

The Rules of the Electoral Game for the National Assembly in Democratic Korea: A Comparative Perspective

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This paper intends to provide a thorough empirical analysis of the character of the electoral system for the Korean National Assembly. Especially, it is going to illuminate both the form and consequence of the electoral system from a comparative perspective. The study will explicate not only the extent to which the system ensures significant political forces fair representation, but it will also discuss the ways in which the system has affected the existing pattern of Korean representational politics since the country's transition from authoritarianism. In this paper, the author will go further to put forward a proposal for electoral reform which can contribute to enhancing Korean democracy.

I. The Electoral Game and Its Rules for the National Legislature since Democratic Transition

This section is devoted to describing the rules for electing the Korean National Assembly. In order to set the context for the analysis, this description is accompanied by an overview of developments in electoral politics since the dawn of the current democratic era.

In June 1987, President Chun Doo Hwan of the authoritarian Fifth Republic faced massive pro-democracy demonstrations, and he conceded to citizens' demand for democratization. This concession, dubbed the June 29 Declaration,

was formally announced by Roh Tae Woo, then President Chun's handpicked would-be successor. The declaration marked the beginning of Korea's transition to democracy. Shortly afterwards, political leaders and their parties negotiated a new democratic constitutional framework heralding the current Sixth Republic.

In the three-way presidential election held on December 16, 1987, Roh of the ruling Democratic Justice Party (DJP) squeezed out an electoral victory with about 37 percent of the votes cast. Roh won a plurality largely because two prominent civilian leaders, Kim Young Sam of Reunification Democratic Party (RDP) and Kim Dae Jung of the Party for Peace and Democracy (PPD), split the opposition vote. This election was historic, for the Korean voters directly elected the president for the first time in sixteen years (Lee 1990, 45-69, 71-92).

In early 1988, parties engaged in a series of negotiation for the Thirteenth Assembly election scheduled for April of that year. The negotiation focused mainly on district magnitude, i.e., the number of seats per district. The DJP initially offered a one-to-three-member district plan. Under this proposal, two or more legislative members would be elected by a single non-transferable vote (SNTV) in each urban district, typically the citadel of the opposition, while one member would be elected by plurality in each rural district, the ruling party's stronghold. The RDP, the largest opposition before the election, was highly divided over the most favorable electoral system. While its leader, Kim Young Sam, was known to be the long-time advocate of the single-member district system, the results of the fairly recent presidential election indicated that this system would not help the party maintain its status as the largest opposition party. The party was likely to receive electoral support that was well widespread but intense only in a relatively small number of districts. The party's legislative members from rural districts supported a plan of two-to-three members per district, and the RDP initially pushed this plan. PPD, the chief rival of the RDP within the opposition, also aimed to become the largest bloc of opposition seats. Kim Dae Jung pressed for single-member districts. Under this winner-takes-all arrangement, the PPD would like perform better than the RDP

because of the former party's more concentrated regional support.

The two largest parties, the DJP and RDP, saw common ground between themselves and reached a tentative agreement on a one-to-three-member district plan on February 19, 1988. On February 23, Kim Young Sam met Kim Dae Jung in an attempt to unify their parties under strong public pressure for such action. Following this, Kim Young Sam announced the renunciation of the agreed multi-member district system and instead the pursuit of the single-member district system demanded by Kim Dae Jung as a condition for the merger. In reaction, the DJP proposed its own version of single-member district system on February 28, which was enacted unilaterally by the DJP on March 9. The DJP changed its stance for the following reasons. First, the DJP was optimistic about gaining votes in the upcoming Assembly election due to the spillover effect of Roh Tae Woo's victory in the presidential election. Second, it saw that the opposition's merger talks did not immediately bear fruit: the ruling party expected the opposition candidates to split their electoral support again in the upcoming Thirteenth Assembly election. Kim Dae Jung lost interest in the merger as soon as a single-member district plan was passed in the National Assembly (see Brady and Mo 1992; Park 1988b, 61-62).

Under the revised electoral rules, the National Assembly was composed of 299 seats. This assembly size remained unchanged from the Thirteenth through Fifteenth Assemblies. For the Thirteenth Assembly, 224 seats were elected from single-member plurality districts. Additional 75 at-large seats were elected by means of nationwide party lists under a proportional representation (PR) system. If the party with the largest number of district seats did not obtain a simple majority of district seats, it was ensured 38 of 75 at-large seats. The remaining seats were allocated to the other parties that won 5 district seats or more, in proportion to each party's share of district seats. If the largest party won a majority of the district seats, the at-large seats were supposed to be allocated, in proportion to each party's share of the district seats, to all the parties obtaining 5 district seats or more. The seat allocation rules involved the application of the

largest remainder (LR) method based on simple or Hare quota. Importantly, the PR formula guaranteed that the party with the largest share of district seats would receive at least half of the nationwide at-large seats. This kind of system was not proportional in a substantive sense. In brief, the electoral system used for the Thirteenth Assembly election was basically a one-vote mixed system in which a nominal component of PR was combined with a single-member plurality district system. Up to the current Sixteenth Assembly, this basic character of the electoral system has remained intact, though its detailed features have undergone some change.

In the Thirteenth Assembly election held on April 26, 1988, the president's party failed to gain a majority for the first time in Korea's legislative politics, with the National Assembly split among four parties. While President Roh's DJP held the largest bloc of seats, its legislative strength fell 25 seats short of an overall majority (Park 1988b; Kim 1989). As shown in Table 1, the DJP captured 87 district seats with 34 percent of the vote. After receiving an additional 38 at-large seats, according to the electoral rules described later, the ruling party's total seats constituted approximately 42 percent of 299 seats. Kim Dae Jung's PPD emerged as the largest opposition party with about 23 percent of the seats. It surpassed Kim Young Sam's RDP in terms of seats, even though the former party's vote share (19.3 percent) was 4.5 percent lower than the latter's. The New Democratic Republican Party (NDRP), the Ex-President Park Chung Hee's party and rehabilitated by Kim Jong Pil, drew 15.6 percent of the vote, and won a respectable number of seats, 35 in total.

The contour of party politics underwent a sudden reshaping when President Roh, Kim Young Sam, and Kim Jong Pil made a surprise announcement on January 22, 1990 to merge their three parties into the Democratic Liberal Party (DLP). On the opposition side, Kim Dae Jung eventually reorganized the PPD into the Democratic Party (DP) in the fall of 1991.

Prior to the Fourteenth Assembly election held on March 24, 1992, some adjustments were made to the electoral system. The number of nationwide at-

Table 1. Thirteenth Assembly Election Results: 1988

Party	Percentage of Vote (A)	District Seats (B)	At-Large Seats (C)	Total (B+C)	Percentage of Districts (D)	Total Percentage (E)	District Advantage Ratio (D/A)	Overall Advantage Ratio (E/A)
DJP	34.0	87	38	125	38.8	41.8	1.14	1.23
PPD	19.3	54	16	70	24.1	23.4	1.25	1.21
RDP	23.8	46	13	59	20.5	19.7	0.86	0.83
NDRP	15.6	27	8	35	12.1	11.7	0.78	0.75
Nine Minor Parties	2.5	1	0	1	0.5	0.3		
Independents	4.8	9	0	9	4.0	3.0		
Total	100.0	224	75	299	100.0	99.9		

Source: Election statistics were compiled by the National Election Commission and calculated by the author.

Note: DJP = Democratic Justice Party; PPD= Party for Peace and Democracy; RDP = Reunification Democratic Party; NDRP = New Democratic Republican Party.

large seats was reduced from 75 to 62, and that of district seats increased from 224 to 237. The formula for allocating at-large seats also changed. The guarantee of half the at-large seats for the largest party was abolished. Under the new formula, any party that failed to win a district seat but received 3 percent or more of the popular vote nationally was entitled to one at-large seat. After accommodating the parties that failed to win a district seat, the remaining at-large seats were allocated among the parties with 5 district seats or more, in proportion to each party's share of district seats.

In the Fourteenth Assembly election, the ruling DLP again was unable to obtain a majority of legislative seats (Lee 1994; Park 1993a; Kang 1998). It came up one seat short of 150 seats needed for a majority (see Table 2). The main opposition DP took almost one-third of all legislative seats by garnering 29.2 percent of the vote. Within only two months of its foundation by Chung Ju Yung, the owner of the Hyundai business conglomerate, the Unification

Table 2. Fourteenth Assembly Election Results: 1992

Party	Percentage of Vote (A)	District Seats (B)	At-Large Seats (C)	Total (B+C)	Percentage of Districts (D)	Total Percentage (E)	District Advantage Ratio (D/A)	Overall Advantage Ratio (E/A)
DLP	38.5	116	33	149	48.9	49.8	1.27	1.29
DP	29.2	75	22	97	31.6	32.4	1.08	1.11
UNP	17.4	24	7	31	10.1	10.4	0.58	0.59
NPP	1.8	1	0	1	0.4	0.3	0.22	0.17
Two Minor Parties	1.6	0	0	0	0	0		
Independents	11.5	21	0	21	8.9	7.0		
Total	100.0	237	62	299	99.9	99.9		

Source: Election statistics were compiled by the National Election Commission and calculated by the author.

Note: DLP = Democratic Liberal Party; DP = Democratic Party; UNP = Unification National Party; NPP = New Politics Party.

National Party (UNP) won 17.4 percent of the vote and 31 seats, sufficient to form a bargaining group within the National Assembly.

Kim Young Sam became the ruling DLP's presidential nominee, and he won the December 1992 presidential election by securing 42 percent of the vote over the 34 percent received by Kim Dae Jung. Kim Young Sam was sworn in as the first civilian president since the military intervention in 1961 (Lee 1995; Park 1993b). Due to his electoral defeat, Kim Dae Jung withdrew from politics as well as from the top leadership of the DP. Chung Ju Yung and his UNP as well were politically buried after the presidential election.

In January 1995, Kim Jong Pil and his followers bolted from the DLP when he was put under heavy pressure to resign from the leadership position second to President Kim Young Sam. Kim Jong Pil subsequently founded the United Liberal Democrats (ULD). Kim Dae Jung, even while allegedly retired from politics, kept a firm grip on the DP, and he greatly influenced the party's strategies

for local election. In the summer of 1995, Kim Dae Jung suddenly decided to come back to the political stage and organized the National Congress for New Politics (NCNP), drawing his loyal followers away from the DP. In late 1995, about four months prior to the general election of the Fifteenth Assembly, the ruling DLP changed its name to the New Korea Party (NKP).

The electoral system for the Fifteenth Assembly was also changed somewhat from the previous one. Of 299 seats, 253 were elected from single-member districts, while the remaining 46 were filled by means of nationwide party lists under a PR system. In this one-vote mixed system, the plurality component became more dominant than previously. The nationwide at-large seats were divided as follows: one seat was first allocated to the party that has won no district seat but received at least 3 and not more than 5 percent of the vote. The remaining seats were then assigned in proportion to each party's nationwide vote share among the parties with at least 5 district seats, or with 5 percent or more of the vote. Each party's vote share at the national level replaced each party's number of district seats in allocating at-large seats.

The results of the Fifteenth Assembly election held on April 11, 1996 reflected a typical pattern (see Table 3). President Kim Young Sam's NKP won 34.8 percent of the vote and a much greater share of seats (46.5 percent), still short of a legislative majority (Leuthold 1997). Kim Dae Jung's NCNP obtained 26.4 percent of total legislative seats with 25.5 percent of the vote. While Kim Jong Pil's ULD demonstrated its strength by winning 50 seats, the DP obtained only 15 seats. The latter party failed to secure a foothold in the National Assembly.

In the December 1997 presidential election, three major candidates competed. The ruling NKP nominated Lee Hoi Chang. In the run-up to the election, Lee's popularity dropped because his two sons allegedly dodged military conscription. This induced Rhee In Je, the runner-up in the NKP contest for the party's nomination, to break away from the NKP and declare his candidacy under the banner of the New Party by the People in mid-September, 1997. By mid-November, Lee managed to revamp his party by merging the NKP with the

Table 3. Fifteenth Assembly Election Results: 1996

Party	Percentage of Vote (A)	District Seats (B)	At-Large Seats (C)	Total (B+C)	Percentage of Districts (D)	Total Percentage (E)	District Advantage Ratio (D/A)	Overall Advantage Ratio (E/A)
NKP	34.8	121	18	139	47.8	46.5	1.37	1.34
NCNP	25.5	66	13	79	26.1	26.4	1.02	1.04
ULD	16.3	41	9	50	16.2	16.7	0.99	1.02
DP	11.3	9	6	15	3.6	5.0	0.32	0.44
Independents	12.0	16	0	16	6.3	5.4		
Total	99.9	253	46	299	100.0	100.0		

Source: Election statistics were compiled by the National Election Commission and calculated by the author.

Note: NKP = New Korean Party; ULD = United Liberal Democrats; NCNP = National Congress for New Politics.

minor DP into the Grand National Party (GNP). The main opposition, the NCNP, unsurprisingly nominated Kim Dae Jung as its presidential candidate. This Kim succeeded in persuading Kim Jong Pil of the ULD to withdraw in favor of an electoral coalition, "the DJP alliance," for Kim Dae Jung's triumph. Kim Dae Jung narrowly defeated Lee Hoi Chang by 40.3 percent to 38.7 percent of the vote. Rhee In Je finished far third. The Kim's victory accomplished the first peaceful transfer of presidential power to the opposition (Park 1998/99; Steinberg 1998).

In the fall of 1998, Rhee In Je and his NPP were drawn into the NCNP. In an effort to boost the ruling party's legislative strength less than three months before the Sixteenth Assembly election, President Kim Dae Jung reinvented the NCNP by recruiting prominent civic activists plus other high-visibility individuals and introducing the Millennium Democratic Party (MDP). Under the leadership of Lee Hoi Chang, the opposition GNP denied several big-name politicians its nomination for the upcoming election. In a dramatic turn against Lee, these politicians seceded from the GNP to form the Democratic People's Party (DPP)

Table 4. Sixteenth Assembly Election Results: 2000

Party	Percentage of Vote (A)	District Seats (B)	At-Large Seats (C)	Total (B+C)	Percentage of Districts (D)	Total Percentage (E)	District Advantage Ratio (D/A)	Overall Advantage Ratio (E/A)
GNP	39.0	111	21	133	49.3	48.7	1.26	1.25
MDP	35.9	96	19	115	42.3	42.1	1.18	1.17
ULD	9.8	12	5	17	5.3	6.2	0.54	0.63
DPP	3.7	1	1	2	0.4	0.7	0.11	0.19
Four Minor Parties	2.3	1	0	1	0.4	0.4		
Independents	9.4	5	0	5	2.2	1.8		
Total	100.1	227	46	273	99.9	99.9		

Source: Election statistics were compiled by the National Election Commission and calculated by the author.

Note: GNP = Grand National Party; MDP = Millennium Democratic Party; ULD = United Liberal Democrats; DPP = Democratic People's Party.

in early March 2000.

For the current Sixteenth Assembly, its size has been set at 273 seats, 26 seats less than for the Fifteenth Assembly. Out of the total seats, 237 are elected from single-member districts and 46 under PR. The rules for allocating the nationwide at-large seats remain largely unaltered. In the Sixteenth Assembly election that took place on April 13, 2000, the opposition GNP finished first by receiving 48.7 percent of the total seats with 39.0 percent of the vote. President Kim Dae Jung's MDP won 35.9 percent of the vote, which yielded 42.1 percent of the seats. No other third party crossed the 20-seat threshold required for forming a party group within the National Assembly (see Table 4). This election produced an incomplete two-party system in which neither of the two major parties singly commanded a legislative majority.

Table 5 provides a summary description of the electoral system used for the National Assembly in terms of its key attributes. Those attributes include the

Table 5. Korea's One-Vote Mixed System for the National Assembly

Assembly	Number of Ballot per Elector	Tier	Electoral Formula	District Magnitude	Number Of Districts	Assembly Size	Legal Threshold
Thirteenth	1	L	Plurality	1	224	299	-
		H	LR-Hare ^a	75	1		5 district seats
Fourteenth	1	L	Plurality	1	237	299	-
		H	LR-Harea	62	1		3 percent or 5 district seats
Fifteenth	1	L	Plurality	1	253	299	-
		H	LR-Harea	46	1		3 percent or 5 district seats
Sixteenth	1	L	Plurality	1	237	273	-
		H	LR-Hare ^b	46	1		3 percent or 5 district seats

Note: ^aApproximation applied to the number of district seats obtained by the relevant party.

^bApproximation applied to the number of votes obtained by the relevant party.

number of balloting by an elector at the polling booth, the tier of districting, the electoral formula, the district magnitude, the number of districts, the assembly size, and the legal threshold for receiving a seat. A quick glance at these attributes suggests that the basic character of the electoral system remains a one-vote mixed one throughout the Assembly elections in the present democratic era. Adjustments have occurred mostly with regard to the number of single-member plurality districts, the number of nationwide at-large seats, and hence the size of the National Assembly.

The electoral system has consistently used two-tier districting. As will be made clear later in this essay, however, this two-tier districting should not be confused with multiple districting commonly found in PR systems. Usually, the basic rationale for multiple districting is to increase proportionality and minority

representation by providing adjustment seats at the higher tier even after allocating seats proportionally at the lower tier. In the Korean case, two-tier districting has been necessitated by the mixed nature of the electoral system, i.e. plurality combined in parallel with PR. In the subsequent section, the analysis will show that the upper-level PR seats have little worked as adjustment or compensatory ones. Also, it is noted that the electoral formula applied to the higher-tier PR seats is not exactly identical with, but closely akin to the LR-Hare method.

In refining the classification of electoral systems in terms of electoral formula, Lijphart adds another "semi-proportional" category to the dichotomy of PR versus plurality and majority formulas (1999, 145-50). This third category includes the limited vote (used in the Japanese 1946 election), the SNTV (used between 1947 and 1993 in Japan), and the parallel plurality-PR system (adopted by the Japanese in 1994). In order to elaborate on the character of the Korean electoral system, the parallel plurality-PR system deserves special mention. In the general election for the Japanese House of Representatives held in 1996, three hundred representatives were elected by plurality in single-member districts and two hundred were elected by list PR. Each voter cast two ballots, one for a candidate in the district and the other for a political party under PR (Gallagher 1998). This is a two-vote mixed system also called "gap system." Despite the attribute of two votes per elector, the current Japanese system is different from the German two-vote system, a subcategory of PR and alternatively labeled in such various ways as mixed member proportional (MMP), personalized PR, compensatory PR, or additional member system.¹⁾ The crucial difference is that the Japanese system keeps the plurality and PR components entirely separate. If the Lijphart's trichotomy accepted, can the Korean system be included into the parallel plurality-PR system and hence called semiproportional? The author of

1) To the best of the author's knowledge, the two-vote mixed system is not the same terminology as the second ballot system or the double ballot system. Each of these two terms is frequently used interchangeably with the two-round system or majority-plurality system like that found in France.

this essay would say no, for the Korean system remains fallen into the category of plurality and majority formulas. Unlike the Japanese voter, the Korean one casts only one ballot for a district candidate, with this vote also being counted for the candidate's party in allocating PR seats. Furthermore, the weight of the PR component is relatively unimportant: in the Sixteenth Assembly election, the PR seats accounted for only 17 percent of the total 273 seats.

II. The Political Consequences of the Electoral System: Disproportionality and Party System Fractionalization

In this section, the analysis focuses on the political consequences of the electoral system: mainly, its effect on the degree of proportionality of the electoral returns, and its effect on the party system as well. Drawing on a variety of measures developed by the previous studies along this line (see Blais and Maiscotte 1996, 67-72; Farrell 1997, 142-68; Lijphart 1994: 57-77, 160-62; Sartori 1994, 53-79; Taagepera and Shugart 1989, 77-91, 104-25, 142-55, 218-37), the analysis brings the effects of the Korean electoral system into comparative perspective. Throughout the analysis, it is argued that the PR component of the Korean electoral system remains nominal not only in the form but also in its actual consequence. Also, the study discusses the implications of such effects for the pattern of Korean electoral and party politics.

Disproportionality refers to the deviation of parties' seat shares from their vote shares. It can be assessed at both levels of each party and the whole electoral system. Naturally, this analysis begins at the individual party level. The advantage ratio, a simple measure derived from dividing a party's seat share by its vote share, serves well the purpose of the analysis. Based on the advantage ratios, Tables 1 through 4 have shown the extent to which a given party has benefited or suffered from the single-member district component or the mixed system as a whole. A ratio greater than one shows how much the party's share

of seats exceeded its share of the popular vote. Conversely, a ratio smaller than one shows to what extent the party's seat share fell short of its vote share.

In the Thirteenth Assembly election, the ruling DJP received 14 percent more district seats and overall 23 percent more seats than it deserved, relative to its vote share. As mentioned above, the PPD succeeded in emerging as the largest opposition party after this general election. Its district advantage ratio (1.25) indicated that the party, enjoying enormously concentrated support in the Honam region, made the most of the single-member district system. It turned out that the party's leader, Kim Dae Jung, was correct in insisting on the adoption of the single-member district system during the inter-party negotiations on the electoral system in early 1988. Indeed, throughout the history of the National Assembly elections, the Thirteenth Assembly election had been the only election held wholly or partly under the single-member district system in which an opposition party was favored more than the ruling party (Kim and Koh 1980, 77-79; Park 1996). In contrast, the RDP was affected unfavorably by the rule changes. It received the second largest number of popular votes, but it was thrown into third place in the number of seats. This party, along with the NDRP, was shortchanged by the electoral system.

The results of the Fourteenth Assembly election (see Table 2) show that the higher the percentage of the vote a party received, the greater advantage ratio it enjoyed. Both the ruling DLP and the main opposition DP collected more seats than they deserved in terms of their vote shares. Under the plurality component, the UNP and the New Politics Party (NPP) were discriminated against. This distortion was not rectified by the PR component.

The data in Table 3 suggest that the rule changes made prior to the Fifteenth Assembly election did not alter the pattern of seat allocation among parties: larger parties gained a disproportionately greater share of legislative seats. The splinter DP, which had no regional bastion of support, suffered the most: it realized only 5 percent of the total seats with a bit more than 11 percent of the vote. The PR component did not much compensate this party for the unfavor-

able distribution of district seats under the plurality component.

With regards to the advantage ratios, one cannot notice any different pattern from the results of the Sixteenth Assembly election than from those of the previous one. Two major parties, the GNP and the MDP, could garner more seats than their performance levels gauged by the vote shares. Contrarily, the third largest ULD, and to a greater extent the fourth DPP had to face disadvantages in seat earning. The ULD, which had fared reasonably well under the electoral system four years ago, suffered considerably under the almost identical electoral system. This had something to do with the party's weakened support in its regional stronghold, Chunchong.

A comparison of the district advantage and overall advantage ratios in Tables 1 through 4 generally suggests that at-large seats allocated under a PR system served poorly as a corrective for the disproportionality, that is, the vote-seat share differences, generated by the plurality component. For instance, in the Thirteenth Assembly election, the DJP's advantage ratio was amplified by the existence of the PR component, whereas the RDP and NDRP suffered a bit from it. In the case of the PPD, the favorable bias of the plurality system was reduced to a small extent. Despite that the disadvantages inflicted upon smaller parties lessened a bit in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Assembly elections, the corrective effects remain insignificant. Again, this suggests that the Korean version of one-vote mixed system is indeed in its effect much closer to the plurality system than to the PR system.

In order to assess the disproportionality of the electoral system as a whole, the study has introduced multiple measures. The first one is the Rae index, which sums the absolute differences between the vote percentages (v_i) and seat percentages (s_i), and then divides by the number of parties (n). Only the party that received overall more than 0.5 percent of vote or seat share was included into computation. The formula goes: $I = 1/n \sum |v_i - s_i|$. The second measure is the Loosemore-Hanby or Gini index, which is slightly different from the Rae index and defined as follows: $D = 1/2 \sum |v_i - s_i|$. The third measure, the

Table 6. Indices of Disproportionality and Party System Characteristics

	Korean Thirteen- Th Assembly Election	Korean Fourteen- th Assembly -Election	Korean Fifteen- th Assembly Election	Korean Sixteen- Th Assembly Election	Mean Thirteen- th through Sixteenth Korean Elections	United King- dom ^a	Japan ^b	Ger- many ^c	Swe- Den ^d
Rae index	6.5	4.9	5.0	4.7	5.3	5.5	1.9	1.0	0.7
Loosemore- Hanby/ Gini Index	16.2	12.3	9.9	12.2	12.7	12.9	10.7	3.3	2.6
Gallagher's Least- Squares Index	14.5	9.8	9.6	8.8	10.7	10.6	5.8	2.2	1.7
Largest- deviation Index	19.2	11.3	12.0	9.7	13.1	11.6	6.6	2.1	1.8
Effective Number of Elective Parties	4.3	3.8	4.4	3.4	4.0	2.7	3.5	3.2	3.6
Effective Number of Legislative Parties	3.5	2.7	3.3	2.4	3.0	2.1	2.9	3.0	3.4
Frequency of Legis- lative Majorities					0.0	0.92	0.65	0	0
Frequency of Manu- factured Majorities					0.0	0.92	0.47	0	0

Source: Lijphart 1994, 160-62 for the data concerning the United Kingdom, Japan, Germany, Sweden. The measures for Korea were calculated by the author.

Note: Only parties with more than 0.5 percent of vote or seat share were included in computation. For definition of each measure, see Lijphart 1994, 58-77.

^aThirteen general elections were held from 1945 through 1987.

^bSeventeen general elections were held from 1947 through 1980.

^cEight general elections were held from 1957 through 1983.

^dSeven general elections were held from 1970 through 1988.

Gallagher's least-square index is computed in the following manner: the vote-seat difference for each party is squared and then summated; this total is divided by 2; and finally the square root of this value is generated: $LSq = \{1/2\sum(v_i - s_i)^2\}^{1/2}$. The last measure is the Lijphart's largest-deviation index, which takes the largest deviation in an election result. It is generally the percentage of overrepresentation for one of the larger parties (for definition of all these measures, see Lijphart 1994, 58-77).

Table 6 presents the four measures of the deviation of party seats and votes. The greater the value of each measure, the more disproportional the results. Overall, the one-vote mixed system used for the Thirteenth Assembly generated much more disproportional results than did that used for any of the three subsequent general elections.

For a comparative examination of the Korean electoral outcomes, relevant measures are also provided for the United Kingdom, Japan, (West) Germany, and Sweden in Table 6. The United Kingdom is well-known for using the single-member plurality or first-past-the-post system that produces highly disproportional results. Before its electoral reform in 1994, the Japanese House of Representatives was elected by an SNTV system in medium-sized (three-to-five-member) districts. In a strict sense, this system is not a PR system, but it is often described as semi-proportional based on its reasonably proportional conversion of votes into seats. Germany elects the lower house, *Bundestag*, by employing its own version of two-vote mixed system in which one half of the total seats are elected from single-member districts and another half are through a PR system. In the German system, a voter casts two ballots, one for choosing a candidate in the district and the other for selecting a party list. Each party's share of the total seats is proportional to its share of the party vote. Sweden uses a list PR system with two-tier districting and adjustment seats. Looking at the values of all four measures, one can conclude that the one-vote mixed system used in democratized Korea is similar to the United Kingdom's plurality system in its effect on disproportionality.

In the democratic era, highly disproportional returns of the National Assembly elections are most vividly demonstrated by the fact that major political parties usually sweep district seats assigned to their respective regional base. In the Thirteenth Assembly election, President Roh's DJP secured twenty-five (86 percent) out of the twenty-nine district seats in North Kyongsang, the northern part of the Yongnam region. The vote percentage received by the party in North Kyongsang was 50 percent. The PPD of Kim Dae Jung got 69 percent of the votes in the Honam region, and captured thirty-seven (97 percent) of the thirty-eight district seats. The Kim Young Sam's RDP obtained 46 percent of the votes and 64 percent of the district seats (twenty three out of the thirty six) in South Kyongsang. Finally, the NDRP of Kim Jong Pil garnered thirteen (72 percent) out of the eighteen district seats allocated to South Chungchong, with 47 percent of the votes (Park 1988b, 69). Similarly, in the Fourteenth Assembly election, the voter-party regional alignment was remarkably salient. The DLP of Roh, Kim Young Sam, and Kim Jong Pil won 47 percent of the votes and 82 percent of the district seats (sixty one out of the seventy four) in the Yongnam region and South Chungchong. Kim Dae Jung's DP grabbed thirty-seven (95 percent) of the thirty-nine district seats with 62 percent of the votes in the Honam region (Park 1993a, 8-10; Lee 1994, 767; Kang 1998, 99-103).

The results of the Fifteenth Assembly election showed no exception. In Yongnam, the NKP of President Kim Young Sam recorded an electoral support of 42 percent in vote share, but amplified its seat share up to 67 percent by winning fifty-one out of the seventy-six district seats. More overwhelmingly, Kim Dae Jung's NKNP received 72 percent of the votes in Honam, which was translated into 97 percent of the district seats (all the thirty seven but one). Also, Kim Jong Pil's ULD enlisted a high rate of electoral support reaching 51 percent of the votes in South Chungchong, and 95 percent of the district seats (nineteen out of the twenty). In the Sixteenth Assembly election, Lee Hoi Chang's GNP won a sweeping victory in Yongnam: 56 percent of the votes, and 99 percent of the district seats (all the sixty five minus one). President Kim Dae Jung's

MDP was no loser in this regard, either. The Honam voters registered a high level of support, 67 percent of the votes. This enabled the party to occupy twenty-five single-member districts among the twenty-nine such districts in the region. Kim Jong Pil's ULD obtained 37 percent of the votes, and 53 percent of the district seats (nine out of the seventeen) in South Chungchong.

The root causes that produce a strong pattern of voter-party regional alignment lie beyond the electoral system. Instead of the rules of the electoral game, other aspects of Korean electoral and party politics should be first considered as prime causes of regional alignment. A boss on top dominates a typical Korean political party at its helm. Being identified with its focal leader, the party receives strong support from the leader's native region. But the party is little supported in the region whose residents do not favor its leader. Also, political parties do not usually diverge much in ideology or policy direction. The constant flux of political parties leaves no time for a distinct policy image to develop. Outside extraordinary times, Korean elections have lacked any major debate on substantive policy. Political parties and their politicians are likely to exploit the issue of regionalism in various ways to boost electoral support. There is a deep-seated rivalry, sometimes animosity, among regions, notably between Yongnam and Honam. This cleavage has deepened due to regional favoritism in elite recruitment, regionally unbalanced socioeconomic development, and so forth. Whether based on their sense of regional identity or realistic calculation of regional interest, Korean voters rely heavily on a party's regional tie as a cue for voting decision.

Having said all this, however, one cannot deny altogether that the existing electoral system, with its consequence of producing a high degree of disproportionality, serves as at least a secondary cause or an auxiliary condition for reinforcing voter-party regional realignments. Under this electoral system, a major party gains a disproportionately greater share of district seats in its regional base. The electoral system provides political parties and their candidates with a good incentive for resorting to regionalism in an attempt to win

during the campaign.

The Korean electoral system, characterized by high disproportionality as one of its consequences, has proven beneficial to major political parties in helping their established incumbents seek reelection and remain viable in the National Assembly. The electoral system discourages the representation of not only smaller parties but also that of minorities who are not concentrated in a particular geographical area. A progressive party is hardly strong and salient on the Korean electoral scene in part because of the entry barrier entrenched in the electoral system. Politicians with progressive tints gain access to the national legislature through the conduit of existing centrist or conservative parties. With an electoral system less unfavorable to a progressive party, it could be represented in the National Assembly. For example, in the Sixteenth Assembly election, the Democratic Labor Party, a new breed of progressive party, nationally received 1.2 percent of the votes. This party garnered such rate of support by fielding out its candidates only in twenty-one out of the two-hundred-and-thirty-seven districts. Each of the party's candidates received on average 13.1 percent of the votes in the district. Four of its candidates finished as runner-ups, three of which earned each more than 35 percent. If a more generous electoral formula or a less rigorous electoral threshold had been installed, the party could have gained a modicum of legislative representation. The point is that the current electoral system highly discriminates against newly emerging, alternative political forces with fresh ideas.

Some analysts point out that the existing electoral system has at least one merit in that it encourages a legislative member to maintain a close relationship with his or her district voters, thus reinforcing constituency representation. However, it has long been known that Korean legislative members are excessively preoccupied with myriad affairs of their own districts, many of which are quite trivial. Rather than working for their districts through policy-oriented activity in the National Assembly, they are too often burdened with dealing with constituents' personal requests and projects involving narrow local interests.

This leads to clientele and particularistic politics (Park, 1988a). Particularly in Korea with her personalistic culture, the single-member plurality system well induces politicians to exert their efforts for gaining the personal vote instead of the party vote.

The investigation of the Korean electoral system's effect on her party system is in order. For this purpose, four measures of party system characteristics are introduced. The first and second are those measures proposed by Laakso and Taagepera: the effective number of elective parties ($N_v = 1/\sum v_i^2$) and the effective number of legislative parties ($N_s = 1/\sum s_i^2$). And, the third and fourth measures are the frequency in which a majority party was generated in the legislature and that in which such majority party was generated out of a party with no vote majority in the election (see Lijphart 1994, 67-77).

Table 6 displays the four measures for assessing the effect of the electoral system on the party system. For the National Assembly elections in democratic Korea, the effective number of elective parties averages 4.0, and that of legislative parties, 3.0. A glance at the relevant measures for four other countries reveals that a higher degree of disproportionality tends to keep lower the effective number of parties. However, the Korean case is intriguing in this regard. Despite the great deviation between parties' vote and seat shares in the general elections for the National Assembly, the fractionalization of Korea's party system is greater than that in the United Kingdom or Japan. The Korean party system, generated by the electoral system largely based on the single-member plurality system, is unexpectedly as fractionalized as the German or Swedish party system either of which is linked to PR.

Why do the Korean election results defy the Duverger's hypothesis that the single-member plurality system is closely associated with a two-party system? The answer lies in the multiple-way regional cleavage found in the party and electoral politics of democratizing Korea. A multipolar cleavage pattern along regional lines keeps the plurality-dominated electoral system from suppressing party system fractionalization. In each of the Honam, Yongnam, and (South)

Chungchong regions, a predominant party system is likely to develop. Nationally, a multiparty system will appear. Only when the regional cleavage emerges akin to a bipolar pattern, so does a semblance of two-party system. In the Sixteenth Assembly election, both the GNP and the MDP were invincible on their respective regional turf, while the hegemony of the ULD in South Chungchong was seriously shaken. The MDP with Rhee In Je, a favorite son of the region, at the front invaded the region. Also, the GNP outflanked the ULD there. As a result, on a national level, a two-party system was born out of the election. Still, this two-party system is an incomplete one, and different from the British or the United States system in that neither of the two larger parties attained an outright majority. Korea's such two-party format cannot ignore the potential role of a minority third party, or for that matter even smaller splinter parties, in building a working majority.

A single party legislative majority was not generated in any of the recent past four general elections for the National Assembly. No majority party was artificially generated out of parties that did not win a vote majority. In this respect, the Korean case is similar to the German or Swedish case. Its strong effect on disproportionality notwithstanding, the Korean electoral system's effect for suppressing party system fractionalization is quite limited.

III. Conclusion: Toward Fairer Representation in a Predominantly Majoritarian Democracy

As made clear in the preceding analysis, the existing electoral system for the National Assembly fails on both fronts. First, its high degree of disproportionality shuts out a good possibility of fair representation for minor parties and smaller political forces with new ideas. The current system greatly helps major, established, or larger parties reap disproportionately bountiful benefits of sweeping legislative seats in their regional strongholds. Second, despite the pre-

dominance of the plurality component, the system also has not well worked to shape a legislative majority or a genuine two-party system. The effect of the electoral system on the simplification of the party system is so limited that a favorable condition cannot be created for ensuring accountability in the electoral and governing process.

Due to its lack of effectiveness for enhancing fair representation and political accountability as well, the electoral system has been under criticism from many reform-minded intellectuals, civic activists, and even some politicians themselves. Although they vary in their perceptions about the weakness of the existing one-vote mixed system, most of them claim to weaken or change the single-member plurality component. Of course, there exist a variety of alternative proposals: namely, the German two-vote mixed system, Japan's newly introduced two-vote parallel system, or other peculiar types of two-vote mixed system including a parallel combination of SNTV in medium-sized districts with PR.

In the Fifteenth Assembly, the ruling MDP sought to introduce a two-vote mixed system as part of electoral reform. In mid-January, 2000, the MDP appeared to succeed in persuading its coalition partner ULD and the opposition GNP to come along with its proposal for a two-vote mixed system after months of on-and-off negotiations. But, in February of that year, at the final passage stage, the ULD and GNP did not eventually join the MDP in adopting the proposed electoral system. The ULD did not see any advantage from the party vote under PR, for its nationwide popularity remained at an extremely low level. On the other hand, the GNP objected to the proposal, mainly because the party anticipated that it would encourage minor parties to gain legislative representation and unduly divide the opposition's strength. Therefore, the revision of the one-vote mixed system has not occurred in spite of pressure from civil society for a change.

The inevitability of revising the electoral system has come from a landmark decision made by the Constitutional Court on July 19, 2001. The court ruled

that the existing one-vote mixed system is unconstitutional. According to the court's ruling, the system encroaches upon the voter's right to choice, especially in case the voter supports a candidate in the district but does not favor the candidate's party for the purpose of PR election. The court has also maintained that the system violates the principle of the voter's direct balloting. It remains to be seen in which direction the political parties move to comply with the court decision.

Among the possible reform alternatives, the author of this essay is clearly against the idea of adopting a full-blown plurality system or that of adopting a complete PR system. The former alternative will further increase an already high degree of disproportionality and seriously undermine fair representation. And, the latter one is likely to lead to a great deal of party system fractionalization that may blur political accountability or make governance more difficult than now. Both alternatives are quite removed from the status quo, and do not stand good chance to be accepted by the rival parties.

The author advocates introducing a two-vote mixed system in which the single-member plurality system is combined with a substantive PR system. A voter casts one ballot to elect a representative of his or her district and the other for a closed party list. The party vote will provide voters with opportunity for passing judgment on the performance of rival parties, thus prompting parties to competitively promote policies in line with public views and sentiments.

In instituting a two-vote mixed system, the next important step will be the choice between the German system and the parallel system. Of the two, the former system is expected to produce more proportional election results, whereas the latter one is less complicated in that two components are kept independent. The simplified parallel system is seen as preferable for newly democratized Korea with prior experience only in nominal PR. The ratio of PR seats to district seats should be adjusted from the current 1 to 5 to at least 1 to 2 (possibly, up to 1 to 1).

The working of the PR component needs further comments. How districting

will be undertaken for the list PR system constitutes another significant issue. Two ways are most frequently debated on: First, the nation is divided into about half a dozen regions, the PR seats being apportioned to each region based on its size of population. Then the election for PR seats takes place basically in each region. The party vote is aggregated at the level, and the PR seats assigned to the region are allocated to each party's regional list according to the vote share. Second, the party vote is tallied nationwide, and the PR seats are allocated to each party's national list of candidates according to the vote share.

Each of these two ways has both advantages and disadvantages. The first way may contribute to the decentralization of power and leadership within a political party, and to the strengthening of links between legislative members elected under PR and their voters. But given party-voter regional alignment, the list PR election together with the single-member plurality election will bring about the hegemony of a dominant party in a region. On the other hand, the second way is prone to necessitate a long national party list, estrange the legislative member-constituent relationship, and reinforce the centralization of party power and leadership. But the nationwide PR election is likely to produce highly proportional results, cancel out the impacts of regional alignment at the national level, and help develop a wider geographical notion of representation. It will also conduce to party competition over national policies, and serve as a route for recruiting policy specialists with national reputation.

All things being considered, the nationwide PR election is recommended in this essay. Furthermore, it is suggested that the legal threshold for participation in the PR seat allocation be lowered to one single-member plurality district seat or 2 percent of the nationwide party votes. Such a revision would expand the opportunity for new political forces to advance into the National Assembly, hence making the electoral system fairer and rendering legislative politics more responsive to diverse interests.

There is a concern that an increase in vote-seat proportionality involves the possible mushrooming of splinter parties that may lead to political instability.

But so long as a single-member plurality system remains bedrock of the proposed two-vote mixed system, an extreme multiparty system is not likely to emerge. Even under the two-vote mixed system, the party system in democratic Korea is expected to remain a moderate multiparty format.

Scholars like Mainwaring (1993) have argued that a multiparty format combined with a presidential system of government is less conducive to stable democracy than a two-party system combined with presidential government. According to this argument, a multiparty system together with a presidential system increases the likelihood of executive-legislative deadlock and ideological fragmentation, and it makes coalition formation difficult. Based on this argument, one may object to the idea of strengthening the PR system tending to produce a multiparty system especially in countries with a presidential system, such as in Korea.

The negative view on a multiparty system combined with presidential government is based mainly on the studies of the ill consequences of an extreme multiparty system. A typical example is the breakdown of Chilean democracy in 1973. But it should be noted that an extreme multiparty system is likely to lead to political stability not only in a presidential but also in a parliamentary system. As shown by Costa Rica, a democracy can endure where PR and a moderate multiparty system are combined with a presidential system. More importantly, actual political situations among many new "third-wave" democracies do not clearly vindicate the proposition that a presidential system has a greater probability of democratic consolidation when linked with a two-party system rather than with a multiparty system (see Power and Gasiorowski 1997). Suppose there existed a serious legislative-executive confrontation in a presidential system combined with a two-party system featuring a strong opposition majority in the legislature. In this situation, a third party can hardly play an effective role in mediating a standoff between the two major parties. It would be much more difficult for the president to manage a divided government under such a two-party situation than under a multi-party situation.

A normative position underlying the proposed electoral reform in this paper is that we should infuse the notion of consensus democracy into the predominantly majoritarian type of political regime in current democratic Korea. The logic and reality of power concentration dominate even in this democratic era. The regime is often portrayed and criticized as an imperial presidency or a "delegative democracy" (see O'Donnell 1996) in which executive power concentrates in the president claiming direct popular mandate and unchecked by the national legislature. There exists a semblance of multiparty system, but the system runs in a largely zero-sum, adversarial, and exclusive manner. The electoral system generates highly disproportional results, and conflicting interests are not well accommodated at all. The tradition of unitary and centralized government is firm and strong. Legislative power resides in the unicameral National Assembly, while the notions of rigid constitution and judicial review have been introduced. On the whole, the majoritarian type of democracy prevails in Korea (Lijphart 1999, 2-4; Kim 2001, 259-90). If the Korean regime can accommodate the norm of inclusiveness, mutuality, and compromise to a meaningful extent, it will be a sure leap forward for the consolidation of Korean democracy. To this goal of political development can the proposed two-vote mixed system make a good contribution.

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