

# The Characteristics and Sustainability of Korean Democracy in 2014

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## Introduction

The spread of democracy during the latter part of the twentieth century expanded the belief that democracy is more desirable and superior to any other system in guaranteeing the freedom of self-decision and equal rights. It also gave people an optimistic outlook, convincing them that it would ultimately improve the quality of democracy. Today, however, the prospects of modern democracy is not so promising. In countries with a long democratic history, phenomena of democratic malaise, as evidenced by the decrease of voter turnout, dissatisfaction in major political parties, corruption scandals related with political leaders and party finances, inefficiency in reform, and increase of distrust toward the government, are taking place (Berg-Schlosser 2004, 28). In addition, in newly democratic countries, the phenomenon of democratic deficit<sup>1</sup> is also taking place, where the conditions of democracy are lacking in terms of procedure and form, or civic freedom is restricted and the checks and balances as well as the democratic responsibilities between governmental institutions are lacking (Schedler 2006).

People are loudly expressing their concern that Korean democracy is also not free from such democratic crisis. Since 1987, Korea has carried out elections without the intervention of national institutions except for the presidential election in 2012 when electoral intervention was made on social networking services by the information agencies and administrative institutions such as the National Intelligence Service, Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs, and Cyber Command. In addition, freedom of association and freedom of expression, which are basic political and civil

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rights, were severely violated as demonstrated in the request for dissolution of the Unified Progressive Party by the government and designation of the Korean Teachers and Educational Workers Union (KTU), which was legalized in 1999, as the outsider labor union.

Democracy is the political structure and process where the power distribution and checks are made based on the political equality and public control, with people's sovereignty as its core principle. Democracy is not just minimum procedures, such as a fair, free, and periodic elections, expansion of equal voting rights, and civil and political freedom—it is also about the practical contents it constitutes. In other words, it is “the state that can guarantee civil freedom and equality among people so that they can decide the conditions of life for themselves” (Held 1987, 271).

In this respect, this report tries to assess Korean democracy using the Asian Democracy Index by the Democracy Research Institute of Sungkonghoe University in 2014, in order to answer the questions like, “What is the current state of Korean democracy?”, “Has Korean democracy regressed since democratization?”, and, “What are deficits of Korean democracy?” To that end, this report analyzed the results of the 2014 questionnaire survey on Korean democracy, targeting political, economic, and civil society expert groups (a total of twenty-seven persons). Each expert group was composed of nine persons, and to control the ideological prejudice, each field-specific group had three subgroups, each made up of three persons who had different ideological positions (conservative, intermediate, and progressive ideology). This questionnaire survey was performed using the e-mail survey method from the beginning of June to the end of July 2014.

### **Korean Democracy as Assessed by the International Indicators**

Since Korea's democratization, the discussions on the characteristics of democracy have been conducted by many scholars. Although in most of the new democratic systems where the governments are organized and their legitimacy is recognized by elections that guarantee democratic competition and participation, there still exists “illiberal democracy,” where democratic accountability, responsiveness, and civil freedom—which are among the important properties of liberal democracy—are restricted or ignored; and the “mixed regime,” where democracy and authoritarianism are mixed with each other.<sup>2</sup> The latter phenomenon is more helpful to us in assessing democracy in reality than the method of classifying the democracy based on the dichotomy of liberal democracy and illiberal de-

mocracy. Democracy in reality has in its system patterns with various characteristics between the spectrum of liberal and illiberal democracy.

Wolfgang Merkel points out that liberal democracy is composed of five partial regimes, namely “a democratic electoral regime,” “political right of participation,” “civil rights,” “horizontal accountability,” and the guarantee of “the effective power to govern” (2004, 36). Merkel defines the types of democracy through the constituents that are missing in these partial regimes. According to Merkel (2004, 36) “exclusive democracy” is similar to liberal democracy in many respects but it is characterized by the restriction of access to political power and limits to the popular suffrage; “domain democracy” is a type of democracy where the disorganization of the power monopoly is restricted and the arbitrary power of veto groups, such as military cliques, semi-military institutions, and economic elites, is indirectly or officially institutionalized, though the governmental institutions legitimized by the election and constitution still exist; “illiberal democracy” is a type of democracy where the rights of the political power are restricted or violated, i.e., where the president, officials, semi-military institutions and corrupt judiciary violate the constitution and the checks and balance between the legislature and judiciary are not made due to the power concentration in the administration according to the semi-pluralistic character; “delegative democracy” is a type of democracy where the control and check of the administration are not made by the legislature and judiciary with no horizontal accountability; lastly, “liberal democracy” is a type of democracy where the five partial regimes are effectively operated, popular suffrage and governance of law are realized, the political power is realized based on the constitution, and the monopoly of power is disorganized based on pluralism.

Merkel (2004) classifies Thailand as an exclusive democracy; many Asian countries including the Philippines as illiberal democracies; Indonesia as a patronage democracy; Taiwan as a liberal democracy; and Korea as a delegative democracy. However, in light of the recent political, social, and economic situation of Korea, the characteristics of illiberal democracy that lacks not only horizontal accountability in partial regimes as suggested by Merkel but also the civil rights and political freedom are more apparent in the country.

According to the 2014 Freedom House rankings, Korea was still in the “free” category, but its political rights, which had been at level 1 (highest) ever since 1988, had regressed to level 2 due to the corruption and electoral intervention by governmental institutions. Its civil rights were still at level 2. According to Freedom House (2014a), Korean de-

mocracy was at a lower level than other major Asian countries like Japan, Taiwan, and Mongolia. Lastly, Freedom House stated that Korea's freedom of speech was still "partly free" for fourth consecutive year, because of governmental intervention and domination (2014b). See table 1 for Korea's Freedom House Freedom rating across time in comparison with other Asian countries.

Table 1. Level of Freedom in Major Asian Countries (Freedom House)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Bangladesh	4	4	4.5	4	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
East Timor	3	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
India	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Indonesia	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	3
Japan	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1
Malaysia	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Mongolia	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1.5	1.5
Nepal	5.5	4.5	4.5	4	4	4	4	4	4
Pakistan	5.5	5.5	5.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5
Philippines	3	3	3.5	3.5	3.5	3	3	3	3
Singapore	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4	4	4
South Korea	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	2
Sri Lanka	3	4	4	4	4	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5
Taiwan	1	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Thailand	3	5.5	5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4	4	4

Source: Freedom House 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013

The Corruption Perception Index (CPI) ranking of Korea has continuously decreased since 2010, and its national ranking in 2013 fell to the forty-sixth place, from the thirty-ninth place in 2010. Even among Asian countries, Korea (fifty-fifth) was ranked lower than Singapore (eighty-sixth), Hong Kong (seventy-fifth), Japan (seventy-fourth), Bhutan (sixty-third), and Taiwan (sixty-first) (Transparency International 2014). Furthermore, the International Coordinating Committee, the coalition of human rights organizations with 120 countries all over the world as its members, decided to defer the grading of Korea on human rights, as represented by the country's National Human Rights Commission. This decision may have been made because of the fact that the status of the National Human Rights Commission had fallen greatly, given the reality that petitions for the remedy of human rights infringements are not properly accepted by the body.<sup>3</sup>

The above indices show that Korean democracy is facing serious crises, and even the minimum political and civil freedom and rights, which should be guaranteed in a democratic country, are not protected.

## **Results of the Asian Democracy Index Surveys in Korea, 2014**

### **Overall Democracy Index**

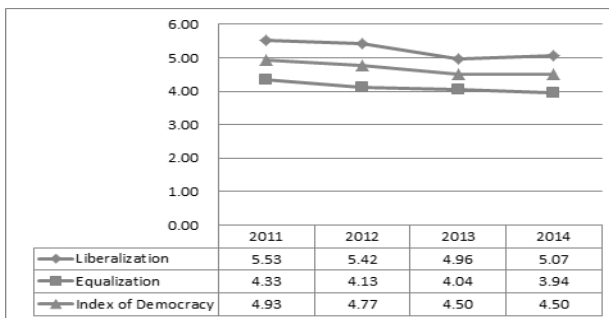
The Korean Asian Democracy Index was 4.50, which was the same as that in 2013. The liberalization<sup>4</sup> index in 2013 was 4.96; it was measured at 5.07 in 2014. The equalization index decreased to 3.94 in 2014 from 4.04 in 2013. This may reflect the reality that inequality is becoming more serious in Korean society. One of the characteristics in the 2014 survey is that the overall democracy index got the same marks as the previous year despite the great decrease in the scores in the political sector, which did not change greatly in the past. This result reflects the fact that the indices in the economic and civil society sectors increased from the previous year. Particularly, the index of the economic sector increased greatly.

Table 2. The 2014 Korean Asian Democracy Index

	Politics	Economy	Civil Society	Total
Liberalization	5.54	4.64	5.02	5.07
Equalization	4.74	3.05	4.04	3.94
Index of Democracy	5.14	3.84	4.53	4.50

What is especially interesting is that both the level of liberalization and equalization decreased in the political sector. The liberalization index was 6.48 and the equalization index was 5.34 in the political sector in 2013, while in 2014, the liberalization index decreased to 5.54 and equalization index to 4.74. However, the liberalization and equalization indexes slightly increased in the economic and civil society sectors. Nevertheless, the liberalization and equalization indices were still the lowest in the economic sector. Figure 1 shows the changes in aggregate scores at the principle level from 2011 to 2014 at a glance.

Figure 1. Korean Asian Democracy Index Principle Scores, 2011-2014



The liberalization index was 5.07 in 2014, an increase by 0.11 from 2013, but still much lower than that of 2011 and 2012. This means that the level of liberalization regressed overall for the past four years in Korean society.

Moreover, the equalization index was 3.94 in 2014, the lowest figure since the survey was first conducted in 2011. This also means that the level of inequality in the country is continuously being aggravated. This can be regarded as the result of the growth-oriented economic policy of the Park Geun-hye regime, resulting in deepening social polarization.

### Patterns and Characteristics of the Answers in Each Sector

#### *Political Sector*

Surveying whether the democratic principles of freedom and equality are well realized in the political sector resulted in a political democracy index of 5.14, the lowest since the survey was first conducted. While the level of liberalization and equalization increased in 2013, compared with 2011 and 2012, it greatly decreased in 2014. This means that the political democracy of Korea is regressing. What is particularly notable is that the liberalization index, which always recorded more than 6 points in the past three surveys, decreased to 5.54 in 2014. This means that the existence of political freedom and rights of the citizens as the minimum condition for political democracy shrank dramatically, and that the governance of law and transparency also remarkably diminished. Also, the political equalization index was at 4.74, the lowest compared with all the previous surveys. To assess the level of equalization, it is necessary to assess the distribution of power and the trust in and efficacy of democracy. The indices for these elements generally decreased. Accordingly, it is considered that Korea demonstrates the phenomenon of deficit in all five partial regimes (electoral regime, civil rights, political freedom, horizontal accountability, and the effective power to govern) according to Merkel. In other words, the results show that Korean political democracy is shrinking in terms of both liberalization and equalization.

Table 3 table shows that all the elements that compose political liberalization and equalization in 2014 recorded lower index points than in 2013. The only item that recorded points higher than 6.00 in 2014 was autonomy (6.03), but that is still the lowest score in that subprinciple compared with all the previous surveys. All other political subprinciple scores, i.e., in competition, pluralization, and solidarity, are located in the range between 4.50 and 5.00. Among these elements, competition and solidarity recorded the lowest points compared with all previous survey results. Only pluralization had a score similar to that of the last survey.

Table 3. Comparison of the Liberalization and Equalization Indices in the Political Sector

Year	Liberalization	Equalization	Index of Democracy
2011	6.35	5.11	5.73
2012	6.33	4.82	5.57
2013	6.48	5.34	5.91
2014	5.54	4.74	5.14

Table 4 shows the political autonomy, competition, pluralization, and solidarity indices in Korea from 2011-2014, while table 5 goes down to the shifts in that timeframe at the indicator level. All of the indicators designed to measure political autonomy showed a decreasing tendency from 2011-2014 in terms of scores. As the indicators that compose autonomy are the items used to measure political freedom and civil rights, the decrease of scores for these indicators reflects the crisis of liberal democracy in Korea. Liberal democracy evolves and develops under the condition that civil rights and freedoms, such as freedom of expression and freedom of association, are guaranteed. To reiterate: the retrogression of these conditions indicates that Korean democracy is facing a crisis.

Table 4. Comparison of the Liberalization and Equalization Indices in the Political Sector

Year	Autonomy	Competition	Pluralization	Solidarity
2011	6.86	5.83	4.86	5.36
2012	6.97	5.69	4.72	4.91
2013	6.78	6.17	5.36	5.31
2014	6.03	5.04	4.94	4.53



Table 5. Indicators of Democracy in Korean Politics, 2011-2014

		Attribute	Indicator / Question	2011	2012	2013	2014
Principles	Autonomy	▷ The level of the performance of state violence	1. How well do you think the citizens are protected from the violence wielded by government agencies in your country?	6.56	6.89	6.67	6.13
		▷ Civil rights	2. How well do you think the citizens' freedom is protected in your country?	7.22	7.33	7.11	6.38
		▷ Freedom to organize and act in political groups	3. How much do you think the freedom of assembly and activities of political groups (parties and quasi-political organizations) are protected in your country?	7.11	7.44	6.89	5.88
		▷ Permission for political opposition	4. How much do you think the opposition movements to the government or governing groups and the governing ideology are allowed in your country?	6.56	6.22	6.44	5.75
		▷ The expansion of the universal suffrage	5. How well do you think suffrage of the citizens is protected in your country?	8.22	7.11	7.89	6.38
	Liberalization	▷ Efficiency of the state	6. How well do you think all government agencies implement government policies in your country?	4.33	5.00	5.67	4.25
		▷ The presence of the non-elected hereditary power	7. How much do you think non-elected groups account for the political power in your country?	4.00	3.78	4.33	3.00
		▷ The rule under the laws	8. How well do you think the rule of law is established in your country?	5.33	5.22	6.22	5.75
		▷ Electoral fairness	9. How fairly do you think elections are conducted in your country?	7.78	7.67	7.56	6.50
		▷ Transparency	10. How transparent do you think the operations of government agencies are in your country?	5.33	5.33	5.33	4.38

Table 5. (continued)

		Attribute	Indicator / Question	2011	2012	2013	2014
Principles	Pluralization	▷ Independence and checks and balances between state power apparatuses	11. How well do you think government agencies maintain checks and balance?	5.11	5.11	5.00	4.75
		▷ Dispersion of political power in the parliament	12. How well do you think the power within the legislature is distributed in your country?	4.78	5.00	5.78	6.25
		▷ Political representation	13. How well do you think the Parliament or the legislature represent various social groups in your country?	4.78	3.89	5.11	4.63
	Equalization	▷ Democratization of state institutions	14. How fairly and rationally do you think government agencies are being implemented in your country?	4.78	4.89	5.56	4.13
		▷ Participation system and degree of participation	15. How actively do you think citizens are participating in elections and other political decision making processes in your country?	7.00	4.44	5.33	4.50
		Solidarity	▷ Affirmative action	16. How well do you think affirmative actions are established and implemented in your country?	4.33	4.44	5.11
▷ The public credibility of the current democratic institution	17. How much do you think the public trust the government?		4.00	4.67	4.67	4.00	
	18. How much do you think the public trust the Parliament/ Legislature?		4.11	3.78	3.78	2.50	
	19. How much do you think the public trust Democracy?	7.33	7.22	7.67	7.00		

Political competition was also revealed to have greatly shrunk. The indicators of competition, such as the expansion of suffrage and fairness

and competition in elections, also recorded lower scores, which indicate that in Korea, openness and competition showed a tendency of being restricted in an electoral regime (again, following Merkel (2004)). Transparency and national efficiency also recorded lower scores, which means that delegated power is not efficiently exercised. The decrease in the scores of these indicators is considered to have been influenced by the electoral intervention by governmental institutions such as the National Intelligence Service and the corruption and incompetency of the government, which became a major issue following the Sewol ferry accident.

The indicators under political pluralization all recorded lower points, except that of power distribution in the legislature. In other words, the items used measure horizontal accountability, political representation, and the democratization of national institutions recorded lower scores, but the power distribution in the legislature received a higher score in 2014 than in the previous year. This survey result demonstrates that Korean democracy is gradually changing to delegative democracy. In other words, this survey result shows that the checking and controlling of the presidential power is still in a low level in Korea; horizontal accountability remains low in the country.

### *Economic Sector*

The democratization of the economic sector is among the foundations of democracy. If economic democracy is weakened despite the growth of political democracy, people will lose their trust in political democracy and this will bring the decline of overall democracy in the long term. In other words, worsening economic conditions causes the weakening of the democratic foundation. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that the deepening of economic crisis and inequality facilitated the advent of anti-democratic forces such as fascism in the past.

In this respect, the 2014 democracy index in the economic sector shows that the foundation of Korean democracy is very vulnerable. The fact that the economic sector index is the lowest among all sectors, and that such a trend continued from 2011 to 2014, causes considerable worry over the future of Korean democracy.

The most remarkable characteristic in economic sector is that the democracy index for that sector, which continuously decreased from 2011 to 2013, increased from 2013 to 2014. The increase was from 3.31 to 3.8. The principle index that led this increase was in liberalization rather than in equalization, as shown in table 6. While the equalization index increased by 0.1 point, the liberalization index increased by almost 1 point.

Initially, the reason for this increase in the liberalization index appears to be the higher score (than in previous years) given by the respondents to the main question of economic liberalization, which can be formulated as, “Is the economy, which the liberalization index tries to measure, realizing the theory of economy itself called fair competition while maintaining its independence from politics or other fields at the same time?” This result is a little surprising because there were no epochal changes in governmental economic policies, labor policies, active measures of the enterprises for harmony of laborers and managers, and efforts for fair competition in 2014. Therefore, it would be more reasonable to think that the economic index increase in 2014 was caused by other reasons.

Table 6. Comparison of the Liberalization and Equalization Indices in the Economic Sector

Year	Liberalization	Equalization	Index of Democracy
2011	4.46	3.71	4.09
2012	4.51	3.17	3.84
2013	3.67	2.95	3.31
2014	4.64	3.05	3.84

Looking at the differences between the core principles in more detail, higher points were given to autonomy, competition, solidarity, and pluralization (see table 7). From a time series perspective, both autonomy and competition are the two subprinciples of liberalization that have been increasing; particularly, the competition index increased dramatically, recording the highest points since the survey was first conducted. However, the index of pluralization, which is a subprinciple of equalization, decreased despite the general increase of all the other subprinciple indices, which means that economic inequality has worsened.

Table 7. Comparison of the Autonomy, Competition, Pluralization, and Solidarity Indices in the Economic Sector

Year	Autonomy	Competition	Pluralization	Solidarity
2011	6.86	5.83	4.86	5.36
2012	6.97	5.69	4.72	4.91
2013	6.78	6.17	5.36	5.31
2014	6.03	5.04	4.94	4.53

Let us look at the index change in each subprinciple in more detail. First, the autonomy index increased from 4.33 last year to 5.06 this year. All the items increased, and particularly, the prohibition of forced labor and child labor and the autonomy in policy decisions not only recorded higher points but also achieved comparatively higher increases. As previously mentioned, this change is considered to be the result of the eased negative perception not because there was a specific advance but because there was no special incident or issue.

Next, in the subprinciple of competition, which showed the most dramatic change, higher points were given in economic transparency, corporate accountability, governmental accountability, and economic fairness. The competition index increased by more than 1 point from the previous year in all items. As previously mentioned, this may reflect the objective change such as the detailed implementation of ordinary wage and the changes in discourse such as “income-led growth” and economic democratization. If the discursive change is connected to practical policy and reality change, then the tendency for such index increase is understandable.

The only subprinciple that not only recorded the lowest points but also achieved no increase among subprinciples is pluralization. This means that economic inequality, which this pluralization intended to measure, is getting worse, and is far from being resolved. As indicated by various objective indicators, economic inequality in Korean society is worsening, which is also proven by the low mark of 2.11 in that subprinciple in our 2014 survey. Except for the 2.67 points in the item on regional inequality, all the other items such as economic monopoly, inequality of income, and inequality of assets recorded a point of 1.0 or so, which clearly indicates the severe economic inequality in Korean society.

Compared with the previous year, the index of economic solidarity also increased. Both the social security system and labor union activity questions recorded higher scores; the item score that raised the social security system index was for the item on whether or not the social insurance system is carried out. Though there was no specific change in social insurance, the efforts to reduce such insurance's blind spots, as seen in the implementation of the Basic Pension Act, received a positive response. In the labor union activity item, all the other questions received a similar response as the previous year.

Table 8. Indicators of Democracy in the Korean Economy, 2011-2014

		Attribute	Indicator / Question	2011	2012	2013	2014	
Principles	Autonomy	▷ Freedom/ autonomy of economic activities without political intervention	1. How much influence do you think the political power/elite have on the operation of private companies in your country?	4.78	5.22	4.00	4.11	
		▷ Protection of basic labor rights	2. How well do you think labor rights are established in your country?	4.33	4.89	3.56	3.78	
			3. How well do you think the prohibition of forced labor and child labor is observed in your country?	5.78	5.67	5.67	6.78	
		▷ Autonomy of decision making in the policy of the international political economy	4. How independent do you think decision making processes of the central government is from foreign countries and/or foreign capital in your country?	5.89	5.22	4.11	5.56	
	Liberalization	▷ Economic transparency	5. How transparent do you think the corporate operations are in your country?	4.22	4.33	3.22	4.56	
		▷ Economic fairness	6. How fair do you think the competition between companies is in your country?	3.67	3.44	2.78	4.00	
		Competition	▷ Government's accountability	7. How much effort do you think the government is exerting to protect and guarantee labor rights in your country?	3.56	4.11	3.00	4.11
			▷ Corporate accountability	8. How well do you think private companies protect/guarantee labor rights in your country?	3.44	3.67	3.00	4.22

Table 8. (continued)

		Attribute	Indicator / Question	2011	2012	2013	2014	
Principles	Pluralization	▷ Economic monopoly	9. How much do you think the economy is dominated by certain groups in your country?	3.13	2.78	1.78	1.89	
		▷ Regional inequality	10. How serious do you think the economic disparities/ inequality are between regions in your country?	4.67	3.22	2.56	2.67	
		▷ Inequality of income	11. How serious do you think the income disparity is in your country?	4.22	2.11	1.89	1.89	
		▷ Inequality of asset	12. How serious do you think the asset disparity is in your country?	3.00	1.89	1.22	1.33	
		▷ Inequality of employment	13. How serious do you think discrimination is in the labor market in your country?	3.78	2.89	2.11	2.78	
	Equalization	▷ The social security system	14. How well do you think support systems for the poor are working in your country?	4.56	4.22	4.22	4.22	
			15. How well do you think the social insurance programs are operated in your country?	4.89	5.22	4.33	5.11	
		▷ The activity of trade unions	16. How well-organized do you think labor unions are in your country?	3.11	3.33	3.11	3.56	
		Solidarity		17. How much influence do you think labor unions have on the policies of the central government in your country?	4.00	3.67	3.11	3.11
				18. How much do you think labor unions participate in the management process in your country?	2.11	2.11	2.00	1.89
▷ Corporate watch	19. How well do you think public monitoring is carried out on the corporate activities in your country?		3.44	3.89	3.67	5.00		
	▷ Awareness of reducing inequality	20. How enthusiastic do you think the general public is about improving the economic inequality in your country?	3.88	3.78	4.11	5.00		

However, the question, "How well organized are the labor unions?" received a comparatively more positive response. This result is a little exceptional because there was no change in labor-related laws and the labor union organization ratio. Table 8 summarizes what we have just discussed.

### *Civil Society Sector*

The civil society sector is concerned with the potential power and driving force of democracy within a country. In other words, if the democracy index in the civil society sector is high even though the democracy indices in other sectors are low, the democracy of that nation is likely to develop in the long run.

As in the economic sector, the democracy index in the civil society sector in the 2014 increased from the previous year. The democracy index in the civil society sector had decreased to 4.30 in 2013 from 4.90 in 2012, but it again increased to 4.53 in 2014, though it could not attain the height of the 2012 index.

Despite this index increase, the difference between the liberalization principle index and equalization principle index was still maintained. The civil society liberalization principle index also recorded a higher score than the civil society equalization principle index, which consistently indicates that the Korean civil society has a developed principle of autonomy, or in other words, it has a unique principle of its own independent from the government and economy but comparatively lacking in the principle of equalization, or pluralization and solidarity inside civil society. From a time series perspective, liberalization showed a comparatively greater increase but equalization showed a comparatively smaller increase. This also shows that the principle of equalization is comparatively insufficient in Korean civil society. Put together, these results indicate that while Korean civil society is constructing more autonomous sectors independently from the political and economic sectors, the level of democratization inside the civil society is comparatively low. See table 9 for the afore-discussed figures and more at a glance.

Looking at the subprinciple indices in the civil society sector, competition recorded the highest score (5.36), while solidarity had a mark of 3.89. What is interesting is that while the pluralization index recorded the greatest increase, the solidarity index recorded the lowest increase; both are under the equalization principle. This indicates that inequality in civil society comparatively decreased but there was almost no change in the positive awareness and actions of citizens to resolve that inequality. Table 10 shows the details of these changes.



Table 9. Comparison of the Liberalization and Equalization Indices in the Civil Society Sector

Year	Liberalization	Equalization	Index of Democracy
2011	5.54	4.14	4.84
2012	5.42	4.40	4.91
2013	4.75	3.84	4.30
2014	5.02	4.04	4.53

Table 10. Comparison of the Autonomy, Competition, Pluralization, and Solidarity Indices in the Civil Society Sector

Year	Autonomy	Competition	Pluralization	Solidarity
2011	5.30	5.78	4.69	3.59
2012	4.94	5.89	4.50	4.30
2013	4.52	4.97	3.83	3.85
2014	4.68	5.36	4.19	3.89

Let us look at the change of subprinciple indices in civil society in more detail. First, the autonomy indicator represented by the questions, “How autonomous is the civil society from the government and economy?” and “Are the basic needs of the citizens to pursue the freedom of selection fulfilled?” increased to 4.68 in 2014 from 4.52 in 2013. The indicator score that showed the most drastic change was in tolerance. The average score for this indicator increased to 4.56 from 3.33 last year, but this change is extremely exceptional, considering that the Anti-discrimination Act was not enacted. However, it is also true that the level of tolerance in Korean society significantly increased as indicated by the Ahn Hyun-soo case in the Sochi Winter Olympic Games. This increase in score reflects the fact that our civic consciousness continuously grew in accordance with the trends of democratization, informatization, and globalization.

Table 11. Indicators of Democracy in the Korean Civil Society, 2011-2014

		Attribute	Question / Indicator	2011	2012	2013	2014
Principles	Liberalization	▷ Autonomy of society from state intervention	1. How free do you think citizens' social activities are from government interference in your country?	4.33	5.00	4.67	4.44
			2. How much influence do you think government organizations have on society in your country?	6.11	4.11	4.00	3.11
		▷ Autonomy of society from the market	3. How much do you think private companies have influence on society in your country?	6.00	3.56	4.22	3.56
		Autonomy (basic needs and basic human development level)	4. How much do you think citizens' basic needs are met in your country?	5.67	5.89	5.67	5.67
			5. Aside from the basic needs stated in question no. 4, how much do you think special care is provided for vulnerable people or minorities, such as children, women, people with disabilities, and immigrants in your country?	4.11	4.67	3.78	4.33
			6. How much do you think citizens are provided with education opportunities in your country?	5.78	6.67	6.00	7.11
		▷ Tolerance	7. How much do you think citizens respect different cultures, religions, languages, races, nations, and ideas in your country?	5.11	4.67	3.33	4.56
	Competition	▷ Capability of voluntary association	8. How much influence do you think NGOs have on society in your country?	5.56	5.33	4.44	5.22
		▷ Public good of voluntary association	9. How well do you think NGOs represent public interest in your country?	6.56	6.56	6.00	5.89
		▷ Transparency of voluntary association	10. Do you think NGOs are democratically operating in your country?	5.22	6.11	5.22	5.33
		▷ Diversity of voluntary associations	11. Do you think NGOs well represent different values and demands of society in your country?	5.78	5.56	4.22	5.00

Table 11. (*continued*)

		Attribute	Question / Indicator	2011	2012	2013	2014
Principles	Pluralization	▷ Inequality of public spheres	12. Do you think the media is fair and just in your country?	2.75	3.78	2.56	2.78
		▷ Inequality of culture and information	13. How wide do you think the information gap between citizens is in your country?	7.22	4.33	4.00	4.11
		▷ Inequality of interest relations	14. Do you think citizens have equal access to cultural facilities and activities in your country?	4.67	5.11	4.89	5.44
		▷ Inequality of power	15. How equally do you think power is distributed among people in your country?	4.11	4.78	3.89	4.44
	Equalization	▷ Institutional guarantee of diversity and affirmative actions	16. Do you think affirmative actions are well established and operated in your country?	3.11	3.89	3.00	3.44
		▷ Participation and support of social groups	17. How actively do you think citizens are participating in NGO activities in your country?	3.89	4.00	3.89	3.67
		▷ Governance of the state and civil society	18. How much influence do you think NGOs have on government's policy making processes in your country?	3.78	5.00	4.67	4.56
	Solidarity						

Another item that also showed dramatic change in the civil society liberalization sector was the autonomy of social members (basic needs and the level of human development). In this item, the questions on the fulfillment of needs of the socially weak and educational opportunities received particularly positive responses. This may have reflected the continuous efforts of our society to meet such basic needs though there was no specific social change.

Competition ranked second in terms of increases among the civil society subprinciples. Looking at the subprinciple of competition in detail, higher points were given to public nature, transparency, ability, and variety of voluntary associations. This indicates that the voluntary associations in Korean civil society are comparatively lacking more in its ability and variety than in their public nature and transparency.

What is peculiar, however, is that the index points for ability and variety of voluntary associations increased greatly compared with those in

2013. It seems that the Sewol ferry political situation influenced this increase. In fact, similar accidents had taken place in Korea in the past. However, there was no other case in the past that received such national attention, where the victims got organized for themselves and demanded for truth. This demonstrates that the awareness of the Korean people of their rights also improved. The continuous interest of the Korean people to know the truth behind the Sewol ferry accident based on the growth of civic awareness despite the indifference of the government, along with a series of relevant incidents, may have resulted in this year's increase in voluntary association-related scores.

In equalization, the indicator scores that showed the most dramatic change were those for inequality of culture, inequality of power, inequality of information, and inequality of the public sphere. The inequality of public sphere, which refers to the unfairness of the mass media, has been one of the chronic problems in Korean civil society since the Lee Myung-bak regime, as indicated by the distorted report on the Sewol ferry accident by most of the mass media, the subsequent resignation of the Korean Broadcasting System president, and the consequent increase of distrust in mass media.

The inequality of information, namely, the extreme information gap, should be regarded as important because it reflects another important conflict in Korean society, namely, the generational conflict. To elaborate, in Korean society, the information gap appears in the form of a generational gap, not class gap. So this may seem to be a big problem, unlike the inequality of culture. However, because the problem of unfair mass media and the difference of the use of mass media between generations overlap, the problem of unfair mass media should be solved without fail for the development of Korean civil society and Korean democracy as well.

Among the subprinciples, civil society solidarity recorded the lowest points, and at the same time had the least change. The principle of solidarity was assessed via three items, namely the institutional guarantee of diversity and affirmative action, participation and support of civil groups, and governance of the state and civil society. Only the first item, namely, the indicator concerned with the institutional guarantee of diversity and affirmative action increased from the previous year; the remaining two items received lower points than the previous year.

### Conclusion

The results of the 2014 survey clearly showed the tendency of Korean democracy to regress in the political sector. While democracy indices in the economic and civil society sectors increased in 2014 compared with 2013, it significantly decreased from 5.91 in 2013 to 5.14 in 2014 in the political sector. This phenomenon of democracy retrogression in the political sector was caused by the shrinking of civil freedom and rights, the major principles composing liberal democracy, and the restriction of fair competition and participation in the electoral process. This may be the result of the lack of efficient exercise of power by the government, including horizontal accountability and transparency, i.e., check and balance between the authorities in the government. According to the types of democracy as previously suggested by Merkel, Korea could be classified as an illiberal democracy rather than delegative democracy. The reason we are not optimistic about Korean democracy is because the trust in democratic value and governmental institutions has declined greatly. In order for the democratic system to be consolidated and for the qualitative contents of democracy to be implemented, people should have sufficient trust in the value of democracy. And the belief that governmental institutions are operated based on the democratic value is required of people. However, as we cannot emphasize enough, the trust in democratic value is decreasing in Korea, and the incompetency of the national government and the national assembly and the winner-take-all competition between the authorities have contributed to a greater distrust and indifference to politics by the Korean citizenry.

In addition, the ever deepening social and economic inequality in Korean society makes the future of Korean democracy not so promising, because it distorts even the political equality that is the aim of procedural democracy. Rather, the mobilization of power resources and the accessibility to power acquisition are likely to be dominated by specific groups who aim at distorting political representation. Such worsening inequality will further weaken the trust and legitimacy of the democratic system. This would increase the risk of instability and collapse of the democratic system, creating a desire to break away from that system and look for a system other than democracy.

Accordingly, for the development of Korean democracy, efforts to expand political and civil rights should be made in all sectors, and the methods to strengthen the trust of citizens in democracy and to improve horizontal accountability should be found. For this, the institutionaliza-

tion of partisan politics should be made in advance to strengthen political representation and accountability.

### Notes

1. Its types include “defective democracy,” “delegative democracy,” and “restricted democracy.” For details, please see Morlino (2004, 5-6).
2. This democracy type includes “defective democracy,” “electoral democracy,” “delegative democracy,” “hybrid democracy,” and “restricted democracy” (Diamond 1999; Lipset 1994; Merkel 2004; Rueschemeyer et al. 1992).
3. See [http://news.khan.co.kr/kh\\_news/khan\\_art\\_view.html?artid=201404062144535&code=940202](http://news.khan.co.kr/kh_news/khan_art_view.html?artid=201404062144535&code=940202) (in Korean).
4. For more details on ADI terminology, see CADI (2012).

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