

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS TO DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN SOUTH KOREA*

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This paper analyzes the enabling and confining conditions for democratic consolidation. First, the modalities of democratic transition that have long lasting impact upon consolidation process are investigated. Then opportunities and constraints that Korean new democracy has been facing. Korean new democracy enjoys prosperous economy, ethnic homogeneity, religious peace, effective state, and civilian control over the military. Nevertheless, Korean new democracy is laden with many obstacles such as low institutionalization of political society, weak constitutionalism, underdevelopment of civil society, and external security vulnerability. Overall, factors working for democratic consolidation are overwhelming the countervailing obstacles compared to new democracies in Latin America and Eastern Europe.

INTRODUCTION

For Koreans the last half century has been a long journey. On releasing from the chain of Japanese imperialism, Koreans have undergone national division, civil war, state building, industrialization, and democratization. For the last half century, Koreans have experienced events that other peoples have experienced for more than centuries. Fifty years history of Koreans is equivalent to centuries for other peoples. For the last half century, Koreans have accomplished many great jobs. Koreans telescoped stages of industrialization in a short period of time despite agony of national division, ruins of Korean war, and repressions of military dictators. Koreans have been lauded for their achievement of double projects of compressed industrialization and democratization in the most militarized area of the world (Im 1995b).

Korea crossed the first threshold of democratic transition in June 1987 when the ruling military elites announced the restoration of democratic competition in concession to popular demand. After the June 29th Declaration, new constitution was made for the first time in Korean history through a political pact between ruling military elites and democratic

*This paper had been presented at the Asia Pacific Research Center, Stanford University (April 1, 1996), the Center for Korean Studies, University of California, Berkeley (April 3, 1996), Department of Political Science, Michigan State University (April 6-7, 1996).

opposition. Since then, two consecutive presidential and National Assembly elections had held under the same constitutional framework. The arena of electoral politics has expanded into local politics. For the first time since 1960, Koreans elected leaders of their living communities. Besides official, formal political arena, many representatives of civil associations have been chosen by the votes of members. Once powerful military has been kept in barracks. These are sufficient enough to conclude that Korea has already crossed irreversible threshold of democratic transition in less than five years. Even though Korean democratic transition was late in world time, the pace of transition and consolidation has been so swift to go ahead of earlier starters for democratization in Latin America.

Having successfully completed the first stage of democratic transition, the battle ground of Koreans has been moved from a "war of movement" to dethrone authoritarian state to "war of position" to construct accountable and responsive representative institutions and a strong bastion of civil society. The social democratization has replaced political democratization as the major area of democratic reform. Now Koreans are tackling the problems such as "what type of democracy to construct?," "how to organize civil society and what kind?," and "how to reformulate the state-civil society relations?" This means that Koreans are now entering into the second stage of democratization, i.e., democratic consolidation. While the prime concern at the first stage of democratic transition is how to extricate the military from power and to install a democratic government through contested elections, the second stage of democratization focuses on the consolidation of new fragile democratic institutions and norms, i.e., to make the people internalizing, habituating, and routinizing democratic rules of game and norms. Democracy is respected as valuable for its "elaborate rules for its conflict resolution." (Rustow 1971, p. 362) For the consolidation of new democracy, rules for distributing benefits and costs should be agreed, legitimized, and internalized among relevant actors, i.e., the institutionalization of conflict resolution.

In this presentation, I will discuss what are the "enabling conditions" and what are the "confining conditions" for democratic consolidation in South Korea. I will focus on structural, institutional and cultural constraints and opportunities that Korean new democracy is facing. This does not mean that I am a believer in structural determination. I agree that democracy is a choice, not a necessity and "democratic consolidation is essentially a process of crafting: "an exercise of conscious leadership and strategy" (Diamond 1995, p. 54). I also agree that conditions desirable and conducive to a real democratic consolidation do not necessarily lead to democratic

consolidation. Nonetheless, studying structural, institutional and cultural opportunities and constraints is essential for the study of democratic consolidation just because "structural and institutional constraints determine the range of options available to decision makers and may even predispose them to choose a specific option" (Karl 1990). Eventually all the tasks of democratic consolidation are left to the strategic interactions among relevant political actors involved. Before crafting democracy, however, actors should have known the structural, institutional, and cultural conditions available to them.

DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION: CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

When can we call a new democracy consolidated? How does one know when consolidation is complete? The minimalist conception about a consolidated democratic regime has been provided by Adam Przeworski who states that "democracy is consolidated when under given political and economic conditions a particular system of institutions becomes the only game in town, when no one can imagine acting outside of the democratic institutions, when all the losers want to do is to try again within the same institutions under which they have just lost" (Przeworski 1991, p. 26). Juan Linz agrees with Przeworski by stating that a consolidated democratic regime is one "in which none of major political actors, parties, or organized interests, forces, or institutions to consider that there is any alternative to democratic processes to gain power, and that no political institution or group has a claim to veto the action of democratically elected decision makers....To put it simply, democracy must be seen as 'the only game in town'" (Linz 1990, p.158). Linz and Stepan describe the more detailed state of consolidated democracy as "the only game in town": behaviorally, no significant political group seriously attempts to overthrow the democratic regime; attitudinally, the overwhelming majority of people believe that any further political change must emerge within the parameters of democratic procedures; and constitutionally, all actors become habituated to the fact that political conflicts will be resolved according to established norms and that violations of these norms are likely to be both ineffective and costly (Linz and Stepan 1996, pp. 15-16).

What such minimalist conception emphasizes for democratic consolidation is spontaneous and self-enforcing compliances to democratic norms and institutions: "the compliance constitutes the equilibrium of the decentralized strategies of all relevant political forces" (Przeworski 1991, p. 26). For me, defining democratic consolidation as simply the

institutionalization of competition is too narrow to describe the complexity of "consolidated" democracy. It is a kind of Schumpeterian conception of democracy that equates democracy with elections. Democracy is not simply electoral competition which is held regularly. One could not call a regime democracy, in which elections are held regularly, but significant forces are excluded from political competition and particular socio-economic alternatives and blueprints are excluded from consideration in electoral agora. One could not call a regime democracy, in which elected representatives are not accountable for their actions and do not keep the campaign promises to constituencies after elected. Therefore a broadened conception of democratic consolidation is needed to include the additional requirements such as the guarantees of basic civil rights, democratic accountability and responsiveness. Schumpeterian "procedural minimum" should be added by substantive requirements such as civilian control over the military, democratic and constitutional checks on executive authority (i.e., "horizontal accountability"), and Tocquevillian social democratization (i.e., absence of extreme forms of social relations and the protection of citizens by law in social and economic relationships) (Collier 1995, p. 8).

In order to achieve an extended version of consolidated democracy, several interconnected and mutually reinforcing conditions must be present or to be crafted. Linz, Stepan, and Gunther contend that in order for a regime to be regarded as a consolidated democracy, the five distinctive conditions must be achieved: 1) a free and lively civil society; 2) a relatively autonomous political society; 3) an effective rule of law; 4) a bounded state bureaucracy; and 5) an institutionalized economic society.

- 1) The organizational and associational life of civil society—protected by law and with some base in the economy—must have a reasonably high degree of autonomy;

- 2) the specific procedures and institutions of political society (parties, electoral systems, legislatures, etc.) must be valued in themselves, and have a sufficient degree of autonomy to function adequately;

- 3) the institutions of democracy, the individual rights, and the rights of minorities must be embedded in—and guided and protected by—constitutionalism and the rule of law

- 4) the state bureaucracies whose task it is to implement laws, procedures, and policies decided upon by political society must operate within the confines of democratic mandates, constitutionalism, and professional norms; and the vast majority of the bureaucracy, both civil and military, must respect the authority of democratically elected government; and

- 5) there should be a certain degree of market autonomy and ownership diversity (government regulation of economic relations and mixed

patterns of public and private ownership notwithstanding), so that sufficient pluralism can exist to permit the autonomous group activity necessary for a modern democracy [Linz et al. 1995, pp. 83-84].

From the conceptual journey, we become to know that the process of democratic consolidation is not simply to institutionalize democratic political competition, but more broadly to stabilize, institutionalize, routinize, internalize, habituate, and legitimize democratic procedures and norms in political, social, economic, cultural and legal arena.¹

THE MODALITY OF DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

The modality of democratic transition has long-lasting impacts on the pattern, content, and degree of democratic consolidation. The modes of transition, according to Terry Karl and Philippe Schmitter, determines, to a significant extent, which "types of democracy" will emerge, whether or not they will be consolidated, and what the long range consequences will be for different social groups (Karl and Schmitter 1991).²

Therefore, in order to predict the future prospect of consolidation of a new democracy, one may look back upon retrospectively what were the enabling conditions, modes, and strategic interactions which made the preceding democratic transition possible.³

Then what was the modality of transition in Korea. First, Korean transition was a typical example of transitions from economically successful authoritarian regime. Two contrasting patterns of democratic transition emerged from the economic performance of authoritarian regimes: "crises of success" and "crises of failure." In Latin America and Eastern Europe, authoritarian dictators were forced to step down from power just because they failed to accomplish self-imposed historical mission of economic development. Severe economic crises rendered favorable conditions for democratic transitions, that is what I call transition by crises of failures. In

¹Philippe Schmitter focuses on process of democratic consolidation rather than the contents of consolidated democracy. For Schmitter, "consolidation could be defined as the process of transforming the accidental arrangements, prudential norms, and contingent solutions that have emerged by those persons or collectivities (i.e., politicians and citizens) that participate in democratic governance" (Schmitter 1992, p. 158).

²Schmitter warns that there may exist tensions between transitology and consolidology. According to Schmitter, the "enabling conditions" that were conducive to reducing and mastering the uncertainty of the transition may turn into "confining conditions" that can make consolidation more difficult (Schmitter 1995a, p. 13).

³Haggard and Kaufman call this mode of transition as "the authoritarian withdrawal in good times" (Haggard and Kaufman 1995).

South Korea, Taiwan, and Spain, democratic transition was caused by "crises of success." The authoritarian dictators had to withdraw from power just because it had accomplished historical mission of economic development. Since authoritarian government had successfully completed its historical mission of economic development it became historically obsolescent and had to be replaced by new democracy to meet new historical necessities such as more freedom and more welfare for the masses. This pattern of transition is what I call "transition by crises of success" (Im 1994a).

Compared to new democracies from "the crises of failures," new democracies from "the crises of success" are in relatively advantageous position for democratic consolidation. In the new democracies created by crises of success, economy is generally in good shape. Post-authoritarian democratic state is not bankrupt. State remains an effective state with relatively efficient bureaucracies. Post-authoritarian states are not in the situation that "a weak state is facing a weak society." Overall, new democracies from the crises of success are not facing the level and amount of dangers that threatens the new democracies in the Eastern Europe as well as Latin America.

Second, the new democracy in Korea emerged out of "market authoritarian regime" (Im 1994a). The authoritarianism that the new democracy replaced was a "market-friendly" or "market-conforming" authoritarianism in the sense that the authoritarian state stressed market rationality and economic liberalization. The prime concern of the state was to put every actor to the discipline of the market. Yet, the repressive character of authoritarian state is not generally lessened under market authoritarianism. Market authoritarian state forces every actor to be compliant to market order; the state forces market losers not to withdraw from the market; the state deprives underprivileged of shelters from destructive forces of the market; the state removes protection and subsidies which were provided to rent-seeking capitalists and farmers.

Market authoritarian state is, in general, in better position with regard to market-oriented economic adjustment and structural reform. Nonetheless, even though market authoritarian state is economically more successful, market authoritarian state is no less vulnerable to democratic transition than populist, socialist, or clientelistic authoritarianism. Because of weak state-society ties inherent in market authoritarianism, the market authoritarian state sowed its own seeds of demise. Market-conforming authoritarian state, in general, tries to demobilize and to depoliticize civil society. The state urges civil society to compete each other in decentralized

market situation. Relying more on market mechanism, however, the state finds its capacity to build organized base of support diminishing. When popular sectors erupt against the authoritarian state, the state does not have friends in organized social forces. Without mass base of support, the state becomes vulnerable to economic fluctuation and political turmoil (Lim and Kim 1994).

The demise of Chun Doo Hwan's market authoritarian state resembles this scenario. Chun's market conforming policies disintegrated state-society networks or "developmental coalition" formed under Park Chung Hee. For big business, stabilization measures were meant the disappearance of rents furnished by the state in the form of subsidies and protections from foreign competitors. By strengthening market principle, the state lost much of policy instruments to allure big business in authoritarian coalition. When popular protest activated against the authoritarian state, the state elites found that big business were no longer the staunch ally to live and die with the authoritarian state. While a symbiotic relationship between the big business and the authoritarian state remained mostly intact under Park's authoritarianism, cracks in "sword-won alliance" emerged in Chun's market authoritarianism. Neoconservative reforms also alienated farmers. Cuts in subsidy for grain and fertilizer price and import liberalization of farm products turned farmers against Chun regime (Im 1994a).

Chun's market authoritarian state did neither build its own friends and supporters in the civil society, nor allowed civil society to organize their specific group or sectoral interests. The state tried to defend its autonomy by keeping civil society in an isolated market situation. Policing market order aroused voices of discontent from civil society. Karl Polanyi once pointed out that unrestrained market movements sparked the counter-movements of market losers in civil society to protect themselves against the destructive forces of the market (Polanyi 1944). The eruption of anti-state popular movements of workers, farmers, urban poor in mid-1980s resembled the Polanyian counter-movement of the civil society. Although the middle class was the main beneficiary of the neoconservative reform, it did not show political support for the regime. It was the middle class who broke the authoritarian legitimacy formula. On freeing from worrying about economic survival, they no longer tolerated the trade-off between economic development and political freedom, and joined democratization movement that strengthened the democratizing coalition to the maximum extent of forcing authoritarian power holders to concede to democratic reforms with the June 29 Declaration for democratization by ruling party's candidate, Roh Tae Woo (Im 1995a).

The prospect for consolidation for new democracy from market authoritarianism is brighter in economic sense because the new democracy does not face a difficult task of simultaneously converting to market economy and democratic polity.

Finally, the mode of democratic transition in Korea was close to "transplacement" (Huntington) or "transition through transaction" (Mainwaring), "transition by pact" (Karl and Schmitter), "reforma pactada" (Linz), "democracy with guarantees" (Przeworski).

In Korea, the transition emerged out of a long protracted and inconclusive standoff between the authoritarian regime and democratic opposition. The authoritarian regime and democratic opposition made breakthrough for democratic transition on the brink of "reciprocal destruction." Both the regime and democratic opposition agreed to get out of a Gramscian "catastrophic balance" by making a second-best compromise to restore formal democracy. On the eve of democratic transition, the balance of force between the regime and democratic opposition was a catastrophic one in the sense that democratic coalition, even though broadened and expanded to maximum extent, was not physically strong enough to force the surrender of the power bloc, and the power bloc, even though severely weakened and divided, had kept the last resort, "to call in the army." Under this circumstance, democratic coalition had to be satisfied with being secured to restoring formal democracy by authoritarian power holders. The June 29 Declaration and ensuing compromise of constitution making was a political pact in which authoritarian power holders were guaranteed to keep incumbent status in exchange for the concession to restore democratic competition. Guaranteeing incumbent status was turned out to be a crucial premium for the military candidate, Roh Tae Woo to be elected president in the transition election.

Because the transition was made through pacts, guarantees, or negotiations among elites, continuity rather than rupture with the authoritarian past has prevailed in political, social, economic policies of new democratic governments. Despite the restoration of political competition in central and local government and the expansion of space of competition to civil society, authoritarian economic and social fabric has remained intact. Democracy in Korea has been very anemic and conservative. The legacies of authoritarian past have hindered the consolidation of political democracy and the expansion of democracy in social and economic area.

These are the modality of democratic transition in Korea. Yet we should be careful that the modality of transition does not "determine" the path of consolidation. In Korea, the foundational pacts between authoritarian

power holders and democratic opposition did not last indefinitely as was the case of Poland. In South Korea, too, the foundational pact that guaranteed "vital interests" of the military was broken by civilian president Kim Young Sam who put former military presidents, Chun and Roh on trial. Whether the "confining conditions" will be removed or lasted will depend on the choice and craftsmanship of reform leaders. Democratic consolidation is not under strict "path dependency" on the authoritarian past and the modality of transition.

FACILITATORS

Economic Affluence

The most supporting conditions that have made Koreans optimistic about the future prospect of democratic consolidation is the economy. In Korea, prosperous economy has protected the new fragile democracy laden with uncertainties, shifting interests, risks of reforms, contagious "street parliaments," and nostalgias for authoritarian past. The major bulwark against the forces of authoritarian subversion is the economy. For the last half century, Koreans transformed one of the poorest economies of the world to one of economic power houses. Per capita income which was merely \$103 in 1963 rose to more than \$ 10,000 in 1995. South Korea is the 11th largest economy and the 13th largest trading country in the world. South Korea is the 2nd largest shipbuilder the 4th in electronics, the 6th in Steel and the 7th automobile producer. Koreans accomplished the spectacular economic growth without seriously distorting equality and the quality of life.⁴

Korea is one of very few countries who had escaped a vicious cycle of poverty and dictatorship in this century by upgrading from periphery to prestigious club of advanced industrial economies. Recently Adam Przeworski and his collaborators disclosed a striking empirical evidence that "above \$6,000, democracies are impregnable and can be expected to live forever; no democratic system has fallen in a country where per-capita income exceeds \$6,055 (Argentina's level in 1976)" (Przeworski et al. 1996, p. 41) Przeworski's disclosure put an end to the long debate on the effect of economic development on democracy. With the hard statistical evidences Przeworski declared Lipset the winner of the debate. Lipsetian neo-modernization thesis is a contemporary argument for capitalism and

⁴For the contending explanations on miraculous economic development in Korea, see Im (1996).

democracy: "the more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy." From the experiences of West, modernization theorists try to generalize the universal causality of capitalism and democracy (Lipset 1959). According to neo-modernization thesis, democracy can prosper on the soil of political culture created by abundance economy of capitalism because economic abundance would provide a hospitable soil for democratic political culture favoring tolerance, reconciliation, and compromise.⁵ Lipsetian thesis seemed to be discredited as military coup after coup toppled democratic governments with relatively advanced capitalist economies such as South Korea, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile. However, the successive transitions to democracy in these countries since mid 1970s has resurrected the modernization thesis. Lipsetian thesis had been confirmed by seventy years experience of socialism in the Eastern Europe. Marx's socialist democracy "which he believed would be an egalitarian and democratic system with politically weak state, could only occur under the conditions of abundance" (Lipset 1994, p. 2). Marx's contention that socialism come out of the womb of capitalism can be understood in the sense that socialism as the ideal democracy does not come out of economic scarcity but out of economic abundance. Lipsetians argue that Marx's theory of socialism based on economic abundance has been proved ironically by the recent collapse of really existing socialism. The socialism of the East collapsed just because they failed to establish the mature affluent economy (Whitehead 1993, p. 1253)

Then how do we expect that affluent economy would positively contribute to democratic consolidation in Korea? First, the developed and affluent economy relieves the burden of simultaneous transition to constitutional democracy and a market economy that many new democracies in Eastern Europe and Latin America have been faced. Relying on rational choice theory, many now contend the impossibility of simultaneous transition. The main argument for the impossibility of simultaneous economic and political reform is that economic reform cannot proceed without democracy, but democracy has no chance without prior

⁵The modernization thesis goes back to Aristoteles' theory of polity. According to Aristoteles, the polity is a good democratic government that is based on a large middle class. The polity is a golden mixture of democracy ruled by many poor and oligarchy ruled by few rich. The polity is possible only when many poor mitigate claims based on number and few rich mitigate claims based on wealth, and when poor can claim based on wealth and rich can claim based on number. In order to claim based on wealth, therefore, large poor must have sufficient wealth. In modern language, the embourgeoisment of poor people is a prerequisite for the good democracy, i.e., the polity (Aristoteles 1958).

price and property reform (Przeworski 1991).⁶ In Eastern Europe, according to Offe, "capitalism by design" under democracy is immensely difficult to get the support from the majority of population because they believe that the introduction of property rights and market mechanism will enrich the powerful and the powerless will fall the victims to the market (Offe 1991, p. 878). In Latin America, too, where economic reform from an oligopolistic to a competitive economy has been undertaken, the dilemmas of double reform are serious, even though less acute than in Eastern Europe.

However Korea have none of these problems. The authoritarian regime that new democracy inherited was a highly "market-friendly" regime. Most of neoconservative economic reforms have been done already under Chun Doo Hwan's market authoritarianism. Deregulation, dismantling of the system of subsidies, and privatization have been continuously pursued by the new democracy. But price reforms did not create extensive layoffs because the most serious problem in Korean economy is labor shortage.

Second, the "surplus democracy" from burgeoning economy makes room for furthering step toward "welfare state": more social safety network, job security, occupational safety and health, and better working condition. Compared to "deficit democracies" in Western Europe and U.S. that are suffering the retreat of welfare state, Korean "surplus democracy" have room for furthering welfare state which would certainly provide the material base for democratic class compromise. Korean model of growth with equity widens the range of choice for both politicians and people. The economy provides an opportunity to institutionalize "economic society" in the words of Linz and Stepan. The formula for economic society that would be recommended is the one that mediates between "market-friendly" state and "people-friendly" market.

Ethnic Homogeneity

The issue of "ethnicity" became prominent in the debate on citizenship in new democracies. The ethnicity problem poses new democracies a more serious challenge than it did to old democracies of the West during 18th and

⁶In the Eastern Europe, Elster argues, "political reforms without a transition to a competitive market might appear to be possible. In the long run, however, democracy will be undermined if it cannot deliver the goods in economic sphere." On the other hand economic reforms under democracy is tremendously difficult: While ownership reform presupposes price reform, if they lead to the worst-off being very badly off because democracy depends on votes of the poor masses. Ownership reforms are also incompatible with democracy, if they yield income inequality that are unacceptable to large masses of population (Elster 1993, pp. 269-271).

19th century. Modern democracy developed in Western Europe is characterized by the rule of the people within national territorial boundary. The people have been defined as the sum of legally equal citizenship. The notion of popular sovereignty constitute both the “**demos**” component and the “**ethnos**” component. Democratization means, on the one hand, the extension of citizenship rights to lower classes, women, and younger people, on the other hand, the extension of citizenship to non-natives (immigrants, aliens, guest workers). The popular sovereignty of modern state has an inclusive character. It allowed the possibility of admitting immigrants to the national community, provided they adhered to the political rules and were willing to adapt themselves to the national culture. Therefore, the ethnic homogeneity based on common ancestry did not set the boundary of citizenship. The requirement of membership of a nation was not the ethnicity but the acceptance of rights and duties of citizens. The French and American revolution spread the idea of people living as citizens of nationally constituted societies. Modern nationalism involved an attempt to overcome local ethnocultural diversity and to produce standardized citizens whose loyalties to the nation would be unchallenged by extra-social allegiances (Robertson 1990, p. 49). With the successful creation of homogeneous citizens through cultural homogenizing process, nationalism could coexist with democracy in the West of 18th and 19th century.

Many new democracies, especially in Eastern Europe and Russia, however, do not enjoy such a happy cohabitation of nationalism and democracy. Once vacuum was created by the collapse of communism in the East, ethnic nationalism rushed to fill the void (Hall 1995, pp. 86-88). Cooperation among multi-ethnicities became harder in post- cold war era because the advantage of scale in terms of security and economic prosperity disappeared and every ethnicity tries to build his/her nation based on mono-ethnicity. The intensifying global economic competition worsens the ethnic problem. Underneath cultural strifes, there couches economic reason that economic inequality is increasing in the era of globalization. Those who were relegated to marginal position in the international division of labor seek shelters to protect them from the destructive forces of the market. They try to find shelter in anti-market, past oriented, local, ethnic identities. The losers in the global competition have nostalgia in the past. They try to constitute an identity based on historically and emotionally shared memories of the past. These kind of backward identity formation, however, is detrimental to the consolidation of democracy. While democracy thrives on the soil of pluralist political culture tolerating diverse opinions and alternatives, ethno-national fundamentalism will suffocate the development

of a pluralist democratic political culture.

In this regard, Korean democracy is blessed. Korea is ethnically one of the most homogeneous countries in the world. Therefore Korea has not suffered from ethnic conflicts in the post-transition period.

For Koreans, the distinction between an "ethnic" and a nation has never existed. The Koreans imagined the geographic boundary of the nation and identified its member through an ethnic (*jok*) which had been formed since the beginning of the history (Kim 1995, p. 369). In addition to the actual fact of ethnic homogeneity in biological terms, common painful experience of Japanese colonialism and Korean War strengthened ethnic nationalism (Kim 1995, p. 372). The cohesive ethnic nationalism has been the prime mover for "late industrialization" in Korea. Koreans believed achieving an industrial nation as the collective project of the nation and worked hard for the project.

In Korea, the national issue or ethnic issue had been solved before normal democratic politics can take place. More correctly say, ethnic issue has been non-existent after the transition as well as before the transition. In Korean new democracy, there has been no conflict between "demos" component and "ethnos" component. The new democracy has been exempted from ethnic conflicts. Korea has an advantage to establish democracy based on pre-established ethnic homogeneity. Korea does not need to devise consociational arrangements to ease ethnic conflicts, which have been experimented widely in Netherlands, Belgium, Swiss, Nigeria, Spain, etc.⁷

Religious Tolerance

Korea is one of the most religiously vibrant and dynamic society in the world. Most of the largest churches in terms of number of followers are located in Korea. Korea is also multi-religious society. No single religion dominates the religious life of Koreans. Buddhism, Protestantism, Catholicism, and Confucianism (even though some say it is ethical codes rather than a religion) coexist peacefully in Korea. Given the fact that many new democracies in Eastern Europe, Middle East, Africa, and Asia are suffering from religious conflicts and that religious fundamentalism is the

⁷Kim, Byung Kook, however, has a different view that ethnic nationalism can be a liability to democratic consolidation in Korea. Imagining the nation as an homogeneous ethnic with biologically common ancestry and shared historical memories and experiences, Koreans tend "to perceive social conflict as a source of political instability and disaster" rather than as something inevitable and legitimate to be harnessed and tamed in democratic polity. I agree mostly with Kim. But imagine also that Koreans are the most individualistic people in Asia as was evidenced by the facts that Koreans were the most rebellious in Japanese colonies and Korean workers are more individualistic than Japanese and Taiwanese workers.

major stumbling block to democratic transition in Middle East, Korean new democracy is blessed with interreligious peace.

How and why has religious pluralism prospered in Korea? Koreans became believers in one or another religion in order to survive in a rapid socioeconomic change. To survive from stresses generated by devastating effects of Korean War, compressed industrialization, and authoritarian repression, Koreans sought shelter in religion. During the last half century, the growth rate of the number of Christians are one of the highest in the world. The growth of number of Christians were not, however, made at the expense of the traditional religions like Buddhism. Buddhism also has flourished in the post-War period.

According to Kim, religious tolerance has been nurtured by indigenization and syncretization of the imported foreign religion like Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity. Koreans indigenized and syncretized religions imported from abroad with shamanism (Kim, 1995). Shamanism does not acknowledge the transcendental state of human existence. For shamanism, what matters is the life in this world. Shamanism lacks a dichotomous, conflictive conception of this-world versus other-world, body versus spirit. Through the process of indigenization and syncretization of imported religions of Buddhism and Christianity with the injection of shamanistic elements, Koreans transformed gods into an instrument for men to acquire secular goals. In Korea even the most transcendental religion like Christianity has emphasized this worldliness. The functionalist and anthropocentric understanding, embracing, explorations of religions fostered religious tolerance. It is no wonder that a multi-religious society never had religious strife and religious war (Kim 1996).⁸

Second, post-Confucianism is an asset rather than a liability for democratic consolidation in Korea. Recently there have been vigorous debates on whether or not positive effects of Confucianism or Confucian ethic on economic development can be extended to political democracy as well. The compatibility between Confucianism and democracy is widely debated issue in consolidation. Huntington argues that "Confucian

⁸Again Kim, Byung Kook argues that syncretization deprived one basis of organizing democratic politics, the church versus the state. In Korea, major political cleavages have not developed along the axis of two cleavage of Lipset and Rokkan: class and religion. The anthropocentric religion made Korean politics develop along the lines of pragmatism and functionalism. The politics without vision is not good for democratic consolidation because it created politics that is organizationally amorphous (Kim 1996). I have a different opinion. If transcendental and utopian religions had developed in Korea, Korea would have suffered from religious fundamentalism and dogmatism, the outcome of which would have been interreligious strifes.

democracy is a contradiction in terms, but democracy in Confucian society need not be" (Huntington 1991, p. 310). Confucian ethic emphasizing hard work, thrifty, diligence, education social harmony, loyalty to authority played a important role in East Asian 'Miracle'. However, many still doubt that the impact of Confucian value system on democratic consolidation would be positive. (Yang 1995, p. 13; Kim 1995) Confucian emphases on family, groups norms, social harmony and moral, political and economic order suffocate the development of political culture of individualism and personal freedom, and give rise to "government by men" rather than "government by laws" (Khil 1995, p. 459).

Nonetheless, many, Fukuyama for example, argue that "Confucianism is obviously compatible with democracy" First, Confucian examination system is a meritocratic institution with potentially egalitarian implications. Second, Confucian emphasis on education contributes positively on the development of democracy because high level of education facilitates people to participate in political debate. Lastly, "this-worldly" Confucianism is tolerant of other religions. Confucianism has coexisted with other religions, Buddhism and Christianity (Fukuyama 1995, p. 25).

Beside the virtues of Confucianism pointed out by Fukuyama, Confucianism in Korea has other virtues that are compatible with and even facilitating democracy. In Korea, there is no such kind of Confucian orthodoxy working. Confucianism has been secularized as to be called "post-Confucianism". The "high Confucianism" or political Confucianism of ruling elites has been replaced by "low Confucianism," or bourgeois Confucianism of ordinary people. Post-Confucianism or the secularized Confucianism has been not only the engine of Korean growth but also the new reservoir for democratic culture in Korea. First, Confucian emphasis on "this-worldliness" fosters positive attitude to the affairs of this world, and faith in transformability of human condition. Second, anthropocentric Confucianism emphasizes self-cultivation and the self as the center of relationship and interconnectedness but has an aversion to self-centeredness, thus, promotes individualism with civic duties. Third, post-Confucianism nurtures political accountability by its emphasis on the reciprocity of respect for authority and public accountability. Confucianism regards the political order as moral community and therefore post-Confucianism fosters social interconnectedness, public spirit, social trust, and social capital, the essential features of post-individualistic democracy.

Imbued with syncretic culture, Koreans reveals extraordinary adaptability to transform Confucianism in the new environment from old, high, dogmatic, political, authoritarian Confucianism to new, low,

pragmatic, bourgeois, democratic Confucianism (Kim 1994). Koreans selectively discarded, modified, and downplayed the whereas old, dogmatic elements of Confucianism, and, instead, absorb, assimilate, and inject new elements of western virtues into post-Confucianism. For instance, whereas old familism will suffocate individual freedom and initiatives, new familism and loyalty to kinship and communal collectivities holds off atomizing individualism which is rampant in Western market democracy. After all the pragmatic Confucianism and Christianity is an asset rather than a liability for the consolidation of new democracy in Korea.⁹

Effective State

Democratic consolidation needs an effective state. In many of Eastern European and Latin American countries the most serious problem is "weak state is facing weak society" (Przeworski et al. 1995). As Linz and Stepan conclude with decisive words, "no state, no democracy," unless an effective state exists, there would be no free and authoritative elections, no exercise of monopoly of legitimate force, no effective protection of rights to citizens by the rule of law. For the consolidation of democracy, the authority of the polis and the rights of the demos should not be in conflicts (Linz and Stepan 1996, p. 14).

In South Korea, the power of the state has been weakened since the transition. Yet the state is still effective compared to other new democracies. Like other cases of transition, the democratization in Korea involves the devolution of power from the central government to local governments and communities. In fact, democratization movement in Korea is basically the resistance movement against the abuse of and the arbitrary use of power by "over-developed" authoritarian "developmental" state. Since democratic transition, centrifugal movement has continued and successive measures of devolution of power from the *polis* to the *demos* have been carried on. Even though in the first transition election, the candidate who was responsible for the reinstallation of authoritarians regime was elected as the president, in ensuing National Assembly election, the first sign of centrifugal tendency was revealed. In the election, for the first time since 1950, the ruling party could not get the majority and *Yoso Yadae* (a small ruling party vs. a large opposition) was created. Even though the centrifugal tendency was checked by the formation of mega-ruling party through three party mergers in 1991,

⁹De Barry even goes further that old classical Confucianism, too, had the virtue of democratic civil society that emphasized "the benefits of free political discussion and open criticism of those in power," and thus compatible with democracy (de Barry 1996).

the power of center has become far weaker than that in previous authoritarian regimes. In 1991, the election of local assemblymen took place for the first time since Park Chung Hee terminated local election "until the unification is accomplished" (Oh 1995). And with some political brawlings, parties reached a compromise on the election of local government head by the spring 1991. Despite some delay, the election of local government heads and local assemblymen was held in June 1995. Again the outcome of the local election revealed the centrifugal tendency. In the election, the ruling party suffered a decisive loss while opposition parties won clearly in the majority of localities.

Despite extensive devolution of power, the state is still relatively effective. Moreover, the efficiency of the state bureaucracy has increased due to the successive civilian government's political reforms to eliminate corruption and irregularities such as the public disclosure of assets of politicians and high ranking officials, anti-corruption legislations, reform legislation on political contribution and campaign money, and the presidential decree on "real-name financial accounting system" to cut off channels of bribing officials and politicians by businessmen.

The continued high rate of economic growth under the civilian government can be a hard evidence that the effectiveness of the state has not declined since the inauguration of democratically elected civilian government. In fact, the high competence of bureaucracy based on confucian merit system remain intact. Democracy has not brought forth fiscal crisis, budget deficit, and overall rent-seeking activities. Even though public expenditure on social programs increased, it turned out not to have deterrence effects on economic growth (Cheng 1995).¹⁰

Civilian Control over the Military

Many new democracies have been threatened, explicitly and implicitly, by military establishment who regard themselves as the privileged definers and guardians of the national interests (Diamond 1995, p. 46). In many new democracies, even after returning to barracks, the "attentive" military plays a significant role in politics behind the scenes. Therefore, unless military tutelage over civilian politics is eliminated explicitly, the new democracy cannot be called consolidated. In this sense, the military extrication and the ensuing reaffirmation of civilian supremacy over the military is a good sign

¹⁰This is in part true because the state that the new democracy inherited is a market authoritarian neo-conservative state which emphasized fiscal restraint and downsizing government.

for democratic consolidation in Korea.

Koreans are now under the first civilian president, Kim Young Sam, in thirty years. Although Kim owed very much to former military elites to be elected the president, Kim did a tremendous job of establishing a firm civilian control over the military. Kim's reform was so successful to revise O'Donnell-Schmitter model of democratic transition. According to O'Donnell and Schmitter, the military and the capitalists are the queen and the king of democratic chess game. It is forbidden to take king and queen because if they are threatened, "they may simply sweep the opponents off the board to kick it over and start playing solitaire" (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986). O'Donnell and Schmitter warned that in the country with a long tradition of military rule and entrenched business interests, civilian democratic government must be cautious not to provoke the military and capitalist privilege. Przeworski also suggested that the pro-democratic forces be prepared to offer the military concessions in exchange for democracy (Przeworski et al. 1995). Kim Young Sam government, however, dared to ignore these warnings. On taking office, Kim, to everybody's surprise, took a decisive action to purge most of politicized military officer group, *Hanahwae*, who, under preceding governments, had monopolized strategic posts and constituted the supporting base of Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo. Even former military presidents, Chun and Roh themselves are on a trial on the charge of corruption, military subversion of December 12, 1989, and Kwangju massacre in May 1980. President Kim's military reform is no doubt the greatest achievement of his presidency, because purging the entrenched military elites from political and military organizations were highly risky job for the president of one of the highest militarized countries in the world. Yet Kim's military reform has turned out to be successful and now very few in Korea could conceive a military coup as a viable option to influence politics and solve socioeconomic "ills" (Kim 1996). The potential subversive attempts of the military has been preempted by good performance of new democracy in Korea. Given the fact that the failure of democracy in terms of corruption, economic stagnation, and institutional malfunctioning creates the space for military intervention in the name of rectifying social ills, salvaging the nation, and restoring order, the new democracy did not give the military such an opportunity for intervention.¹¹

¹¹Diamond points out that "the single most important requirement for keeping the military at bay is to make democracy work, to develop its institutional capacities" (Diamond 1995, p. 47). For Korea, certainly the performance of democracy has deterred the military intervention,

OBSTACLES

Low Institutionalization of Political Society

Democracy needs strong institutionalization of political society. To consolidate new democracy, political institution of political parties and electoral system and representative organizations have sufficient capacities to articulate, aggregate and represent the interests of their constituencies in the political arena.¹²

The fact that elections are institutionalized does not necessarily mean the new democracy is consolidated. Election is a necessary but not sufficient condition for democratic consolidation. Democracy is not consolidated if major decisions are made by the president and his entourage outside of representative institutions and channels, even if elections are held regularly and civil rights are generally observed.

In South Korea, the institutionalization of political society crossed the minimal threshold by institutionalizing electoral competitions. The election of Kim Young Sam signifies that two consecutive presidents had been elected under the same rule of game. The institutionalization of electoral rules and games, in fact, increased the expectations that democratic competition would repeat regularly regardless of exogenous fluctuations (i.e., institutionalizing uncertainty). Yet, we cannot say new democracy consolidated simply by the fact that elections are institutionalized. In this regard, the political society in Korea has not reached to the point of institutionalization and consolidation. Still the accountability and responsiveness of the government to citizens between elections remain low.

First, political parties are not yet institutionalized. The life of parties are ephemeral. There remain no political parties who has kept the party name at the time of democratic transition of 1987. Few parties kept their names beyond one government; no party or party names have lasted more than two Korean republics thus far (Yang 1995, p. 23). The major political parties come and go with the ambition of charismatic leaders who has an unshaken regional stronghold. Since 1987, most politicians, irrespective of their

but whether or not she has nurtured the institutional capacity to check military intervention is still in doubt.

¹²What "civil society arguments" bypass is that "civil society by itself can destroy a nondemocratic regime, but democratic consolidation must involve political society." Democratic consolidation requires that citizens develop core institutions of democratic political society: political parties, legislatures, elections, electoral rules, political leadership, and intraparty alliances (Linz and Stepan 1996).

ideological and policy position, have continuously aligned and realigned according to the moves of their charismatic leaders and the leaders "create the party to suit his or her political needs or in the more recent past, recreate it in the leader's own image" (Steinberg 1995, p. 396). Autocratic control from party headquarters has vitiated democratic process within the party (Steinberg 1995, p. 396). Three key political leaders, Kim Young Sam, Kim Dae Jung, Kim Jong Phil, founded, dissolved, refounded "a political party at will, which in turn manages the election by controlling almost exclusively the power of nominating the party candidates of each and every electoral district, and successfully elected representatives arrive at the National Assembly and function like robots under the strict guidance and leadership of the party bosses" (Yang 1995, p. 20).

Party bossism has posed insurmountable impediments to the consolidation of democracy in Korea. It prevents new democracy from being consolidated for the following reasons.

First, party bossism obstructs the growth of democratic responsiveness and accountability. Elections are held regularly but elected officials do not keep the campaign promises to constituencies but behave in behalf of their bosses, then the collective rational choice that is the core of democracy become impossible, and we cannot call it democracy.

Second, party bossism fosters the clientelism in politics. According to Kim Byung Kook, with religion and class powerless in organizing politics, the party bosses came to rely on monetary incentives (Kim 1996). The patron-client relationship formed between the party bosses and followers nourishes corruption, particularism, personalism, nepotism, and patronage. Elected officials serve the particularistic interests of bosses such as *Daekwon* (ultimate power), not universal interests of producing collective or public goods for the community as a whole. Buying support with material remuneration nurtures political corruption; even though the game is played "inside" democratic institutions, if formal institutions and real practices (or formal rules and actual behavior) does not fitted together, then democratic consolidation is in question (O'Donnell 1996, p. 41).

Third, the party bossism of Korean kind is based on regionalism in politics. Since the authoritarian era, the outcome of electoral politics has been decided by regional cleavages. Under authoritarian regimes, regional voting contributed in some sense to democratic transition. Two leaders of democratic opposition, Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung, have had regional strong hold and the staunch support from their home provinces tipped the balance toward democratic coalition. However, after the transition, the deep seated regional cleavages divided votes for democratic

opponents and contributed decisively to the Roh's election to the president. Since then, the determination of regional cleavages on electoral outcome has been so overwhelming that the elections could no longer be the arena that other cleavages are articulated, contested, represented, and resolved. As a consequence, the representatives would not represent the class, religious, and occupational interest nor general interests of the nation, but only follow faithfully the order of the boss who monopolistically represents the specific region. Under the circumstance that votes count the outcome of election, but the votes are predetermined along the lines of regional cleavages, then it is very hard for politicians to appeal voters with programs and visions other than regional interests which is personified in charismatic leaders.

Without relinquishing party bossism, the emergence of the durable party system is hard to expect. Korean party system is too immature to be institutionalized. Voters still tend to pay loyalty to and identify themselves with not a specific party but a charismatic leader from their home province.

Weak Constitutionalism: "Constitutions without Constitutionalism"

If constitution does matter for democratic consolidation, the problem will arise which constitution would make democracy last longer. Many constitutional theorists favors parliamentarism over presidentialism with the backing of statistical evidences. Nevertheless the superiority of parliamentarism is not sufficient to advice citizens and politicians to immediately change constitutional system, for example, from presidentialism to parliamentarism. Even though we are persuaded that parliamentarism have more virtues in terms of democratic consolidation and governance, presidential system is still no doubt a truly democratic constitutional system.

Once a democratic government is installed, the first job for consolidating new democracy is not searching for a new better alternative constitutional formula, but rather internalizing, habituating routinizing the existing constitutional formulas, if the existing formula satisfies the minimum requirements for democracy. I make this point because hot debate, squabblings, disputes about constitution may destabilize fragile new democracies just instaurated.

Korea is a notorious case that constitutions "are modified frequently and remain irrelevant" (Przeworski 1991, p. 35). From 1948 to 1987, constitution had changed 9 times and average life of constitution was less than four years. Every president or prime minister took over power with his own constitutional formula. Making, revising, reviving constitution had been the

main arena of political conflict. In Korea, the debate on new constitution starts just the day after the presidential election. Every power contenders tried to revise constitutions in a way to increase the probability of his/her winning the next election. As a consequence, constitution did not have institutional power of regulating interaction and competition among citizens, politicians, parties, and interest associations. Constitution mongers have destabilized new fragile democracy. Democracy is consolidated when relevant actors can expect that democratic competition will be held regularly and repeatedly under the same rules of the game in the foreseeable future, that is what Przeworski called "institutionalizing uncertainty."

If uncertain nature of democratic game is not institutionalized and instead continues to become the focus of political conflict, democratic institution is weakened as a result and become vulnerable to the forces who try to subvert new democracy.

Therefore what Korea needs now for democratic consolidation is not searching for a more perfect democratic constitution, but internalizing, habituating, routinizing values and norms of presidential system. Changing constitution in the early stage of democratic consolidation might destabilize the fragile democracy and weaken the institutional autonomy. It would not be too late to discuss and debate on better constitutional formula for democratic competition after Korean democracy cross the threshold that the reversal to authoritarianism become impossible.

Underdevelopment of Civil Society

Consolidated democracy needs a strong civil society. Civil society is a new growth industry in the literature of democracy. There are many ways of conceptualization of civil society. Here civil society means "a society of civility" or civic virtues (Shils 1991). The concept of civil society used here is broader conception than what Hegel and Marx used. For Hegel and Marx, civil society means "bürgerlich gesellschaft" that is bourgeois capitalist society (or market society). But the concept of civil society should be broader than market society in the sense that the civil society is not confined to market society but extended to the sphere of community and culture. As Fish aptly points out, "capitalism is possible in the absence of civil society. But without civil society, capitalism will not create a 'civil economy'" (Fish 1994, p. 41). Without civil economy the civil society loses the element of community but reveals the bad element of market society in which everybody pursues his/her own selfish interests and the outcome would be

a Hobbesian war of all against all. For the consolidation of new democracy, therefore, it is required to construct a robust civil society based on civic virtue that can overcome the limits of market society.

The first systematic study on the relations between democracy and civil society had been done by Alexis de Tocqueville. Traveling America in 1830s, Tocqueville found the secrecy of functioning democracy in America in American people's "art of association":

Americans of all ages, all stations in life, and all types of disposition are forever forming associations. There are not only commercial and industrial associations in which all take part, but others of a thousand different types-religious, moral, serious, futile, very general and very limited, immensely large and very minute. ... Where in France you would find the government or in England some territorial magnate, in the United States you are sure to find an association.... Thus the most democratic country in the world now is that in which men have in our time carried to the highest perfection the art of pursuing in common the objects of common desires.... Nothing, in my view, deserves more attention than the intellectual and moral associations in America [De Tocqueville 1966, pp. 513-517].

Traveling America, Tocqueville found that it is civil associations that reactivated individual citizens, who were likely to be impotent under mass democracy, into active citizens. Through the mediation of voluntary civil associations, private interests of citizens can coincide with the public interests of communities. Tocqueville warned that under mass democracy, it is very hard for democratic virtues to be realized but rather the tyranny of the majority would more likely emerge. Yet Tocqueville found in America that the emergence of the mass tyranny has been checked by the burgeoning civil associations and active participation of citizens in community matters. Today's neo-Tocquevillians confirm that dense network of civil associations improve democratic governance in solving the problem of education, poverty, unemployment, crime, drug and violence. Neo-Tocquevillians refine the functions of civil associations with the concept of "social capital," or "social trust". For them, "social capital" refers to "features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (Putnam 1995, p.20). Dense networks of civic associations foster norms of generalized reciprocity, increase the amount of social trust, facilitate coordination and communication and thus allow dilemmas of collective action to be resolved.

Following Tocquevillian tradition, Schmitter provides operating concept of civil society with civic virtue. For Schmitter, civil society can be defined

as a set or system of self-organized intermediary groups that (1) are relatively independent of both public authorities and private units of production, i.e., of firms and families; (2) are capable of deliberating about and talking collective actions in defense/promotions of their interests and passions; (3) but do not seek to replace either state agents or private (re)producers or to accept responsibility for governing the polity as a whole; (4) but do agree to act within preestablished rules of a "civil" or legal nature (Schmitter 1995).¹³

Many theorists on civil society argue that strong civil society perform positive functions for democratic consolidation. According to Schmitter, although the existence of civil society is not a prerequisite either for the demise of autocracy or for the transition to democracy, contributes positively to the consolidation of democracy.¹⁴

First, civil society raises the degree of predictability among relevant political actors because civil association provides more reliable information for governance (i.e., institutionalizing uncertainty). Second, civil society plays the role of the "school of democracy" that inculcates conceptions and norms that are civic. Third, it provides channel for self expression and identification among proximate individuals and firms, i.e., creating channels other than political parties for the articulation, aggregation, and representation of interests. Fourth, it reduces the burden of governance for both public authorities and private producers. Finally it provides the last reservoirs of resistance to arbitrary and tyrannical rule (Schmitter 1995, pp. 13-14; Diamond 1994, pp. 7-11).

Yet such a rich associational life is not burgeoning in Korea. In South Korea a strong civil society resurrected during the transition to democracy. Civil society played a major role in the transition to democracy (White 1995). It were students, workers, journalists, artists, priests, monks, professionals, white collars who bright forth democracy from authoritarianism in Korea.

In the post-transition period, however, civil society in Korea failed to transform itself from "mobilizational civil society" into "institutional civil

¹³Diamond also defines civil society as the "realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, (largely) self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared values" (Diamond 1994, p. 5).

¹⁴For Schmitter, civic association is not a major factor in determining the shift of governance from authoritarian to democratic. Rather civil associations are significant in determining what type of democracy will be eventually consolidated because civil associations affect the distribution of benefits, the formula of legitimation, the level of citizen participation. In short the civil association affect the quality of democracy rather than the quantity and the duration of democracy (Schmitter 1992, p. 166).

society".¹⁵ In Korea, after democratic transition, the state was forced to loosen the tight control over civil society and to allow the expansion of space for the civil society to organize. Businessmen, workers, farmers, urban poor, artists, teachers, journalists all formed autonomous interest associations to defend their class, sectoral, professional, or occupational interests. Nonetheless, the proliferation of interest associations was not translated into an institutionalized interest politics. Interest association has not developed institutionalized channels for mediating differences among them. Korean interest politics is still amorphous, centrifugal, hyperbolic, and unruly.

Why did civil society, once resurrected as mobilizing force against authoritarianism, fail to transform themselves into "institutional civil society" under new democracy? First, civil society movement failed to understand the difference between transition politics and consolidation politics. In the period of democratic transition, pro-democratic actors are generally engaged in Gramscian "war of movement" to dethrone authoritarian power holders by coup de grace. The transition process is "one of rapid change, high risk, shifting interests, and indeterminate strategic reactions," (Schmitter 1995, p. 13) and therefore, sometimes, dramatic and bold actions are required to prevail in the "street parliaments." While the most important task in the period of transition is mobilizing popular masses through "strum und drank", in the period of consolidation, it is "settling into trenches" which is the recommended strategy in the "war of position." Once dangerous moment has passed, the civil society movement have been compelled to transform themselves into "institutional civil society": "to organize internal structure more predictably, to consult their constituencies more regularly, to consider their long term consequences more seriously" (Schmitter 1995, p. 13).

In Korea, too, the momentum of mobilizing civil society movement had gone immediately after the transition. Movement politics had been replaced by institutional politics: Institution replaced street parliament. Yet despite the shifting focus of democratization from transition to consolidation, the civil society movements did not give up the strategies for movement politics: political radicalism, militancy, intransigence, and moral purism. But the outcome of strategies of movement politics was a disaster for "moral civil society." In National Assembly elections of 1988 and 1992, no candidate representing radical social movement forces won a seat in National

¹⁵The term, "mobilizational" and "institutional" civil society is borrowed from Weigel and Butterfield (1992).

Assembly and thus failed to enter into the institutional political arena. After the failure, mobilizational, moral, radical civil society has been gradually discredited, forgotten, and disintegrated. As a consequence the space of civil society became depopulated. The activists of moral civil society were compelled to be coopted en masse into political parties and state administrations.¹⁶

Second, the conservative nature of democratic transition must be responsible for the underdevelopment of civil society. Because the new democracy emerged because of crises of success, the new democracy inherited the main framework of socioeconomic policies of preceding authoritarian state. Labor policy and social welfare policy are the two main areas of government policy dominated by continuity from authoritarian state and have inhibited the growth vibrant civil association in industrial relations. The democratic state inherited "company unionism" of authoritarian state and maintained "the three bads" of Korean industrial relations: ban on third party intervention, one company-one union, ban on political activities of unions. As a consequence, industrial relations have been prevailed by fierce confrontation between unions and firms. Wage rates are settled by strikes. "*Chunhyup* (Spring settlement) after *Chuntu*" (Spring strikes) is the typical Korean style of wage negotiations. High strike rates, lock-outs, police intervention in workplaces are the costs that Korea had paid as a consequence of adopting such an extreme pluralism. As the level of wages settled by labor-capital confrontation has been rule rather than exception, industrial relations in Korea has not been stabilized and becomes barrier both to raising international competitiveness and to consolidating the new democracy. Therefore, under the new democracy, organized workers have not been integrated in the networks of tripartite partnership of the state, capital and labor. Even though individual labor unions are accepted as legitimate actors in collective bargaining, they still remain at the status of "affiliation," to say nothing of the status of "association."¹⁷ Labor unions at Korean firms are more like "company unions" in the original sense of being dependent wholly on the management in a paternalistic system, as opposed even to Japanese "enterprise unions" with their own bases for relative autonomy. Company

¹⁶For the similar state of civil society in Eastern Europe, see Smolar (1996).

¹⁷According to C.T. Onions (ed.), *The Oxford Univeristy Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), "association" is a legal term for a "body of people joined for a common purpose," while "affiliation" referred originally to adoption of an orphan, assignment to its origin, as opposed to membership in a family by birth; more recently, the term is used for "relationship by inclination or affinity" (p. 31).

unions can be described as "affiliations" in the sense of assignment to a group solely because of employment by the company. There is no external legal basis for membership, and no ties to labor organizations beyond the firm (Im 1995b).

In addition to industrial relations, the underprovision of social welfare hinders the development of civil society. The current state of Korean social welfare is dismal. The level of social welfare is even below the level of welfare of late comers like Philippines, not to mention Latin American democracies. Since democratic transition, minimum wage, pension, medical insurance have been introduced, still Korea does not have unemployment insurance, family allowances, and social security. In addition, Korean welfare system is characterized by market-dependent welfare system. The state do not bear most of the direct responsibility of funding and providing welfare but, instead, welfare is funded and provided by private companies and therefore welfare payment is highly dependent upon market conditions. The market-dependent welfare system increases the inequality of welfare between large company workers and small and medium company workers. More than that, never experiencing the consequences of welfarism, Korean conservatives raise their voice against the expansion of welfare service. Speaking about "English disease" or "European disease," they try to prevent the introduction and expansion of social welfare. While neo-conservatism of the West arose from the failure of welfare state, Korean neo-conservatism arose out of preemptive attempt against welfarism. But welfare should be provided and welfare democracy should be realized. The failure of welfare state is the failure of the state, not the failure of welfare democracy. That is the only way to protect citizen from the vagaries of the market. Welfare is a kind of social wage that can be paid without participating in the market (Esping-Anderson 1990).

Nonetheless, the conventional idea that welfare must be provided by the state should be revisited. The failure of the welfare state is a "state failure." In the West, there had been an enormous growth of the state apparatuses and welfare bureaucracies and welfare bureaucrats maximize not citizen welfare but their private welfare. As a consequence the society as a whole suffered the net losses, i.e., what Becker calls "deadweight losses" (Becker 1983). Thus there should be renewal on the conventional concept of welfare that welfare is planned and provided by the state. There should be separation between designing and implementing welfare provision. The state should not monopolize in deciding the level of welfare and providing welfare services but devolve the authority of welfare service to organized civil associations. If the level of welfare is decided by the compromise

between organized PIGs of labor and capital, they try to link the level of welfare with productivity increase. If welfare level is decided, the state takes charge of most of welfare provision. But in this case, too, the provision of welfare can be provided by the private firms that have been constrained to provide welfare efficiently with minimum costs. But depending too much on the subcontracting and outsourcing to private firms is dangerous because profit motivation is involved in the provision of the welfare services. Therefore in the provision of welfare service, we should make use of the advantage of civil associations. Currently volunteering movements in the US are proven to be an effective associative alternative both to the privatization of welfare which can cause market failure and to state welfare collectivism which can cause "state failure". Currently in the US the number of non-profit organization (NPO) amount to 1 million and their activities are performed by 90 million non-paid staffs and their activities are composed of 1/10 of GNP (Drucker 1993). The key that the US can maintain democracy despite severe inequality and underdeveloped state welfare system lies in the civil volunteering movements led by non-profit organizations.

In South Korea, however, there do not yet emerge such civil input into welfare provision. Currently the state and business favors the Japanese model of company welfarism. But because company welfarism is primarily based on the profit motivation of firms, it does not fit well into the fundamental objective of welfare, i.e., providing shelter to the victims of market competition. Koreans may have to save the virtues of family welfarism which is based on spontaneous solidarity among family members. But in the more complex and industrialized societies traditional small community based welfarism tend to become weaker. The alternative, therefore, is to realize the virtue of community at the level of intermediary civil associations. However, the feasibility of democracy based on civil association in Korea is questioned. The rapid increase of regional or group egoism after democratic transition warns us that Korean civil association have grown without civic virtues and instead intensify self-regardingness at the level of group, region, or other collectivities.

Economic Globalization

Koreans live in the era of economic globalization, "in which capital, production, management, labor, information and technology are organized across national boundaries (Castells 1993, p. 18). In December 1994, Kim Young Sam government announced the globalization (*seggyehwa*) as the prime goal of civilian government. Globalization of Korean economy,

culture and society is on the main track. Many argue that the East Asian tigers have been and will be the main beneficiaries of globalization of production. East Asia has been the world's fastest growth economy. Highly export dependent East Asian economies will continue to grow faster than anywhere else. East Asian countries have succeeded in upgrading themselves low-value added goods producing countries to high-value added goods producing countries. Korean conglomerates have themselves become significant foreign investors. They are now trying to build up their own global commodity chains.

Yet the impact of economic globalization on democratic consolidation in Korea is double-edged. On the one hand globalization has positive impacts upon the prospect of democratic consolidation. The main virtue of globalization is "competitiveness." Thus, the injection of the spirit of competitiveness into politics would make the state more efficient, competitive, flexible, adaptable, and accountable; the advent of information society provides citizens greater access to information and thus render a good environment to realize an ideal democracy based on informative citizen; globalization accelerates the devolution of power from the center to periphery, from central government to local government (Im 1995c).

Yet "forced to be competitive" is not always translated into "forced to be free." There are many negative impacts that economic globalization would render the new democracy vulnerable.

First, in the era of globalization, there does not exist feasible democratic control mechanisms to force the global actors to be accountable and responsible to the people because the decision of global actors are mostly made outside of control of the state and the people (Fields 1994, p. 15). As global firms can shift investment and to move operations to a more favorable investment climate, it is very hard to force them to be accountable by the people through elections. As global corporations can transcend national boundaries, there are no effective national and international measures to make global corporations accountable for environmental destructions and violation of working people's rights. In the era of globalization, the elected national leaders' ability of ensuring the welfare and security are quite limited because of losing control over the decisions of transnational firms, the movement of ideas and persons across their borders, and the impact of their neighbors' policies (Schmitter 1994, p. 63). The ability of government to pursue development, full employment, or other national economic goals has been undermined by the sovereign power of the capital. As a consequence, the power of individuals and communities to shape their destinies through participation in the democratic process will

be diminished. The autonomy of transnational firms make democracy vulnerable.

Second, the global race to the bottom would likely delay the emergence of welfare democracy in Korea. In the era of globalization, "threats of foreign competition" are being used as the weapon of employers to hold down wages, business taxes, environmental protections. The threat of foreign competition gives government a justification to cut education, health and other services in order to reduce the burden of business who competes globally. The global obsession with competitiveness, efficiency, profitability and productivity may hinder the extension of citizenship from civic and political to social and economic one through the provision of social safety nets, education, workers' rights of association.

Third, the advent of information society can also threaten civil society. Information revolution is a powerful force of both good and evil. The dark side of information revolution is that it intensifies the centralized control of information and thus seriously constrains the individual liberty which is the core of democracy. Information revolution will make ways for a new horizon for participatory democracy through diffusing knowledge and information globally. However, the revolutions may make ways for a new pan-opticon in which a new tele-leviathan can monitor the people with a new centralized computer control mechanism of information. Tele-revolution may lead not to tele-democracy but to a new totalitarian system which can monitor people by computerized networks of information.

Fourth, globalization would likely flourish bourgeoisie rather than citizen. In the era of globalization, people's identities are being constructed globally by the goods he/she consumes. Global fetishism might impair the concept of citizen. Citizens in ancient Greek polis participated directly in the affairs of the state and took accountability. Pericles' warning in the funeral address that those who do concern his/her private business only are not really citizens shows us that Athenian democracy required the civic virtue and civic commitment. Rousseau's general will can be realized if and only if private interests of citizens coincide with public interests of community. When fetishism overflows, there are few citizens who dedicate themselves to the realization of common good and instead, there remain "market men" who pursue their own private selfish interests. Market man is not the kind of man that democracy requires. Adam Smith's "invisible hand" cannot be attained by decentralized exchange among vicious self-seeking individuals as many misunderstood, but by free exchange among individuals with civic virtue (Whitehead 1993, p. 1247).

External Security Vulnerability

In addition to external fluctuations emanating from economic globalization, unstable, volatile external security environments in East Asia could be a potential area of vulnerability of the new democracy in Korea.

The democratic transition in Korea came at good timing. "World time" was on the side of Korean democracy. The wave of democracy reached Korea when the Cold War was receding, a good timing that permitted the new democratic government to cut defense spending to help finance welfare programs that increased since democratic transition (Cheng 1995).

Yet Cold War did not end, though it is receding, in Korean peninsula. Korean peninsula is still in the midst of Cold War and remains one of the most dangerous areas that war could break out. Therefore it is an amazing story that Koreans managed democratic transition in the most militarized area of the world. South Korea is still vulnerable from the aggression from the North Korea. North Korea is one of the few last remaining socialist countries who have resisted the wave of democracy and the market. North Korean leader Kim Jung Il still needs time to fill the void left by his late father and "supreme leader", Kim Il Sung. Surely, it is tremendously difficult for Kim Jung Il to maintain a secluded, autarkic, dogmatic *Ju Che* socialism in post-Kim Il Sung era. Economy is getting worse day by day to the extent that the government no longer feed population in the North. Some talk about the imminent collapse of North Korean regime.

The deep internal crisis of North Korea provides source of destabilizing new democracy in South Korea. The worst scenario would be the military aggression from the North. The second Korean War would destroy political and economic gains made by South Korea even though South Korea would prevail eventually even without U.S. support (Steinberg 1995, p. 406). Regardless of who win the war, the second Korean War would increase the possibility of resumption of power or at least the sharp increase of the military influence in the politics.

Looking from longer time horizon, the eventual demise of North Korean regime and the ensuing unification process would likely destabilize democracy in Korea. Wanted or not, South Koreans have to bear the costs of unification, even though the benefits of unification will be distributed unevenly in favor of big business. South Korean workers may have to pay the costs such as facing the new competitors from the North. The huge immigrant workers from the North would surely play the role of repressing wages of South Korean workers downwardly. South Korean farmers would

suffer from the inflow of low priced agricultural products from the North. Even though costs would be diffused widely to every social sector, the benefits would be concentrated in big business. After unification, big business in South Korea would certainly find a new source of labor force, land and markets. Uneven distribution of costs and benefits of unification would likely intensify conflicts among social groups, sector, and classes. In addition, there will also rise a new source of conflicts between two Koreans. Under the unified Korea, North Koreans would likely be degraded to a second-class citizen and a kind of "internal colonialism" will emerge. The ensuing distrust and animosity between North and South Koreans would be more severe in intensity and more extensive in scope than currently existing regional animosity between *Honam* and *Youngnam* (or *Non-Honam*).

CONCLUSION

Unlike many new democracies in Latin America and Eastern Europe, Korean new democracy is not in the process of "protracted unconsolidation" nor "in the process of authoritarian regression." Overall, factors working for democratic consolidation are overwhelming the countervailing obstacles. Yet I still hold the position of cautious optimism for the prospect of democratic consolidation in Korea.

From a comparative perspective, Koreans are in a relatively more advantageous position than Latin American and East European people. While in many new democracies in the East as well as in the South, democratization unleashes movements for ethnic autonomy, Korea, as ethnically the most homogeneous country in the world, do not have problems of national integration and territorial integrity. The state of the economy is more propitious for democratic consolidation. Unlike Eastern European and Latin American countries, the process of democratic transition and consolidation in Korea unfolded in a condition of economic prosperity rather than economic adversity. Currently the economy is still in excellent shape. Korean economy is one of the fastest growing and vibrant economies in the world. Unlike Eastern European countries, the post-authoritarian state was not bankrupt. The Korean state still remains an effective state with relatively efficient bureaucracy. Post-communist Eastern European syndrome that "a weak state is facing a weak society" has not surfaced in Korea. In general Korea is not facing the dangers and dilemmas that are threatening many new democracies in the East as well as the South.

Nonetheless, the process of democratic consolidation in Korea is laden with many obstacles, vulnerabilities, constraints and challenges that does

not allow us overtly optimistic about the prospects for democratic consolidation in Korea: Even though elections are being institutionalized, political society is not sufficiently institutionalized to articulate and represent the will of the people in electoral arena and then to realize the people's will in a accountable and responsive manner; still civil associations are not burgeoning enough to intermediate between individuals and the state, to approximate a perfect democracy by transmitting informations, to reduce the burden of overloaded political society, to arrest the tendency of illegitimate usurpation of power and the tyranny of intolerant majority; constitution is not institutionalized enough to regulate political and social life of citizens; the wave of economic globalization challenges the effective popular and state sovereignty; Korean new democracy has been under the constant threat from the remaining socialism in the North, even though Cold War had ended elsewhere.

These are supportive and obstructive conditions for democratic consolidation in Korea. Nevertheless, we should not accept these conditions in a deterministic way. Such domestic and international, institutional, structural and cultural conditions are not fixed indefinitely. The "enabling conditions" may turn into "confining conditions" and vice versa. The favorable environments can be fabricated by deliberate efforts and the barriers to democratic consolidation can be removed by good strategies of the state and civil society. We should not lament the absence of conditions for democratic consolidation or wait blindly for favorable conditions to be matured, but, with innovative efforts, fabricate the environments for a successful democratic consolidation.

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