

# Democracy Index in South Korea, 2011

**HYUNGCHUL KIM, JUNGHOO KIM, HEEYEON CHO,  
HYUNYUN CHO, SEOUNGWON LEE, YOOSEOK OH,  
DONGCHHOON KIM, KYUNGTAE PARK, YOUNGPYO SEO,  
SANGCHUL YOON, KYUNGHEE CHOI**

## **Objectives of the Research**

This study aims to assess the quality of democracy in South Korea through the Asian Democracy Index (ADI). The ADI is a framework for comparing different democratic qualities in Asia in line with the view that earlier indices by Western societies, along with their respective frameworks, hardly reflect the reality in Asia.

This survey forms part of the ADI pilot test. While as a pilot survey, it is expected to be largely exploratory in nature—investigating the various characteristics of democracy in South Korea—it can also be a means by which to identify problems in the parameters, the methods of the research, and the analysis of the ADI. Thus, the pilot survey conducted contributes to furthering the methodological refinement of the ADI.

## **Previous Evaluations of Democracy in Korea in 2011**

The democratic movement in South Korea in June 1987 brought about a transition from an authoritarian to a democratic system of government. Afterwards, South Korean democracy has been evaluated by both international and domestic experts as having successfully established democratic processes (Diamond and Kim 2000; Park 1998). Since the first presidential elections held in December 1987 under the amended constitution of the Sixth Republic of South Korea, there have been five presidential elections and seven National

---

Hyungchul Kim, Junghoon Kim, Heeyeon Cho, Hyunyun Cho, Yooseok Oh, Dongchoon Kim, and Kyungtae Park are all from the Democracy and Social Movements Institute of Sungkonghoe University, South Korea. Seoungwon Lee is Research Professor at Sogang Global Korean Study Initiative in Sogang University. Youngpyo Seo is Assistant Professor of the Department of Sociology in Jeju National University. Kyunghee Choi is a research associate of the Korean Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. Sangchul Yoon is Professor of the Department of Sociology in Hanshin University.

Table 1: Evaluation of South Korea's Democracy by Freedom House (2001-2011)

Year	Political Right	Civil Liberty	Category
2002	2	2	F
2003	2	2	F
2004	1	2	F
2005	1	2	F
2006	1	2	F
2007	1	2	F
2008	1	2	F
2009	1	2	F
2010	1	2	F
2011	1	2	F

*Sources:* Freedom House 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011a.

Assembly elections, all of which were conducted fairly and freely. Peaceful regime change has been witnessed twice in the country. Further, the persistence of South Korea's democracy in the face of the unprecedented economic crisis in late 1997 is a manifestation of its level of institutionalization.

Assessments of world-renowned institutions measuring the level of democracy in various countries support the view that South Korean democracy is indeed institutionalized. Freedom House<sup>1</sup>, a U.S.-based private organization, has classified South Korea as "Free"<sup>2</sup> from 1988 to 2011 (Shin and Chu, 2004; Gunaratne 1999).

UK-based Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), in its investigation of the level of democracy of 167 nations worldwide, classified South Korean democracy as one of the "full democracies" for having earned more than eight points on average from 2010 to 2011.<sup>3</sup> However, the South Korean democracy score went down from 8.11 in 2010 (20th out of 167 nations) to 8.06 (22nd out of 167 nations). A closer examination of the score in each category surveyed in 2011 indicates that the electoral procedure and plurality measure scored the highest point (9.17), followed by the degree of civil liberties (8.82), the function of government (7.86), and the political culture (7.5). The degree of political participation item scored the lowest at 7.22.

In spite of the abovementioned positive ratings, several anti-democratic actions by the South Korean government have been reflected in several country surveys and rankings. In particular, South Korean democracy since the Lee Myung-bak presidency in 2007 has been evaluated as having set back

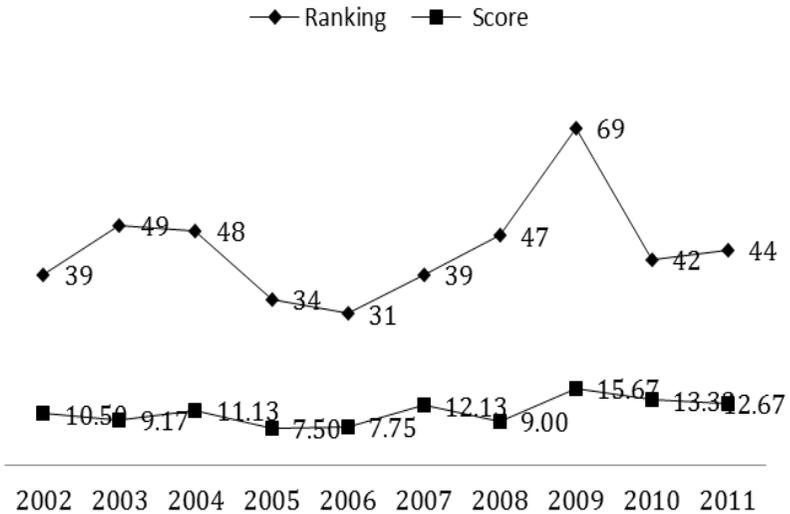


Figure 1: A compilation of evaluations of the Press Freedom Index in South Korea from 2002 to 2011. The diamond series represents the changes in South Korea's ranking of democracies by Freedom House, while the square series represents the changes in the actual score in the Index.

*Sources:* Freedom House 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011a; Reporters Without Borders 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2010a, 2010b, 2011a, 2011b, 2012.

democratization in the country by ten years (Scholars-Academia Consortium 2009; Scholars-Academia Consortium 2010). This low evaluation is due to the Lee government's curtailment of various democratic rights and unpopular policy leanings, including the lifting of the ban on US beef imports, the anomalous "4 Major Rivers Project," and the ratification of the US-Korea Free Trade Agreement. The regime's attempt to curtail freedom of expression and assembly by suppressing demonstrations and implementing enforced imprisonment was met with strong resistance from the people. The Lee administration is also said to have utilized government organizations such as the South Korea Communications Standards Commission to (SKCSC) increase censorship and infringe on the South Korean population's freedom of expression in the internet and via short message service.

The abovementioned acts of infringement of freedom of expression have been reported and commented on by international organizations. Reporters Without Borders, an organization established in 1985 to enhance freedom of the press worldwide has been releasing annually a Worldwide Press Freedom Index<sup>4</sup> since 2002. It is found that the Press Freedom Index in South Korea has been on the rise since the inauguration of the Lee government. This means that under the Lee administration, freedom of the press is not secured but infringed.

The Internet Enemies Report 2012 classified South Korea as a country under internet surveillance, which means that the government censors online content with explicit political overtones (Reporters Without Borders 2012). South Korea has been dishonorably stigmatized by Reporters Without Borders as one of the countries which censor the internet for four years in succession since 2009. The reports have noted an upsurge in online content deleted by the SKCSC. Such cases rose from 1,500 in 2009 to 80,499 cases in 2010 (Reporters Without Borders 2011). The number of investigations conducted by the government on internet content rapidly increased from 58 before 2009 to 91 in 2010 and 150 in August 2011. Such phenomena of limiting the freedom of the press and expression in South Korea implies that even such basic civil rights are not secured in the country, as said in the press of the US with regard to the imprisonment of Chung Bong-ju, who co-hosted the “podcast” “I’m a Petty-Minded Creep.”<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, South Korea ranked 39th among 180 nations in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) of Transparency International (TI), with its CPI score decreasing (reflecting an increase in corruption based on data from various surveys), earning 5.5 points in 2009 and 5.4 points in 2010 (Transparency International 2009a; Transparency International 2010). It further slid down in ranking in 2011, when it ranked 43rd among 182 nations with 5.4 points (Transparency International 2011a). TI’s Global Corruption Barometer 2010/2011 shows that 32 percent of the public perceived an increase in the degree of corruption over the last three years while 42 percent did not (Transparency International 2011b). These findings show that the people feel corruption has been rising since the inauguration of Lee Myung-bak as South Korean president. A survey question on public perception of the government’s effectiveness in battling corruption showed a slight increase in those who think that government measures against corruption were effective in 2010-2011 (Transparency International 2011b). But the values are still similar with those in the 2007 survey (Transparency International 2007). In addition, the 2009 survey results showed the highest number of people who think that the government’s anti-corruption measures are ineffective

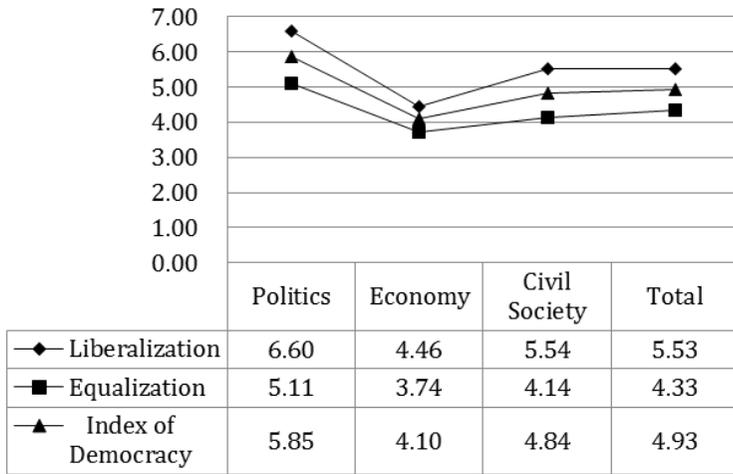


Figure 2: Freedom Index and Equality Index by Area

(Transparency International 2009b). These patterns of responses suggest that the efforts of the Lee Myung-bak government to address corruption are less effective than those of the Roh Mu-hyun government.

What has been examined so far is relevant to the procedural definition of democracy in South Korea, so these indices may not reflect the ideal of demonopolization of power and resources, which would define a substantive South Korean democracy. Recently, researchers on democracy have had much interest in inequality<sup>6</sup>. As neoliberal globalization consolidated and most of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member nations show the widening gap in income between the upper class and the lower class. Since the late 1980s, the global Gini coefficient, the index for income inequality, has been on the rise and this difference in income has economic, social, and political consequences (Jung 2011, 106) Issues that have been found to be the cause of the worsening social and economic polarization in the country. in South Korea since 1997 include deepening poverty, a shrinking middle class, and the ever-increasing income share and influence of the upper class.

However, these democracy indices have failed to measure democracy as it is characterized by social and economic equality. Therefore, this study intends to assess South Korea's democracy by measuring expert evaluation about socioeconomic and political equality.

Table 2: The Mean Values of Subprinciples by Area

	Liberalization		Equalization	
	Autonomy	Competition	Plurality	Solidarity
Politics	6.86	6.53	4.89	5.36
Economy	5.19	3.72	3.76	3.71
Civil Society	5.30	5.78	4.69	3.59

## Survey Method

### The System and Organization of the Asian Democracy Index

The survey was implemented in accordance with the framework explained in the Asian Democracy Index Guidebook.

#### The Method and the Target of Survey

##### *The Selection of the Survey Target*

One of the challenges an expert survey presents is how to ensure objectivity. In the process of sampling a group of experts as respondents, systematic distortions are very likely. Given the fact that experts do have gaps in their specialist knowledge, it is highly probable that their answers may be no different from citizen respondents.

To secure objectivity and rigor, the survey first employed an ideological standard in selecting experts. In other words, according to the situation in each country, groups of experts are categorized into pro-government/conservative, moderate, and anti-government/progressive groups. Each group is mutually exclusive to allow for their autonomous evaluations. This is a strategy for securing the objectivity of the study as it reveals the biases in advance. Experts from the different groups are further divided to assess three different areas where they have specialist knowledge, namely: politics, economy, and civil society.

A total of twenty-seven experts, composed of scholars and activists, were surveyed. Nine experts are assigned to each area. Each of these groups of nine are comprised of three conservatives, three moderates, and three progressives. Most of the experts assigned to tackle politics and economy are researchers and professors while most of those assigned to answer questions regarding civil society were activists.

Table 3: The Level of South Korea's Democracy Categorized by Political Tendency

	Aspect/Area			
	Politics	Economy	Civil society	
Right	6.49	5.64	5.65	5.90
Moderate	5.93	3.58	4.7	4.69
Left	5.21	2.83	4.59	4.13
Right-Left	1.42	2.82	1.06	1.76
Deviation				

### *Survey Duration and Method*

The survey was conducted from early June to late July of 2012. The survey method was mostly via e-mail with only one case being a face-to-face survey. The responses were then coded. In case of unanswered items or exceptional responses, a follow-up survey was carried out.

### **The Results of the Survey**

Survey data reveals a Democracy Index score of 4.93 for South Korea, lower than the median score of five on a 10-point scale. Although this score can hardly affirm the scores in international democracy indices, it still shows that South Korea still has a long way to go before it achieves the ideal of a demopolitized democracy, disproving the observation that South Korea's democracy has advanced substantially in a relatively short period of time. With the further itemized comparison of democracy indices via an examination of the liberalization indices and the equalization indices by area, it can be said that political democracy in South Korea is relatively well developed with 5.85 points while economic and civil society democracy were relatively underdeveloped, having been evaluated with 4.10 and 4.84 points, respectively.

Also, it is found that in all the three areas, the liberalization index (5.53 points average) garnered higher scores than the equalization index (4.33 points average). This means that the realization of socioeconomic and political equalization in South Korea is delayed. Moreover, in the area of politics, the liberalization index earned the highest evaluation with 6.60 points. It can thus be interpreted that autonomy and competition are secured fairly well in South Korean politics.

On the other hand, the equalization index in the area of economy earned the lowest evaluation at 3.74 points. This means that the South Korean economy is defined by inequality, monopolization of wealth, and the failure

Table 4. Comparison of the Constituents in the Area of Politics Categorized by the Political Tendencies

	Autonomy	Competition	Pluralization	Solidarity
Right	8.25	6.93	5.33	5.80
Moderate	6.67	6.53	4.78	5.73
Left	5.67	6.13	4.56	4.53
Right-Left	2.58	0.80	0.78	1.27
Deviation				

of economic redistribution. Lastly, in the civil society area, the civil society index was measured with a score of 5.54 points, above the average 5.0 on the 10-point scale. However, the civil society equalization index was assessed with a low score of 4.14. This means that while civil society in South Korea has well-secured autonomy and competition, unequal power relations in society still persist.

Table 2 shows the mean values of the attributes which constitute the principles by area. As shown in the scores of constituents in each area, autonomy, a constituent the principle of liberalization, earned the highest score. Competition earned the highest score in the areas of politics and civil society, but not in the area of economy. This was due to the low evaluation in transparency and fairness of corporate management and liabilities of government and business. That is, even after the democratization, they still engage in the authoritative practices in the past while the democratic rules for management are ignored and unhealthy links between business and politics are maintained.

Second, both plurality and solidarity, which constitute equalization, earned lower evaluations than the average, except for solidarity in the area of politics. In particular, plurality and solidarity in the economy recorded 3.76 and 3.71 points, respectively. This may mean that the strengthening of neoliberal policies of the Lee Myung-bak government is causing the worsening economic inequality in South Korea (Scholars-Academia Consortium, 2010). Also, within the economic structure where the association of trade union and the participation in the decision-making process of the government and the management are limited, the decline in economic equality becomes remarkable.

One of the more intriguing results for political equalization is that pluralization was given a rating below 5.0 points, unlike other constituents in the area of politics. This is due to the fact that power dispersion in the National Assembly, political representativeness, and democratization of

national organizations earned low points. Also of note is the fact that solidarity received the lowest point (3.53) in the area of civil society. That is, it is assessed that the institutions and policies for preserving the rights of marginalized sectors of society, the degree of participation of citizens in NGOs, and the influences of NGOs in the decision-making process of the government require much improvement in South Korea. This means that in the democratization process, the monopolization of power into only a handful of members of society still persists. Civil society in South Korea is deficient in tolerance for minorities and is criticized for having a “civil rights movement without citizens.” As has been earlier indicated, this is due to the lack of participation of citizens.

### The Political Tendency and the Evaluation of South Korea’s Democracy

The respondents’ assessments on each area were analyzed depending on their political tendencies. The average score of the conservative respondents was 5.9 points. The average of the progressive respondents was 4.13 points, thus the deviation between both sides being 1.76 points. This shows that the conservative respondents evaluate South Korea’s political democracy more highly.

#### *The Area of Politics*

A comparison of autonomy, competition, pluralization, and solidarity measures in politics is shown in table 4.

Among the four subprinciples, autonomy and competition earned the higher scores, while pluralization and solidarity earned low scores. The fact that the ratings for autonomy and competition are higher than the ratings for the other two subprinciples shows that Dahl’s (1998 and 1971) concept of democracy (polyarchy) is being established. However, autonomy has a substantial deviation (2.58) between the values of the conservative and the progressive respondents. The reason is that compared with the items constituting autonomy, there is a big discrepancy between the progressives’ and the conservatives’ opinions about whether civil liberties are secured (deviation : 3.67 points), whether there is violence in the country (deviation: 3.00 points), and whether political opposition/challenge is allowed (deviation: 2.00 points).

Competition and pluralisation have very homogenous evaluations. Among the items, the expansion of suffrage (8.22 points), the fairness of election/competition (7.78 points), and the delegation of power by election

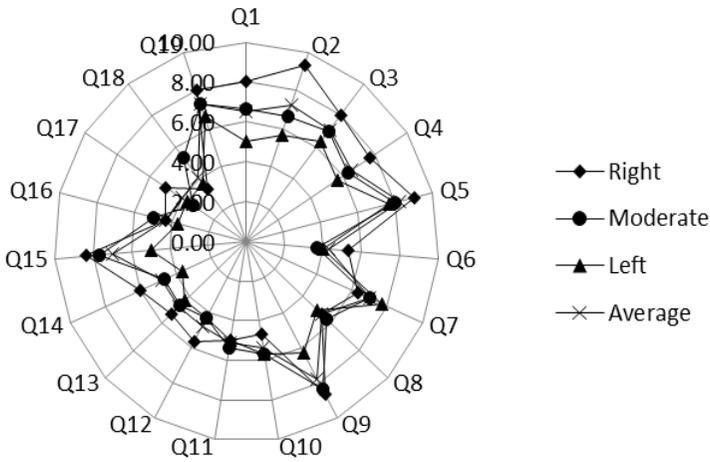


Figure 3: The distribution map of responses by political tendency in the area of politics. Cross: average; diamond: conservative; circle: moderate; triangle: progressive.

(7.0 points) earned high scores. It shows that electoral democracy is well established in South Korea. However the evaluation of the efficiency of the government (4.33 points) was low, which shows that government responsiveness to people’s demands with regard to governmental organizations and policies is poor (supported by Scholars-Academia Consortium 2009 and 2010).

Pluralization is a constituent with the least deviation (0.78 points) between political tendencies, which shows the homogeneity of opinions across respondents of differing political ideologies. The fact that pluralization is the weakest means that there are still some politically excluded groups and that the imperatives of checks and balances between power structures are unobserved due to a concentration of power, as this among the indices comprising this subprinciple are political representativeness (4.78 points), democratic accountability (5.11 points), and the power dispersion within the National Assembly (4.78 points).

The items which compose solidarity examine the institutionalization of participation, the implementation and efficacy of affirmative action measures for marginalized sectors of society, popular trust in values, and democratic institutions. In this regard, the respondents showed high evaluations on the institutionalization of participation (7.0 points) and popular trust in values and institutions of democracy (7.33 points) while affirmative action measures

Table 5: Comparison between the Constituents in the Area of Economy Categorized by Political Tendencies

	Autonomy	Competition	Pluralization	Solidarity
Right	6.17	6.08	5.10	5.48
Moderate	5.67	3.00	3.13	3.05
Left	3.75	2.08	3.13	2.50

(4.33 points) for marginalized sectors of society and trust in the present government (4.0 points) and in the National Assembly (4.11 points) earned low evaluations. This indicates that there is severe political distrust and exclusivist politics in South Korea.

In sum, South Korea's democracy fulfils the criteria for a political democracy in which political participation and expansion and electoral competition take place on the basis of the definition provided by Dahl (1998 and 1971). However, it shows that South Korean democracy has weak political representation and government accountability. This type of democracy is deficient in responsiveness, which exacerbates political distrust.

### *The Area of Economy*

According to the survey results, the area of economy earned the lowest score. Democracy Index in the area of economy was 4.10 with deviation between democracy indices dependent on differing political tendencies. That is, the average score of the conservative respondents was 5.64 points while the average score of the progressive respondents was 2.83, the lowest.

Table 5 summarizes the comparison between autonomy, competition, plurality, and solidarity in the area of economy according to political tendencies. As the characteristic of each constituent is examined, liberalization earned higher evaluations than equalization. The reason behind the high evaluation of the degree of liberalization can be attributed to the autonomy among the elements which constitute liberalization. Only autonomy earned more than 5 points (5.19 points), unlike the other constituents.

Such evaluations are due to the perception that business is independent of government (4.78 points), that the prevention of compulsory labor and child labor is well secured (5.78 points), and that there is a high degree of autonomy of the national government from foreign capital (5.89 points). However, there is a substantial deviation (2.42 points) in the responses of the respondents when divided according to their political tendencies. The item with the biggest deviation is related to the assurance of labor rights. The average score for the conservative respondents is 7.33 points while those of

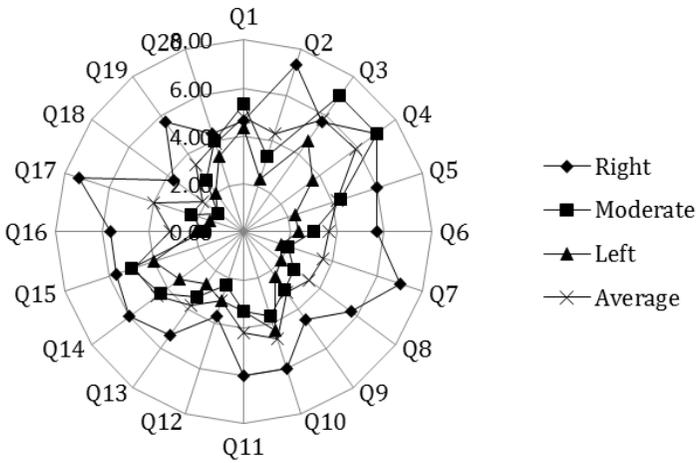


Figure 4. The distribution map of responses in the area of economy by political tendency. Cross: average; square: moderate; triangle: progressive; diamond: conservative.

the progressive respondents is 2.33 points—a deviation by 5 points. Also, in the item which examines autonomy from foreign interests, the median score for the conservatives is 7 points while that of the progressives is 3.67 points—a deviation of 3.33 points.

Political competition earned 3.72 points on average. It has the biggest deviation (4.0 points) according to the political tendencies among the 4 constituents. The conservative respondents evaluate high competition in the area of economy, while the progressives consider it as being the lowest in the same area. The biggest deviation in responses of conservatives and progressives among the items which constitute competition can be found in the item related to the accountability of the government for upholding of labor rights. For that item, conservatives gave 7.0 points on average while the progressives gave 1.67 on average—a deviation of 5.33 points. For the other items, there were deviations which range from 3.33 points to 3.67 points.

Next, we examine economic pluralization and solidarity, the constituents of economic equalization. Pluralization earned 3.76 points, with a relatively low deviation between the conservatives and the progressives. The item about economic inequality between regions obtained the highest score (4.67 points) among the items which constitute pluralization. The item with the lowest score (3.0 points) was the item concerned with the inequality of assets. That item earned the lowest evaluation regardless of political tendencies, with a deviation of only 0.67 points. The primary reason behind the low level

Table 6: The Comparison of Constituents in the Area of Economy Categorized by Political Tendency

	Autonomy	Competition	Pluralization	Solidarity
Right	7.00	4.75	5.17	4.33
Moderate	4.90	6.08	3.92	3.44
Left	4.00	6.50	4.92	3.00
Right-Left	3.00	-1.75	0.25	1.33
Deviation				

of pluralization of the economy is the monopolization of economic interests by some particular groups or forces, which obtained a rating of 3.13 points.

As the rapid modernization in South Korea accelerates, *chaebols* (conglomerates) or large companies are still in existence, perpetuating their long-standing monopoly of economic interests in the country. The evaluation of plurality in the survey shows the excessive dominance of *chaebols* over the economy, which have recently resurfaced, and the inequality of assets. Such a situation indicates the direction of the solution to economic inequality in South Korea.

Lastly, economic solidarity obtained quite a low evaluation (3.71 points). The item with the lowest evaluation in the area of economy is the participation of labor in management. Also, since the organization of labor unions earned a low evaluation, a very low evaluation was given to the item on movements of labor unions (the average of items 16, 17, and 18 under economy). This shows that contrary to public appearance, labor unions in South Korea are not well organized nor do they have a strong influence on government and business.

The difference between the ratings of respondents according to political tendencies under economic solidarity was the second biggest, exceeded only by the deviation in economic competition. This is because the conservative respondents evaluated solidarity as being relatively high (5.48 points) but the progressive respondents assessed it as being weak (2.50 points). The item with the biggest deviation among the items in solidarity is related to the influences of labor unions on the decision-making processes of the national government. Regarding this item, the conservatives gave an average 7.33 points while the progressives gave an average 1.5 points. Meanwhile, the item with the least deviation between political tendencies is related to the sentiment of citizens with regards to economic inequality—a deviation by 1.0 point. The item with the second smallest deviation is on the item on the enforcement of the social security system. Although this item shows a higher score (4.89

points) than other items, the deviation between the conservatives and the progressives is 3.67 points. This may reflect the expectation of each tendency on government welfare spending.

### *The Area of Civil Society*

In the area of civil society, autonomy and competition of citizens earned a relatively high score whereas the evaluation on plurality and solidarity was relatively low. In the subprinciple of civil society solidarity, the items concerned with institutions and affirmative action measures which guarantee plurality earned the lowest evaluation. This seems to reflect the fact that there is still a lack of institutions for protecting the interests of the socially marginalized in South Korea.

The element earning the highest evaluation in the area of civil society was competition, one of the items in liberalization. The items under competition were influence, publicness, transparency, and plurality of an association. The evaluations of these items by the moderate respondents (6.08 points) and the progressive respondents (6.50 points) were higher than those by the conservative respondents (4.75 points). This may be the result of the proliferation of voluntary associations as well as the participation of civil society organizations in policy-making processes. Also, it can be said that these associations have made efforts to acquire credibility and the participation of citizens through moral uprightness and transparency.

In the evaluation of autonomy in civil society, the deviation between the conservatives and the progressives becomes significant. The items with exceptionally big differences are the ones related to the fulfillment of basic needs and the autonomy of civil society from the state. First, the conservatives gave 8.33 points on average for the fulfillment of basic needs item, while the progressives gave it 3.33 points on average, resulting in a difference of 5.0 points. Also, there was a difference of 4.33 points between the conservatives and the progressives with regard to the autonomy of civil society from the state. It shows that there is a big discrepancy in opinion between the two groups about the autonomy of citizens.

Second, the examination of the characteristics of items in equalization indicates that plurality in the area of civil society is 4.69 points, which requires some improvement. The items for measuring plurality are related to the equality in power distribution in the press, information, culture, and civil society. The difference of evaluations under the plurality item according to different political tendencies is typically not substantial, except for the item (3.33 points) related to equality in power distribution in the civil society. The

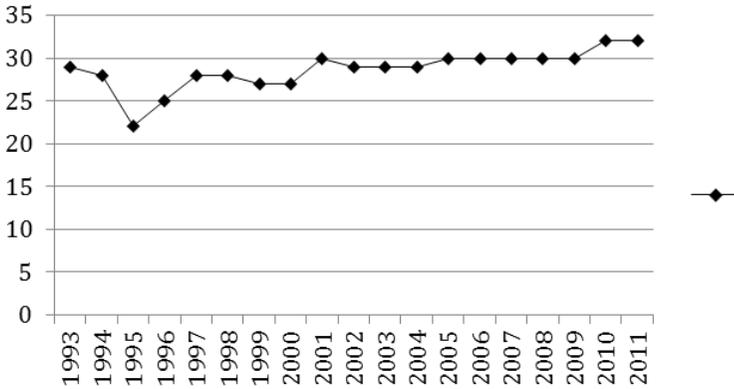


Figure 5: South Korea's Press Freedom Index from 1993-2011 by Freedom House.

*Source:* Freedom House 2012.

equality of information item earned the highest evaluation score at 7.11 points. This can be an indicator that South Korea has progressed rapidly in information technology.

On the other hand, equality of the press is the item with the lowest evaluation at 2.44 points. This evaluation is well reflected in Freedom House's Press Freedom Index (PFI) for South Korea. South Korea had been classified as a free country with secure press freedom from 1988 to 2009 (Freedom House 2012). However, in 2010, it was classified as a partially free country in terms of press freedom (Freedom House 2012).<sup>7</sup> South Korea's Press Freedom score was 30 points from 2006 to 2009; the score increased to 32 points in 2010 and remained the same in 2011 (Freedom House 2012). As mentioned earlier in this report, possible reasons behind this increase are the Lee Myung-bak government's influence on the press, the increase of censorship by governmental organs, and the governmental intervention in the management of the major broadcast media stations (Freedom House 2011a, 7).

Lastly, the evaluation of solidarity in the area of civil society has the lowest score among the three constituents in the degrees of democracy. This is due to the lack of affirmative action measures for the marginalized sectors in society, the low rate of citizen participation in the NGO movements, and

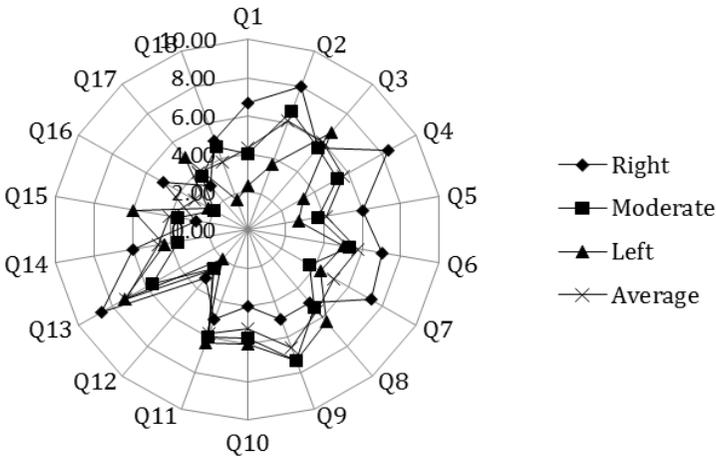


Figure 6: The distribution map of responses in political tendency for the area of society and economy. Cross: average; diamond: conservative; square: moderate; triangle: progressive.

the low influence of NGOs in the decision-making process of the government. Apparently, voluntary associations have proliferated in South Korea, but still have considerable limitations in their capacity to have any impact on South Korean society and politics. Civil rights movements have suffered from a lack of citizen participation and the representation of civil society interests have not been institutionalized.

The solidarity items that polarized conservatives and progressives are related to civil society influences on the decision-making processes of the government. Conservatives gave 5 points while progressives gave 1.67 points, resulting to a difference by 3.33 points. Evidently, the progressive respondents perceived that civil society articulations are not well delivered and their interests not reflected under the rule of the conservative government.

### Discussion/Evaluation

In sum, the characteristics of South Korea’s democracy in 2011 are as follows. First, the procedural type of democracy is found to be established in South Korea, with the principle of liberalization being highly evaluated but with the principle of equalization being poorly evaluated. South Korea, therefore, has a long way to go yet for its development of a substantive democracy. Second, the large deviation of scores among conservative and progressive respondents implies that South Korea’s democracy is experiencing the institutionalization

of political democracy. On the other hand, democratic procedures and norms have not been internalized nor have been habituated in the civil society and economic spheres. Particularly, the conventional authoritative practices such as rent-seeking, the illegal and arbitrary use of power, and deficiency of responsibilities are still entrenched in South Korean society. Lastly, South Korean democracy appears to exhibit characteristics of “restricted democracy” in that the idea that “democratic procedures and norms as the only game available under the given political, social and economic conditions” (Przeworski 1991, 26; Linz and Stepan 1996) is not recognized. Also, in each area, there are still restrictions on the participation in decision-making and democratic control by the citizens.<sup>8</sup>

This survey enabled us to understand the merits and the weaknesses of an Asian Democracy Index as currently designed. The CADI ADI is commendable in its demand to understand realities in each country by examining the country’s democracy and complex manner. Relevant observations based on democratic realities by areas and by principles can shed light on the strengths and weaknesses, the possibilities and limitations of an Asian democracy.

This survey also brought to attention some commonly shared characteristics of democracy in Asia. For example, though the democratic exercise of free and fair elections are carried out regularly, economic inequality is an enduring problem. The Asian Democracy Index thus is significant for a generalization of the characteristics of an Asian democracy by its accumulation of empirical data.

Nevertheless, there are many lessons for further study. First, there is the difficulty in comparing democratic realities of countries with one another. Although the respondents are experts, it seems that they would have much difficulty in making an international comparison and assessment while overcoming the regional limitations of their respective countries. There is a need to consider how to use the internationally comparable objective indices which have been previously collected.

Second, there is a problem of how to tackle the huge difference between the scores of respondents. Trivial errors such as those incurred in designing the questionnaire or the errors in responses can be resolved by way of supplemental surveys. However, there will be still an issue in significantly big difference in scores between respondents. The score distribution suggests the gap from some ideological differences to some extent, but since expected, this result would not be a significant issue. Nevertheless, for some research subjects, too much difference in the scores are sometimes found especially in some of the questions. Regarding this issue, it seems that new considerations

should be taken into account in the survey method using the Delphi survey technique, for instance.

## Notes

1. Freedom House assesses the two dimensions of political right and civil liberty on a 7-point scale (2011b). The average score of these two dimensions can be the standard with which to measure the degree of freedom in each country (Freedom House 2011b).
2. Averaged pairs of political rights and civil liberties scores determine statuses of “Not Free,” “Partly Free,” and “Free” (Freedom House 2011b).
3. EIU’s index of democracy is the average of the five category indices on electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture (Economist Intelligence Unit 2010).
4. The value of the PFI ranges from 0 to 100 points. As the Press Freedom Index gets closer to 0, freedom of the press becomes better secured; as the index increases, freedom of the press will be more infringed (Reporters Without Borders 2011a).
5. This can also be translated into “I’m a Smart-Ass.”
6. See, for example, Beramendi and Anderson (2008); Fukuyama, Diamond, and Plattner (2012).
7. Freedom House classifies the degrees of press freedom into three categories. The score of free countries ranges from 0 to 30; the score of partially free countries is from 31 to 60; the score of non-free countries is from 61 to 100 (Karlekar 2011).
8. In other words, a limited democracy in the area of political representation by the exclusion of major groups, the significant decrease in responsiveness of the government, and the restrictions on the freedom of association and expression, even though a fair election of the representatives by universal suffrage is held and the imperatives of government accountability, such as that for the National Assembly, are mostly fulfilled (Rueschmeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992, 92).

## References

- Beramendi, Pablo and Christopher Anderson. 2008. Income Inequality and Democratic Representation. In Pablo Beramendi and Christopher Anderson eds., *Democracy, Inequality and Representation: A Comparative Perspective*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Dahl, Robert A. 1998. *On Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University.
- . 1971. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University.
- Diamond, Larry and Byoung-Kook Kim eds. 2000. *Consolidating Democracy in South Korea*. London: Lynne Rienner Publisher.
- Economist Intelligence Unit. 2010. Democracy Index 2010: Democracy in Retreat. [http://graphics.eiu.com/PDF/Democracy\\_Index\\_2010\\_web.pdf](http://graphics.eiu.com/PDF/Democracy_Index_2010_web.pdf).
- . 2011. Democracy Index 2011: Democracy under Stress. [http://www.eiu.com/Handlers/WhitepaperHandler.ashx?fi=Democracy\\_Index\\_Final\\_Dec\\_2011.pdf&mode=wp&campaignid=DemocracyIndex2011](http://www.eiu.com/Handlers/WhitepaperHandler.ashx?fi=Democracy_Index_Final_Dec_2011.pdf&mode=wp&campaignid=DemocracyIndex2011).
- Freedom House. 2002. South Korea: Freedom in the World 2002. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2002/south-korea>.

- . 2003. South Korea: Freedom in the World 2003. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2003/south-korea>.
- . 2004. South Korea: Freedom in the World 2004. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2004/south-korea>.
- . 2005. South Korea: Freedom in the World 2005. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2005/south-korea>.
- . 2006. South Korea: Freedom in the World 2006. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2006/south-korea>.
- . 2007. South Korea: Freedom in the World 2007. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2007/south-korea>.
- . 2008. South Korea: Freedom in the World 2008. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2008/south-korea>.
- . 2009. South Korea: Freedom in the World 2009. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2009/south-korea>.
- . 2010. South Korea: Freedom in the World 2010. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2010/south-korea>.
- . 2011a. South Korea: Freedom in the World 2011. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2011/south-korea>.
- . 2011b. Methodology. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedomworld-2011/methodology>.
- . 2012. Freedom of the Press Detailed Data and Sub-Scores 1980-2012. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FOTP%20Detailed%20Data%20and%20Subscores%201980-2012.xls>
- Fukuyama, Francis, Larry Diamond, and Marc Plattner eds. 2012. *Poverty, Inequality, and Democracy*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Gunaratne, Shelton A. 1999. The Media in Asia: An Overview. *Gazette* 61(3-4): 197-223.
- Jung, Heesun. 2011. The Change in the Income Inequality and its Reason. *The Health Welfare Forum* (September): 106-117.
- Karlekar, Karin Deutsch. 2011. Press Freedom in 2010: Signs of Change Amid Repression. <http://freedomhouse.org/images/File/fop/2011/FOTP2011OverviewEssay.pdf>.
- Linz, Juan J. and Alfred Stepan. 1996. *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Park, Kiduk ed. 1998. *Hanguk Minjujuui 10nyeon: Beonhwawa Jisok [Ten Years of Korean Democracy Since 1987: Change and Continuity]*. Seoul: The Sejong Institute.
- Przeworski, Adam. 1991. *Democracy and the Market: The Political and Economical Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Reporters Without Borders. 2002. Press Freedom Index 2002. [http://en.rsf.org/spip.php?page=classement&id\\_rubrique=297](http://en.rsf.org/spip.php?page=classement&id_rubrique=297).
- . 2003. Press Freedom Index 2003. [http://en.rsf.org/spip.php?page=classement&id\\_rubrique=551](http://en.rsf.org/spip.php?page=classement&id_rubrique=551).
- . 2004. Press Freedom Index 2004. [http://en.rsf.org/spip.php?page=classement&id\\_rubrique=550](http://en.rsf.org/spip.php?page=classement&id_rubrique=550).
- . 2005. Press Freedom Index 2005. [http://en.rsf.org/spip.php?page=classement&id\\_rubrique=549](http://en.rsf.org/spip.php?page=classement&id_rubrique=549).
- . 2006. Press Freedom Index 2006. [http://en.rsf.org/spip.php?page=classement&id\\_rubrique=35](http://en.rsf.org/spip.php?page=classement&id_rubrique=35).

- . 2007. Press Freedom Index 2007. [http://en.rsf.org/spip.php?page=classement&id\\_rubrique=34](http://en.rsf.org/spip.php?page=classement&id_rubrique=34).
- . 2008. Press Freedom Index 2008. [http://en.rsf.org/spip.php?page=classement&id\\_rubrique=33](http://en.rsf.org/spip.php?page=classement&id_rubrique=33).
- . 2009a. Internet Enemies. [http://www.rsf.org/IMG/pdf/Internet\\_enemies\\_2009\\_2\\_-3.pdf](http://www.rsf.org/IMG/pdf/Internet_enemies_2009_2_-3.pdf).
- . 2009b. Press Freedom Index 2009. [http://en.rsf.org/spip.php?page=classement&id\\_rubrique=1001](http://en.rsf.org/spip.php?page=classement&id_rubrique=1001).
- . 2010a. Enemies of the Internet, Countries Under Surveillance. [http://en.rsf.org/IMG/pdf/Internet\\_enemies.pdf](http://en.rsf.org/IMG/pdf/Internet_enemies.pdf).
- . 2010b. Press Freedom Index 2010. [http://en.rsf.org/spip.php?page=classement&id\\_rubrique=1034](http://en.rsf.org/spip.php?page=classement&id_rubrique=1034).
- . 2011a. Internet Enemies. [http://12mars.rsf.org/f/Internet\\_Enemies.pdf](http://12mars.rsf.org/f/Internet_Enemies.pdf).
- . 2011b. World Press Freedom Index 2011-2012. [http://en.rsf.org/IMG/CLASSEMENT\\_2012/CLASSEMENT\\_ANG.pdf](http://en.rsf.org/IMG/CLASSEMENT_2012/CLASSEMENT_ANG.pdf).
- . 2012. Internet Enemies Report 2012. [http://en.rsf.org/IMG/pdf/rapport-internet\\_2012\\_ang.pdf](http://en.rsf.org/IMG/pdf/rapport-internet_2012_ang.pdf).
- Rueschemeyer, Dietrich, Evelene Huber Stephens, and John Stephens. 1992. *Capitalist Development and Democracy*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Scholars-Academia Consortium (Gyosu-Haksool Danchae Gongdong). 2009. The White Paper of the 2nd year of Lee Myung-bak Regime.
- . 2010. The White Paper of the 2nd Year of Lee Myung-bak Regime.
- Shin, Doh Chull and Chu, Yun-han. 2004. The Quality of Democracy in South Korea and Taiwan: Subjective Assessment from the Perspectives of Ordinary Citizens. Working Paper Series No. 25., A Comparative Survey of Democracy, Governance and Development. Taipei: Asian Barometer Project Office, National Taiwan University and Academia Sinica. <http://www.asianbarometer.org/newenglish/publications/workingpapers/no.25.pdf>
- Transparency International. 2007. Global Corruption Barometer 2007. [http://archive.transparency.org/policy\\_research/surveys\\_indices/gcb/2007](http://archive.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/gcb/2007).
- . 2009a. Corruption Perceptions Index 2009. [http://archive.transparency.org/policy\\_research/surveys\\_indices/cpi/2009/cpi\\_2009\\_table](http://archive.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2009/cpi_2009_table).
- . 2009b. Global Corruption Barometer 2009. [http://archive.transparency.org/policy\\_research/surveys\\_indices/gcb/2009](http://archive.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/gcb/2009).
- . 2010. Corruption Perceptions Index 2010. [http://archive.transparency.org/policy\\_research/surveys\\_indices/cpi/2010/results](http://archive.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2010/results).
- . 2011a. Corruption Perceptions Index 2011. <http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2011/results/>.
- . 2011b. Global Corruption Barometer 2010/2011. [http://archive.transparency.org/policy\\_research/surveys\\_indices/gcb/2010\\_11/results](http://archive.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/gcb/2010_11/results).