

Study of Nationalism and Korean Democratization: 1987-1993

Nura-arnis Kitkongpat*

Saikaew Tipakorn**

Abstract

This study aimed to examine the factors that contributed to the consolidation of democracy in Republic of Korea (South Korea) during 1987-1993. The research employed the threshold definition of the consolidation of democracy as avoiding a democratic breakdown and focused on an expression of South Korean nationalism during this period that influenced the civil movement within and outside the National Assembly. It also minimized the risk of democratic collapse and stabilized the democratic government. According to the findings, the South Korean people diverted their focus to the new expression of nationalism. When the country was falling into authoritarianism and coup d'états, the growing unease of the civilians led to dissatisfaction with the U.S. government that had worked with the South Korean government. As a consequence, the people focused on anti-Americanism. After the transition to democracy in 1987, negative sentiment toward foreign countries declined, while the pride of the nation was on the increase due to the Seoul Olympic Games in 1988, Nordpolitik, economic success, and

* M.A. student, Korean Studies, Graduate School, Chulalongkorn University. e-mail: adoniz_27@hotmail.com

** Director of Japan-ASEAN Studies Center, Institution of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University. e-mail: saikaew.t@chula.ac.th

democratization during the end of the Cold War. These aspects evaluated South Korea's status in the national arena and made it become one of the world's leaders. Furthermore, South Korean success was an undercurrent that favored Roh Tae-woo's administration and allowed Roh Tae-Woo to finish his term without any intervention by an external power and in a peaceful transition to the new government. This was a success in avoiding the democratic breakdown in the Roh Tae-Woo era.

Keywords: Nationalism; pride of the nation; democratization; the consolidation of democracy.

1. Introduction

The creation of democracy in the Republic of Korea (South Korea) has become a case study in which few countries have been able to complete successfully. Although South Korea was established in 1948, it took three decades to complete the transition process and move toward consolidation. In 1987, the June struggle led to the restoration of democracy in South Korea when the people came out to protest for new elections. Subsequently, the constitution was amended, and a new election was held in the same year. This marked the beginning of the consolidation process.

The new president, Roh Tae-Woo, was unpopular among the Korean people, as he was involved in the 1980 coup d'état and was close to the former president, Chun Doo-hwan. However, he won the election; this led to some people believing that this election was staged for the succession of power. Arguably, Roh Tae-woo's term entailed domestic political chaos and intensive protests. Nevertheless, Roh was able to complete his term without a coup or any suppression, unlike the tragic events of the Gwangju Uprising in 1980 or the June 1987 protests. Nonetheless, it is interesting how Roh managed to continue his term amidst the ongoing protests demanding his resignation.

Simultaneously, the first year of his presidency coincided with an important year for South Korea, as it was the first time the nation hosted the world-class event of the Olympic Games. Moreover, the country was under global scrutiny, which placed pressure on Roh and the Korean people to maintain a positive national image. Nevertheless, this event provided Roh with an opportunity to showcase his potential to the people. Moreover, Roh's era became a period

that South Korea stepped onto the global arena successfully and attempted to become an ally with various Communist countries and North Korea by continuing his Nordpolitik. As a result, the success of the country gained a new sentiment of nationalism among South Korean society. Thus, it seemed that South Korean nationalism was changed.

Therefore, this study proposed that democracy could survive in the early stages of democratic consolidation due to the pride of the nation that would exist between the people and the leader. This would be because they would share the desire to present the greatness of their nation to the global community and become a part of it.

2. Literature Review and Theory

2.1 Literature Review

The consolidation of Korean democracy has been studied multiple times to understand the factors contributing to full democracy. Through the literature review, the literature was categorized into two groups. Firstly, literature on the factor of completing democratic consolidation. For instance, Im (2000, pp. 21-47) suggested that factors, such as ethnic homogeneity, religious tolerance, an effective state, and civilian control over the military contributed to the consolidation of South Korean democracy. Heo and Hahm (2014) proposed that democratic culture within South Korean society also played a crucial role. South Koreans have a democratic culture, such as choosing their leaders by holding free and fair

elections regularly, and often used protests as a means to express their desires, which was the culture under a democratic society.

Secondly, literature that could explain the actions of the characters leading to the consolidation of democracy; for example, Jonsson (2014) proposed that the South Korean constitution and the determination to reform the political structure by each president, along with each president's policies, ultimately contributed to the stability of South Korean democracy. Additionally, Aleman (2005) suggested that the democratization movement, especially the labor movement, played a crucial role as labor protesters shifted to institutional forms of mobilization. They established the Democratic Labor Party (DLP), a strong political party, since 2000 to consolidate long-term political mobilization in terms of a party institution. Furthermore, if only considering Roh Tae-Woo era's democratization, Strnad (2010) proposed that Roh Tae-Woo worked to reconcile with all parties to avoid political turmoil and focused on his foreign policy. Moreover, Kim (1997) mentioned that the governance during Roh Tae-Woo's time did not differ significantly from the preceding Chun Doo-hwan regime. True political reform, however, only took place under the administration of the following president, Kim Young Sam.

Thus, the literature review demonstrated that South Korea achieved success in consolidating democracy through various factors. However, this transformation took some time to adjust the political structure and meet the conditions of a full democracy, such as military reform to prevent coups, which was a process that spanned several administrations, including those of Roh Tae-Woo, Kim Young-Sam, Kim Dae-Jung, and others. While during the early stages of democratization, the military still held significant political power, the protests were more violent, and Roh Tae-Woo's was a minority government with an administration that did not seriously prioritize political reform. The literature also showed that Roh tried to compromise and improve his situation, but the literature could not show the factors that maintained democracy in Roh Tae Woo's era.

Therefore, Roh Tae-Woo's ability to manage the transition and succeed through various administrations without external interference was considered remarkable. As such, this research aimed to identify the factors that preserved democracy in South Korea during the era of Roh Tae-Woo.

2.2 Theory

This study focused on the early stages of democratization under the minimal definition of avoiding a democratic breakdown, which meant strengthening democracy without allowing it to fully collapse. This was essential for maintaining democracy, preventing its dissolution due to interference from an external power interference, and facilitating the peaceful transfer of power through elections (Schedler, 1998, p. 95). During the period from 1988 to 1993, the presidency of Roh Tae-Woo was the first government transition in the era of democratization. Roh Tae-Woo successfully transferred power to Kim Young-Sam through elections without a coup or intervention of an external power. However, during Roh Tae-Woo's time, there were no specific factors that were aligned with preventing the interference of political power but managed to maintain democracy. This article thus explored the factors beyond the general conditions that led to democratic consolidation, thus encompassing both civilian and powerful factions.

The research emphasized nationalism, a shared ideology of the people within a nation, which played a crucial role in preserving democracy in South Korea during its early stages. Nationalism, as defined by Kohn (2023), is an ideology that prioritizes an individual's loyalty and devotion to the nation-state over other individual or group interests. Additionally, nationalism had a continuous significant impact in South Korea, especially during the transition to democracy in 1987, as it played a pivotal role in mobilizing the population for protests. Thus, nationalism served as the foundation for the people's movement in defining the direction of the

nation by placing the welfare of the nation at the forefront. Therefore, it was proposed that nationalism had a profound influence on South Korean society during Roh Tae Woo's era by contributing to the avoidance of a democratic breakdown in the country during a time when democracy was still fragile.

3. Methodology

This research examined the factors of nationalism that contributed to the consolidation of democracy in South Korea during 1987-1993 through collective data and analysis of the nationalism theory. Firstly, the global and regional conditions during the end of the Cold War were explored by collecting data from primary and secondary sources, such as books, news, articles, research papers, and academic work in electronic media. Secondly, the data on how South Korea raised its status in the global arena and how the country's success supported Roh's administration were analyzed.

4. Findings

4.1 New Focus of Nationalism

Nationalism is an ideology that holds that an individual's loyalty and devotion to the nation-state outweighs other individual or group interests (Kohn, 2023). Likewise, Mylonas and Tudor (2021, pp. 122-123) found that nationalism has metamorphized across time and space to fuse with local traditions and struggle. Due to regional and global conditions, therefore, the expression of South

Korean nationalism went in different directions during 1987-1993, thus deviating the people's focus from anti-Americanism to the pride of the nation.

The Korean grassroots class also suffered from starvation and realized these problems must be managed by South Korea's government. They were in pursuit of possibilities to resolve the problems, and build up the stereotype in the national narrative that an authoritarian government was involved in corruption and lacked distribution of power and income. Simultaneously, the U.S. occupied the South Korean government and was in favor of authoritarianism, which was the cause of the national problems. As a consequence, the people became focused on anti-Americanism, the expression of nationalism, and then stood up against authoritarianism and the U.S. As a result, the ever-growing tension, aversion to the elite, and resentment brought by the suppression of the South Koreans led to a mass protest in 1987 and the successful transition to democracy (Lie, 1998, pp. 118-154).

In addition, during this period, when the country's election was successful with a democratic government with economic success as a background, acting as the host of the Olympic Games and the utilization of Nordpolitik brought South Korea into the spotlight. This resulted in South Korea being able to evaluate its status as a world leader. Hence, this resulted in generating the pride of the nation to the people. Then, instead of anti-Americanism, South Koreans began to focus on national pride.

Firstly, for South Korea's economic success with the rapidly growing economy, the country became one of the newly industrialized countries (NICs) that earned recognition at that time. In 1950 (Korean War), South Korea was the poorest country in the world, but after a short time, the value of its exports were on a steep trend. The country's export value went from 3.3 million U.S. dollars in 1960 to 10 billion U.S. dollars in 1977 along with economic growth and rising gross national product (GNP); all of which occurred within a period of 20 years (Woo,

2010, pp. 222-231). Consequently, South Korea was described as the “Miracle of the Han River” and recognized economically. Moreover, in the 1990s, the World Bank regarded the country as one of the four Asian tigers, the moniker which was used to refer to four Asian areas with swift economic growth that became a model for other countries (Pack, 1993, p. 14). Economic recognition and continuous economic expansion prior to democratization, along with a series of diplomatic policies enacted since Chun Doo-hwan’s administration through Roh Tae-woo’s rise to president rendered South Korea to become a widely known country in terms of economic development and international politics during Roh Tae-woo’s administration.

Secondly, South Korea’s status was raised on the global stage as a world leader due to successfully hosting the Olympic Games and initiating Nordpolitik, which enabled the country to advance relations with the 178 Olympic members, including the communist countries. Following this, South Korea was introduced to the world to invite travelers to visit and experience the country with their own eyes. Additionally, the Nordpolitik ties advanced relations with foreign countries, as several high-level talks between the South Korean, Russian, and Chinese leaders were held. This implied that South Korea would be recognized for its sovereignty and independence from other states. This would also influence and secure the country’s place on the global stage; the more diplomatic relations established, the more recognition and attraction South Korea gained on the global stage. Nevertheless, the country’s connections to advance relations through Nordpolitik caused North Korea to fret when its allies, i.e., China and Russia, displayed allegiance to South Korea, which North Korea had considered a long-time enemy. On the other hand, South Korea had more neighbors, gained more power than North Korea, and was a part of the community of the major powers. As a result, the South Koreans were indulging in the increasing pride of the nation. Hence, the Olympic Games host brought a highly visible demonstration of the country’s

modernization and economic success through broadcasting live worldwide. This reshaped this country's stereotype to be a nation that had succeeded in self-development, and Nordpolitik showed possessiveness of the capabilities in international politics. Thus, South Korea no longer needed to rely on other countries in terms of economics, rather other countries had to rely on South Korea's economy.

Thirdly, the elected government was another reason that contributed to the image of South Korea in a positive way as well as the pride of the nation among the Korean people because the election symbolized the country could conform with the international standard. From the 1980s onward, the third democratization wave occurred worldwide (Huntington, 1991); several countries strove for a democratic government, thereby leading to the perception of a democratic government as the successful development of a country. By this time, South Korea had already achieved its goals for democracy, while other countries were still trying to end authoritarianism.

After the Olympic Games had ended, various foreign media discussed South Korea's success. One of these stated that, "It's a dazzling time for South Korea. Its economy is churning out the world's highest growth rate. The Seoul Olympics won wide applause. And now, most impressive of all, the nation steadily consolidates a new and remarkably supple political democracy. That suppleness now faces its trickiest test. The initial response seems encouraging..." (Times, 1988). This news reflected the fact that in addition to the praise for South Korea's economy and democracy, other foreign nations had kept their eyes on the preservation and strengthening of democracy. Then, in 1989, more pride came to South Korea again.

On October 18, 1989, Roh Tae-Woo, President of the Republic of Korea (South Korea), visited the United States Congress and talked about the success of economic development and the transition to democracy. He pointed to progress

toward full democracy in South Korea since the demonstrations of 1987, with the 1988 Olympics serving as a showcase for the country (South Korean President's Address, 1989). This showed that the democracy that bloomed in South Korea and its economic success were introduced to the rest of the world as the pride of South Korea, and Roh Tae-Woo's speech demonstrated the country's pride to the superpower community.

Moreover, South Korea's status was increasingly outstanding and higher in the national arena relative to other countries and comparable to that of the superpower countries, which influenced public sentiment after learning of the favorable facts and prompted the people to reimagine the national narrative. The people went from focusing on anti-Americanism and authoritarianism to taking pride in successful democracy, the economy, and diplomacy. With lessened discomfort and increased delight, they created the new story of their nation. When it was clear what was the pride of the nation and their fellow members, the people realized that they must promote democracy and maintain the standards of the nation if they wanted the country to advance to another level. Therefore, this new focus on nationalism influenced individual Korean actions and behavior, which allowed Roh Tae-Woo to succeed in his term as president without any democratic breakdown.

4.2 Korean success as the undercurrent

Prior to 1987, South Korea's regime was dominated by the elite and the military, while civilians went onto the street to push for their movements outside the National Assembly and were unable to engage themselves in political decisions through the regime. The pride, however, prompted civilians to change their attitudes toward the government and redirect their movement, thus allowing them to take control of the parliament and replace the elite movement with that of the

civilians. Consequently, the civil movement was changed from protesting on the street to a political institution in the National Assembly. This issue is discussed as follows:

Firstly, the pride of the nation contributed to a series of political movements among the civilians in the National Assembly. Due to political deadlocks, the ruling party was unable to administer the country, which somewhat added to the risk of the fall of democracy. Kim Young-sam, a civilian politician of the opposition party, decided to merge the political parties and the ruling party of Roh Tae-woo to allow smooth political flows. Furthermore, it has commonly been assumed that Kim Young-sam realized the political deadlock, or political disruption would lead to the fall of democracy, and also cause the pride of the nation to plummet due to the domestic crisis that would later disrupt the economy and international politics, so he decided to do it.

The pride of the nation changed the attitude of moving the country forward by civilian politicians by putting an end to the current administration by allowing democracy to go on. The merging of the political parties inferred that the ruling party of the government would be joined by civilian politicians, thus affecting the direction and actions of the administrative branch of the government. This was also the first civilian movement as the ruling party after having been subject to long-running administration by the elite and the military.

It should also be noted that the merger deleted the elite of South Korea's politics completely in the next government. In the 1992 election, Kim Young-sam became a civilian presidential candidate of the old authoritarian party, hence meaning that the leading candidates from both sides, Kim Young-Sam and Kim Dae-Jung, were civilians. Therefore, no matter who won the presidential election, the president would be from the civilian side, and the regime would be controlled by the civilians. As such, it was concluded that a new focus on the country's image

in the global community had effects on the civilians' political movements to resolve the political and democratic deadlock.

Secondly, national narratives and reimagining were also important for democracy (Kopstein & Wittenberg, 2010; Tudor, 2013; Tudor & Slater, 2020). As such, the pride of the nation reimagined the Korean national narrative and that supported the consolidation of democracy. Consequently, the public's attitudes changed as nationalism in the form of anti-Americanism and calls for democracy declined, i.e., the forms persisted but the intensity of the public sentiment decreased, while the pride of the nation grew significantly larger. These factors enabled the civilians' democratic control to proceed rather than to be disrupted due to the traditional nationalism that was extremely hostile against the administrative ruling by the elite.

After the transition to democracy in 1987, the number of protesters began to decline, which benefited the consolidation of democracy, as chaotic protests could be used as a reason to justify a coup d'état and disruption of democracy. Protests persisted, however, as the sentiment toward the government and nation changed, thus the protest leaders could no longer create as many individual forms of sentiment to join a protest like they could before.

Since the 1988 Olympic Games, the shared sentiment of the people began to focus more on the pride of the nation. The event and reception of state guests were a sign of the pride that was developing in Korean society. Thus, even though Roh Tae-Woo, a former dictator-successor, became president, all sectors had their eyes on the Olympic Games and regarded them as their priority, which effectively mitigated hostility and disapproval against Roh Tae-Woo's administration temporarily.

According to the survey's public opinion after the event, the success of being the Olympic Games host affected Roh Tae-Woo's public image in a positive

way. Referring to the respondents who were asked, "With the result of the Olympics, what do you expect the political assessment of the president to be in the future? The results showed that 59% thought Roh Tae-Woo would achieve a better result in the upcoming assessment of the president (Korea Social Science Data Archive, 2012a, p. 22). A survey on the success of Roh Tae-Woo's government in opening to the outside world showed that the majority of the public were satisfied with Roh Tae-Woo's administration: 54% believed that Roh's government was doing well, 26% believed they were doing well, and 16.8% believed they were doing very well. These results reflected the fact that Roh's government was perceived by the majority of the public as doing well in their jobs (ibid, p. 21).

Moreover, the Olympic Games widened the South Koreans' views of the outside world by giving them more insights into the globalization of their country. The welcoming of the athletes and tourists from around the world changed the attitudes of the South Koreans from excluding themselves to being a member of the world. This aspect also changed the people's sentiment on foreign countries (Cho, 2009). Instead of being hostile toward foreign countries, they acknowledged the state of having allegiance with comparable powers while refraining from intervention. In addition, the successful foreign policies, which began since the Olympic Games, catapulted South Korea onto the global stage and prompted the fresh feeling of pride and contributed to the country's self-efficacy that they were as competent as other countries in the international environment and cooperated with their neighbors (Ceuster, 2005, pp. 75-81). Moreover, the people believed that their economic development played a crucial role in establishing this relationship with several Eastern European countries and benefited the improvement of South Korea's status on the international level (Kim, 2015, p. 276).

These factors indicated that the South Koreans desired that their country would advance their relations with foreign countries to secure their existence in the global community and show more in-depth that they had realized that the nation should maintain a relationship with its neighbors.

The public also gained more awareness of the benefits generated by foreign policy and the government's practices that corresponded to their wishes; for example, the country's advancing relations with Russia, China, and other communist countries, and its capability to equal the U.S. This corresponded to the domestic hostility against the U.S., which had been attempting to dominate over and intervene in South Korea internally, which made South Koreans feel inferior to the U.S. Additionally, the move to advance relations with North Korea and assist North Korea in advancing its relations with diplomatic countries reflected how South Korea had become diplomatically influential enough on the global stage to successfully persuade the diplomatic world to take a look at North Korea. Considering these factors, the general public was satisfied by Roh Tae-woo's administration.

Roh Tae-woo's administration corresponded to the desires held by the South Koreans, as well as the image of Roh Tae-Woo in the South Korean national narrative, which improved after the event to be a good character who took the country to the global arena. As such, the personal hostility against Roh Tae-woo declined, thus making the people anticipate how his government would perform in the long run. Considering the nature of the protests during the administrative change under Roh Tae-woo's government, it was found that the number and nature of protests had changed over time (Figure 1).

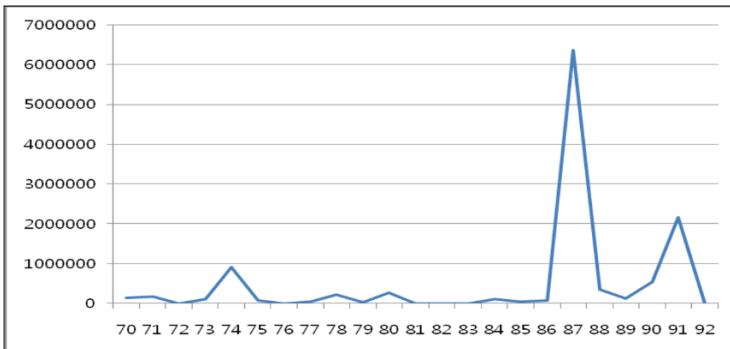


Figure 1. Number of individuals participating in protests by year (1970-1992).

(Source: Shin et al., 2007, p. 10)

As shown in Figure 1, the number of protestors plummeted in 1988 and decreased even further in 1989. Hence, it could be argued that despite more protests taking place in the following years, they were not essentially a mass protest that was aimed for democracy like the one in 1987; several organizations began to split and protest for their own needs. It should also be noted that the protests that took place after the transition of the government were aimed for the need of a particular group, and that their sentiment was not shared by the whole country but rather their fellow members, such as the university students protest calls for Korean reunification and democracy. This occurred as the students still held that Roh Tae-Woo's elected government was nothing more than a conspired plot intended for inherited dictatorship. However, it was found that the university students protested more frequently and violently, and that they were more likely to resort to violence and weapons (Aleman, 2005, p. 82). Disruption to the government and suicide were an extreme act of protest with the aim to attract powerful individuals' attention. This reflected how a protest failed to draw together

enough participants to attract the government to the extent that some protestors resorted to violence and noticeable signs, as they intended to attract enough attention to establish the shared sentiment, which could lead to achieving their agenda.

While the labor protests continued due to the demands for the reform of the economic structure, although South Korea was enjoying immense economic growth and success, it only exacerbated economic structural problems, such as inequality and labor problems, which were caused by the policies of the former government that was in favor of an investment fund for the Chaebol entities. This paralyzed small businesses while South Korean employees were subjected to work for 51-56 hours per week, which was much more than that of any other industrial countries between 1960-1987 (Dornbusch et al., 1987). Insufficient wages for their living prompted several labor movements since the 1960s. However, the movements had called for the presidents to resign, as they were convinced that the presidents were in favor of the capitalists, and that the movements needed to begin with the administration before restructuring the economy. To strengthen their movement and negotiation, they collaborated with university students and other groups of people (Aleman, 2005; Song et al., 1999, p. 398).

However, after changing the administration in 1987, groups of movements separated and called for different issues. The labor group then went on strike and called for labor law and minimum wage, which Roh Tae-woo's government acknowledged and amended the labor law on issues, such as the minimum wage. The average income of labor workers grew by 10% in 1987, 15.5% in 1988, and 21.1% in 1989, respectively (Heo, 2008, p. 13; Strnad, 2010, pp. 222-224). This left the Chaebols unimpressed and eventually Hyundai President Chung Ju-yong formed the Unification of People's Party and campaigned for the presidential election in 1992 (Strnad, 2010, p. 223). This indicated that the Chaebols had to

also learn to change their ways when it came to negotiation with the government. Rather than approaching the government directly and favoring one another as they did in the past, Hyundai's president decided to join and resolve the situation under the National Assembly. Simultaneously, this showed how the government's administration was increasingly transparent. These were the results of effective democratic processes within the National Assembly, as the government and the opposition party cooperated with one another to meet the employees' needs, instead of resorting to authoritative power as they did in the past. However, it could be seen that after changing the administration, the labor movement clearly shifted its focus. They still demonstrated but shifted their demand from democratization to the labor rights, such as welfare benefits. This showed that they believed in solving the problem under the form of democracy instead of using other regimes. Furthermore, this supported democracy indirectly and became a part of maintaining democracy due to showing that they needed only democracy. As such, this was a participatory democracy.

For the majority of the public, it seemed like they did not participate in the protests as much as before. Nevertheless, even though they were not participating in a protest, the public did not believe that the group of students or employees should be boycotted; therefore, they acknowledged that a protest was an act of freedom and a democratic right. According to the Survey on Values and Attitudes in Transitional Korea 4, 1988 (Korea Social Science Data Archive, 2012b, pp. 5-10), the results showed that the majority of the respondents understood the students' protest goals of democratization, and the majority wanted the government and students to resolve the situation together through dialogue. In addition, the survey of the Gallup Korea poll in 1992 showed that the majority of respondents felt the student protests had a positive effect on the country's political climate (Aleman, 2005, p. 81). South Koreans could feel the freedom of protest and expression under a democratic regime (Shin et al., 2007). On the other hand,

they thought that protests could cause disturbances, which would hinder the democratization of the country and lead to the seizure of power by authoritarians. Therefore, they would not participate in the protests to avoid the justification of the seizure of power, but monitored the internal intervention through external actors.

Moreover, the Korean people were still ready for the pro-democracy movement on the streets if democracy was disrupted. According to the Survey on the Democratic Politics Desired by Korean Citizens in 1991, half of the respondents answered that they would participate in the movement if democratization failed due to the abuse of power by the ruling party or political intervention by the military to save democracy. Additionally, 19.5% answered they would definitely participate, and 43.5% would probably participate (Korea Social Science Data Archive, 2009, p. 10). The public's readiness to participate in street protests in case of the disruption to democracy reflected their needs for democracy and their beliefs that democracy would persist in the context of South Korea's government. They were prepared to deviate from their sentiment if the democracy and freedom were to be hindered even though they disagreed with the protest group's action. For example, there was one incident in which a South Korean student and missionaries visited North Korea without the government's approval to push forward Korean reunification, which was an action that the majority of public disagreed. The majority believed that this action should have been done through the government (Kwon, 2005, pp. 5-10), thus indicating that South Koreans remained confident in their government. However, the death of a university student as a result of a government official's action during the protest in 1991 led to public outcry. The people went out to protest to call for justice by decrying the excessive use of violence to suppress the protesters (Aleman, 2005, p. 47). As can also be seen in Figure 1, the number of individuals participating in the protest was the second highest in 1991 during Roh Tae-woo's era. In other words, this reawakened the same shared sentiment as the people believed their rights and freedom were being

violated by the government. In addition, for South Koreans, they would definitely gather again if they believed that the government was abusing the democracy and freedom of the public, and it was being hindered.

In conclusion, South Koreans no longer engaged themselves emotionally in protests, as they did during the dictatorship. They have become proud of their nation's success in foreign and economic policies and opposed neither Roh Tae-Woo nor his government. With Roh Tae-Woo's improved image, South Koreans still trusted that his administration remained democratic. Moreover, the majority of the public acknowledged that it would take some time be it democratization or reunification of the nation; therefore, none of these issues should be disrupted. Additionally, Roh Tae-Woo did not appear to impede democracy or conduct Korean reunification as other leaders did. As such, in taking these factors into account, the majority of the public showed no support and deemed a protest unnecessary, thus letting the democratization follow the status quo.

Thirdly, nationalism led to anti-military sentiment. As mentioned earlier, nationalism and national narratives could change over time due to a particular factor. With South Korea's success, the military would find no justifiable reason to stage a coup and the pride of the nation shared by the people contributed to hostility and negative stereotypes that grew more intense over the military.

In Roh's era, there was a triangular relationship: the military, Roh Tae-Woo, and the people. The military was not popularized by the people as mentioned above, while Roh Tae-Woo was not favored by the military; the military was displeased and disagreed with Roh Tae-Woo executing the Nordpolitik, as the military has been a crucial force in defending the country's security since the Korean War. Hostility among the military against this president significantly grew, as they had been instilled with the belief that considered communism an enemy.

For example, the Commander of the Third Army, Gen. Koh Myung Seung, voiced his concern over national security as the monitoring of communism was eased in favor of the Nordpolitik (Yoon, 1999, pp. 55-57), while Lt. Gen. Min Byong Don, Superintendent of South Korea's military academy, reacted similarly with his opposition of the policy (HN, 1989). This poor relationship between the military and Roh Tae-Woo suggests the fact that they could care less about Roh Tae-Woo if they were to resort to a coup. Nevertheless, personal displeasure could never overthrow the government's power, and the military would face strong opposition if their action could not be justified. Therefore, Roh Tae-Woo who needed to maintain his position and the military who was not favored by the people would need to convince the people to side with them for their goals to succeed.

However, at that time, the military would never be able to find any justifiable reason for a coup and convince the people for the following reasons: Firstly, the people no longer accepted the idea that a coup was meant to sustain democracy. The current government was elected by virtue of the constitution being amended for fairness and democratic administration, which were what the people had been calling for and believed would help the country to progress. With a coup, they believed that the democracy and progress of the country would be hindered. Secondly, a coup could no longer be justified in terms of the economy and development of South Korea, as the country had been performing smoothly on the global stage. South Korea managed to achieve equality like that of the big powers, the economy was growing, and the country was gradually being democratized.

Moreover, the military's image was increasingly ruined. For instance, in October 1990, the Defense Security Command (DSC), an army intelligence unit, was revealed to have spied on approximately 1,300 politicians and prominent religious figures. Reporters, labor leaders, activists, and university students kept the voice recordings as evidence (Maass, 1990). This spying scandal stemmed from the surveillance program introduced in 1979, which was claimed by the DSC

to be intended for maintaining public security. The public, however, argued that the program was a political agenda for political intervention. Roh Tae-woo fired his defense minister and army intelligence chief and despite criticism against Roh Tae-woo as a former military officer involved in dictatorship and speculation that he was associated with the surveillance program, the ousting of his defense minister and army intelligence chief helped promote his image as a supporter of rights, freedom, and democracy, whereas the military's image was increasingly criticized as a body of people that hindered democracy, who attempted to remain in power and violated the rights and freedom of the people.

At this time, the military's image was defined by nationalism as follows: Firstly, while the people were overwhelmed with the pride of the nation due to the success of their country in several aspects, they still spied on the people and attempted to hinder democratic administration. Thus, the people acknowledged that the military did not prioritize the success of the country or care for the people; they were just longing for power. Secondly, the military's criticism of Nordpolitik for the Korean reunification was contradictory against the nationalist need of the public for the reunification and their pride of the nation due to their country's success in developing allegiance with the communist countries, which was an achievement that made South Korea appealing on the global stage.

With their past experiences, the South Korean people acknowledged the atrocity of the military-led coup d'état, realized that a coup d'état would lead to authoritarianism, censorship of opinion and use of unimaginable violence against dissidents, and that the military was a liar as they had never returned power to the people. Hence, the military was by no means supposed to be involved in politics and the national assembly. In the nationalism, the perception of the military's identity was negative and the military and coup d'état were no longer accepted.

While Roh Tae-woo was able to build up his image while stabilizing his position, he tried to build up a positive image to the people as someone who put

the country before himself. He also proposed the military reform plan and separated from the military and Chun Doo-hwan, thus leading to military reconfiguration. In addition, it should be noted that some of the ousted military officers were openly against his Nordpolitik, and some were appointed under Chun Doo-hwan's government. While it seemed like he was attempting to reform the military, most of the officers appointed by Roh Tae-woo were from North Gyeongsang Province, also his hometown (Strnad, 2010, pp. 220-222). These position transfers stabilized his standing, mitigated military hostility against him, and benefited his image, which was the hidden agenda rather than the genuine move to military reform.

In summary, nationalism in the form of the pride of the nation enabled South Koreans to witness the true nature of a coup d'état and the military's role. They came to realize that a coup d'état hindered democracy and the country's progress. The people felt the need to monitor, pressure, and oppose the use of power by the military. Simultaneously, the military was unable to find a justifiable cause to stage a coup d'état or intervene politically, or even to build any shared sentiment among the public for them to accept the military's role. Additionally, Roh Tae-woo was enthusiastic over military reform, consequently resulting in the decrease of the powerful, old military officers that were familiar with politics, which benefited the stabilization of Roh's position and the consolidation of democracy during 1988-1993. Therefore, in the new prologue of South Korea's democracy that began with Roh Tae-Woo's era, the military could no longer exploit nationalism to preserve their political role and power, but it was the government instead that was making beneficial use of nationalism to justify their position.

5. Conclusion

South Korea's success contributed to the pride of the nation. This was a new focus on nationalism; instead of focusing on anti-Americanism, the people focused on the success of the country. This was because nationalism is an ideology that holds the benefit of the country as the first priority. This sentiment influenced the behavior and attitudes of both the elite and citizens. They needed to maintain a democratic government because it was an element of a developed country and tried to avoid chaos in the country, which would lead to a coup d'état or disrupt the democratic system. As a consequence, this would destroy their national image and their pride of the nation.

Kim Young-Som decided to merge his party with the opposition party because he aimed to solve the political problem by showing he realized that this was the only thing he could do if he wanted the country to move forward smoothly. Furthermore, the civilian politicians strove to retain the pride due to the positive politics and economy. In contrast, the public changed their behavior from resorting to calling for the president to resign or disapproving of the government to maintaining democracy and avoiding a democratic breakdown. Despite any political or economic problems, they upheld the notion that a problem must be solved only under democracy without seeking or believing in any other forms of administration as they did in the past.

Lastly, the nation's success shaped and raised awareness of the consequences of a coup d'état and the presence of the military in politics, which was essential for all members living in the community of democracy. Therefore, the new focus on nationalism provided the consolidation of democracy in terms of avoiding a democratic breakdown and Roh's term ended successfully.

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