

From “Korean-Style Democracy” to Democracy, Korean Style: An Analysis of Democratic Consolidation in South Korea

By: Michaela Flum

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Abstract:

FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2020

South Korea

FREE

83
/100

<u>Political Rights</u>	33 /40
<u>Civil Liberties</u>	50 /60

LAST YEAR'S SCORE & STATUS

83 /100 ● Free

Puzzle: What explains South Korea's successful democratic consolidation?

Dependent Variable:

- *Democratic Consolidation*: The process by which “complex systems of institutions, rules, and patterned incentives and disincentives... become... ‘the only game in town.’”

Independent Variables:

- *Economic Development*
- *(Relatively) Strong Political Institutions*
- *Robust Civil Society*

Brief Historical Background:

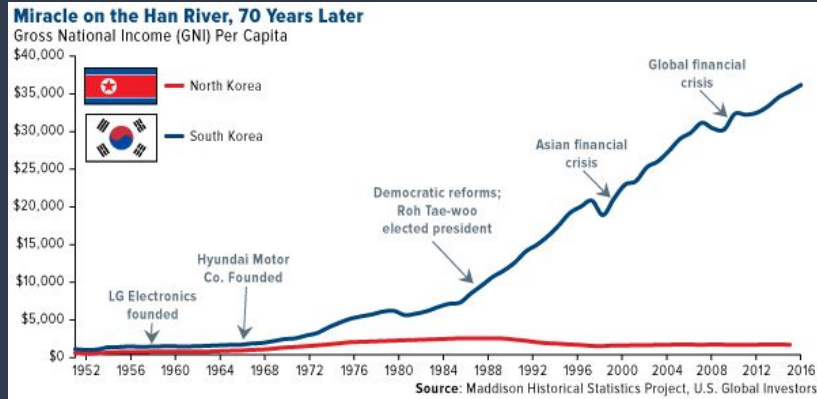
Three Democratic “Junctures”:

- **First Democratic Juncture:** 1956-1961
- **Second Democratic Juncture:** 1973-1980
- **Third Democratic Juncture:** 1984-1987
- **Democratic Consolidation:** 1988-Present



Yonsei University Students Protesting in 1987

Economic Development:



Modernization Theory: “Development First, Democracy Later”

- Economic shifts bring about social changes that “[o]nce set in motion, tend to penetrate all aspects of life.”
- Modernization tends to generate “occupational specialization, urbanization, rising education levels[,]... life expectancy, [and] economic development.”

(Relatively) Strong Political Institutions:

Article 1

- (1) The Republic of Korea shall be a democratic republic.
- (2) The sovereignty of the Republic of Korea shall reside in the people, and all state authority shall emanate from the people.

Samuel Huntington: “The most important political distinction among countries is not their form of government but their *degree* of government [emphasis added].”

- Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stephan: “[N]o state, no democracy.”

Robust Civil Society:



The first banner reads “I want to live in a world without torture”. The second reads, “Don’t kill our Jong Cheol twice”.

Robert Putnam:

- “The health of... democracy requires... widespread participation in *private* voluntary groups - those networks of civic engagement that embody social capital.”

How did a robust civil society contribute to South Korea’s democratization?

- People’s Movement Groups
- Citizens’ Movement Groups



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