PART TWO

DEMOCRACY IN TRANSITION
Crisis of Public Confidence in Democratizing Korea: A Comparative Perspective

Chung-Si Ahn and Won-Taek Kang

Introduction

Democracy has emerged as the leading political system of the post-Cold-War world. While liberal democracy has no real rival, political distrust and the growth of "critical," "disaffected" citizenry is the troubling reality of contemporary democracy everywhere. Studies show that over the past decades, a loss of confidence in government and public institutions is almost universal. Citizens in most democracies have become less satisfied with their political institutions than they were decades before (Nye, Zelikow, and King, 1997; Norris, 1999; Pharr and Putnam, 2000). Confidence in government has declined in many countries in the old, established democracies, as well as the new, nascent democracies. Trust, confidence, and satisfaction in politics are widely held to be intimately connected with the effectiveness of government and the durability of democratic institutions (Putnam, 1993; Fukuyama, 1995; Warren, 1999).

Contemporary South Korea is well known for its lack of political trust and low confidence in government. The country had a relatively soft transition to democracy in 1987 and has since made remarkable progress in democratic
change (Ahn and Jaung, 1999). In 1998, Korea also became the first among Asia's new democracies to transfer power peacefully to an opposition party. In spite of this, its political process is torn by discontent with gridlock and bickering, and citizens perceive the performance of democratic institutions to lag far behind what they expect. Mass dissatisfaction in government, feelings of alienation from politics, perceptions of a widening gap between the elite and the masses, and low regard for public agencies are familiar words in the politics of democratizing Korea (Shin, 1999). Declining confidence in government is feared to disengage people from "positive social capital," or retract them to depend primarily on "personal trust" built into kinship, regional identity, and informal networks of patron-client relationships (Ahn, 2000a: 467). Therefore, addressing the problems of political distrust and declining confidence in the government in South Korea is a highly relevant case for concern.

What does it matter when people do not have trust and confidence in government? If we follow the classical liberal vision of society, democracy is the better when there is less government. The core belief of traditional liberalism is, so far as government "will have incentives not to act in the citizens' interest," that "citizens should distrust and be wary of government" (Hardin, 1999: 23). Accordingly, low confidence and mistrust in government (at least a modest degree) are considered healthy for democracy. If the subjective political feeling of citizens reflects "wariness rather than cynicism," lack of trust about untrustworthy politics and flawed public institutions is both sensible and necessary for more democracy. However, it is necessary to emphasize that the aim of democracy is to "take the most effective precautions for keeping (rulers) virtuous whilst they continue to hold the public trust" (James Madison, The Federalist Papers, No. 57, quoted from Newton, 2001: 212, Notes 2). At the same time, growing evidence attests that citizens' trust and confidence in politics matter much to the future of democracy and its sustained performance.

Distrust, dissatisfaction, and low confidence in government are said to affect the sustainability of democracy and the strength of democratic institutions in many ways. Also, political trust, satisfaction, and confidence
in government are strongly associated with one another. Trust builds effective institutions, which helps government perform more effectively. And this in turn will encourage confidence in public institutions, and help to build a vibrant civil society. On the contrary, continuously declining confidence in government might cause "a cumulative downward spiral" (Nye et al., 1997: 4). Or, "poor government performance as manifested, for example, in rampant political corruption may create a cycle that contributes to widespread social distrust" (Pharr and Putnam, 2000: 72-73). Representative democracy requires public support to sustain its durability and effectiveness. Loss of citizen trust means low support and unstable government, which will negatively affects government's ability to provide public goods. When people withdraw from providing support (and resources) to ineffective government, there will be a low stability regime. Inefficient, unstable government will also breed cynicism about politics and elected officers, which in turn may reduce citizens' participation. The more cynicism and the less participation, the more it is likely that public support for "democracy as a way of governance" will erode.

The reasons for low trust in government can be many—inefficiency, corruption, costing too much, doing the wrong thing, authoritarian character and behavior of leaders, and so on. Attempts, both theoretical and empirical, to explain the causes and problems of low public trust abound in the literature. Among them, three explanations stand out. The first looks to economic performance as the main cause for low public trust. It posits that economic prosperity leads to public satisfaction, while economic downturns erode citizen confidence in government. The second explanation is one based on social and cultural hypotheses. The cultural model attributes a decline of political trust to a long-term secular trend, arguing that disrespect of authority is a part of post-modern society as it moves from (modern) survival to (post-modern) quality-of-life values (Inglehart, 1997). Another popular explanation is the civil society model, synonymous with social capital theory. According to this theory, confidence in government diminishes when social capital runs low, and it can flourish when civil society is endowed with a good supply of social capital (Putnam, 1993). The
third explanation attributes the decline in confidence primarily to political and institutional factors. This approach emphasizes unaccountable, unresponsive political leaders and institutions (parties, legislature, bureaucracy), constitutional arrangements, dishonesty of leaders, political corruption as the main causes of dissatisfaction and low confidence in government (Norris, 1999; Pharr, Putnam, and Dalton, 2000: 3-27; Pharr, 2000; Newton and Norris, 2000).

This paper explores grounds for better understanding of where South Korea stands in the evolution of democratic governance. We do this by comparing Korea with neighboring Asian countries as to how well the government performs various functions in the eyes of its citizens. The term political trust is synonymous with terms such as “civic-mindedness and participation,” “citizenship,” “political interest and involvement,” “concern with public interest/public good,” “political tolerance,” “ability to compromise,” and “confidence in political institutions” (Newton, 2001: 205). For the sake of analytical simplicity and extended applicability for empirical indicators across countries, we define political trust broadly in this study as interchangeable with confidence and satisfaction in politics. Trust, confidence, and satisfaction in politics refer here to the aggregate property of politics seen from citizens’ evaluation of the political world. They are expressed in citizens’ perception that a political system and its institutions perform their functions satisfactorily. This study uses the cross-national survey research data collected by Gallup International in August-October 1999, and the main reason for using it is pragmatic: the data is available for public use and provides a good basis for cross-national comparison of political trust and confidence. The survey, one of the largest on global opinion at the turn of the new millennium, covered 60 countries, including ten in Asia, and has a total sample size of 57,000. For this analysis, we took only Asian samples from the global data and a sample size per country that varies between 500 and 1,000. The questionnaires were designed for either telephone or face-to-face interviews. Specific measures focused on are in the appendix.

The following sections will first provide comparative statistics to show
how South Korea stands in Asia on selected measures of citizen confidence in politics. We will then look into plausible causes of South Korea's low trust and confidence in politics. Our purpose in this exposition is not to lay out full answers to the question, or provide solutions for the problem public disaffection in politics. By examining a series of political, economic, and social-cultural hypotheses about the causes and correlates of political disaffection, we think we can clear the ground for an in-depth examination of the institutions, governance, and performance of the new democracy in South Korea.

Political Trust in South Korea: Comparative Assessments

Democracy and Government Performance

Representation and responsiveness. Democratic government should represent the will of the people. Democracy also requires a government that responds well to the wishes of its people. We took the question "would you say the will of the people governs your country?" as a measure of democratic representation, and the perception as to whether one considers his or her own country "responds to the will of the people" as that of responsible governance. Figure 6 shows a plot of eight Asian countries. It is intriguing that Koreans are most dissatisfied in "representation" and discontent with the level of "responsiveness" in spite of its hard-won democratization. Only 19 percent of Koreans responded in the positive to the question, "is your country governed by the will of people?" Though the percentage is higher than Japan and Thailand, it is still below the average (21 percent) of eight Asian countries. The figure suggests that Koreans feeling of political efficacy is extremely low. It is also worth noting that there is an equally low level of positive answers from the Japanese sample. Table 2 shows the distribution on the question, "Do you feel that elections in (your country) are free and fair?" Forty-one percent of Korean people answered "yes." Compared with other questions, the proportion of positive answers is somewhat high, indicating that electoral procedures
Table 2. Perception of Free and Fair Elections in Select Asian Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economy</th>
<th>Approval Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6. Democratic Representation and Government Responsiveness in Select Asian Countries
are gaining legitimacy. However, we should note that more than half the respondents did not agree that elections are free and fair. Moreover, when compared with the other eight countries (average 48 percent in positive response), South Korea is sixth in rank, with a percentage of positive responses lower than the regional average.

**Efficiency and performance.** Four questions were used to evaluate government efficacy and its performance: The perception of government as “efficient” and “just” were placed on the positive scale, and “bureaucratic” and “corrupt” on the negative. We plotted countries across each of two pairs of questions in Figures 7 and 8. Only 8 percent of Koreans agreed that their government is efficient. Again Korea is among the lowest, followed only by the lowest (3 percent of Japanese). Similarly, very few Koreans see their government “just” in performance. Only 4 percent gave a positive evaluation, with Korea being placed among the lowest, along with Japan, Thailand, and a slightly better Taiwan. Singapore and Malaysia are perceived as most efficient in governance, while the Philippines and Hong Kong fall in the middle between the three East Asian democracies and the two Southeast Asian semi-authoritarian governments.

Political discontent among Koreans is also high in a “bureaucratic way of governance” (Figure 8). More than half of the respondents said that the government is bureaucratic. On corruption, nearly three-quarters of Korean people perceive the government as corrupt. South Korea is in stark contrast to Singapore, where only 1.4 percent see the government as corrupt.

In short, a majority of Koreans perceive their government as being highly bureaucratic, mostly corrupt, of extremely low efficiency, and not performing justly. The data clearly implies that democracy in South Korea lacks the support and trust of its citizens. Another interesting point is the seeming contrast between East Asian and Southeast Asian countries in the way citizens evaluate government. People in Korea, Japan, and Taiwan tend to be more critical than those in Southeast Asia. In all questions examined, the response pattern looks quite similar in Korea, Japan, and Taiwan.
Figure 7. Is Your Government Efficient and Just?

Figure 8. Is Your Government Bureaucratic and Corrupt?
Policy performance on environment and crime control. Two indicators chosen to tap into perceptions of the quality of social life as affected by government policy are environment and crime. We first looked into how satisfactory citizens find the “overall state of the environment” and how concerned they are about “the level of crime” in their country. Then, we plotted corresponding questions on what people think of the government’s policy for addressing the issues of environment and crime (Figures 9 and 10). As expected, satisfaction with the state of the environment and crime highly correlate with the approval of government’s handling of issues. Generally speaking, the assessment of Koreans about the quality of life in society is quite negative. Only 17.6 percent are satisfied with the current state of the environment, among the lowest percentages in addition to those from Japan and Pakistan. That statistic is well below the average 44 percent for the entire nine countries. Dissatisfaction with government performance in addressing environmental issues is equally high among the Korean people; only 13 percent agreeing that “government policy is adequate in addressing environmental issues.” In this respect as well, Korea and Japan are similar, the latter being least satisfied with government’s handling of environmental issues.

Human Rights, Freedom and Equality

Human rights and freedom. Human rights, freedom, and equality are the three most substantial values of democracy. On the question of whether human rights are “fully respected” in Korea, only a tiny fraction of Koreans (4 percent) agreed (Figure 11). The vast majority of Korean thinks that the authorities still breach human rights. Given the uninterrupted democratic development in South Korea for the last decade, such low esteem for the protection of human rights is surprising. Intriguingly enough, Japanese respondents also expressed huge discontent with human rights. However, responses in South Korea and Japan differ sharply on the question of whether the use of torture is documented. An affirmative answer to this question is highest among Korean respondents (80 percent) (Table 3). By contrast, 19 percent of Japanese answered that torture is still
Figure 9. Government Performance: Environmental Policies

Figure 10. Approval of Government’s Handling of Crime
Figure 11. Are Human Rights Fully Respected?

Table 3. Approval Rates of Human Rights and Freedom in Selected Asian Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rights to Freedom of Speech Respected?</th>
<th>Discrimination on the basis of Political Opinion?</th>
<th>Use of Torture Documented?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Crisis of Public Confidence in Democratizing Korea: A Comparative Perspective 283
being documented, the lowest of the nine countries surveyed.

Korean discontent is high not only on human rights, but on political freedom. As Table 3 shows, only 36 percent of Korean respondents agreed that everyone has freedom of speech, half the approval rate of Filipinos. A similar result is found in responses to discrimination on the basis of political opinion. Thirty-six percent of Koreans say that discrimination based on political opinion “frequently” takes place. That percentage, along with those of Taiwan and Pakistan, is among the highest. Japanese and Singaporeans (the lowest at 6 percent and 10 percent, respectively) believe that there is “discrimination based on political opinion.”

Equality. In Figure 12, we plotted the responses to the question of “equality before the law” against the “right to equal pay for equal work.” Twenty-two percent of Koreans agreed that “equality before the law” is respected in Korea, while 34 percent said that the “right to equal pay for equal work” is guaranteed. Except for Singapore, Hong Kong, and Malaysia, approval rates of “equality before the law” are generally low. However, the fact that almost eight out of ten Koreans think that they are not fairly treated by the law implies a very high distrust of the justice system. The Korean approval rate to the “right to equal pay for equal work” is modest in relative terms. Korea is at the median of the nine Asian countries on this scale. Interestingly enough, the approval rates from the Japanese sample on both dimensions are surprisingly low.

South Korea is again consistently low in terms of women’s rights or gender equality. The plotting of responses in Figure 13 clearly attests to the fact that South Korean society is highly male-dominant. On the question of equal rights between men and women, the lowest 26 percent of Koreans agreed that there is such equality. That figure is only half the average of all the countries and about one-third that for Malaysia. The response rate on the question as to whether discrimination takes place on the basis of sex is also highest among Koreans, with 39 percent saying that discrimination “frequently” takes place because of gender difference.

The foregoing analysis reveals two striking features of the “Korean syndrome” in political values. First, in the Korean sample, low trust prevails
Figure 12. Equality before the Law and Equal Pay for Equal Work

Figure 13. Gender Equality

8. Crisis of Public Confidence in Democratizing Korea: A Comparative Perspective
in almost all questions on democratic governance. This is unique to Korea, although it may be true of Japan as well, and is in stark contrast to the aggregate properties of other Asian samples. Considering many democratic achievements during the last ten years, such low esteem for government by Korean citizens seems hardly justifiable. For example, Korea's political freedom score by the Freedom House 2001 survey is 27, relatively high compared with other Asian countries (www.freedomhouse.org/pfs2001/pfs2001.pdf). However, only 36 percent of the Millennium Survey's Korean sample responded that "everyone has the right to freedom of speech." This is well below the average (43 percent) of the nine countries under comparison, followed only by Pakistan (28 percent) and, lowest, and equally intriguing, Japan (14 percent). In short, Koreans tend to be unusually critical and disaffected with their democratizing government.

Second, there is a wide gap between the objective indicators of democratic governance and the subjective measures of citizens' evaluation of government. Table 4 lists rankings based on analyses of 60 countries covered both by Freedom House data and the Gallup Millennium Survey. The table clearly shows an almost complete reversal of objective and subjective indicators (Inoguchi, 2000: 4-5).

It is those quasi-democratic and semi-authoritarian countries that are accorded highest scores for subjective democratic governance along with such seemingly highly democratic countries as Switzerland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, and the UK. It is those highly democratic counties such as Japan and South Korea that are given low scores of democratic governance along with Cameroon and Colombia. Those quasi-democratic and semi-authoritarian countries are given bonuses to democratic scores despite some illiberal practices.

Why are Korean people so dissatisfied with their newly won democracy? What makes up the seemingly unique culture of political disaffection in South Korea? How can we explain the extremely low confidence and erosion of trust in democratic governance? Interpreting the "Korean syndrome" and explaining the context and dynamics of political distrust in South Korea is a paramount task.
Table 4. Country Rankings in the Freedom House Data and Gallup Millennium Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rank by Freedom House</th>
<th>Rank by Gallup Millennium Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Inoguchi, 2000, p. 4.

Interpreting Trends and Dynamics

South Korean economy, society, and politics underwent a radical transformation over the past several decades. In this regard, it is natural to assume that those changes affected attitudes, values, social norms and networks, and have caused shifts in how Korean people feel about and evaluate government and public institutions. We will look into the question starting from exploring hypotheses drawn from an economic perspective.

Economic Factors

South Koreans in recent years have experienced both the exhilaration of political liberalization and the frustration of economic downturn. The country had decades of prosperity under authoritarian rule before undergoing the transition to democracy in 1987. Between 1988 and 1996, the country made slow but relatively steady progress from a soft transition to the uplift of democratic consolidation. Political involvement by the military was completely eliminated during Kim Young Sam’s presidency. In
1996, Korea was admitted to the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). However, its reputation as a nation capable of achieving both an “economic miracle” and a “democratic breakthrough” was shattered by the financial crisis of 1997. The crisis forced the Kim Young Sam government to seek a bailout from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Kim Dae Jung was able to win his hard-won presidency at the end of 1997 largely because he effectively capitalized on the “critical mood” of voters against the ruling party for making a fiasco of the country’s economy.

The Millennium Survey was taken while Koreans were amidst a financial crisis. One may presume that timing and the specific social context would bias the results of Korean data, but it is equally plausible that, in the wake of economic crisis, more people would be dissatisfied with the way the national economy was governed. However, the economic explanation must not be taken simplistically for several reasons. First, other countries such as Thailand and Malaysia underwent similar economic crises, but the statistics of these countries do not match those of Korea. Second, the sheer intensity and consistency of responses from the Korean sample attest to the fact that there must be more effects than those of timing and financial crisis.

Another hypothesis based on economic reasoning is that people get angry and tend to hold a low regard for politics when a good economic record is sharply reversed. Generally speaking, management of the Korean economy under democratic regimes is far from impressive. As Table 5 shows, economic performance in post-transition Korea was not as good as that under the authoritarian government. Annual growth rates continued to decline from a high of 10.5 percent under Park Chung Hee and 9.5 percent under Chun Doo Hwan to 6.9 percent and 4.9 percent during Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung's presidency. The current account surplus turned to a net deficit in 1990 and remained that way throughout the entire period of the Kim Young Sam government. In 1996 the annual deficit current balance was especially high at 2.3 billion US dollars.

Moreover, the lingering memory of “miraculous” economic development
under authoritarian regimes may well explain part of the declining confidence in the current government. Until the late 1980s when the downturn started, the South Korean economy looked good. Consumer prices were stabilized well under Chun Doo Hwan. Park’s and Chun’s regimes effectively maintained full employment and rapid growth. In contrast to those glittering economies, economic performance under democratic governments was meager. At the same time, new groups formerly oppressed under authoritarianism began to claim the right to participate in the wake of democratization. Labor is a case in point. Authoritarian regimes were able to force workers to remain underpaid, and effectively keep them from any volatile level of participation in the labor movement. However, with democratization, radical demands for high wages and better working conditions fervently burst out. For example, loss of working days from labor disputes abruptly rose from 72 days in 1986 to 6,947 days in 1987. Eruption of sectional interests was not limited to trade unionism; but dispersed to other parts of society. A newly democratized government tends to be vulnerable to collective action, resulting in inconsistency and lack of coordination in economic policy-making.

The combination of low growth and reduced effectiveness in managing the national economy followed by good economic times might have rekindled a sense of exclusion, deprivation, dissatisfaction, public distrust and
Table 6. Changes in Political Efficacy and System Responsiveness in Korea, 1994-96

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Political efficacy</th>
<th>System responsiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>40.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stayed about the same</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>51.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1,475</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The original table with five categories is collapsed into three. Modified from Shin (1999: 34), Table 1.6.

disaffection in the newly democratizing regime. The explanation appears convincing to those who take the economy seriously as a tool in understanding the dynamics of citizen support for government. However, we find it difficult to establish that a reduction in public confidence in government was primarily due to economic downturn or economic crisis. Widespread discontent and perceptions of government ineffectiveness were on a growth trend even before the 1997 economic crisis erupted. As Table 6 suggests, low and declining confidence in government actually preceded the outbreak of economic crisis. As Shin reports, the proportion of citizens who felt that the democratic Sixth Republic did a better job than the preceding authoritarian government in running “the government by and for the people” had declined significantly between 1994 and 1996 (Shin, 1999: 35).

It should not be prematurely ruled out that, in the Korean context, an economic downturn combined with the ensuing economic crisis in 1997 significantly disaffected citizens from government. However, we are inclined to limit the generalization only to specific circumstances (i.e., hard times such as the economic crisis) in conjunction with certain socio-political contexts or settings (i.e., in semi-democracies or transition economies). It may be that people become disenchanted with a certain socio-political context during economic hard times.
Socio-Cultural Dynamics

Is there something unique to Korean culture that makes its citizens stingy in giving scores to what government does? Are Koreans culturally inclined to be "critical," "rebellious," and "cynical" toward government? Are they intrinsically less trustful of politics than, for example, Malaysians or Singaporeans? There certainly are some indications that the measures of confidence and trust in government for the three Confucian states of Korea, Japan, and Taiwan tend to cluster together somewhat. However, the data at hand do not warrant any systematic evidence to show that Confucian East Asians are more disrespectful of authority than other Asians. Another hypothesis pertaining to cultural exposition is the gap theory. The theory posits that the actual or perceived gaps between the ideal and reality, between expectation and achievement, between socio-economic and political development, produce dissatisfaction, mistrust, and low confidence in government. Critical attitudes may also reflect lagging social, political, and economic development or the lingering effects of an authoritarian era.

A related, but analytically differentiated, mode of placing "the Korean syndrome" onto a socio-cultural plane of analysis can be found in the debates on "the Asian values" toward democracy and its performance. Singapore's senior minister Lee Kuan Yew has long argued that Western-style democracy has deleterious effects on Asian society (Zakaria, 1994; Emmerson, 1995). A "soft" form of authoritarianism, according to Lee, is more appropriate to East Asia's Confucian tradition than Western-style liberal democracy. On the basis of this (illiberal) logic, he justifies the suppression of freedom of speech and political dissent. According to this view, (liberal) democracy represents not universal values, but is uniquely rooted in Western culture, and is therefore not always appropriate for "Asian culture."

In contrast, Kim Dae Jung, while still an opposition leader, challenged Lee's view on democracy and Asian values, refuting it with the point that democracy represents the same human principles no matter whether they
are in the East or the West. Kim also argued that economic development could not take the place of democratic values. He said that democracy and economic prosperity should be pursued simultaneously. In his presidential inaugural address in 1998, Kim declared that his government would pursue the "parallel development of democracy and free market economy." Kim's view parallels the development of democracy and market economy and can be contrasted to Lee Kuan Yew's notion that Asian values are less conducive to "Western-style" democracy.

These two opposing views were widely debated in Korean society. By and large, perhaps somewhat dissimilar to Singapore or Malaysia, a majority of Koreans have been socialized in such a way that they oppose the view that democracy is alien to Korea or to Asian culture(s). Few Koreans, whether they supported his government or not, challenged Kim's view that democracy and a market economy could develop in parallel. The Korean people tend to understand that democracy represents universal values that cannot be confined to the Western world. This notion implies that democratic values and culture, its institutions, and practices in Western countries are not ethnocentric; achievements made in the West such as political freedom, human rights, fair and free elections, and rule by law are models and standards for every country to emulate. The standards formulated in "advanced" democracies are "normal" and "desirable" and can serve as "universal" categories to judge and compare this or any other government and its performance.

Culturally and psychologically, Korean views of democracy may lead to setting an unduly high level of aspiration, which in reality may be difficult to achieve. "To be democratic," for example, we need to be "democratic enough to match the Western democracies." Such a high level of aspiration is likely to cause a low esteem for his or her own government, and may increase the number of "critical citizens." Even if some improvements are made in democratization and its consolidation, people will want "more democracy" and "better governance" with reference to ever rising comparative grounds for "asking for more and better."

Although we do not have sufficient data to test the validity of this hy-
ypothesis, we should not rule out such a possibility in the Korean context. Formal education in South Korea has long instilled modern, democratic values of liberal individualism into its youth. Student activism and working class movements have been deeply affected by progressive ideology, drawn from the leftist literature of the West. With economic globalization, leaders and policy-makers emphasize the need for Koreans to restructure the society and economy to global standards. Korea’s early entry, or perhaps a premature one to some critics, into the OECD was welcomed by many as a means of providing the country with a good opportunity to reach and meet global standards. One editorial highlighted the positive consequences of joining the OECD (Dong-A Ilbo, November 18, 1996):

It is very important that by joining the OECD the principles of pluralist democracy, market economy and human rights will be obviously applied to the Korean society in general. Domestic policies, from human rights, labor, and environment to finance, education, and health, should be revised to meet ‘international standards.’ With the entry we will actively participate in the international economic order led by the advanced economies.

President Kim Young Sam also said in 1996 that the Korean government would reform and liberalize its domestic systems to match “the standards of advanced countries” (Chosun Ilbo, December 12, 1996).

One ramification of the above discussion is that Koreans low approval of government performance in the Millennium Survey does not necessarily mean that citizens see no improvement in the democratization of Korea. Neither do the citizens support the democratic regime. Studies widely support the conclusion that people would not allow a return to the authoritarian past, and are more satisfied with the quality of life under democracy than under authoritarian regimes (Shin, 1999; Ahn, 2000b). It may be that those who aspire for a high level of democratic achievement tend to become more critical toward government, and that the Korean people as a whole do not see that the changes made so far in democratization have brought sufficient progress to meet their aspirations. Poor grading more or less may reflect, on the other hand, that people are getting exasperated at...
the sluggishness of the reforms. Testing these hypotheses requires further work with improved theory and data that go beyond the scope of this study.

Constitutional Arrangements and Institutional Flaws

Constitutional arrangements adopted at the time of the democratic transition in South Korea have the built-in defects of producing divided government and dual legitimacy. That may have caused ineffective governance, in turn resulting in disenchantment with government. High public disaffection in government can also be attributed to the poor performance of political leaders, representative institutions, political parties, and policy implementing agencies. South Korea's party alignment is primarily based on regional rivalry and poses additional problems. The hypothesis underlying these arguments is that it is primarily the performance of political leaders, public institutions/agencies, and policies that produce (or reproduce) citizen trust and confidence in politics.

In all elections held after the 1987 transition, the country's voting turnout was divided into four politically distinctive regions, upon which three or four parties heavily relied for backing. Voters have been strongly aligned with "their" region-based parties. The ramifications of regional voting are in the emergence of divided governments. Table 7 shows that no governing party succeeded in securing a majority of seats in the National Assembly in all four elections since 1988. In fact, every election in post-transition Korea produced a divided government. Unlike American politics, presidents with divided government in South Korea have to deal with a hostile and united opposition in the legislature. According to Sartori (1994: 89), three factors help the American presidential system to function effectively: lack of ideological principles, weak and undisciplined parties, and locally centered politics. America has weak political parties in which electoral politics are run on the basis of "individualistic" campaigning. Campaign resources are made available mainly to individual candidates rather than through political parties (Ware, 1996: 295). Such a weak grip by the political parties allows the lawmakers to defy the party line, if any,
Table 7. Share of Seats by Governing Parties in Korea, 1988-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election year</th>
<th>President's Party</th>
<th>Governing Party</th>
<th>Number of Seats</th>
<th>Share of Seats (%)</th>
<th>Number of Seats Short of a Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Democratic Justice Party</td>
<td></td>
<td>125</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Democratic Liberal Party</td>
<td></td>
<td>149</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>New Korea Party</td>
<td></td>
<td>139</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>New Millennium Democratic Party</td>
<td></td>
<td>115</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

when voting in Congress.

In spite of a seeming similarity of a lack of ideology, South Korean parties operate under different logic. National issues dominate party politics and all parties are under the tight control of top leaders who monopolize political resources. Individual lawmakers cannot effectively challenge the official party policy without running the risk of being disciplined or even expelled. Such strong party discipline prevents individual legislators of opposition parties from freely cooperating with the government party or the president in the Blue House, even when they are sympathetic with government policy positions. Accordingly, problems will arise when the government party fails to win the majority in the National Assembly. As parties are solidly united, political disagreement with an opposition party (or parties) can lead to conflict between the president and the legislature and result in stalemate.

Dual legitimacy is not unique to Korea. It can be found in any presidential system of government. The problem in the Korean case is that its constitutional system lacks institutionalized solutions to settle conflicts, at the time they arise, between the president and the opposition-dominated legislature. In the United States, presidential leadership and power to persuade opposition lawmakers plays an important role in settling disagreements with Congress (Neustadt 1980: 10). The French way is much subtler. Even though the designers of the Fifth Republic intended the pres-
idency to be strong, the president is able to wield strong power only when his party (or coalition of parties) wins a majority in the National Assembly. Otherwise, administrative power goes to the opposition that controls the National Assembly, which is often dubbed "cohabitation."

Unlike the United States or France, the Korean presidential system has yet to invent an institutional mechanism that can settle a deadlock of dual legitimacy. In the absence of such a mechanism, political disagreements often develop into serious showdowns between president and legislature, resulting in protracted stalemates. The deadlock inevitably lessens the effectiveness of policy making and policy implementation. In this situation, the reform agenda president can easily be blocked in the National Assembly. Many bills can be delayed or even canceled out. When urgent reform bills at the time of the crisis were dawdled over by the legislative entanglement, huge public outcry and criticism arose. The widespread political negativism from the Korean respondents seen in the Millennium Survey can be interpreted in this context.

Another facet of institutional flaws in the Korean political system is the timing of executive and legislative elections. The Latin American experience shows that non-concurrent elections (executive and legislative elections on separate dates) are likely to bring about a multiparty structure (Jones, 1995: 103-118). The effects of non-concurrent elections in Korea are twofold. First, they are more likely to produce divided government. Elections in the midst of the executive's term (especially after the "honeymoon period") are interpreted as polls on the popularity of the incumbent president. When the governing party (or a coalition) does not fare well, which is often the case, it results in a divided government. Second, mid-term elections often make the momentum of reforms run out of steam. During election campaigns, every party tries to woo as many voters as possible. Reforms inherently entail changes in the status quo, which is likely to turn some voters against the ruling party. To avoid the loss, the president compromises or softens reform programs. In consequence, the political momentum slows down. This is part of the reason that successive presidential attempts to reform the bureaucracy have been aborted.
Political distrust may also reflect the unpopularity of the incumbent president, the political parties, and the politicians, and discontent with their political conduct. Less than three years into their respective tenures, all presidents in the Sixth Republic of Korea lost much of their credibility as leaders, becoming early lame ducks. Many people perceive that not only presidents but also all legislators are collectively blamed for inefficiency, dishonesty, and excessive partisan interest. Frequent occurrences of political deadlock and partisan bickering turn people away from politicians as a whole, regardless of party or position. The level of public support for main parties is quite low. According to a survey reported by Joong-Ang daily in September 2000, 40 percent of the respondents said they were not close to any party, 25.5 percent favored the main opposition Grand National Party, and 22.7 percent supported the ruling New Millennium Democratic Party. Civic movement groups and non governmental organizations (NGOs) are rated much more favorably than political parties. Independent candidates were no less favored than party affiliated candidates in legislative elections (Hwang and Kang, 1998).

The widened scope of press freedom and freedom of speech brings unceasing disclosure of corruption at high levels and official misconduct in electoral democracy and provides further grounds for mounting public distrust in government and cynicism towards politicians. Electoral democracy enhances political transparency and mechanisms for institutional checks on the governing processes. Democratization expands the scope of civic participation in decision-making and subjects officials to closer public scrutiny and greater accountability. The National Assembly has been substantially empowered to oversee executive misconduct. Local councils were set up to check local government. Mass media, freed from government control and intervention, finds it more "profitable" to scrutinize or criticize government activities. In addition, many voluntary civil watchdog groups sprang up during and after democratic transition. NGOs regularly monitor government policies, covering various issues such as environment, women's issues, political financing, and elections. The activities of NGOs have also been expanded to sub-national levels so that they can watch over
local policy-making processes. Trade unions (particularly white-collar trade unions) play an important role in enhancing transparency within large firms and conglomerates.

All in all, when compared with the authoritarian period, democracy has made Korean society much more open, transparent and contentious at all levels. Growing civil society and institutions of monitoring systems pressurize political power and public institutions to enhance responsiveness and accountability. Given the openness and transparency, it is no small surprise that a big majority of Korean people regard their government as inefficient, corrupt, bureaucratic, and unjust. Almost three-quarters of the Korean sample in the Millennium Survey said “government is corrupt.” That is the highest number among the eight Asian countries, with Thailand being second. How can this seeming paradox be explained? It makes no sense to assume that democratization brought about more corruption than the authoritarian regimes did. Table 8 is taken from Transparency International data. Korea ranked 48th among 90 countries surveyed in the 2000 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). It is about in the middle of the countries surveyed between 1995 and 2000. The table also shows that Korea’s ranking and CPI scores are gradually lowering, which suggests that corruption is becoming less rampant, albeit still continuing. As Table 9 shows, Korea’s CPI rank in Asia is about in the middle as well.

One possible way to solve the puzzle is to look at any changes in public attitude toward corruption to the extent that even less rampant corruption (than before under authoritarianism) causes more serious disaffection in the context of democratization. People might have taken corruption for granted in the past, either because they had no alternative, or because there were no institutional channels to express their frustrations. However, in a democratic environment with an expanded scope of monitoring institutions and public participation, citizens are probably more willing to openly deplore and defy them. In consequence, practices that were “ordinary” under authoritarian regimes are no longer tolerated.

On many occasions, presidents and their cabinets have embarked on anti-
Table 8. CPI Rankings of Korea, 1995-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of countries surveyed</th>
<th>Ranking of Korea</th>
<th>CPI Score</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5.02</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>2.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. CPI Rankings of Other Asian Countries, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>CPI score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


corruption campaigns. However, corruption scandals in which powerful politicians are implicated have been more frequent under democracy than before. Without exception, democratically elected presidents or close aids and relatives turned out to have been involved in corruption. Two former presidents, Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo, were jailed for illegally accumulating huge amounts in slush funds. A son of president Kim Young Sam was charged with bribery and tax evasion. Kim Dae Jung’s presidency is no exception to the cycle. Naturally, these scandals provoked fu-
rious reactions from the public. Unlike under the authoritarian rule, people nowadays would not condone corrupt behavior and official misconduct. Citizens and social groups are more inclined to publicize their dissatisfaction than before. Statistics from the Millennium Survey data may reflect this public discontent and political disaffection.

Also, public scrutiny and institutional checking allowed many otherwise, concealed cases of corruption to be disclosed to the public. As press freedom expanded, the mass media would disclose malpractice, bad conduct, and corruption cases much more frequently than before. Such frequent disclosures of corruption, in turn, makes many people believe that "government is corrupt." Moreover, frequent revelations of corruption can give an image of weak control or lack of discipline within government. However, the impression that corruption greatly increases as democratization proceeds cannot be justified objectively. Authoritarian regimes would have swept many of these corruption cases under the carpet by preventing the press from publicizing them. If we take that into consideration, it would be inappropriate to say that democratization has brought about more corruption. Thus, we conclude that the extreme negativism expressed in the political orientation of the South Korean people as seen in the facts and figures in this paper is overstated to some extent. However, such critical attitudes show that, while Korea is slowly proceeding toward democratic consolidation, its people are not content. As a matter of fact, they are still far from being proud of how they are governed in electoral democracy.

Conclusion: "Crisis of Democracy" or "Dissatisfied Democrats"?

Public opinion and mass political culture has received marginal attention in past studies of Asian politics, reflecting a view in part that ordinary people matter little under military regimes or authoritarian government. Instead, greater scholarly attention has been given to studies of dominance by elites, characteristics of the regime, political and economic dynamics,
and international linkage. However, as democracy spreads widely, public opinion and citizen values are taken increasingly as important subjects of inquiry. Accordingly, studies on mass culture and citizen orientation have emerged as vital areas of research in comparative democratization. The approach of this paper is based on the assumption that studying subjective evaluations of citizens toward their government is one of the most effective methods for understanding and explaining the dynamics of democratic change in Asia. Analysis undertaken here is a modest attempt to fill the academic gaps in this emerging research.

The findings in the study lead to the conclusion that Korean politics today, after a decade since the turn to democracy in 1987, is still far from stable and mature. The quality and performance of South Korea's new democracy has a long way to go. People generally see that an electoral democracy they won a decade ago has not progressed much in delivering on its promises of accountability, responsiveness, effectiveness, and respect for the rule of law. The record in human rights, freedom, and equality is still far from what is expected. Only a few believe that democracy works satisfactorily. Public support for the regime and the representative institutions remains remarkably low, even compared with the illiberal, authoritarian governments of Southeast Asia. On the whole, we find little evidence of declining public commitment to the principles of democratic governance among Korean citizens. We do not see the democratic regime in South Korea at risk of being supplanted by "a return to authoritarianism." Both in perception and reality, the authoritarian past has been effectively relinquished in favor of electoral democracy. However, evidence shows a decline in political confidence among Koreans. A majority of Korean citizens are disillusioned with politicians, political parties, and political institutions. A growing segment of the people are publicly disaffected with government and the institutions of representation.

Growing negativism in politics and government may reflect a post-modern trend, that is, general anti-authority attitudes that grow with broad socio-economic transformation. But, our analysis appears to confirm that, in shaping public confidence in politics, what happens in politics matters
much more than what happens in the economy and society. The problem could in part be that popular expectations of a hard-won democratic government after long authoritarian rule have been too high. It may be that the performance of South Korea’s electoral democracy is poor, or that Korean political culture tends to incite too high expectations. Either way, low confidence and high distrust in politics tell us that something is deficient in Korean democracy. The heart of the problem may be in the inability of government to fill the gap between expectations and actual performance (Norris, 1999: 2-3, 21-25).

Does the high level of political distrust in South Korea reflect a “crisis of democracy?” Or is it “tension between ideals and reality” that is “essentially healthy for the future of democratic governance”? The growth of a more critical citizenry in the 1980s increased the pressure for the democratic transition in South Korea in the 1990s (Ahn, 2001). Will the same be true of the consolidation process? The answer lies in how we make our elected government more accountable to the public before citizens become highly skeptical of democratic principles. In this perspective, the challenge is first to reform existing institutions and structures so that we can quickly correct the flaws and improve the quality of democratic government. Sustaining and strengthening democracy requires public trust and popular support. Hence, the next critical problem facing South Korea’s democracy is to foster responsible leadership and democratic governance under which trust and confidence can be generated and upheld.

Notes

1. For example, Newton and Norris conclude, “our research provides substantial support for theories that focus on the performance of governments and political institutions to explain citizens’ declining confidence in them” (Newton and Norris, 2000: 72).

2. Kim Dae Jung diagnosed at the time that “if South Korea had developed democracy and a market economy in a parallel, collusion between the government and business would not have occurred, and the disastrous and painful financial crisis could have been averted”
3. See, for example, various articles in the special issue on the topic in *Gegansasang* (Winter 1996).

**References**


A Comparison of (Low) Trust in Korea and Italy

In-Young Kim

Damned is he who trusts another.
Don’t make loans, don’t give gifts, don’t do good, for it will turn out bad for you.
Everyone thinks of his own good and cheats his companion.
When you see the house of your neighbor on fire, carry water to your own.

The Problem of Trust in Korea and Italy

Trust is now considered an important basis for democratization, and social and economic development, the base of “social capital.” In the political sphere, trust has been understood as a basis for civil participation and the development of democracy or as a basic condition for the synergy of state and civil society. In the economic sphere, trust has been known to facilitate market transactions, elevate the efficiency of government and business (Kramer and Tyler, 1996), and make possible the development of the overall national economy (Clague, 1997). In his book Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity (1996), Francis Fukuyama considers trust as a factor that makes possible the formation of large business groups. In addition, trust plays an
important role in reducing the uncertainty between persons and between institutions and in making society stable. When the members of organizations expect other members to behave honestly and that they are believable, we don’t need to “pay the cost of a suspicious mind.” Trust, the basis of social capital, is a lubricant that makes organization efficient (Fukuyama, 1999: 16).

In conclusion, trust is a necessary factor for economic growth and development, socio-political stabilization, and the formation of personal relationships. If transaction costs such as contacts and judicial institutions are decreased, the needs for contracts and prosecution will be reduced. If transaction costs are reduced, the possibility for economic growth is increased. Fukuyama emphasizes that trust is a precondition for highly industrialized societies in the twenty-first century and a necessary element not only for socio-political stability, but also from economic development.

The mass media in Korea proclaims that the recovery of trust in Korean society is one of the most important and immediate reform projects that Koreans have to accomplish. Social reforms in Korea have not been made successfully, and public disappointment in Korean politics, economy, and society has increased. Korean people seem to believe that we need to overcome distrust or low trust in Korean society. For example, the win-win politics between the government party and opposition parties is possible under conditions of trust. If the government party and opposition parties believe in the word of other parties, they can clear out the endless confrontations between them. Trust is also critically important to Korean economic growth. The financial crisis of Korea in 1997 resulted from international distrust of the Korean economy. When we don’t trust a bank, we withdraw money from the bank. When international investors distrusted the future of the Korean economy, they withdrew their investment and portfolios, and South Korea reached the brink of bankruptcy. If we don’t trust the market, the additional costs, that is, transaction costs, and inefficiency increase in the economy. If trust in government is low, citizens do not believe in the government and rely on Mafia protection for their lives and prosperity.
In this essay I will compare the historical origins and conditions that made South Korea and Italy (low) trust societies. According to Fukuyama, the characteristics of low-trust societies are as follows: (1) weak intermediate associations, (2) a family-oriented society, and (3) small businesses are the center of economy. The important characteristics of high-trust societies are two: (1) spontaneous sociality and (2) strong solidarity for community. In other words a society of strong solidarity for community is a high-trust society, whereas a society of weak solidarity for community is a low-trust society. Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Italy, and France can be classified as low-trust societies. These societies cannot have large businesses. But the Korean government cultivated large business groups through its industrial policies of 1960-70. Small family businesses should prosper following the cases of China that depend on family. This is clear when we look at the cases of Korea's big business groups that have been managed by family members.

Fukuyama claims that, in the case of southern Italy, people show little trust in all others except family members (as is the case for the Chinese), and the power and number of intermediate associations between state and personnel are relatively weak and small. Also Italy lacks spontaneous sociability, like China. Historically Italy was ruled by a “centralized and arbitrary state” and this state eliminated the intermediate associations and tried to control the life of associations. Fukuyama shows the examples of Montegrano in the southern part of Italy where Edward Banfield conducted research (Banfield, 1958: 115-116; Fukuyama, 1996: 141). Banfield pointed out that he was not able to find any kinds of social associations. The social activities include only the activities that were church- and state-made and centrally controlled. Putnam follows Banfield’s arguments, explaining the differences between southern and northern Italy in the development of local autonomy. Putnam analyzes the number and role of “civic community” in the whole of Italy, which is not based on the blood ties and makes spontaneous sociability.

In this paper I do not start from the proposition that Korea is definitely a low-trust society from a Western point of view and the question of how
to make Korea a Western high-trust country. I don’t want to follow the mistakes of past modernization theorists who did not understand the characteristics of non-Western societies and argued that Westernization seems to be the best solution for all kinds of social problems in non-Western societies. For it is a matter of criteria whether society is low-trust or high-trust. Also the criteria can be chosen differently depending on the purposes. For example, Korean society shows high trust in inter-personal relations, but has a low-trust of public institutions and norms. It is argued that Korean society did not extend its high trust exhibited in the private sphere to the public sphere (Che-Hyok Yi, 1998).

Both Italy and Korea show high private trust and low public trust. This paper examines why the two countries show the same phenomena and the historical origins of low public trust in a comparative historical perspective. How Italy has tried to overcome low public trust and what Korean society has to do to get over the problems of low public trust. If I can find out the similarities in the historical origins or causes of two countries’ high private but low public trust, I can determine the differences between social conditions of low-trust and high-trust societies. With this kind of research, we can calculate the social cost that low-trust has resulted in. The huge amount of social cost will imply the necessity of trust buildup in low-trust societies and open up opportunities for raising the rate of trust in a society.

A History of Low-Trust Formation in Italy

Fukuyama classifies Italy as a low-trust society and explains the reasons why large companies are not well organized. Table 10 shows the change in the level of trust of the people in each member state of the European Community between 1976 and 1990. The mid-point of the trust scale is 1.5. When the level of trust rises above 1.5, a sense of mutual trust exists. A value below 1.5 indicates that a lack of trust predominates. According to Table 10, the Italians were the least-trusting people from 1976 to 1990.
although they were displaced by the Portuguese in 1990.

The gap between the Italians and the European Community as a whole has gradually narrowed except in 1980, as shown in Table 11. As shown in the table, the difference was -0.33 on the scale in 1976, but it had narrowed to only -0.14 by 1990.

In *The Civic Culture* (1989), Almond and Verba point out that Italy’s political culture shows a low rate of trust. They explain that Italy has shown a political culture of suspicion, distrust, alienation, and low cooperation—a condition of low social trust. Ronald Inglehart points out that though there have been a lot of changes in Italy in the last few decades, the trust among people is still very low (Inglehart, 1991: 183; Misztal, 1996: 194). According to a survey of 1980, 24 percent of Italian people answered that they don't believe other Italians. Southern Italians showed a lower rate of trust than that of Northern Italians in the category of inter-personal trust. For example, 28 percent of Northern Italians answered that “they don’t especially trust other Italians” or “they don’t trust other Italians at all.” However, Italians showed higher rates of trust for people of other countries than the rates of trust for other Italians. For example, 68 percent of Italians answered that they believe Americans. On the other hand, in the survey of 1990, only 3 percent of Italian people answered that they can believe other Italians (Misztal, 1996: 194). When we look at the surveys of 1959-60, 1980, and 1990, Italians show relatively low rates of trust toward other Italians.

However, there is a controversial issue whether all areas of Italy should be classified as low-trust societies or not. Generally speaking, Italy can be divided into three parts: the First Italy (the northwestern area), the Second Italy (the central and northeastern areas), and the Third Italy (the southern area). These three areas are different from each other in their economic development and socio-political structure. The First Italy includes the industrial triangle of northern Italy including Torino, Milano, and Genova (*il triangolo industriale*), an industrialized region where large companies are well established. The Second Italy is the southern part of Italy covering the area below Rome and many islands, an area where the economy relies
Table 10. Trust Rates in the European Community, 1976-90

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgians</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danes</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>2.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germans</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greeks</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italians</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxemburgers</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Eurobarometer, Nos. 6, 14, 25, and 33; Niedermayer and Sinnott (1995, Table 10.20); Kaase and Newton (1995, 120).

Note: The mid-point of the scale is 1.5. Ratings above that level indicate a sense of mutual trust; ratings below it indicate a lack of trust.

Table 11. Differences in Mean Trust Rates: European Community versus Italy, 1976-90

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean rate of trust (EC average)</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference between EC mean and Italian mean</td>
<td>-0.33</td>
<td>-0.36</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Same as Table 10.

on traditional agriculture. The Third Italy encompasses two areas; the central and northeastern parts of Italy, including Umbria, Toscana, Emilia, Romagna, and Veneto. The characteristics of the Second Italy are marginal economic activities, the structure of society based on the family, and poli-
tics of clientelism. The Third Italy has a very dynamic economy of small business production based on cooperation between local government and small companies. The area of Emilia-Romagna, ruled by a leftist coalition led by the Communist Party, has the highest GNP per capita in Italy.

The local characteristics of the First, Second, and Third Italy come from the political, economic, and cultural differences. In northern Italy, including Piedmont, Lombardy, and Friuli, the proportion of large companies is relatively high, whereas the proportion of small companies is relatively high in the Second and Third Italies.

The regional differences and antagonism between northern and southern Italy originate from historical experiences. After the collapse of Rome, Italy was divided and conquered and ruled by foreign forces. In the fourteenth century, Italy had two different patterns of governance. This became the origin of the socio-cultural differences of southern and northern Italy. While a communal republic was established in the northern part of Italy, a feudal autocracy took hold of the southern part. While, the northerners changed into "citizens," the southerners were made into "subjects." In the North of Italy, the feudal bondage became weak, and equal citizens appeared. In the South, feudal bonds were strengthened, and a hierarchical order of society was established. In the northern part of Italy public officials enjoyed legitimate authority, decided by the community, and they were responsible to the citizens. However, in the southern part kings monopolized authority, and there was no need for the kings to be responsible to the people (Putnam, 1993: 130). While a socio-political royalty and support based on a horizontal social order were built in the North of Italy, in the South there came to be a socio-political royalty and support based on a hierarchical order. As a result communal collaboration, mutual assistance, civic obligation, and trust were crucial virtues of citizens and extended the limits of family kinship in northern Italy. But in the South, hierarchy and order in society became important virtues (Putnam, 1993: 130).

Though in the seventeenth century the republics of northern and middle Italy collapsed and were feudalized again, civic culture burgeoned with the
implantation of northern Europe's culture. In the South the legacies of a feudal autocracy continued. Frederick II's rule was a feudalistic and centralized autocracy. King and nobles ruled people as predators and dictators. In other words the hierarchical social networks including extraction and subordination were fortified in southern Italy, while the tradition of association appeared under the horizontal social network in the North. The differences of hierarchical solidarity and horizontal network resulted in the differences of voluntary sociality.

The fact that foreigners—for example, the Habsburgs of Spain and the Bourbons—and not Italians ruled all of Italy south of the Papal States between 1504 and 1860 is crucial. In the South, Spanish rulers used distrust among people to aid Spanish domination. They taught subjects how to transfer their responsibilities to other subjects. This is the divide and rule policy (divide et impera) used by the Spanish Bourbons who replaced the Habsburgs in 1724. They tried to ignite disputes between the Neapolitans and Sicilians in order to make the divide and rule policy successful until 1861, when Italy was unified. For Sicilians the Bourbon domination and the Neapolitan domination were not much different (Gambetta, 1988: 161) from each other.

In southern Italy the Italians' poor living conditions were more serious, and the Spanish kings' heavy taxes were more severe than in other areas of Italy. The biggest rebellions rose in Naples and Sicily. Hunger and the desire for freedom from foreign rule ignited the rebellions. For example, in 1647 Naples raised the biggest revolt against Spanish rule. For a few months the “common people” (popolo minuto) and populo civile who were composed of merchants and lawyers established an independent republic, but in 1648 the Spaniards conquered by force and ruled them again. But this resulted in the decline of the crown's confidence in the barons, and its policies were not in anybody's long-term interests. For its policies had destroyed people's trust and the cultural networks that sustained trust. In 1707, after the War of the Spanish Succession, Naples was placed in Austrian hands, and in 1724 it became an independent kingdom under Bourbon rule (Pagden, 1988: 128).
In south Italy, called Mezzogiorno under Spanish rule, the distance between the ruler and the ruled became wide, and a patron-client system in politics was created (Putnam, 1993: 138). Spanish rule destroyed the horizontal human networks and intentionally promoted mutual distrust and conflicts among people to maintain the hierarchical relationship of subordination and extraction. Anthony Pagden points out that distrust was facilitated on purpose and used to rule. The Spanish princes who lived far from the main territory they dominated adapted very malicious methods to maintain their rule. The use of force was not enough for them to maintain their rule. The methods were “divide and rule” (divide et impera) including creating distrust among people and turning neighbor against neighbor (depauperandum esse regionem). Paolo Mattia Doria explains that the Spanish crown took away wealth and virtue and introduced ignorance, villainy, disunion, and unhappiness. Because the main concern of the Castilian crown was secure revenues to fight foreign wars, they wanted to extract enough resources and strengthen political subordination. Therefore, the crown supported efforts by the nobles to squeeze people, as long as the nobles met their requests (Pagden, 1988: 132). Robert Putnam describes the conflicts among people as follows:

The peasants were in constant competition with each other for the best strips of land on the latifondo, and for what meager resources were available. Vertical relationships between patron and client, and obsequiousness to the landlord, were more important than horizontal solidarities. As Bevilacqua has written for the period 1880-1920: ‘The peasant classes were more at war amongst themselves than with the other sectors of rural society; a war which fed off a terrain of recurring and real contrasts, both economic, psychological and cultural.’ That such attitudes triumphed can only be understood in the context of a society which was dominated by distrust... [T]he weight of the past, when combined with the failures of state authority after 1860 and the disastrous peasant-landlord relations...produced a society where fede publica (civic trust) had been reduced to a minimum: ‘chi ara diritto, muore disperato’ (he who behaves honestly comes to a miserable end) was a noted Calabrian proverb (Ginsborg, 1990: 33-34, quoted by Putnam, 1993: 142).

The problem of differences between northern and southern Italy results
in a dual structure in society such as "advanced versus backward," "modern versus traditional," "sound civil society vs. clientelismo society." Putnam explains in his book *Making Democracy Work* (1993) why the introduction of local autonomy in 1970 in Italy was established successfully in the North, but not in the South. The reason why local autonomy was not successful in the South is the distrust among people. The southerners do not believe each other. They are not successful in solving problems of public affairs by themselves and for themselves. The number of voluntary associations in the South is half that of the North. In the South hierarchical order types of organizations, such as the Sicilian Mafia, have succeeded instead of voluntary associations. The citizens of central and north Italy show the characteristics of "born participants" that Alexis de Tocqueville noted in Americans, but the southerners seem to have the features of the "amoral familists" that Edward Banfield describes: people who seek material and short-term interest for their family and think others do same. In *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society* (1958), Banfield describes the features of a village in southern Italy with a culture oriented only toward the small family. Banfield finds the origins of amoral familism in Frederick II's domination of Sicily and Naples. He built an autocracy that suppressed independent movement and introduced a hierarchical societal order. There were no intermediate institutions between king and subjects. The church was able to play the role of an intermediary, but it did so only to fortify autocracy.

But in northern Italy the church was apart of a burgeoning associative life that included guilds and other voluntary associations. Then Venice, Genoa, and Florence enjoyed political autonomy as well as economic prosperity. These kinds of commercial activities and prosperity were possible under the conditions of a high trust culture.

According to Putnam the main feature of the South was the "uncivic," the lack of civic mindedness, called *incivisme* in French. Therefore the concept of equality as a "citizen" did not develop in the South. Public affairs belonged to someone else: *i notabili*, bosses, politicians, "not for me." People did not show interest in and did not participate in public af-
fairs (Putnam, 1993: 115). When comparing the number of voluntary associations in the South with the North, we conclude that in the South association was not important. Because civil solidarity and civic participation did not appear, people were not interested in what government was going to do. Putnam concludes that a civic culture results in trust, solidarity, and tolerance, which exist in the North. The institutions in the North perform better than those in the South. Figure 14 shows how civic involvement affects institutional performance. We can also conclude that the civic involvement influences socio-economic performance, not vice versa.

In 1950, after World War II, the Italian government established the Cassa per il Mezzogiorno and tried to industrialize the South, which remain relatively backward in economic terms. The government poured in a huge amount of money and tried to eradicate poverty and other southern problems in the name of “special intervention” (l’intervento straordinario). Though there were some positive results in agricultural reform and industrialization, the result was that bureaucracies took care of their own interests using a self-serving investment policy and through collusion with the Mafia. Owing to these kinds of negative effects, the “special intervention” did not create the desired industrial bases for autonomous development and a democratic civic culture (Ok-Cho Kang, 2000: 75).

Putnam argues that the appearance of the gang association in the South is the result of a culture of horizontal distrust and vertical exploitation/dependence for over a thousand years (Putnam, 1993: 148). The Mafia is well known as an institution based on paternalism and strong trust among only (family) members. The Mafia is famous for its strong internal trust and internal code of behavior called l’omerta. The members of the Mafia (Mafiosi) are called “men of honor” (Fukuyama, 1999: 16). However, the internal norms of the Mafia are not extended to the outside, to non-Mafia members. The most important norms outside Sicilian society are: “Use others except family members. Otherwise, they will deceive you.” These kinds of norms do not lead to social cooperation or contribute to social and economic development. Organized criminality appears when there is a lack of intermediate associations between the government and
the people; this makes the corruption of political and economic elites possible.

The Mafia organizes on and develops on a ground of distrust. Diego Gambetta considers the Mafia and the system of patronage as the price of distrust. He also identifies amoral familism or misguided individualism, where people ignore others’ misfortune and seek only their own interests, as the source of a Mafia culture. Whether this kind of culture of distrust exists or not explains the reason why only the South and not other areas of the Mediterranean has the Mafia (Gambetta, 1993: 77). The Habsburg’s intentional policy of divide and rule resulted in the destruction of public trust (la fede pubblica) and the maintenance of personal trust (la fede privata). People seek shelter in the private arena of family and close friends, avoiding social injustice, aggression, and unpredictability. Schelling also
sees that the Mafia arises in places where public interest destroys personal trust and cooperation, rather than creating them (Schelling, 1984; Gambetta, 1988: 159). From an economic point of view the Mafia fills the socio-economic vacuum that appears in the transition from feudalism to capitalism. From a political point because people distrust public protection, owing to the inexistence of institutionalized public/government protection, they turn to hierarchical personal loyalty, and the Mafia offers this kind of protection. The Mafia appears when public protection does not work and when conflicts arising from a lack of trust cannot be solved (Gambetta, 1993).

Quoting Leopoldo Franchette, the landlord in Tuscany who traveled to Sicily, Gambetta points why the Mafia appeared in Sicily. First, there are no credible or effective systems of justice and law enforcement. Sicilians did not believe in fairness or the protection of the law in the seventeenth century. Therefore, Sicilians sought other institutions to protect them. This is the main reason why the Mafia appeared. Second is the lack of a reliable central agency. After people in the South fail many times to find public institutions to protect them, they try to find any private institution. In the case of the Pisticci people, they developed a system of patronage rather than the Mafia. Here we find the economic cause for the Mafia's emergence. If we cannot rely on the law, we cannot trust, trade will stall, and cooperation without personal connections will not be easy. In this situation society will turn to other forms of discipline. Gambetta explains one additional cause for the Mafia's emergence—low social mobility in the southern Italy. When trust is lacking and there are severe restrictions on social mobility, the inducement for specialization as a means to of achieving a superior position over one's peers is weak and "a deeply fragmented social world" results (Gambetta, 1988: 162-163).

Then why did the Mafia emerge in western Sicily? Gambetta explains that in eastern Sicily the upper class maintained their monopoly on power and defended successfully the challenges from the lower class wanting a share of power. The solidarity of the upper class was strong and made the transition from a late feudal system without the social tensions that hap-
pened in the west of Sicily.

The necessary conditions for the emergence of a Mafia were present in Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In this perspective some features of feudalism overlap those of socialism. Few people have property rights or the right to resort to violence. Respect for property is maintained at the end of feudalism and socialism. People who have a lot of wealth increase their wealth and property rights move from the few to many. However, the right to violence is not transferred to the wealthy, and thus they fear losing their property and the demands of trust on public institutions soars. If the government meets these demands, there will be no problems resulting from the lack of trust. But in Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union there were no clear laws to protect private property rights and no capable government institutions to secure property rights and stable financial institutions. Because it would take a long time to set up such laws and institutions, people turned to private institutions to provide these kinds of services (Gambetta, 1993: 252).

Trust in the former Soviet Bloc countries—with societies that experienced fear and suspicion under totalitarian regimes—was relatively lower than in Western countries. The ruling Communist Party destroyed the institutions that strengthened traditional values and tried to disorganize the family system and downgrade the value of responsibility, respect, and autonomy. During the period of transition, the new system failed to restore the former traditional values. In this situation the Russian Mafia replaced the former Communist Party and took over the rights to use violence. The Russian Mafia consisted of the former Red Army, former members of the Communist Party, and people who built their confidence, providing private justice in the Soviet market (Gambetta, 1993: 253).

Low Trust in Korean Society

Where does the high rate of distrust, injustice, and corruption in Korea come from? The overall crisis of Korean society results from the overflow
of traditional private trust and its misuse, and the lack of public trust that maintains social integration. Who bears responsibility for this crisis of low trust? Here I examine the origins of low public trust in Korean society.

The origin of low public trust in Korean society goes back to the distortion of modernization. What does “trust” (shin, 信) mean in traditional Korean society? “Trust” implies a “regime’s legitimacy, in other words, trust from the people” in the context of the Confucian tradition. The trust was the combination of “trust from the people” and “confidence from heaven.” The term mangmin (岡民) has an opposite meaning: when “politics do not acquire trust from the people, when they deceive and exploit people.” Examples of mangmin include “laws that change day and night, the ordinances that government officials change for themselves, and policies that are good only for officials and their friends” (Han, 1999: 7).

The Confucian tradition of trust was marred by Japanese colonial policy that was based on the oppression and exploitation of Korean people. After Korea became a colony of Japan, the Korean tradition of community was intentionally destroyed by the Japanese colonial government. In sum, the unity, cooperation, and trust among Koreans were intentionally destroyed by Japanese colonial rule. The colonial government adopted a divide and rule policy by using Korean collaborators and promoted distrust and conflict among Koreans. The colonial policy of co-option resulted in the elimination of civic trust among Koreans and the building of hierarchical relationships between the Japanese colonial government and individual Koreans. In other words the Japanese colonial government focused on breaking down the traditional relationship between Koreans and establishing relationships between pro-Japanese privileged Koreans and the Japanese colonial government. Because under Japanese colonial rule the “public” implied Japanese imperialism for Koreans, Koreans had to strengthen the structure of trust based on family members and relatives. The Japanese colonial rulers and their government and its policy were the targets of distrust. The laws, institutions, and education that the Japanese provided did not attract the trust of Koreans, for they seemed to benefit only the Japanese. In conclusion, during the Japanese colonial period there
was no space for Koreans to build public trust.

After liberation from Japanese colonial rule in 1945, there were chances for Koreans to establish public trust based on their own constitution and economic system. However, owing to the chaos that ensued in politics, economics, and society, and the Korean War of 1950-1953 and the establishment of a long military dictatorship, it was not easy to build social trust. We also must look at the effect that the military rule had: it destroyed civic relationships and strengthened a hierarchical social order. The military government worked as an obstacle for building public trust among people.

South Korea’s rapid economic growth has been called a “compressed, rapid modernization.” During the economic growth its “growth first ideology” justified public institution measures that focused only on goals, rather than process. The concentration on national goals yielded Korea’s economic miracle, but broke the trust in government, public institutions, and legal processes. Economic efficiency took precedence over “due process.” People also began to distrust the process of wealth accumulation of the chaebol (business conglomerates), because they saw how the business groups used government privileges in collusion with politicians. Therefore, people consider government’s confiscation of illegal capital accumulation as normal and government’s redistribution of wealth as natural. The government's encroachment on property rights seems to be normal. In this situation big business groups and some capitalists depended on the regime’s or politicians’ protection in their pursuit of wealth. This is how collusion between Korea’s capitalists and politicians emerged. There are no differences between the powerful politicians’ protection of large capitalists in Korea and the Mafia’s protection of businessmen in economic activities in Italy.

Comparison of the Origins of Low Trust in Korea and Italy

In the case of Korea, it is difficult to deny the existence of the “amoral familism” or exclusive familism that Banfield describes. The cohesion of
family and exclusion of strangers are very strongly rooted in Korean society: nepotism, regionalism, chaebol management by family members, and sectionalism in party management are all characteristic of Korean society. When people emphasize only their own family or relatives, it means they also exhibit "exclusive familism" and a competitive spirit toward other families. Also the norms that are applied to their own family members are different from those that are applied to other families. If anybody becomes a member of their family, the members forgive him of almost everything. The family norms do not transfer into the norms of community and the whole of society. The more serious implication is that people put family interests and family glory before public interest. For example, anyone who has power puts his family, relatives, and followers at the center of power and excludes and criticizes others despite their merits (Kuk, 1998: 6). This is the origin of regionalism and nepotism in Korean society and the reason why social justice does not work in Korean society. This is also the origin of low trust in Korea.

Korea's regionalism in politics—for example, the voting behavior and decision-making process—is an extension of Korean familism. Why do people vote for candidates with whom they are familiar because of name, school ties, or birthplace? The reason that, when voters and candidates are interwoven in the name of family ties or school ties, or birthplace, the voters feel they can trust these candidates. In other words, voters calculate that after the candidates are elected, they cannot betray their voters' interests precisely because of the ties of family, school and birthplace.

Why do the chaebol manage their companies with their family members? Why do Korean chaebols show the characteristics of "family capitalism?" The entrepreneurs who were successful in business and built the chaebols do not trust managers who are not family members. They think they have established companies, and they and their family own the companies and their interests are the companies' interests. The problems of amoral familism can be solved only when Korean people extend their trust in the family to the public sphere.

The chop'ok (Mafia in Korea) "syndrome" in Korea can also be ex-
plained by amoral familism. Koreans have two contrasting points of view about the *chop’ok*, which means “gangster violence.” One is the view that gangster violence should be eliminated because it violates laws and destroys social order. But on the other hand gangster culture looks good, because that culture puts its priority on the organization’s or the group’s interests before the individual’s interest. This kind of attitude reflects the culture of Korean familism. Owing to the loss of trust in laws, people depend on violence and the fear from violence. People rely on the logic of power based on violence, not laws. Why are Koreans so accepting of the logic of power based on violence? They experienced the rule of the Japanese military government and later the military coups of 1961 and 1980, and they became accustomed to governance through violent means. It is very interesting that both the Japanese colonial government and the Park military government attempted to eliminate all other domestic gangster groups. However, there are not many differences between gangster culture and other group cultures (such as industrial bosses, military culture, and the main players in a coup) whose members show loyalty for group interests. The members place their respective group interests or the nation’s interests ahead of their own individual interests.

In Korean society it is not easy to find large active voluntary associations that developed from small blood-tie groups or regional associations. Most large (voluntary) associations have been managed by a small number of people who are connected by school ties, regional ties, and blood ties (Fukuyama, 1996: 150). The family centered (or blood centered) management of institutions appears in business organizations, the mass media, private universities, and even religious institutions. However, there are a lot of social criticisms of this.

Family organization is the basic institution to build trust among members and the starting point from which to spread trust to society. Cultural similarities between Italy and South Korea can be found in that the two countries rely heavily on family ties. Voluntary associations that connect family and state do not develop well in societies such as Italy and Korea. However, there are some differences between these two. For example,
though Italy developed small businesses based on the family, Korea developed large business groups. But clearly the similarities between Italy and Korea in their lack of spontaneous intermediate associations and the organization of gangsters have their origins in colonial domination.

However, when we explain the problem of distrust in the south of Italy with the tradition of the Norman dynasty's authoritarian state, we have to figure out how the medieval tradition of history has influenced the realities of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Theoretically it is easy to attribute all kinds of social problems to the experiences of the colonial period, but there is also cultural determinism. It is not proper to conclude either that trust is the source of all kinds of virtues or that distrust is the source of all kinds of social ills. We need to draw cautious hypotheses and conclusions.

It should also be mentioned that another hypothesis is possible. It is argued that because the farmers of southern Italy sought short-term interests, and they were not able to develop communitarian social solidarity, this resulted in socio-economic backwardness. But the reverse is also possible: the backwardness is not the "result" but the "cause" (Filippucci, 1997: 54; Kang, 2000: 86). Trust is involved in all kinds of commercial transactions. Therefore, the other side of economic growth and backwardness reflects whether trust exists or not. This implies that the hypothesis that amoral familism resulted in economic backwardness seems to be more reasonable than the hypothesis that economic backwardness fostered amoral familism. However, there is the possibility of a vicious circle of low trust, amoral familism, poverty, and the patronage political system. Now we need to draw cautious conclusions about the colonial experience as the origin of low-trust.

Geoffrey Hawthorn argues that Japanese colonial domination resulted in malicious distrust in Korean society. Because the Japanese colonial government collaborated selectively with Koreans, Koreans themselves were not sure who among them was collaborating with the Japanese (Hawthorn, 1988: 122). After liberation from Japanese colonial rule, Korea experienced continuous social turmoil such as farmers' move into urban areas,
the emergence of industrial workers, and rapid urbanization. These kinds of social changes created tensions in Korean society from 1945 to the 1960s. The military coup of 1961 and military rule that ensued were not "escapable" matters. Gambetta says when one Mafia disappears, another big and well-organized Mafia appears. When the violence of Japanese colonial rule disappeared, a new violence of military rule surged. Because the military had a monopoly over coercive means in Korea, it did not allow any regional Mafia who wanted to share the power of patronage. Also the state owned intelligence agency, the KCIA, used distrust in Korean society to maintain the military regime. The KCIA resorted to exaggerating the possibilities of a North Korean invasion and to arresting "traitors" based only on rumors in order to fortify the military rule (Hawthorn, 1988: 124).

**Conclusion: Ways to Build High Trust in Korean Society**

Distrust in politicians, distrust in government, distrust in education, distrust in law enforcement, and the like have taken hold in Korean society. Though distrust is a matter of degree, the overall distrust in politicians, government, education, and law enforcement imply that corruption is evident in every aspect of society and that the law has not been enforced properly. Does all this mean that trust does not exist in Korean society? It is well known that *fede privata* is high, though *fede pubblica* is low in Korean society. For example, private groups within public institutions through personal networks have prevailed. Groups based on people from the "same region" or from the "same high school" exist, and people turn to these private networks in their attempts to solve public issues such as taxation and law enforcement.

How can public trust be increased? De Tocqueville argues that the civic community or civic associations should be prosperous. Civil associations, religious associations, moral associations, choruses, and leisure clubs can be organized without considering age, occupation, or race. People learn how to cooperate, how to follow rules and laws, how to share re-
sponsibilities, and how to trust each other in these associations. If these kinds of civic associations for public trust are successful, private groups (that is, private networks) will weaken.

At the personal level as well as the level of Korean society, how can we restore a high degree of trust? Distrust can spread easily, but trust cannot be restored easily. First of all, we need to build a society run by “law.” The rules of the game should be fair, and law should be enforced correctly and fairly. Audit systems to evaluate a company’s managerial achievement should be fortified. Ownership and management should be divided in chaebol companies, the media, churches, and schools. A recall system or evaluation-of-congressmen system to oversee politicians should be introduced. The judicial system, prosecutors, and police organizations should be independent from political influences. As Jae-Yul Lee argues, the “institutional basis to make possible the social cooperation and consensus to overcome the traditional bondage and trust should be built up” (Lee, 1998b: 88).

The lessons of Korea are different from those of Western societies. Western democracies and capitalism were born from the institutionalization of distrust, and the moral loophole has been filled by trust. But Korean society did not build fully legitimate public institutions that went beyond private trust. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate cultural traditions and customs critically. As southern Italy lacked trust as a source of social capital because of “amoral familism,” Korea had an authoritarian tradition, which emphasized hierarchical relationships rather than horizontal relationships, and regionalism which depends on familism, school ties, and regional ties. The most important mission for Korean society is to strengthen a social system in which a promise is a promise rather than a problem, and a law is a law rather than a lie.

9. A Comparison of (Low) Trust in Korea and Italy 325
References in Korean


References in English


213-237.


America,'" Political Science and Politics, 28: 664-683.


Introduction

East Asia has only partially shared in the third wave of democratization that spread around the globe in the 1990s. Indeed, the severe economic problems of the late 1990s raised concerns about the increasing trends of public protest and dissatisfaction in some of the consolidated democracies of East Asia, such as Japan and Korea. In other nations, democracy regressed or made only little progress during this decade. The newest findings from the 2000-2002 World Values Survey enable us to assess how people across East Asia now think about democracy and the value of a democratic regime. Has democracy lost some of its appeal in the consolidated democracies as these nations struggle with their policy problems? Is the democratic ideal appealing in those nations where democracy has not been achieved?

A striking finding from the World Values Survey is the breadth of public support for a democratic form of government—and beliefs that democracies can be effective. These “democratic aspirations” now transcend national boundaries and regime forms in East Asia. For example, large majorities of the public in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan support the Churchillian
position that democracy may have its faults, but it is better than other forms of government. At the same time, the majority of the public in China, Singapore, Indonesia, and Vietnam also endorse this position. Despite differences in regime form that currently exist in East Asia—there is a broad public consensus in democracy as the preferred form of government.

These democratic sentiments have different implications for the nations of East Asia. For the consolidated democracies of Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, support for democracy occurs along with spreading public criticism of politicians, parties, and political institutions in recent years. Indeed, the World Values Survey also finds decreasing public trust of the political process and declining confidence in political institutions.

Many citizens in Seoul and Tokyo—like those in other OECD nations—are "dissatisfied democrats" who expect more of democracy and want to see the process improved to better reach its own ideals, even if they remain unsure how that can be accomplished. Thus disaffection with the current government does not represent a challenge to democracy (and democratic values have not been eroded by the economic difficulties of the late 1990s). Furthermore, support for the democratic ideal is stronger among the young and better educated, which is a positive signal for the future. Thus, current public criticism of these governments speaks to their performance and rising citizen expectations, not to public doubts about democracy's basic ideals.

In contrast, many other nations in East Asia function with the presumption that citizens accept the current non-democratic regime, and the political culture of the nation is not ready for democracy. The citizens of these nations do not fit this model—they express democratic ideals and aspirations. Even if they are inevitably unsure about how democracy actually functions, they see it as preferable to the non-democratic alternatives with which they are familiar. Democratization is a complex process, but political culture does not appear to be a major impediment to democratization in East Asia. This presumably represents a markedly different pattern than would have been found a generation ago, and provides a basis
for further democratic development in the region.

In both cases, this research offers a positive message. In the consolidated democracies of East Asia, citizens want the democratic process to work better—and further education and democratic experience can deepen democratic values. Dissatisfied democrats are now common in most OECD nations, and other democracies also struggle to address the public's new expectations. In the other nations of East Asia, democratic aspirations provide a new foundation, much as in East Europe in the 1990s, to develop a more democratic system and ultimately to learn the benefits and limits of the democratic process, and their role as democratic citizens. Beginning this process with democratic aspirations increases the potential for further democratization in East Asia.

Democratic Aspirations and Democratic Ideals

Democratization has transformed the world in the last half of the twentieth century. Where once democracy seemed like a small island in a sea of authoritarian states, with an uncertain future, it now is proclaimed as the inevitable endpoint of human political evolution. Data from the Freedom House illustrate this development. In 1950, only 14.3 percent of the countries (and colonial units) in the world were democracies, which included 31 percent of the world's population. In 1990, the Freedom House considered 46.1 percent of the nations in the world as democracies, and by 2000 democracies governed in 62.5 percent of the world's nations with 58.2 percent of the world's population (Freedom House 2000).

East Asia, however, has been an uncertain participant in these global trends. On the one hand, the people power movement that forced Ferdinand Marcos from power in 1986 was the beginning of the third wave of democratization in East Asia, which was quickly followed in 1987 by the end of military rule in South Korea and the lifting of martial law in Taiwan. South Korea and Taiwan might now be considered consolidated democracies, along with Japan. On the other hand, progress in the rest of
East Asia is more varied. China and Vietnam represent two of the small handful of communist regimes left after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Singapore and Malaysia have had a mixed political record over the past decade, and the Freedom House rated both as only partly free in 2000. Thailand and Indonesia also struggled through a difficult decade of political contention, ending as more strongly democratic. Cambodia remained an authoritarian state throughout the decade of the 1990s, and its democratic development emerged after 2000. In 2000, the Freedom House (2000) rated 44 percent of the nations in East Asia as democracies, and 33 percent were authoritarian or totalitarian states. Indeed, there are few areas in the world where the diversity of political regimes is as great—and the overall prospects for further democratization as uncertain.

In part, these differences reflect the unique historical trajectory of the nations of East Asia. Fitting them to the template of democratic transitions in Eastern Europe may be no more appropriate than applying the East European pattern to Latin America. In addition, there has been a persisting claim that cultural and historical forces lead to a different developmental pattern in East Asia. Several analysts have questioned whether Confucian traditions are compatible with established western forms of democracy. Others point to the limited economic development of many nations in the region, and argue that the forces of social modernization that are suggested as prerequisites for democratization have not reached many of the poorer nations in this region. Indeed, many explanations for the political status quo abound.

This paper focuses on the citizenry and describes the values, traditions, and cultural foundations that might support democratic development across the East Asian nations included in the World Values Survey. As a first step, we describe the democratic experience of the nations included in our project. Then, we use a variety of measures from the World Values Survey to map citizen orientations toward democracy across these same nations. Until now, the debate about political culture in the region has largely occurred among elites and political analysts. Our analyses give voice to the actual opinions of the public, and whether democratic values exist across
the political regimes of the region.

By concentrating on democratic orientations, this paper intentionally looks beyond evaluations of the incumbent government or images of the current institutions of government in each nation. Trust in government and evaluations of government policies are important elements of the political culture—but they are not the central theme of our analyses here. Indeed, other research suggests that the cross-national patterns of governmental performance evaluations may be driven by much different processes than the democratic values studied here (Norris, 1999; Pharr and Putnam, 2000). But the foundation of the democratic process is a public commitment to democratic values and principles, and the extent of such orientations is essential for judging the potential for democratization in the region.

The Extent of Democracy

How broadly has the third wave of democratization affected the nations of East Asia? We want to briefly describe the political context in the nations included in our project. This first requires that we define what we mean by democracy. Indeed, one of the complications of the democratization literature is the disagreement on the definition and measurement of this concept. One approach has focused on elections as a linchpin of the democratic process (Schumpeter, 1942; Vanhanen, 1990; Przeworski, et al., 2000). The holding of competitive, free, and fair elections is essential to the meaning of democracy. This includes acceptance of the rule of law so there is legal administration of elections and procedures for resolving electoral disputes. Unless different political views can compete in the electoral arena, and the electoral outcomes structure government policy to a substantial degree, a political system cannot claim to be a democracy.

But electoral democracy represents a minimal threshold for defining democracy. Most political theorists and practitioners have a more expansive definition. Robert Dahl's writings are illustrative of this literature. For example, in discussing the conditions necessary for a liberal democracy, Dahl (1971) held that beyond the functioning of the electoral process,
democracy required social structures that enabled citizens to independently form their preferences, and to collectively express and mobilize these preferences. Similarly, Huntington (1991: 174-192) discussed how viable opposition groups and independent social interests are important in assuring that governments will actually tolerate electoral opposition and run fair elections. Thus freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and freedom of association are essential elements of democracy. These rights are especially important for political minorities and other groups that are vulnerable to oppression by the state. In addition, although the term “civil society” was not yet in common usage when Dahl was developing his theoretical framework, the principles of civil society were very much present in Dahl’s writings. In fact, Dahl often wrote that autonomous organizations were an essential part of the democratic process (e.g., Dahl, 1982: 31-40).

Democracy thus requires a set of political conditions and civil liberties that extend beyond the electoral arena. These conditions are necessary first to ensure the meaningfulness of elections, and second to ensure that democracy includes more than just elections. If an election is free, but the society is not, then the election is unlikely to have informed voters who openly cast their preferences for future government policy. Thus a free election presumes a free press, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and other political and civil liberties.

This dual framework of elections and civil society has led to numerous attempts to measure democracy and track its development. Because it is the most widely used data source, and because it taps a range of civic and political rights, we rely on the Freedom House data to describe the democratic development of the nations in the region. The Freedom House uses national experts to score nations on two scales. The political rights scale measures the extent to which people can participate freely in the political process to choose policy makers who make government policy. This is largely equivalent with the electoral dimension of democracy in which citizens are eligible to vote and compete for public office, and the elected representatives have a decisive role in making public policies. The civil liberties scale evaluates the freedoms to develop views, organizations, and
personal autonomy apart from the state. This involves characteristics such as the right to organize and freedom of assembly, an independent judiciary and respect for the rule of law, personal autonomy (such as freedom of movement and freedom to travel), and economic rights. We combined both the political rights and civil liberties scale to create a "democracy score" for each nation.  

Figure 15 displays the democracy score of each nation in our project for the 1985-2000 period that brackets the public opinion data collected by the World Values Survey. Even if many citizens question the workings of the democratic process in the West, the four Western democracies in our study consistently score at the highest level on both scales across this entire decade. In fact, we include these nations in the project because they provide a baseline of established democracies to compare with the nations in East Asia.

The East Asian nations in the World Values Survey display tremendous political variation. The most interesting cases are at the other end of the Freedom House scale: China and Vietnam. China appeared to be making progress on both dimensions during the 1980s, but then the Tiananmen protests in 1989 led the regime to reassert its control. Similarly, Vietnam began a process of economic liberalization (đoì moi) in the mid-1980s, but this has not led to significant changes in the communist governance structure. There have been small democratizing experiments in both nations during the 1990s (e.g., Thurston, 1998; Turley and Selden, 1992), but both nations remain controlled by a dominant Communist Party that prohibits true electoral democracy. According to Freedom House, only limited progress has been made in providing civil liberties as well. Thus over this decade, both China and Vietnam have changed only slightly on their summary democracy scores according to Freedom House.

Singapore and Indonesia present more complex patterns. The dominance of the People’s Action Party continues to provide a vehicle for the party elites to control the Singapore government, and to use the powers of the government to curb potential political opposition. The institutions of government and constraints on the press limit the conditions necessary for
elections to be meaningful. In addition, while social life enjoys relative freedom from state interference, there are significant constraints on free expression, assembly, and other rights when they have a potential political content. Since the financial shock of 1997 and the subsequent recession in the Singapore economy, the government’s use of its authority has strengthened. Thus, the Freedom House documents a general erosion of political rights and civil liberties over the decade of the 1990s.

Indonesia moved in the opposite direction during the 1990s. Sukarno had ruled Indonesia since the 1960s, and the regime oversaw the long-term development of the nation under an authoritarian state. Still, for most of the 1980s, Indonesia earned a “partly free” rating from the Freedom House because of the dominance of the regime. But in the 1990s pressures mounted against Sukarno and his continued authoritarian rule, and the government’s response was to suppress its political opponents. Ethnic conflict in East Timor, Aceh, and other regions put further strains on the government. Opposition protests mounted in the later half of the decade, partly in reaction to deteriorating economic conditions. This is seen in
Figure 15 in the significant drop in the summary democracy score in the mid-1990s. In 1998 Sukarno’s 32-year military rule came to an end. This ushered in a tumultuous period in which national elections were introduced, there was a rapid turnover in the executive, and parliament began to assert itself as a democratic body. By the end of the 1990s, Indonesia had made dramatic gains both in the extent of political rights and in the protection of civil liberties (an overall increase of 3.0 points between 1995 and 2001), although these are recently achieved gains and politics remains contentious.

Since the end of military rule in 1987, South Korea has made relatively steady progress in developing its democratic system and ensuring the civil liberties of its citizens. And as a consequence of the financial crisis of 1997, power shifted to the political opposition—a key indicator in the development of democracy. Indeed, many political challenges continue to face Korean democracy, and the public remains critical of the progress of democracy-building and the actions of political elites, but the political base of democracy is gradually broadening.

The end of military law in 1987 began the democratization process in Taiwan (Chu, 1992), signaled by Lee Teng-hui’s election as president, and then the victory by the opposition Chen Shui-bian in the 2000 presidential elections. Thus, over this fifteen-year period, evaluations of Taiwanese democracy have made dramatic gains. South Korea and Taiwan illustrate the East Asian examples of democratization during the third wave, and have joined Japan as examples of consolidated democracies that ensure the basic political rights and civil liberties of their citizens.

Japan, of course, has the longest democratic history, and this is reflected in its positive scores on the summary democracy scale over this period, with only a slight decline in the 1990s. In overall terms, however, Japan ranks as highly on the Freedom House scale as many established European democracies.

In summary, the political context in our nations varies widely—representing as large a gap as is possible with the Freedom House measures. There has been a general movement toward democracy among the East
Asian nations over the past decade, but this progress has been uneven, and Singapore has experienced a significant regression. Thus, the extent of democracy remains mixed, and low levels of democratization in several nations means that the potential for further democratization is substantial.

Measuring Attitudes toward Democracy

The previous section described the levels of democratic development across the nations in this project. In this section we describe how citizens in these same nations view democracy, and judge whether these sentiments reflect the political context of their nation. We might first ask, however, what one should expect from these cross-national comparisons. Certainly, there is a clear expectation that the citizens in the established democracies should espouse strong commitment to democratic values and believe that democracy is preferred to other regime forms. This pattern is frequently found in studies of Western public opinion (Dalton, 2004; Klingemann, 1999).

Prior research is less clear on what might be expected across the range of nations we are studying in East Asia. At least until recently, numerous scholars questioned whether the cultural traditions of the region are compatible with democratic principles. Lucian Pye (1985), for example, described a fundamental tension between Confucian traditions and the emphasis on community in East Asia versus the values presumably associated with Western democracy. Scalapino (1989) similarly stressed the limited potential for democratic development in East Asia because of cultural traditions that emphasized communalism with limited toleration for opposition groups. This theme of Asian values was also popularized by Singapore’s Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew (Emmerson, 1995); and Samuel Huntington (1996) also described this cultural syndrome in East Asia as a source of cultural clash with the West.

Even in the consolidated democracies of East Asia, there are reasons to ask whether public doubts about democracy have grown in recent years.
Japan's seemingly unending recession has eroded public trust in politicians and political institutions, and this may eventually touch broader images of the democratic process. The severe economic impact of the 1997 economic crisis also may have tarnished the image of democracy in democratic nations such as Korea that have struggled to respond to these economic challenges.

It is also clear that national conditions vary widely across East Asia. Although most of the region is linked to Confucian cultural traditions, this is certainly not universal. Indonesians are overwhelmingly Islamic, and Filipinos are disproportionately Catholic. And even adherence to Confucian traditions varies greatly across the nations linked to this orientation. Thus, it is problematic to talk of a general East Asia political culture. For instance, Larry Diamond's (1988: 14-18) review of the political culture of the region emphasizes the variability of cultural traditions, and the richness of these cultures enables them to be selectively interpreted to encourage or discourage democracy. Friedman (1994) was even more direct in stressing the cultural diversity of East Asia, and the ability of democratic norms to take root in many different types of cultural traditions.

Indeed, if we look at the nations in our study, it is clear that national conditions now vary widely across East Asia. We should expect the greatest support for democracy among the more democratic nations of Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. Based on an earlier wave of the World Values Survey, Klingemann described high levels of support for democracy in these three nations. Doh Chull Shin's analyses of Korean Barometer data also show strong support for democratic principles among the Korean public; and in several comparisons with other cross-national surveys, Korean support for democracy is relatively positive (1999; 2000a). But even in these nations, recent research suggests that trust in politicians and government performance is decreasing (Tanaka, 2001; Shin, 2000b; Ahn and Kang, 2003), and this cynicism may erode support for the democratic process as well.

These questions deepen as we move to the less democratic nations in our study. We would expect support for democratic principles and values to be less frequent—or at least to be less frequently expressed to strangers
conducting a public opinion survey—in China and Vietnam, where the re-
gime is based on the dominant role of the Communist Party. Recent sur-
veys of Chinese public opinion, however, are more sanguine about demo-
cratic values in the People's Republic. For instance, Chu and Chang (2001)
found that democratic values of political equality, elite accountability, and
pluralism are surprisingly common in China, although less widespread than
in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Tianjin Shi (2000) similarly described rela-
tively high levels of support for democratic values in China (also see
Nathan and Shi, 1999). But these studies were limited in the number of
items they analyzed, and in the ability to compare responses to the bench-
mark of established democracies. Until the WVS, data on Vietnam was
non-existent, although the prospects for democracy seem even more lim-
ited in this second communist regime.

Similarly, Singapore is widely cited as the archetypical case of where
citizens accept a restriction of their political rights and liberties in ex-
change for the (past) economic progress of the regime. The commitment
to democratic principles is equally uncertain in Indonesia; popular pro-
tests for democracy have been highly visible in the recent transition to democ-

cracy, but the breadth of these sentiments within the general public is
unclear.

The World Values Survey (WVS) provides an exceptional resource for
studying how the citizens in East Asia actually view democracy. The WVS
includes seven East Asian nations in either the third or fourth wave of the
study: China (PRC), Indonesia, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan,
and Vietnam. In addition, we examine the established Pacific rim democ-
cracies of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States—to provide
a reference point for interpreting the East Asian patterns against the bench-
mark of established democracies. Not all nations are included in both
waves of the WVS, and the Table 12 presents the surveys that include the
democracy questions and the number of respondents in each survey.

This comparative approach should provide a context for better interpret-
ing public sentiments in any single nation, as well as provide a valuable
research tool for investigating the interaction of political/economic struc-
Table 12. Number of Respondents in World Values Survey in Select Countries, 1995 and 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Wave 1995</th>
<th>Wave 2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1,054</td>
<td>1,362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>1,249</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>1,452</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>2,048</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>1,201</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1,542</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: World Values Surveys.

Public support for democracy is a complex orientation to measure. The concept of democracy is itself complex. If political theorists continue to be divided on what democracy means, then equal diversity might exist in the minds of citizens who are asked to evaluate democracy or democratic potential in their nation. Understanding the meaning of democracy is especially uncertain in those nations where actual experience with democratic politics is limited or non-existent. This is a serious concern that we discuss as the analyses proceed. In addition, opinions toward democracy might be conditioned by the nature of the current political regime. It may be as unlikely for an Australian to express their dissatisfaction with the principles of democracy as it is for a Vietnamese (or an East German before 1989)
to express opposition to the communist government. Conversely, with the global spread of democracy, it seems that governments of all types claim to be democratic, and thus ritual support for democracy may be seen as the socially acceptable response to a public opinion interview (see, for example, Klingemann, 1999). Democracy can be an elastic term, used by leaders in Washington and Beijing. The solution to these potential problems is to proceed cautiously, and with multiple items to tap different aspects of democratic sentiment.

To address these concerns, the World Values Survey included a battery that assessed orientations toward different regime types, presenting democracy as one of four options. Respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with a set of four statements:

I'm going to describe various types of political systems and ask what you think about each as a way of governing this country. For each one, would you say it is a very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad way of governing this country?

- Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections.
- Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country.
- Having the army rule.
- Having a democratic political system.

Keeping these different regime principles separate is intended to lessen a routinized endorsement for democracy. Respondents can express support for any of the non-democratic alternatives in the first three items before the democratic alternative is even presented. In addition, response sets normally encourage individuals to agree with questions, which facilitates potential non-democratic responses on the first three items. In other words, we measure support for democracy primarily by assessing disapproval of non-democratic regime forms. In the terms of Almond and Verba (1963), we are assessing orientations toward the political system and not the incumbent government.
Table 13 presents the percentage of the public in each nation giving the “pro-democratic” responses to each of the four items. The pro-democratic responses are to disagree with the first three items, and agree with the fourth. The first clear pattern is the breadth of pro-democratic sentiment across this diverse array of nations. For instance, the last column in Table 13 demonstrates that expressed support for democracy is nearly universal. A large majority in each nation is positive toward democracy, even in the nations that Freedom House would rank as only partly free or not free (this battery was not asked in a comparable way in Vietnam). Indeed, the lack of differentiation in positive support for democracy between the established Western democracies and the range of nations in East Asia is especially striking.

The wording of this question may reflect the affective endorsement of democracy that results from the democratization wave of the past decade, and the rhetorical endorsement of “democracy” from very different regimes. But generally similar patterns emerge when we consider orientations toward other regime forms. For instance, nearly as large majorities in most nations disapprove of government by a strong leader who exercises power without democratic controls. One might rightly ask whether a Chinese peasant understands the term democracy, but they certainly understand government by oligarchic leaders: What is especially striking is the broad disapproval of such a governing system in nations such as China and Singapore, where the oligarchic experience is still common.

Even on the other dimensions in Table 13, the majority of citizens in most East Asian nations give what is considered a “pro-democratic” response. The most notable exception is also illustrative. Only 4 percent of Indonesians said that army rule is bad—far lower than in any other nation. But this presumably reflects the military’s positive role in easing Suharto from office in 1998: the dwi-fungsi tradition in Indonesian politics (Sundhaussen, 1988). Even today, the democratically elected parliament reserves seats for the military and police. The military also continues to play an active role in Indonesian politics, and terrorist concerns have reinforced this involvement. In all the other nations of East Asia, however, a majority
Table 13. Orientations toward Political Systems in Select Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strong Leader (Bad)</th>
<th>Expert Government (Bad)</th>
<th>Army Rule (Bad)</th>
<th>Democracy Good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90%</td>
<td>PRC/INDS (81)</td>
<td>JPN/NZ/SING CDN/SKOR</td>
<td>JPN/NZ/SING CDN/SKOR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NZ (80)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SING (78)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CND/OZ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>USA (73)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JPN (70)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60%</td>
<td>TWN (59)</td>
<td>PRC (70)</td>
<td>PRC (55)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>USA/SING (60)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NZ/OZ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CND (54)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>INDS (52)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figure entries are in percentages giving pro-democratic responses on each item (V164 to V167).

of the public disapproves of military rule. Opinions on the role of experts are more varied (and more ambiguous in terms of democratic theory), but there is only modest support for this alternative.

The general level of democratic support is clearly seen if we combine these four items to create a summary index of support for a democratic regime. The national mean scores on the democratic regime index are presented in Figure 16. A score of 4.0 on this scale is the highest level of pro-democratic sentiment, and a score of 1.0 is anti or non-democratic. In all ten nations, the mean score tends toward the democratic end of the continuum. As we would expect, citizens in New Zealand, Canada, Australia, and the U.S. are more likely to favor a democratic structure over non-dem-
Figure 16. Democratic Regime Indexes in Select Countries

Sources: 1995-98 and 1999-2003 World Values Survey
Note: Figure entries are the mean score on the four-point index of support for a democratic regime: 1=support non-democratic regime and 4=support democratic regime.

Democratic governing principles (the four nation average is 3.27). Pro-democratic sentiments are slightly less common in the nations of East Asia (2.92)—although the size of the East-West gap is quite modest. Prior research from the World Values Survey suggests that this index, which contrasts democratic versus authoritarian governing principles, is a more robust measure of commitments to democratic rule (Klingemann, 1999) than the democratic process measure presented in the next section.

Certainly we should question whether people in all of these nations understand the democratic process when they answer these questions. But the primary finding is that aspirations for democracy—and negativity toward non-democratic governing systems—are common among the people in East Asia, and these sentiments broadly transcend the current type of political regime. This does not mean that they are equally pleased with the policies the current government is following or the behavior of the current incumbents of power—often support for democracy co-occurs with criti-
cism of the government (e.g., Klingemann, 1999; Shin, 2000b; Tanaka, 2001). But the viability of democracy is based more on these system orientations than incumbent evaluations, and citizens in these Pacific rim nations see democracy as the best form of regime to address their policy preferences.

**Democracy as a Process**

Another aspect of democracy involves the performance traits of democracy. Indeed, support for a regime in principle is far different from evaluations of how that regime will perform in practice. This is a common criticism of democracy, communism, and other regime forms. Thus, people might express support for democracy in the abstract, but then worry about how the process actually functions.

To tap such sentiments, the World Values survey asked respondents about various traits that might be attributed to a democratic system:

I'm going to read off some things that people sometimes say about a democratic political system. Could you please tell me if you agree strongly, agree, disagree, or disagree strongly, after I read each one of them?

- In a democracy, the economic system runs badly.
- Democracies are indecisive and have too much quibbling.
- Democracies aren't good at maintaining order.
- Democracy may have problems but it's better than any other form of government.

The advantage of these items is that they allow respondents to express doubts about democracy, without directly rejecting democratic principles. Moreover, the focus is on broad features of democratic governance, and not short-term judgments about specific governments.

The first three items also are phrased so that a critical opinion is easy to express as approval of the statement. The disadvantage is that by explicitly asking about democracy, these questions might tap sentiments that democracy is now the hegemonic system and thus it should be endorsed. We should also point out that the fourth item testing the Churchillian prin-
ciple that "democracy may have problems but it's better than any other form of government" has been widely asked in other surveys (Rose, Haerpfer and Mishler, 2000).

Table 14 presents the percentage that gives pro-democratic responses to each of the four items (disagree with the first three items and agree with the fourth). If we begin with the fourth item asking whether democracy is the best form of government, we find that democratic aspirations are remarkably widespread, even in nations that lack a democratic government.

For instance, support for democracy is relatively high in China (95%) and Vietnam (73%), which are the two communist nations in our study. When most people in these nations say that democracy is the better than

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>90%</th>
<th>Democracy</th>
<th>Democracy</th>
<th>Democracy</th>
<th>Democracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bad Economy</td>
<td>Indecisive</td>
<td>Disordered</td>
<td>Better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80%</td>
<td>VN (82)</td>
<td>INS (75)</td>
<td>PRC (82)</td>
<td>JPN/INS/CND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JPN/INS (79)</td>
<td></td>
<td>PRC (79)</td>
<td>USA/PRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>USA/NZ</td>
<td></td>
<td>USA/PRC/INS</td>
<td>NZ/OZ/CND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PRC/TWN (74)</td>
<td></td>
<td>VN/NZ (75)</td>
<td>TWN (83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CND/OZ 70</td>
<td></td>
<td>OZ (71)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60%</td>
<td>VN (69)</td>
<td></td>
<td>CND (68)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PRC (65)</td>
<td></td>
<td>TWN (66)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SKOR (62)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>USA (60)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NZ/JPN (56)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OZ (50)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>CND (48)</td>
<td></td>
<td>PRC (55)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TWN (40)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figure entries are percentages giving pro-democratic responses on each item (V167 to V172).
other forms of government, this suggests that democracy is now seen as a basic human value. Indeed, surveys from Eastern Europe in the early 1990s detected similarly positive sentiments toward democracy virtually as the Berlin Wall was being breached (Dalton, 1994; Rose, Haerpfer, and Mishler, 2000).

The other items in Table 14 tap potential criticisms of the democratic process; that it weakens the economy, is indecisive, and does a poor job in maintaining order. Given the traditional description of East Asian political cultures and their presumed emphasis on agreement and aversion to conflict, it is striking that large majorities in Western and East Asian nations reject the view that democracy are not good at maintaining order. Similarly, large majorities reject the view that the economic system runs badly in a democracy. This is in stark contrast to the claims running from Lee Kuan Yew to Samuel Huntington (Huntington and Nelson, 1976) that one must chose between economic development and democratic develop-
ment—most people in East Asia reject this claim. Opinions are more divided on whether democracies are indecisive and have too much quibbling, and these sentiments actually seem to be more common in the Western democracies we surveyed.

The overall cross-national pattern is seen in Figure 17, which combines the four items into a single scale and presents national mean scores. The data describe general support across these ten nations, with little evidence of a sharp East-West divide. Citizens in the established democracies are generally positive about these features of the democratic process, but people in less-democratic nations are not significantly more skeptical about democracy. Moreover, because these process questions tap some of the themes about democracy's supposed limitations from the perspective of East Asian political traditions, it is significant that the actual opinions of most people in East Asia do not fit this pattern.

Political Culture and Democracy

Scholars have engaged in a long debate on the influence of Asian political culture on the political development of the region. In large part this has been a debate among political experts and area specialists. One side of this debate questioned whether Confucian traditions and political history had produced a political culture potentially congruent with a democratic political system (e.g., Pye, 1985; Scalapino, 1989; Huntington, 1996). The lack of democracy in most of East Asia was cited as evidence to support this position, and even those nations that had made the democratic transition functioned under the specter of this cultural theory. On the other side, other experts suggested that cultural traditions were open to multiple meanings and applications, and that democracy was not a regionally distinct phenomenon that could only prosper in Western Europe (e.g., Friedman, 1994; Diamond, 1988: 14-18). Noticeably absent from this debate, however, has been cross-national empirical evidence on what people in East Asia actually think about democratic principles and the democratic
process.

This research addresses this void, using the World Values Survey to describe citizen orientations toward democracy in the nations of the Pacific rim. Although caution is warranted since tapping democratic orientations is a complex task, the WVS data describe broad support for democracy as a regime form, and rejection of the non-democratic alternatives of oligarchy and military rule. Similarly, most people are positive about the democratic process, rejecting the common claims of democracy's critics that it weakens the economy and leads to disorder. Indeed, when large majorities in the two communist nations of East Asia endorse the view that democracy may have its problems, but it is better than any other form of government, this is an indicator of how widespread democratic aspirations have become. Moreover, in comparing East Asia to the established Western democracies of the Pacific rim, the differences in opinions are overshadowed by the broad support for a democratic regime and the democratic process that transcends the East-West divide.

Our findings thus add to the growing body of empirical evidence that the political cultures in East Asia are not inconsistent with further democratic development. For instance, the Pew Global Attitudes Survey (2002) done in summer 2002 found that majorities of the public in Vietnam (62%), Japan (62%), South Korea (58%) and Indonesia (52%) were favorable toward "democracy as it exists in the United States."\(^{15}\) The 2003 Pew Global Attitudes Survey included a smaller set of East Asian nations, but it also found that when asked to choose between a democratic government and a strong leader, nearly two-thirds of Koreans and Indonesians favored democracy. Other questions from the 2003 Pew Survey point to the breadth of support for a fair judiciary, religious freedom, and freedom of speech as important for their nation. The initial results from the new East Asian Barometers also find majorities in support of democratic principles for most of the nations they surveyed (Chu, 2003; Albritton and Bureekul, 2003). Similarly, we cited other research on Chinese public opinion that also uncovers surprising support for democratic principles (Chu and Chang, 2001; Shi, 2000; Nathan and Shi, 1999). One of the most interesting results comes
from Zweig's (2002) surveys in poor rural Chinese villages, where support for democratic principles was widespread. Doh Chull Shin (1999; 2000a) found across the 1990s that large majorities of the Korean public favored a democratic system for their nation, and most believed democracy was suitable for Korea (also Ahn and Kang, 2003). And in comparison to data from Western Europe and other emerging democracies, Koreans also are relatively positive toward democracy (Shin, 1999). In short, most of the publics we surveyed agree with the Churchillian premise that democracy may be the worst form of government—except for all the other forms.

Certainly, one must be cautious in interpreting these findings. In several of these nations, the average citizen is unlikely to understand the full benefits and limitations of a democratic system. It is not realistic to think that, when the Vietnamese express support for democracy, that carries the same meaning as when citizens are surveyed in established, advanced industrial democracies. A similar problem existed in the first public opinion surveys in Eastern Europe after the fall of communism (Dalton, 1994; Rose, Haerpfer and Mishler, 2000). But citizens in states with oligarchic leadership are willing to criticize this system of government, as well as military rule—they know how these systems work, and can meaningfully reject them. Thus democratic aspirations seem to be a common element of the human condition in the nations of the Pacific rim, whether West or East.

The experience in Eastern Europe is also illuminating because it suggests that democratic aspirations are the beginning of a process of building a democratic political culture that accepts the frustrations and conflicts that come with the democratic process (Rohrschneider, 1999). People generally welcome freedoms and rights, but it is more difficult to openly extend these rights to one's opponents. Elections and a fair judiciary are positive values, until one's party loses an election or an electoral appeal. We have less evidence on whether the citizens in the non-democratic states of East Asia understand and accept these democratic principles as an extension of their democratic aspirations. In fact, these norms might only be internalized by actually working within a democratic process. And a positive example comes from time series data from Taiwan. Taiwanese surveys
find a broad shift toward democratic values of freedom and pluralism that follows the nation's democratization process (Xu, 1998).

We should also stress that we are studying broad orientations toward democracy and alternative regime forms, and not support for the present government and its policies. Political theory and empirical evidence suggests that there are important distinctions between public images of the political regime and images of the current holders of power. Americans can (and do) harshly criticize the policies emanating from the White House, while still embracing the democratic creed. This same dichotomy can apply to citizens in the nations of East Asia. Indeed, the economic crises of the 1990s have placed strains on many of the nations examined here, and this is reflected in growing public dissatisfaction with politicians and government in democratic nations like Korea and Japan (e.g., Shin, 2000b; Tanaka, 2001; Ahn and Kang, 2003). This makes our findings even more meaningful, because we uncovered little change in basic orientations toward democracy across the last two waves of the World Values Survey in these two nations.

Public attitudes are, of course, only one part of the democratization process. The course of democratization, at least over the short term, is more likely to depend on the strategic decisions of national elites than on the responses of citizens to a public opinion survey. But in the long run, a democratic system requires a democratic public to survive and function. Especially when placed in the larger context of the global findings from the World Values Survey (Inglehart, 1997; 2003), it appears that democratic aspirations are a common belief—more common than previously recognized.

Notes

1. For discussions of the distinction between citizen evaluations of different levels of the political system—such as democratic values, evaluations of the regime, and evaluations of the incumbents—see Dalton (2004) and Klingemann (1999). Recent research emphasizes
the distinctions between these different objects of evaluation in the minds of citizens, and these distinctions thus should be clear to the readers as well. In addition, evaluations of the government and politicians are a function of the expectations of the citizenry and the acceptance of opposition in the political culture. A clear example of this contrast comes from Ahn and Kang's (2002) comparisons of citizen perceptions of government performance across a set of East Asian nations. They find that citizens were more critical of government in the more established democracies of Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, while citizens in Malaysia and Singapore were more positive toward their government. This tendency for criticism of government to be higher in more established democracies has been noted by others (Norris 1999; Pharr and Putnam 2000).

2. Vanhanen (1990: 11-26) reviews the previous empirical studies that measured scored nations in terms of their democratic development.

3. Similarly, the Polity dataset measures democracy and scores Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States as a 10 in 1999 using their 10-point scale (http://weber.ucsd.edu/~kgledits/Polity.html). For additional information on the Polity measures see Jaggers and Gurr (1995).

4. The Polity data cited in note 3 also describe the same general patterns as the Freedom House measures. The national scores on the 0-10 scale in 1999 were: China 0, Vietnam 0, Singapore 2, Indonesia 8 (although it was scored 0 in 1998 before the regime change), South Korea 8, Taiwan 9, and Japan 10.

5. For instance, in her study of local elections in China, Anne Thurston (1998: ix) quotes Jiang Zemin as saying "without democracy there can be no modernization. We will ensure that our people hold democratic elections, make policy decisions democratically, carry out democratic management and supervision, and enjoy extensive rights and freedoms under the law. The overall goal of our political restructurings to build socialist democracy with Chinese characteristics while upholding and improving our basic political system." Similarly, the most recent development plan in Vietnam includes democracy as one of the nation's goals: "prosperous people; strong nation; just, democratic and civilized society."

6. We do not distinguished between the two waves of the World Values Survey but simply present all the data available for each nation across the 1995-98 and 1999-2002 waves. Missing data were excluded from the calculation of percentages.

7. A partial long-term time comparison is available for Korea. In 1972-73 Chong Lim Kim and Young Whan Kihl did a national opinion survey; they asked if "elite rule is desirable" and 65 percent agreed (cited in Kim, 1978: 71-72). In contrast, in the 2003 World Values Survey, only 28 percent were favorable to government by a strong leader without democratic controls.
8. We conducted factor analyses of these four items to verify they form a common dimension and one factor emerged (Eigenvalues = 1.73, 42% of the total variance), with all four items loading on this first dimension: strong leaders (.792), experts (.577), army rule (.740), and support for democracy (-.475). In separate analyses, the factor structure is stronger in the advanced industrial nations (US, Canada, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand) than in the remaining nations, but the same pattern applies. Then, we simply summed together responses to the four items (reversing the polarity of the democracy item) and divided the total by four. The resulting scale runs from 1) prefer non-democratic regimes and disapprove of democracy, to 4) prefer a democratic regime and disapprove of non-democratic regimes.

9. We have two time points for three nations, and the overall democratic regime scale is relatively stable over these two waves:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wave</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>South Korea</th>
<th>USA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995-98</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-03</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. On this point, new evidence from the East Asian Barometers is very illuminating. Albritton and Bureekul (2003) followed a battery of items about democracy with an open-ended question asking what the respondents meant by the term democracy. Nearly half the respondents replied with examples that fit traditional notions of liberal democracy, and an additional third mentioned personal freedoms or civil liberties that are very consistent with Freedom House definitions of civil liberties. Also significant was what was not mentioned: most surprising was the low response rate in terms of traditional “Asian values” as commonly understood—good, social equality, or duties to society. Only one respondent mentioned “openness or government transparency,” and no one mentioned “solving employment,” “providing social welfare,” or “finding someone a job.” Additional cross-national evidence on this point should be available from the East Asian Barometers in other nations.

In contrast, Shin (1999: 47-48) shows that in 1993 high percentages of Koreans thought that economic prosperity and security “were important to democratic development in our country.” Smaller numbers cited political freedom or fair justice in response to the same question. Further research on the meaning of democracy to the publics of East Asia should be priority for future public opinion surveys on this topic.

11. For example, a standard question in post-communist nations asks whether individuals think socialism was a bad idea, or a good idea badly carried out (Rohrschneider 1999).
12. These data also illustrate the value of the cross-national research approach. Shin (1999: 31) noted that Koreans still appeared to question whether prior authoritarian government's were more effective than democracy in dealing with the nation's problems. But when placed in cross-national context, Korean support for the democratic process is relatively high compared with the Western democracies and other East Asian nations.

13. The four items were added together to produce an additive scale, and then divided by four. The resulting scale is scored: 1) critical of the democratic process, 4) supportive of democratic process.

14. We have two time points for three nations, and the overall democratic process scale is relatively stable over these two waves:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wave</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>South Korea</th>
<th>USA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995-98</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-03</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. One might question this choice of wording, but the question has the advantage that the reference to the United States offers a clear reference that this is not democratic socialism or other claims to democracy practiced in a different way. So a citizen of Beijing, for instance, does not think of the Politburo's version of Chinese democracy in answering this question.

References


, and Joan Nelson. 1976. No Easy Choice: Political Participation in Developing


Part Two: Democracy in Transition