

Original Paper

Political Leadership for Crisis Management: A Comparative Case Study of Asian Leaders (Note 1)

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Abstract

This study looks at the comparative analysis of the political leadership and thoughts of two Asian leaders. There are different thoughts and political approaches attributed to Lee Kuan Yew and Kim Dae-Jung. Some of the key concepts include political leadership, Asian values, and democracy in Asia. The qualitative analysis of different resources revealed and proved several theories and views of Lee Kuan Yew and Kim Dae-Jung. It establishes different thoughts and political leadership of the two leaders, a scenario that can help future leaders to align the policies that can enhance, social, political and economic development in different Asian countries. This study also establishes the importance of their different view on Asian values and how did they overcome the national crisis. Although Lee Kuan Yew and Kim Dae-Jung had different opinions on Asian Values, both work positively towards the development of their countries.

Keywords

political leadership, Asian Values, Kim Dae-jung, Lee Kuan-yew, crisis management

1. Introduction

Political leadership is an essential aspect of society. Herath (2015) affirms the importance of political leaders due to the broad impact of their actions, especially for powerful countries. Kim Dae-Jung, the fifteenth president of South Korea, led his nation through the transition process of democratization in 1997. It was the first change of government between the ruling and opposition parties in Korea. Previously, the country had been ruled by authoritarian leaders, most of them military dictators. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2000 for his efforts to improve his country's democratic process, human rights struggle, and relationship with North Korea, as well as his attempt to restore peace in East Asia (The Norwegian Nobel Committee, 2000). His efforts to maintain peace with North Korea were

implemented through the Sunshine Policy. Kim, who was born on 3 December 1925 during a period when Korea was ruled by Japan, used a Japanese name (Toyota) instead of his Korean name in his youth and studied the Japanese language in school (*Korea Times*, 2010).

Kim Dae-Jung began his political career in 1954. For many years, he opposed the rule of dictators and as a result underwent immense torture such as imprisonment, kidnapping, exile, and even a death sentence that was not executed (Jeong, 2004). He became president when the country was undergoing financial constraints which became known as the IMF crisis. Under his leadership from 1998 to 1999, however, the economy moved from -5.8 % to 10.2% (Jeong, 2004).

On the other hand, Lee Kuan Yew was a political leader who was widely recognized due to the role he played in shaping modern-day Singapore. Lee was born in 1923 when Singapore was a colony of Great Britain. Hence, he grew up speaking and educated in English and went by his English name, Harry, which given to him by his paternal grandfather, Lee Boon Leong (Oei, 2015). During World War II, when Japan ruled Singapore from 1942 to 1945, Lee was almost killed by Japanese military but luckily escaped from Sook Ching, where between 25,000 and 50,000 lives were slaughtered (*The Straits Times*, 2014). This remembrance by Lee describes his life in Singapore in simple terms:

“I have had to sing four national anthems: Britain’s *God Save the Queen*, Japan’s *Kimigayo*, Malaysia’s *Negara Ku*, and finally Singapore’s *Majulah Singapura*; such were the political upheavals of the last sixty years” (Lee, 2013, p. 130).

Lee became the first prime minister of Singapore in 1959 and served the most extended term of any since, from 5 June 1959 until 28 November 1990 (Patapan, 2013). He commanded a significant level of influence as the “minister mentor” of Singapore even after resigning from the duties of prime minister. As minister mentor, Lee spent most of his time teaching and speaking on the role of Asian values in a country’s political leadership. For example, he did several lectures and interview at Harvard Kennedy School of Government (Williams, 2014). As a strong advocate of the Asian values, of course, he was no big fan of American-style democracy.

These two political leaders, though they played different crucial roles in the development of their countries, had similar backgrounds and experiences. Both faced catastrophic periods in their nations’ histories when they came to the scene as political leaders.

On the one hand, Kim faced shattering adversity during his time in power. In December 1997, he won the presidential election, but in front of him was a huge economic crisis. Businesses went bankrupt and unemployment skyrocketed. Even when he spoke of his victory at his inaugural address, he could not speak and wept.

Lee faced similarly troubling times as prime minister. In August 1965, Singapore was expelled from Malaysia. It was a pivotal moment of survival for the tiny state with low population and natural resources, for which this newfound independence was undesired. As his people’s leader, Lee appeared on television and relayed the sad news to the citizens of Singapore in tears, revealing during this appearance what a shock and emotional moment it was for him. By this time in history, however, both

Singapore and South Korea have overcome their crises and become global economic giants. How did these two leaders lead their countries to overcome their respective hardships?

2. Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research paper is to perform a comparison of the political leadership and thoughts of Lee Kuan Yew and Kim Dae-Jung. The comparison will be focused on the disparities and similarities between their views of Asian values. This research can be useful in the development of political leadership strategies to bring about cultural change and social value in this academic field. This comparison will also provide an in-depth discussion of how two Asian countries (South Korea and Singapore) achieved economic and political prosperity. This new understanding can be used as a learning platform for developing countries; researching the relationship between Asian values and democratic and authoritarian leadership can be used to derive strategies that may strengthen the stability of Asian countries. Ultimately, the new insights proposed herein can be used in considering the meaning of democracy to Asian people.

3. Research Methodology

This research aimed to compare the political leadership and philosophies of Kim Dae-Jung and Lee Kuan Yew. The assumption underpinning this study was that other factors which affect the external circumstances of political leadership are held constant. The research was qualitative because the focus was on analyzing the behavior of the two leaders and discussing observable outcomes. The methods used to collect data were both primary and secondary: The main source of data was the existing studies and relevant articles on Lee Kuan Yew and Kim Dae-Jung, and the primary sources were their written interviews and speeches. These methods of data collection were selected because they are the most reliable in the provision of historical data. During data collection, the keywords used in the selection phase were Kim Dae-Jung's leadership, Lee Kuan Yew's leadership, and Asian values. The analysis phase was conducted using the theoretical frameworks outlined in the study. The analysis was conducted on the articles that were discussed in the literature review. These articles were selected on the basis that they provided information that answered the research questions and met the objectives of the study. The thoughts of the two leaders were then analyzed based on their relation (or lack thereof) to democracy and Asian values. Political leadership accomplishment was analyzed based on the identifiable attributes that contributed to Kim and Lee's success. One limitation of the research was the use of secondary sources; this limitation was present because such sources do not provide the accuracy and reliability provided by primary ones. Therefore, the study may contain biased opinions derived from the authors. Another notable limitation was the lack of quantitative data to support the findings.

4. Asian Values and Political Leadership

Asian values are so called as concepts common to multiple Asian countries; they are largely derived from Confucius' teachings, which are on leadership, virtue, and judgment and these teachings originated in China and spread to other Asian countries. Patapan (2013) argues that the concept of nominally "Asian" values emerged due to the economic prosperity of Singapore that led to its exposure to Western influence, which in turn eroded family ties. On the contrary, Barr (2000) argues that the concept emerged from Lee Kuan Yew as his way of justifying his paternalistic rule in Singapore. According to Lee, Asian values portrayed the family as the most significant unit of a country (Patapan, 2013). The concept of Asian values employed by such countries emphasizes human relationships (Barr, 2000). For example, the relationship between a father and his sons is likened to that of a leader and citizens: Asian values are aimed at instilling discipleship and obedience on the son (or citizens) while the father (or leader) is expected to rule based on his superior wisdom (Barr, 2000). Moreover, Asian values have led to the development of the Asian model, which can be defined in the context of the East Asian concept of society.

Lee Kuan Yew claimed that East Asian societies view people not as individuals but as members of families (Zakaria, 1994). Individualism is directly discouraged in this ideology. Lee also compared this concept of society to the one adopted by Western countries, where he believed the role of the family is undermined by the government (Zakaria, 1994). Lee emphasized the ignorance of the West in assuming that the government can solve all society's problems while neglecting the fundamental unit of the community. These values expressed by Lee are widely used by Asian countries in governance. According to Jeong (2004), the concept of leadership in this context, interestingly, is individualistic in that a leader's personal traits enable him to rule. For instance, Lee Kuan Yew's concept of leadership is associated with his belief in Asian values. According to Lee, political leadership is characterized by one's intelligence, imagination, and one's perception of reality (Patapan, 2013). Leadership ability is not associated with the average person in society. In particular, only a few elite individuals should be given the opportunity to lead the people (Patapan, 2013). Additionally, political leadership needs individuals who are highly educated but not career-oriented, as it is supposed to be a calling with the main focus being service of the people. It is this political definition upon which paternalistic societies are formed. In these societies (such as Asian ones), an authoritarian form of leadership is practiced because it allows decisions of elite individuals to outweigh those of the average people.

Kim Dae-Jung's concept of leadership also centered on his Asian beliefs, though he came to slightly different conclusions than Lee did. Leadership, he believed, is a responsibility tasked to the government with the aim of maintaining peace. According to Kim (1994, p. 194), the government should cater to the needs of society, which guarantees peace. Kim's concept of leadership also entailed the influence of the democratic form of leadership. He added (Kim, 1994, p. 194) that people should be accorded the right to decide how they are governed. Lastly, his concept of leadership entailed practicing similar values across the globe to achieve a uniform form of democracy.

“Asia should lose no time in firmly establishing democracy and strengthening human rights. The biggest obstacle is not its cultural heritage but the resistance of authoritarian rulers and their apologist. Asia has much to offer the rest of the world; its rich heritage of democracy-oriented philosophies and traditions can make a significant contribution to the evolution of global democracy. Culture is not necessarily our destiny. Democracy is” (Kim, 1994, p. 194).

This belief is expressed in the desire for a global democracy, which means other countries would presumably implement Asian values.

5. The Leadership of Two Leaders

Asian values can characterize Lee Kuan Yew’s leadership. In 1982 and 1983, under Lee’s leadership, Singapore introduced Confucian education to secondary school and university curricula (Patapan, 2013). On top of this, a media campaign promoting Confucian values was run during this period (Patapan, 2013). All these were Lee’s attempts to introduce Asian values as the cornerstone of the nation. In 1994, Singapore redefined itself as a Confucian country (Patapan, 2013). However, states that the related Asian values were resisted because they were associated with lack of progress, despite Lee’s propagandizing efforts. However, Lee firmly believed that the use of Asian values would ensure that his legacy was protected as well as keep the country safe from Westernization, which would lead to the erosion of morality (Patapan, 2013). Zakaria and Lee (1994) also affirm Lee’s strong belief in Asian values, as he discussed in a well-known interview. Even after his retirement, his leadership influence has made a significant impact on the Chinese, who adopted the Confucian teachings after Singapore’s example (Patapan, 2013). It is evident that there was an overwhelming influence of Asian values on Lee’s leadership approach.

Lee required that the citizens followed strict rules. According to Herath (2015), he employed strict disciplinary measures to deal with unruly citizens. Lee (2015) was inarguably a believer in social discipline and imposed harsh measures to improve the productivity of the country. For example, he increased working hours and lowered benefits (Herath, 2015). Herath (2015) further states that those who were allowed to give him counsel were his close friends. He put little stock in the common views of the masses.

Lee’s leadership was visionary. After Singapore separated from Malaysia, the country consisted of multiracial communities (Herath, 2015). To reduce racial tension, Lee decided to build a national identity for the Singapore based on strong moral values. He began by providing a housing project that he used to ensure people of mixed races lived together in local communities (Herath, 2015). To build a national identity, he changed the official language policy and marriage customs and established a national defense system. First, he made sure every citizen learned English in addition to their mother tongue (Herath, 2015). English was commonly used for business. For the marriage order, he created a policy that encouraged educated men to marry educated women (Herath, 2015), believing it aided in increasing the number of intelligent people in the society. He also built a defense system by ensuring

every young male joined the military for two years (Herath, 2015).

The Sunshine Policy characterized Kim Dae-Jung's leadership. Jeong (2004) asserts that Kim established this policy with the aim of engaging North Korea to restore peace within the region. The policy guided the conduct of South Koreans along the Korean Peninsula by ensuring that they promoted peace and stability. In 2000, he was rewarded for his hard work when the North Korean president agreed to have a summit to discuss the relationship between their two countries (Jeong, 2004). Peace was restored, and the two countries agreed to work together to cater for mutual prosperity and in the restoration of affected regions after the Korean war. Kim (1994) advocated for peace with other countries as well—it is evident that he is a practical leader because he acted effectively to implement his ideas.

Kim Dae-Jung's leadership entailed the values of a democracy. Jeong (2004) states that after gaining power, Kim promoted the recognition of individual rights. Before his rule, South Koreans had noticed that individual rights had been neglected under the previous authoritarian rule (Jeong). As mentioned earlier, this form of leadership was encouraged because it promoted economic growth. However, South Koreans had agreed that this form of leadership had also contributed to increased levels of corruption (Jeong, 2004). Therefore, they preferred a change in form of governance. In addition, Kim reformed the education system that increased individuals' access to equal opportunities. This provision of equal opportunities for all citizens is an integral aspect of any democratic state. Kim Dae-Jung used his democratic-tending philosophies to reform the economic structure of South Korea. Jeong (2004) states that Kim used his authority in the negotiation of IMF bailout loans. With the aim of serving the people, he peacefully restructured the labor and management sectors. These deeds were per the belief of the duty of the government to the people, chief of which was to maintain peace (Kim, 1994). It is clearly evident that Kim was a democratic leader.

There have been debates concerning the role of Asian values in the development of democracy in East Asia. According to Zakaria's interview with Lee Kuan Yew in *Foreign Affairs*, Lee argued that Asian values are centered on the existence of the individual as part of a family, an extended family, and a society. It can be argued that the family is the foundation of this type of community. Lee also stated that a family gives a person a sense of responsibility, which ensures that he does not solely rely on the government for provisions (Zakaria, 1994). The resulting lack of reliance on the government fosters economic development because an individual will become more productive. Lee further argued that the democratic system of government in America could not be applied in East Asia because it would not meet the different people's needs (Zakaria, 1994). In particular, he did not believe that democracy would be able to uphold the Asian values that had led to the economic and political development of East Asia. On the other hand, Barr (2000) argued that East Asian countries such as Indonesia used Asian values to defend societal evils such as nepotism. Despite this argument, Lee alleged that the system of governance employed in America had eroded the morality of society (Zakaria, 1994). Since Lee strongly believed that Asian values were the essential reason behind Asian countries' achievements,

the last thing he wanted was for democracy to lead to their erosion. Ultimately, he argued that Asian values are incompatible with a democratic society.

Kim Dae-Jung disagreed with Lee's perspective on Asian values. In response to the abovementioned interview he sent a quick reply to the same magazine, *Foreign Affairs*. The basis of his counterargument was that Lee's belief was self-serving (Kim, 1994). As mentioned earlier, Lee thought the Western governments aimed at solving all society's problems, which led to them intervening in private affairs; Kim held, however, that the Asian governments did essentially the same thing. Kim (1994) states that the Singaporean government restricted people's behavior on activities, even down to trivialities such as chewing bubblegum. In the same vein, Gibson (1993) states that the Singaporean government imposed mandatory dating and those who failed to attend the social meetups were reported to their employers. Such government actions not only revealed that the Singaporean government was interfering with private matters but also that it lessened people's freedom. Therefore, Kim concluded that Lee was using Asian values to justify those of his actions that tampered with human rights, which he judged as self-serving.

Kim Dae-Jung (1994) argued that not only the West but also Asia has a profound democratic tradition, and that Asian values can be integrated into a democratic society. According to him (Kim, 1994), the foundation of the democratic society (which was developed by John Locke) is the people, and they are allowed to choose leaders whom they can overthrow at will based on performance. Similarly, a Chinese philosopher Meng-Tzu claimed that a king had the mandate to provide for his people and that he could be overthrown if he failed to fulfill that duty (Kim, 1994). It is evident that some members of Asian countries believed in democratic leadership. Based on this belief, Kim (1994) also mentioned that the Tonghak Peasant Revolution of 1894 against the imperialistic government was made possible and justified by these inherently democratic Asian cultural values.

Another factor that shows that Asian values are in alignment with democracy is that the fundamentals of a democratic society were evident in China and Korea before the West employed them. According to Kim (1994), the Chin (Qin) Dynasty had the rule of law; leaders were appointed after passing a test, and freedom of speech was valued. These practices ensured people were treated fairly, qualified leaders were chosen without bias, and people had a say in their governance. Lastly, Kim (1994, p. 192) added that Western-style democracy could be applied in East Asia because democratization had already occurred in Asian countries. Based on these arguments, it is evident that Asian values lay a deep foundation for the application of democracy.

Kim Dae-Jung's views on dealing with people were centered on Asian values. According to Kim (1994, p. 194), "*Xiushen qijia zhiguo pingtianxia*" which means, "to govern the country and bring peace to all, one should first be able to govern one's family; to govern one's family successfully, one should first learn to govern oneself". This teaching imparts the wisdom that the government and the elite in the society were supposed to maintain peace. Therefore, all government's deeds should be for the benefit of the people, since that is the way to maintain peace and order in society. Kim (1994, p. 194) also

stated that *Xiushen* represented the “self”. It can be argued that he acknowledged that the “self” existed despite membership in the family unit.

Lastly, the fact that Asian values are not distinct from the values upheld by Western nations supports Kim’s thoughts. An empirical study on four Western countries (Australia, New Zealand, United States, and Canada) and six Asian countries believed to hold strong Asian values regarding authority (China, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Vietnam, and Japan) revealed that acceptance and respect for authority is not distinct between the two groups (Dalton & Ong, 2005). The study examined perception of authority, which is a fundamental principle of Asian values. According to Dalton and Ong (2005), the results were contrary to popular belief in that East Asian countries were shown to have greater respect for authority. These findings suggest that democratic societies practice some Asian values.

According to Patapan (2013), Lee Kuan Yew thought of society as shaped in the form of a pyramid consisting of three layers, the top layer being comprised of exceptional leaders, the middle layer of qualified leaders, and the bottom layer of average people (Patapan, 2013). When he became prime minister, he decided to increase the number of leaders; between 1966 to 1971, the number of leaders had shifted from 150 to 300 (Patapan, 2013). Unsurprisingly, Lee believed that exceptional leaders should be at the top. Patapan (2013) states that he had a meritocratic focus on finding highly talented individuals with whom to surround himself. This belief translated into his thoughts on democracy: Lee argued that leadership, not institutions, determines the success of a country (Patapan, 2013). In a democracy, power is divided among various institutions to prevent leaders from exercising too much power. Lee opposed this form of government because he did not believe that people could know what was good for the country as a whole (Patapan, 2013). Therefore, according to Lee, leaders should be accorded more power and voting was to be done by a few knowledgeable people, not the masses.

Lee’s opinion of democracy affected how he interacted with and judged people. For instance, he held the Machiavellian belief that rule-breakers must be dealt with ruthlessly (Patapan, 2013), an attitude which reflected his perception of the capability of the average person. He also thought that leaders should ensure people are fully aware of the consequences of their actions. For this reason, Lee punished people publicly (Patapan, 2013). His high regard for leadership made him develop a specific technique for selecting leaders; Patapan (2013) states that he made sure he recruited the best university graduates who demonstrated analytical abilities as well as developed senses of imagination and reality.

In summary, Lee Kuan Yew’s thoughts on democracy were in alignment with his view on society. Patapan (2013) notices that these thoughts were centered on Asian values and such beliefs were witnessed in paternalistic societies; however, he asserts that such values are not specifically Asian, since they were witnessed in other modern democratic societies. Kim Dae-Jung’s perception of leadership was heavily related to his understanding of democracy. Kim (1994) argued that Asian countries could be stronger democratic states if they were to use their cultural values to strengthen their leadership tradition. For example, the people could still respect the Asian family institution while practicing freedom of speech. Kim (1994) also stated that the authoritarian leaders of many Asian

countries misunderstood how effective governance worked. This belief guided his understanding of democratic societies in Asia: According to him (Kim, 1994), economic prosperity could not prevail in a country where stringent rules were imposed on the people.

Regarding society, Kim Dae-Jung's thoughts transcended the level of the nation. Kim (1994) stated that, according to Asian values, society is based around the family. Therefore, he used this belief to formulate the practice of global democracy. Kim (1994) also argued that countries could learn to implement democracy within and beyond their borders, that systematic change in leadership was one of the lessons that countries could learn from the performance of democratic Western countries. Moreover, practicing this form of democracy would lead to better care of the environment, and in this respect, a global democracy could improve relationships that would promote responsibility.

In summary, Kim Dae-Jung's thoughts on democracy are highly influenced by his Asian values. He believed leaders could embrace their Asian values to create democracies that transcended their respective nations. This trust was centered on the knowledge that human beings, even average ones, can live in peace.

6. Findings

Lee Kuan Yew's personal beliefs profoundly influenced his political leadership, especially in the notion that the family is the essential unit of the society. This conviction affected his leadership, for example, when he decided to ensure that educated men married educated women. He did this to strengthen the family unit, with the assumption that intelligent children would be born to such a couple. Based on this leadership theory, Lee's political leadership style was transformational. He was able to change his country and achieve economic and political prosperity. His visionary traits further enhanced his transformational leadership style. Being a visionary leader, he was able to improve the moral values of Singapore by implementing Asian values. Despite being a visionary leader, however, he did not use motivation to influence the actions of his citizens; instead, he used the rule of law to instill social discipline by enforcing policies through harsh punishments. It is evident that his political leadership was conservative yet transformative.

As mentioned above, Lee Kuan Yew's view on Western democracy was that it was not applicable in an Asian country. He defended himself on the subject by arguing that a democratic government would erode the Asian values that were upheld in Asian communities, and that this erosion would ultimately lead to the moral decay which he witnessed in Western nations. Additionally, Lee argued that democracy is inapplicable because citizens are incapable of knowing what is best for their country. According to him, the average citizen should be given fewer voting rights than the chosen elite leaders in society. Therefore, his views reveal his conviction that democratic states may fail if the people are accorded too much power and Westernization erodes their cultural values.

The concepts and ideas of traditional Asian values play significant roles in the Asian cultural sphere, specifically for the leaders like Lee Kuan Yew who are searching for unique moral systems and values that are different from the West's. It is evident that Lee used these concepts to instill moral values in society as well as to defend his authoritarian rule. In Lee's society, the congruence theory applies since the values upheld by units of society, such as families, are in alignment with Lee's political leadership. Therefore, the success of Lee's leadership—despite Kim's argument that Asian countries once upheld democratic values—lay in his ability to erode such democratic values.

Kim Dae-Jung's leadership was also transformational in that he instilled new values into society which transformed his country into a democratic state. For example, he allowed individualism, which promotes the protection of human rights. In addition, he practiced global democracy through fostering a good relationship with North Korea. Kim also catered to the people when he created reforms in sectors such as education to provide equal opportunities among the masses. His political career was the platform he used to carry out his beliefs on Asian values and democracy.

Kim's thoughts on democracy reveal he was convinced democracy can be practiced in Asian countries. It is evident that he felt that he proved this notion as president of South Korea. On a larger scale, he held that democracy should be practiced globally. Lastly, he strongly believed in allowing a nation's people to dictate how they should be ruled, which is a fundamental aspect of democracy.

It is obvious that Kim's views on Asian values influenced how he exercised democracy in South Korea. He believed that those values were rooted in the traditions of his people, which made it easier for them to accept the Western democracy. Based on this understanding, the congruence theory applies: that values adopted by basic units of a society should be in alignment with the political leadership's values. Therefore, South Korea's deeply rooted values were in alignment with Kim's political leadership values. In this case, it can be argued that South Korea prospered under Western democracy because of the fundamental Confucian values embedded in the society.

7. Conclusion

It is evident that there were major differences in the political leadership approaches and philosophies of Lee Kuan Yew and Kim Dae-Jung. In essence, Kim was a democratic and Lee was an authoritarian leader; Lee considered East Asian communities different from Western and therefore judged Western democratic rule to be incompatible with them, while Kim thought that Asian communities' traditional values allow a Western democratic government to prosper; and finally, surprisingly, an overview of their political careers seems to suggest that both systems of government can lead to prosperity if administered under strict cultural values.

It is also evident that there were similarities between the methods and mindsets of Lee and Kim. The two leaders shared similar character traits such as intelligence, practicality, and focus on goals. Although Kim and Lee had conflicting opinions in regards to their leadership approaches, they both advocated for the economic empowerment and the general progress of the nation. Their successes can

be attributed to their strong belief in transforming not only their countries but the entire Asian community. It can be argued that this is the reason why Asian nations continue to become economic powerhouses in the global economy today.

The views of Lee Kuan Yew and Kim Dae-Jung differed on the bases of leadership style and the understanding and usage of Asian values. In regards to the leadership style, Lee was an authoritarian, while Kim was a democratic leader. Lee's understanding of Asian values was that they dictated that the family is the foundational unit of the society. He used this knowledge to justify his authoritarian rule, which may be considered controversial primarily due to its negative impact on human rights. On the other hand, Kim's understanding of Asian values was that they were embedded in their culture. He used this understanding to Westernize South Korea. And, despite having different opinions, both leaders achieved success.

The comparison of Lee Kuan Yew and Kim Dae-Jung's political leadership styles and thoughts is important because it can be useful in developing other countries. It seems that it is possible to exercise modernization while minimizing Westernization. Though Lee's belief supported an authoritarian rule, he was able to protect the integral values of his country despite Western influence. These lessons are useful to a developing country that wants to achieve economic prosperity through modernization. Kim's views on global democracy are useful in fostering international relations; they try to find democracy in Asia's long traditions and unique cultures.

However, dictators like South Korea's Park Chung-hee have justified dictatorship using the nationalistic sentiments of so-called "Korean-style democracy" (Kim, 2007, p. 98). Did Lee simply defend dictatorship? Lee pointed out the emerging social problems in Western society; he stressed that Asian traditional culture can solve the structural problems caused by modern Western civilization. Along with others in his political camp, he argued that Eastern family-oriented cultural traditions play a big role in alleviating the problems of community disintegration and moral collapse.

To sum up, the two leaders overcame crises in different ways at different times; nonetheless, they shared certain thoughts based on their common Asian values. Two influential Asian leaders are now passed away, but the impact of their leadership on their respective countries and their arguments revolving around Asian values are still going strong today. These leaders' exemplary methods of overcoming nationwide hardship will continue to contribute to the future development of Asian countries in the areas of economic prosperity, democracy, peace, and even a harmonious family unit.

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