

ASIAN  BAROMETER

A Comparative Survey of

DEMOCRACY, GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

Working Paper Series: No.15

The Mass Public and Democratic Politics in South
Korea: Exploring the Subjective World of
Democratization in Flux

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Issued by
Asian Barometer Project Office
National Taiwan University and Academia Sinica

2003 Taipei

Asian Barometer

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Working Paper Series

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The ABS Working Paper Series is issued by the Asian Barometer Project Office, which is jointly sponsored by the Department of Political Science of National Taiwan University and the Institute of Political Science of Academia Sinica. At present, papers are issued only in electronic version.

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**The Mass Public and Democratic Politics in South Korea:
Exploring the Subjective World of Democratization in Flux**

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The Mass Public and Democratic Politics in South Korea: Exploring the Subjective World of Democratization in Flux*

“...government of the people, by the people, for the people,
shall not perish from the earth.”

Abraham Lincoln, 1863

“As it is essential to liberty that the government in general
should have a common interest with the people, so it is
particularly essential that the branch of it under consideration
should have an immediate dependence on, and an intimate
sympathy with, the people.”

James Madison, 1788

South Korea (Korea hereafter) has achieved a reputation in the contemporary world as one of the four dragon states or economic miracles in Asia. Like its three neighbors of Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan, Korea transformed one of the world's poorest economies into an economic powerhouse within a single generation (Kim and Hong 1997). Now a country with a population of forty six million, Korea produces a gross domestic product (GDP hereafter) larger than that of ten of the fifteen states in the European Union. It is the only non-Western country admitted in the past seven years to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the exclusive club of industrialized countries.

Currently, Korea is undergoing a political transformation from military rule to a representative democracy. In Asia, it is the only new democracy that has not only transferred power peacefully to an opposition party but also transformed fully its age-old crony capitalism into a competitive and transparent market economy. One of the world's third-wave democracies, Korea has already seen Internet information technology playing an active and crucial role in presidential elections to an extent not yet observed in even more advanced democratic countries, including those

in Western Europe and North America (Choo 2002). In the world of Internet technology, moreover, Korea currently has the highest broadband penetration with more 70 percent of users hooked into a high-speed network (WebsiteOptimization.com 2003).

In the world of new democracies undergoing the dual transformation of political and economic systems, Korea is also the first new market democracy to recover fully from the dire financial crisis that erupted in Asia nearly six years ago. In the scholarly community, therefore, Korea is acknowledged as one of the most vigorous and analytically interesting third-wave democracies (Chu, Diamond and Shin 2001; Diamond and Kim 2000; Diamond and Shin, 2000; S. Kim 2003). In policy circles, it is also increasingly regarded as a model of market liberalization and political democratization (Bremner and Moon 2002; Haggard 2000; Lemco 2002).

Yet many researchers wonder how much progress Korea has really made in democratizing its authoritarian institutions and its underlying cultural values that for nearly three decades supported the military dictatorships that ruled the country. What challenges and problems does the country face in furthering democratization? What are its prospects for expanding and consolidating limited democratic rule? This chapter addresses these and other related questions with the East Asia Barometer (EAB hereafter) survey conducted in Korea during the month of February 2003 when its people were commemorating the 15th birthday of the democratic Sixth Republic and reflecting on the election of Roh Moo Hyun as its fourth president (for detailed information about the fieldwork undertaken for the EAB survey, see Garam Research Institute 2003).

The chapter is organized into eight sections. The first section briefly discusses the historical and institutional characteristics of Korean democratization to provide background for the interpretation of the EAB survey findings that immediately follow. The second section examines how the Korean people recognize democracy and understand its meaning. The third section deals with their democratic and authoritarian perceptions of the current and past regimes. The fourth

section examines their perceptions of regime change and evaluations of its consequences for the quality of life in Korea. The fifth section makes a comprehensive assessment of the quality of Korean democracy in terms of democratic citizenship, political leadership, and institutional trust. The sixth section deals with the depth of attachment between the Korean people and democracy and how fully they have detached themselves from authoritarianism. The seventh section discusses optimistic and pessimistic feelings among the Korean people about the prospect for consolidating their democracy. The eighth and final section highlights the key findings of the EAB survey and explores their implications from theoretical and other perspectives.

Historical and Institutional Backgrounds

Korea is one of the many new democracies that evolved out of a military dictatorship (Huntington 1991; United Nations Development Programme 2002). During the period of 1987-88, Korea accomplished a peaceful transformation from the military dictatorship headed by former general Chun Doo Hwan to a democratic state that allowed the people to choose their president and other political leaders through free and competitive elections. During nearly three decades prior to the advent of democracy (1961-1987), the military ruled the country as a developmental dictatorship with a rationale of promoting economic development and strengthening national security against the Communist North (Moon 1994). Institutionally, the developmental state provided the president with unprecedented and unlimited powers, both executive and legislative in character, to the extent that he dissolved the National Assembly and took emergency measures whenever he deemed them necessary (Lim 1998, 2002).

By invoking the National Security and Anti-Communist laws, the military dictatorships headed, successively, by former generals Park Chung Hee and Chun Doo Hwan suppressed political opposition and curtailed freedom of expression and association (Moon and Kim 1996). Through security agencies such as the Korean Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security

Command, those regimes placed the news media under strict censure and kept labor unions and educational institutions under constant surveillance. Moreover, these regimes controlled opposition parties and other nonpolitical civic and business organizations through a variety of tactics including co-optation and intimidation. By suppressing political opposition and disallowing individual citizens and civic groups to take part in the political process, the military dictatorships insulated policymaking from the pressures of social and political groups (Jang 2000). In pre-democratic Korea, therefore, it was technocrats and bureaucrats, not elected representatives, who played the key role in the policymaking process.

The current constitution of the democratic Sixth Republic, which was ratified in a national referendum held in October 1987, has laid out a new institutional foundation for representative democracy (for a full text of the constitution amended on October 29, 1987, see Kil and Moon 2001, 327-352). It provides for direct election of the president with a single, nonrenewable five-year term. As in the past, the president serves as the head of the state and the government. Yet the president's powers are reduced considerably, while those of the legislative and judicial branches are expanded significantly. Specifically, the president's powers regarding emergency decrees and dissolution of parliament are abolished. The National Assembly's power to oversee the executive branch, on the other hand, is broadened and strengthened. The process of appointing judges is institutionalized to ensure the independence of the judiciary. The Constitutional Court is newly instituted to enforce the principles of the democratic constitution and to ensure the rule of law. The limits of civil liberties and political rights are extended and the protection of economic and social rights is strengthened. The constitution protects political parties from being disbanded by arbitrary governmental action. The constitution also explicitly requires political neutrality by the military.

To implement the democratic ethos and principles of the new democratic constitution, popularly elected governments headed by the two best-known opponents of military rule adopted a

variety of democratic reforms. The Kim Young Sam government (1993-1998), for example, instituted civilian supremacy over the military and implemented the constitutional principle of political neutrality of the military (Kil 2001, 58-63). This first civilian government also enacted the financial reform legislation to mandate the use of real names in financial transactions in order to dismantle the structure of political corruption. The Kim Dae Jung government (1998-2003) furthered democratization by extending the limits of economic and social rights. It expanded the social security system to include health insurance, unemployment insurance, pension insurance, and workers' accident compensation insurance (Shin and Lee 2003). With these reforms, the Korean political system moved beyond electoral democracy and embarked on a new path leading to democratic consolidation.

After the transition to democracy in 1988, popular elections became the only method to choose governors and lawmakers at the national, provincial, and local levels of government. Three free and competitive presidential elections took place during the past decade and a half. In the presidential election held on December 18, 1997, Korea established itself as a mature electoral democracy by elevating an opposition party to political power. In the latest presidential election held on December 19, 2002, the Korean people for the first time elected a relatively young and liberal candidate in his fifties to lead their nation—a nation where age has long played an important role in political and all other aspects of Korean life. In addition to these presidential elections, four rounds of parliamentary elections also enabled the people to choose their representatives to the National Assembly. In local communities as well, popularly elected governors and legislators have taken the place of appointees of the central government.

Electoral and other political reforms during the past decade and a half transformed policymaking away from the practices and style of military rule. With the abolition of the Basic Press Laws and other regulations that suppressed public protest and limited the news media,

freedom of expression and association has been thrown wide open. The institutionalization of free and fair elections for both local and central governments has also expanded the involvement of the mass public in electoral politics and policymaking. Farmers, factory workers, women, the elderly, the urban poor, businessmen, and journalists have all formed new public interest groups as competing forces against the existing government-controlled representational institutions. Today, more than six thousand nongovernmental organizations are known to operate in Korea (Lim 2000; see also S. Kim 2000). As a result, civic associations and interest groups have become formidable players in the policy process, which was formerly dominated by bureaucrats and technocrats.

In short, the democratic institutional reforms to date have expanded civil liberties and political rights by downsizing and overhauling the various security agencies, which used to meddle in every important decision of both government and private organizations and controlled the behavior of private citizens. The reforms have firmly established civilian control over the military by purging politicized military generals and disbanding secret societies within the military establishment (Steinberg, 2000). Accordingly, Korean democracy today meets the criteria for procedural democracy or polyarchy specified by Dahl (1971) and many other scholars (Przeworski et al. 2000; Rose, Mishler and Haerpfer 1998; Schmitter and Karl 1991). It is a political regime characterized by free and fair elections, universal adult suffrage, multiparty competition, civil liberties, and a free press. In the words of Kim Byung-Kook (2000, 52), “. . .electoral politics has become the only possible game in town for resolving political conflicts.”

For the past ten years (1993-2003), the country has received an average rating of 2.0 on Freedom House's scale of political rights and civil liberties, placing it within the ranks of the world's liberal democracies. Indeed, Korea has achieved greater success in transforming its authoritarian political institutions than many of its democratizing predecessors and contemporaries (Im 2000). Unlike new democracies in Latin America, Korea has fully restored civilian rule by

extricating the military from power and has established the minimal architecture of procedural democracy. The country has also become the first new democracy in Asia to peacefully transfer power to an opposition party. In the Western media and scholarly community, therefore, Korea is mentioned increasingly as a possible model of democratization for the emerging post-authoritarian countries in the world (*New York Times* 1998; *Wall Street Journal* 1992). Nonetheless, Korea can be regarded neither as a well-functioning representative democracy nor as a consolidated democracy.

Korea's inability to progress steadily as a democratic state has a lot to do with its current system of governance, which often produces immobilizing institutional deadlock in the form of divided government with competing majorities in the presidency and the legislature (Mo 1998, 2001; Park 2002). Institutionally, Korea constitutes a presidential system of governance combined with multiple minority parties and staggered presidential and parliamentary elections (Kim and Lijphart 1997). As in all other presidential systems, the Korean constitution provides for the popular election of a president, but this incumbent may serve for only a single term of five years. Unlike the president, lawmakers are elected for a term of four years and can serve multiple terms. The National Assembly consists of 273 seats, three-quarters of which are elected from single-member districts for terms of four years (one-quarter being chosen by political parties via the method of proportional representation). In all four parliamentary elections held since the democratic regime change in 1988, more than three political parties participated (Jaung 2000). Because these parties have regionally concentrated bases of support in the country, no president's party has ever obtained a majority in the legislature.

Without stable majority support in the legislature, Korean presidents lack appropriate institutional leverage to deal with protracted policy gridlock. To overcome this sort of institutional gridlock, the previous three democratically elected Korean presidents have resorted to political or extra-legal tactics. They have merged political parties and intimidated opposition lawmakers. Their

use of prosecutorial power for political purposes has undermined the political neutrality of the judicial system. Their frequent use of tax audit for political purposes has threatened freedom of expression, as evidenced in the Kim Dae Jung government's investigations of the newspapers that were critical of its Sunshine policy.

Under the Kim Dae Jung government, therefore, Korean democracy suffered serious setbacks. As in the authoritarian past, an inordinate array of disparate powers was concentrated in the hands of the president and his staff. Frequent refusal by the executive branch to be accountable to the National Assembly thereby opened the door to what O'Donnell (1994) often calls "delegative democracy" and undermined the institutional foundation of representative democracy (*Chosun Ilbo* 2002; Kirk 2001; Park 1998; Struck 2002; see also Przeworski, Stokes, and Manin 1999). As revealed by successive waves of political corruption scandals, some that even involved the president's three sons, and the concealment of US \$450 million in backdoor aid to North Korea (Chang 2002; Larkin 2001; Jung 2002), moreover, informal and clandestine political rules, not the formal and transparent norms and rules of representative democracy, determined formulation and implementation of major national policies.

What do the Korean people think of this system of democratic governance that fails to maintain the rule of law and accountability to the electorate? Do they see it as a democracy? If they do, what sort of democracy do they think it represents? Do they welcome it as a lesser evil more than what they had in the authoritarian past? Their conceptions of democracy are likely to shape their negative or positive reactions to the various practices of democratic rule they have experienced on a daily basis for the past fifteen years.

Conceptions of Democracy

Democracy is known to mean different things to different people (Bratton and Mattes 2001; Miller, Hesli and Reisinger 1997; Shin 1999, chap. 2). In distinguishing democracy from non-

democracy, ordinary citizens more often than not disagree over the specific characteristics of political life they take into account. The particular characteristics or terms they emphasize most can serve as the main standards for their appraisal of how well the current democratic political system performs and their decision to support or not to support it on a continuing basis (Shin et al. 2003).

Are ordinary Koreans capable of recognizing democracy? If they are, how do they understand democracy? Do they endorse a liberal notion of democracy that stresses liberties and limited government? How many subscribe to a procedural notion that stresses voting and majority rule? Do more entertain a socioeconomic notion of democracy that emphasizes social justice and economic equality? Do they tend to view democracy primarily in a positive or negative light? To explore their divergent interpretations of democracy, the EAB survey asked an open-ended question: "To you, what does democracy mean?" This question encouraged respondents to think about their own notions of democracy and allowed them to name up to three essential elements of democracy in their own words.

The Awareness of Democracy

In a first rudimentary test of cognitive capacity, we attributed an awareness of democracy to all those respondents who offered a definition or a meaning in response to the question. All those who were unable to do so were considered unaware of democracy or incapable of recognizing it. By this criterion, the Korean people, as a whole, are highly capable of recognizing democracy. Virtually all Koreans surveyed (98%) were able to identify at least one constituent or element of democracy. More than a half of all surveyed (57%) could provide a second element of democracy, and nearly one-fifth (19%) was able to supply a third one. Considered together, these data confirm that virtually every Korean adult is capable of recognizing democracy as a normative or empirical phenomenon.

The Meaning of Democracy

How do the Korean people understand democracy? Do they understand it narrowly or broadly? To determine the breadth of their understanding, we counted the number of entities they identified with democracy. A substantial minority of the Korean people (42%) view democracy on a narrow basis by identifying it with only one meaningful attribute. Nearly three out of five Koreans (57%), on the other hand, hold broad notions of democracy by expecting more than one thing from it. Furthermore, in terms of the exact nature of their conceptions, an overwhelming majority (98%) sees democracy in a positive light. It is a tiny minority (2%) that views it in either a negative or a mixed light. To virtually every Korean adult, democracy refers to something that they value for their own lives or that of their nation.

We considered together the breadth and nature of Koreans' democratic conceptions in order to classify respondents into four broad types. The first type views democracy narrowly and positively. Slightly more than two out of five Koreans (42%) are of this type. The second type views it narrowly and negatively. Only two respondents (0.1%) in the entire sample of 1,500 subscribe to this view. The third type views democracy broadly and positively. A bare majority (57%) belongs to this type of broad and positive conception. The fourth and final type features broad and negative conceptions of democracy. Only one surveyed Korean subscribes to this view. The nature of popular democratic conceptions in Korea is overwhelmingly positive. Yet a substantial minority conceives of democracy in a narrow fashion.

What did Koreans mention most often when they were asked to name up to three components of democracy? Nearly three-quarters (64%) of the Korean people associated democracy with some sort of civil or political liberty. One-fifth (11%) embraced limited government or its institutions as one of the essentials of democracy. More than two-fifths (43%) associated democracy with social justice and equality or market economy. One-sixth (17%) cited

good governance or other desirable characteristics of a political system. About one-sixth (16%) equated civic duty or some other qualities of individual citizens with democracy.

Do the Korean people tend to understand democracy in procedural terms, which most theorists hold as important, or in substantive terms? When asked to name three essential components, about one-tenth (11%) named, at least once, some institutional characteristics or practices of representative democracy, such as elections, parliament, party system, majority rule, and voting. In striking contrast, eight times as many (88%) mentioned, at least once, some substantive outcomes of socioeconomic and political natures, such as a free market, social justice, welfare state, and law and order. While a miniscule portion (0.5%) mentioned institutional characteristics more than once, more than two-fifths (43%) expressed substantive outcomes two or more times.

When these two categories of procedural and substantive responses were taken into account, about two-thirds (68%) of the respondents interpreted democracy solely in substantive terms. Those who did so solely in procedural or institutional terms, on the other hand, made up a very small minority (4%). There were a few (6%) who understood it both substantively and procedurally. The remainder (20%) gave neither a procedural nor a substantive response. In striking contrast to what theorists hold to be important for democracy, the Korean people do not identify with a classical or procedural conception of democracy.

Is it the liberal or non-liberal notion of democracy that is more popular in Korea? For this question, we defined liberal democracy as a political system that allows, substantively, for political freedom and civil liberties and procedurally limits the arbitrary use of governmental authorities and powers primarily for the well being of individual citizens (Diamond 1999; MacPherson 1977; Zakaria 2003). When asked to name essential characteristics of democracy, nearly two-thirds (66%) specified one of such substantive and procedural characteristics of liberal political order,

thereby prioritizing individual citizens over their communities. Nearly one-seventh (14%) named such characteristics more than once. However, slightly more than one-half (53%) defined democracy in terms of socioeconomic or other desirable elements of communal life. Those who were deeply attached to this non-liberal, communitarian notion constituted about one-eleventh (9%), a figure that is significantly smaller than the number of those similarly attached to the liberal notion. Thus we can conclude that between the liberal and non-liberal communitarian notions, the former is much more popular in Korea.

Liberal and non-liberal responses to the EAB questions tapping the understanding of democracy were combined in a typology to identify those who were attached solely to either of these two contrasting notions. The respondents who defined democracy solely in liberal terms constituted a relatively small minority (29%) of the Korean people. Yet these liberal democrats outnumbered non-liberal democrats who defined democracy solely in non-liberal terms by ten percentage points (29% versus 19%). Those who understood democracy in both kinds of terms made up 26 percent. Those responding with neither term constituted 22 percent. Although the liberal notion is more popular than the non-liberal notion, Korea obviously remains far from a nation of liberal democrats.

In addition to whether more Koreans are liberal or non-liberal, we also wanted to measure how strongly the Korean people are attached to the liberal notion of democracy. To address this question, we used individual rights and limited constitutional government again as the two most important substantive and procedural characteristics. We measured the magnitude of attachments in terms of the number of times respondents referred to each of these two substantive and procedural characteristics as they defined democracy. Those who included both characteristics were rated as fully liberal democratic. Those who referred to neither were considered as unattached to either liberal or democratic politics. For respondents who included only one element, we counted the

number of times they mentioned it as an indicator of the magnitude of their attachment. Consequently, one-time mentioners were treated as being weakly liberal or democratic, while those who mentioned a characteristic more than once we labeled highly liberal or democratic.

The results showed slightly more than one-half (52%) of respondents landing in the weakly liberal or democratic category and an additional one-third (33%) falling into the category of completely unattached. Those who are either fully liberal democratic or highly liberal or democratic constitute a relatively small minority (15%). More notably, those fully liberal democratic constitute only 4 percent of the total population. Comparing these figures reveals that the Koreans unattached to the liberal notion of democracy are more than eight times as many as the Koreans fully attached to it. The liberal notion of democracy is widely shared among the Korean people, but it has not yet become deeply rooted in their affections.

In summary, the great majority of the Korean people associates democracy with individual freedom or limited government rather than social justice and economic equality. By emphasizing individual freedom and limited government, their views are overwhelmingly of a liberal persuasion rather than socioeconomic or communitarian in nature. Koreans are reluctant to equate democracy only with the holding of elections or popular participation, rejecting so-called minimalist notions of democracy. For this reason, many advocates of democratic reform in Korea expect much more of democracy than what the scholarly literature considers to be an electoral democracy. For Korean reformers, free elections make for a democracy only when combined with civil liberties and the rule of law.

Why do Koreans tend to conceive democracy mainly in terms of civil and political liberties and limited government? A satisfactory answer to this question could come from considering the political practices of authoritarian regimes that prevailed in Korea for nearly three decades. After all, successive regimes led by the military allowed the Korean electorate to participate in seemingly

competitive elections on occasion. Yet by arbitrarily using coercive state power, these regimes severely limited the extent of civil liberties and political rights. Such repression by military regimes strongly motivated Koreans to adopt the extension and protection of civil liberties as the litmus for distinguishing democracy from authoritarianism. The fast-growing economy and increasing standards of living that accompanied political repression discouraged the Korean public from attaching much importance to socioeconomic development in their definitions of democracy. We conclude that Korean conceptions of democracy are hardly different from Western liberal conceptions that emphasize individual rights and the rule of law. They tend to be primarily maximal, libertarian, and political in nature.

Perceptions of Regimes

How do the Korean people perceive the current political system that allows them to elect their national and local political leaders in free and competitive elections? Do they perceive it as a democracy? If they do, do they see it as a limited electoral democracy or a substantially advanced democratic political system? What do they think about the past political system that the military dominated without free and competitive elections? Do they tend to view it as a highly oppressive, hard authoritarian regime or a somewhat oppressive, soft authoritarian regime?

To address these questions, the EAB survey asked respondents to rate their current and past regimes on a 10-point ladder scale. This scale allows respondents to answer according to their own understanding of democracy and dictatorship. A score of 1 on this scale indicates “complete dictatorship,” while a score of 10 indicates “complete democracy.” The scores reported on this scale were collapsed into four categories: (1) hard authoritarianism (1 and 2); (2) soft authoritarianism (3 through 5); (3) limited democracy (6 through 8); and (4) advanced democracy (9 and 10).

For the current and past regimes, Table 1 reports the mean ratings on the 10-point scale and the percentages of the EAB respondents falling into each of the four categories of regime perceptions. From those percentages reported in the table, we clearly see that the Korean people tend to view the current regime as a democracy while perceiving the past regime as a non-democracy. More than four out of five Koreans (82%) rated the current regime as democratic by placing it at 6 or above on the scale. Of these Koreans, more than three times as many rated it as a limited democracy by placing it at 6, 7, or 8. The current regime's mean on the 10-point scale is 6.5, a figure that is only one point above the scale's midpoint of 5.5. These percentage and mean ratings make it clear that people perceive democracy in Korea today as far from a complete or full democracy. Even after a decade of democratic rule led by the two long-time leaders of the democracy movement in Korea, Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung, the country remains a partial or limited democracy in the eyes of its people.

(Table 1 here)

The past regime scored 4.4 on the 10-point scale. Falling lower than the scale's midpoint, the mean rating indicates that the Korean people tend to see the previous regime as a non-democratic regime. Nearly three-quarters of the Korean public (72%) rated the past regime as undemocratic by placing it at 5 or below. Of these Koreans, the less critical were far more numerous than the more critical. While 55 percent of rated the military regime as a soft authoritarian regime, 17 percent perceived hard authoritarianism.

Also notable is the finding that nearly three-tenths (28%) rated the same regime as a democracy rather than a non-democracy. This percentage figure is significantly higher than the percentages that were reported in the earlier Korean Democracy Barometer surveys—18.8% in 1996, 18.9% in 1997, 18.0% in 1998, 12.5% in 1999, and 13.6% in 2001 (Shin, 2003c). Why is it that an increasing number of the Koreans perceive it as a democracy rather than a dictatorship? Do

they do so because they perceive the old authoritarian regime, not the current democratic one, as a lesser evil? These questions, which the first wave of the EAB survey cannot address directly, need to be studied systematically in the future.

When the democratic ratings of the past regime and the authoritarian ratings of the present regime are considered together it is evident that a considerable proportion of the Korean people does not distinguish the basic practices of democratic rule from those of non-democratic rule. Which segment of the Korean people is most likely to view the current regime as a democracy? Which segment is most likely to remember the past regime as an authoritarian regime? Table 2 examines the relationships between regime perceptions on the one hand and five demographic variables on the other. The demographic variables include gender, age, education, income, and residential community.

(Table 2 here)

As might be expected given limitations in their political sophistication, those unable or unwilling to accurately recognize the authoritarian nature of the past regime are significantly more present among older people, residents of rural communities, and those with little or no formal education. They are also overrepresented among middle and upper income groups. Those able to accurately recognize the democratic nature of the current regime are also overrepresented among the elderly (sixty and older) and the undereducated (elementary education and less). They are also overrepresented among residents of rural communities. Considering such larger democratic perceptions of the past and current regimes together reveals that these three segments of the Korean population see both regimes as democracies in the greatest proportion. It appears that many older Koreans, especially those living in rural areas with little formal education, are not capable of recognizing the fundamental differences between the two regime types and become biased toward democracy in their regime perceptions.

How do the divergent conceptions of democracy affect democratic and authoritarian perceptions of the current and past regimes? Table 3 examines the relationship between the extent to which the Korean people understand democracy in liberal terms and how they attribute democratic and authoritarian labels to the two regimes. Those who are fully attached to the notion of liberal democracy differ substantially from those who are not. The fully attached, as compared to others, are much less likely to perceive the present regime as a democracy (70% versus 87%) and are significantly more likely to see the past regime as a non-democracy (82% versus 69%). Apparently, the liberal conception of democracy motivates the Korean people to set more and/or higher standards for a democratic regime.

(Table 3 here)

Assessments of Regime Change

On February 27, 1988, Korea formally became a democratic state from a military dictatorship with the inauguration of Roh Tae Woo as the first president of the democratic Sixth Republic of Korea. In the first election of a president by direct votes in sixteen years, Roh, a former general, won election by ordinary citizens in a free and competitive contest on December 16, 1987. Since then, such elections have been regularly held at the national and other levels of government. Several waves of institutional reforms have been implemented to further limited democratic rule.

The Extent of Democratic Change

To what extent do the Korean people perceive these reforms have contributed to the democratization of their political system? To address this question, an index is constructed by subtracting individual respondents' ratings of the past military regime from their ratings of the current regime on a 10-point ladder scale. The index runs from a low of -9 to a high of +9. The lowest score of -9 indicates the transformation of a complete democracy into a complete

dictatorship, while the highest score of +9 indicates that of a complete dictatorship into a complete democracy. Negative and positive values on this index, respectively, indicate democratic retrogression and progression. On this 19-point index, respondents to the 2003 EAB survey averaged +2.1. According to this mean score, the Korean people as a whole think that their political system has taken 2.1 steps on the 10-step ladder of democratization. Such an upward shift represents considerable progress in the democratic transformation of military rule.

Nonetheless, Figure 1 shows that the Korean people are not in complete agreement on the nature and extent of the political change they have experienced. Slightly more than one-seventh (15%) perceived no such democratic progress. As many as one out of twelve Koreans (8%) reported retrogression to authoritarian rule rather than progression toward democracy. Even among those who perceived progress, there is a great deal of disagreement over its extent. About one out of five Koreans (22%) reported that it was no more than one step on the ladder. Nearly one-quarter (24%), on the other hand, reported four or more steps of democratic progress on the ladder.

(Figure 1 here)

Recognition of Regime Change

Do ordinary Koreans recognize the regime shift from the Fifth Republic of military rule to the Sixth Republic of civilian rule as a democratic transition? Do they instead view the change as the liberalization of authoritarian rule or something else? To explore these questions concerning their sophistication in democratic politics, we considered together Koreans' ratings of the two regimes on a 10-point scale and identified six views of the regime change that took place more than fifteen years ago. The views are: (1) authoritarian reversal (from a democracy to an authoritarian regime); (2) authoritarian persistence (an authoritarian regime of either a hard or soft nature remains little changed); (3) authoritarian liberalization (from a hard authoritarian regime to a soft authoritarian regime); (4) limited democratic transition (from an authoritarian regime to a limited

democracy); (5) advanced democratic transition (from an authoritarian regime to a substantially advanced democracy); and (6) democratic persistence (from a democracy to a democracy).

Of these six views, limited democratic transition is most popular with 56 percent. This is followed by democratic persistence (25%), authoritarian persistence (10%), authoritarian liberalization (5%), authoritarian reversal (4%), and advanced democratic transition (1%) (see Figure 2). When upholders of the most and least popular views of limited and advanced democratic transition are considered together, it is clear that a majority (57%) of the Korean people accurately recognizes the occurrence of democratic regime change in the aftermath of military rule. Yet even after they have lived under democratic rule for more than a decade, more than two-fifths (43%) have yet to recognize the regime change.

(Figure 2 here)

Which segments of the Korean population are most and least likely to recognize the democratic transition from military rule? Table 2 shows that the proportions that recognize the transition, by and large, vary relatively little across the categories of gender, age, and residential community. Of five educational categories, the most likely to recognize the transition are the least educated, rather than the most educated who have a college education and who are known to be most sophisticated about democratic politics. Of five income categories, also, the most likely to recognize the change are those in the lowest income category who are the least likely to have visited any advanced democracies. These surprising findings indicate that the recognition of democratic regime change does not increase with citizens' level of political knowledge or financial resources.

Why is it, then, that some Koreans, as compared to others, are more willing to recognize the demise of a military dictatorship and the subsequent birth of a democratic regime? A satisfactory answer to this question can be found in the way they personally understand the notion of democracy. Figure 3 shows that the Koreans who understand democracy solely in procedural terms are far more

likely to recognize the democratic transition than those who understand democracy in other terms. As compared to 55 percent of substantive democrats, for example, 75 percent of procedural democrats recognize this change. In understanding the change, procedural democrats lead mixed democrats, i.e., those who understand democracy in both procedural and substantive terms, by ten percentage points. By a greater margin of twenty percentage points, the former also outnumber other democrats who associate democracy with neither an institutional characteristic nor a substantive outcome.

(Figure 3 here)

Among the Korean people, those who want nothing more than institutional change from democratization are the most likely to recognize its occurrence. Those who want something besides institutional change, on the other hand, are the least likely to recognize such an occurrence. In the subjective world of democratization, one's own conception of democracy appears to serve as a powerful influence on the perception and assessment of the change. Rather than quantity, the particular kind or quality of regime characteristics individual citizens use to define the meaning of democracy determines how Koreans view the transition.

Consequences of Democratic Regime Change

Many regard democracy as the form of government that is essential for improving citizens' lives (Bay 1970, 185; Lipset 1981, 439). How do the Korean people think the democratic transformation from military rule has affected the quality of their public lives? What specific life domains do they think have changed for the better in the wake of democratic regime change? What life domains do they think have changed for the worse? To evaluate these consequences of democratic reforms during the past fifteen years, the EAB survey asked respondents to rate each of nine major life domains on a 5-point verbal scale. With five categories ranging from "much better

than before” to “much worse than before,” the verbal scale allowed them to compare current circumstances with those under the past military regime.

Table 4 briefly describes the nine domains used for evaluation in the survey. For each domain, it presents the mean score on a numeric scale ranging from -2 (much worse than before) to +2 (much better than before). For each domain, the table also presents three percentage ratings, including negative and positive ones and the percentage differential index (PDI hereafter) measuring the difference between these negative and positive scores. This index varies from a low of -100 to a high of +100. Positive scores on this index indicate that respondents rate the current status of a given domain more positively than negatively, while negative scores indicate the opposite. The positive and negative PDI scores, therefore, indicate, respectively, reported improvement or deterioration in the quality of public life experienced in the wake of democratization.

(Table 4 here)

The mean and PDI scores reported in Table 4 clearly indicate that the democratic transformation of the military regime in Korea has brought about positive as well as negative consequences for the quality of its public life. The table reports positive consequences in five domains, including freedom of speech, freedom of association, equal treatment by government, popular influence on government, and an independent judiciary. Negative consequences, on the other hand, occur in four domains: economic development, economic equality, law and order, and control over corruption. Evidently, Korean democratization has brought about improvements in those domains that have to do with political freedom, participation, and justice, which constitute the fundamental principles of liberal democratic politics. Yet it has entailed deteriorations in the domains that deal with economic welfare and the rule of law. While nearly three-fifths (58%) reported more losses than gains in the sphere of governmental policy, a much larger majority (70%)

did more gains than losses in the sphere of liberal democratic political performance.¹ In the eyes of the Korean people, democratization has been, by and large, a mixed blessing, which involves gains in political performance but mostly losses in policy performance.

In the political dimension, during the last two years of its term of office, the Kim Dae Jung government engaged in a series of serious efforts to curb the news media, which was critical especially of its policy toward the Communist North (Kirk 2001; Larkin 2001). Yet that regime was still rated more positively than the previous authoritarian regime for ensuring freedom of expression. In the eyes of the Korean people, the civilian government's anti-media campaign was less offensive than the authoritarian government's extensive abuses of human rights and brutal suppression of opposition politicians, and labor and student activists. Consequently, Koreans apparently credit the current regime for expanding civil and political liberties.

In ensuring the independence of the judiciary, however, the Korean people are reluctant to rate the current democratic regime significantly better than the old authoritarian regime. During the past decade and a half, a series of reform measures institutionalized the democratic principle of checks and balances (Diamond and Shin 2000; C. W. Park 2000). Yet respondents refuse to give high marks for political neutrality by the judiciary. Evidently, the Koreans hold the justice system to higher standards now than they did under the military regime. They have become fed up with democratically elected governments' continual and frequent use of prosecutorial power against opposition parties and failed to recognize the positive effects of judicial independence on the reform measures. The Korean people have also compared the new regime negatively with the former in the struggle to maintain public order. This finding is understandable in view of the fact that it is more difficult to control crimes and manage anti-social behavior in a free and open society.

Less expected is the Korean people's perception that political corruption has multiplied in the aftermath of democratic regime change. Despite increasing popular control over the

government, the incidence of corruption committed by public officials appears to have worsened under democratic rule (Shin 2001, 190). Perhaps several recent corruption scandals, which resulted in the imprisonment of President Kim Da Jung's two sons and close associates, explain this finding. In a democratic regime, corruption by high-level public officials can be easily detected and revealed to the public. Because scandals become more visible than in the authoritarian past, people may conclude that the present democratic regime is more corrupt than its authoritarian predecessor.

Considered together, the positive and negative assessments of all nine individual domains of public life allow us to determine the overall impact of democratization on the quality of public life in Korea. To make this determination, we constructed an index by subtracting the number of domains each respondent rated negatively from that of domains the person rated positively. This index ranges from -9 to +9. A score of -9 would indicate deterioration in all nine domains surveyed, while +9 would indicate improvement in all those domains in the wake of democratization. According to this index on which the Korean people averaged +0.7, only a bare majority (52%) is more positive about overall consequences, while a substantial minority (40%) is more negative. Those who rated all of the domains either negatively or positively constituted a very small minority of less than one percent rated all of the nine domains either negatively or positively. Obviously, democratization in Korea is not perceived uniformly as beneficial.

Which population segments have benefited most and least from the change? In what sphere of public life have they done so? The data reported in Table 5 shows that none of the segments defined by such demographic characteristics as gender, age, education, income and residential community has experienced more losses than gains in political performance from democratization. For the twenty segments listed in the table, PDI scores are all positive, indicating more gains than losses. Yet the magnitude of those positive scores varies considerably across the segments, indicating that some have experienced greater gains than others. According to the scores, college

graduates and middle-income people have experienced significantly less gains than their respective counterparts. In the policy performance sphere where every segment of the Korean population reported more losses than gains, males, young and old people, those with little education, low-income people, and residents of medium-size cities have lost much less than their respective counterparts. Most unexpected is the finding that those with little education and income are not the ones who feel least positive about political performance and most negative about policy performance.

(Table 5 here)

We also found that the perceived impact of democratization on political and policy performances varies somewhat according to the views of the regime change. Those who perceived the incidence of democratic regime change, for example, were the most positive and the least critical of its consequences. Those who perceived the incidence of authoritarian reversal, on the other hand, were the least positive and the most critical of its consequences. For example, on average, the former rated 3.4 domains of public life positively and 2.3 negatively. The latter, however, rated 2.0 domains positively and 3.5 negatively. Among the former, the demise of military rule has improved the quality of Korean life more than it has deteriorated it. Among the latter, the opposite is true.

In summary, the transition from military rule to a civilian democracy in Korea has not improved every domain of its public life. Nor has the democratic regime change improved the quality of public life across the various segments of the Korean population to an equal extent. While political life is seen to have improved, economic life is perceived to have deteriorated in the wake of the change. For this reason, many Koreans may perceive the current democratic regime as promoting the liberalization of the political process at the expense of socioeconomic welfare. When political, socioeconomic, and all other life domains are considered together, however, we see that

the Koreans with relatively little socioeconomic resources see themselves to have benefited from the regime as much as those with high levels of those resources do so. On the basis of these findings, it is fair to conclude that the benefits of Korean democratization, as subjectively perceived to date, are not confined to a particular socioeconomic class.

Are citizens' perceptions of democratic regime change consistent with what has actually happened to the objective conditions of life in Korea? To address this question, we assembled three additional pieces of information describing political and economic changes in the wake of the transition to democracy from military rule in 1988. On political change, we analyzed Freedom House's indexes of political rights and civil liberties (Freedom House 2003). According to these indexes rating each country annually on a 7-point scale in which low values signify more freedom and high values signify less freedom, the transition to democratic rule has brought about remarkable improvements in the levels of both political freedom and civil liberties ordinary Koreans experience. On the 7-point index of political freedom, Korea scored an average of 4.6 during the authoritarian period of 1980-87. During the democratic period of 1988-2002, the country averaged 2.0, a score that is close to the ones observed in consolidated democracies in the West. On the index of civil liberties also, Korea experienced a similar improvement with significant drops in the average of its scores from 5.4 to 2.4 between the two periods. When these average ratings of these two indexes are considered together, it is evident that democratic rule has transformed Korea from a not-free country into a free country.

Citizen perceptions of the changes in economic life also appear to be consistent with what has actually happened to the Korean economy. According to Korea National Statistical Office (2003), the GDP grew annually at an average rate of 8.7 percent during the authoritarian Chun Doo Hwan government (1980-88). Immediately after the inauguration of the democratic Sixth Republic in February 1988, its growth rate began to decline slowly. However, during the Roh Tae

Woo government (1988-1993) and the Kim Young Sam government (1993-98), its growth rates averaged 8.4 and 8.0 percent, respectively. During the Kim Dae Jung government (1998-2003), the rates averaged only 4.6 percent, which is close to half the growth rate for the seven years of military rule.

Unlike the GDP growth rates that have steadily declined, the Gini coefficients often used to measure economic inequality have registered upward and downward trends (Korea National Statistical Office 2001). During the authoritarian Chun government, the coefficients averaged 0.309. During the first two democratic governments, the coefficients lowered to 0.294 and 0.285, indicating further declines in economic inequality. However, during the third democratic government headed by President Kim Dae Jung when the country suffered the worst economic crisis since the Korean War fifty years ago, the coefficients rose sharply to an average of 0.317. As the Korean people perceive, the distribution of incomes these days is now more unequal than what it was in the authoritarian past.

The Quality of Democracy

The presence of a democratic constitution and the regular holding of free and competitive elections alone do not necessarily make a political system function as a representative democracy (Rose and Shin 2001). A system becomes truly democratic only when ordinary people are capable of expressing their preferences in the political process and their political leaders and institutions respond to those preferences according to the principles and rules of representative democracy as prescribed in the constitution (Dahl 1971; Shin 2003a). The quality of democracy, therefore, depends not only on the capacity of ordinary people to participate but also on the behaviors of political leaders and various institutions representing and transforming the people's preferences into substantive outcomes. In this section, we will first differentiate and evaluate three components of the current democratic system—democratic citizenship, political leadership, and institutional trust—

on a separate basis. Then, we will consider the extent to which ordinary Koreans are satisfied with the performance of the system as a whole and the extent to which they would endorse it as the best regime for the nation. Finally, we will ascertain the four divergent appraisals the Koreans hold of the overall quality of their current regime.

Democratic Citizenship

How do ordinary Koreans feel about themselves as citizens of a democratic state? Do they feel they can influence what the government does? To estimate their perceived cognitive capability, we selected a pair of statements from the EAB survey: (1) “I think I have the ability to participate in politics,” and (2) “Sometimes politics and government seems so complicated that a person like me can’t really understand what is going on.” Affirming responses to the first statement and disaffirming responses to the second one were chosen as indicators of citizen empowerment, the capacity of citizens to formulate and express their preferences in the political process. These responses were considered together in order to identify four types of democratic citizenship among the Korean people. The categories are: (1) fully incapable; (2) cognitively capable; (3) behaviorally capable; and (4) fully capable.

When asked about their ability to understand the complexities of politics and government, a majority (54%) expressed their cognitive capacity to do so. When asked about their capacity to take part in politics, however, only one-quarter (25%) affirmed their behavioral capacity to do so. When these two figures are compared, it becomes obvious that the quality of democratic citizenship among the Korean people suffers a great deal more from its underdevelopment in the behavioral dimension than in the cognitive dimension.

Responses to the two above statements reveal that a plurality (39%) is cognitively as well as behaviorally incapable of meeting the requirements of democratic citizenship. These Koreans who are fully incapable are followed by the cognitively capable (36%), the fully capable (18%), and the

behaviorally capable (7%). The cognitively capable lead the behaviorally capable by a large margin of 5 to 1. This additional evidence supports the claim that the behavioral dimension of democratic citizenship has developed far less than its cognitive dimension. More notable is the finding that those fully incapable not only constitute the largest proportion of the Korean electorate but they also outnumber those fully capable by a margin of 2 to 1 (39% versus 18%). A vast majority of the Korean people reports having yet to acquire the understanding and ability necessary to perform their citizen responsibilities as citizens in a democratic state (Shin, Park and Jang 2002).

Political Leadership

Public officials of the current democratic regime must work differently from the way their authoritarian predecessors did in the past. As leaders of a constitutional democracy, they must follow the rules and processes specified in the constitution and various laws in a procedurally proper fashion. They must also work substantively for the welfare of the people, rather than for their own personal benefits. This section seeks to evaluate the overall quality of Korean public officials according to the procedural and substantive criteria for democratic governance. For this purpose, we identified four categories of perceived leadership on the basis of whether they meet none, only one, or both criteria of democratic governance.

To determine the extent to which public officials abide by the rules and procedures of democratic politics, the EAB survey asked a pair of questions concerning the extent to which local and national governmental officials were engaged in corrupt political practices. Specifically, the survey asked respondents to estimate officials' corruption, choosing one of four response categories: (1) hardly any; (2) not a lot; (3) most officials; and (4) almost everyone. The choice of the first two categories was considered indicative of the view that political leaders tend to be law-abiding and untarnished by corruption. The choice of the last two was deemed evidence of the view that political leaders tend to engage in corrupt and illegal practices.

When asked about the extent of corruption among those officials at the national level of government, nearly one-half (47%) perceived corruption, in “almost everyone” (9%) or “most” (38%) of the people working on that level. About the officials working for local governments, three-sevenths (44%) gave the same replies: “almost everyone” (8%) or “most” (36%). When responses to the two questions are considered together, more than one-third (35%) perceived almost everyone or most of national and local government officials as corrupt. In addition, one-fifth (21%) perceived almost everyone or most officials working in either the national or local government as corrupt. It is only a minority (44%) who did not perceive almost everyone or most of either local or national government officials to be corrupt.

In January 2002, the Kim Dae Jung government began to enforce a new anti-corruption law. This law imposes stiff penalties on corrupt officials, including jail terms up to ten years, fines of up to fifty million won (US \$40,000) and a ban on employment by public or private companies lasting five years (Transparency International, 2003). Despite all the reform efforts to root out the various forms of corruption, the levels of governmental corruption have not declined in the eyes of the citizenry. Instead, the extent of corruption perceived has still remained considerable at all levels of government. Such widespread disregard for the rule of law among public officials makes the current democratic regime look more like the pre-modern states than the consolidated democratic states of Western Europe and North America (Rose and Shin 2001).

To evaluate how well government officials work substantively, the EAB survey asked respondents whether they could generally trust “the people who run our government to do what is right.” Close to one-half (47%) did not trust government leaders “a lot” and one-sixth (16%) did not trust them “at all.” When these two categories of negative responses are considered together, it becomes evident that a substantial majority of the Korean people does not believe their government

works for people like themselves. Those who believe that the government is working for the people constitute only a small minority (37%).

Finally, we considered together the aforementioned two separate assessments of public officials—procedural and substantive—and divided them into four groups. The respondents perceive their leaders as: (1) fully undemocratic; (2) substantively democratic; (3) procedurally democratic; or (4) fully democratic. The fully undemocratic perceive the leaders as engaged in unlawful and self-seeking conduct. The substantively democratic think that the leaders work for the public without being bound by the rules of a constitutional democracy. The procedurally democratic view the leaders as following the rules but working for themselves rather than for the public. The fully democratic perceive officials as law-abiding and working for the public.

The largest proportion (37%) of the Korean people placed their public officials in the fully undemocratic category and the smallest proportion (18%) placed them in the fully democratic category. The number of surveyed Koreans who believe that they have fully democratic public officials are not only a small minority but are also outnumbered by those believing they have fully undemocratic officials by a margin of 2 to 1. Furthermore, the former are outnumbered by those reporting partially democratic officials by a large margin of 2.4 to 1. In the eyes of the Korean people, a shortage of fully democratically performing public officials poses a serious problem to the consolidation of Korean democracy.

Institutional Trust

Public trust or confidence in political institutions is one of the most widely tested dimensions of system affect. It reflects popular perceptions of how well or poorly specific democratic institutions actually perform. Do the institutions of Korean democracy perform responsively to the extent that the Korean people consider them trustworthy? The survey asked respondents how much trust they had in eleven public and private institutions. Figure 4 provides

the percentages of positive and negative ratings of these institutions. About one-seventh of Koreans (15%) expressed trust in political parties and the parliament, which constitute two key political institutions in democratic politics. Nearly a quarter (26%) considered the national executive government a trustworthy institution, while three-sevenths (44%) accepted the local executive government as such an institution. These findings suggest that the key political institutions of Korean democracy are not performing properly in the eyes of the public.

(Figure 4 here)

We can compare general levels of trust across three categories of institutions—political (national government, local government, political parties, and the National Assembly), governmental-administrative (courts, civil service, the military, and the police), and private (newspapers, televisions, and civic associations). The proportions expressing trust in most of the institutions in each of these institutional categories are highest for the private category of institutions with 79 percent and lowest for the political category with only 13 percent. The governmental-administrative category scored 43 percent. The general level of trust in democratic political institutions is extremely low. This indicates that the institutions have failed to supply what individual citizens and their nongovernmental organizations demand.

As compared to those trusting the political institutions, relatively higher proportions of the Korean people have faith in governmental-administrative institutions, especially those that once formed the coercive apparatus for authoritarian rule. A bare majority of the Korean people (51%) expressed trust in the judiciary, which once followed the directives of the presidency in the authoritarian past. Nearly three-fifth (59%) of the Korean people trusted the military, and one-half (50%) trusted the police. Nearly one-half (45%) expressed trust in the civil service that once formed another pillar of the old developmental authoritarian state.

It appears that significant progress has been made in de-politicizing security agencies and administrative organizations in the aftermath of the democratic transition. These changes, in turn, appear to have contributed to considerable levels of public trust in them. It is notable that major institutions of a bureaucratic-authoritarian regime have managed to obtain greater levels of public trust, while those of a democratic regime have failed to do so. More notable is that the Korean people are significantly less trusting of political and public institutions than private institutions, such as the news media and those known as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Three-quarters or more expressed trust in these private institutions.

When all three institutional categories are considered together, less than one-tenth (9%) of Koreans trusts most of the institutions in all three categories, while nearly twice as many (17%) does not trust most of the institutions in any of them. A plurality (42%), moreover, trusts most of the institutions in only one of them. When these percentage ratings are considered together, more than half the Korean population trusts most of the institutions in none or only one of the three categories surveyed. This finding supports the view that Korea today is not a society of high trust, a cultural requisite of democratic consolidation (Diamond 1999; Fukuyama 1996; Park and Shin 2003; Putnam 1993).

Korean Democracy as a Whole

On the whole, how well or poorly do the Korean people think their current political system performs as a democracy? To address this question, we first selected a pair of items that have often been used to tap a political system's responsiveness. The first item in this pair asked respondents how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the statement "The nation is run by a powerful few and ordinary citizens cannot do much about it." The second item asked them how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the statement "People like me don't have any influence over what the government does." To each of these two questions, exactly 40 percent replied negatively and affirmed the

responsiveness of the current democratic political system. When such responses to both questions were considered together, about one-quarter (24%) rated the system as fully responsive and another one-third (33%) as partially responsive. A plurality of 43 percent, on the other hand, judged it to perform more unresponsively than responsively.

For a comprehensive assessment of the regime's overall quality, we selected another pair of items from the EAB survey. The first item asked "On the whole, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way democracy works in our country?" Contrary to one would expect given the low levels of institutional trust and system responsiveness more than three-fifths of the Korean people (62%) expressed at least some degree of satisfaction with the current regime at the time of the survey, which was conducted just before the inauguration of a new president in February 2003. When asked, however, to respond to the statement "Whatever its faults may be, our form of government is still best for us," less than two-fifths (36%) reported agreement. Even among those who expressed satisfaction with the performance of Korean democracy, only a minority (43%) endorsed it as the best one for their nation.

Finally in our assessment of the regime's overall perceived quality, we considered responses to the previous question and statement along with the perceived character of the current regime and identified four different views of the current system of democratic governance. The respondents perceived it as (1) an undemocratic system; (2) an ill-performing democracy; (3) a well-performing democracy; and (4) a best-performing democracy.² The first, most critical view dismisses the current system as a non-democracy. The second view recognizes it as a democratic regime failing to perform satisfactorily. The third view sees it as a satisfactorily functioning system. The fourth view embraces it most enthusiastically as the best democratic system for the country. Less than one-quarter (23%) placed the current system in the most positive category of these four views. The most affectionate of Korean democracy in the present form constitute a relatively small minority.

They outnumber its severest critics by a small margin (23% versus 19%). Likewise, those who view the current system as a well-performing democracy outnumber those who view it as an ill-performing democracy by six percentage points. When all Koreans surveyed are grouped into the two broad categories of negative and positive views, those falling into the positive category lead those falling into the negative one by a slightly larger margin of eight percentage points (54% vs. 46%).

Are the positive assessments of the current regime as a well-performing or best-performing democracy confined to small segments of the Korean population? Or are such assessments widely distributed across the various segments? They are found to vary considerably especially across the categories of age, education, and residential community. Older and undereducated Koreans are significantly more positive in their assessments of the current regime as a democracy than their younger and college-educated counterparts. Residents of rural communities are also far more positive than those especially of large metropolitan areas. In all groups, however, close to one-half or more recognizes the current regime as a democracy and expresses at least some degree of satisfaction with the way it performs.

Support for Democracy

Support for democratic politics, especially in new democracies, involves more than favorable orientations to democratic ideals and practices. To their citizens with little experience and limited sophistication in democratic politics, both democracy and dictatorship may fail to provide satisfying solutions to the many problems facing the people. Confronting this gloomy reality, citizens with little democratic experience, more often than not, embrace both democratic and authoritarian political propensities concurrently (Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfer 1998; Shin 1999; Shin and Shyu 1997). Even growth in their pro-democratic orientations does not necessarily bring about a corresponding decline in their antiauthoritarian orientations. Popular support for democracy in

emerging democracies, therefore, depends on a majority of citizens who not only accept it but who also reject its authoritarian and other non-democratic alternatives.

Attachment to Democratic Politics

How strongly are ordinary Koreans attached in principle to democracy as a system of government? How strongly are they committed to its practices? A set of five questions allows us to estimate the general level of support for democracy in principle as well as in action. These questions address the desirability of democracy, the suitability of democracy, the preference for democracy, and the efficacy of democracy. Positive or pro-democratic responses to the questions are considered, individually and collectively, to measure the specific and general level of commitment to democratic governance.

The first question asked respondents to indicate on a 10-point scale how democratic they want the current political regime to be. A score of 1 on this scale means “complete dictatorship,” while a score of 10 indicates “complete democracy.” An absolute majority (95%) expressed a desire for democracy by placing it at 6 or above. More notably, nearly one-third (31%) desired to live in an advanced democracy rather than in a limited democracy by placing it at one of the two highest scores, 9 and 10 on the scale. It is evident that, at least in principle, most Koreans would prefer to live in a well-developed democracy.

Levels of attachment to democracy-in-practice are somewhat lower than those of democratic desire. In attempting to measure general orientations to democracy-in-action, the EAB survey first asked a pair of questions. The first question in this pair asked respondents to rate, in general terms, the suitability of democracy for their country on a 10-point scale. A score of 1 on this scale indicates “completely unsuitable,” while a score of 10 indicates “completely suitable.” A large majority (86%) considered democracy suitable for Korea by placing it at 6 or above on this scale. Those expressing high levels of democratic suitability with one of the two highest scores of 9 and

10 on the scale, however, constituted only one-quarter (25%) of the survey sample. Obviously there are many Koreans who, in principle, desire to live in a democracy but who do not believe that it is highly suitable for their country given its current situation. Even among those normative supporters of democracy, more than two-thirds (69%) do not believe it is highly suitable for their country.

As another indicator of general support for democracy as a viable political system, the EAB survey asked respondents whether or not they would believe “democracy is capable of solving the problems facing the country.” A substantial majority (72%) replied affirmatively. This percentage is, however, fourteen points lower than the percentage reporting democratic suitability (see Figure 5). From this finding, it is clear that even among the Koreans who see democracy as a suitable political system for their country, many question its viability. When responses affirming democratic suitability and capability are considered together, less than two-thirds (62%) was generally supportive of democracy as a viable political system for the country. When we compare this figure with that of democratic desirability (95%), we see that one-third of the Korean electorate remains attached merely to the idea of democracy as an ideal political system. Even after fifteen years of democratic rule, they have yet to fully embrace democracy as a viable political system.

(Figure 5)

To what extent do the Korean people embrace democracy as a more viable model or method of governance than its alternatives? To elicit specific support for democracy-in-action from a comparative or relative perspective, the 2003 EAB survey asked the second pair of questions concerning the daily practices of democratic governance. The first question deals directly with Koreans’ preference for democracy rather than its alternatives. Close to one-half (49%) expressed unconditional support for democracy, agreeing with the statement “Democracy is always preferable to any other form of government.” The other half had yet to embrace democracy unconditionally as the most preferred system of government. Perhaps because their country enjoyed a remarkable

economic achievement under the authoritarian regimes led by the military, one-third (33%) of the Korean citizenry was still entertaining an authoritarian alternative to democracy, reporting an authoritarian regime might sometimes be preferable to democracy. Less than one-fifth (17%) expressed no particular preference for either of the two regimes.

To measure the priority of democracy as a policy goal, the EAB survey asked: "If you had to choose between democracy and economic development, which would you say is more important?" A large majority of seven-tenths (70%) replied that economic development is far more (30%) or somewhat more (40%) important than democracy. Less than one-fifth (19%) said that democracy is somewhat more (15%) or far more (4%) important than economic development. Slightly more than one-tenth (11%), on the other hand, considered economic and democratic development of equal importance.

When these three categories of responses were considered together, only a small minority (30%) was found supportive of democracy as an important policy goal. Even among those who always preferred the democratic method to the non-democratic method of governance, a majority (62%) ranked democracy as being secondary to economic development. A much smaller minority (19%) fully endorsed the democratic model of governance, embracing democracy not only as the always preferred method of governance but also as a highly salient policy goal.

These findings make it clear that attachment to democracy among the Korean people has much to do with comparative considerations. When they view it merely as a political ideal, almost everyone embraces it as the best-possible political system. Even when they see it as a political enterprise, most of them are still in favor of it as a viable political system. Yet when they approach it as a model of running a government on a daily basis in comparison with its alternatives, only about half endorses it as the preferred model of governance. The higher the level of democracy's abstraction or generality, the greater is the level of Korean attachment to it. The higher the level of

its specificity, the lower is the level of democratic attachment. The broader the basis of its comparison, the lower the level of democratic attachment. This pattern is a notable feature of the Korean people's favorable opinions about democracy.

Another notable feature concerns the extent to which Koreans are attached to democracy. To estimate the depth of their democratic attachment, pro-democratic responses—desire, suitability, efficacy, preference, and priority—were added up into a 6-point index of attachment to democracy. The lowest score of 0 on this index means the absence of any attachment, while the highest score of 5 means complete or deep attachment. The mean score on this index and the proportions placed on its highest end are employed as separate indicators of overall attachment to democratic politics. Figure 6 reports these figures.

(Figure 6)

On the 6-point index, the Korean people as a whole average 3.3, a score that is slightly higher than its midpoint of 2.5. This score indicates that they tend to accept rather than reject democratic politics. The mean score is, however, nearly two points lower than the highest score of 5, which reflects complete or full acceptance. This suggests that many Koreans have yet to embrace democratic politics to the fullest extent. Figure 6 shows that only one in six Koreans (16%) remains completely or deeply attached to democracy by responding affirmatively to all five questions. Less than one-third (30%) is nearly completely attached to it by scoring 4, the second highest score on the index. When these two percentage figures are considered together, it is evident that those who have yet to be completely or deeply attached to democracy constitute a small majority (54%) of the Korean population. When all these findings are considered together, it can be said that the successive waves of institutional reforms have not been very effective in orienting and reorienting ordinary Koreans toward democratic politics.

Authoritarian Detachment

Have those institutional reforms been more effective in orienting the Korean people away from the political regimes of the authoritarian past than toward democracy? To what extent have Koreans detached themselves from the virtues of authoritarian rule? To address these questions, the EAB survey asked a set of four questions each of which focuses on a different type of authoritarian political system. Antiauthoritarian responses to this set of questions are considered, individually and jointly, to estimate the specific and general levels of antipathy for authoritarianism. The EAB survey asked respondents whether or not they would favor the return to any of the following four authoritarian regimes: civilian dictatorship, military dictatorship, single-party dictatorship, and technocratic dictatorship.

A vast majority (85%) expressed opposition to civilian dictatorship, disagreeing with the statement “We should get rid of parliament and elections and have a strong leader decide things.” A larger majority (90%) rejected the option to restore military rule, disagreeing with the statement “The military should come in to govern the country.” A like majority (87%) also turned down the option of single-party dictatorship, disagreeing with the statement “No opposition party should be allowed to compete for power.” Nearly as many (82%) rejected the option of technocratic rule, disagreeing with the statement, “We should get rid of parliament and elections and have the experts decide everything.” These findings make it clear that the Korean people, as a whole, are not much in favor of replacing the current democratic regime with any of its non-democratic alternatives under which they once lived.

Together, responses to these four questions measure the general level of opposition to authoritarianism at the regime level. We measured the magnitude of antiauthoritarianism at this regime level with a 5-point index constructed by counting the number of authoritarian alternatives to which each respondent expressed opposition. A score of 0 on this index means no opposition,

while a score of 4 means full opposition. On this index, the Korean people as a whole scored 3.4, indicating that the average Korean is detached from more than three of the four types of dictatorships surveyed. As Figure 7 shows, nearly two-thirds (65%) are fully detached from the virtues of authoritarian regimes by expressing opposition to all four types. An additional one-fifth (19%) rejected authoritarian virtues in three options. More than one decade of democratic rule has helped more than eight out of ten Koreans to dissociate themselves from authoritarianism fully or substantially.

(Figure 7 here)

Overall Commitment to Democracy

For Korean society to achieve democratic consolidation requires an unconditional or unqualified commitment to democracy among a majority of the mass citizenry (Alexander 2002; Diamond 1999; Inglehart 2000; Linz and Stepan 1996). In young democracies like Korea, such a commitment can be secured only with a deep attachment to democracy as well as a total detachment from authoritarianism because the cultural norms of the previous authoritarian or totalitarian regimes tend to cohabit with the institutions and procedures of democratic rule (O'Donnell 1996; Shin and Shyu 1997). Under this situation, many democratic novices do embrace both democratic and authoritarian political propensities concurrently “not as hypothetical alternatives but as lived experiences” (McDonough, Barnes, and Lopez Pina 1994, 350; see also Rose and Mishler 1994). Thus, the overall levels of democratic attachment and authoritarian detachment are considered together to determine the extent to which the Korean people embrace democracy as the only game in town and the degree to which Korean democracy is culturally consolidated at the level of individual citizens.

In Figure 8, we identified seven distinct patterns of regime orientations by asking how deep democratic attachment is and how complete authoritarian detachment is. The seven patterns are: (1)

very strong supporters who reject all four authoritarian regimes and accept democracy to the fullest or nearest fullest extent; (2) strong supporters who reject all four authoritarian regimes and accept democracy considerably more than half-way; (3) moderate supporters who reject all four authoritarian alternatives but accept democracy less than half-way; (4) skeptical supporters who reject all those alternatives but accept democracy minimally; (5) weak opponents who remain attached to one of the non-democratic alternatives while accepting democracy more than minimally; (6) strong opponents who remain attached to two or more authoritarian alternatives while refusing to accept democracy or accepting it minimally; and (7) the incoherent who are highly mixed in their orientations toward democracy and authoritarianism.

(Figure 8 here)

The most striking feature of Figure 8 is that more than half the Korean people support democracy very strongly or strongly and these supporters are two and a half times more numerous than those who oppose it. A plurality (34%) of Korean voters belongs to the group of very strong supporters who are completely detached from the virtues of authoritarian rule and embraces those of democracy fully or nearly fully. Another one-six (17%) falls into the group of strong supporters who are completely detached from authoritarianism and attached to democracy more than half-way. Slightly more than one-tenth (11%) are moderate supporters who are partially committed to democracy while rejecting authoritarianism fully. Those who oppose democracy, either strongly or weakly, by failing to dissociate themselves from authoritarianism constitute about one-fifth (20%). In addition to these democratic opponents, slightly more than one-seventh (15%) is either skeptical of or confused about democracy. When these opponents and those who fail to support democracy strongly are combined together, nearly one-half has yet to embrace democracy as the only political game they wish to play. From these findings, it is apparent that Korea remains far from being a nation of authentic or genuine democrats (Shin et al., 2003).

Is democratic support revealed through pro-democratic and antiauthoritarian orientations distributed widely across the various segments of the Korean population? Is it confined to a few particular segments? Once again, we explored these questions of a distributive nature with five demographic variables. In all twenty groups defined by gender, age, education, income, and residential community, majorities, ranging from 56 percent to 70 percent, are fully detached from authoritarianism and supportive of democracy at least to some extent (see Table 6). In all those groups, moreover, substantial minorities, ranging from 22 percent to 33 percent, are strong or genuine supporters of democracy. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that democratic support is widely distributed in Korea.

(Table 6)

Commitment to Liberal Democracy

Figure 8 shows that nearly two-thirds (65%) of the Korean people tend to support democracy primarily through rejection of authoritarianism. Do they also tend to endorse the principles of liberal democracy over those of an authoritarian government? To address this question, the EAB survey asked a set of four questions dealing with the liberal principles of democratic governance including the rule of law and the separation of powers (Diamond 1999, chap. 1; Zakaria 2003, chap. 1). More than three quarters (77%) expressed opposition to the arbitrary use of power by the government, disagreeing with the statement “When the country is facing a difficult situation, it is all right for the government to disregard the law in order to deal with the situation.” An equally large majority (77%) also expressed opposition to the age-old illiberal practice of justifying illegal means by ends, disagreeing with the statement “The most important thing for a political leader is to accomplish his goals even if he has to ignore the established procedure.” These responses, when considered together, make it clear that a substantial majority (63%) of Korean voters is fully

committed to the liberal constitutionalism of a *Rechtsstaat*, a law-bound state (O'Donnell 1996, 1999).

By sharp contrast, a substantial majority (61%) is not fully committed to the liberal principle of separating executive and non-executive powers and maintaining checks and balances among those powers. About two-thirds (69%) endorsed the separation of powers by disagreeing with the statement "When judges decide important cases, they should accept the view of the executive branch." A significantly smaller majority (54%) endorsed legislative checks on the executive branch by disagreeing with the statement "If the government is constantly checked by the legislature, it cannot possibly accomplish great things." Yet those who voiced liberal responses to both of these questions constitute less than two-fifths (38%) of the Korean electorate. Obviously many Koreans who accept the liberal principle of constitutional rule favor a powerful presidency instead of separation of powers.

In Figure 9, we explore the overall commitment of the Korean people to the principles of liberal democracy by counting their pro-liberal responses to the four separate questions discussed above. Those who voiced such responses to all four questions constitute less than one-third (30%). A few more Koreans (34%) expressed those responses to three of the four questions. Thus, more than three-fifths (64%) are fully or nearly fully committed to liberal democracy. They are followed by those moderately committed, who constitute a little more than one-fifth (22%). Those who are completely uncommitted or barely committed to it, on the other hand, make up less than one-fifth (15%). According to the mean score reported in Figure 9, the average Korean endorsed nearly three (2.8) out of four essential norms of liberal democracy. On the basis of these findings, we can reasonably conclude that the Korean people as a whole tend to endorse the norms of liberal democracy.

(Figure 9)

What proportion of the Korean people can be considered full supporters of liberal democracy? In the first place, they have to be democrats who are not only deeply attached to democracy but also totally detached from authoritarianism. In addition, they must understand democracy mostly in liberal terms. They also have to be committed, fully or nearly so, to the norms of liberal democracy. Using each of these criteria, we divided supporters of democracy into two categories: liberal and illiberal democrats. In the 65 percent of the Koreans who support democracy through rejecting all forms of authoritarian rule, 48 percent are, by and large, supportive of the principles of constitutional and limited government while 17 percent are not. In the rest who do not support democracy, 16 percent are supportive of those principles while 20 percent are not.

When the liberal conception of democracy is taken into account as an additional criterion, only 13 percent of the democratic supporters endorsing constitutional and limited government are fully—conceptually and normatively—committed to liberal democracy. Among the Korean people, authentic supporters of liberal democracy constitute a rare species, indeed. They are outnumbered not only by those who support illiberal democracy but also by those who favor a non-democratic alternative. This is the predicament Korea must face as it works to strengthen democracy.

The Future of Korean Democracy

What particular changes do the Korean people anticipate in their democratic political order? Are they optimistic about its future? If they are, do they see any possibility of its soon becoming a fully or nearly fully consolidated democracy? These questions prompt two separate items concerning the current and future standings of the political system on a 10-point dictatorship-democracy scale. Table 7 summarizes its current and future ratings in terms of the four regime categories discussed earlier. It also reports its current and future mean ratings on the 10-point scale. Comparing these two sets of aggregate ratings, we can determine the general direction and overall magnitude of the regime change expected over the next five years.

(Table 7 here)

According to the mean ratings reported in the table, the Korean people as a whole anticipate significant improvements in the overall democratic level of their current political system. On the 10-point scale, they expect the system to progress toward an advanced democracy by 1.2 points from 6.5 to 7.7 in the next five years. More than one-quarter (27%) think that five years from now they will live in an advanced democracy. This percentage represents more than eleven-fold increase from the current 2 percent who placed their present regime in the same category of advanced democracy. In the categories of soft authoritarian and limited democratic regimes, the table reports significant downward shifts. Those who think they currently live in a soft authoritarian regime would decrease from 18 percent to a future 5 percent if Koreans' expectations are fulfilled. Those who think they live in a limited democracy will also decrease from 80 percent to 68 percent. In the wake of these anticipated upward and downward shifts across regime categories, more than nine in ten Koreans believe they will live in a limited or an advanced democracy.

What proportions of the Korean people anticipate advances and setbacks in their current journey toward a greater democracy? To estimate these figures, we compared each respondent's current and future regime ratings on the 10-point scale. As expected from the above aggregate analysis, those expecting democratic advances are the most common, while those expecting democratic setbacks are the least common. More than three in four Koreans (76%) expect their political system to become more democratic, while only one in seventeen Koreans (6%) expects it to become less democratic in five years. In addition, one in six (18%) expects no significant change in either direction. In Korea today, the optimists who expect further progress in their democracy outnumber those who do not by a large margin of 3 to 1. This overwhelming sense of democratic optimism is a notable feature of Korea's mass political culture.

What specific patterns of democratic advances and setbacks do the Korean people expect in the near future? To explore this question, we first divided the present and future regime ratings on the 10-point scale into the four categories ranging from hard authoritarianism to advanced democracy. Then we compared these categorical regime ratings to determine the particular patterns of regime shifts expected over the next five years. These comparisons yielded six patterns of expected political regime change: (1) authoritarian persistence; (2) limited democratic transition; (3) advanced democratic transition; (4) authoritarian reversal; (5) democratic persistence; (6) democratic progress; and (7) democratic consolidation.

Of these seven patterns reported in Figure 10, the persistence of limited democracy is the most popular with a majority of 54 percent. This pattern is followed by that of continuing democratic progress from a limited democracy to an advanced democracy. Less than one-quarter (23%) expects it. A third popular pattern is to transform authoritarian rule into a limited democracy. About one-seventh (14%) anticipates this pattern. A very small minority of less than 5 percent, on the other hand, expects the persistence of authoritarian rule (3%), the reversal to authoritarian rule (2%), the further consolidation of advanced democracy (2%), or the rapidly transforming of authoritarian rule into an advanced democracy (2%).

(Figure 10 here)

Although a large majority of the Korean people is optimistic about the future of the democracy in their country, there are substantial disagreements about the extent to which the current regime will become more democratic. What is more noteworthy, though, is that nearly every Korean (95%) expects to live in a democracy soon (as compared to 82 percent who believe they live in a democracy now) and a substantial minority (27%) expects to live in an advanced democracy. That 27 percent would represent a nearly 12-fold increase from the number of Koreans who currently appraise their democracy so highly. Such optimism about increasing democracy can fuel

greater demand for further democratization of Korean democracy, which, in turn, can promote its consolidation as a new democracy.

Feelings of democratic optimism differ relatively little across the various groups defined by five demographic characteristics. The elderly, the least educated, and rural residents, however, appear to be least optimistic about the future of Korean democracy. In all demographic groups, however, majorities expect the current regime to become more democratic. Moreover, such optimism has very little to do with the divergent conceptions of democracy, the levels of knowledge about democratic politics, and the varying degrees of trust in institutions. Regardless of their personal backgrounds or political orientations, the Korean people remain optimistic about improvements in their democratic political life. This is another encouraging feature of Korean mass political culture.

Summary and Conclusions

The EAB survey findings presented above clearly reveal that, both institutionally as well as culturally, Korea remains far from being a consolidated democracy. Institutionally, the country has become a mature electoral democracy where the democratic principle of popular sovereignty is well practiced at all levels of government through regularly scheduled electoral contests. Yet, its democratic practice is stymied by the current system that blends a semi-presidentialism with a multiparty system, and uses staggered presidential and parliamentary elections. This system produces divided government and immobilizing institutional deadlock because rival parties control the presidency and the legislature. It has also yet to tackle the age-old problems of political corruption, economic and gender inequality and crimes, or many newly arising issues that divide the nation to an unprecedented extent.

Culturally, progress toward democratizing the hearts and minds of the mass citizenry is excruciatingly slow (Shin 2003b; Shin et al. 2003). Despite fifteen years of democratic rule, a

majority of the mass citizenry has yet to fully internalize the basic norms and rules governing democratic politics and to reject those of authoritarian politics. Disappointed by frequent failures of democratically elected governments to supply what they have wanted, many Koreans have come to distrust not only their elected governors and lawmakers but also the very institutions of popular representation. Among the Korean electorate, therefore, it is a small minority who embraces democracy not only as the best form of government ever experienced but also as the best method of governance to practice always. Deep in the hearts of too many Koreans, democracy has yet to become the only political game they would choose to play on a daily basis.

Empirically, there is little doubt that as a new democracy Korea lacks specific support for democracy-in-action, such as liberal democracy. Such support is neither broadly distributed nor deeply rooted. It is especially lacking among the older generations of people who lived most of their lives under civilian and military dictatorships, perhaps because they recall their emergence from decades of poverty and unemployment during decades of military rule. On the other hand, normative support for democracy as an ideal political system has become a nearly universal phenomenon. General support for democracy-in-action, which involves the endorsement of democracy as a suitable and efficacious system, has already become pervasive throughout every segment of the population. Specific support for democracy-in-action is evident in very high levels of optimism about future progress in the democracy movement. Perhaps the confluence of optimism about democratic development, incessant demand for political and economic reforms, increasing use of the new information technology for electronic democracy, and greater experience in democratic politics will allow younger generations of Korean political leaders and civic activists to turn their country into the first consolidated democracy in Asia.

Theoretically, the findings of our first EAB survey conducted

in Korea suggest that the conceptions of democracy among the mass publics hold the key to understanding how and why people react to democratic regime change. In their own subjective world of democratization, ordinary people figure out what constitutes democracy before they decide to embrace or not to embrace it as the only option worth choosing. Two considerations, how they think about democracy and in what specific terms they understand it, substantially shape their perceptions and assessments of democratic change in both the past and in the future. We cannot fully unravel the dynamics of democratization among the mass publics of new democracies until we understand equally well how and why they understand democracy as they do. In the public opinion research conducted in third-wave democracies during the past two decades, however, such fundamental questions have yet to receive adequate exploration (Camp 2001; McDonough, Barnes, and Lopez Pina 1998; Norris 1999; Pharr and Putnam 2000; Putnam 2002; Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfer 1998; Shin 1999).

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Endnotes

*An earlier version of this paper was presented at an international conference “How People View Democracy: Public Opinion in New Democracies,” which was organized by Stanford University’s Center for Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law on July 21-22, 2003. The authors wish to thank Anita Harrison for helpful comments and suggestions on earlier drafts and Byong-Kuen Jhee for research assistance.

¹These two figures were derived from the comparison of the domains in each of the two sphere of public life which individual respondents rated negatively and positively. Those who rated more domains negatively were judged to have lost more than gained from the democratic regime change, while those who did more domains positively were judged to have gained more than lost.

² These four types of regime quality are identified in three successive steps. In the first step, respondents were divided into two groups according to their perception of the current regime. Those who perceived it as a non-democracy were grouped into the most negative quality type of an undemocratic system. In the second step, we further divided those who perceived it as a democracy into two subgroups depending on whether or not they were satisfied with its performance. Those who were not satisfied formed the type of an ill-functioning democracy. In the final, third step, we further subdivided into two types those who were satisfied with the performance of the current regime as a democracy on the basis of their relative assessment of its quality. Those who expressed agreement to the statement that “Whatever its faults may be, our form of government is still the best for us” formed the most positive quality type of a best-performing democracy. Those who did not agree with it were placed into the second most positive type of a well-performing democracy.

Table 1 Perceptions of the Past and Current Regimes

Regime types	Past regime	Current regime
Hard authoritarianism	16.5%	0.5%
Soft authoritarianism	54.9	17.8
Limited democracy	27.5	79.5
Advanced democracy	0.9	2.3
(No response)	0.2	0.0
<i>(Mean on 10-point scale)</i>	<i>(4.4)</i>	<i>(6.5)</i>

Source: 2003 East Asia Barometer survey conducted in Korea.

Table 2 Demographic Differences in Perceptions of Regimes and Regime Change

Demographic Variables	Past regime as an authoritarian regime	Present regime as a democracy	Democratic regime change
(entire sample)	(71.3%)	(81.7%)	(56.7%)
Gender			
Male	72.3	82.0	58.3
Female	70.6	81.5	55.2
Age			
20-29	74.8	80.2	58.5
30-39	74.0	80.6	56.9
40-49	71.3	81.3	57.2
50-59	65.4	81.7	51.3
60 & older	67.3	86.7	57.5
Education			
Elementary school	66.9	89.3	59.2
Middle school	62.4	80.7	48.6
High school	72.8	81.2	58.0
Some college	73.9	79.8	55.9
College graduation	72.3	80.6	55.7
Income			
Lowest	76.4	80.5	62.0
Low	72.1	83.5	59.2
Middle	68.5	81.2	51.5
High	61.3	82.3	47.4
Highest	76.7	82.9	61.6
Community			
Large cities	74.7	80.2	59.6
Other cities	69.8	81.0	52.8
Rural areas	63.9	88.5	57.4

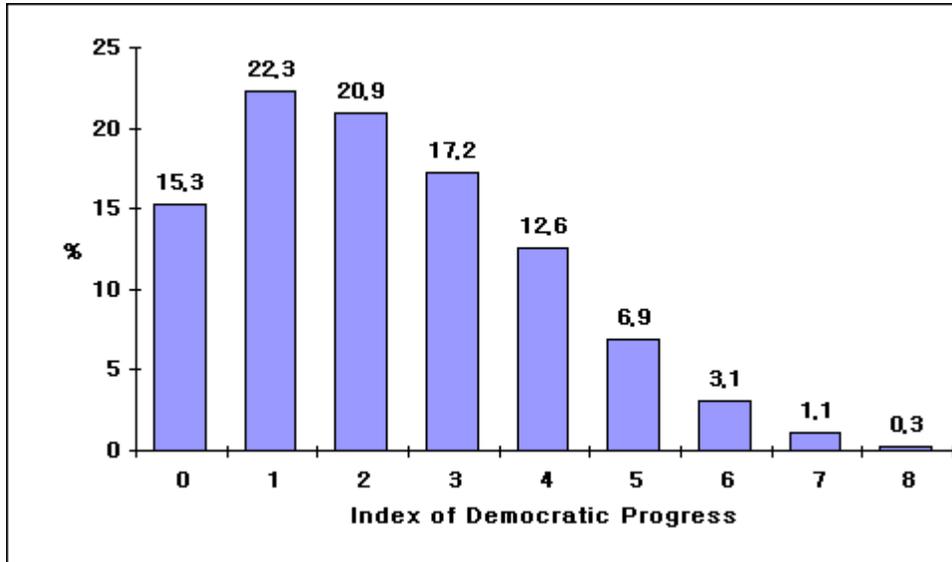
Source: 2003 East Asia Barometer survey conducted in Korea.

Table 3 Levels of Attachment to the Liberal Notion of Democracy and Perceptions of the Past and Present Regimes

Levels of Attachment	Past regime as a non-democracy	Current regime as a democracy	(N)
Unattached	69.9%	82.2%	(508)
Weakly attached	71.8	82.3	(766)
Moderately attached	69.7	81.4	(175)
Strongly attached	86.5	69.2	(51)

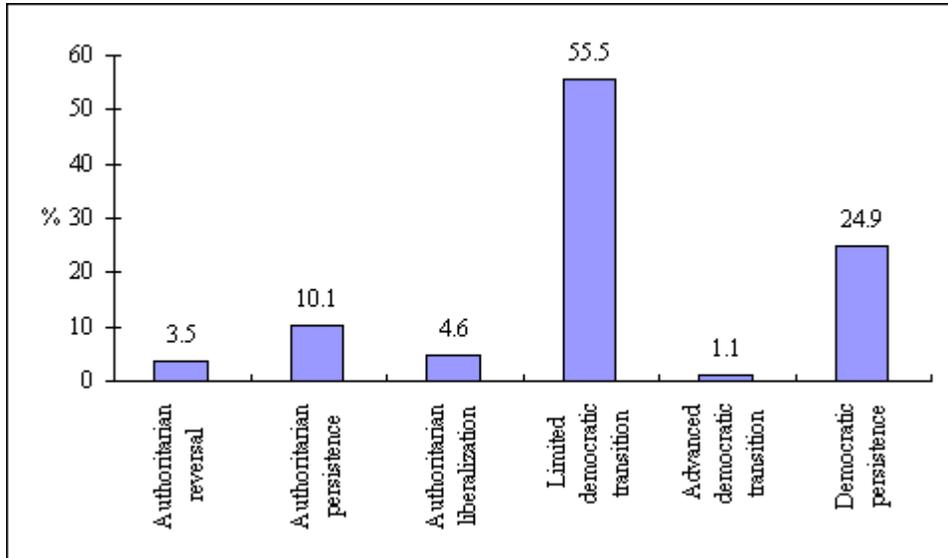
Source: 2003 East Asia Barometer survey conducted in Korea.

Figure 1. The Extent to Which Democratic Progress is Recognized

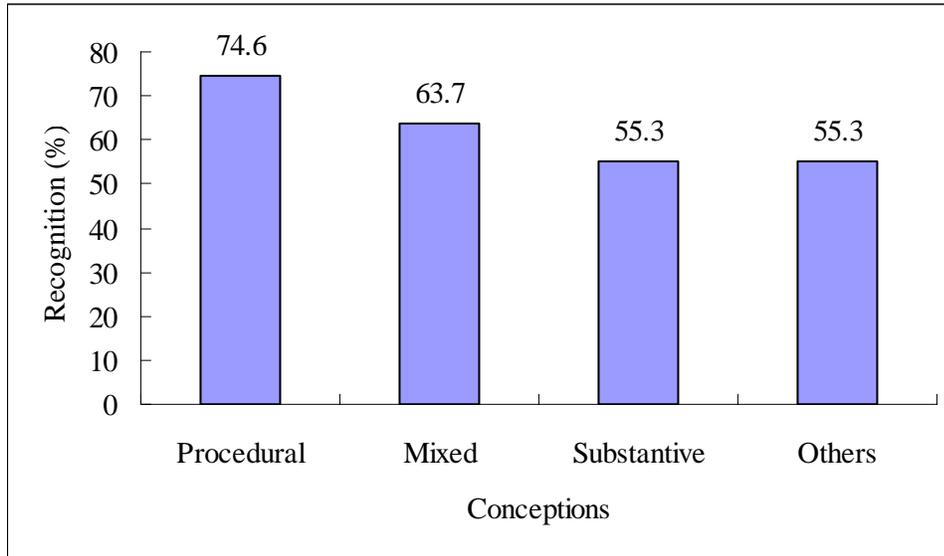


Source: 2003 East Asia Barometer survey conducted in Korea

Source: 2003 East Asia Barometer survey conducted in Korea.

Figure 2 Patterns of Perceived Regime Change

Source: 2003 East Asia Barometer survey conducted in Korea.

Figure 3 Conceptions of Democracy and Recognition of Democratic Regime Change

Source: 2003 East Asia Barometer survey conducted in Korea.

Table 4 Perceived Consequences of Democratic Regime Change for Political and Policy Performance

	Mean	SD	Negative Change (A)	Positive Change (B)	PDI (B-A)
Political Performance					
Freedom of speech	.74	.76	6.4%	69.7%	63.3%
Freedom of association	.52	.76	7.9	53.1	45.2
Equal treatment	.24	.78	14.8	37.7	22.9
Popular influence	.22	.82	17.1	37.6	20.5
Independent judiciary	.04	.78	20.9	26.3	5.4
(average scores)	(.35)	(.78)	(12.1)	(44.9)	(31.5)
Policy Performance					
Anticorruption	-.15	.88	33.4	23.2	-10.2
Law and order	-.17	.89	36.5	24.7	-.11.8
Economic development	-.25	.97	42.5	24.9	-.17.6
Economic equality	-.70	.86	60.9	8.1	-.52.8
(average scores)	(-.32)	(.90)	(44.3)	(20.2)	(-23.1)

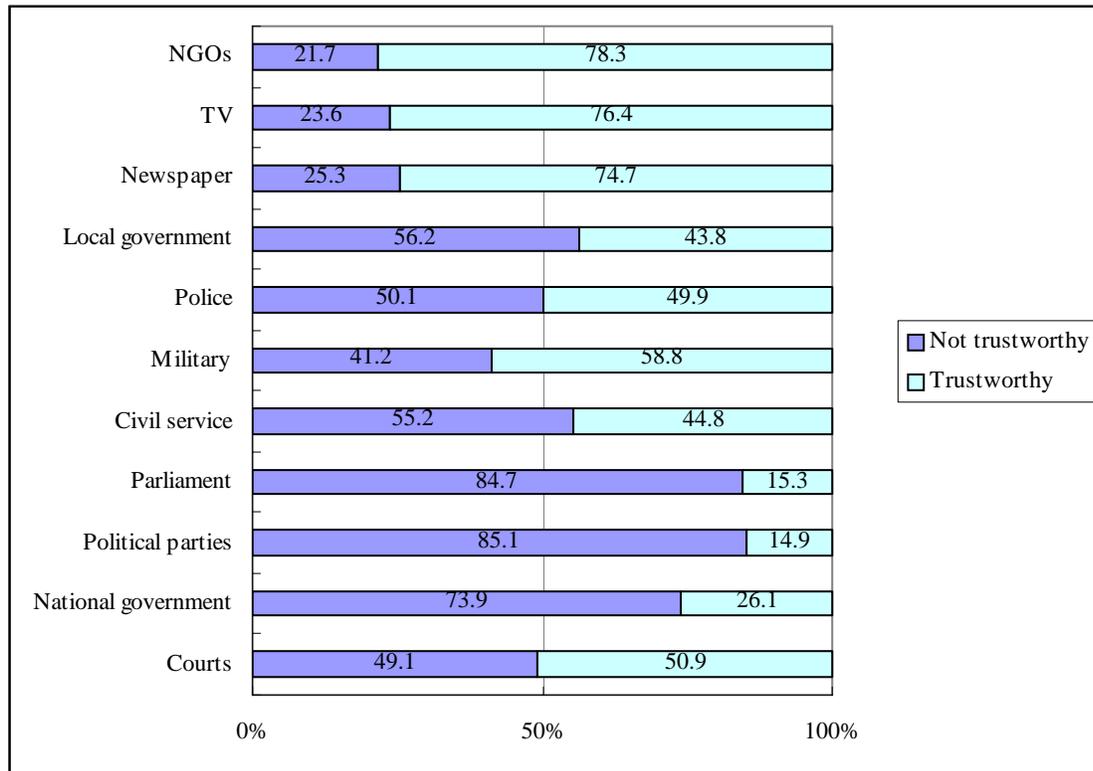
Source: 2003 East Asia Barometer survey conducted in Korea.

Table 5 Demographic Differences in the Perceptions of Changes in Political and Policy Performance

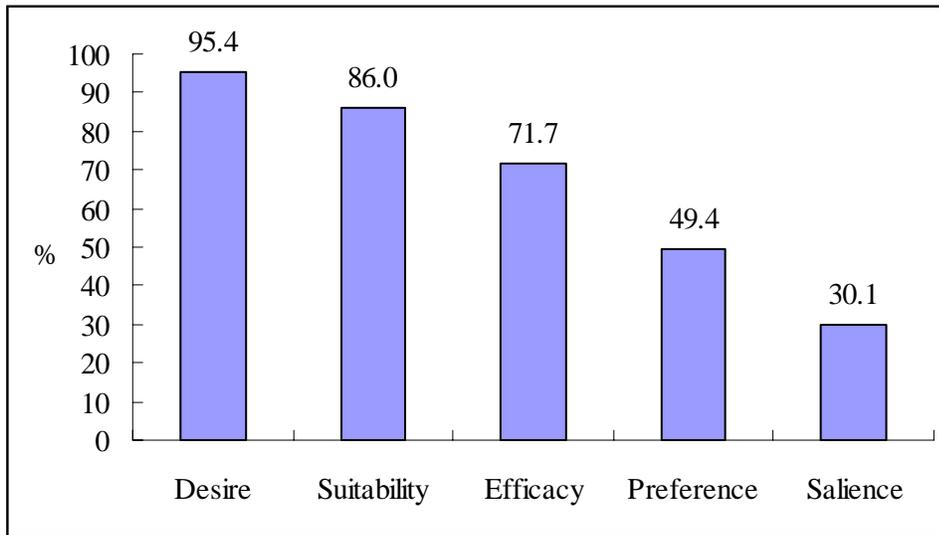
Demographic Variables	Political Performance			Policy Performance		
	Positive	Negative	Net	Positive	Negative	Net
(entire sample)	(70.0%)	(18.2%)	(+51.8%)	(28.3%)	(57.9%)	(-29.6%)
<hr/>						
Gender						
Male	71.0	18.0	+52.9	30.5	55.2	-24.7
Female	68.4	18.8	+49.6	25.5	59.4	-33.9
Age						
20-29	70.1	18.1	+51.9	31.9	55.5	-23.6
30-39	70.2	17.6	+52.6	26.5	56.1	-29.6
40-49	68.5	19.6	+48.9	26.6	60.2	-33.6
50-59	70.7	18.8	+51.8	21.6	61.8	-40.3
60 & older	69.0	18.1	+50.9	31.9	54.4	-22.6
Education						
Elementary school	71.0	18.3	+52.6	35.5	52.1	-16.6
Middle school	74.3	15.6	+58.7	25.7	56.9	-31.2
High school	68.1	17.4	+50.7	24.2	59.8	-35.6
Some college	71.1	19.0	+52.1	31.6	54.8	-23.2
College graduation	69.6	21.7	+47.8	30.8	56.9	-26.1
Income						
Lowest	74.5	16.3	+58.3	26.6	60.7	-34.2
Low	71.0	18.3	+52.7	32.0	50.0	-17.9
Middle	63.5	23.1	+40.4	28.8	53.1	-24.2
High	64.7	23.7	+40.9	24.8	62.5	-35.7
Highest	72.4	11.8	+66.6	27.2	62.2	-35.3
Community						
Large cities	69.6	20.2	+49.5	24.5	60.8	-36.2
Other cities	70.3	16.5	+53.9	31.6	63.5	-21.9
Rural areas	67.8	17.5	+50.3	30.6	55.7	-25.1

Source: 2003 East Asia Barometer survey conducted in Korea.

Figure 4 Levels of Trust in Public and Private Institutions



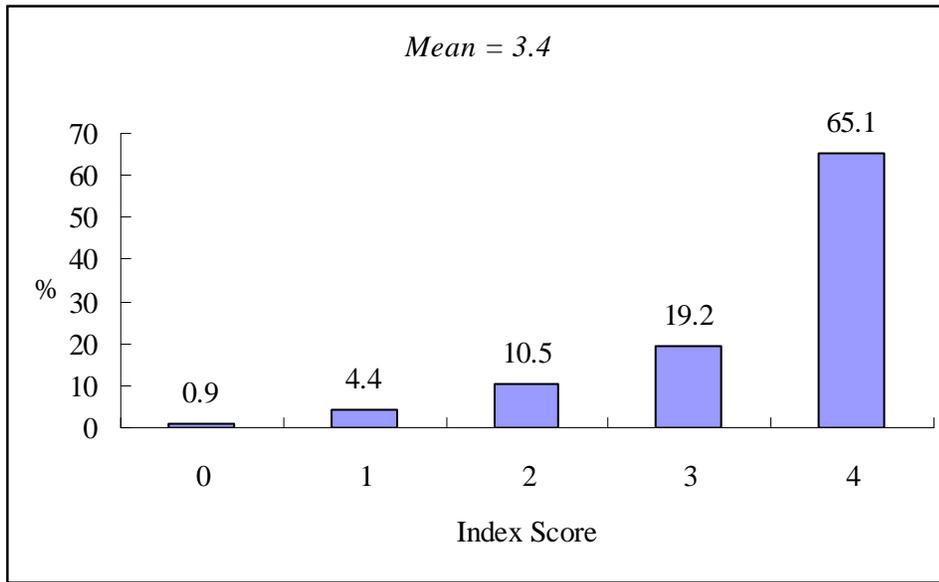
Source: 2003 East Asia Barometer survey conducted in Korea.

Figure 5 Favorable Orientations to Democracy

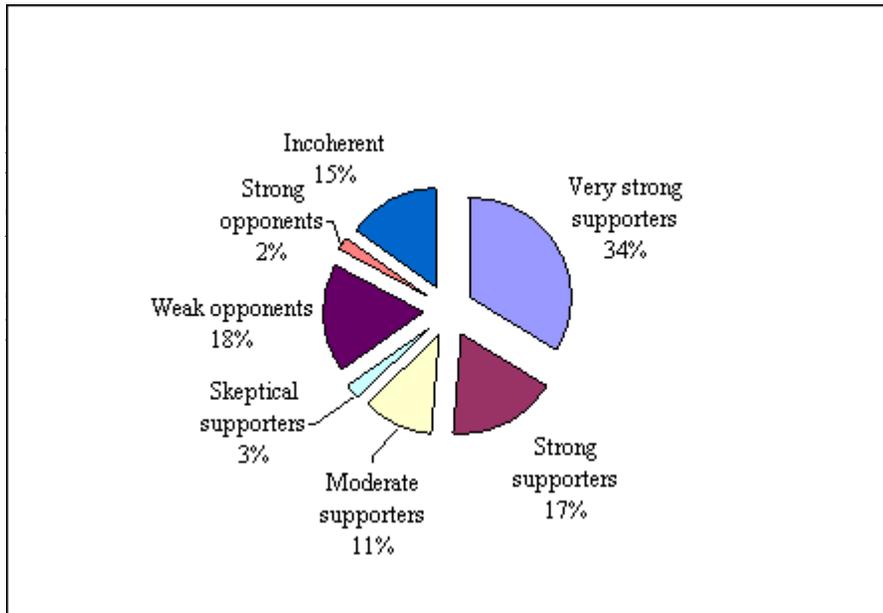
Source: 2003 East Asia Barometer survey.

Figure 6 Overall Levels of Attachment to Democracy

Source: 2003 East Asia Barometer survey conducted in Korea.

Figure 7 Overall Levels of Detachment from Authoritarianism

Source: 2003 East Asia Barometer survey conducted in Korea.

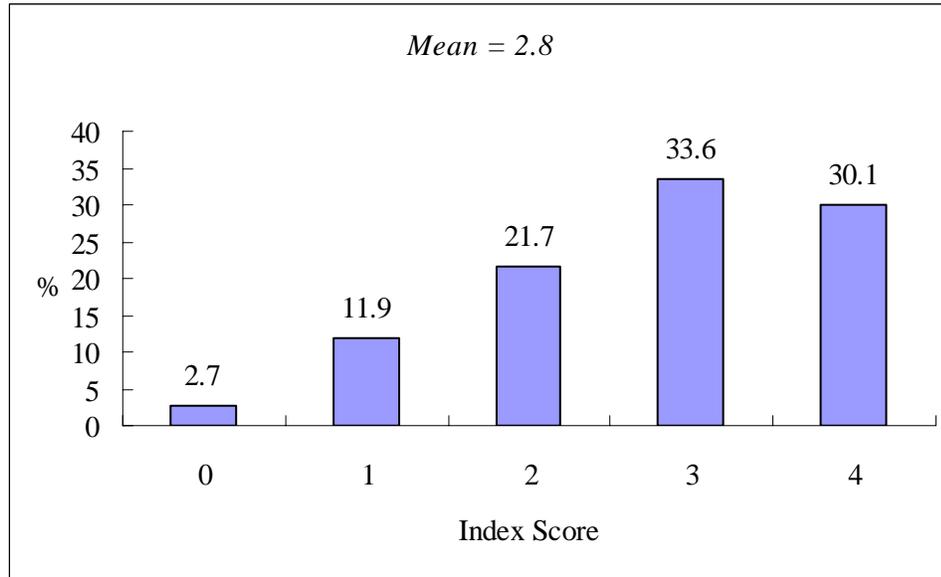
Figure 8 Patterns of Commitment to Democracy

Source: 2003 East Asia Barometer survey conducted in Korea.

Table 6 Demographic Differences in Democratic Support and Opposition

Demographic variables (entire sample)	Opponents (20.6%)	Very strong supporters (28.2%)	All supporters (64.7%)
Gender			
Male	22.0	27.3	64.4
Female	19.2	29.1	65.0
Age			
20-29	21.4	26.1	63.7
30-39	20.2	28.6	64.8
40-49	18.0	32.7	70.3
50-59	22.0	28.3	62.3
60 & older	22.6	24.3	59.7
Education			
Elementary school	17.8	26.6	63.3
Middle school	27.5	22.0	56.0
High school	20.1	28.1	65.7
Some college	20.1	30.0	66.9
College graduation	21.3	30.4	64.0
Income			
Lowest	23.0	24.7	61.3
Low	22.5	30.2	59.9
Middle	17.3	25.6	67.3
High	17.3	32.7	68.8
Highest	22.4	27.2	67.2
Community			
Large cities	18.8	28.2	64.9
Other cities	23.3	29.0	64.2
Rural areas	19.7	25.7	65.6

Source: 2003 East Asia Barometer survey conducted in Korea.

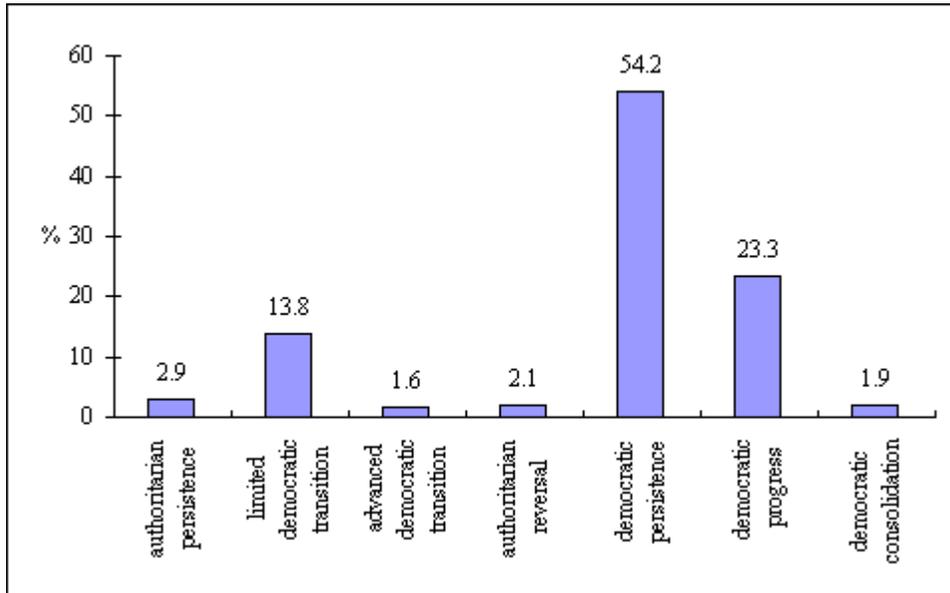
Figure 9 Levels of Commitment to the Norms of Liberal Democracy

Source: 2003 East Asia Barometer survey conducted in Korea.

Table 7 Comparing the Current and Future Levels of Democratization

Regime Categories	Current Regime	Future Regime
Hard authoritarianism	1.5%	0.1%
Soft authoritarianism	17.8	4.9
Limited democracy	79.5	68.0
Advanced democracy	2.3	26.7
(no response)	(0.0)	(0.3)
<i>(Mean on 10-point index)</i>	<i>(6.5)</i>	<i>(7.7)</i>

Source: 2003 East Asia Barometer survey conducted in Korea.

Figure 10 Patterns of Expected Regime Change

Source: 2003 East Asia Barometer survey conducted in Korea.

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In July 2001, the EABS joined with three partner projects -- New Europe Barometer, Latinobarometro and Afrobarometer -- in a path-breathing effort to launch Global Barometer Survey (GBS), a global consortium of comparative surveys across emerging democracies and transitional societies.

The EABS is now becoming a true pan-Asian survey research initiative. New collaborative teams from Indonesia, Singapore, Cambodia, and Vietnam are joining the EABS as the project enters its second phase (2004-2008). Also, the State of Democracy in South Asia Project, based at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (in New Delhi) and directed by Yogendra Yadav, is collaborating with the EABS for the creation of a more inclusive regional survey network under the new identity of the Asian Barometer Survey. This path-breaking regional initiative builds upon a substantial base of completed scholarly work in a number of Asian countries. Most of the participating national teams were established more than a decade ago, have acquired abundant experience and methodological know-how in administering nationwide surveys on citizen's political attitudes and behaviors, and have published a substantial number of works both in their native languages and in English.

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