

# Electoral Politics in South Korea

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## Introduction

In December 1997, South Korean democracy faced the fifteenth presidential elections since the Republic of Korea became independent in August 1948. For the first time in almost 50 years, elections led to a take-over of power by the opposition. Simultaneously, the election marked the tenth anniversary of Korean democracy, which successfully passed its first 'turnover test' (Huntington, 1991) when elected President Kim Dae-jung was inaugurated on 25 February 1998. For South Korea, which had had six constitutions in only five decades and in which no president had left office peacefully before democratization took place in 1987, the last 15 years have marked a period of unprecedented democratic continuity and political stability. Because of this, some observers already call South Korea 'the most powerful democracy in East Asia after Japan' (Diamond and Shin, 2000: 1). The victory of the opposition over the party in power and, above all, the turnover of the presidency in 1998 seem to indicate that Korean democracy is on the road to full consolidation (Diamond and Shin, 2000: 3).

This chapter will focus on the role elections and the electoral system have played in the political development of South Korea since independence, and especially after democratization in 1987-88. Five questions structure the analysis:

1. How has the electoral system developed in South Korea since independence in 1948?
2. What functions have elections and electoral systems had in South Korea during the last five decades?
3. What have been the patterns of electoral politics and electoral reform in South Korea?
4. What are the virtues and perils of the current electoral system?
5. What interests and strategies shape the discourse of electoral reform in South Korea to date and do these reform proposals address the shortcomings of the current system?

In order to discuss these questions, the analysis is divided into five parts. In the first section, I describe the historical dimension of electoral politics in South

Korea. In the second, I give a short description of the political system of the Sixth Republic to date. In the third, I classify the current electoral system. In the fourth, I analyse the functionality of the current system concerning the three principles of representation, integration and decision.<sup>1</sup> I show that the current system has significant perils because it combines a moderate disproportionality with an insufficient majoritarian effect and a very weak integrational effect on the party system. In the fifth, I discuss the process of electoral reform on a theoretical and empirical level. On the theoretical level, electoral reform is modelled as a game in which the tactics of the players are guided by two conflicting logics: the logic of consequentiality and the logic of appropriateness of institutions. Depending on which logic is dominating, institutional reform can improve the virtues of the electoral system or increase its perils. Since I conclude that the latter is the case in South Korea, I present some alternative suggestions for electoral reform in South Korea.

## Historical Overview

Since the partition of the Korean peninsula in 1945, the political development of the southern part of Korea has followed a democratic-authoritarian cycle, which has produced six republics to date.<sup>2</sup> When American troops entered the southern region after the surrender of Japanese armed forces, they found a society with no experience of the institutions and organizations of a representative democracy. Before Japan occupied the Kingdom of Korea in 1910, the political model was one of absolute rule by the Korean monarchy. The social and cultural system was deeply penetrated by Neo-Confucian philosophy. And the economic system was pre-capitalist, with only a rudimentary market system based on agriculture and almost without any modern industrial structure (see Nahm, 1993).

### *Political Development*

The first step in the process of South Korea's independence was the decision of the United States Military Government in Korea to establish a separate Korean state south of the thirty-seventh parallel. A draft constitution was elaborated by a parliament (National Assembly) which had been directly elected in May 1948. This National Assembly in turn elected Syngman Rhee to the presidential office. The Republic of Korea eventually became independent on 15 August 1948.<sup>3</sup> The young state faced highly unfavourable conditions for developing a stable democracy (Lee, 1990: 19). The vast majority of South Korean citizens had no understanding of the system of political representation and democratic institutions. The fragmentation of the nationalist movement after the Japanese

1. See the Introduction to this book.
2. First Republic 1948-60; Second Republic 1960-61; Third Republic 1963-71; Fourth Republic 1972-80; Fifth Republic 1981-87; Sixth Republic 1987-2001.
3. For more details see MacDonald, 1978.

had left the peninsula strengthened the development of an extremely pluralized party system, composed of more than 340 officially registered parties in 1947 (see also Koellner, 2001). Most of these so-called political parties were at best proto-parties, grounded by single politicians as vehicles for local or individual interests. A truly national party system did not exist. The partition of Korea into two hostile states and the Korean War (1950-53) seriously interfered with the development of an ideologically and programmatically pluralized party system. Given the ideological hegemony of anti-Communism and rightist nationalism, even centrist parties or moderate socialist parties were suspected of supporting North Korea.

In the new presidential form of government Rhee acted both as head of state and head of government, with a vice-president at his side. Yet after the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, Rhee gradually consolidated his one-man rule. By resorting to the constabulary, the president pressured the National Assembly into amending the constitution according to his political wishes. The 1952 parliamentary elections brought the National Assembly under the control of Rhee's supporters. The subsequent parliamentary and presidential elections of the 1950s were subject to extensive vote-buying, abuse of electoral rules and fraud. The opposition parties remained legal and were allowed to contest the polls, but under such semi-competitive conditions they failed to achieve significant electoral support (see Han, 1974; Pak, 1980).

As a result of his government's failure economically, Rhee saw himself increasingly deprived of both domestic and foreign support. By March 1960 he had to resort to illegal mechanisms to be re-elected. The unearthing of electoral fraud was followed by large-scale demonstrations by both students and urban residents. Finally, with no support from either the United States or the South Korean military, Rhee went into exile in Hawaii on 26 April 1960.

The short-lived Second Republic followed. On 10 June 1960, a new constitution was passed, which provided for a bicameral parliament. The new parliament was elected three weeks later. Chang Myon, a member of the former main opposition Democratic Party (DP), became Prime Minister on 19 August 1960. However, due to internal turmoil, widespread corruption in the state administration and Chang Myon's announcement that he intended to cut the defence budget, several factions of the military were reluctant to support the new democratic regime. On 16 May 1961, a junta, known as the Supreme Council for National Reconstruction (SCNR), led by General Park Chung-hee took over power. In accordance with Park's pledge that the military would only establish an interim regime, a number of SCNR-members – including Park – stepped down from duty and became politicians. A new constitution was approved by a referendum on 17 December 1962, and the presidential system was restored. After free and more or less fair elections Park became president in October 1963. The elections of 1967 gave him another term in office, and the constitution was

amended in 1969 to provide for the possibility of a third presidential term. In the 1971 presidential elections, Park prevailed against the candidate of the oppositional National Democratic Party (NDP), Kim Dae-jung, albeit only through massive fraud. In October 1972, Park suspended the constitution and declared martial law. Legitimized by a pseudo-democratic referendum, the notorious Yushin (Revitalization) Constitution was enacted. Park was confirmed as president twice more (1973 and 1978) by an electoral committee known as the National Conference for Unification. On 26 October 1979, he was assassinated by Kim Jai-kyu, the head of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency. A new military regime led by General Chun Doo-hwan emerged.<sup>4</sup> The new junta (Special Committee for National Security Measures) declared martial law, dissolved the National Assembly and banned all political parties. Finally, with the approval by referendum of a new constitution in October 1980, the Fifth Republic was institutionalized. It meant more or less the continuation of disguised military rule. Like his predecessor Park, Chun Doo-hwan was elected president by an electoral committee in February 1981. Before the 1981 parliamentary elections, political parties were unbanned.

In January 1985, two leading politicians, Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung, established a new opposition party, called the New Korea Democratic Party (NKDP), which fared remarkably well in the parliamentary elections of the following month. The emergence of a powerful opposition force led to a political crisis in 1987 and eventually to democratization when the Sixth Republic was established in the winter of the same year (see below).

### *Evolution of Electoral Provisions* <sup>5</sup>

The history of the Korean electoral system goes back to 1948. Since then there has been universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage. Candidates running for the National Assembly have to be 25 years old, while the minimum age for presidential candidates (at least in the 16 presidential elections held so far [1948-1997]) is 40. From the First to the Fifth Republic (1948-1987) the voting age was 21, but the ninth constitutional amendment of October 1987 reduced it to 20.

The Central Election Management Commission (CEMC), first designated as a constitutional agency in 1963, has been responsible for the organization and supervision of electoral campaigns, elections themselves and vote-counting (Election Commission Act, 1998: Article 3). However, before the arrival of democratization in 1987, the constant intervention of the authoritarian government prevented the CEMC from performing its function as an independent supervisory organ.

The plurality system was used for the presidential elections. For the first 40

4. References for more detailed research are Nam, 1989; Croissant, 1998a: 47-56; Han, 1974: footnote 10.

5. Overviews including references can be found in Croissant, 2001a; and Croissant, 2001b.

years after independence, elections were indirect. The president was elected either by the National Assembly (1948), by the bicameral parliament in a joint session (1960), or by an electoral college (National Conference of Unification) (1972-1981). In the intervals 1952-1960 and 1963-1971, the presidential elections were direct. After democratization in 1987, the principle of direct presidential election was re-established. The frequent changes of electoral system are largely attributable to the political interests of the president in office, who changed tactics for every election in the face of domestic political pressure and shrinking voter support. The second constitutional reform (November 1954) limited the four-year presidential term of office to two terms; the first incumbent was exempt from this requirement, however. In October 1969, the number of presidential terms was extended to three, and the term limit disappeared in November 1972. But with the eighth amendment in October 1980, the president's term of office was limited to one seven-year term.

Table 1: Presidential Elections in Korea (1948-1981)

Date	Method of Election	Candidates and Percentage of Votes			
		Winning Candidate % of Votes		Second Candidate % of Votes	
20/07/48 <sup>a</sup>	National Assembly	92.3	Syngman Rhee	6.7	Kim Gu
05/08/52	Direct popular vote	74.6	Syngman Rhee	11.4	Cho Pong-am
15/05/56	Direct popular vote	70.0	Syngman Rhee	30.0	Cho Pong-am
15/03/60 <sup>b</sup>	Direct popular vote	100.0	Syngman Rhee	—	
12/08/60 <sup>c</sup>	National Assembly	82.2	Yun Po-sun	11.5	Kim Chang-suk
15/10/63	Direct popular vote	46.6	Park Chung-hee	45.1	Yun Po-sun
03/05/67	Direct popular vote	51.4	Park Chung-hee	40.9	Yun Po-sun
27/04/71	Direct popular vote	53.2	Park Chung-hee	45.3	Kim Dae-jung
23/12/72 <sup>d</sup>	NCU	100.0	Park Chung-hee	—	
06/07/78 <sup>d</sup>	NCU	100.0	Park Chung-hee	—	
06/12/79 <sup>d</sup>	NCU	100.0	Choi Kyu-hah	—	
27/08/80 <sup>d</sup>	NCU	100.0	Chun Doo-hwan	—	
25/02/81	Electoral College	90.2	Chun Doo-hwan	1.6	Kim Chon-chol

a. Elected by Constitutional Assembly.

b. Election was declared null and void.

c. Elected jointly by the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors.

d. Elected by the NCU.

Sources: Appendix, Table A1; Croissant, 2001a.

Since 1948, bar the period 1952-1961,<sup>6</sup> the Republic of Korea has had an unicameral parliament (National Assembly, *kukhoe*). Independent candidacy was possible from 1948 until 1960, and again since 1973. In legislative elections, a plurality system in single-member constituencies (SMCs) was applied for the

6. The bicameral legislature was elected for the first time in 1960, and was abolished again with the fifth constitutional amendment in 1962.

1948, 1950, 1954 and 1958 elections to the National Assembly. In the Second Republic this system was in place for the election of the House of Representatives, while proportional representation was used for the House of Councillors in one nation-wide constituency. Several types of segmented electoral systems were employed after 1963, most of which had a strong majoritarian effect. In 1963, 1967 and 1971, two thirds of the representatives were elected via the plurality system in SMCs and one third by proportional representation in a single national constituency. In 1973 and 1978, two thirds of the members of parliament were elected by the binomial system, whereas one third was appointed by the president. In 1981 and 1985, two-thirds of the representatives were elected according to the binomial system, and one third was allocated proportionally in a single national constituency.

Table 2: Electoral Systems Used in Parliamentary Elections (1948-1985)

Republic	Date	Electoral System	Independents
<b>First Republic</b>			
1 <sup>st</sup> National Assembly	31/05/48	Plurality system in SMCs	yes
2 <sup>nd</sup> National Assembly	19/06/50		
3 <sup>rd</sup> National Assembly	08/06/54		
4 <sup>th</sup> National Assembly	07/06/58		
<b>Second Republic</b>			
5 <sup>th</sup> National Assembly	29/06/60 <sup>a</sup>	Plurality system in SMCs (HoR)	yes
	29/06/60 <sup>b</sup>	Proportional system (HoC)	no
<b>Third Republic</b>			
6 <sup>th</sup> National Assembly	12/12/63	Segmented system: 2/3 of seats by plurality system in SMCs; 1/3 by proportional representation according to percentage of seats for each party	no
7 <sup>th</sup> National Assembly	10/07/67		
8 <sup>th</sup> National Assembly	26/07/71 <sup>b</sup>		
<b>Fourth Republic</b>			
9 <sup>th</sup> National Assembly	12/03/73	Segmented system: 2/3 of seats by binominal system; 1/3 appointed by the president	yes
10 <sup>th</sup> National Assembly	17/05/79		
<b>Fifth Republic</b>			
11 <sup>th</sup> National Assembly	11/04/81	Segmented system: 2/3 of seats by binominal system; 1/3 by proportional representation according to percentage of seats for each party	yes
12 <sup>th</sup> National Assembly	12/02/85		

a. House of Representatives (HoR).

b. House of Councillors (HoC).

Source: Yang, 1994: 499, with modifications by the author.

Unlike other countries in the region, elections in South Korea were held in democratic as well as in authoritarian regimes. Though most of the time elections were neither free nor fair, they were politically relevant. The popular vote effectively gave legitimacy to the ruling coalition headed by the president. To

the South Korean people and the international community, elections were a type of democratic window dressing, attempting to prove that South Korea was part of the 'free' (Western) world. The authoritarian regimes permitted a limited pluralism and allowed opposition parties to participate in semi-competitive elections. However, abuse of the National Security Law, unfair party laws, the institutional architecture of the electoral system, fraud and vote-buying ensured that the regime was in no real danger of losing the elections to the opposition. Elections and the electoral system were not means of political competition but instruments for securing the regime's power. The government changed the electoral rules whenever it became clear that the electoral system had lost its use, hence the frequent changes of provisions for presidential elections and the electoral system used in legislative elections. In the long-term, however, this strategy was only of limited use. On several occasions elections developed an unintended political dynamic which forced the authoritarian governments to violate their own rules of the electoral game. After a while, the strategy of legitimization in semi-competitive elections failed. This failure, in turn, was the beginning of the end of the authoritarian rule of presidents Syngman Rhee (1960), Park Chung-hee (1978) and Chun Doo-hwan (1985) (see also Rhee, 1984; Han, 1989: 313-351).

The arbitrary character of the electoral law was particularly pronounced in legislative elections. The National Assembly Election Laws, used from the 1960s until the late 1980s, were constructed to secure the hegemonic position of the ruling Democratic Republican Party (DRP) of President Park Chung-hee (1963-1979) and later of the Democratic Justice Party (DJP) of President Chun Doo-hwan (1980-1988).

As argued in the Introduction to this book, elections have three functions. They ought to represent the people; they ought to integrate the people; and the electoral system has to generate majorities large enough to ensure the stability of government and its ability to govern. Table 3 shows that the electoral systems used in parliamentary elections during the Third, Fourth and Fifth Republic did fulfil the third function, but at the expense of the first. The large disproportionality of the electoral system during these times always benefited the ruling party. Even when the ruling party's share of votes shrank dramatically, it still won a large majority of the seats in parliament.

With regard to the integration of the political will of the Korean people the electoral system worked quite efficiently, at least from the late 1950s, as the decreasing fragmentation of the party system shows. This trend can be explained at least partially with Maurice Duverger's so-called 'sociological law' (1964: 217, 226). This maintains that the plurality method favours two-party systems; conversely, proportional representation and two-ballot systems encourage multi-partism. Duverger explains these differential effects in terms of 'mechanical' and 'psychological' factors. The mechanical effect of the plurality

rule is that all but the two strongest parties are severely under-represented because they tend to lose in each district. The psychological factor reinforces the mechanical one because voters soon realize that their votes are wasted if they continue to opt for third parties. Therefore, they tend to transfer their vote to one of the two strongest parties. The psychological factor operates also at the 'support'-side. Politicians do not want to waste their political capital by running as non-performing third-party candidates; instead they will join larger parties to improve their chances for candidature.

Table 3: Disproportionality, Fragmentation and Majoritarian Effects of the Electoral System (1948-1985)

	Average Electoral Disproportionality <sup>a</sup>	Effective Number of Parties (seats) <sup>b</sup>	Effective Number of Parties (votes)	Percentage of Vote (GP <sub>A</sub> ) <sup>c</sup>	Percentage of Seat (GP <sub>B</sub> ) <sup>d</sup>	Average Electoral Disproportionality (GP) <sup>e</sup>	Percentage of Seats for Independents <sup>f</sup>	Unrepresented Votes <sup>g</sup>
<b>First Republic</b>								
1 <sup>st</sup> NA	3.50	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	42.9	n/a
2 <sup>nd</sup> NA	2.90	n/a	n/a	—	—	—	60.0	n/a
3 <sup>rd</sup> NA	11.60	3.10	6.90	36.8	56.2	19.4	33.5	20.1
4 <sup>th</sup> NA	8.48	2.45	3.40	42.1	54.1	12.0	11.6	11.8
<b>Second Republic</b>								
5 <sup>th</sup> NA <sup>h</sup>	23.80	1.77	5.40	41.7	75.1	33.4	21.0	33.8
<b>Third Republic</b>								
6 <sup>th</sup> NA	22.15	2.18	5.39	33.5	62.9	29.4	—	32.8
7 <sup>th</sup> NA	17.10	1.60	2.75	50.6	73.7	23.1	—	20.8
8 <sup>th</sup> NA	4.70	2.00	2.28	48.8	55.4	6.6	—	6.6
<b>Fourth Republic<sup>i</sup></b>								
9 <sup>th</sup> NA	21.77	2.00	3.76	38.7	66.7	28.0	8.7	14.5
10 <sup>th</sup> NA	22.79	2.15	4.68	31.7	62.7	31.0	9.5	19.3
<b>Fifth Republic</b>								
11 <sup>th</sup> NA	15.75	2.54	5.04	35.6	54.7	19.1	4.0	26.6
12 <sup>th</sup> NA	14.50	2.71	3.88	35.2	53.6	18.4	1.4	18.5

a. Index of Average Electoral Disproportionality; see Lijphart, 1999: 156.  
 b. For definition and computation, see Laakso and Taagepara, 1979: 3-27.  
 c. Government party's share of votes.  
 d. Government party's share of seats.  
 e. Average electoral disproportionality concerning the government party (GP<sub>B</sub> - GP<sub>A</sub>).  
 f. Candidates without formal party affiliations.  
 g. Share of votes which were lost due to the disproportionality of the electoral system since votes were not converted into seats.  
 h. Only House of Representatives.  
 i. For the Ninth and Tenth National Assembly two thirds of the members of parliament (MPs) were elected, one third was appointed by the president. In 1973 and 1978, the president appointed 73 and 77 MPs, respectively. They were counted as members of the ruling Democratic Republican Party of President Park Chung-hee.  
 j. No government party existed before President Syngman Rhee established the Liberal Party in 1954.  
 NA - National Assembly

Source: See Appendix, Table A2.



A useful method to reveal the effects of Duverger's mechanical factor is to compare effective numbers of parties. The difference between the effective number of parties (based on votes share) and the effective number of parties in parliament (based on seats share) shows a concentrating effect of the electoral system on the party system. This creates a lower effective number of parliamentary parties than the effective number of electoral parties. The difference was the highest in the elections for the Fifth, Sixth, Tenth and Eleventh National Assembly. The continuous decline of party system fragmentation seems to indicate an increasing rationalization of party systems in Korea. The continuous decreasing percentage of seats held by candidates without formal party affiliations (independents) supports this argument. Yet, several times, coup d'états (1961, 1979), an *autogolpe* (1972) and constitutional changes (1960, 1972, 1980) disrupted this trend, shook up the weakly institutionalized party structures and impeded the development of a stable party system.

The psychological effect of electoral systems on the structure of the party system also varies. It can be measured approximately by the index of the 'not represented votes'. The number of 'lost votes' due to the disproportional effects of the electoral system was substantial (see Table 3). It went up every time a new electoral system was introduced, but went down in the second or third election held under the new system. This indicates that South Korean voters as well as political parties had serious problems adjusting to the new system.

Although the president always has been the most powerful and dominating institution in South Korean politics, parliamentary elections became a window of opportunity for the opposition to challenge the authoritarian regime several times. This was the case in 1971, 1978 and especially in 1985. Because of its violent origins, the authoritarian regime of President Chun Doo-hwan was caught in a permanent crisis of legitimacy, and faced with the presidential elections in Autumn 1987 and the Summer Olympics in 1988, it was under pressure to prevent political upheaval and secure political stability. Against the background of strong oppositional protests from the notorious student movement, the regime decided to open up the electoral arena. The decision to use the semi-competitive parliamentary elections in February 1985 seemed to be a good idea at the time. The chances of holding a 'fair but quiet election' (Kim, 1985: 67), which would increase citizen support for the regime and channel political protest into the regime's institutions seemed promising. The electoral system practised at that time greatly benefited the ruling Democratic Justice Party while the opposition was divided into several parties, camps and factions.<sup>7</sup> However, when the government decided to tolerate the newly established New Korea Democratic Party (NKDP) under the co-leadership of prominent

7. Two thirds of the representatives were elected according to the binomial system, and one third was allocated proportionally in one national constituency. However, two thirds of these 'proportional' seats were reserved for the party with the largest number of winning candidates in the two-member constituencies. The 'proportional' part of this electoral system thus provided a large majoritarian bonus for the strongest party which has been always the President's party.

opposition members Kim Dae-jung and Kim Young-sam, and permitted the NKDP to take part in the elections, it gave the opposition the opportunity to oppose the regime openly. The NKDP succeeded in mobilizing the urban middle-class voters and creating an active extraparliamentary coalition including student opposition groups, churches and NGOs, which translated into almost one third of the votes in the election. This, in turn, gave the opposition the legitimacy to criticize the regime and to protest even more directly than before (see Croissant, 1998a: footnote 11; chs. 3 and 4).

The country's domestic policy crisis then escalated in the summer of 1987 as a result of skilful political manoeuvring on the part of the opposition leaders, the strategic failures of the ruling elite and external influences, such as pressure from the United States and the upcoming Olympic Games. The country's major cities saw mass protests. Faced with the choice of using military force and putting at risk its already strained relations with the United States, the country's most important political, military and economic partner, or giving in to the opposition, the moderate forces within the regime preferred the second option. Chun's designated successor, Roh Tae-woo, declared the democratic opening of the regime on 6 June 1987. In bilateral talks, the NKDP and the DJP negotiated the transition to the Sixth Republic. The institutional democratization was completed a few months later, after the approval of a new constitution by a referendum and the election of the president (see Croissant, 1998a: footnote 11; ch. 3 and 4). The softliners in the regime accurately calculated that they would win the election against a divided opposition. Roh Tae-woo won the free and sufficiently fair presidential election of December 1987 with a little more than one third of the total valid votes. The opposition had been unable to find sufficient common ground due to both an atmosphere of personal animosity between their leaders and an inability to learn from mistakes, and had entered the elections with three candidates.

## The Political System of the Sixth Republic

Roh's election victory was by no means a bad omen for the continuation of the democratization process. With a representative of the old regime in the top position, the military forces were rapidly integrated into the democratic system. The moderate reform policies pursued by Roh proved to be compatible with the self interests of the main body of the old regime's supporters. The defeat forced the opposition to reform their own confrontation strategies. In the early nineties, this resulted in the reorganization of the party system and the palpable moderation of opposition programmes. The resulting situation provided, during the initial years of democratic rule, a fruitful basis for the creation of a consensus among the relevant political parties and within the mainly conservative populace of the country that a return to an authoritarian regime was not the road to the future (Croissant, 1998a: footnote 11, ch. 5; Croissant, forthcoming).

Under the so called 'grand compromise' in 1990, the DJP (led by Roh Tae-woo), the Reunification Democratic Party (RDP - led by Kim Young-sam) and the New Democratic Republican Party (NDRP - led by Kim Jong-pil) merged to create the Democratic Liberal Party (DLP). The specific path taken by the transformation process and transformation strategies of the relevant decision-makers thus had a stabilizing effect on the basic democratic institutions and procedures in the country. This was seen clearly when Kim Young-sam, then the candidate of the governing party, became the first civilian to assume the country's highest national and governmental office in 1992/93 after more than 30 years of military domination of national politics.

When the 'grand compromise' came to an end, Kim Jong-pil's NDRP split – at that time under the new label United Liberal Democrats (ULD). Before the 1997 presidential elections, however, Kim Jong-pil and Kim Dae-jung of the National Congress for New Politics (NCNP) formed a new opposition alliance which paved the way for the first democratic change of government in South Korean history. Kim Dae-jung was the first opposition candidate to win the presidential contest on 18 December 1997.<sup>8</sup> The inauguration in February 1998 of the newly-elected President Kim Dae-jung, a dissident for many years, demonstrated that all the country's relevant forces had been integrated into the political system.

## The Electoral System of the Sixth Republic

Any Korean citizen over 20 who is registered in the electoral roll by the local government is entitled to vote. Suffrage is universal, equal, direct and secret. Elections are held for the president of the Republic of Korea and the National Assembly.<sup>9</sup> Since the early 1990s, elections have also been held at local and provincial levels. The regular term of office for the president is five years without re-election and four years for the National Assembly (no term limits). In order to be eligible for the presidency citizens must be at least 40 years old, have resided in the country for at least five years and qualify as eligible members of the National Assembly. They may run as party candidates or as independents. An independent candidate needs the support of 2,500-5,000 electors, among whom not more than 500 may live in the same city or province. A public official who wants to register as a candidate must resign from his/her post 90 days before the date of the elections.

In parliamentary elections, candidates may be recommended either by a political party or by electors (independent candidates). Independent candidates need the recommendation of 300-500 electors. Candidates in the national constituency can only run as party candidates on a party's list. Candidates who apply for

8. For the causes of Kim Dae-jung's victory see Croissant, 1998b: 36-58.

9. For technical details of both parts see 'Election for Public Office and Election Practice Prevention Act' in Korea Legislation Research Institute, 1998.

registration have to pay a deposit of 10 million Won (approximately US\$8,300 in 2001). The money is returned if the candidate receives at least half of the quota obtained from dividing the total number of valid votes by the number of candidates (local constituency), or if at least one of the candidates on the list concerned is elected (national constituency).

The electoral system used in presidential elections is a first-past-the-post system (Korea Legislation Research Institute, 1998: Article 187). In legislative elections a segmented system is used. The electoral system applied in 1988 and in 1992 was similar to the systems used in 1985: three quarters of the seats were elected by plurality in SMCs, while one quarter was allocated proportionally in one national constituency. If one party wins at least half of the popularly elected seats, it is automatically entitled to two thirds of the seats on the national list; if it gains less, the strongest party is still awarded half of the national list seats. In the Fifteenth National Assembly election (1996), 253 seats were elected in SMCs. The remaining 46 seats (15 per cent) were allocated proportionally to the parties that had obtained at least 5 per cent of the total valid votes/seats in SMCs, while the special seat bonus for the largest party was abolished (Korea Legislation Research Institute, 1998: Article 189).

In the Sixteenth National Assembly elections in April 2000, the total number of seats was reduced to 273. While 227 seats were distributed via plurality in SMCs, 46 seats were allocated through proportional representation to closed and blocked party lists in one national constituency. The proportional seats are distributed among the parties which have obtained either a minimum of five seats in the SMCs plurality contests or 5 per cent of the total national valid vote in the 227 SMCs. Finally, there is a different threshold for those parties that receive between 3 and 5 per cent of the national valid vote (Korea Legislation Research Institute, 1998: Article 189). Each of these parties is granted one seat before the allocation of the remaining proportional seats begins according to the Hare quota formula and the method of the largest remainder. Candidates in SMCs can be nominated by political parties or the candidates themselves, i.e. independent candidates without any official party affiliation are allowed to participate in the SMC plurality contests. In fact, independent candidatures are frequent and also quite successful. Table 4 provides a summary report of the electoral system used in legislative elections in terms of its key attributes. While some minor changes concerning assembly size, district magnitude and number of districts were made, the fundamentals have remained unchanged since 1988.

Table 4: The Electoral System as at Spring 2000

Assembly	No. of Ballots Per Elector	Tier	Electoral Formula	District Magnitude	No. of Districts	Assembly Size	Party Threshold
13th	1	L	Plurality	1	224	299	-
		H	LR-Hare	75	1		5 district seats
14th	1	L	Plurality	1	237	299	-
		H	LR-Hare	65	1		3 per cent or 5 district seats
15th	1	L	Plurality	1	253	299	-
		H	LR-Hare	46	1		3 per cent or 5 district seats
16th	1	L	Plurality	1	137	273	-
		H	LR-Hare	46	1		3 per cent or 5 district seats

L - largest remainder; H - Hare quota  
 Source: Park, 2001: 31.

The National Election Commission (NEC) is responsible for the organization and supervision of electoral campaigns, elections and vote-counting. The NEC is an independent constitutional agency, equal in status to the National Assembly, the executive branch of the government, the courts of justice and the constitutional court. It has a four-tier structure, consisting of the NEC itself and 16,724 sub-national and voting district electoral commissions. The NEC is made up of nine commissioners in total. Three of them are appointed by the president, three by the National Assembly and three by the chief justice of the supreme court. The NEC's chairperson and a standing commissioner are chosen from these nine. By tradition, the chief justice of the supreme court is elected chairperson. The district electoral commissions are formed by commissioners chosen on the advice of the courts, political parties with factions in the National Assembly, a pool of scholars and/or other individuals known for their high academic and moral standards. The election law gives the NEC and the electoral commissions a mandate to supervise and manage all national and local elections, as well as the referendums (see Croissant, 2001a: footnote 12).

Universal suffrage is effectively guaranteed. The proper conduct of elections at the national level is also provided for. Despite claims of irregularities by opposition candidates during the presidential elections in December 1987 and the parliamentary elections in 1988 and 1992 (Lee, 1990: 73; *Korea Times*, 22 March 1992: 1 and 24 March 1992: 3), there was no hard evidence of major irregularities, fraud and meaningful vote-buying. Media reports, statements of the NEC, claims and protest notes from candidates from all political camps about violations of the electoral law are neither in numbers nor in quality significant enough to doubt the correctness of the electoral process, as official data reported from the NEC show:

**Table 5: Violations of the Election Law Reported by the NEC (1992-2000)** \*

	<b>1992</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>2000</b>
Reported cases	1,583	741	2,834
Warnings against candidates by NEC	601	507	2,259
Investigations by NEC or public prosecutors	187	211	575
Cases in Court	19	23	N/A
Annulment of results and by-election	0	6	N/A

\* No. of cases.  
Sources: National Election Commission, 2000a; *Korea Herald*, 2000.

Most cases are related to slander of other candidates, campaigning before the start of the official campaign period and exceeding the campaign money limits set out by the NEC (Chon, 2000).<sup>10</sup> While there are violations of the electoral rules, these cases do not constitute significant disturbances of the meaningfulness of the election process in South Korea.

## Virtues and Perils of the Current Electoral System

The virtues and perils of any electoral system are the point of reference for any discussion about its reform. Its 'functionality', consisting of its integrational, representational and majoritarian effects, is the cardinal tenet of the analysis of electoral politics for detecting necessary institutional reform steps and evaluating the effects of implemented reforms. In other words, electoral reform in a democratic system should aim at optimizing the integrational, representational and decisional capacities of the electoral system. Under ideal conditions, this can be done without improving one function at the expense of the other(s). It is clear that any discussion about electoral reform has to begin with taking a close look at where the virtues and perils of the system to date are located. It is necessary to analyse first the functional profile of the current electoral system with regard to the three functions of representation, integration and decision (generating majorities) before any appropriate reform proposal can be given.

### *Representation*

District apportionment – determining the number of members of parliament according to the proportion of the population of each district, province or local constituency to the total population of the national constituency – is one of the most powerful instruments to influence the representativeness of an electoral system. This holds true for all forms of plurality system where the art of district manufacturing can be used manipulatively to benefit selected candidates or single political parties (gerrymandering) (Mackenzie, 1958; Reilly, 2001).<sup>11</sup> In

10. This point is discussed again in the section on the Reform of Electoral Systems.

11. For a discussion of ethnic gerrymandering in the case of Malaysia, see Lim Hong Hai's chapter in this book.

proportional representation systems, where the total territory of the state forms one national constituency, district apportionment has no effect on the degree of representativeness and proportionality of the system.

The usual indicator to measure this effect is the mal-apportionment between the largest and the median district size (Wada, 1996). Large mal-apportionment points to a high disproportionality of the electoral system. When mal-apportionment exceeds a certain maximum it violates the principle of universal suffrage. Table 6 compares the mal-apportionment in district sizes authorized by the Courts of five democracies.

Table 6: International Comparison of Mal-apportionment

	<b>Ratio of voters, largest to average constituency size</b>
South Korea	4: 1
Germany	1.25:1
Japan	3:1
France	1.2: 1
United States	In case of justifiable cause any ratio

Sources: Bausback, 1998: 246-47; Wada, 1996: 12-13; National Election Commission, 2000b.

Table 6 shows the maximum ratio of voters between the largest constituency and the average constituency size, permitted by the Constitutional Court (Germany, Korea, France) or the Supreme Court (Japan, United States). In Germany and Japan, the ratio is below the limit declared constitutional by the Court two decades earlier. The Japanese Supreme Court, for example, declared in 1983 that the highest existing ratio (4.41:1) was not acceptable. In Germany, the largest district in terms of the number of voters was a third larger than the average constituency size in the early 1990s. In the course of minor electoral reforms, this limit was reduced to one quarter in 1996.<sup>12</sup> The Constitutional Court of South Korea recalled the existing maximum ratio (5.87:1) on 27 December 1995. In a close vote of five to four votes the judges suggested a new maximum ratio of four to one.<sup>13</sup> The National Assembly applied the Court's decision in February 2000. In the National Assembly election on 13 April 2000, the largest deviation from the median district size was 3.8. Still, this is high compared to other democracies. It is, for instance, larger than in Japan, whose district apportionment is 'unfair by any standard', as a Japanese political scientist recently wrote (Wada, 1996: 3, footnote 26).<sup>14</sup>

High mal-apportionment indicates a low representativeness of the electoral system since it leads to high disproportionalities – that is, great differences between the average party's vote percentage and seat percentage. Computing

12. See paragraph 3, Part 1, No. 3, Bundeswahlgesetz [German Election Law].

13. Decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Korea, 7-2 KCCR 760, 95 HunMa 221.

14. For a critical comment from a Korean point of view, see Kwon, 1995: 164; Kim, 1998: 152-166.

Arend Lijphart's (1999: 156) largest-deviation index, which takes the largest deviation in an election result, is a method to test this assumption. For a comparative examination of the Korean electoral outcome, relevant measures are also provided for 40 other democracies.

Table 7: Average Electoral Disproportionality and Type of Electoral System in 41 Democracies

Country	Disproportionality	Electoral System	Country	Disproportionality	Electoral System
Netherlands	1.3	Proportional	Greece	8.08	Proportional
Denmark	1.83	Proportional	Spain	8.15	Proportional
Sweden	2.09	Proportional	Japan <sup>d</sup>	8.35	Plurality
Israel	2.27	Proportional	Bangladesh	8.4	Plurality
Malta	2.36	Proportional (STV)	Nepal	9.0	Plurality
Austria	2.47	Proportional	Australia	9.26	Plurality
Germany	2.5	Proportional	PNG	10.06	Plurality
Switzerland	2.5	Proportional	UK	10.3	Plurality
Thailand <sup>a</sup>	2.7	Plurality	Columbia	10.6	Proportional
Finland	2.9	Proportional	New Zealand	11.1	Plurality <sup>e</sup>
Belgium	3.2	Proportional	Canada	11.7	Plurality
Italy	3.25	Proportional	Botswana	11.7	Plurality
Luxembourg	3.26	Proportional	Costa Rica	13.65	Proportional
Ireland	3.45	Proportional (STV)	Trinidad	13.66	Plurality
Portugal	4.0	Proportional	Venezuela	14.4	Proportional
Taiwan	4.2	Plurality (SNTV)	United States	14.9	Plurality
Iceland	4.25	Proportional	Bahamas	15.47	Plurality
Japan <sup>b</sup>	4.8	Plurality (SNTV)	Barbados	15.75	Plurality
Norway	4.9	Proportional	Mauritius	16.4	Plurality
Thailand <sup>c</sup>	6.0	Plurality	Jamaica	17.75	Plurality
<b>Korea</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>Plurality</b>	France	21.08	Plurality
Philippines	7.8	Plurality			

Note: All information for the first or only parliamentary chamber; classification of electoral systems after dominating representational principle. For details of the sub-typology, see the Introduction to this book by Aurel Croissant. a. Before 2001; b. Before 1996; c. 2001; d. Since 1996; e. Before 1996.

STV - Single Transferable Vote; SNTV - Single Non-transferable Vote; PNG - Papua New Guinea

Sources: Lijphart, 1999: Table 8.2; calculations by the author; classification of electoral systems based on Nohlen, 2000: Tables 23, 28, 29.

The average electoral disproportionality of the Korean electoral system is 6.9 per cent for the period 1988-2000. Compared with 40 other democracies this is



a moderate level of disproportionality. From a theoretical point of view, it is desirable to improve the proportionality of the electoral system. However, from a comparative point of view, the conclusion must be that the electoral system of the Sixth Republic (since 1988) is doing quite well in terms of representativeness, compared with other plurality systems in the world.

### *Integration*

Elections ought to integrate the people. In representative democracies it is most important that the electoral system leads to the formation of political parties and does not just generate single representatives (Smend, 1968). How well electoral systems perform this function can be measured by several indicators. First, we can measure how strongly mechanical and psychological effects shape the party system (see *Electoral System of the Sixth Republic* above). The comparison of effective numbers of parties can tell us how strong the mechanical effect is, while the percentage of not-represented votes serves to evaluate the psychological effect of the electoral system.

Table 8: Effective Number of Parties and Index of Non-representation

	<b>Effective No. of Electoral Parties</b>	<b>Effective No. of Parliamentary Parties</b>	<b>Non-represented Votes (%)</b>
1988	4.27	3.54	12.1
1992	3.79	2.74	13.6
1996	4.50	3.16	13.5
2000	3.40	2.39	16.3
Average	3.99	2.95	13.9

Source: Computation by the author according to data in Table A2.

The difference between the effective number of electoral parties and the number of parliamentary parties is 1.04, which is significantly lower than during the Third to the Fifth Republic. Conversely, the non-represented votes percentage (13.87 on average) is remarkably high. Although the election in April 2000 was the fourth in a row under the same system, the percentage went up, which may indicate that South Korean voters and candidates are still not familiar with the system.

The data tell us something about the integrative effects of the electoral system on the party system but they do not tell us if and how the electoral system integrates the political will of the people into stable party organizations. We can address this question with two indicators. The first is the parties durability index, the second is the independents' votes percentage and seats percentage. While the first indicator measures the average organizational age of a national party system at a given point in time, the second is the median votes or seats percentage of independents in election results; it measures the success of candidates without any formal party affiliation in elections.

Table 9 presents a detailed list of all political parties that have participated in National Assembly elections since democratization. It includes all parties which obtained 3 per cent or more of votes or seats ('relevant parties') (Sartori, 1976: 121-25). The parties' durability index for the time period May 1987 to January 2000 is 31.5 months, which is little more than two and a half years. Including the founding elections of the Sixth Republic in 1988, no relevant party participated more than once in National Assembly elections; none sent candidates into the presidential race more than once.<sup>15</sup> This means that the organizational age of the Korean party system is remarkably low; there is no organizational continuity and the political choices parties offer for voters vary very much from election to election. The median independents' votes percentage in the Thirteenth to Sixteenth National Assembly election (1988-2000) is 9.4 per cent while the independents' seats percentage is 4.3 per cent.<sup>16</sup> Both figures are high compared to established democracies like Japan, Great Britain, the United States, or Germany.

Low party durability and a high relevance of independents are signs of a weak integrative effect of the electoral system: the system is able to produce single representatives but it fails to produce or support a trend towards a well institutionalized and stable party system. Concerning the parliamentary elections of 1992 and 1996, the party system showed an extremely high volatility.<sup>17</sup> The overall volatility indices of 59.7 per cent (1988), 44.2 per cent (1992), 38.6 per cent (1996) and 39.75 per cent (2000) exceeded almost all volatility rates of other democracies in Southern Europe, Eastern Europe, South America and East Asia (Merkel, 1997: 369; Mainwaring and Scully, 1995). This is because electoral competition in South Korea revolves around personality-dominated, clientelistic parties, built on the basis of vast networks of patron-client relations and informally institutionalized intra-party factions. In fact, factionalism is the dominant structural feature of political parties in South Korea. The factions are based on personalism and clientelism (Cheng and Womack, 1996: 322; Croissant, 1997: 304). As such they represent the type of 'personalistic faction'<sup>18</sup> which is directed by a charismatic leader or a leading politician who controls the access to material resources and political careers.

Immunization of parties against these factional tendencies is rendered more difficult by the fact that the respective parties are mainly 'caucus parties'<sup>19</sup> that are hardly ever visible except prior to elections (Yun, 1994: 554). On the other hand, these parties frequently develop a wide and closely knit network of regional and local organizations and branches. Most often these networks are structured around individual, factional leaders, along personalistic and

15. Computed by the author; data taken from Central Election Management Commission (since 1996 National Election Commission), various issues; and *Korea Annual* (Seoul: Yonhap News Agency), various issues.

16. Computed by the author according to data in Table A2, appendix.

17. Volatility rate measures the sum of all wins and losses in votes for all parties between elections; see Nohlen, 2000: 473-474.

18. For the concept of party factions and the type of personalistic factions see Sartori, 1976: 71-117, footnote 37.

19. For this party type see Duverger, 1964: footnote 16.

clientelistic lines. However, they only set up loose links to the national party organizations. Organizational autonomy of parties is thus replaced by the autonomy of individual politicians from the national party organizations.

Table 9: Party Durability (1981-2000)

Party*	Existed	Status	NA <sup>a</sup>	Presidential <sup>b</sup>	Durability (in months)
DJP	1/81 - 2/90	Merger with DLP	3	1	109
KNP	1/81 - 5/88	Dissolution	3	1	49
DKP	1/81 - 5/88	Dissolution	3	1	49
NKDP	1/85 - 5/88	Dissolution	2	-	49
RDP	5/87 - 2/90	Merger with DLP	1	1	33
PPD	11/87 - 4/90	Renamed NDP	1	1	29
NDRP	11/87 - 2/90	Merger with DLP	1	1	27
DLP	2/90 - 2/96	Renamed NKP	2	1	72
DP (1) <sup>c</sup>	6/90 - 9/90	Merger with DP (2)	-	-	4
NDP <sup>c</sup>	4/90 - 9/90	Merger with DP (2)	-	-	6
DP (2)	9/90 - 11/97	Merger with GNP	2	1	86
UPP <sup>d</sup>	2/92 - 5/96	Dissolution	1	1	25
NKP	2/96 - 11/97	Merger with GNP	1	-	21
NCNP	9/95 - 1/00	Renamed MDP	1	1	52
ULD	2/95 - 1/00	Exists to date	1	-	59
GNP	11/97 - 1/00	Exists to date <sup>e</sup>	-	1	26
NPP	11/97 - 9/98	Merger with NCNP <sup>f</sup>	-	1	11
Geometric Mean					31.5

\* DJP - Democratic Justice Party; DKP - Democratic Korea Party; DLP - Democratic Liberal Party; DP - Democratic Party; GNP - Grand National Party; KNP - Korean National Party; MDP - Millennium Democratic Party; NCNP - National Congress for New Politics; NDP - New Democratic Party; NDRP - New Democratic Republican Party; NKDP - New Korea Democratic Party; NKP - New Korea Party; NPP - New Party by the People; PPD - People's Party for Democracy; RDP - Reunification Democratic Party; ULD - United Liberal Democrats; UPP - United People's Party.

a. No. of National Assembly elections.

b. No. of presidential elections.

c. DP (2) emerged out of DP (1) and NDP. It is treated as a new party because NDP held approximately four times as many parliamentary seats as the DP (1) which technically was the same party as DP (2).

d. UPP split into two parties in mid-1994 (UPP and NRP). During the Fourteenth National Assembly most representatives left both parties. Neither party participated in the next National Assembly elections.

e. In February 2000 a group of parliamentarians split from GNP and founded the Democratic People's Party. The DPP is already dissolved.

f. Because the NPP had less than ten parliamentarians when it merged with the NCNP, the NCNP before and after the merger is counted as the same party.

Source: Croissant, 2001b: 70-90.

Factionalism provides rational incentives for the splits and mergers of political parties. This has led to an endemic instability of short-lived party organizations which are more a tool for the personal aspiration of party leaders than autonomous organizations with their own identities. While the high fluidity of party organizations is also the result of other, non-institutional factors, there

are good theoretical causes to argue that the plurality system also promotes this fluidity. Plurality systems in SMCs such as those in Korea are ‘candidate-centred electoral systems’ (Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina, 1987; see also Carey, 1998). This system encourages competition between candidates, not between political parties. Parliamentary representatives are generally more inclined to gain reputations as representatives of local interests and to promote the particular interests of their respective constituencies than to adhere to well defined party programmes on the national level. Their main task therefore consists of securing and distributing private (particular) goods (Shugart, 1999: 53-88; Carey, 1998: footnote 46; Carey, 2000: 735-761). Since they judge their political survival to be less a matter of policy-oriented action than of satisfying particular interests, they are not inclined to delegate much political power to their party leaders. On the contrary, representatives commonly oppose the enforcement of strict party discipline and pursue grab-and-run strategies that aim at the short-term maximum of private goods for their voter clientele (Cox and Morgenstern, 2000). The low relevance of the proportional representation component compared to the plurality component is the reason why the party list system does not give strong enough incentives to parties and candidates to break this trend.

### *Generating Political Majorities*

The declining fragmentation of the party system and the smaller number of effective parties in parliament compared with the number of electoral parties are, at first sight, signs of a rationalization of the party system (see Table 8). The Korean electoral system, characterized by moderate disproportionality, leads toward a concentration of the party landscape, as already argued. This has proven beneficial to major political parties to date.

Table 10: Over-representation of the Strongest Party

	Percentage of Vote (A)	Percentage of District Seats (B)	Percentage of Total Seats (C)	District Advantage Ratio (B/A)	Overall Advantage Ratio (C/A)
13th Assembly Election (April 1988)	34.0	38.8	41.8	1.14	1.23
14th Assembly Election (March 1992)	38.5	48.9	49.8	1.27	1.29
15th Assembly Election (April 1996)	34.8	47.8	46.5	1.37	1.34
16th Assembly Election (April 2000)	39.0	49.3	48.7	1.26	1.25
Average (1988-2000)	36.5	46.2	46.7	1.25	1.27

Source: Computation by the author with data from Table A2, appendix.

The Korean plurality system in SMCs heavily favours the strongest party, which is shown in the sixth column of Table 10. With an average of 36.5 per cent of votes, the strongest party was able to win 46.2 per cent of district seats. The overall advantage ratio averages 1.27. The comparison of the district advantage and the overall advantage ratio generally suggests that at-large seats allocated under the proportional representation system served poorly as a corrective for the disproportionality generated by the plurality component. In every election except for the fifteenth, the largest party's advantage ratio was amplified by the existence of the proportional representation component. As the fourth column shows, however, the high seat bonus for the strongest party did not lead to a single party majority in parliament. The leading party has failed to win an absolute majority of seats in every election since democratization in 1987/88.

The reason for this surprising fact is the prevalent party cleavage that originates from regional conflicts. In almost all analyses of the South Korean party system, regionalism is highlighted as the most salient cleavage (Wonmo, 1995: 1-27; Cho, 1996: 231-258; Chung, 1997: 1-18). It basically reflects the regional cleavage among political elites, emotional identities, historical grievances and uneven economic development. Regionalism is older than the transition to democracy during the 1980s. As a social and cultural phenomenon it goes back to the Chosun dynasty (1392-1910) and the Japanese colonial period (1910-1945). However, as a political phenomenon it had nearly vanished, and since the 1950s had been overlapped by the conflict between the democratic opposition and the authoritarian regime. But it suddenly re-emerged with the 1987 presidential election and continued to be salient through all the parliamentary elections in the late 1980s and 1990s. Today the political mobilization of communal groups corresponding to their regional background is the most influential variable for the explanation of voting behaviour in South Korea (Wonmo, 1995: footnote 28; Croissant, 1998a: 138, footnote 11). As a partly ascribed and recently manufactured cleavage (uneven economic development during the authoritarian period, clientelism, patronage) it has fragmented and shaped the electoral competition ever since. Since democratization, the regional cleavage corresponds with vote splitting into an opposition (Honam region) and a pro-government (Yongnam region) block.

Regionalism impedes the transformation of the over-representation of the strongest party into an absolute single party majority of seats in parliament, since no region holds a voter share that is large enough for such a majority.<sup>20</sup> However, at least the general elections in 1992 and in 1996 brought a near single party majority, when the then governing DLP won 49.8 per cent and the New Korea Party (NKP) 48.7 per cent of the total seats, respectively. These pluralities allowed the president's parties to build up absolute majorities in parliament by co-opting independent representatives as well as small numbers

20. For this discussion, see Kim, 1999.

of representatives of the opposition camp into the governing party.<sup>21</sup> But the elections of 1988 and April 2001 did not see the emergence of an absolute majority. Both times the results were minority party cabinets and 'divided governments'. In spring 1990 the situation was resolved by a so-called 'grand compromise': the governing DJP together with the oppositional NDRP and the RDP formed the new ruling DLP. To solve the deadlock in April 2000 was more difficult. The Millennium Democratic Party (MDP) of President Kim Dae-jung and its smaller coalition partner, the ULD of Kim Jong-pil, failed to keep the majority of seats in the National Assembly which they had won only the year before by co-opting members of opposition parties and independent representatives. As a result, legislative gridlock and political stalemate between president and National Assembly has been the rule to date (Jongryn, 2001: 467-493).

## The Reform of Electoral Systems: Two Competing Founding Logics

There are various ways of studying electoral systems. Prior to this section we analysed it as an independent variable while the political parties were dealt with as a dependent outcome. In this section the analysis changes the perspective by asking how political parties influence the reform of electoral systems. This perspective is essential for analysing electoral politics in any political system because the electoral system is 'the most specific manipulable instrument of politics' (Sartori, 1968: 273) – and the political parties are the manipulators.

Philippe C. Schmitter recently argued that parties are undergoing a world-wide decline as part of a development in the direction of 'post-liberal' democracy (1995: 15-22). Particularly in Western democracies, party memberships are shrinking, the critical distance between citizens and parties is growing, and a world rich with new social movements and organizations of civil society offers citizens more and new forms of interest articulation and political participation. Political organizations styling themselves as political movements are shaking the decades-old structures of the party system in Italy and some Latin American countries. In Eastern Europe, many countries have grave problems creating a socially integrative, politically responsive and ideologically developed system of socially rooted mass parties. Rather, it seems that 'Cartel Parties' (Katz and Mair, 1995)<sup>22</sup> or 'unbounded party systems' (*Schwebende Parteiensysteme*) (Segert and Machos, 1995) dominate the political landscape of many East European democracies. However, thus far no true substitute for parties has emerged. Political parties are still the central players in the consolidated democracies of the West and the new democracies of the East.

21. During the 15th National Assembly (1992-1996) the share of representatives who changed party affiliation at least once during the session was nearly 20 per cent; see Kwon, 1995: 167-70, footnote 34; Huh, 2000: 65-67.

22. For an application of the concept of the cartelized party system to the Korean case see Kwak, 2001.

Electoral systems and political parties are interdependent variables. The electoral system influences political parties and party systems because its provisions form the arena in which candidates and parties compete with each other. From this point of view, the relationship between the electoral system and the party system can be described as follows: *Electoral systems are the rules of the game, political parties are the players.*<sup>23</sup>

Concurrently, political parties influence the structure of the electoral system, because political parties legislate electoral laws in parliaments. This perspective reveals a fundamental dilemma that has to be resolved in the process of making and reforming an electoral system: *political parties are players who make rules according to which they later have to play the game* (North, 1988). At this point two competing institutional logics are confronted with each other:

1. The *logic of consequentiality*. It is the aim of political parties to promote the interests they represent. In democratic systems this means political parties try to win political office, first of all in government. Therefore, from their point of view, the logic of consequentiality dominates the process of making and reforming an electoral system. Political parties will try to establish electoral systems in a way that supports their aim to win political mandates. In this sense, the electoral system is only an instrument to win a maximum of political benefits in the short run.
2. The *logic of appropriateness*.<sup>24</sup> Democracy needs an electoral system that is able to fulfil sufficiently the three functions discussed above. Therefore the makers of the electoral system have to consider the effects and consequences of the system they are designing. The core question here is which proposal is appropriate concerning the specific social, political and cultural dispositions of a particular society?

When the *logic of consequentiality* dominates the process of making an electoral system, the decision in favour or against a model depends on what expectations the parties have about how the system will distribute political power among them. When the *logic of appropriateness* dominates, the decision depends first of all on the system's expected contribution to social inclusion and political efficiency of the democratic system. The electoral system is then an impartial rule of the democratic game. Obviously, both logics are always present in the process of making electoral systems. Since it is of such fundamental relevance to all political players, electoral reform cannot be an either-or question. But both logics can be combined in such a way that the legitimate self-serving interest of the political parties as well as the functional imperatives of the democratic process are served. This is the clue to electoral institution-making in democratic systems.

23. This assumption rests on Douglass North's general differentiation between institutions and organizations; see North, 1988.

24. I borrow these two terms from March and Olsen (1989), but give them a different meaning.

In democracies, political games to do with electoral reform are always power games. Therefore it is naive to expect that actors involved in the process of drafting electoral laws (parties, interest groups, individuals) do not care about the consequences a specific regulation will have for themselves. Political agents may not use electoral laws or their reform as instruments to secure their own political privileges, positions of political authority or permanent political advantages (Bausback, 1998: 83). Nevertheless, if elections are to fulfil their function of political representation and social integration, institutional crafting has some immanent limits.

To understand the political economy of electoral reforms we have to examine carefully the motives, opportunities and strategies of the agents involved in the process. Electoral reform can help to improve the standards of electoral quality in an existing system. Deficits of representativeness, integration and legitimation can be reduced, structural blockades removed and political privileges broken up. Electoral reforms can thus be instruments to strengthen the quality of the democratic system as a whole. However, an electoral system is only able to perform its core functions if the system itself is a compromise of the different interests of the relevant political players and overriding democratic principles. Frequent changes of electoral system are a sign of a lack of political consensus between players about the basic rules of their political game.

In cases where electoral reforms are frequent and chronic, agents regard the most recent electoral regulations as momentary rules of the game, which can be modified as soon as the power relations and the configuration of the players changes (see also Rueb, 1994). While the acceptance of this democratic institution by the political players is bounded by the immediate use they can make of it, the electoral system becomes an instrument of short-term profit maximizing. Arbitrary and compulsive manipulations of this core mechanism of democratic legitimation damages the integrity of democratic institutions and, in the medium and longer term, the integrity of the whole democratic system.

### *Negotiating Reforms: South Korea in 1988*

The introduction of the current plurality system with an additional proportional list (segmented system) was not based on a broad consensus between all major political parties. Whereas the opposition parties presented several reform drafts, the ruling DJP insisted on its own proposal. Negotiations between the four parties in parliament (DJP, RDP, PPD, NKDP) were marked by the expectations each party had about its chances of winning seats in future elections. Eventually the DJP took advantage of the victory of its candidate, Roh Tae-woo, in the presidential elections of December 1987. As the opposition was not willing to find a common position, the DJP used its legislative majority in parliament to unilaterally pass its own draft (Croissant, 1998a: 113-115, footnote 11).



The electoral system enacted in March 1988 was characterized by two elements. First, the combination of a plurality system in SMCs and proportional representation, with the plurality system dominating. The DJP's hope was that this system would strengthen the position of the already strongest party, whereas it institutionalized a high threshold for the smaller parties. Second, the electoral system offered strong incentives for a moderate to strong fragmentation of the party system since it benefited those parties which had regional strongholds. Again the DJP hoped this would strengthen its own position since it was the only national party with a regional stronghold and a nation-wide reservoir of votes, whereas the opposition was divided into several regional camps. Electoral reforms in 1988 were thus clearly dominated by the *logic of consequentiality*.

Contrary to expectations, the election in April 1988 did not see a majority for the ruling party. Instead it supported the regionalization of the party system, which impeded the formation of parliamentary majorities. Attempts to create an interregional party crossing regional cleavages failed. Voters still regard parties as regional organizations. The combination of manifest regional camps and strong presidential elements in the Korean form of government makes the government system highly vulnerable to institutional gridlock and political blockades between presidential executive and parliament (see Croissant, 2002a; also Jongryn, 2001: footnote 53). Minority ruling parties are the rule, not the exception, as we have shown in the section on the *Virtues and Perils of the Current Electoral System*. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Korean debate on electoral reforms focuses very much on the question of how to improve the majority generating function of the electoral system – i.e. its capability to produce single party majorities in parliament which can break the trend toward minority government parties in the National Assembly.

If and how political actors support the electoral system obviously depends on its functional profile. Accordingly, the political parties have not reached a consensus about the electoral system to date. On the contrary, discussions about the need for a fundamental change of the electoral system have shaped the political debate ever since democratization. None of the relevant political forces stands positively behind the current system. Because of the lack of consensus, the plurality system has not changed fundamentally. Since 1988, however, minor changes have occurred more than a dozen times. Supplements, completions, additions to the regulations for candidature and the party list threshold, as well as changes to the ratio of SMCs to party list seats have occurred frequently. There are ongoing debates and political parties frequently change positions, favouring a modified plurality system one day, supporting a proportional representation system the next, and a single non-transferable vote (SNTV - such as that used in Japan before 1994) the day after (see *Korea Herald*, 20 May 1999; Kim, 1999: footnote 51). This indicates that political parties have not accepted the electoral system for what it should be: the impartial core

institution of democratic competition. Rather, every time a window of opportunity opens, a party takes the initiative to come up with a new proposal or draft which it perceives as improving its chances of winning in the next elections. In other words, the politics of electoral reform in Korea is a game in which the strategies of the players are not guided by the objective criteria of institutional efficacy, inclusiveness and efficiency, but almost exclusively by their self-serving interests. Almost all drafts focus on the problem of how to reform the system so that it becomes possible for one of the large parties to win a majority in parliament.

### *Negotiating Reforms: South Korea in the Late 1990s*

A distinct example of what has been said about electoral reform in Korea is the debate of the late 1990s. I will look briefly into this debate. Most observers agree that the current electoral system has at least three shortcomings. Though I agree with these observations, I identify an additional fourth point, the significance of which seems to be ignored in the current discussion.

*1. Increasing Campaign Spending and Political Corruption.* Elections in Korea today have become capital-intensive. Although this is a world-wide phenomenon, soaring campaign costs are especially significant in South Korea. It is usual to attract votes by way of giving gifts, buying meals and drinks, offering some kind of entertainment, and so on (see Chon, 2000: footnote 28; Kwak, 2001: footnote 56). Ever since democratization, election campaigns have become more and more costly. This trend is due to the ever-rising costs of political advertising. Research done by Jin-Young Kwak (2001: footnote 56) shows that while the sum of parties' *reported* spendings is also increasing, the amount is not very high. However, it is a well-known fact that Korean parties and candidates do not report their total spending which tops the limits set out by the NEC (see Chon, 2000: footnote 28; Kwak, 2001: footnote 56). The significance of this development does not lie in the amount of money or the increase itself, but in whether money matters in electoral competitions. While the exact effects of money on electoral outcomes are unclear, some authors conclude that the more a candidate spends the better his chances of winning a bid for parliament are. Of course, money is not the only thing that counts. In 1992, for example, the former chairman of the Hyundai Chaebol, Chung Ju-yung, who was probably one of the wealthiest men in Korea, ran for the presidency but lost. In 1997, the candidate of the ruling Hanaradang Party (GNP) also lost, despite the fact that the GNP was at that time the richest party in Korea, with a huge war chest of campaign contributions from the business community.

Due to sky-rocketing campaign costs, the electoral system has criticized from by reform-minded intellectuals and civic activists. They claim that the electoral system produces unacceptably high campaign costs because it boosts competition between candidates and the 'mediaization' of elections. This gives

candidates strong rational incentives to invest more and more money in outbidding their opponents.

To limit campaign spending some observers have proposed a reduction in the number of seats in the National Assembly to about 260. The logic of this argument is very simple: if the number of seats in parliament were reduced, fewer candidates would be elected. As each party can nominate only one candidate in each SMC, this would cut down parties' total spending. This proposal was partially adopted. The National Assembly modified the election law in Spring 2000, with the result that the number of SMCs was reduced by 26 seats, down from 254 to 227. This decreased the total number of seats in the National Assembly to 273. Obviously, the logic of this argument is oversimplistic for at least two reasons. First, although the reduction of the number of SMCs reduces the number of party candidates, it intensifies the competition between candidates in the remaining SMCs. As the stakes are higher, campaign spending is more likely to increase than decline. In fact, the sixteenth National Assembly elections of April 2000 were the most expensive yet. Second, it is not clear how high campaign spending is related to the number of seats in parliament. On the contrary, theoretical arguments support the assumption that capital-intensive campaigning is related to the plurality system in SMCs combined with a weakly institutionalized party system. Whereas the electoral system supports the personalization of elections at the district level, the weak institutionalization of party organizations forces candidates into capital-intensive campaigns because they cannot rely on the support of party organizations. Because Korean parties are organizationally fluid, highly volatile and only loosely linked to society, they can work neither as electoral machines nor as effective campaign organizers for candidates. However, money cannot be eliminated entirely from politics – neither in Korea nor anywhere else. As Susan Rose-Ackermann says, '[e]lections must be financed, and wealthy interests concerned with legislative outcomes and government policy may be willing to foot the bill' (1999: 132-33). Democratic systems must find a way to finance political campaigns without encouraging the sell-out of politics to contributors.

A more adequate way of fighting the inflation of campaign money would be to increase the weight of the electoral system's proportional representation component. As proportional representation is a party-centred system, it could help to stabilize party organizations. Candidates' prospects of electoral success depend on parties' organizational strengths, their ability to run good campaigns and the attractiveness of their programmes. On the other hand proportional representation shifts the political competition away from individuals towards party competition. In the Korean case this could counteract the personalization of campaigns and slow down the increase in campaign spending. As Lederman, Loayza and Soares (2001) argue, proportional representation systems with closed lists 'make parties stronger, which in turn bias politicians toward long-term goals and increase the concerns about reputation. In other words, the use

of closed lists [and proportional systems]<sup>25</sup> in legislative elections creates incentives for individual politicians to worry about the reputation of the party as a whole'. This has a corruption reducing effect, the real cause for concern behind rising campaign spending. Making parties relatively stronger vis-à-vis candidates may lead to fewer myopic politicians.

*2. Deficit of Social Representativeness of Parliament and Political Parties:* Critics of the current system argue that it is unable to transmit public opinion and social interests into parliament. In other words, the composition of parliament does not represent sufficiently the public will. However, as I have shown in this article, the electoral disproportionality is moderate. The party composition of the National Assembly reproduces more or less the political preferences of the South Korean voters as expressed at the polls. Sometimes it is argued, however, that the lack of representativeness of the parliament and the social inclusiveness of the party system is indirectly related to the electoral system. Its moderate to high degree of disproportionality shuts out the possibility of fair representation for minor parties and smaller political forces with new ideas. The current system benefits major, established, or larger parties. They are, however, the biggest obstacles for democratic consolidation in South Korea. Ideological distance between political parties<sup>26</sup> is difficult to recognize because the number and positioning of parties is in constant flux. Problems of representativeness and inclusion are the result of parties' ideological meaninglessness and the lack of mass linkages between political parties and society. None of the relevant parties relies upon deep roots in Korean society. Parties and presidential candidates appeal to regional sentiments for the most part, and not to social classes, professional groups or issue-oriented opinion voters. Despite only minor programmatic differences, South Korean parties and parliamentary groups tend to think and act in zero-sum categories. There are no signs of a parliamentary culture, which is conducive to co-operation, trust and compromise. Parties are more covers for clientelistic networks than political organizations for articulating societal demands and developing programmes and policy options for the solution of societal problems. The intra-party structures are strongly oligarchic and discriminate against the active participation of regular party members.

Furthermore, stable alignments between the parties and the electorate do not exist; linkages between parties, candidates and society are weak or absent. The degree of organizational autonomy of Korean parties is generally low. The social, financial and political support parties receive from other groups in society is mostly under the control of individual politicians. There are very few organizational resources which are not bound to leading party figures. Also, the linkages between various party factions are weak. The factions are grouped

25. Author's own words in parentheses.

26. Programmatic differences, though they are difficult to find and more a matter of degree than of fundamental nature, exist on the issues of social welfare, inter-Korean relations and national security; cf. Institute of Social Science et al., 1997.

together under the same party label, but they do not build a coherent political organization.

The problematic features of the party system are further complicated by the combination of a weakly institutionalized party system with unco-operative party strategies and a governmental system which has institutional deficits. It may be that the conflict between authoritarianism and democracy has generally disappeared from the party system. However, beneath the surface, the basic features of Korean party politics have survived the democratic regime change almost intact. The political parties that exist now are far from being socially rooted, electorally responsive and politically responsible. Because political parties do not succeed in performing more effectively as intermediary organizations, the emergence of a 'delegative democracy' (O'Donnell, 1994: 55-69) becomes imminent: A strong president vertically legitimated by the people can govern without being effectively controlled (and supported) horizontally by a working parliament and by socially rooted, responsive and responsible political parties (see Croissant, forthcoming, footnote 56; also Hahn, 2001).

This line of argumentation leads to a double conclusion. First, the electoral system benefits established parties (or factions) and impedes the development of political alternatives. The vested parties are responsible for the lack of political representativeness of democracy in Korea. Second, the electoral system supports indirectly a political trend towards 'delegative' or 'majoritarian democracy'. This in turn leads to a lack of social inclusiveness because of the exclusion of political minorities, their interests and preferences. Although this conclusion might take things too far, the points it refers to are correct: the electoral system benefits established parties (see Park, 2001: 19) and strengthens the majoritarian character of Korean democracy.<sup>27</sup>

Electoral reform has to address both points. Two possible reform steps are recommended. The first is to strengthen the proportional representation elements. Introducing a substantive proportional component will offer small or new parties better opportunities for successful competition than plurality systems. This will expose established parties to more competitive pressure and force them to develop programmatic answers to new voter demands, as well as be more representative.<sup>28</sup> The second step is to revise those sections of the election law which discriminate against small parties and impede the institutionalization of new parties. This concerns the deposit money clause (Articles 56 and 57, Election for Public Office and Election Practice Prevention Act, see Korea Legislation Research Institute, 1998), which throws obstacles into a new party's path when it nominates candidates in a large number of

27. For an analysis of the electoral system as an element of majoritarian democracy see Croissant, 2002b.

28. The danger of proliferation of parties and the fragmentation of the party system can be checked by introducing electoral clauses which fix minimal thresholds for winning parliamentary seats. The Korean electoral system already has such a threshold.

SMCs or to the party list.<sup>29</sup> New parties who cannot rest on the fundamentals of precursors are very disadvantaged by this provision which makes party founding a one-shot game.

*3. Regionalism.* Critics of the current system argue that it blocks the development of a truly national party system. They claim that it supports regionalistic tendencies and offers strong incentives to those political parties who act as brokers of regionalistic interests. Concerning what I have said so far in this chapter, this argument has some merits. Regionalism is the dominating cleavage in Korean politics, the party system is regionalized and the current system does provide rational incentives for political actors to appeal to regional sentiments. However, I do not think that regionalism can be fought successfully with the institution of the electoral system. The best chance for this would be to abolish the plurality system in SMCs or any other form of plurality system (binominal, plurality system in medium-sized constituencies) and introduce a pure or modified proportional system. This would force large parties to campaign seriously in areas outside 'their own' regions because winning as many votes in the national constituency as possible would count more than obtaining as many seats in their home region as possible. The prospects of success are grim, however. For the large parties it would make sense to follow a strategy of broadening their electoral support outside their regional strongholds. For smaller parties, even in a proportional system, it would still make sense to appeal to a regional electorate. If they were to behave rationally, small or medium-sized parties would try to capitalize their voters' support in one region rather than compete with larger parties on the national votes market. In the end, a 'deregionalized' party system is only achievable in a process of political learning, which includes political parties, the government and Korean citizens themselves. This process must include a change in political culture, which will take several years. The Korean case thus points not just to the possibilities, but also to the limitations of electoral engineering. Changing electoral rules may well be able to place a national spin upon political campaigning, but it cannot change the basic circumstances of regional conflict in Korea. Nor can it have a miraculous impact on the willingness of the political elites and the citizens to shift their political orientations from the regional to the national level.

*4. Party Formation.* This fourth point is an additional peril of the current system, which is, however, not much discussed in the Korean debate. The current electoral system hampers the development of stable party organizations. Instead it supports tendencies toward a short-lived, volatile party system, characterized by frequent party splits, mergers and re-foundings of party organizations, continuous re-labelling of parties and a lack of party institutionalization. The current system is a candidate-centred electoral system, whereas a proportional system would be more party-centred. Beyond this reform step, some minor

29. For the National Assembly elections in April 2000 candidates had to give a deposit of 20 million Won to the NEC. Political parties had to pay a deposit of 10 million Won for each candidate on their lists.

reforms are conceivable. First, those who switch party affiliations should automatically lose their parliamentary seats. Such a provision may violate the freedom of a parliamentary mandate but it provides an effective negative incentive against 'party hopping' simply for opportunistic and economic reasons. Second, party law should guarantee more rights to party organizations on the provincial level, especially in the case of selecting candidates. The democratic quality of intra-party decision-making could thereby be improved.

## Summary and Outlook

South Korea has a long history of elections. During the last 50 years several institutional designs have been tested. Alongside all the changes in the electoral system, there has been one constant element. Until 1987 the electoral system was used by the ruling elites as a tool to stabilize their power and not as a technical means to realize the democratic principles embedded in the electoral process. When democratization led to political change in the late 1980s, electoral reform was a major step in the process of the institutionalization of the democratic regime. However, the fundamental pattern of electoral politics changed only slowly. To date, the electoral system is still not accepted as an impartial rule of the game. Electoral reform is still guided by a logic of consequentiality. Meaningful reforms, which would enhance the deficits of the current system, are absent or have only a slim chance of being applied. There is still no consensus between political parties about the fundamental goals of electoral reform, about the type of electoral system which will be introduced and about the road to electoral reform. There are theoretical reasons to believe that a modified proportional system could help to reduce the deficits of the current system.

However, the analysis also points to the need to take other influences into account. Social cleavages, the institutional characteristics of the party system and the type of government system also have an impact on a party system's structure, its competitive dynamic and especially on the effectiveness of democratic governments. The electoral system alone cannot take on the task of developing representative and effective governments, or political institutions which fulfil the requirements of social inclusion, political efficiency and political effectiveness. As stated at the beginning of this analysis, any judgment about the influence of electoral systems on democratic governance and democratic politics in general has to take the broader institutional architecture of democracy as well as the social fabric into account. The question of how to reform electoral institutions so that elections represent the political will of the people, integrate people into cohesive political parties and generate political majorities large enough to ensure the stability of government and its ability to govern, cannot adequately be addressed without looking carefully at the broader institutional architecture of the democratic regime. The interaction between the electoral

system used in legislative elections, the party system which is shaped by several influences, of which the electoral system is only one (important) element, and the practised system of government seem to be among the most important. That is why the political results of electoral reforms are limited. However, this does not necessarily mean that there is no chance for electoral reform, or that electoral reform is meaningless. Just the opposite. Reforming the electoral system might be a crucial element in the process of democratic consolidation in South Korea, providing that the political players who set down the rules of the electoral game are willing to apply the *logic of appropriateness* to their strategies. Whether they will do so in the future is still an open question.

## Appendix

Table A1: Presidential Elections 1948-1997 <sup>30</sup>

<b>1st Republic</b>					
<b>1948<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Total no.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>1952</b>	<b>Total no.</b>	<b>%</b>
Registered voters	198	—	Registered voters	8,259,428	—
Votes cast	196	99.0	Votes cast	7,275,883	88.1
Invalid votes	1	0.5	Invalid votes	255,199	3.5
Valid votes	195	99.5	Valid votes	7,020,684	96.5
Syngman Rhee	180	92.3	Syngman Rhee	5,238,769	74.6
Kim Gu	13	6.7	Cho Pong-am	797,504	11.4
An Chae-hong	2	1.0	Lee Shi-yong	764,715	10.9
			Shin Hung-u	219,696	3.1
<b>1956</b>			<b>1960<sup>b</sup></b>		
Registered voters	9,606,870	—	Registered voters	11,196,490	—
Votes cast	9,067,063	94.4	Votes cast	10,862,272	97.0
Invalid votes	1,856,818	20.5	Invalid votes	1,228,896	11.0
Valid votes	7,210,245	79.5	Valid votes	9,633,376	89.0
Syngman Rhee	5,046,437	70.0	Syngman Rhee	9,633,376	100
Cho Pong-am	2,163,808	30.0			

a. President was elected by Constitutional Assembly

b. Election was declared null and void.

30. The following electoral statistics have been elaborated on the basis of the official data provided by the Central Election Management Commission (since 1996 National Election Commission). See National Election Commission, 1996. The results of the 1997 presidential elections were taken from the Korean newspapers *Korea Herald* and *Korea Times* (both of 20 December 1997).



**2nd Republic**

<b>1960<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Total number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Total number</b>	<b>%</b>
Registered voters	263	—	Yun Po-sun	208	82.2
Votes cast	259	98.5	Kim Chang-suk	29	11.5
Invalid votes	6	2.3	Byung Yong-tae	3	1.2
Valid votes	253	97.7	Baek Nack-chun	3	1.2
			Ho Chung	2	0.8
			Kim Doh-yun	2	0.8
			Kim Byung-Roh	1	0.4
			Pak Sun-chun	1	0.4
			Na Young-kwon	1	0.4
			Lee Chul-sung	1	0.4
			Yu Ok-u	1	0.4
			Kim Shi-hun	1	0.4

a. President was elected jointly by House of Representatives and House of Councillors.

**3rd Republic**

<b>1963</b>	<b>Total no.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>1967</b>	<b>Total no.</b>	<b>%</b>
Registered voters	12,985,051	—	Registered voters	13,935,093	—
Votes cast	11,036,175	85.0	Votes cast	11,645,215	83.6
Invalid votes	954,977	8.7	Invalid votes	586,494	5.0
Valid votes	10,081,198	91.3	Valid votes	11,058,721	95.0
Chang I-sok	198,837	2.0	Lee Se-chin	98,433	0.9
Park Chung-hee	4,702,640	46.6	Chon Chin-han	232,179	2.1
Oh Chae-yong	408,664	4.1	Yun Po-sun	4,526,541	40.9
Yun Po-sun	4,546,614	45.1	Kim Chun-yon	248,369	2.2
Pyon Yong-tae	224,443	2.2	Park Chung-hee	5,688,666	51.4
			Oh Chae-yong	264,533	2.4

**1971**

Registered voters	15,552,236	—
Votes cast	12,417,824	79.8
Invalid votes	494,606	4.0
Valid votes	11,923,218	96.0
Park Chung-hee	6,342,828	53.2
Kim Dae-jung	5,395,900	45.3
Pak Ki-chul	43,753	0.4
Lee Chong-yun	17,823	0.1
Chin Pok-ki	122,914	1.0

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**4th Republic**

<b>1972<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Total number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>1978<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Total number</b>	<b>%</b>
Registered voters	2,359	—	Registered voters	2,581	—
Votes cast	2,359	100	Votes cast	2,578	99.9
Invalid votes	2	0.1	Invalid votes	1	0.0
Valid votes	2,357	99.9	Valid votes	2,577	100
Park Chung-hee	2,357	100	Park Chung-hee	2,577	100

  

<b>1979<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Total number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>1980<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Total number</b>	<b>%</b>
Registered voters	2,560	—	Registered voters	2,540	—
Votes cast	2,549	99.6	Votes cast	2,525	99.4
Invalid votes	84	3.3	Invalid votes	1	0.0
Valid votes	2,465	96.7	Valid votes	2,524	99.97
Choi Kyu-hah	2,465	100	Chun Doo-hwan	2,524	100

a. President was elected indirectly by electoral college.

**5th Republic**

<b>1981<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Total number</b>	<b>%</b>
Registered voters	5,277	—
Votes cast	5,271	99.9
Invalid votes	1	0.0
Valid votes	5,270	100
Chun Doo-hwan	4,755	90.2
Kim Chong-chol	85	1.6
Kim Ui-taek	26	0.5
Yu Chi-song	404	7.7

a. President was elected indirectly by electoral college composed of presidential electors in 77 voting districts across the country.

**6th Republic**

<b>1987</b>	<b>Total number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>Total number</b>	<b>%</b>
Registered voters	25,873,624	—	Registered voters	29,422,658	—
Votes cast	23,066,419	89.2	Votes cast	24,095,170	81.9
Invalid votes	463,008	2.0	Invalid votes	319,761	1.3
Valid votes	22,603,411	98.0	Valid votes	23,775,409	98.7
Roh Tae-woo	8,282,738	35.9	Kim Young-sam	9,977,332	42.0
Kim Young-sam	6,337,581	27.5	Kim Dae-jung	8,041,284	33.8
Kim Dae-jung	6,113,375	26.5	Chung Ju-yung	3,880,067	16.3
Kim Jong-pil	1,823,067	7.9	Park Chan-jong	1,516,047	6.4
Shin Jeong-yil	46,650	0.2	Lee Pyong-ho	35,739	0.2
			Kim Ok-sun	86,292	0.4
			Paek Ki-won	238,648	1.0

<b>1997</b>	<b>Total number</b>	<b>%</b>
Registered voters	32,290,416	—
Votes cast	26,042,633	80.6
Invalid votes	395,488	1.5
Valid votes	25,647,145	98.5
Lee Hoi-chang	9,935,718	38.7
Kim Dae-jung	10,326,275	40.3
Rhee In-jae	4,925,591	19.2
Kwon Young-kil	306,026	1.2
Huh Kyung-young	39,055	0.2
Kim Han-shik	48,717	0.2
Shin Jeong-yil	61,056	0.2

Table A2: National Assembly Elections (1948-2000) <sup>31</sup>

<b>1st Republic</b>								
<b>Year</b>	<b>1948</b>		<b>1950</b>		<b>1954</b>		<b>1958</b>	
	<b>Seats</b>	<b>Votes (%)</b>	<b>Seats</b>	<b>Votes (%)</b>	<b>Seats</b>	<b>Votes (%)</b>	<b>Seats</b>	<b>Votes (%)</b>
	200	100	210	100	203	100	233	100
NARRKI*	55	26.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
KDP	29	13.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
TYP	12	9.6	-	-	-	-	-	-
NYP	6	2.2	-	-	-	-	-	-
TLF	1	1.6	-	-	-	-	-	-
FF	2	0.8	-	-	-	-	-	-
CDP	1	26.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
TYC	1	13.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
KNP	-	-	24	9.8	3	1.0	-	-
DNP	-	-	24	9.7	15	7.9	-	-
NA	-	-	14	6.8	3	2.6	-	0.6
KYP	-	-	10	3.3	-	-	-	-
KFTU	-	-	3	1.7	-	-	-	-
SP	-	-	2	1.3	-	-	-	-
IC	-	-	3	1.0	-	-	-	-
NIF	-	-	1	0.7	-	-	-	-
LP	-	-	-	-	114	36.8	126	42.1
DP	-	-	-	-	-	-	79	34.0
UP	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.5
Others	8	5.9	3	2.2	-	3.8	-	1.1
Independents	85	40.3	126	62.9	68	47.9	27	21.7

\* For full party names see the List of Abbreviations.

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**2nd Republic**

Year	1960 <sup>a</sup>		House of Councillors	
	House of Representatives		Seats	Votes (%)
	Seats	Votes (%)		
	233	100	58	100
DP	175	41.7	31	N/A
LP	2	2.8	4	N/A
SMP	4	6.0	1	N/A
KSP	1	0.6	1	N/A
Others	1	2.1	1	N/A
Independents	49	46.8	20	N/A

a. Because of irregularities the elections were repeated in 13 constituencies.

**3rd Republic**

Year	1963		1967		1971	
	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)
	175	100	175	100	204	100
DP	13	13.6	-	-	-	-
DRP	110	33.5	129	50.6	113	48.8
CRP	41	20.1	-	-	-	-
LDP	9	8.1	-	-	-	-
PP	2	8.8	-	-	1	1.4
NDP	-	-	45	32.7	89	44.4
MP	-	-	1	2.3	-	-
NP	-	-	-	-	1	4.0

**4th Republic**

Year	1973 <sup>a</sup>		1978 <sup>a</sup>	
	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)
	219 <sup>a</sup>	100	231 <sup>a</sup>	100
DRP	73	38.7	68	31.7
NDP	52	32.5	61	32.8
DUP	2	10.2	3	7.4
Independents	19	18.6	22	28.1

a. 73 appointed members recommended by the president and elected by the National Conference for Unification.

<b>5th Republic</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>1981</b>		<b>1985</b>	
	<b>Seats</b>	<b>Votes (%)</b>	<b>Seats</b>	<b>Votes (%)</b>
	276	100	276	100
DJP	151	35.6	148	35.2
DKP	81	21.6	35	19.7
SDP	2	3.2	-	-
KNP	25	13.2	20	9.2
CRP	2	6.7	-	-
NPP	2	4.2	-	-
DPP	1	0.9	-	-
DFP	1	1.4	-	-
NKDP	-	-	67	29.3
NSP	-	-	1	1.4
NDP	-	-	1	0.6
Independents	11	10.7	4	3.3

<b>6th Republic</b>								
<b>Year</b>	<b>1988</b>		<b>1992</b>		<b>1996</b>		<b>2000</b>	
	<b>Seats</b>	<b>Votes (%)</b>	<b>Seats</b>	<b>Votes (%)</b>	<b>Seats</b>	<b>Votes (%)</b>	<b>Seats</b>	<b>Votes (%)</b>
	299	100	299	100	299	100	273	100.0
DJP	125	34.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
PPD	70	19.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
RDP	59	23.8	-	-	-	-	-	-
NDRP	35	15.6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hangyore DP	1	1.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
DLP	-	-	149	38.5	-	-	-	-
DP	-	-	97	29.2	15	11.2	-	-
UPP	-	-	31	17.4	-	-	-	-
NPRP	-	-	1	1.8	-	-	-	-
NKP	-	-	-	-	139	34.5	-	-
NCNP	-	-	-	-	79	25.3	-	-
ULD	-	-	-	-	50	16.2	17	9.8
GNP	-	-	-	-	-	-	133	39.0
MDP	-	-	-	-	-	-	115	35.9
DPP	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3.7
KNP	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Independents	9	4.8	21	11.5	16	11.8	5	9.4

31. The electoral statistics in this table have been elaborated on the basis of the official data provided by the Central Election Management Commission (since 1996 National Election Commission). See Central Election Management Committee, 1989ff. The complete data are published in English in Croissant, 2001a.

## List of Abbreviations

CDP - Conservative Democratic Party  
CEMC - Central Election Management Commission  
CRP - Civil Rights Party  
DFP - Democratic Fairness Party  
DJP - Democratic Justice Party  
DKP - Democratic Korea Party  
DLP - Democratic Liberal Party  
DNP - Democratic Nationalist Party  
DP - Democratic Party  
DPP - Democratic People's Party  
DRP - Democratic Republican Party  
DUP - Democratic Unification Party  
FF - Farmers Federation  
GNP - Grand National Party (Hanaradang Party)  
GP - Government Party  
Hangyore DP - Hangyore Democratic Party  
HoC - House of Councillors  
HoR - House of Representatives  
IC - Ilmin Club  
KDP - Korea Democratic Party  
KFTU - Korean Federation of Trade Unions  
KNP - Korean National Party  
KSP - Korea Socialist Party  
KYP - Korea Youth Party  
LDP - Liberal Democratic Party  
LP - Liberal Party  
MDP - Millennium Democratic Party  
MP - Mass Party  
NA - National Association  
NARRKI - National Alliance for Rapid Realization of Korean Independence  
NCNP - National Congress for New Politics  
NCU - National Conference for Unification  
NDP - National Democratic Party; New Democratic Party  
NDRP - New Democratic Republican Party  
NEC - National Election Commission  
NIF - National Independence Federation  
NKP - New Korea Party  
NKDP - New Korea Democratic Party  
NP - National Party  
NPP - New Party by the People  
NPRD - New Political Reform Party  
NSP - New Socialist Party  
NYP - National Youth Party

PP - People's Party  
PPD - People's Party for Democracy; Party for Peace and Democracy  
RDP - Reunification Democratic Party  
SCNR - Supreme Council for National Reconstruction  
SDP - Social Democratic Party  
SMC - Single-member Constituency  
SMP - Socialist Mass Party  
SNTV - Single Non-transferable Vote  
SP - Socialist Party  
STV - Single Transferable Vote  
TLF - Taehan Labor Federation  
TYC - Taehan Youth Corps  
TYP - Taedang Youth Party  
ULD - United Liberal Democrats  
UP - Unification Party  
UPP - United People's Party

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