

ANALYSIS OF THE 16th PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION IN KOREA—ESPECIALLY INCLUDING THE CHUNGBUK PROVINCE

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Abstract: No theory can explain regionalism, party choice, candidate personality, policy and money with one unified frame in the 16th parliamentary election in Korea 2000. Party choice of constituents is correlated with regionalism, which could be well understood in either emotional or rational theory because they vote in their own subjective rational judgment. They may select their preferable party based on emotional subjective regionalism or perceived on unequal disadvantaged regionalism. So regionalism in Korea could be explained in both cognitive psychological theory and rational choice theory. The candidate personality seems to prevail more in the Korean parliamentary election than party. If so then, the independent candidates should be elected but in fact they are a few only. Policy that a candidate or a party presented in the election has not enough influence upon win or defeat. It may be interpreted as much money demand for winning during informal or formal campaigning that campaign money is related with winning significantly. One noticeable achievement of elections is the successful civic campaign to boycott unfit politicians, even though the campaign has been ruled as unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

INTRODUCTION

Analysing the results of the 16th parliamentary election on April 13, 2000 is critical to assess the government of Kim Dae-Jung and forecast the direction of the future of Korean politics. The two-party system of 'major opposition and minor ruling' comes from the election, in which the opposition, Grand National Party (GNP), received 18 seats more than the ruling party, Millennium Democratic Party (MDP), winning the 16th election to create a new party. Nevertheless, the strategies of the ruling party did not play a role in constituent votes.

This paper investigates the results of the election with the data from the National Election Commission (NEC). In this election the characteristics may include the following: more solidity regionalism,

the major opposition party, negative campaigns by citizen groups, many new legislators, and no impact of South-North Korean policy on the election.

The government receives authority from citizens through election. The election also leads to peaceful political change, taking public opinion into consideration for government policy.

These election images may be called a principal one (Niemi and Weisberg, 1984: 3). But another theory insists the election has only a positive meaning; it is not an influential symbol (Edelman, 1964; Ginsberg, 1982). The ruler ratifies his authority through the election and uses the election as a means to get acceptance from the governed, who participates by voting (although their one vote has little probability of changing policies). They receive psychological satisfaction by fulfilling their role as citizens, forgetting to make political change. Citizens rarely know policies or candidates and have little concerns.

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It is very important to understand the results of elections because the elected officials should be genuine representatives of the constituents.

In this paper the following election factors are analyzed: regionalism, party, personality in the campaigning of citizen groups against so-called corruptive or unfitting candidates, policy and money.

FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYZING THE ELECTION

Review of Election Theories

The election theories of the United States can be classified into the sociological theory at Columbia University, the social-psychological theory at the University, Economics Theory at Rotschster University, and the recent cognitive psychological theory. Each theory has different views of constituents. The two sociological theories consider elites as defense of democracy by viewing constituents as passive, emotional, and non-cognitive beings. They may provide a logical reason for elite democracy. The economic and cognitive psychological theories, however, recognize constituents as calculating and cognitive beings, and so they might signify the possibility of liberal democracy (Gi-Sook Cho, 1996: 14). In contrast with these theories, the modernization theory looks into the voting behavior of Korea, but currently the rational choice theory seems to prevail. I would like to insist on a comprehensive rational purposive theory.

Sociological Theory

The characteristic of the social group to which an individual belongs determines definite voting behaviors of the individual. Factors such as socio-economic status, place of residence, and religion are the most important elements in predicting the constituent voting pattern (Lazars-

feld, Berelson and Gaudet, 1948). Social characteristics determine the political preference. The voting choice of the individual is no more than the dependent factor of social characteristics. Therefore, the prediction for the individual's political attitude or action needs information about social factors of the social group to which the individual belongs (Lazarsfeld et al., 1965).

Socio-Psychological Theory

The political attitude or action of voters is mainly influenced by emotional identification with a party. American voters have no concerns about policy issues of parties or candidates, but they vote with the psychological attitude of party identification. The preference for policy or candidate even seems to be decided by the party identification (Campbell et al., 1960; Hess and Torney, 1967; Jennings and Niemi, 1981; Sears, 1975).

Economic Theory

This theory states that the policy issues are the most important factors of voting. According to the democratic theory, the constituents complete the representative system by electing the representatives who promise to carry out their desired policies. Therefore the voting on policy issues is very critical in the democratic election. Key (1966) believes that constituents are rational beings with the capacity to self-determine. In other words, voters are not stupid. He insists that they fail to vote on prospective issues because parties do not propose the definite policy alternatives but the rational electorate success the retrospective voting. They support the ruling party again if they are satisfied with its policy performance, otherwise they support the opposition party. Retrospective voting can occur without knowing the definite policy alternatives.

Cognitive Psychological Theory

Unlike the socio-psychological theory, the

cognitive psychological theory describes human beings as rational and reasonable entities with limited rationality (Simon, 1985). The cognitive psychology theory presupposes that the constituent has limited cognitive capabilities. This theory predicts that every constituent cannot adapt to the exogenous changing situations about policy issues because of every constituent's limited cognitive capabilities.

(This entire paragraph is very unclear. What are you trying to say? Please rewrite) It is necessary of some degree of knowledge and concerns for constituents to vote the complicated policy issues, while ordinary constituents decide the easy policy issue voting (Carmines and Stimson, 1980: 78~91). Therefore, it is not probably expected easily for ordinary constituents to vote the controversy policy issues although the definite policy issues are given from the outside.

Modernization Theory

Modernization theory indicates no unified principle because of its diverse theories proposed by numerous scholars (Han Bae-Ho, 1984: chapter 9). Nevertheless, the common characteristic of modernization theory is that a political typology comes from the changing of fundamental social economic structure. In this theory, modernization means industrialization and urbanization often leading to changes in the personal social economic conditions of education, profession, place of residence, and income. These changes influence political cognition, personal modernity, and political behavior. Therefore, according to the modernization theory, the change of personal psychological orientation through modernization appears to change the political culture collectively. Such a change implies that it is a necessary condition to develop democracy.

The political culture has encouraged discussion on the role of citizens in developing countries (Almond and Verba, 1963). They have classified

the political culture into three types: parochial, subject and participant political culture in accordance with recognition about political process, and potential citizen's influence. The change of political culture happens concurrently with modernization. Democracy may be successful when the political culture changes into a participatory one.

The theoretical frame for election study is the modernization theory of Lerner and Lipset (date). It states that the degree of modernization explains the difference in voting behavior. For example, the voting behavior in the non-modernized traditional society shows the loyalty toward the primary group of kin and territory, while the voting behavior in the developed society shows participants voting for secondary political interest along with the formation of participant culture from modernization. "The rural pro the ruling party and the urban pro the opposition party" states that the difference in social economical condition between the rural and the urban brings about the difference of voting behavior (Yun Chun-ju, 1979; C. L. Kim, 1980). Thus, the farmers often vote for the ruling party by accepting the official authority or material entertainment, while the urban dwellers usually vote for the opposition party because of their interests in literacy, mass media development, high education, and economic abundance. The voting of urban citizens indicates the degree of political development.

Rational Choice Theory

Downs introduced the rational man of economics into the research of voting behavior to find the regularity of human social behavior (1957). Economical analysis in this stage can find the purposes which policy-makers search for and the most reasonable alternative to achieve them (Downs, 1957: 4). The theorists try to increase the forecasting potentiality of available alternatives by one simplification (profit of max with cost of mini) of rational human purpose. Therefore, rationality

means humans make their behavior conciliatory to their purpose (Riker and Ordeshook, 1973: chapter. 2).

Rationality on rational choice theory attempts to describe the regularity of human behavior, which means the action of selecting the most suitable one for the purpose after evaluating alternatives (Mueller, 1979:1). If politics adapt to this principle, then the purpose of humans as politically rational is plausible. So the rationality of the rational choice theory might be substituted for the term of 'rational purpose'.

Comprehensive Rational Purposive Theory

What factors constituents vote on depends upon the attitude of constituents toward voting. Page and Jones (1984: 106~131) state that the constituents vote because of policy, while Markus and Converse (1984: 132~153) believe that the attitude constituents have toward a candidate prevails over other factors. Voters do not determine their attitudes along only one element. Their mind and heart can fluctuate with the type and level of elections. Voters select a candidate in light of their own purpose with no objective rationality as the rational choice theory advocates. On subjective purposive, his or her voting may be no more than rational at any level or type of election. There is no determination of voter without reason for he or she is a complex human with own capable judgment. Whether voter uses regionalism or the party agenda or the personality of a candidate depends upon his or her subjective purposive choice that may not be rational.

Frame of Analysis

The election behavior of Korean constituents has been fluctuating from the Park Chung-Hee regime to the present situation, especially on 'pro ruling party of the rural pro opposition party of the urban', which seems to substitute regionalism. Only one

theory cannot describe the results of the election in Korea. The inclusive theories may be introduced into analysis of the 16th parliamentary election.

The factors of election are the following: regionalism, party, policy, personality and money. This section will analyze how these factors appear in the 16th parliamentary election in comparison with one of the 15th as control criterion, which may not be applied to strict analysis of election features.

In analyzing the results of congressional elections, we might use a framework that expresses the function of regionalism, party, policy, personality and money. It may be one of the objectives to investigate how much these factors influence constituents' voting behavior in the 16th National Assembly in Korea and especially the Chungbuk Province.

Regionalism

Regionalism in the election context can be defined as "emotional affection or support to a candidate from his or her home town" (Kim and Koh, 1980: 67). The trend of regionalism in the Korean presidential elections has been discussed on 'the South and North mode' between Park Chung-Hee and Yoon Bo-Shuen in 1963 and 'the East and West mode' between Park Chung-Hee and Kim Dae-Joong in 1971. Such a trend has begun to happen on parliamentary elections after the 13th presidential election. The proposition from the view of modernization theory may be more voting trends due to regionalism in the rural than in the urban areas because the voting trend according to regions may mean irrationality and emotion. One research, however, concludes no relationship between modernization and regionalism of election about the proposition (Kim and Koh, 1972). This research explains the reason regionalism tends to come from the poor political party is because the voting criteria are not parties but regions due to underdeveloped political party system.

The regionalism factor also seems to be one of the

most important factors in describing the voting behavior in the western democracy. The voting behaviors may be based on two causes: (1) the emotional tie the voter feels with candidates from the same hometown and (2) the different political and economical interests or different cultural preferences between voters and candidates from different regions.

According to the rational choice theory, the political events or economical backgrounds in the regions have determined absolutely the regionalism of voting behavior, which could be ameliorated by solving different regional obstacles, such as political and economical problems.

The voting trend of regionalism has been recognized as one of our traditional cultures of having regional or kin affinity. This trend could be found more in the rural than the urban in the view of modernization theory. Regionalism can be classified into two types. One is the emotional non-political regionalism, and the other is the strong political one. Regionalism in Korea may seem like an amalgam of the two types. How could we interpret the regional results of the 16th election respectively in the provinces of Honam, Gyung-sang and Chung-chung?

Party

It is doubtful whether the Korean constituents vote according to a party or personality. Modernization theory might assume that constituents vote according to a party after modernization. However, they base their decisions no more on party or policy than a candidate's personality (Choi and Lee, 1980; Shin Myung-soon, 1984). Voting based on a candidate's personality means voting on the basis of individual affinity with the candidate or candidate's character, such as domicile, family relations, educational background, age, and so on (Choi and Lee, 1980: 168). Korean constituents take polls regarding candidate's personality because they don't have party identification due to a short

history of parties. The constituents cannot distinguish one party from another because almost all Korean parties have conservative features since the division of the Korean Peninsula.

Party identification in the United States is not calculating or rational, but rather an emotional factor, which parents pass on to their children before entering politics, influencing political cognition and evaluation (Campbell, 1960). The party identification in Korea is combined with regionalism, which may cause subjective purposive rationality in polls.

Candidate

Korean poll surveys suggest that the candidate factor is more determinant than the party factor (Gil Sheung-Heum, 1993: 133~152; Gil Sheung-Heum et al., 1987; Shin Myung-Soon, 1984;).

A candidate evaluation means assessing one's personality, career, competence, and the impact of the candidate's personality on what? These elements may be better understood by the two following causes. First, the Korean political culture may influence voting of candidate's factor. Patronage, such as alumni, places a high emphasis on affinity, therefore making individual relationships with a candidate more influential than party. Second, the existing parties are unstable, making constituents experience no party identification. This is because they have been continually changing political party alignment. Many parties have been created just before an election and existed for only a short time.

A candidate's personality as an election deter-

Table 1. Factors in Voting of National Assembly (%)

	13 th	14 th	15 th	16 th
Personality	30.2	31.8	44.0	59.3
Party	31.8	28.9	23.0	22.7
Policy, issue	24.4	25.3	21.1	6.3

Source: Surveys of the Korean Association of Election Study (Lee Gap-Yun & Lee Hyun-Woo, 2000: 150)

minant is also important in the Western world. A candidate's competence has increasingly influenced the election results, especially in the United States and England, a one-winner system in small districts since 1970 (Cain et al, 1987; Herrera and Yawn, 1999: 136~150). The contemporary environment also has influenced the candidate factor in an election since 1980 for communism crumbled and the nations leaned toward the welfare state. The ideologies of parties now are converged into a similar one.

The constituents are aware of the political corruption through media. Thus, they take a candidate's morality and honesty seriously on important issues (Groseclose and Krehbiel, 1994: 75~99; Welch and Hibbing, 1997: 226~239).

The studies for the congressional election in the United States indicate the effect of current incumbent as the typical case of personality voting. The election rate of the present incumbent in the House is over 90% and 85% in the Senate. Many studies indicate their sincere service on behalf of their constituency as the cause of such high percentages (Fiorina, 1977: 177~181; 1981; Jacobson, 1992; Mayhew, 1974: 295~317; Yiannakis, 1981: 568~580). In addition they could increase their possibility of being elected by contacting their constituents (Cain et al., 1987: 27~36; Mann, 1978).

The candidate's factor may become stronger than the party factor since democratization in Korea because (1) the ideological distinction among Korean parties has disappeared since democratization and (2) the fluctuation of parties becomes high due to changing alignment of political parties.

Policy

Voting is an important connection between ordinary people and their government in democratic theory. How much a candidate's proposed policies in his or her campaign are considered in voting is only a small part of the representative

election. Voting, however, is a weak tool for policy making because of several imposing factors. Although today the competitive principle of democracy allows the voters to choose the policy maker among rival candidates, it does not give the electorate much influence on those policies between elections. The electorate vote on a few policy issues directly, but really they vote for the candidate rather than the policies in most cases. The candidates state their opinions about policy issues and the electorate considers them. However, it is a question of how much the electorate can have an influence on policies through voting (Edward III & Sharkansky, 1978: 20~27; Lindblom, 1980: 106~109). The act of voting does not mean supporting a policy, for votes of support for opposing policies could be more than those of the elected (Rae, 1967).

Money

No candidate succeeds in acquiring votes without campaign funds, but how much he or she should spend on elections varies according to electoral systems. In Korea control limitation on free campaign by money that must corrupt polls over fair competition among candidates. The 'Act for Public Office Election and Prevention of Illegal Election' describes the possible amount of money that could be spent for an electoral campaign (Ch.8), asking candidates to report that amount to the NEC. The NEC must then sue candidates who spend money over the limit.

Although the law prohibits free campaign money, no candidate adheres to the limitation as indicated in a fact poll. In addition there is no fairness on electoral campaign between party candidates and independent candidates because independent candidates can campaign and spend money during the 15-day campaign period, while party candidates can campaign and spend money anytime as political party activities (Article 58 vi).

Indeed, candidates have never reported their

informal or illegal money, which are beyond the legal limitation. Therefore, the impact of campaign money has never been disclosed and identified, although money is said to definitely have a great role on voting in Korea.

In this paper the impact of campaign money is analyzed under the general assumption of ruling party advantage and correlation of campaign money between the elected and the defeated.

ANALYSIS OF THE 16th ELECTION

Low Voter Turnout

Voter turnout fell to a record-low 57.2 percent in this year's elections, with only 19,153,076 of the nation's 33,482,387 eligible voters casting their ballots. The turnout was down 6.7 percent from the 1996 general elections and dropped below 60 percent for the first time in the nation's election history. The turnout for the nation's first general elections in 1948 was 95.5 percent, still the record high. It has since hovered around 60 percent.

Turnout for the latest polls was highest in Cheju at 67.2 percent, while Taejon recorded the lowest at 53.3 percent. Turnout was 54.3 percent in Seoul, 55.4 percent in Pusan, 53.4 percent in Incheon, 54.1 percent in Kwangju, 53.5 percent in Taegu, 59.1 percent in Ulsan, 54.9 percent in Kyonggi Province and 62.9 percent in Kangwon Province.

Frustration with corrupt and divisive politics, negative campaigning by parties and their candidates, and negative campaigning of citizen groups were cited as the main reasons for the dismal voter turnout.

Regionalism

Regionalism in the Nation (correct all spacings between the number and percents in the parentheses)

The GNP received 21 seats (55.8% of valid polls) in Pusan, 11 (62.9) in Taegu, 16 (52.5) in

Kyungbuk and 16 (53.7) in Kyungnam in the 16th election, while it received 21 (55.8) in Pusan, 2 (24.5) in Taegu, 11 (34.9) in Kyungbuk and 17 (46.5) in Kyungnam in the 15th election (Table 2). The tendency of regionalism for GNP has increased in the Kyungsang region from the 15th election to the 16th election. In contrast, the MDP received 5 seats (69.9% of valid polls) in Kwangju, 9 (65.4) in Cheonbuk and 11 (66.4) in Cheonnam in the 16th election, while it received 6 (86.2%) in Kwangju, 13 (63.7) in Cheonbuk and 17 (71.0) in Cheonnam in the 15th election. If 4 independents (26%)--offshoots from MDP--are added into the MDP, the voting rate would increase. So the trend of regionalism in the 16th election has become stronger than ever.

Regionalism in national or county levels cannot be interpreted by the rational theory, but the emotional traditional background or the comprehensive rational purposive theory can.

Civic groups are gearing up to eradicate deep-rooted regional rivalry as the result of general elections, which showed that regional animosity took a firm hold on voters. During the 15-day campaigning period, bureaucrats, politicians, citizens and civil right activists repeatedly put the elimination of regional antagonism as one of their top priorities. Nonetheless, the general elections have institutionalized the regional confrontation between the southeastern Kyongsang provinces and the southwestern Cholla provinces. Regionalism could dominate political activities in the National Assembly.

The ruling MDP, based in the Cholla Provinces, failed to overcome its image as a regional party. Meanwhile, GNP has a narrow power base in Kyongsang provinces. Many voters were surprised that the GNP garnered a sweeping victory in Kyongsang-pukto and Kyongsang-namdo, with its candidates winning in 64 constituencies. It only lost in one area, Ulsan City.

GNP won in 51 of all the 76 constituencies in the

Table 2. The 15th & 16th National Assembly Election Results per Party Seats (% of valid polls)

City & Province	Party Total	*NKP	NCNP	ULD	DP	Independents			(15 th)
		**GNP	MDP	ULD		Independents	DPP	KNP	(16 th)
	253	121(34.5)	66(25.3)	41(16.2)	9(11.2)	16(11.8)			(15 th)
	227	112(39.0)	96(35.9)	12(9.8)		5(9.4)	1(3.7)	1(0.4)	(16 th)
Seoul	47	27(36.5)	18(35.2)	0(11.3)		1(3.1)			
	45	17(43.3)	18(45.1)	0(4.7)	1(13.5)	0(1.6)	0(1.3)	0(0.1)	(16 th)
Pusan	21	21(55.8)	0(6.4)	0(5.5)	0(18.8)	0(11.7)			(15 th)
	17	17(60.3)	0(15.0)	0(1.6)		0(7.5)	0(14.9)	0(0.1)	(16 th)
Taegu	13	2(24.5)	0(1.4)	8(35.8)	0(4.0)	3(29.7)			(15 th)
	11	11(62.9)	0(10.9)	0(10.2)		0(9.2)	0(6.2)		(16 th)
Inchun	11	9(38.2)	2(29.5)	0(14.5)	0(11.0)	0(5.9)			(15 th)
	11	5(41.7)	6(40.6)	0(12.1)		0(3.2)	0(1.2)		(16 th)
Kwangju	6	0(7.5)	6(86.2)	0(0.8)	0(2.0)	0(3.4)			(15 th)
	6	0(3.3)	5(69.9)	0(0.3)		1(26.1)			0(0.4) (16 th)
Taejon	7	0(21.4)	0(11.4)	7(49.8)	0(12.6)	0(4.1)			(15 th)
	6	1(23.3)	2(28.4)	3(34.3)		0(9.9)	0(0.9)	0(0.9)	(16 th)
Ulsan									(15 th)
	5	4(41.7)	0(9.6)	0(3.1)		1(24.4)	0(3.9)		(16 th)
Kyonggi	38	18(33.2)	10(27.4)	5(18.6)	3(13.9)	2(6.6)			(15 th)
	41	18(39.1)	22(40.9)	1(12.4)		0(4.7)	0(1.6)		(16 th)
Kangwon	13	9(37.3)	0(6.7)	2(23.6)	2(14.5)	0(17.7)			(15 th)
	9	3(38.6)	5(36.5)	0(10.2)		0(8.1)	1(6.5)		(16 th)
Chungbuk	8	2(31.5)	0(8.9)	5(39.4)	0(8.9)	1(10.9)			(15 th)
	7	3(30.6)	2(31.3)	2(29.5)		0(7.1)	0(0.7)	0(0.8)	(16 th)
Chungnam	13	1(28.9)	0(6.1)	12(51.2)	0(7.9)	0(5.5)			(15 th)
	11	0(17.4)	4(30.0)	6(39.2)		0(4.9)	0(1.1)	1(6.5)	(16 th)
Cheonbuk	14	1(23.4)	13(63.7)	0(0.5)	0(5.8)	0(2.4)			(15 th)
	10	0(3.6)	9(65.4)	0(3.4)		1(27.4)	0(0.2)		(16 th)
Cheonnam	17	0(17.7)	17(71.0)	0(0.8)	0(1.3)	0(9.3)			(15 th)
	13	0(4.1)	11(66.4)	0(1.6)		2(27.5)	0(0.5)		(16 th)
Kyongbuk	19	11(34.9)	0(1.6)	2(20.6)	1(6.9)	5(33.)			(15 th)
	16	16(52.5)	0(14.7)	0(14.0)		0(8.4)	0(10.1)	0(0.3)	(16 th)
Kyongnam	23	17(46.5)	0(4.2)	0(4.7)	2(14.7)	4(28.7)			(15 th)
	16	16(53.7)	0(11.8)	0(3.3)		0(21.9)	0(6.2)	0(0.2)	(16 th)
Cheju	3	3(37.2)	0(29.4)	0(1.2)	0(2.0)	0(30.2)			(15 th)
	3	1(44.2)	2(49.4)	0(0.6)		0(5.3)	0(0.4)		(16 th)

*NKP: New Korea Party NCNP: National Congress for New Politics ULD: United Liberal Democrats DP: Democratic Party

**GNP: Grand National Party MDP: Millennium Democratic Party ULD: United Liberal Democrats

DPP: Democratic People's Party KNP: Korea New Party

Modified from Source: <http://www.nec.go.kr>

two provinces in the last elections. The number of constituencies decreased to 65 this year. President Kim Dae-Jung's MDP also triumphed in 25 of the 29 constituencies in Cholla-pukto and Cholla-namdo. The four independents are MDP offshoots.

The boycott movement of citizen groups has failed to prevent regional rivalry between the Kyongsang and Cholla provinces in the elections. The alliance has repeatedly stated that their second important task was to erase regional antagonism in

the polls. But the task was placed in the back burner because the civic group had to concentrate all its efforts to wage campaigns against corrupt and tainted candidates. A representative of the alliance admitted that the movement has not made enough efforts to check the worsening regionalism. The alliance plans to step up its struggle to sweep away the regional confrontation, which has long been dubbed as a “chronic disease” that will destroy the nation.

Regionalism in the Chungbuk Province

The other regionalism in the 16th election appears in the Chungbuk Province (Table 3), where more competition among counties ensued, although the results of election per party are not the trend of regionalism in the whole province because the GNP received 3 seats (30.6% of valid polls), MDP 2 (31.3%) and ULD 2 (29.5%) in the 16th election. For example, the discrepancies of supporting party are unique between Zecheon and Danyang counties, among Boeun, Okchun and Yungdong counties, and among Zincheon, Eumseong and Gyesan counties. The voters elect their own regional candidates from their own county.

ULD got 39.4% of valid polls and 5 elected winners among 8 constituencies in the 15th election in Chungbuk (Table 3). The leader of ULD, Kim Jong-Pil, was born in Chungnam, which is very similar to Chungbuk. ULD also received 12 seats among 13 seats in Chungnam, his political backbone, supporting him for a long time since the military coup.

The voting results of ULD have fallen to 29.5% and 2 seats in the 16th election in Chungbuk, where GNP has 3 seats (30.6%) and MDP 2 seats (31.3). Regionalism seemed weak in the 16th election in the entire province of Chungbuk, but strong among counties around Chungbuk. A GNP candidate received the most ballots (64.9%) in the Youngdong county, while an independent received the most votes (48.6%) in the Boen county. ULD

and MDP candidates received 42.9% and 42.4%, respectively, in the Okcheon county of the same constituency. This means that regionalism occurs even among counties that elect their own candidates. Regionalism among counties also occurs in the Zincheon, Eumseong, and Gyesan counties of one constituency. The ULD candidate received the most ballots (61.4%) in the Zincheon county, while the GNP candidate received the most ballots (43.7%) in the Eumseong county. The MDP candidate received the most ballots (56.3%) in the Gyesan county (Table 3).

Party Factor

The general elections resulted in a polarized 16th National Assembly controlled by neither the ruling nor the main opposition force. However, the opposition party, GNP, kept the majority since the failure of the last presidential election although the ruling party, MDP, competed with GNP in obtaining the majority in the parliament. The GNP had become weak in the number of representatives because its representatives had changed their party after the failure of presidential election. The GNP, however, got 133 seats (including national proportional representatives), 4 short of the majority, in the landslide support of Kyongsang regions.

The MDP has even failed to get the majority, but it has succeeded in getting recognized as a national party as well as getting 115 seats in all the regions except the Kyongsang regions.

The major parties are now moving quickly to take the lead in shaping the nation's new political order. Both the MDP and the GNP exchanged reconciliatory gestures, but political tensions are expected to remain high in view of the new bipolar structure of the national legislature. This assumption is based on the fact that neither the MDP nor the GNP captured an outright majority in the parliament in the polls, and the likelihood that the two parties will both attempt to secure control of

Table 3. The 15th & 16th National Assembly Election Results per Party in Chungbuk Seats (% of valid polls)

City & County	Party Total	*NKP	NCNP	ULD	DP	Independents			(15 th)
		**GNP	MDP	ULD		Independents	KNP	DPP	(16 th)
		2(31.5)	0(8.9)	5(39.4)	0(8.9)	1(10.9)			(15 th)
		3(30.6)	2(31.3)	2(29.5)		0(7.1)	0(0.8)	0(0.7)	(16 th)
Cheongju		0(36.8)	0(10.7)	1(42.3)	0(3.6)	0(5.9)			(15 th)
Sangdang		0(33.7)	1(40.1)	(26.2)					(16 th)
Cheongju		0(21.0)	0(8.1)	1(43.4)	0(17.4)	0(9.5)			(15 th)
Heungduk		1(31.1)	0(25.8)	0(26.7)		0(13.5)	0(2.9)		(16 th)
Choongjoo		0(24.5)	0(7.2)	1(43.1)	0(12.2)	0(13.0)			(15 th)
		0(35.3)	1(38.7)	0(22.6)		0(3.4)			(16 th)
Zecheon		0(26.5)		0(30.6)	0(7.4)	1(35.6)			(15 th)
		0(32.5)	0(25.4)	1(37.0)		0(2.9)		0(2.1)	(16 th)
Danyang		(38.1)		(32.8)	(8.1)	(21.0)			(15 th)
		(20.2)	(20.4)	(55.2)		(2.5)		(1.7)	(16 th)
Cheongwon		1(37.9)	0(6.3)	0(37.3)	0(13.8)	0(4.6)			(15 th)
		1(28.9)	0(27.4)	0(28.9)		0(11.6)	0(3.2)		(16 th)
Boeun		0(10.7)	0(12.3)	1(72.6)	0(2.6)	0(1.0)			(15 th)
		(8.7)	(25.1)	(17.7)		(48.6)			(16 th)
Okcheon		(14.4)	(48.4)	(30.4)	(2.6)	(1.7)			(15 th)
		(8.6)	(42.4)	(42.9)		(6.2)			(16 th)
Yungdong		(67.6)	(10.0)	(10.7)	(5.5)	(5.4)			(15 th)
		1(64.9)	0(13.8)	0(14.2)		0(7.1)			(16 th)
Zincheon		0(18.6)	0(5.5)	1(67.5)	0(3.6)	0(4.7)			(15 th)
		0(16.6)	0(19.7)	1(61.4)				0(2.4)	(16 th)
Eumseong		(44.7)	(4.7)	(35.8)	(5.2)	(9.6)			(15 th)
		(43.7)	(24.3)	(29.5)				(2.5)	(16 th)
Gyesan		1(53.6)	0(4.6)	0(27.1)	0(5.0)	0(9.7)			(15 th)
		(15.8)	(56.3)	(25.4)				(2.5)	(16 th)

*NKP: New Korea Party NCNP: National Congress for New Politics ULD: United Liberal Democrats DP: Democratic Party

**GNP: Grand National Party MDP: Millennium Democratic Party ULD: United Liberal Democrats

DPP: Democratic People's Party KNP: Korea New Party

Modified from Source: <http://www.nec.go.kr>

the Assembly by recruiting minor opposition party members and independents is slim.

Senior ruling camp officials have already indicated that President Kim Dae-Jung may approach his former coalition partner, Kim Jong-Pil, with a proposal to merge their two parties or form a second legislative alliance. At least four independent candidates who emerged victorious in constituencies in the President's support base, Cholla province, joined the MDP. Even if the MDP, which managed to capture 115 Assembly seats, succeeds in wooing the United Liberal

Democrats (ULD), which won 17, and (what do you want to say about the independent candidates???) the independent candidates, it would still fall short of attaining the 137 seats needed to form a parliamentary majority. This has led to speculation that the ruling party may try to bring some GNP members under its wing. But senior presidential aides at Chong Wa Dae said that the President would not try to expand the MDP's legislative force by any form of political realignment, and would instead seek bipartisan cooperation with the GNP. The aides said that any attempts

to take control of the Assembly might further heighten tensions with the main opposition party, which is claiming that it earned the public mandate in the elections.

The GNP maintained its status as the largest single political bloc by garnering 133 Assembly seats, just four short of a parliamentary majority. The presidential aides' comments are seen as a bid to placate the GNP, which was emboldened by its unexpectedly large margin of victory.

GNP leader Lee Hoi-chang, buoyed by the opposition party's victory, responded positively to the ruling party's reconciliatory gesture, saying he was ready to meet with President Kim. "President Kim and the ruling party must accept the public verdict in a humble manner and devote themselves to politics that will benefit the public," Lee said. Now that the elections are over, both the ruling and opposition parties should allow the wounds that were inflicted during the campaigns to heal and address the issues related to the daily lives of the people, he said. Presidential aides said that regardless of the election results, President Kim would continue to promote his reconciliatory approach toward North Korea and political and economic reforms.

They said that although the MDP failed either to capture a parliamentary majority or emerge as the largest single political force in the elections, the ruling party's performance was impressive enough for the President to have confidence in the public mandate and carry on with his policy. They noted that the MDP earned 96 seats by direct vote, an increase of 30 from the 1996 elections, while the GNP and the ULD lost nine and 29 seats, respectively. "This is a big gain for MDP," a senior Chong Wa Dae official said. He also noted that the MDP fared well in regionally neutral regions, such as Seoul, Incheon, Kyonggi, Kangwon and Cheju. "This shows that our party is overcoming its excessive dependence on popular support in the Cholla provinces, its home base," the official said

(Chosunilbo, April 15, 2000).

There may have been no decisive winner in the 16th National Assembly, but there was a clear loser --- the minor conservative ULD. The No.2 opposition party saw its 51 Assembly seats reduced to only 17 and failed to gain even the 20 places in the legislature necessary to form an independent negotiating bloc. The ULD's dismal showing is likely to threaten the position of the party's founder, former Prime Minister Kim Jong-pil, who is often dubbed the "perennial No.2 man." The catastrophe was a result of the party's humiliating defeat in the Chungchong Provinces, traditionally Kim's political stronghold. In the 1996 parliamentary polls, the party dominated the region, winning 24 of the total 28 constituencies. This time, however, the party managed to attain only 11 of the 24 seats available in the area.

Kim Jong-pil's excessive confidence in Chungchong voters' loyalty to him was obvious from the party's candidate nominations. He attributed the embarrassing setback to flaws in ULD's candidate selection process. Compared to the previous election, ULD also fared miserably in other regions. It was unable to win a single seat in the Kyongsang provinces, where it gained 10 in 1996, and secured only one in the capital area and Kangwon Province, where it snatched seven four years ago. Nonetheless, the party managed to retain its status as the third-largest force in the Assembly and said in a statement, "We will actively fulfill our role as the legislature's guardian against the political squabbles of MDP and GNP." Critics said this statement indicated ULD's hopes of holding on to its power to exercise the "casting vote," as neither the ruling MDP nor the main opposition GNP were able to secure a simple majority.

The upstart Democratic People's Party (DPP), which also hoped to form an independent negotiating bloc, did even worse than the ULD, emerging victorious in only one district. With its entire leadership--mostly GNP defectors who were re-

jected in the main opposition party's candidate nomination process--utterly defeated, the barely two month-old party is likely to be dissolved in the near future. The DPP's fall from grace was largely due to an effective GNP campaign strategy that convinced voters that "a vote for DPP is a vote for President Kim Dae-jung." This worked particularly well in Pusan and the surrounding South Kyongsang Province, the political hometown of both parties where the DPP expected it could compete with the GNP. With the splinter parties on the verge of collapse, the 16th Assembly could give the nation a "two-party" political system.

Candidate Factor

Citizen Campaign against Unfit Candidates

There were many reasons why the candidate's factor had more influence on voting than in the past elections. The negative systematic campaigning of citizen groups was performed on support of the people. The Citizens' Alliance for the 2000 General Elections has devoted its effort to stage campaigns to boycott corrupt and incompetent candidates over the election period. The movement successfully blocked many tainted candidates from winning the parliamentary race.

The civic movement to oust "unfit" candidates from politics produced bigger-than-expected results in National Assembly elections, raising possibilities of political reform. According to the final ballot count, 59 out of 86 candidates who were on the rejection list announced by the Citizens' Alliance for the 2000 General Elections did not get elected. Of the 20 candidates who were subject to the intense rejection campaign, 15 were defeated. In particular, such senior and multiple-term candidates as Lee Jong-chan (Chongno, Seoul) and Lee Kang-hee (Namgu-B, Inchon) of the ruling MDP and Kim Zoong-hwie (Kangdong-B, Seoul) and Lee Sa-churl (Puchon Wonmi-B, Kyonggi-do) of the GNP were among those who suffered setbacks.

Nearly 70 percent of the blacklisted candidates were ousted from the elections, boasting the success of the citizen's three-month rejection campaign. The alliance's rejection drive proved to be decisive in the metropolitan area encompassing Seoul. Of the 20 blacklisted candidates who ran for metropolitan electoral districts, 19 suffered losses. The only exception was Chung Dae-chul of the MDP who ran in the Chungku district in downtown Seoul. The alliance, which consists of more than 400 civic groups, claimed victory for its rejection drive at a news conference. Despite deep-rooted regional rivalry and the lowest ever voter turnout, their campaigns had scored a major success. The alliance hopes this election will create a clean and transparent political culture in the nation. The alliance's spokesman said the campaign was very successful in convincing politicians that they can no longer get away with the kind of election practices that were once commonplace. That general election had great significance in that people's participation increased markedly at the expense of politicians who typically monopolized elections.

The alliance's pleas for political reform, which had been supported by its revelation of military service, taxation, and criminal records of candidates, had effectively ousted the blacklisted runners.

Earlier, the alliance disseminated across the country a list of 86 "unfit" candidates. The alliance promised to defeat these candidates in the general elections. Twenty-two, in particular, were designated for a more intensive rejection campaign. Under its promise, the alliance has conducted a variety of activities, persuading voters not to cast ballots for the blacklisted runners. Some of the alliance's leaders were stationed to constituencies for which the blacklisted candidates had run, handing out leaflets and urging people to join in the rejection campaign. Such a civic campaign, targeting what it claimed to be corrupt and incompetent politicians, was the first of its kind in Korea where

regional enmity had been the most important factor in elections.

It was only three months ago that the alliance began the campaigns to discredit unfit candidates by unveiling their names and misdeeds in an ultimate bid to reform the outdated and corrupt political world. It successfully forced the lawmakers to rewrite the election law and drop some candidates from party nominations. The alliance also strongly encouraged voters to refrain from casting ballots to unfit candidates.

Nevertheless, the alliance's campaign is a half-baked success. As people's distrust in politicians ran deep, voter turnout hit a record low --- 6.7 percentage points lower than in the last general elections in 1996. Furthermore, despite its persistent drive aimed at easing the deep-rooted regional antagonism, the phenomenon of regionalism worsened, raising doubts about the alliance success.

Despite the rejection campaign's accomplishments, all 18 blacklisted GNP candidates in the Kyongsang provinces won seats in the National Assembly, reflecting that regional loyalties clearly took precedence over other considerations.

Then the boycott movement against corrupt and dishonest candidates launched by the Citizens' Alliance for the 2000 General Elections was found to be illegal by the Supreme Court January 26, 2001, the first time such a thing has happened in Korea. "The campaign was definitely an illegal act which damaged the authority of the government agency responsible for supervising the elections, and we cannot acknowledge any claims by the campaigners that the election laws banning boycotts of candidates are unconstitutional," the Supreme Court said (Chosunilbo, January 27, 2001)

Current Incumbents

These elections also demonstrated the public's strong desire to effect a generation change in politics, as a number of veteran politicians were

replaced with young, reform-minded figures. According to statistics released by the NEC, an official election management agency, voters gave about 47 percent of the total 273 seats to newcomers.

A total of 86, or 42.5 percent, of the 207 members of the outgoing parliament who ran in the elections, failed to get reelected. Newcomers won 106 seats, or 46.7 percent, of the 227 constituencies up for grabs. Eight of the 12 incumbent lawmakers running in Inchon lost. Twenty-one of the 37 incumbents running in Kyonggi failed, or 56.8 percent of the total, and in Seoul, 12 incumbent lawmakers, or 44.4 percent of the running, lost their seats. In the Seoul-Kyonggi area, a total of 41 incumbent lawmakers lost, or 47.6 percent of the 86 sitting politicians participating in the polls. In South and North Kyongsang provinces, however, the failure rates of incumbent lawmakers were only 20 percent and 17.2 percent, respectively.

Young Candidates

Another noteworthy development in polls was the rise of young candidates. They initially received considerable public attention, but many doubted that they would be able to appeal to voters. The fact that political heavyweights, like Reps. Kim Yoon-whan and Lee Sei-ki, were defeated by candidates in the 30s was a testament to the public's desire for reform. Many young candidates who distinguished themselves in professional fields, such as law, easily defeated their rivals in the Seoul and Kyonggi areas or lost by very small margins to more established politicians. The infusion of young blood into Korea's politics would contribute to the momentum for change and set the stage for reforms to be carried out in the new National Assembly.

Females

The victory by several female candidates in National Assembly elections showed that women

could advance into the political arena, which was previously believed to be tough to crack. A total of 16 women, including those from the proportional representation, won assembly seats, accounting for 5.86 percent of the total 273 in the 16th National Assembly. The rate is nearly double the 3.01 percent from the previous term. Given the fact that 26 from 299 curtailed the number of assembly seats, the election outcome shows that women expanded their presence in the political community significantly.

A total of five regional female candidates were elected, marking a 15 percent success rate from the 33 female candidates who run in the elections. Four women out of six from the MDP succeeded in winning assembly seats. The first of the four is a second-term representative and the other three newcomers. Meanwhile, the leading opposition GNP had only one successful female candidate, Park Keun-hae. Other female candidates from minor parties failed to grab a seat despite the considerable number. The ULD, the second largest opposition party, chose three female candidates to run and the nascent Progressive Youth Party (PYP) nominated 12. In the last National Assembly elections, only two women won seats out of 21 candidates.

Although women made a remarkable achievement in the National Assembly compared to past elections, there is still much room for improvement. Women politicians account for just 13.2 percent globally and 14.9 percent in Asia. Female lawmakers in Western Europe, however, account for almost 40 percent of the parliament, with Sweden accounting for 42.7 percent according to press reports.

Small margin of polls between winner and defeater

The results of the 16th general elections broke many campaign records. Park Hyok-kyu of the GNP attained victory in Kwangju, Kyonggi

Province, by gaining just three more votes than his closest rival, Moon Hak-jin of the MDP. This was the smallest margin of victory in the nation's election history.

Successful candidates beat their closest competitors by a margin of less than 350 votes in nine constituencies. These included Seoul's Tongdaemun B, where the margin of victory was 11 ballots; Chongwon, North Chungchon Province, where it was only 16; and Bonghwa-Ulchin, North Kyongsang province, where the margin stood at 19. Meanwhile, in Chongwon, Chungchon-pukto, Oh Hyo-jin of the opposition ULD and Shin Kyongsik of the GNP exchanged the lead by as few as eight votes before the latter finally clinched the victory.

Kim Bu-kyum of the GNP won the election by just 260 votes in Kunpo, Kyonggi-do. Kim Kwangwon of the GNP also had a successful run against Kim Joong-kwon of the MDP, former chief secretary to President Kim Dae-jung, by a slim margin of just 24 votes.

Officials of the NEC explained that heated races took place in constituencies where candidates of the so-called 386 generation were pitted against old-time politicians and where politicians with different regional backgrounds clashed in pursuing assembly seats. The NEC officials also stated that the close contest speaks volumes about the transition occurring in political culture.

Policy Factor

Contrary to earlier predictions, the announcement of the historic summit meeting between President Kim Dae-jung and North Korean leader Kim Jong-il had a less than expected effect on the elections. Analysts said earlier that the news of an unprecedented summit with North Korea just a few days before the elections would give the ruling party a major boost in the election as it would attract votes from those with families in North

Korea.

President Kim Dae-jung had underlined the urgency of reuniting separated families, particularly those in their advanced years, and said the reunion of families would be at the top of the agenda. After a close race between the main rival parties, however, the GNP overturned the exit polls that showed President Kim's ruling party would emerge as a big winner. The election results show that voters' consciousness has grown enough to separate South-North issues from the election, a GNP official said.

Despite the ruling party's failure to take the lead at parliament, however, the MDP is believed to have received a share of its gain from the Kwangwon and northern Kyonggi provinces bordering North Korea where people are sensitive to security issues. However, the MDP's expectation that they would benefit from the proposed June summit backfired in the southeastern Kyongsang provinces where regional sentiment resulted in the ruling MDP not winning a single seat.

When Seoul and Pyongyang simultaneously announced that they would hold unprecedented summit talks in the North Korean capital June 12 ~ 14, the GNP denounced the news as an election ploy. They also called for the government to reveal any secret deals it made to compensate Pyongyang for to the summit agreement, alleging Seoul might have proposed massive economic aid for the starving North

The shortage of foreign dollars has brought about the crisis of economics, the IMF, and the lending and controlling of emergent funds to Korea. The Koreans experienced serious problems and pain when they found the bankruptcy of the industry and a number of unemployment due to the shortage of foreign dollar without efficient structure of industry and bank. Although the MDP had the advantage of getting rid of this crisis, there is doubt about the results of the polls for the MDP had not taken enough seats in the parliament to be the majority.

In this election the policy factor had no more influence than regionalism.

Money Factor

In the 16th parliamentary election, the spending money of candidates cannot be identified definitely but we could conjecture a general assumption of political money from the ruling party or the opposition party and indirectly the election money reported to the NEC by candidates.

In general the ruling party can give its candidates much political money so that they might succeed in the general election. Congressmen of the ruling party can get much political money from their 'supporting commission', in which industries and the concerned put political investment for their future interest.

Party candidates can spend money and campaign as party activities before the beginning of the campaign period, while independent candidates must not spend money and campaign before the official registration of the candidate. Therefore, independent candidates may never have the chance to succeed in the election.

The winner of the three parties spent an average of 86.6 million Won (Table 4) and the defeated spent approximately 68.7 million Won. The average for the winner of the MDP is the most at 93.4 million Won, the next average being 86.5 million Won for the winner of the ULD. The winner of the GNP candidates spent an average of 80.7 million Won. The defeated MDP candidates spent an average of 82 million Won, those of the GNP averaged 62.8 million, and those of the ULD averaged the least with 62.1 million Won. Ordinary Korean citizens never believe that the average for winners is 86.6 million Won and that the difference between winners and losers is only 17.9 million Won.

We may determine a relationship between the success of the 16th election and campaign money, which candidates report to the NEC despite its

Table 4. Average of Campaign Money per Candidate in 16th election (Million Won)

Party D & W	GNP	MDP	ULD	Total average
Defeater	62.8	82	62.1	68.7
Winner	80.7	93.4	86.5	86.6

Calculated from Source: <http://www.nec.go.kr>

Table 5. Correlation Among party, Defeater, Winner and Campaign Fund

	X1	X2			
	Total	Total	GNP	MDP	ULD
X2	-0.280 0.0001				
X3	-0.039 0.3244	0.287 0.0001	0.355 0.0001	0.236 0.0004	0.132 0.0853

Pearson Correlation Coefficients / Prob > |R| under Ho: Rho=0 / N = 628(total)

N: GNP=226 MDP=225 ULD=171

X1; ● :GNP, ● :MDP and ● :ULD; X2; ● :defeater and ● :winner; X3; campaign fund

Calculated from Source: <http://www.nec.go.kr>

doubtful validity. Correlation between success in the election and campaign money is valid totally (Table 5: x2x3; Pearson Correlation Coefficients=0.287, P=0.0001). That means a candidate must spend enough money beyond the definite amount although the report of candidates to NEC is doubtful and the amount is different from constituencies. Correlations among parties, success, and campaign fund appear minor due to the order of parties on x1 (Table 5: x1x2, x1x3). Correlation between success and campaign fund appears the most significant in the GNP, and it is not significant in the ULD (Table 5: x2x3 in GNP, x2x3 in ULD), for the number of sampling in winners of the ULD is only 17.

Other Feature: Wrong Prediction of Broadcasters

A flurry of protests against the wrong predictions reached the TV stations and newspaper companies via telephone calls and the Internet as the ballot-count continued overnight. The numbers tallied by

the exit polls of the three broadcasts incorrectly showed that winners from the ruling MDP would outnumber the main opposition GNP. Another citizen believed the TV stations and the polling agencies intended to side with the ruling party. Similar misinformation also took place in the previous general elections, inviting harsh criticism from the public and political parties. Unlike this year the survey was made through phone calls four years ago.

Upon the completion of the ballot casting, a joint exit poll announced at 6 p.m on two broadcasting stations--KBS and SBS that the MDP would capture 112 out of 227 seats in the direction elections in constituencies while the GNP would receive 95. In its exit poll, MBC announced that the MDP would snatch 107 seats while the GNP would gain 100 seats. But the official figure showed that the GNP won 112 seats while the MDP won 96.

"I underwent the same nightmare I experienced in 1996 when we had the wrong survey tally. Thirty-seven seats changed hands in the official figure then," confessed an executive at MBC. The credibility of the exit poll was shattered from the outset. The difference between MBC and KBS-SBS in calculating the leading candidates was by as many as some 20 constituencies, which outraged television viewers. But the number was large in the neck-to-neck constituencies with the margin within 1 percent or less. Forty constituencies were within the common error rate of 3 percent. Polling company officials said close races in many constituencies made it difficult to predict the results with any degree of accuracy (Chosunilbo, April 14, 2000).

CONCLUSION

Comprehensive Rational Purposive Theory

There is no one theory for describing the characteristic features of the 16th parliamentary

election about voting factors of regionalism, party, personality, policy and money. No theory can explain all these factors in one unified framework. Party choice of constituents is correlated with regionalism, which could be well understood by either the emotional or rational theory because they vote in their own subjective rational judgment. They may prefer a party based on emotional subjective regionalism or unequal disadvantaged regionalism. So regionalism in Korea could be explained by both the cognitive psychological theory and rational choice theory. The candidate personality rather than the party factor seems to influence the Korean parliamentary election. If so, then, the independent candidates should be elected, but in fact they are a few only. Policy that a candidate or a party presents in the election does not have enough influence upon the result. It may be interpreted that campaign money is related significantly with winning elections.

If these causes are considered logically, a single theory cannot justify the reason constituents make certain decisions during elections. Instead the voter's purposive rationality is a criterion of voting. The rationality includes, of course, a socio-psychological cognition as well as economic interest. So 'comprehensive rational purposive theory' may identify the determination of voters in the Korean parliamentary elections.

Regionalism Combined With Party

The parliamentary elections did not bring about any major changes in the balance of power in the political community. The opposition GNP will remain as the party with the most Assembly seats, but will be short of a majority. The ruling MDP holds several more seats than in the past but will continue to be the No.2 party.

The votes also failed to break the stronghold of regionalism on this country. The GNP won almost every seat in its southeastern power base, the Kyongsang region, while the ruling MDP swept the

Cholla region in the southwest, except for a few districts where independent candidates won. The only major change is the reduction in the number of seats to be held by the ULD, the former coalition partner of the ruling MDP. The ULD lost some districts in its stronghold, the central region of Chungchong.

This election result may reflect the public's wish for both stability and balance of power. The result gives the ruling party and the government the necessary, though not sufficient, public support to continue with their current policies, while keeping the opposition strong enough to check the government's power.

Civic Movement

One noticeable achievement of elections is the successful civic campaign to boycott unfit politicians. Fifty-nine of the 86 politicians who were on the list of unfit politicians made up by the Citizens' Alliance for the 2000 General Elections, a coalition group of hundreds of civic organizations, were defeated. These 59 included many political heavyweights in both the ruling and opposition parties.

The rampant negative campaigns against candidates before the elections had many voters turn away from the polls, resulting in a record-low voter turnout. Only 56.4 percent of the eligible voters cast votes, the lowest-ever rate in the history of Korean parliamentary elections.

Current Incumbents and Political Concerns

The growing public clamor for reform has also brought about a generation change among lawmakers. Nearly half, or 41.8 percent, of the incumbent lawmakers failed to get reelected. Among the 227 candidates who were elected, 106 are political newcomers or ex-lawmakers. Worthy of attention is the good performance of members of the so-called "386 generation," those who are now in its 30s.

One immediate concern for Korean politics after the elections is the possibility of political realignment. As neither the ruling party nor an opposition group succeeded in securing a majority in the Assembly, the political parties are expected to seek alliances with other groups to secure a legislative majority. This is especially true of the ruling MDP. But any artificial attempt to realign political power is undesirable as it would only trigger further partisan struggle. No doubt, the opposition GNP would increase its political offensives against the ruling party if the MDP tries to enlist its members. The aggravation of the already embittered inter-party relations would be fatal to national harmony. Both ruling and opposition parties should humbly take the elections results as they are. Instead of wasting energy in extended partisan confrontation, they should join in efforts to tackle the many crucial issues pending.

Minor Feature

This year's parliamentary votes broke several records. First, they were one of the most fiercely contested in Korean history. Four candidates won by margins of fewer than 100 votes, testimony to the cutthroat nature of the competition. One candidate won his race by margin of only three votes. A total of 15 politicians won by margins of less than 1,000 votes.

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