

Political culture and democratization in South Korea

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Abstract— *The study of Political culture and democratization in South Korea aims to study the political culture that affects democratic South Korea. This country has been much discussed in terms of countries where democracy has been developed steadily. Since the process of democratization has started.*

The research was conducted according to a qualitative methodology and the data collection was also performed according to the methodology. The data was collected with documentary study and from documents which considered as academic literature i.e. books, articles, research papers, theses and papers on electronic media.

The research results revealed that the political culture that is open to channels of negotiation, participation, and political monitoring are the main factors that contributed to South Korea's democratic stability. Furthermore, the dynamic factors supporting ongoing democratization of South Korea are political leaders who have faith in democracy, the strong role of the social movement group or civil society that pushes for special legislation in order to protect the rights of citizens to rise to democracy, an elimination of the influence of the military from politics as well as success in economic development and social change.

Index Terms— *Democracy Democratization Political culture South Korea Politics*

I. INTRODUCTION

South Korea is a country that has been extensively discussed in terms of countries where democracy has developed steadily since the democratization in 1987. In the past, South Korea has been under the authoritarianism for more than 20 years, but when the regime has been changed to democracy. No single coup has been occurred to retrograde to authoritarianism. Unlike several Asian countries i.e. Thailand where the democracy is still unstable, The coups have been occurred several times; furthermore, the political culture hindered the principles of democracy, as well as political conflict, all of which has been the obstacles to democratization.

After the founding of the Republic of Korea, Political power was in the hand of the ruling party and the administrators whether from the military or civilian sectors, they tried to maintain their power as long as possible. During Park Chung-hee's presidency (1961 - 1979), he ruled as a dictator, having modified the constitution to keep himself in position unboundedly, conspiring to eliminate political opponents, depriving the right of freedom of public opinion and exploiting political power to seek benefits for themselves and their cronies. At the end of the presidential term of, a junta led by General Chun Doo-hwan, took political power. There was some resistance of students and the public. The political

leaders used military force to crack down leading to the violent incidents i.e. Gwangju Uprising in May 1980 and later in August 1980, General Chun Doo-hwan seized the power as the president of South Korea [1].

Even political power was in the hand of certain individuals, the economic development during President Park Chung-hee presidency in addition to the effect of South Korea's economic structure was not only changed agriculture-based economy to industry one, but also a change in social and political aspects; that is to say, the expansion of middle class has been occurred. In this regard, they, the middle class people, demanded the government to allow them participating in politics, clear and just a election to be held and a solution to the problem of corruption [2]. Even the government under the president Chun Doo-hwan used the method to oppose the rally, it could not withstand the power of the consecutive demands. Eventually, a mass rally in June 1987 has been occurred; consequently, Chun Doo-hwan's government accepted the demands of the people and the political reform was taken place. According to the constitutional amendment, the essence was as following the president shall be elected by the people directly, the rotation of office shall be 5 years and after retirement, reinstatement shall not possible [3]. Also the amended constitution required that local administrators and council members at all levels shall be elected by the people. Seeming, such mass rally was an important turning point in South Korea's politics due to the democratization. Given that, there were elections at all levels and the end of military political interference; politicians, bureaucrats, and businessmen seeking to illegally exploit were effectively investigated; moreover, the offenders were brought to justice. In case of former president Chun Doo-hwan and former President Roh Tae-woo, they were sentenced to prison by the offence of the rally [3].

Aforementioned, it is interested to study the political culture that has influenced the democracy of South Korea. Which factors were the supporting and obstructive. With findings from the study of these issues, they should be utilized to seek ways to make the stable progress of democracy in Thailand.

II. Research Objectives

To study the political culture affecting the democratic system of South Korea.

III. Research Methodology

In this study, qualitative research methodology was implemented. Data collection was performed by collecting information from academic papers such as books, articles, research papers and academic papers in electronic media.

Data analysis was performed in an analytical approach i.e. descriptive analysis and description. The concepts and theories were applied to demonstrate the political culture that influenced the democratic system of South Korea.

IV. Research result

The paper aims to study the political culture that affects democratic South Korea. The research was based on qualitative research.

The results show that the process of democratization in South Korea. Which is considered a democratic country have a stable development. Since the process of democratization began, it came from historical conditions, and the other side was the result of international politics. And another factor is the external factor or the world situation. The politics of Korea today are the result of interaction between political histories political culture and the current environment.

Korea divided into two parts. And the Cold War on the Korean Peninsula. It has had a great impact on the political developments in South Korea. Destroying political opponents by libelous support for communist parties. It is an important weapon in the political drive. The situation in Korea is divided, it is used as an excuse for denial promoting democracy from the condition [3]. It is a condition that political leaders of South Korea during the dictatorship to use for their own. During Syngman Rhee's presidency between 1948 and 1960, The Security Act was enacted. And the Communist suppression law. Citing the need to prevent North Korea's invasion and infiltration. Including Communist punishment. And to support North Korea [1]. However, political leaders and politicians who hold positions in the government benefit from the law. In arresting opposition or anti-government politicians. With allegations that support Communism or a threat to national security.

In addition, President Syngman Rhee has used the fraudulent approach to amending the constitution. In order to win the election. By changing the way the presidential election later, when the Constitution limited the term of the presidency used to be unlawful. By holding back opposition members to consider amending the Constitution [2]. The use of such power does not guarantee the authority to remain in office. This is because the tolerance of the people is limited. As a result, students, workers, and the public came to the rally. And in the end, President Syngman Rhee had to resign.

At the end of the civil-military dictatorship. South Korea was under a democratic government led by civilians for only a short period of time. Later, General Park Chung-hee made a coup. In May 1961. And General Park Chung-hee was elected the third president of South Korea in 1963. He was then elected the second president in 1967. At the end of his presidency, Park Chung-hee used corruption tactics to revise the constitution, allowing him to serve as the third leader in South Korea 1971 was elected The president again [2].

President Park Chung-hee has promulgated a Yushin constitution in 1972, which empowered the president. At a later time, anti-government activists emerged within the political factions to deal with the anti-government movement. And then President Park Chung-hee was assassinated in October 1979 [3]. Despite the end of the dictatorship of Park Chung-hee, South Korean politics has not yet escaped from monopoly. In December 1979, General Chun Doo-hwan and General Roh Tae-woo seized power within the army. And the plan to take power. This led to resistance from students, intellectuals, workers and religious organizations. The leader of the military must declare war veterans. But such events have led to violence when the military leaders. Gwangju was in power in May 1980, resulting in numerous casualties and injuries, and General Chun Doo-hwan took over the presidency in the same year [2].

Although President Chun Doo-hwan will use a crackdown on democracy but the power of civil society, this is due to the integration of individuals in various occupations. Increased numbers and stronger organization. Anti-government rallies and calls for political reform continue. The effect of the government's violence on the deterrence and dissolution of the congregation is that it causes the death of students. As a result, the public has become accustomed to the rally. And it grew bigger nationwide. In June 1987, political leaders finally needed to accept the demands of political reform. The constitutional amendment is in line with the democratic principle [1]. The strength of the people's power to make a transition to democracy.

The 1987 Constitution of Korea, which has been used until now. The president are directly elected by the people. The president has a five-year term and can only be one. This is to prevent monopoly power. Citizens are the elected officials and members of the local government. Journalists have the freedom to perform duties. And the government must give priority to human rights [1]. The result of this success is that people are involved in decision making. And can monitor the administration of the government. Thus, it was said that between 1980 and 1987, during the crackdown on the Gwangju uprising until the constitution was amended. Civil society consists of groups. It is the driving force behind the democratization of South Korea.

After the change of political regime from the authoritarianism to democracy. South Korea's politics did not return to the authoritarianism. Unlike the case of Thailand, which still has a coup and returned to the authoritarianism. The political developments in South Korea are a result of the significant role played by civil society and the people in soliciting and monitoring government administration. The Roh Tae-woo government (1988-1993), the first government to direct elections of the people. The key claim is the factual investigation. In the event that Gwangju and bring the offender to punish. In order to prevent such acts from happening again [1]. but such efforts must face obstacles. President

Roh Tae-woo has been implicated in suppressing the Gwangju crowd. It can control the state mechanism in the process to bring the offender to punishment, which, if consent is required by the self and the people, will be prosecuted.

Later in the reign of President Kim Young-sam (1993-1998), a claim to the fact that Gwangju had succeeded. When the National Assembly has enacted a special law on this issue. As a result, former President Chun Doo-hwan and former President Roh Tae-woo and officials involved in the incident have been arrested. In the allegations, the order to dissolve the assembly using force. And corruption [2]. The success of which demonstrates the strength of the power group. To push the process. Take the most influential person in the country to be liable. Which has become a major governing body by law and culture. The political offender must be punished. This principle was strictly followed later.

In the early days of President Kim Young-sam, He succeeded in eradicating the military influence in South Korean politics. It is rooted in more than 20 years. Although the approval of the people are more stable. At the same time, it also solved the problem of corruption, a common exploitation among politicians, bureaucrats, and businessmen, so that such action would not favor the influence of the old power group. And to block the process of democracy [1].

During the Roh Moo-hyun government (2003 - 2008), President Roh Moo-hyun aimed at a more mass-based political party under the guidance or patronage of politicians [2]. In addition, the emphasis is placed on the separation of roles between the executive and the legislature. By the President as the leader of the political party must not interfere with the work of members of the National Assembly. To counterbalance and monitor each other. It also includes the freedom to work for organizations that have been used as political tools, such as police, prosecutors, and tax authorities [1].

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study of the political culture and democratization in South Korea aiming to study the political culture affecting the democratic system of South Korea, It was found that:

The factors supporting the democratization of South Korea are constantly dynamic. Taking political aspect into consideration, it was found that the movement group or civil society has been playing a role in the political struggle since the government and when South Korea's politics made their way to democracy.

In addition to the special legislation to protect the rights of citizens who rose up, demanding democracy and the lawsuit against the government that ordered the suppression on the people, in the events of the Gwangju Uprising (1980s), the crucial demand was an investigation concerning the facts of the incident and brought the offenders to justice. In order to prevent

such actions to re-emerge, the National Assembly has enacted special legislation on this issue. As a result, former President Chun Doo-hwan and former President Roh Tae-woo and military officers involving in the incident have been arrested with the allegations: Order to dissolve the rally with force and corruption. This was consistent with the research conducted by Satitorn Thananithichote (2012): National reconciliation study: case study: South Korea. the success of such incident demonstrated the power in several groups in driving the processes to bring the influential person to justice. In this regard, It became a principle in the rule subjected to the law and political culture of South Korea, which the offender must be brought to justice. Later, this principle was strictly observed [4].

Other political factor is when the president Kim Young-sam became the president, he was able to eliminate the influence of the military in South Korea's politics in order to allow the main political party to be elected or through the approval of the public. At the same time, he also solved the problem of corruption which conspired the exploitation between politicians, government officials and businessmen for not allowing to exploit to help influencing the old-power group and to hinder the democratization progress.

In the aspect of the political institution, political parties were more dependent on the mass than under the guidance or patronage of politicians. In addition, the emphasis is placed on the separation of roles between the executive and the legislature. the president as the leader of the political party must not interfere with the work of the National Assembly to cause power balance and to monitor each other, including the freedom to work for organizations that have been used as political tools.

Economic factors and social factors. The change in South Korea's economic structure has given rise to the middle class. It consists of people in many fields. These people are generally highly educated. Get information from many sources. Critical to the information. This is an important factor in the development of democracy, which is in line with Wichian Intasi's (2013) research [1]. The structure of production from agriculture to industry. It resulted in the migration of workers from the countryside to the city. And industrial areas. Labor groups in the manufacturing and service sectors have been forced to pay wages. As a result, labor groups try to group together to negotiate. But the government has interrupted the action. They are concerned about the impact on government policies and the interests of entrepreneurs. However, labor groups continue to unite to fight by claiming they are not restricted to only wage issues. It also includes issues of rights, liberty, and political participation.

Comparative analysis between Thai political culture and democratization showed that the democratization of Thai still has many hindrance factors i.e. military intervention in politics causing a coup d'etat and

constitution repeal for many times; consequently, the political system was unstable, as well as a conflict between political ideas, lacking of the participation of its people and nondemocratic political culture of Thai people as a result of being accustomed to a patronage system. In these factors, they are an obstacle in Thai democracy development in conformity with the research conducted by Nattapoll Chaiching (2013): "Thai citizen biography: founding, development and difficulty of the mission to safeguard Thai democracy (1932-present)" as he stated that the preceding Thai political situation has been caused by 3 reasons i.e. (1) A new political force supporting democracy was arisen i.e. Red Shirt (United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship) mainly made up of rural people (2) Elites or nobles did not adapt to the world moving towards democratic current but they desired to control the Thai regime (3) Unstable political situations and problems in current successors.

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