3) abolishment of the Korean CIA; and (4) disclosure of the kidnapping of Kim Dae Jung.⁵ This demonstration was the first public protest since the enactment of the Yushin constitution, and initiated a series of student protests later on.⁶ In addition, on November 29, encouraged by the sequence of student protests, the Journalists' Association adopted a resolution to express themselves freely. Finally, on December 24, some intellectuals, religious leaders and journalists adopted the "Declaration of Promoting the Petition Movement for the Constitutional Revision," and began a nation-wide anti-Yushin movement. Confronting such strong resistance from the opposition forces, the government's response was severe repressive measures such as Emergency Decree No.1 and No.2 issued on January 8, 1974.

⁵In August 8, 1973, Kim Dae Jung, Park's opponent in the 1971 election, who was carrying on an anti-Park campaign in Japan at that time, was kidnapped from a Tokyo hotel by the Korean CIA agents to South Korea and later imprisoned.

⁶Hae Ch'an Yi, "70 Nyôndae Chisigin Haksaeng Undong (Movements of Intellectuals and Students in the 1970s," in Hyôn Ch'ae Pak et al., Haebang Sasimnyôn ŭi Chaeinsik (Reassessment of the Forty Years After Liberation) Vol.II (Seoul: Tolbegae, 1986), p. 204.

In 1974, student demonstrations continued. A nationwide inter-university organization called the National Democratic Students' League (Minch'ŏnghangnyon) was established. The Park government issued another repressive measure, Emergency Decree No.4, against the opposition movement. The situation, however, did not get better for the government. Later in the year, even high school students demonstrated against the military rule.

Moreover, many journalists opposed government censorship, and reported the scenes of student demonstrations and the demands of the opposition groups which had been banned from publication. The Dong-A Daily, one of the largest circulating newspapers, was a forerunner of the movement for freedom of the press at that time. To suppress it, the Yushin government put pressure upon the advertizing businesses to cancel their advertisements in the Dong-A Daily. Commercial advertisements by businesses ceased for about seven months beginning in December 1974. But the popular response to the government's harsh restraint was phenomenal. Hundreds of citizens as well as numerous democratic movement groups took ad space in the newspaper for their own statements encouraging the newspaper's battle for the press freedom. As the donations from the people continued, the popular discontent against the Yushin system increased rapidly.

Faced with a series of anti-government protests by students, the use of more oppressive measures became inevitable. The notorious Emergency Decree No. 9, issued on May 13, 1975, prohibited, among other things, any criticism of the Yushin constitution, student participation in politics, and press coverage of them.⁷ How repressive the Park regime was is well shown in the number of political prisoners imprisoned under its various austere laws. [See: Table 5.1]

That is, in addition to the denial of the fundamentals of democracy such as popular sovereignty under the Yushin constitution embodying the unfair methods of executive and legislative selection, basic civil rights such as freedom of assembly, expression, and opposition were seriously restricted. The Park regime censored the press, incarcerated students demonstrating against the Yushin constitution, and repressed the opposition leaders. Such harsh measures silenced the voice of the anti-government forces, but only temporarily.

⁷The Emergency Decree No. 9 contained extraordinarily repressive measures: (1) banning the fabrication and spreading of any "false reports," (2) prohibiting any petitions and statements for the constitutional revision, (3) proscribing any political gathering and political activities, (4) forbidding any criticisms on the Decree, (5) outlawing the propagation of any contents containing such criticisms, (6) providing the Ministers of the Departments concerned with authority to take any measures on the persons or organizations that violated the Decree, and (7) immunizing such measures from responsibility to the law. Korea Annual (Seoul: Haptong News Agency, 1976), pp. 328-330.

Table 5.1: Political Prisoners
Under Various Laws: 1961-1975^a

	NSL	ACL	PAL	PSL	LAD	ED	Total
1961	296					1	297
1962			3,033*				3,033
1963	102	86			239		427
1964	63	105			34	6	208
1965	120	133			42	2	277
1966	69	141			151	2	363
1967	131	207			33	6	377
1968	270	381			121	2	774
1969	254	627			91	1	973
1970	204	368			25		597
1971	217	276			49	1	543
1972	175	507			24		706
1973	164	260		1	37		462
1974	152	228			7	203**	590
1975	74	328		5	13		420

* Source: Ch'angkyu Choe, Haebang Samsimnyŏnŭsa (Thirty Year History After Liberation) Vol. IV., p. 119.

** Source: Dong-A Ilbo, Donga Yŏnbo (Dong-A Annual) (1976)

^aSource: (1) For the years of 1961-1963, Kvŏngch'al T'onggye Yŏnbo (Police Annual Statistics) of the National Police Bureau, (2) For the years of 1964-1975, Pŏbwon T'onggye Yŏnbo (Court Annual Statistics) of the Office of Court Administration; Citing from: Se-jin Kim, "Han'guk Chŏngch'i Palchŏn e kwanhan Koch'al (A Study of Political Development in Korea)," Han'guk ŭi Chŏngch'ibalchŏn kwa Kvŏngjebalchŏn (Political and Economic Development of Korea) (Seoul: Asian Institute for Public Policy, 1979), p. 188.

The decline of legitimacy was clearly shown in the Tenth National Assembly election in December 1978. In the election, the opposition New Democratic Party won 32.8% of the total votes. It was 1.1% more than the ruling Democratic Republican Party. Surpassing the ruling party in popular votes by the opposition party was a first in the history of Korea. Again the outcome of the legislative election verified the dissatisfaction of the general public with the Yushin government.

To make the political situation worse, in the late 1970s, the South Korean economy was in a critical situation. The oil price rise generated inflation and the worldwide economic recession slowed the pace of South Korean economic growth, probably the only remaining justification for sustaining Park's rule. For example, the foreign trade balance considerably deteriorated, and the inflation rate kept on increasing, as shown in Table 5.2 and Table 5.3 as follows:⁹

Table 5.2: Foreign Trade Balance

Year	Trade Balance (millions in US \$)
1976	-591
1977	-477
1978	-1,787
1979	-4,396

⁹Source: Economic Planning Board, Major Economic Indices (1983).

Table 5.3: Consumer Price Index

Year	% Change
1977	10.2
1978	14.5
1979	18.3

In addition, the gap between the haves and have-nots became more and more immense. Considering the seriousness of his economic difficulties, in December 1978, Park reshuffled the Cabinet, especially in the staffs of the Economic Planning Board. The new technocrats headed by the Minister of the Economic Planning Board, Sin Hyŏn Hwak, who replaced Nam Tŏk U, employed an economic stabilization plan, but only to fail. The economic downturn contributed to a series of bankruptcies. Bankruptcy resulted in unemployment.

On August 9, 1979, the Y.H. Trading Company, created by Chang Yong Ho in 1966, was one of many bankrupt business enterprises. About 170 female workers of the company who lost their jobs, demanding the right to manage the company, occupied the New Democratic Party headquarters in Map'o, Seoul, and went on a sit-in demonstration. A few days later, some 1,000 riot policemen stormed into the building at night. During the police operation, many innocent people including the party members, reporters, and workers were beaten, and a woman worker was killed. The "Y.H. Incident" gave rise to mass protests, most significantly the so-called "Puma Sat'ae"--the mass protests in the Southeastern cities

of Pusan and Masan--in later months. They finally led to the end of the Park regime.

In September, university students held rallies responding to the Y.H. incident. The students demonstrated for the end of the exploitation of the workers and farmers as well as of the authoritarian rule. To make it worse, the government took an inflexible hard-line stand against the opposition by expelling the opposition leader Kim Young Sam. In October, a number of anti-government protests initiated by university student took place in Pusan, a Southeastern seaport, the second largest city in South Korea and Kim Young Sam's regional background. Later, many citizens joined in the street demonstrations. Their slogans most commonly yelled out were "Abolish the Yushin" and "Away with Dictatorship." On October 18, when the demonstrations turned into major riots, a state of emergency in the city was declared, and Pusan was placed under military control. To ally themselves with protesters in Pusan, hundreds of Masan and Kyŏngnam University students poured into the streets of Masan, a neighboring city of Pusan. To block the proliferation of such strong anti-government protests, the government proclaimed martial law and put the area under military control.

As the legitimacy of the Park regime deteriorated, the people, who did not have any other alternative channel to express themselves or to affect the political process

(largely due to the limitation of their civil rights by the authoritarian regime) resorted to radical means--street protest. Responding to such challenges from the people, the government policy was inevitably--owing to their authoritarian characteristics--inflexible and coercive. Force could not suppress the voice of the people, or their aspiration for freedom and democracy. On the contrary, it even further disintegrated the legitimacy of the Park regime and strengthened the resolve of the opposition.

2. Disharmony Within the Park Regime and Park's Assassination

On October 26, 1979, when the mass protests in Pusan and Masan were still going on, the Korean CIA Director Kim Jae Kyu assassinated President Park and the Chief of the Presidential Security Office Ch'a Chi Ch'ôl, thereby ending the eighteen years of Park's authoritarian rule. Many factors motivated Kim Jae Kyu's assassination plot. First of all, the social disorder at that time weakened the confidence of the core members of the ruling class including Kim, and it became a pretext for him to carry out the assassination plot. Second, domestic discord between Ch'a Chi Ch'ôl and Kim was a main cause of pushing him to the incident. Third, Kim's personal constitution, such as his

own ambition to leave an honorable name after death and his explosive temper, certainly influenced events.¹⁰

Under such a single-person dominant political system, it was natural that all power converge upon the dictator. Accordingly, the most powerful were those close to Park. The three most influential offices were: (1) the Presidential Secretariat headed by Kim Kye Won at that time, (2) the Presidential Security Office, and (3) the Korean CIA. The heads of those three offices were the men whom Park met with most frequently--virtually everyday.

Among them, the closest staff person to the president at that time was Ch'a Chi Ch'ŏl. He was born in Seoul on November 6, 1934. On May 16, 1961, he participated in the military coup as an airborne unit captain. When the airborne unit commandant, Park Chi Ok, hesitated to mobilize his troop upon the receipt of a message from the Chief of the General Staff Chang To Yŏng not to relocate, Ch'a was "the first one who broke into an arsenal and prepared for

¹⁰Kim stated his personal ambition to die gloriously in his last testimony as follows: "I am not making my final statement to beg for my life. Rather I am grateful to die for a worthy cause...The objectives of the October 26 revolution are (1) restoration of liberal democracy, (2) preventing the production of more victims [of the Yushin system as well as the mass protests prevailing these days], (3) protecting the country from the spread of communism, (4) renewal of relations with the United States and promotion of national interest, and (5) obliterating the Koreans' reputation, prejudiced as dictatorial." Kap Che Cho, Yugo (Accident) Vol.II (Seoul: Hankilsa, 1987), pp. 238-239.

making a sortie."¹¹ On the scene was Park Chung Hee, thus Ch'a's undaunted action won the confidence of Park. In 1962, he retired from military service, and participated in civilian politics by being appointed as Assemblyman. On August 15, 1974, there was an incident that prompted his access to President Park as the Chief of the Presidential Security Office. It was an assassination attempt on Park during the National Independence Day ceremony by a Korean from Japan, Mun Se Kwang. The attempt was aborted but Moon's overshot bullets killed the president's wife instead. After the incident, Park became a loner avoiding public exposure, and became increasingly dependent upon his bodyguard, Ch'a Chi Ch'ol.

Ch'a was known to be stubborn and sometimes arrogant. As he was becoming Park's most trusted man in Park's later years--which means his power increased, Ch'a's arrogance was often perceived as impertinent by Park's other close associates such as Kim Jae Kyu and Kim Kye Won, who were competing with each other to get the President's confidence. As Ch'a gained Park's trust more and more, Kim Jae Kyu's power basis was threatened. Kim became frustrated as Ch'a tried to influence politics as well as other state organs, especially anything under the jurisdiction of Kim's own office. For example, concerning the mass protests in Pusan and Masan, Ch'a recommended a hard-line policy such as the

¹¹Ibid., Vol.I, p. 22.

use of coercive means while Kim advocated a soft-line method.

Kim Jae Kyu was born at Sônsan-kun, Kyôngbuk, as the first son of eight children to a well-off family on March 6, 1926. He was a member of the second graduating class of the Korean Military Academy. The army positions he assumed include the commander of the 36th Regiment of the 5th Division, which was under Park's command at that time, the commander of the Army 6th Division, and the commander of the Army Security Command. In 1973, he retired from active army service and became an Assemblyman by Park's appointment. In 1974, he was named as the Minister of Construction, and the Director of the Korean CIA in 1976. He was a man of great self-respect who had a keen sense of honor.¹² Considering these aspects of his character, he was one of the last ones who could put up with the haughtiness of Ch'a Chi Ch'ôl. Moreover, Ch'a was eight years younger than Kim. This furthered Kim's frustration, especially in Korea where the seniority system is well observed.

At this point, the disruptions in Pusan and Masan gave an impetus to the assassination plot. Kim perceived the disturbances as a serious threat to the Park regime and proposed some moderate plans to cope with the crisis. Again Ch'a Chi Ch'ôl interrupted the connection between Park and

¹²Kim Jae Kyu spoke of himself as a man "who values honor" and wanted to go down in history as "a man with a clean record." Ibid., p. 97.

Kim, and recommended more repressive measures, ones which Kim regarded as an incentive to a larger scale mass protest all over the major cities in the country that consequently would lead to the regime's collapse. It was obvious that Park was relying on Ch'a and would not listen to Kim's recommendation. Thus, Kim was waiting for a right moment to carry out his radical plan to solve the problem. He thought Park was hopeless, and so was the future of Park's regime.¹³

To sum up, Kim's own ambition to leave a clean name in history and his frustration with Ch'a Chi Ch'öl's supercilious attitude jelled into the scheme to kill the President as well as the first target, Ch'a. The implementation of the plan was abetted by the mass protests against Park's rule, which Kim might have regarded as a forewarning of the collapse of the Park regime, or at least as endangering the durability of his rule. That is, the domestic discord between Park's own associates, who had benefited most from his authoritarian rule, was one of facilitating factors, if not the immediate cause, of the assassination of Park and the breakdown of the Yushin regime.

¹³On October 27, 1979, the day after his assassination of President Park, Kim was arrested. He was later sentenced to death and executed on May 24, 1980. Kap Che Cho, op. cit., Vol.2, pp. 248-9.

B. Unsuccessful Democratic Transition

A sudden power vacuum created after Park's death on October 26, 1979, became an opportunity for democratic change in South Korea. The notorious Emergency Decree No. 9 was revoked and political prisoners including Kim Dae Jung were released. Civilian politicians including three Kims, Kim Jong Pil, Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung, resumed their political activities. The National Assembly prepared a new constitution. Adversely, however, some younger army generals headed by Maj. Gen. Chun Doo Hwan, the commander of the Army Security Commander, rose in revolt against General Chung Seung Hwa and other senior officers, on December 12 of the year. The revolt was successful. Afterwards, the leaders of the coup intervened in politics, played a dominant role in the transition process, and finally produced another military dictatorship. The military's action could have been restrained, if civilian politicians had been effective in managing the critical situation. Even after the coup, however, politicians were not well aware of the state of affairs in top-level governmental decision-making organs on which the military officers exerted their influence. In short, another military intervention in politics, aided by civilian politicians' ineffectiveness,

aborted the second chance for the country to move toward democracy.

1. The Rise of Young Army Generals

On the day after the assassination of President Park on October 26, 1979, Kim Jae Kyu was arrested and martial law was declared. Prime Minister Choi Kyu Ha became the acting president. Later in the year, important political figures of both the governing and the opposition sides resurfaced in the political scene. Kim Jong Pil was elected as the new president of the government party, the Democratic Republican Party, on November 12.¹⁴ Kim Young Sam also regained his leadership in the New Democratic Party, which had been in confusion since the expulsion of its leader, Kim, from the National Assembly in early October. The Emergency Decree No. 9 was rescinded, and Kim Dae Jung was released from prison on December 6, the day the Acting President Choi Kyu Ha was elected as president in the electoral college called the National Conference for Unification by the provisions of the Yushin constitution. The Choi government's task was to maintain political order, to prepare for the revision of the constitution and the election of a new national leader, and

¹⁴Chong-Sik Lee, "South Korea 1979: Confrontation, Assassination, and Transition," Asian Survey Vol.XX, No.1 (January 1980), p. 71.

to serve for the establishment of a nationally accepted new government. In spite of widespread unstable conditions such as an economic downturn, the society in general was relatively stable and also favorable to democratic change. On December 12, however, the groundwork for reestablishing another military regime was laid by a small number of younger generals in the army.

a. The December 12 Coup

On December 12, a group of military officers, mainly consisting of the eleventh graduating class of the Korean Military Academy, carried out a coup against General Chung Seung Hwa, the commander of martial law. Its leader was Maj. Gen. Chun Doo Hwan, the commander of the Army Security Command, the army's intelligence unit, who later became the chief of the Joint Investigation Headquarters in charge of investigating Park's assassination case. First of all, Chung Seung Hwa, who became the martial law commander after Park's death, reorganized the top-ranking military officers. The personnel changes were characterized as the elimination of the so-called "political" military officers.¹⁵ It was believed, at that time, that Chung Seung Hwa would soon replace and reposition Chun as commander of an army division

¹⁵Sang U Yi, "Han'guk Kunbu ūi Inmaek kwa P'abŏl (Personal Network and Factions in the Korean Military)," Shin Dong-A (August 1988), p. 344.

on the East coast, a position commonly regarded as a sinecure. This meant the interruption of his successful military career. Such a demotion was an intolerable one for Chun who had been the leader among the members of the eleventh graduating class of the Korean Military Academy.

Meanwhile, Chun was a chief investigator of Park's assassination case and found a suspicious element in General Chung's whereabouts at the night of the assassination. At the time when the Korean CIA director Kim Jae Kyu assassinated President Park, Chung was dining in a Korean CIA office at Kungjŏng-dong, only a few blocks away from the place where Kim gunned down the president. It was only because Kim invited Chung in order to use him in managing the aftermath of the assassination, not because Chung was involved in the plot. In fact, Chung was the one who ordered Kim's arrest after being informed by the chief of the Presidential Secretariat, Kim Kye Won, that Kim Jae Kyu was the one who killed the president.

Chun Doo Hwan used the uncertain element of Chung's whereabouts in persuading his colleagues in the army to rise up against Chung and their superiors. On December 12, he mustered his supporters at a guardhouse of the Capital Garrison Command near from Kyŏngbok-kung Palace and the residence of Prime Minister, where the Acting President Choi Kyu Ha was living. The gathering was called as a "birthday party." Some crucial members of the party, who later became

the leading group of the Chun regime, were as follows: Lieutenant General Ch'a Kyu Hôn, the commander of the Capital Army Corps; Lieut. Gen. Yu Hak Sông, the Assistant Deputy Minister of Defense; Lieut. Gen. Hwang Yông Si, the commander of the 11th Army Corps; Maj. Gen. Roh Tae Woo, the commander of the 9th Army Division; Maj. Gen. Pak Jun Pyông, the commander of the 20th Army Division. Most of them were the members of "Hanahoe," an intra-military faction comprised of the army officers who were politically conscious under the Park regime.

Gathering his supporters, at 6:00 P.M., Chun sent two of his junior officers, Colonel Hô Sam Su, the Chief of the Personnel Division in the Army Security Command, and Colonel U Kyông Yun, the Chief of the Information Division in the Army Security Command, to the residence of General Chung Seung Hwa to arrest him. Meanwhile, Chun went to Acting President Choi, who was the only authority to make such a high level decision to arrest the Martial Law Commander, to get a permission to seize General Chung. At 7:30 P.M., the two officers captured General Chung and transported him from his residence. Several fights occurred and a few soldiers were killed.

After the incident, the supporters of General Chung were informed of the capture of General Chung, and tried to act against the revolt of Chun and his associates. They were Major General Chông Pyông Chu, the commander of the

Army Special Force and Major General Chang T'ae Wan, the commander of the Metropolitan Garrison Force. But their response was too delayed, and they were arrested by Chun's forces.

Before the dawn of the next day, the Minister of Defense, No Jae Hyôn, was found in the Ministry of Defense building. His capture became a turning point in the success of Chun's revolt, since Acting President Choi had maintained his position, that he would not approve the arrest of General Chung unless the Defense Minister was present. Without delay, Defense Minister No was sent to Choi's residence. Losing his last remaining excuse, at 4:30 A.M., Acting President Choi signed a paper approving the arrest of General Chung. Chun's coup was successful.

b. Military Intervention In Politics

After the success of the coup, Chun replaced many important military positions with his associates. He himself became a Lieutenant General in March 1980, and later the Acting Director of the Korean CIA in April. Considering his position as the Commander of the Army Security Command, he was in control of virtually all information organs. Using such crucial positions, he prevailed over President Choi, who was elected as president by an electoral college

called the National Council for Unification in late December of 1979. Choi became a mere tool of Chun.

In the spring of the year, university students held rallies against the delay in the process of democratic change, and demanded the repeal of the martial law imposed since the death of President Park, and the resignation of General Chun and Prime Minister Sin Hyun Hwak, who were collaborating with Chun on the military's interference in politics. However, the media were forced to report only destructive aspects of the student demonstrations. At that time, the military authorities imposed censorship and manipulated public opinion, so that they could consolidate their control over the country. The Journalists Association of Korea protested against the military's press censorship, and announced that they would stop submitting stories for censorship on May 17.¹⁶ But their effort ended in a failure.

Utilizing the student protests as an excuse, Chun coerced President Choi to issue a far-reaching and nationwide martial law on May 17.¹⁷ Chun devastated the power

¹⁶Amnesty International, Republic of Korea: Violations of Human Rights (London: Amnesty International Publications, 1981), p. 7.

¹⁷The martial law includes some strengthened repressive measures as follows: (1) All political activity was banned, including any assembly or demonstration for political purposes. This included the closure of the National Assembly; (2) Universities and colleges which had reopened were closed temporarily; (3) "Strikes and absence from work without good reason" were banned; (4) To the prohibition on

base of all influential political figures by arresting many politicians including the "Three Kims."

Chun's hard-line policy was then confronted by a major crisis. Later in the month, from May 18 to May 27, there was the so-called Kwangju Uprising, mass protests in the provincial capital of South Cholla, Kim Dae Jung's home province, and its neighboring areas, demanding the immediate end of martial law, the release of Kim Dae Jung, and the resignation of General Chun. It was crushed brutally by the army and some airborne unit soldiers. Hundreds of civilians were killed.

As planned, the next step was made.¹⁸ A 25-member "Committee for National Security (Kukpowi)," headed by General Chun Doo Hwan, was formed on May 31. The committee controlled the government, initiated a far-reaching "purification movement," and eliminated some members of the National Assembly, government officials, journalists and

"spreading groundless rumors" was added "the act of slandering the former and present heads of state and the use of declaration and language in the same vein as used by the North Korean puppets; and any other agitating remarks and acts corrupting public order at public meetings will not be permitted." Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁸Chu Yŏng Pok, the Minister of Defense at that time, testified at a hearing of the Special Committee on Kwangju of the National Assembly as follows: "At 9:00 A.M., May 17, 1980, Kwon Chŏng Tal [the Chief of the Information Division of the Army Security Command and Chun's associate] came to see me and told me that it would be better to have an organ like the "Committee of National Security (Kukpowi)." Thus I discussed about it with the Commander of the Joint Army Staffs and the Chief of the General Staff." Chosun Ilbo New York Edition (November 22, 1988), p.32.

business élites. On August 16, President Choi resigned. Chun resigned from the army on August 22, and was elected president on August 30 by the rubber-stamp electoral college, the National Conference for Unification, one vote short of the total 2,525 votes--the 1 vote was invalid. A new constitution was declared on October 22, 1980.¹⁹ The Fifth Republic was inaugurated.

2. Incapability of Civilian Politicians

The renewed chance for South Korea's transition to democracy was dissipated mainly because of the intervention in politics by the army officers' circle headed by Chun. But civilian politicians were also partly responsible for the failure of democracy. The death of Park rejuvenated civilian politics. Major post-Park political forces were represented by the ruling Democratic Republican Party and the opposition New Democratic Party, or by the so-called "Three Kims" as follows: Kim Jong Pil, one of Park's associates who was elected as the new president of the Democratic Republican Party on November 12, 1979; Kim Young Sam, the leader of the New Democratic Party; and Kim Dae

¹⁹C.I. Eugene Kim, "The South Korean Military and Its Political Role," in Ilpyong J. Kim and Young Whan Kihl (eds.), Political Change in South Korea (New York: The Korean PWPA Inc., 1988), p. 101.

Jung, the leader of the so-called "Chaeya" (the opposition forces widespread in the society) who was released from prison on December 9. In spite of the restraint on their political activities under the martial law proclaimed on October 27; the extensive role of the three Kims in the politics of transition was widely expected. First of all, mutual agreement between those civilian forces on how to establish the next government was necessary for the three Kims to control the transition process, because the military, keeping a vigilant eye on the three Kims, was already deeply involved in politics. Largely due to the disunity in their parties, however, those civilian politicians wasted their time and energy in addressing their own intra-party problems, and consequently became unable to construct a national political agenda. Such inefficiency provided the younger army generals with time to increase their influence in the transition process, and eventually with the opportunity to seize political power.

a. Disarray of the Democratic Republican Party

After Park's death, Kim Jong Pil, who had been commonly regarded as the second man throughout Park's era, made a quick movement. He became the new president of the ruling Democratic Republican Party in November and reorganized the party in December, placing his associates in the main posts.

In the mean time Kim Jong Pil, probably concerned about the next presidential election, tried to dissociate himself from the Yushin system (e.g.. the decision not to participate in the presidential election by the National Conference for Unification to be held at least within three months by the provision of the Yushin constitution) and to show himself as responsive to the popular demand of democratization (e.g., his meeting with the opposition leader Kim Young Sam in November).

Before long, however, Kim Jong Pil encountered a series of events, called the "Chôngp'ung (rectification)" movement, indicating that he was not in full control of the party and its members. The "Chôngp'ung" movement was a purification effort initially claimed by some younger members in the party. It aimed at ostracizing some of the party leaders who were allegedly involved in abusing their power during Park's rule and various corruption cases. The accused leaders were as follows: Yi Hu Rak, former head of the Presidential Secretariat (1963-69) and of the KCIA (1970-73); Kim Jin Man, former speaker of the National Assembly; and Park Chong Kyu, former director of the Presidential Security Forces.²⁰ The young Assemblymen representing the "Chôngp'ung" group were Park Ch'an Jong, Oh Yu Pang, Chung

²⁰Chong-Sik Lee, "South Korea in 1980: The Emergence of a New Authoritarian Order," Asian Survey Vol. XXI No.1 (January 1981), p. 127.

Tong Sung and Hong Sung Woo.²¹ But the accused politicians were powerful enough to reciprocate with pressure on the party leadership to submit the leaders of the "Chôngp'ung" group to disciplinary action.

Under such a delicate situation, Kim Jong Pil himself was not safe from the "Chôngp'ung" movement, literally meaning a "rectifying wind." Im Ho, a member of the party and the Assembly, issued a statement on the necessity of Kim's resignation for the furtherance of the rectification drive. Furthermore, a head wind from the accused members was even more serious. On March 24, 1980, Lee Hu Rak, the most notable subject of criticism by the "Chôngp'ung" group, held a press conference, publicly condemning Kim Jong Pil and urging his resignation from the party's leadership.²² The aftermath of Lee's announcement was enormous. It threw the party into utter confusion. Such a chaotic situation was finally settled by disciplinary action taken against both the advocate, Im Ho, and the target, Lee Hu Rak, of the

²¹Yông Sôk Yi, op. cit., p. 412.

²²There is a speculation on the grounds of Lee's denouncement of Kim. Lee, who had been in exile since the death of Park, came back to Korea on March 14, only 10 days before his bombshell statement, and took such drastic action. It is believed that there was a clandestine arrangement between Lee, who was in need of his own security after his return, and the military leaders who had to undermine Kim's power for them to seize political power. New Korea Times (April 19, 1980); reciting from Sanbon'gangsa, "Korea in Upheaval," in Han'guk Hyôndae Kunjôngsa (History of Modern Military Rule in Korea) translated by Choe Hyôn (Seoul: Samminsa, 1987), pp. 374-76.

"Chôngp'ung" movement. But it inflicted much damage on the party, particularly on its leadership.

b. Disunity in the Opposition

After Park's death, Kim Young Sam, the leader of the New Democratic Party, the strongest opposition party, whose authority had been in danger since the provisional disposition of his presidency by the Seoul district court in October 1979, regained his control of the party. As one of a few viable contenders for political power, he reinforced his authority in the party as well as in his own private organizations, such as the Institute for the Korean Affairs. When Kim Dae Jung was rehabilitated on February 29, 1980, however, Kim Young Sam's dominant position in the party, as well as in the opposition forces in general, was seriously challenged. Since the opposition party was expected to win the forthcoming election, the power struggle between the two Kims became more intense.

The party was divided into two groups: the so-called "hegemonic (Tanggwonp'a)" and "non-hegemonic (Pi-tanggwon-p'a)" party members. The former group dominating the party consisted of Kim Young Sam's supporters, and the latter of Kim Dae Jung's followers.

Kim Dae Jung, who did not command a majority in the party but represented the various social groups such as

dissident students, intellectuals and progressive Christians who had protested against the authoritarian Yushin government, did not rejoin the party. Instead, he reorganized the "Chaeya" forces as his own political resource. In April 1980, Kim Dae Jung criticized the New Democratic Party for their waste of the six months since Park's assassination. During the six-month period, the "Yushin" forces were able to regroup the conservative camps and reinforce their political power. This split Kim Dae Jung's followers from the party, and precipitated the separation between the two most important opposition political forces: the New Democratic Party and the "Chaeya" forces.

Meanwhile, college students as well as the citizens became frustrated with the maintenance of the Yushin system and the delaying of democratic changes by the interim Choi government and those behind Acting President Choi, the younger generals including Chun. They demanded that martial law be lifted and the remnants of the Yushin system be eliminated, and began to throng on the streets. In late April, social disorder proliferated into some other sectors of the society (e.g., a large-scale miners' riot in Sabuk on the east coast during April 21-24, and a steel mill workers' riot in Pusan on April 29).²³ In early May, student protests became more vigorous, large-scale, and extensive.

²³Chong-Sik Lee, "South Korea in 1980: The Emergence of a New Authoritarian Order," Asian Survey Vol.11 No.1 (January 1981), p. 128.

On May 14, some 50,000 students poured into the streets of downtown Seoul. The streets of other major cities were also flooded with thousands of college students.

These massive student demonstrations generated a major crisis and provided an excuse for the military led by Chun Doo Hwan to intervene. On May 17, martial law was extended into the whole nation. On that day, a new Martial Law Decree including the closure of the colleges and universities, prohibition of all political gatherings, and censorship of all publications and broadcasts, was issued.

Most important political figures, including not only Kim Dae Jung and others who had been opposing the Park regime but also Kim Jong Pil, Park Chong Kyu and Lee Hu Rak who had been the close associates of President Park, were arrested. This move was a part of Chun's well-planned scheme to seize political power. By eliminating those possible obstructors, Chun could gain the power to control the political arena.

In brief, although the military officers headed by Chun were already involved in politics and intentionally delayed the democratizing process in order to rise to power, it was conceivable that unity within the opposition forces and their agreement on a future political schedule could expedite the process of democratic political change such as a constitutional amendment for a new government. The opposition forces, however, lacked such solidarity. They

were ineffective in checking the military intervention in politics. Consequently, the process of building a new government under Chun's leadership was not blocked, and authoritarian rule was re-installed in South Korea.

In conclusion, the second chance for South Korea to move toward democracy came in 1979, when the political legitimacy of Park's military dictatorship considerably declined as the economy showed a downward trend and the anti-government protests by various opposition groups proliferated. But the chance was also lost, mainly because of the weakness of the opposition and another military interference. Civilian politicians were too indecisive to block the military intervention in politics. They were divided, unable to agree upon the future political agenda for establishing a new civilian government, and, most importantly, ineffective in checking the ambitious younger army generals. Major General Chun Doo Hwan, the leader of the army officers' circle called the "Hanahoe," led a coup against his senior officers in December 1979, gained control over the military, seized political power after a brutal suppression of the bloody Kwangju Uprising in May 1980, and installed a new military authoritarianism later in the year.

In short, the decline of the Park regime's political legitimacy along with the disintegration of its ruling bloc generated a new chance for the country to make a transition to democracy, but it failed mainly because of the weakness of the democratic opposition party and the strength of the support of the authoritarian regime in the army. This, again, proves how important the existence of strong opposition forces as an alternative is in the process of democratization.

CHAPTER SIX

FROM MILITARY AUTHORITARIANISM TO DEMOCRACY

Historical Background

After the bloodshedding suppression of the Kwangju uprising in May 1980, the military headed by General Chun created the "Kukpowi (the Committee of National Security)," which functioned as the supreme state organ with the authority to pass laws.¹ In June, Chun resigned his acting directorship of the Korean CIA. In August, he retired from the army and was elected president by the National Conference for Unification, a rubber-stamp electoral college. On October 22, a new constitution containing many undemocratic features such as indirect presidential election and the president's authority to dissolve the National Assembly was

¹On May 31 the Special Committee for National Security Measures was organized. The 25-member committee was headed by President Choi, his cabinet members, and nine military officers. However, the 31-member Standing Committee of the Special Committee headed by Chun was the ultimate decision-making organ. The Special Committee consisted of the army officers who seized control of the military by the December 12 coup, including Chun Doo Hwan, the commander of the Metropolitan Garrison Command Roh Tae Woo, the commander of the Army Special Forces Chung Ho Yong, and the deputy chief of Staff of the Army Ch'a Kyu Hŏn. Young Hwan Kihl, Politics and Policies in Divided Korea: Regimes in Contest (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1984), p. 80.

approved by national referendum, and the Fifth Republic was born.

The "Chôngghwa (purification)" campaign was one of the first programs President Chun enforced. Many politicians were arrested. Thousands of government officials including former cabinet officers, administrators of state-financed enterprises and agencies, and bank officials were dismissed.² The campaign was also extended to the mass media. About 200 periodicals were eradicated, many journalists of major daily newspapers were expelled from their job, and two privately owned television broadcasting companies were assimilated into the government operated Korean Broadcasting System.³

In October, President Chun appointed 81 members to the Legislative Council for National Security. The Council functioned as a law-making organ until the resumption of the National Assembly. The Council exercised its legislative power by passing a number of laws including such politically significant ones as laws on legislative elections and

²Chong-Sik Lee, "South Korea in 1980: The Emergence of a New Authoritarian Order," Asian Survey Vol.11 No.1 (January 1981), p. 135.

³At that time, there were only three television channels. They were TBC (Tongyang Broadcasting Company--Channel 7), MBC (Munhwa Broadcasting Company--Channel 11), and KBS (Korean Broadcasting System--Channel 9). The TBC and MBC were privately owned and the KBS was operated by the government. Therefore, the incorporation of the former two companies to KBS created a government monopoly of all television broadcasting system.

political parties. In accordance with the laws, a legislative election was held in March 1981. The Democratic Justice Party, a newly organized party under Chun's leadership in January 1981, won 35.6% of the popular vote but easily won a majority, 151 of the total 276 seats, aided by the absence of prominent politicians whose political activities were prohibited, and by the new electoral law favoring the party with the greatest number of seats.

To sum up, through the implementation of the "Chônghwa (purification)" campaign, Chun eliminated his viable political contenders and gained control over the government, state-owned firms, and the mass media. The outcome of the 1981 National Assembly election provided a stable position of the governing Democratic Justice Party in the nation's politics. That is, a new authoritarian regime under the leadership of Chun was established. There was no major change in the domestic political scene until 1985, when the Twelfth National Assembly election was held.

The 1985 National Assembly election was a significant political event to both the ruling group and the opposition. For the ruling group, it was the first electoral contest to test the popular support of the regime since the emergence of the Fifth Republic. For the opposition, it was an opportunity to revitalize its power. The outcome of the election was in favor of the opposition New Korean Democratic Party which was organized, by the former leaders of the

New Democratic Party, a few weeks before the election day. The new opposition party, of which Kim Dae Jung and Kim Young Sam were the leaders, unexpectedly won 29.2% of the popular vote and became the strongest opposition party. Although the opposition did not gain a majority of seats in the National Assembly, it was a big success for the New Korean Democratic Party to acquire almost 30 percent of the total votes, especially considering all the disadvantages of the opposition party.

The election provided the opposition forces with the momentum to revive their effective battle against the authoritarian government. The central issue of their anti-government movement was democratization. First of all, student activism resurged. A number of significant student organizations were newly founded in the mid-1980s.⁴ Those student groups were strengthened by student activists with more militant ideas and better organizational skills. Second, the opposition party leaders became more confident, and raised their voice for political democracy by pressing the government for democratization, specifically a constitutional revision for a direct presidential election. Since the Chun government was unresponsive to the demands of the

⁴Among them are as follows: Sammint'u, a student organization advocating its struggle for "national unification, emancipation of the people, and the achievement of democracy" established in 1985; Minmint'u, the Struggle Committee for the People and Democracy; Chamint'u, the Struggle Committee for Self-reliance and Democracy; and Minminhangnyôn, the Student Federation for the People and Democracy.

opposition forces, they often used mass appeal tactics including popular petition drives and rallies.

Because he was to step down in 1988 by the constitutional provision of a single seven-year presidential term, and his fate would be unstable under the opposition's rule, President Chun was deeply concerned about the government after his tenure. Hence, he was in favor of the existing indirect presidential election system in which the candidate of his selection would undoubtedly win. Under increasing pressure from the opposition forces, however, the Chun government was forced into a compromise, and a committee within the National Assembly for drafting a new constitution, named the Special Committee on Constitutional Revision, was created on June 24, 1986. But the committee's proceedings were often disrupted by the different positions of the governing and opposition parties.

In early 1987, the torture death of a dissident student, Pak Chong Ch'81, by police became a major political scandal. The incident produced a number of street demonstrations by various opposition groups. To make the situation worse, on April 13, 1987, President Chun announced his decision to suspend the debate on constitutional revision. The decision generated student protests as well as the general public's frustration. In June there were a series of large-scale student demonstrations often joined by many citizens. Finally, the so-called "June Democratic Protest

(Yuwol Minju Hangjaeng)" forced Roh Tae Woo, the chairman of the governing party and Chun's hand-picked successor, to make a concession accepting the opposition's demands for democratization including direct presidential election. His far-reaching liberalization programs are well expressed in his announcement on June 29, 1987.

The so-called "June 29 Announcement" relieved South Korea from political crisis. Later in 1987, a new constitution was formed, and a presidential election followed in December. It was the first genuine presidential election in sixteen years. Roh Tae Woo won the election defeating Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung who were fighting against each other. In 1988, Roh assumed his office. It was the first peaceful transfer of political power since the establishment of the Republic of Korea in 1948, a significant movement toward democracy.

A. Legitimacy Crisis of the Chun Regime

1. A Series of Financial Scandals and Its Political Impact

The basis of political legitimacy of the Chun regime was weak from the beginning since Chun's rise to power had

been through an unjustifiable means, a military coup and the suppression of the people's aspiration for democracy. At the outset of its rule, the Chun government claimed to stand for social justice and to eradicate corruption, in order to ameliorate the legitimacy crisis of his rule. The newly organized political party was even named as the Democratic Justice Party, undertaking as its primary function the elimination of corrupt practices from politics. In 1982, only two years after Chun's inauguration as the president, however, a financial scandal in which President Chun's family was involved, the so-called Chang Young Ja scandal, shocked the South Korean people.

The scandal, the biggest one in Korean history, was so outrageous that a Catholic church group urged President Chun to make the "courageous decision to step down."⁵ Chang Young Ja was a private money market operator who controlled nearly \$ 1 billion by fraudulent means such as acquiring promissory notes from a number of industrial firms, to which she gave cash loans, for many times as much as the actual amount of her loans. It is believed that Chang took full advantage of the association with her brother-in-law, Lee Kyu Kwang, whose niece was President Chun's wife, Lee Soon Ja. He allegedly took a \$ 140 million bribe from Chang for his instrumental role in putting pressure on banks to give

⁵New York Times (June 17, 1982), reciting from Dae-Sook Suh, "South Korea in 1982," Asian Survey Vol.13 No.1 (January 1983), p. 98.

loans to the companies owned by Chang.⁶ The Korean banks were virtually in the government's control. The pressure from the President's uncle-in-law was so compelling that her companies could get bank loans of more than ten times their total assets.

The aftermath of the so-called Chang Young Ja incident was enormous. Its impact on the financial market was substantial. Two large industrial companies, Kongyoung Construction Company and Ilshin Steel Company, were declared bankrupt. A bank manager committed suicide. Many small enterprises were destroyed. The presidents of two leading commercial banks (Choheung Bank and Korean Industrial Bank) resigned and were later arrested.⁷ In addition, the scandal had a political impact. Kwon Chông Tal, secretary-general of the governing Democratic Justice Party and a close associate of President Chun, resigned. Fifteen cabinet members including the prime minister were replaced in May and June 1982.

In 1983 another financial scandal, the Myungsung and Youngdong incidents undermined President Chun's anti-corruption campaign. The Myungsung Corporation accumulated a huge amount of assets (\$200 million) in three years by fraudulent means such as bribery and illicit bank transactions. President Chun's father-in-law, Lee Kyu Dong, was

⁶Ibid., p.99.

⁷Shin Dong-A (June 1982), pp. 72-121; from Ibid., p. 98.

allegedly involved in the Myungsung scandal. Other government and bank officials together with the Myungsung managers including the president of the corporation, Kim Chul Ho, were indicted.

Soon after the Myungsung incident, the Youngdong scandal was revealed. It involved the Youngdong Development Corporation and the Choheung Bank. Even though the Choheung Bank was a private financial institution, it was under the government's supervision. Thus the South Korean people speculated that those financial scandals were the tip of an iceberg involving a systematic collaboration between the business elites and the Chun government.

In June 1984, corruption charges faced Chông Rae Hyôk, the chairman of the ruling Democratic Justice Party, former Defense Minister and retired lieutenant general, to retire from his positions in the party and in the National Assembly. This incident furthered the erosion of the governing party's public image.

As shown above, a series of financial scandals and corruption cases overshadowed the anti-corruption campaigns, one of the major instruments of Chun's government for enhancing its political legitimacy. This made the public suspect the willingness and ability of Chun's government to eliminate economic and social injustice, and eventually made it consider the Chun government as corrupt and alienating the common people. Later, it became a major source of

public protests against Chun's rule. These scandals not only disintegrated the political legitimacy of the Chun regime but also justified the anti-Chun movement of dissident politicians, college students, and religious leaders, and strengthened their position.

2. Human Rights Violations, Delayed Democratic Process, and Public Discontent

After Chun's seizure of power, there were a number of human rights violation cases. Among them, the most well-known are three torture cases: Kim Kûn T'ae, former chairman of Minch'ôngnyôn (Young Men's Council for Democracy); Kwon In Sook, a female college student who was sexually tortured by police; and Pak Chong Ch'ôl. The Pak Chong Ch'ôl incident had a very significant political impact. On January 14, 1987, a dissident student, Pak Chong Ch'ôl, was tortured to death by police. Park, a junior in Linguistics at Seoul National University, was taken to the police station on January 13 for interrogation concerning the whereabouts of his friend, Park Chong Un, a dissident student wanted by the police. In an interrogation room, in addition to beating, the police used water torture on him which finally resulted in his death.

It was not just regarded as an accident but considered as the tip of an iceberg involving basic civil rights

frequently trampled down by the police and other government agencies such as the Korean CIA. For example, detention without any written order and inhumane police brutality were not new to the South Korean people.⁸ But this particular case provoked a tremendous public indignation.

Later, this public indignation transformed into a series of anti-government movements and eventually contributed to strengthening the opposition forces. On February 7, in spite of the police blockade in which 70,000 out of 120,000 police were mobilized, many public rallies in memory of Pak Chong Ch'ŏl were held in major cities. The public demonstrations in which students, dissident politicians, and religious leaders participated actively continued until March. On one hand, with this as a momentum, the opposition forces gained an opportunity to take the offen-

⁸National Assemblyman Pak Ch'an Chong, in an extra session of the National Assembly held January 26-28, 1987, demanded the reexamination not only of the Pak Chong Ch'ŏl incident but also of many other cases as follows: Woo Chong Won, a Seoul National University student who died an unnatural death and was found at a railroad track near Hwangkan station in October 1985; Kim Sung Soo, a Seoul National University student who was buried at sea near the Songdo port, Pusan, in June 1986; Shin Ho Soo, a Yŏnan Gas Company worker who was taken to the police station because of his involvement in the June 1986 Inch'ŏn protest and later found dead in a cave near Yŏch'ŏn, Chŏnnam; Kim Kŭn T'ae, former chairman of a dissident group, Minch'ŏngnyŏn, who was tortured by police many times under interrogation; and other dissidents such as a Minch'ŏngnyŏn staff Lee Ul Ho and secretary-general of the Council of Journalists for Democracy Kim Tae Hong, who were allegedly tortured by police. Chosun Ilbo (January 27, 1987) in 1987 Han'guk Chŏngch'i Sanghwang (1987 Political Affairs in Korea) (Seoul: Minchoongsa, 1988), p. 106.

sive against the government. As public anger prevailed, on the other, the people's discontent with the Chun regime also significantly increased.

On April 13, although the public resentment against the government did not quiet down, President Chun ordered a suspension of the debate on constitutional reform in the National Assembly, with the intention of maintaining the existing system which contained many undemocratic features, including indirect presidential election. This decision immediately met with objection by most South Korean people, and anti-Chun protests by various opposition groups. When a cover-up of the Pak Chong Ch'ol incident was unveiled in May, the government was placed in an even more serious condition. In late May, thousands of students protested against the April 13 decision and against the cover-up of the Pak Chong Ch'ol incident. On May 26, aiming at appeasing the public anger, Chun reshuffled his cabinet and removed his close associates including Prime Minister Loh Shin Young, Minister of Internal Affairs Chung Ho Yong, and director of the National Security Planning Board (former Korean CIA), Chang Se Dong. But the situation did not get better.

In early June, thousands of students poured into the streets again, and many citizens, including middle-class people, joined them. The 60,000 riot police forces tried to obstruct the street demonstrations with massive use of tear

gas, but failed because of the enormous numbers of demonstrators. In the month of June, street protests were held almost every day in major cities.⁹ What the demonstrators demanded was democracy. They called for nullifying the April 13 decision, guaranteeing freedom of assembly and expression, releasing all political prisoners and restoring their rights. Confronting such massive, violent, and continuing anti-government protests, the Chun government's choice was very limited. It was either to use more repressive measures such as mobilizing the military troops to quell the civil disturbance or to make concessions to the opposition. Either choice was uncertain. The risk of the former alternative was a more large-scale resistance of the people, and that of the latter one was the loss of power after democratization.

In brief, Chun, whose regime was established without the support from a majority of the South Korean people, could not gain the political legitimacy for his government largely due to a series of financial scandals in which his relatives were involved, and because of many cases of human rights violation during his rule. The growth of the people's aspiration for democracy was also crucial in

⁹Among them, the so-called "June 10 Protest" and "June 26 Popular Parade for Peace" were major ones. On June 10, about 300,000 demonstrators held their rallies in 22 major cities. On June 26, about 1.3 million people protested against the government in 37 cities. 1987 Han'guk Chôngch'i Sanghwang (1987 Political Affairs in Korea) (Seoul: Minchoongsa, 1988), pp. 393-396.

weakening the Chun regime's legitimacy. In addition, the increase of the opposition forces' strength had a significant effect on accelerating the legitimacy decline.

B. The Rise of the Opposition Party

The opposition party's power was considerably weakened after Chun seized power in 1980 and eradicated the opposition forces by dissolving all political parties and banning politicians from participating in politics. In 1979 and 1980, many prominent opposition leaders were held under house arrest or sent into exile. In 1981, the National Assembly election in March rearranged the South Korean political arena in favor of Chun's party. The Democratic Korea Party (Minhan-tang) under the leadership of Yu Ch'i Song, often regarded as a backslider by some principalists in the opposition, became the major opposition party by acquiring 81 seats (29%) of the total 276. The governing party dominated the Assembly with a simple majority (151 seats). The Democratic Korea Party was weak not only because the party formed a small minority in the Assembly but also because the party lacked determination to fight against the government. This was mainly caused by the

government's prevention of many prominent opposition leaders from participating in politics.

Kim Dae Jung had been in prison since May 1980 and sentenced to death on January 13, 1981, on the charge of sedition by instigating the Kwangju uprising.¹⁰ After spending two years and seven months in jail, he was sent into exile to the United States in December 1982. During his two-year exile in the U. S., Kim Dae Jung continued his anti-government campaign. Kim Young Sam, who had been under house arrest since May 1980, also strove for democracy. Opposing the government's repression, he went on a 23-day hunger strike during May and June 1983. The strike prompted the realignment of dispersed opposition forces.

The anti-Chun campaign of the two Kims was at its peak in August 1983, when they made a joint declaration, in which they pledged to unite in a struggle against the Chun regime. Even though the anti-Chun campaign was not publicized by the South Korean press, their political message paved a way to rearrange the opposition forces. In May 1984, the so-called Minch'uh-yôp (the Council for Promoting Democratization) was founded. Many supporters of the two Kims joined in the organization. Among them were Lee Min Woo, Kim Myông Yun, and Choe Hyông U from the Kim Young Sam group, and Kim Sang

¹⁰Kim Dae Jung testified to the fact that the accusation was fabricated by the Chun government in a hearing of the Special Committee on Kwangju held in November, 1988. Chosun Ilbo New York Edition (November 21, 1988), p. 18.

Hyôn, Kim Nok Yông, Cho Yun Ha and Ye Ch'un Ho from the Kim Dae Jung line.¹¹ In December of that year, the Council declared its participation in the next National Assembly election which was to be held in February 1985. The Council later became the mother-body of the New Korean Democratic Party.

The newly organized opposition party surprisingly gained 29.3% of the popular vote in the Twelfth National Assembly election held on February 12, 1985, and became the major opposition party. Such performance was a remarkable success, considering that the governing Democratic Justice Party, with many advantages including financial and organizational resources, acquired only 35.3% of the popular vote, and that the opposition party had disadvantages as follows: (1) the party was organized only a few weeks before the election; (2) the leaders of the party--Kim Dae Jung who returned to South Korea a few days before the election, and Kim Young Sam who had been under house arrest--were prohibited from political campaigning; and (3) the already existing opposition Democratic Korea Party acquired 19.7% at the expense of the opposition party.

Table 6.1 shows the result of the election:

¹¹Yông Sôk Yi, Yadang Sasimnyônsa (Forty-Year History of the Opposition Party) (Seoul: Ingansa, 1987), p. 451.

Table 6.1
The Outcome of the Twelfth National Assembly
Election in 1985¹²

	Popular Vote	Number of Seats	Percentage of the Total Seats
DJP	35.3%	148	53.6
NKDP	29.3%	67	24.3
DKP	19.7%	35	12.7
NP	9.2%	20	7.2
Independents	6.5%	6	2.2

The electoral outcome indicated the degree of public discontent against the Chun government and the people's aspiration for democracy.

Although the governing party gained only 35.3% of the popular vote, the party attained 53.6 percent (148 of the total 276 seats) of the National Assembly seats because of a peculiar electoral system favoring the party with the most votes.¹³ On the other hand, the opposition New Korean Democratic Party with 29.3 percent of the popular vote

¹²Source: Sŭng Hŭm Kil et al., Han'guk Sŏn'gŏron (Theory of Korean Elections) (Seoul: Tasan Publishing Co., 1987), p. 65.

¹³The 276-member National Assembly is formed by the principles as follows: (1) Two-thirds, or 184 seats, of the total seats are elected directly from 92 electoral districts; (2) Each electoral district is assigned two seats; (3) The remaining 92 seats, called "Chŏn'guk-ku," are distributed to those parties winning five seats or more in the direct election; (4) Two-thirds, or 61 seats, of the remaining 92 seats go to the party winning the most seats, and one-thirds, or 31 seats, are allocated proportionally to the other parties with five or more seats.

gained only 24.3% (67 seats) of the total seats. The opposition was still a minority. In April, two months after the election, however, 32 National Assemblymen from the second opposition Democratic Korea Party and 4 others joined the New Korean Democratic Party. Thus, the opposition party became stronger, occupying 103 seats in the National Assembly and surpassing the governing party by 49 percent to 35.3 percent in the holding of the popular votes. [See Table 6.2]

Table 6.2: The Formation of the National Assembly After Realignment in April, 1985¹⁴

	Popular Vote	Percentage of the Total Seats
DJP	35.3%	47.3%
NKDP	49.0%	42.9%
DKP	0.3%	0.5%
Others	15.4%	9.2%

The growth of the opposition party terminated the political stagnation which had been going on for five years since 1980. The rearrangement of the opposition parties re-established the two-party system in South Korea and reactivated domestic politics. First of all, the opposition party regained its bargaining position with the government. This reopened the negotiation between the governing and

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 291-2.

opposition parties on various political issues including constitutional revision. As President Chun was to step down in 1988 by the provision of the existing constitution that limits the presidential tenure of office to a single seven-year term, the central issue of the constitutional amendment was how to select the next national leader.

However, the inter-party negotiation was not always fruitful. From the beginning, the ruling party was reluctant to change the existing constitutional system. Unsuccessful in gaining any significant concession for democratic change, the opposition challenged the government stance by using the so-called "outside (Chang-oe)" tactics such as public rallies. Eventually the Chun government yielded to the demands and agreed to create a special committee within the National Assembly, called the Special Committee for Constitutional Revision in June 1986. The positions of the both parties (DJP and NKDP), however, were contradictory to each other. The ruling party adhered to its proposal, a parliamentary system, while the opposition party maintained its posture, a presidential system. After all, they failed to produce a consensus, a new constitution. Politics was deadlocked. The conflict between the government and the opposition party became acute.

To solve the stalemate situation, on December 24, 1986, the president and nominal leader of the New Korean Democratic Party, Lee Min Woo, proposed to consider the Democratic

Justice Party's proposition on condition that the government accept his offer: seven-point democratic reforms including the release of political prisoners, freedom of the press, and the restoration of Kim Dae Jung's political rights. In early 1987, Lee's proposal became a key political issue. The actual leaders of the opposition party, Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung, who had been advocating a direct presidential election and strongly opposed the governing party's plan for constitutional change, denounced the proposal.

In March of that year, the party was divided into two groups: the "mainstream (Churyu)" and "non-mainstream (Pi-churyu)." The former group consisted of the followers of the two Kims and the latter supported Lee's proposal. As the party's domestic discord became more intense, the two Kims decided to split from the party to form a new party on April 8. Seventy four Assemblymen (40 from Kim Young Sam's line and 34 from Kim Dae Jung's line) left the party.¹⁵ On May 1, they formed a new party, the Reunification Democratic Party, with Kim Young Sam as president.

The new opposition party was small in its number of seats in the National Assembly, but stronger in its organizational aspect, compared to the former opposition party. This gave the opposition the capacity to have more effectiveness in its anti-government struggle. The party maintained its tie with various dissident groups and

¹⁵Dong-A Ilbo (April 8, 1987).

actively participated in the so-called "June Protest," a massive anti-government protest demanding democratic reforms including a direct presidential election. Finally, the governing party conceded to the popular call for democracy on June 29.

To sum up, the rise of the opposition party in 1985 brought the political stagnation in South Korea that had been going on since the inauguration of the Chun regime in 1980 to an end, and provided the opposition with more influential power in dealing with the authoritarian government. The party continued its struggle for democratic change. In 1987, a new opposition party was organized. The formation of the new party indicated that the "maximalists" among the opposition prevailed over the "moderates."¹⁸ The pressure from the opposition party as well as from various social groups became stronger. Finally, it forced the governing party to concede to the opposition's demand for democracy. That is, the growth of the opposition was

¹⁸Here, the "maximalists," contrary to the "moderates," are the tough elements within the opposition, as the hardliners, as antithetic to the softliners, are the same within the ruling bloc. Adam Przeworski discusses their characteristics as follows: "Indeed, one way to think of the strategic postures of different actors is to classify them by their risk aversion: the hard-liners and the maximalists, not to speak of the moralists, are risk-insensitive; the soft-liners and the moderates are risk-averse." Adam Przeworski, "Some Problems in the Study of the Transition To Democracy," in Guillermo O'Donnell et al. (eds.), Transition From Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspective (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p. 54.

instrumental in South Korea's transition to democracy in 1987.

C. The Disunity Within the Ruling Bloc and the Liberalization of the Chun Regime

As the legitimacy of the Chun regime disintegrated and the pressure of democratic change from the opposition forces became strong, the authoritarian ruling bloc's unyielding position vacillated. Facing with the nationwide anti-government protest in June 1987, the course that the ruling elites of the Chun government could take was limited to two alternatives: using more repressive means such as issuing an emergency decree and mobilizing the army troops, or making a concession to the opposition's demand for democracy. The ruling bloc was divided into the hardliners and the softliners according to their posture on the proper course. Eventually, the softliners headed by Roh Tae Woo prevailed and liberalized South Korea. The liberalization policy opened a new stage for the transition to democracy.

1. Factionalism Within the Military

Since the Chun regime was established through a military coup by a group of army officers headed by Chun,

the top of the regime's power structure was occupied by Chun and his associates who had their background as military officers. First of all, the December 12 military coup in 1979 was a turning point when the real power was transferred to Chun and his associates. The young generals who participated in the coup constituted the main body of the ruling bloc in the Chun regime. They were Yu Hak Sŏng, Ch'a Kyu Hŏn, Hwang Yŏng Si, Roh Tae Woo, Pak Chun Pyŏng, Chang Se Dong, etc. Most of them were the members of the so-called "Hanahoe (One Club)" or "Ilsimhoe (One-Mind Club)," a politically oriented army officers' circle organized in early 1960s. The "Hanahoe" members were the core group of the ruling bloc throughout the period of Chun's rule. In order to understand how the upper end of the pyramid of political power is formed, it is crucial to investigate the "Hanahoe."

The "Hanahoe" was originally organized by a group from the eleventh graduating class of the Korean Military Academy in 1962. In 1958, 7 graduates of the eleventh graduating class of the Academy who had the same geographical background, Kyŏngsang Province, formed a clique to promote their mutual friendship. It was named as the "Ch'illsŏnghoe (Seven Star Club)." In 1962, it was developed as an army officers'

circle, including their juniors, and renamed as the "Hanahoe (One Club)."¹⁷

During the military ruling period, the club kept growing under power holders' wings. The "Hanahoe" members had been under the patronage of President Park during his rule. The head of the Presidential Secretariat, Yun P'il Yong, and the director of the Presidential Security Office, Park Jong Kyu, under the Park regime were also their patrons.¹⁸ Accordingly they emerged as a powerful military clique. Their strong position lasted at least until President Park, who feared the excessive growth of a particular faction, took a precautionary action and eradicated Yun P'il Yong and his associates in April 1974, when the "Hanahoe" also disintegrated. Outwardly, the "Hanahoe" was dissolved as an organization, but the close relationship among the members was not. When South Korea encountered a

¹⁷The original seven members are as follows: Chun Doo Hwan, Roh Tae Woo, Son Yŏng Kil, Chung Ho Yong, Kwon Ik Hyŏn, Ch'oe Sŏng T'aek, and Paek Un T'aek. Sang U Yi, "Han'guk Kunbu ū Inmaek kwa P'abŏl (Personal Relations and Cliques in the Korean Military)," Shin Dong-A (August 1988), pp. 339-340.

¹⁸The former Chief of the General Staff Chung Seung Hwa spoke about the "Hanahoe" as follows: "They formed a military clique called the "Hanahoe." The "Hanahoe" consisted of only the graduates of the Korean Military Academy and the number of its members once reached about 200. The leaders of the December 12 coup were mainly its members. Yun P'il Yong and Park Jong Kyu were the sponsors of the "Hanahoe." Seung Hwa Chung, "12-12 Sakŏn: Chung Seung Hwa Marhanda (December 12 Incident: Chung Seung Hwa Speaks)"; recited from Jong Ok Lee, "Che 5 Konghwakuk Kwollyŏk ū Ppuri: Hanahoe (The Root of the Fifth Republic's Power: Hanahoe)," Shin Dong-A (January 1988), pp. 315-316.

major political crisis after President Park's death, they united together and led a military coup against their senior officers.

After their seizure of political power, their dominance of the power structure was a natural outcome.¹⁹ In early 1987, for example, most of them took crucial positions in the government, the ruling party and the military. Among them were: Roh Tae Woo as the chairman of the ruling Democratic Justice Party; Chung Ho Yong as the Minister of Internal Affairs; Chang Se Dong as the director of the Board of the National Security Planning (the former Korean CIA); Park Hee Do as the Chief of the General Staff, and so on.

In early 1987, the Pak Chong Ch'ŏl torture-death incident damaged the Chun government's popularity and contributed to the enhancement of the position of the opposition forces, especially that of the "maximalists." When Chun suspended the debate between the ruling and opposition parties on constitutional reform on April 13, 1987, the anti-government protests proliferated and the Chun

¹⁹In addition to the original 7 members, the "Hanahoe" members who held crucial positions in the Chun government are as follows: (1) members of the twelfth graduating class of the Korean Military Academy--Pak Se Chik, Pak Chun Pyŏng, Choe Tong Ch'ŏl, Pak Hi To and An P'il Chun; (2) members of the thirteenth graduating class of the Academy--Choe Se Ch'ang and Chŏng Tong Ho; (3) members of the fourteenth graduating class--I Ch'un Ku, Pae Myŏng Kuk, Pak Chŏng Ki, An Mu Hyŏk; (4) members of the sixteenth graduating class--Chang Se Dong and Chŏng Sun Tŏk; and (5) members of the seventeenth graduating class--Hŏ Sam Su, Hŏ Hwa P'yŏng and Kim Chin Yŏng. *Ibid.*, p. 341.

government got into a difficult situation. On May 1, a new opposition party, the Reunification Democratic Party, taking a firm stand against the Chun regime, found itself with a new leadership held by two most prominent opposition leaders, Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung. The new party took the deteriorating situation as an opportunity and assumed the offensive against the government. On May 25 the opposition requested the Chun regime to resign. Anti-government demonstrations were held virtually every day.

At that time, the ruling bloc was roughly divided into two groups: the softliners and the hardliners. The hardliners stood on their hard-line policy against the opposition's pressure and often advocated more direct intervention of the military in politics. They were led by Chun Doo Hwan and Chang Se Dong. The softliners in general supported the military's neutrality and checked the hardliners' gaining ground. They were headed by Roh Tae Woo, Chung Ho Yong and Kim Pok Tong.²⁰

In late May, affairs took a favorable turn for the softliners. When Chun effected a cabinet reshuffle on May 26 as a way out of the difficulties caused by disclosure of the police cover-up of the Pak Chong Ch'81 incident, Chung Ho Yong and Chang Se Dong were deprived of their offices. The resignation of Chung Ho Yong, a soft-liner who was the Minister of Internal Affairs that had jurisdiction over the

²⁰Sang U Yi, op. cit., pp. 345-346.

police responsible for the Pak Chong Ch'81 case, was predictable. But the resignation of Chang Se Dong, an advocate of a hard-line policy who was the director of the Board of National Security Planning, is noteworthy. It is widely known that Chung's strong demand induced Chang's resignation.²¹

In any case, Chang's loss of his government post was significant in terms of the status of the hardliners. It curtailed him, as well as the hardliners, from influential power over policy-making mechanism. Such a disadvantage was damaging, especially under such a critical situation, while the leader of the softliners, Roh Tae Woo, maintained his control over the ruling Democratic Justice Party as chairman. This contributed to the softliners' gaining control over the process of political change later in the year.

2. The Rise of the Softliners Within the Ruling Bloc and the June 29 Announcement

In June, the softliners prevailed over the hardliners by taking an initiative, the so-called "June 29 Announcement" by Roh Tae Woo. On June 10, the Democratic Justice Party held the fourth national convention and nominated Roh Tae Woo as presidential candidate. Roh Tae Woo said in his

²¹Ibid., p. 347.

acceptance speech that he would "talk to anyone for a peaceful development of democracy" in the country. However, street violence did not cease but expanded to the general public, including the middle class citizens. Massive protests against the government continued in all major cities throughout the month. This generated a major political crisis.

Under those critical conditions, such important figures in the government and its party as secretary-general of the party, Yi Ch'un Ku, the director of the Board of National Security Planning, An Mu Hyôk, and the First Secretary in Political Affairs of the Presidential Secretariat, Kim Yun Hwan, gathered together at Roh Tae Woo's residence on June 21 and deliberated how to cope with the situation. Later in the night, they met other party officials such as the assistant secretary-general of the Democratic Justice Party, Kim Tae Ho, and Assemblymen Hyun Hong Chu and Choe Pyông Yôl, in a downtown hotel, and agreed on a proposal: dissolution of the National Assembly and holding a general election later, a referendum on constitutional revision, and Chun's dialogue with the opposition leaders on how to control the situation.²² This plan was to be recommended by Roh at his meeting with President Chun scheduled on June 22. It was only a partial, not a complete, concession to the opposition's demand.

²²Hanguk Ilbo (June 26, 1988), p. 3.

At the same time, Roh Tae Woo was formulating a different strategy, a more wide-ranging and surprising concession. He discussed the plan with his assistant, Yi Pyŏng Ki, and articulated his "bombshell" proposition including a direct presidential election, the release of political prisoners, and the restoration of Kim Dae Jung's civil rights. This proposal was such a drastic change in the government posture which had been maintained for the whole period of the Chun regime that even the assistant could not believe its contents.²³ Roh later discussed his intention with only a few more associates such as Kim Pok Tong, Roh's brother-in-law and classmate in the Korean Military Academy; Chung Ho Yong, Roh's close friend and also classmate in the Korean Military Academy; and Park Chul On, the Assistant Director of the Board of the National Security Planning. Lee and Park worked mainly on Roh's statement, the current political trends, and the pre- and post-announcement process. The major task of Kim and Chung was contacting important military personnel who might act in concert with them in the case of a strong opposition within the ruling bloc, most probably from the hard-liners.²⁴ This plan was kept secret until his public announcement at the

²³Ch'ŏng Yi, "Roh Tae Woo ŭi Ch'osanghwa (Roh Tae Woo's Portrait)," Wolgan Kyunghyang (January 1988), pp. 129-130.

²⁴Hanguk Ilbo (June 26, 1988), p. 3.

meeting of the Democratic Justice Party's central executive committee on June 29.

The so-called June 29 Announcement, Roh's scheme to control the deteriorating situation, was basically an eight-point liberalizing program: (1) the revision of the existing constitution; (2) the opening of dialogue on the presidential electoral laws; (3) the release and restoration of political prisoners and their civil rights including Kim Dae Jung; (4) the guarantee of press freedom; (5) the extension of basic rights; (6) the autonomy of local governments and educational institutions; (7) the guarantee of freedom of political organization and their activities; and (8) the eradication of corruption in society.²⁵ This announcement surprised both government supporters and opponents, and won the hearts of the people. On July 1, Chun accepted Roh's proposal. The opposition also welcomed it.

In some sense, Roh's action was a "coup," a sudden blow against the hardliners in the Chun regime. It was successful. Many factors contributed to its success. Among them were the rapidly declining legitimacy of the authoritarian Chun regime, the strong popular demand for democratization, and the growth of the opposition party. In addition, the role of the softliners in the ruling bloc was crucial. In addition to those who were directly involved in the June 29 Announcement (Roh Tae Woo, Chung Ho Yong, Kim Pok Tong,

²⁵Choongang Ilbo (June 29, 1987), p.1.

etc.), the soft-liners were the secretary-general of the Democratic Justice Party, Yi Ch'un Ku, the director of the Board of the National Security Planning, An Mu Hy8k, the Blue House First Secretary in Civil Affairs, Kim Yong Kap, and the First Secretary in Political Affairs of the Presidential Secretariat, Kim Yun Hwan. The softliners effectively restrained the hardliners' position. This paved the way to the success of Roh's action and contributed to initiating a democratizing process.

D. Transition To Democracy

After the June 29 Announcement by Roh, South Korea slowly moved toward democracy. The government released 177 political prisoners on July 6, granted amnesty to 2,335 political opponents, including Kim Dae Jung, on July 9, and reorganized the Democratic Justice Party. On July 10, Chun resigned his position as president. On July 14, the four members of the Central Executive Committee who had risen from their military background were replaced by civilians.²⁸

²⁸Those who were excluded from the committee are as follows: Yu Hak S8ng and Pak Chun Py8ng, the crucial members of the army officers' group who participated in the December 12 coup; and the secretary-general of the party Ch8ng Sun T8k and Kim Che. Those who were newly appointed were Ch8ng S8k Mo as the secretary-general, Yi Tae Sun as the majority floor leader of the National Assembly, Lee Min S8p as the party's spokesman, and S8 Ch8ng Hwa. Dong-A Ilbo (July 14,

On August 5, Roh gained the control of the party by being elected president. In August, the dialogue between the ruling and opposition parties on constitutional revision and presidential election was reopened. A series of negotiations between them continued until early October. On October 12, the National Assembly approved the new constitution by 254 to 4. It was the first draft of constitutional reform in South Korea formulated and passed by mutual consent of the governing and opposition parties. The new constitution, including direct presidential elections, won an overwhelming 93.1% of popular support and was adopted by a national referendum on October 28.²⁷

As the presidential election was scheduled on December 16, the race for the presidency began without delay. Viable candidates were as follows: Roh Tae Woo, the ruling party candidate; Kim Young Sam, the president of the Reunification Democratic Party; and Kim Dae Jung, the co-leader and advisor of the Reunification Democratic Party. Considering the popular support for the opposition shown in the 1985 National Assembly election, it was obvious that the opposition party candidate would win the presidential election. The only remaining problem was how to designate a single candidate from the opposition party. In order to solve the question, the withdrawal of either one of two Kims was

1987), p.1.

²⁷Dong-A Ilbo (October 28, 1987), p.1.

necessary. Thus two Kims met a few times but failed to decide a single candidate. Later, Kim Dae Jung split from the Reunification Democratic Party, organized a new party--the Party for Peace and Democracy--and became a presidential candidate. On October 30, Kim Jong Pil, former prime minister under President Park, also joined the presidential race by organizing his party, the New Democratic Republican Party.

From early November until the election day on December 16, active campaigns were conducted by Roh and three Kims. A striking contrast among the four candidates was their different regional background. Each one had firm support in his home base: Roh in Kyōngbuk, Kim Young Sam in Kyōngnam and Pusan, Kim Dae Jung in Chollado, and Kim Jong Pil in Ch'ungch'ōngdo. Regional rivalries, often expressed in violence, dominated the election campaigns, and became a matter of grave concern among the voters.²⁸ In addition, there were various charges of irregularities against Roh by the opposition groups.

²⁸A South Korean political scientist, Han Sung-Joo, described the regional rivalries as follows: "Many of Kim Dae Jung's supporters in the southwestern Chollado provinces felt that their region had been discriminated against by the successive regimes dominated by leaders from the southeastern Kyungsangdo provinces. Citizens of Kwangju, in particular, viewed their city as the object of regional oppression in 1980 at the time of the "Kwangju uprising" in which more than 200 people were killed. Ultimately, the level of voting support for each of the candidates closely coincided with his regional background." Sung-joo Han, "South Korea in 1987," Asian Survey Vol. 28 No.1 (January 1988), pp. 56-7.

Despite those obstacles, the voting took place as scheduled, and Roh Tae Woo won the election by winning 36.6% of the popular votes, compared to 28% by Kim Young Sam and 27% by Kim Dae Jung. Kim Jong Pil received 8.1% of the vote. [See Table 6.3]

Table 6.3: The Result of the 1987
Presidential Election by Region²⁹

Region	% voter turnout	DJP	RDP	PPD	NDRP
Metropolis					
Seoul	87.5	24.4	28.6	32.1	8.1
Pusan	88.4	31.6	55.2	9.0	2.6
Taegu	89.9	69.8	24.0	2.6	2.0
Inch'on	88.2	38.7	29.4	20.9	9.1
Kwangju	92.5	4.5	0.4	93.3	0.2
Provinces					
Kangwon	90.7	57.9	25.4	8.6	5.3
Kyōnggi	88.4	40.6	27.0	21.8	8.3
Ch'ungbuk	91.1	45.7	27.5	10.7	13.2
Ch'ungnam	88.3	26.6	15.8	12.1	42.8
Chōnbuk	90.4	13.7	1.4	80.9	0.7
Chōnnam	90.3	7.9	1.1	87.9	0.3
Kyōngbuk	91.0	64.8	27.5	2.3	2.5
Kyōngnam	89.5	40.4	50.3	4.4	2.6
Cheju	88.5	48.6	26.1	18.1	4.4
Total	89.2	36.6	28.0	27.0	8.1

DJP: Democratic Justice Party (Roh Tae Woo)

RDP: Reunification Democratic Party (Kim Young Sam)

PPD: Party for Peace and Democracy (Kim Dae Jung)

NDRP: New Democratic Republican Party (Kim Jong Pil)

²⁹Source: Newsreview (December 19, 1987), p. 5.; from Young Hwan Kihl, "South Korea's Search For a New Order: An Overview," Ilpyong J. Kim and Young Hwan Kihl (eds.), Political Change in South Korea (New York: Korean PWPA, 1988), pp. 18-9.

Some opposition groups declared that the Chun government had carried out a rigged election and that the election was null and void. For example, in one of electoral districts in Seoul, Kuro-gu, some 1,500 students and citizens, claiming that ballot boxes for absentee voters were suspect, held back the transportation of the ballot boxes to the ballot-counting place by occupying the district office building for three days until the police dispersed the crowd by force. In addition, accusing the government of conducting a rigged election, there were dozens of public protests in major cities, especially in Cholla provinces.³⁰ A number of small-scale demonstrations continued, and rumors about election frauds circulated for a few weeks after the presidential election on December 16, 1987.

Later, however, the general public centered their attention on the failure of designating a single candidate from the opposition as the main reason for the opposition's defeat rather than the unfair election, and accepted the result. In any case, it was the first genuine presidential election in sixteen years. On February 25, 1988, Roh Tae Woo took office and the new Sixth Republic was officially born. The inauguration of Roh as president was the first peaceful and orderly transition of political power in the history of South Korea. This opened a new stage of the democratizing process in the country.

³⁰Chosun Ilbo New York Edition (December 21, 1987), p. 16.

In brief, as the legitimacy of the Chun regime declined, largely due to various financial scandals and human rights violation cases, the South Korean people's aspiration for democracy became increasingly strong. Confronting the legitimacy crisis, the Chun regime could not satisfy the people's yearning because of its authoritarian nature which included undemocratic constitutional features and their practices. With the absence of the government's willingness to carry out democratic change, the unfulfilled desire for democracy of the people eventually transformed itself into massive anti-government protests in June 1987. These incidents not only strengthened the position of the opposition forces but also weakened the ruling bloc's confidence and generated its division into two groups: the hard-liners and soft-liners. Under such difficulties, the soft-liners led by Roh Tae Woo prevailed within the ruling bloc and they proposed several liberalization programs. One of their liberalizing policies was a direct presidential election, in which the government party candidate, Roh, was elected as president. Finally, his winning induced the first peaceful transfer of political power in South Korea, a significant movement toward democracy, in 1988. Since then, the country has been consolidating democracy.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

A. Theoretical Reconsideration: A Summary

The crisis of authoritarianism is nowadays a world-wide trend, from China to Eastern Europe in the communist bloc, and from Latin America to East Asia in the third world. Even though such change is often described by a general term--democratization, liberalization, or transition to democracy, the causes and consequences of the change in each country are varied. By the same token, the democratic change in South Korea has its own uniqueness as well as some similarities with the other cases.

Causes

There are many factors accountable for the transition in South Korea. First of all, socio-economic development (i.e., increased national wealth, more widespread education, expanding mass communication, urbanization, etc.) generated

more diversified social and political interests in the country, which were difficult for the authoritarian regime to accommodate. Although there are many pessimistic views on economic growth and social change in South Korea, and there is no "causal" relationship between such socio-economic changes and democracy, it is undeniable that the socio-economic development ultimately contributed to the democratization of South Korea.

Second, the cultural factor played a significant role, less explicit but more fundamental, in the democratization process of South Korea. The South Koreans' growing democratic beliefs and values facilitated the democratic development of the country. That is, as the society changed, the citizens became more receptive to the democratic rules and procedures, more informed of the political situation, more conscious of their interests, and more politically active.¹

Finally, political factors are more importantly and directly connected to the actual transition processes. The central issue in South Korean domestic politics has been the contention between the ruling bloc and the opposition forces. The success and failure of democratic transitions can be simply understood as the outcome of the dynamics of

¹On the other hand, however, many authoritarian features of traditional society such as a hierarchical family system and the so-called "kwanjon minbi" practices leading to a "subject" political culture still exist and hinder the democratic change in South Korea. In this sense, cultural factors played a dual--both positive and negative--role.

power politics between those political actors. The ruling bloc (including the authoritarian leaders, the military, bureaucracy, and the business elites) has been a factor impeding democratic change in South Korea. The opposition forces (including the opposition party, the churches, students, and laborers) promoted the democratic transition by their struggle for democracy.

The peaceful transfer of political power in 1988 was a consequence of the interplay between all these major political actors. Like all other cases, the crisis of authoritarianism was initiated by the decline of political legitimacy. The Chun regime's legitimacy was weak from the beginning; it rapidly deteriorated, especially after Chun's order to suspend the debate over constitutional changes on April 13, 1987. Consequently, the so-called "Spring of Seoul" came.

In the Spring of that year, the rise of the opposition forces ensued. The opposition groups, frustrated with the Chun government's disregard of the people's aspiration for democracy, and with its abuses of basic human rights, mobilized their forces against the Chun government. In early June, students initiated the so-called "June Protest." A number of South Koreans, including middle-class citizens, joined them in the streets of all major cities. This mass demonstration is comparable with that of the Philippine's in 1986. The street violence and protests caused another

political crisis, probably the most serious one since Chun consolidated his power in 1980.

Faced with such a political crisis, primarily caused by the rise of the opposition forces, the military government's alternatives were very limited: the use of more coercive means, or concessions. The ruling bloc was divided into two groups over what strategy to take: a hard or a soft line. Eventually, the soft-liners prevailed and the decision was to make concessions. Roh Tae Woo, Chun's hand-picked successor and the chairman of the ruling Democratic Justice Party at that time, announced a dramatic and unexpected concession to the opposition's demands, and proposed that the nation's next president be elected through direct elections, on June 29, 1987. The announcement was a total reversal of the stances that the ruling bloc had been sustaining since the Fifth Republic was born in 1980. The decision was a "surrender" to the opposition forces' pressure on one hand, and a "self-help" for preserving stability on the other hand. In any case, the so-called "June 29 Announcement" relieved South Korea from the furtherance of political turmoil. Later in the year, a new constitution was overwhelmingly endorsed by South Koreans, and Roh was elected as president in the nation's first genuine presidential election in many years. Undoubtedly, the "June 29 Announcement" was a significant turning point of South Korea's transition to democracy.

To sum up, while socio-economic development and a democratic change of the people's way of thinking constituted the long-term causes, political factors were immediately responsible for generating the democratization process.

Nature

The pace of transition was rather abrupt, compared to Brazil's protracted process. Transition came unexpectedly, after Roh Tae Woo's announcement of liberalizing programs on June 29, 1987, a declaration which is parallel to the colonels' decision in the Greek case in 1974, and to President Bignone's announcement in February, 1983, in Argentina. Since the ruling bloc was the prime mover of the transition, however, no rapid and profound change in the existing social, economic, and political institutions is feasible. The Roh government's slow actions in democratic political reform and continuing repressive measures against various political groups confirm this.² Therefore, the democratization process after the transfer of political power in South Korea resembles the cases of Spain and Brazil.

²Since the formation of the Roh government in 1988, it arrested many opposition leaders such as Kim Kûn T'ae, Yi Chae O and Ko Un, and placed several opposition groups such as Chônminyôn and some militant labor unions under restraint. Chosôn Ilbo New York edition (April 5, 1989), p. 23.

This raises a new question, maybe serious enough to demolish the whole argument in this study: can the recent political change in South Korea be described as democratization? This question depends very much upon how we interpret the term democratization. Some scholars have distinguished democratization from liberalization by pointing out that "liberalization and democratization are not synonymous," and that "authoritarian rulers may tolerate or even promote liberalization in belief that by opening up certain spaces for individual and group action, they can relieve various pressures and obtain needed information and support without altering the structure of authority."³ This gives us another controversial issue: is the Roh government a mere "liberalized authoritarianism" or is it a democracy? This matter is as complex as defining democracy itself. As I have implied by using the term, transition,⁴ and by trying to avoid the term, democratization, in this study, I close the argument with a very imperfect conclusion: South Korea made a significant step toward democracy by making its transition from authoritarian rule, but whether we can label its recent political changes as democratization will depend

³Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, Transition From Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p. 9.

⁴O'Donnell and Schmitter defined the transition as "the interval between one political regime and another." Ibid., p. 6.

upon the future. After all, democratization, by its very nature, is a lengthy and gradual process.

B. Additional Factors

Some of the most notable factors, which have significantly affected the course of the transition to democracy in South Korea but have not yet been discussed, are: the middle class, foreign influences, and the North Korean factor.

1. The Middle Class

The role of the middle class in modern democracy has been crucial. The basic propositions are that (1) historically the middle class has played an important role in moderating conflict between extremes, for example, as a buffer between the extremes of poverty and wealth; and (2) the interests of that class can be maintained only in a political environment in which a degree of permissiveness prevails.⁵ These propositions apply to the South Korean case, to some extent.

⁵M. Rajai, Democracy: The Contemporary Theories (New York: Atherton Press, 1967), p. 191.

In South Korea, few studies on the middle class, compared to the other classes, have been done. Moreover, the studies did not delve into the role of that class in the democratization process, but merely examined its characteristics and emphasized its general role.⁶ Among the studies which have been done, Yŏngmo Kim's statistical analysis showed that 34.4% of the South Korean people regarded themselves as middle class.⁷ Yet Kyŏngdong Kim's analysis showed that the middle class has decreased in percentage during the period from 1955 to 1975.⁸ Yŏngmo Kim's study emphasized the people's feelings of which class they belong to, while Kyŏngdong Kim concentrated on the economic and occupational stratification of the middle class. The former classification is more appropriate for the purpose of this study, since this study deals with the middle class in terms of its role in the democratization process, where psychological aspects are more meaningful than a mechanical classification by socio-economic status. Therefore, considering the result of a survey by a Korean newspaper in 1989, in which 60.6% of those who were surveyed identified

⁶e.g: Kyŏngdong Kim, "Sahoe Pyŏndong kwa Sahoe Kyekŭp (Social Change and Social Class)," Chungkyung Yŏngu (October 1977); Yŏngmo Kim, "Chungsanch'ŭng ūn Marhanda (The Middle Class Speaks)," Wolkan Chosŏn (January 1981).

⁷Yŏngmo Kim, Ibid.; citing from Tongan Yang, "Chungsankye-kŭp Minjujuŭi ūi Munche wa Chŏnmang (Problems and Prospects For the Middle Class Democracy)," Chungkyung Munhwa 194 (April 1981), p. 85.

⁸Tongan Yang, op. cit., p. 84.

themselves as belonging to the middle class,⁹ the middle class, in terms of its proportion among the people has increased considerably.

In spite of its size and potential power, however, the South Korean middle class has not been politically active. The middle class commonly played its role as a stabilizer rather than as an active participant in political changes. When the so-called "June Democratic Movement" in 1987 threatened the nation's stability, however, a number of middle class people participated in the student-led street demonstrations. They probably saw the unwillingness of the government to move toward democracy (i.e., Chun's announcement of shattering prospects for constitutional change on April 13, 1987) as the major cause of social disorder. Although the numbers of those involved were small, and they were not eager to assume the risks that come with public protest, their voice was loud and clear, especially to the government which has kept arguing that the middle class was on their side. In brief, middle class people had not been politically active, but their role was crucial, especially in a critical situation such as a deadlock between the extremes of both governing élites and the opposition forces.

⁹Chosun Ilbo New York Edition (January 25, 1989), p. 26.

2. Foreign Influences

Although international factors are secondary compared to the major impact of domestic political determinants, their influences were too significant to be neglected.

a. The Role of the United States

The United States has been encouraging democracy in the Third World countries as one of its major foreign policy goals, whether its objective is idealistic or realistic. South Korea was not an exception to the U.S. efforts to promote human rights and democracy. This attracts an attention to the role of the United States in the transition to democracy in South Korea.

Historically, the United States has been the most influential foreign power in South Korea since the end of World War II. The United States played a crucial role in Korea's liberation from Japan, its division, the Korean war of 1950-1953, the post-war economic resurgence, and, more recently, foreign trade. The U.S., as consumer of 40% of its exports in 1985, and as the second largest source of imports after Japan, is South Korea's primary trade part-

ner.¹⁰ In addition, some 42,000 U.S. military forces are still located in Korea.

The role of the U.S. in democratizing South Korea is ambivalent. The essential interest of the U.S. in South Korea has been the geopolitical and strategic importance of the Korean peninsula to the entire Northeast Asian region. Other factors such as the credibility of the U.S. commitment, and the importance of South Korea as a major trading partner, are also important, but not as crucial as the country's strategic importance. The U.S. does not like to see any serious domestic instability in the country. Accordingly, the U.S. sometimes supported the military government, when the people's democratic movement caused political instability.

On the other hand, there are also many positive aspects for South Korea of the United States policy based on the respect of human rights and freedom. For example, the United States has pressed the military government on human rights, especially during the Carter and Reagan administrations. In September 1980, the South Korean military court sentenced Kim Dae Jung to death for sedition.¹¹ President Reagan, between his election and inauguration, publicly urged that Kim's life be spared. This was so influential

¹⁰Council On Foreign Relations, The Asia Society, Korea At the Crossroads: Implications For American Policy (New York: Council On Foreign Relations, 1987), p.31.

¹¹New York Times (September 17, 1980), p. 4.

that it induced President Chun to announce the commutation of Kim's sentence to one of life imprisonment on January 24, 1981. There is no doubt that the United States played a major role in the decision.¹²

In 1987, the U.S. correctly evaluated the political situation in South Korea: that there could be no stability without democracy. U.S. government officials kept pressing the Chun government to move toward democracy. For example, Assistant Secretary of State Gaston J. Sigur, Jr. called for a more open and legitimate political system in South Korea in early 1987; Ambassador James R. Lilley met with opposition leaders in February 1987; and the U.S. warned against South Korean military intervention, as possibly a disaster for the transition to democracy, during the political unrest in June.¹³ The U.S. attempt to influence the South Korean military government, whether its objective was purely

¹²"Reagan urged that Kim Dae Jung's life be spared, and in order to prevent this stand from being mistaken in Seoul for pure posturing, he communicated the same message privately to the South Korean government through an aide. There is little doubt that this view, reinforced by similar expressions from leaders of other governments including the Japanese, had an influence on President Chun Doo Hwan, who for reasons of both domestic and foreign policy wanted an invitation to visit the United States although he was understandably unwilling to commute Kim Dae Jung's sentence. The outcome was as satisfactory to both sides as could be imagined..." Harold C. Hinton, Korea Under New Leadership: The Fifth Republic (New York: Praeger, 1983), p. 22.

¹³New York Times (February 10, 1987), A34; (February 16, 1987), A3; (June 23, 1987), A11.

humanitarian or pragmatic, facilitated the transition to democracy in 1987.

b. Democratic Changes in the Philippines

In addition, democratic change in the Philippines in 1986 was a significant event, one which encouraged the opposition leaders on one hand, and acted as a warning to the ruling élites on the other hand. The fall of Ferdinand Marcos, whose regime was often considered comparable to that of the South Korean military government, strengthened the confidence of many South Korean opposition leaders, especially Kim Dae Jung who sometimes identified himself as South Korea's Aquino. Since many opposition group members had been weary of the military rule and its continuing repression for a quarter of a century, their ideological "armament" became weakened at that time. In this sense, the democratic political change in the Philippines was timely for the South Korean opposition leaders in consolidating their forces.

The ruling élites were also affected. They saw the dictator's defeat by the people's power. Probably they learned a lesson from Marcos's downfall about how unstable an arbitrary rule against the people's will is. The abrupt political change in the Philippines was clearly a factor

promoting the transition to democracy in South Korea in terms of its psychological impact on both the opposition and the government leaders.

c. The 1988 Olympiad

One of the most pressing challenges which confronted the Roh government after its inauguration in early 1988 was the successful hosting of the 24th Summer Olympiad held in Seoul from September 17 to October 2. The task was meaningful for the new regime both domestically and internationally. Not only it was a chance to enhance the new government's political legitimacy among South Koreans, the nation's international prestige was at stake. The South Korean government's largest worry was that other nations would boycott the Olympiad. Fortunately for the government, this did not happen. The international pressure the government confronted was thus a self-imposed pressure rather than a real one.

For the successful hosting of the Seoul Olympic games, therefore, domestic political stability and a favorable international environment were crucial. Since the people's desire for democratization was strong, it was necessary for the government to show its own efforts in that direction in order to maintain internal political stability and bring

about more favorable international circumstances. Hence, President Roh made several liberalizing gestures by his verbal commitment to eliminate authoritarianism from all aspects of the government, to allow more freedom, and to move quickly toward democracy. In this sense, the 1988 Olympiad played an indirect, yet never trivial, role in the course of democratic transition.

3. The Security Threat from the North, and the "Logic of Security"

The security threat from North Korea is real.¹⁴ Korea has been divided into two parts since 1945 as the result of an artificial demarcation of the 38th Parallel, proposed by the United States and accepted by the Soviet Union.¹⁵ In 1950, the Korean war broke out and lasted until 1953, when

¹⁴Kim Ilsung, the dictator of North Korea, has never, in his speeches, omitted his emphasis on the imminence of reunification. This has been perceived as a security threat by South Koreans. For example, in Kim Il Sung's speech to the sixth Congress of the Korean Workers Party, October 10, 1980, he said: "If reunification does not come quickly and division continues, our nation will remain bisected forever, and the South Korean people will be unable to cast off the yoke of colonial slavery. Failing reunification at the earliest possible date, it will be difficult even to defend the independence and sovereignty of our country."

¹⁵Eun Sung Chung, "The Division of Korea: A Historical Study of the 38th Parallel," Journal of Law and Political Science Vol.3 (Seoul: Hanyang University Press, 1982), pp. 158-159.

the armistice agreement, which is still in force, was signed. In fact, the armistice means that the war has not officially ended yet, and that the two Koreas are still officially under a cease fire.

The division produced many social, economic, and political hardships. First of all, Korea has a single ethnic group, a single language (Korean), and the same historical background of more than four thousand years. The division created about ten million people whose family members were separated. Virtually all Koreans hope for reunification. For Koreans, the division, the so-called "national misery," is a state of abnormality. Second, the Korean war in 1950 set the two Koreas back in economic growth, not only because of wartime destruction, but also because of post-war military burdens. For example, national defense expenditure of South Korea in 1981 (3.97 billion dollars) constituted 6.3% of its GNP, as that of North Korea in the same year (1.68 billion dollars) constituted 8.9% of its GNP.¹⁸ Third, the border between South and North Korea is regarded as one of the most dangerous zones which menace world peace, and is one of the world's most heavily armed regions. For example, there have been almost 2,000 armed incidents between South and North Korea during the period of

¹⁸Source: International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance 1982-1983 (London: Spottiswoode Ballantyne Ltd., 1982), pp. 124-125.

1967-1975.¹⁷ The tensions between the two Koreas have never ceased (i.e., Rangoon bombing incident in 1983).¹⁸ Such tensions often provided the South Korean military government with an excuse to limit civil rights and control domestic politics in an authoritarian manner. This has impeded the country's political development.

National security is a grave concern of the South Korean government, and the citizens in general regard it as of great importance. The problem is that it has often been used as a justification for political repression.¹⁹ For example, the National Security Law, enacted in 1960 and in force from 1961 until 1975, has caused the detention of more than two thousand political prisoners. The other laws restraining political freedoms of the citizens under the

¹⁷Donald S. Zagoria and Young Kun Kim, "North Korea and the Major Powers," in William J. Barnds (ed.), The Two Koreas in East Asian Affairs (New York: New York University Press, 1976), p. 23.

¹⁸In Rangoon, Burma, 21 people (17 of them are South Koreans including Deputy Prime Minister Suh Suk Joon, Foreign Minister Lee Bum Suk, Minister of Energy and Resources Suh Sang Chul, chief presidential secretary Hahm Pyong Choon, and other leading advisers to President Chun and his Cabinet ministers) were killed in bomb blast which was planned by North Korean terrorists. New York Times (October 10, 1983), p. 1. and p. 8; (October 11, 1983), p. 12.; (October 18, 1983), p. 13.

¹⁹"One of those tensions is the near universal concern in the South about an invasion by North Korea. President Park justified his political repression on the grounds of national security. North Korea is still only 25 miles from Seoul, and that rationale will be invoked in the future by any politician who wants to defuse criticism of his policies" Mike Tharp, "Korea's Authoritarian Tradition," Wall Street Journal (November 1979), p. 16.

guise of concern for security (such as the Anti-Communist Law, and the Laws on Political Activities) have been used to imprison more than 7,000 persons during the period of 1962-1975.²⁰ In short, political repression such as human rights violations by the authoritarian military government has been rationalized by the so-called "Logic of Security (Anbo Nolli)," that gives more importance to national security than to political freedom.

In fact, North Korea's invasion would be determined by North Korean internal politics and other international circumstances. North Korean invasion, an offensive action in its nature and an outcome of the decision-making process of the North Korean political élites, cannot be made without a careful consideration of South Korean military power as well as their own, or without to the international environment. In short, considering the "logic of security" as a tool for legitimizing the military government, the security threat from North Korea has been an impeding factor in implementing democratic change. In addition, the South

²⁰Source: (1) For the years of 1961-1963, Kyôngch'al Tonggye Yônbo (Police Annual Statistics) of the National Police Bureau; (2) For the years of 1964-1975, Pôbwon Tonggye Yônbo (Court Annual Statistics) of the Office of Court Administration; and (3) For the number of political prisoners under Laws on Political Activities, Changkyu Choi, Haepang Samsimnyônsa (Thirty Year History After Liberation) Vol.4, p. 119. Citing from: Se-jin Kim, "Han'guk Chôngch'i Palchôn e kwanhan Kochal (A Study of Political Development in Korea)," Han'guk ôi Chôngch'ipalchôn kwa Kyôngiepalchôn (Political and Economic Development of Korea) (Seoul: Asian Institute for Public Policy, 1979), p. 188.

Korean military has an extreme sensitivity on the security question, thus the negative role of the North Korean factor in the process of democratization, usually involving conflict between different political actors and their interests, is important.

C. Problems and Prospects

Many problems still exist. They can be divided into two categories. One is the problems that the democratization process itself can bring, and the other is the difficulty in moving toward democracy. Among the problems in the first category, the relation between democracy, in which political participation of the public is essential, and social instability, has been frequently pointed out. Considering the past experiences of South Korean citizens who have struggled for democracy for a few decades, however, there is no stability without democracy. Probably democracy is "the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time" as Winston Churchill eloquently put it.²¹ The phrase applies to South

²¹The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 150.

Korea, too. Confrontation and confusion are likely to be prevalent in the early period of transition, but social instability will diminish as democratic "rules of the game" become accepted among the citizens and among the various social groups.

The core of the second category of problems can be also understood through the dynamics which exist between authoritarians and democrats. First of all, as long as North Korea is a main source of South Korea's security threat, the military's influence as the most powerful pressure group in South Korean political life will be dominant, and the military in all likelihood will take the position of intervening in politics either in an indirect or a direct way. In addition, there are hard-liners in the military. When they face challenges from protesters which they perceive will seriously harm their vested interests, or when there is a major crisis, it is possible for them to turn to the use of offensive means such as another military coup.

Second, the dissident groups are demanding democracy, and this has certainly facilitated the democratization of South Korea. Among dissidents, however, there are radicals. The growth of radicalism casts dark shadows over the South Korean society. Student activism and labor unrest are at the forefront of such radical resurgence. When their demands are too extreme, they can endanger the foundation of social order, especially, the economy. Ultimately, their

demands will impede the transition to democracy, particularly the consolidation phase.

Democracy is not anarchy but the process of an orderly and evolutionary change. Therefore, the prospects for democracy in South Korea are brighter when the radical forces of both the ruling élites and the opposition are alienated. In short, the reconciliation of moderate positions between the ruling and opposition parties, on the basis of mutual concessions and understanding by the means of dialogue and negotiations rather than confrontation, is more likely to construct effective democratic institutions. This might be the best way to develop democracy in South Korea.

The foregoing discussion confirms that democracy is not something to be achieved at once. That is, democratization is a gradual process, not a radical one. Democracy in South Korea will thrive when the Korean people do not lose their hope for democracy, and when they move toward it step by step. MacIver speaks of this as follows:

"Democracy is the long emergent way, proceeding stage by stage, moving this way and that, sometimes hesitant and sometimes confused, but feeling the pulse of the ever changing present, always seeking never fully attaining, never forgetting its own fallibility and never unwilling to correct its mistakes, always aspiring and never fulfilled. For such is the fight of life and such is the spirit that animates man."²²

²²R. M. MacIver, Democracy and the Economic Challenge (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), p. 70.

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