Why Has the National Leader Increasingly Gone Public in Democratized Korea: An Institutional Analysis of the Rising Public Presidency*

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Abstract: This paper aims to explicate the rise of the public presidency by illuminating the institutional changes highly relevant to the president's political resources and strategies in democratized Korea. The institutional changes discussed in the study include the president's weakened control of the press, the reform of presidential candidate selection and the increasing independence of the president's party, the recurrence of divided government, and the institutionalization of media campaigning with growing usage of the Internet for the president-public communication. The authors relate such institutional changes to the rising levels of presidential public activities, such as televised addresses, press meetings, and overseas political travels. The main thrust is that presidential going public is a product of relevant institutional changes

Key words: presidential going public, imperial presidency, president-press relationship, reform of presidential candidate selection, outsider president, divided government

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rather than that of the president's idiosyncrasies, including presidential personality or character. By emphasizing institutional changes affecting the president's political resources and strategies, the paper seeks a good understanding about the dynamics of the Korean presidency under the current democratic regime.

Ⅰ. INTRODUCTION

The term, "imperial presidency" used to be widely employed for describing the Korean presidency even after the country's democratization that began in 1987. It portrays the exercise of power dominating all other branches and institutions beyond the boundary of the constitution and laws, including passing his laws and appointing or changing the judiciary leadership as well as the leaders of the presidential party.

However, recent studies on Korean presidential politics have suggested that the Roh Moo-hyun presidency (February 2003 up to the present) can be hardly described as imperial (Park 2004; Mo 2004; Kang 2005; Hahm 2005). In fact, President Roh has declared several times he would prefer to abandon the years-long presidential abuse of power and be part of the first generation of new politics. It is true that unlike former presidents, he lacks absolute approval from his party, enormous political funds (usually donated discreetly by Korean corporations or Chaebol), power of selecting his party's candidates during election times, long political career, and a strong regional base. Then without such political resources being available to President Roh, how can he find a way to exert his political influence? In exercising presidential leadership, President Roh has shown political style of appealing directly to the public.

In explicating the present nature of presidential politics, one needs to pay great attention to the notion of the public presidency. In the United States, modern presidents seek to in-

crease recognition of their policy agenda and enhance legislative success by going public through various channels (Kernell 1997; Cohen 1995; Hill 1998; Barrett 2000; Rivers and Rose 1985; Clinton et. al. 1999, 2000; Canes-Wrone 2001). The "going public" strategy is unfolded before the public, but its ultimate target is to augment presidential influence over the politicians around the president (Kernell 1997, viii). According to the public presidency model, the presidents' frequent appeal to the public is not simply due to the leader's personality, but it results from the institutional changes that have occurred over the last few decades in American politics.

The objective of this study is to examine whether institutional changes have taken place since Korea's democratization in 1987 so that the imperial presidency may transform into the public presidency. Based on the public presidency model, the authors discuss the institutional changes relevant to presidential political resources, and provide empirical analysis of presidential public activities, such as televised addresses, press meetings, and overseas political travel. The thrust of the study is to prove that presidential going public is a product of relevant institutional changes more than that of the president's idiosyncrasies. It is true that President Roh Moo-hyun is an eloquent speaker apt to make direct appeals to the public. Still, such personal attribute is not sufficient for explaining the rise of public presidency in Korean politics. This paper puts a primary emphasis on institutional factors conducive to the president's use of going public strategy. The authors seek to contribute to the study of the Korean presidency in the democratic era by explaining a presidential strategy adopted under the constraint of diminishing political resources for imperial power, and marked by growing presidential public activities.

Ⅱ. THE PUBLIC PRESIDENCY MODEL

Many classical texts on the American presidency (Hamilton et. al 1961; Neustadt 1960; Dahl and Lindbloom 1953; Tulis 1987) seem to give warnings to presidents who appeal to the public rather than try to bargain with or persuade other politicians. For Neustadt (1960), the value of public opinion was subordinated to the presidents' bargaining skills. *The Federalist Papers* offer concerns over the possibilities that a popular leader gains the presidential power, thus provoking people's passions and ruining the constitutional setting. The frequent abhorrence of "demagogues" in the *Papers* demonstrates this anxiety well. In this context, presidential public appeal is regarded as a form of unilateral power. Nonetheless, as Neustadt admits, in the aftermath of Watergate and in the age of mass media, public approval has gained a more important status as one of presidential power resources (Neustadt 1990, 185-187). Presidents now often go directly to the public by way of various kinds of public appearances, including televised press conferences, special prime time addresses to the nation, speech before business conventions, political overseas travel, and White House ceremonies broadcast via satellite to television stations across the nation.

Kernell (1997) goes beyond the bargaining skills of presidents, and systematically explicates why mobilizing public opinion has become important to recent presidents, and also how much it has grown recently. Presidents have increasingly gone public for the following reasons: divided government prevailing in modern American politics, technical development of the media and transportation, outsider presidents who have benefited from the reform of presidential nomination system, and the rise of fragmented pluralism in the Washington society.

Cook and Ragsdale (1998) also stress the growing importance

of going public. According to their view, as the complexity of the policy environment in American politics has grown, the number of politicians with whom presidents need to bargain has also increased. Such increasing complexity places limits on presidential bargaining, and thus forces the presidents to develop a public strategy. This implies the individualization of modern political society that Kernell has pointed out.

Some scholars (Gronbeck 1996; Benson 1996; and Miroff 1998) attempt to explain the recent presidents' inclination to stand before the public based on the effects of the media as a form of modern technology. Not only do presidents now respond progressively to the demands and passions of the public, but they also try to shape them through television. Miroff has labeled this trend "the politics of spectacles" (Miroff 1998). Gronbeck (1996: 41) also considers television as a consequential instrument for the modern presidency when he mentions "the electronic presidency." There are also scholars like Benson (1996), who emphasizes the influence of the Internet, as a "superhighway linking demos to the presidency."

Ⅲ. INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES CONDUCIVE TO THE PUBLIC PRESIDENCY

Presidential Press Relations: From Client-Patronage Bond to Mutually Suing Rivalry

The intimate press relationship of the presidency is a component of the bargaining presidency. In the United States institutional setting of the first half of the 20th century (Kernell 1997), correspondents stationed in the White House formed a corps and took a role to punish "outsider" writers who violated "off the record" rules. Ironically, a parallel close relationship existed also in the Korean imperial presidency. However, unlike the U. S. bar-

gaining presidency, the Korean version was overwhelmingly a "president-dominated press relationship" or a client-patronage bond. First, in the selection of the reporters covering Cheong Wa Dae or the Blue House (the office and residence of the president), not only was there a guideline for the press itself, but the presidential office was also deeply involved in the selection process. Second, Cheong Wa Dae correspondents made their own exclusive circle with strong mutual cooperation and collective interests. Third, they bridged the news organizations that they worked for, and exerted strong power. This guaranteed them a status of "top class journalist" in their respective organizations. In the give-and-take but asymmetric setting, news coverage activities were carried out mostly through unofficial channels (Nam 2005, 101).

After the inauguration of President Kim Dae-jung, the influence of Cheong Wa Dae over reporter appointments, and the overall control by the presidential office over the press were diluted. The press and the new administration were not in an amicable relationship, but unofficial routes for news coverage were still maintained (Nam, 103). This became known as the "discordant adhesion relationship."

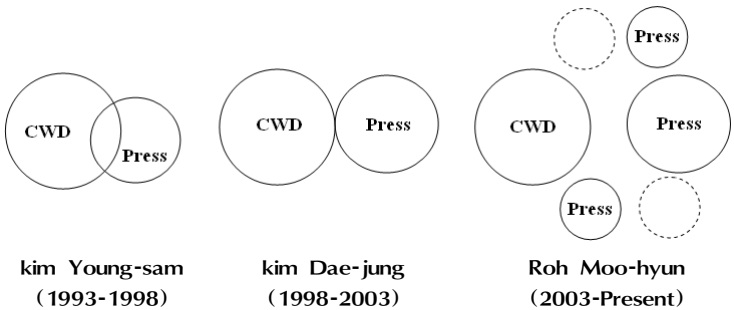
The transition in a president-press relationship materialized more significantly in the Roh administration. As a presidential candidate, Roh declared in December 2002 that "the media and Cheong Wa Dae should dismiss the old idea of mutual returns, and go their own separate way." Also, after his inauguration, he has occasionally claimed the need to reform the press, accusing it of having "unchecked power," thereby instantly justifying a new relationship with the media. Specifically, right after the inauguration, a plan for managing the Cheong Wa Dae press room and conducting public relations was introduced. It contained the formation of a Cheong Wa Dae reporter registration system and open press room, specifications of any news source, restriction of reporter's individual office visits for news gathering, reporting to

the Domestic Communications Office of Cheong Wa Dae after interview of any its staff, and alert explanations to any false report. These new guidelines comprised one of the main contributors for breaking down the president's imperial press relationship. The reporter registration and open press room policies brought about a sudden increase in the number of correspondents from around 80 (during the Kim Dae-jung presidency) to 308 (during Roh's term), ultimately meaning that staff reporters from local papers and new Internet sites gained an equal chance to interview important figures or participate in press conferences at the presidential office. Also, restriction of office visits and press briefing regularization meant cutting off private channels, allowing open and official communication only.

Surrounded by an antagonistic press environment, a president seeks to promote competitions between news organizations, rather than permitting a few ones to monopolize presidential information. Under the unfavorable press environment left by its predecessor, the Roh administration removed selective benefits given to some major press agencies, which were largely unfavorable to the president, in the name of autonomy, and let minor press agencies relatively friendly to the new president sit side by side with major ones. The Korean press corps left the press room. Whereas there had previously existed a hierarchy among the correspondents according to the size and influence of news organizations, and a degree of cooperation in writing articles or news coverage, reporters in the Roh's Cheong Wa Dae setup now make efforts to work together only occasionally due to more equally distributed access to presidential information and interview chances than before. Without the solid press corps, it is no longer easy for the Roh presidency to make negotiations with the press over news content or tones of commentaries in newspapers. Instead, the system was replaced with lawsuits between the presidential office and the press over presidential news coverage and

president-public direct communication (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. Cheong Wa Dae (CWD)-Press Relations



Obviously, exerting presidential influence on the political circle and seeking public approval through the intransigent press are not simple tasks. Rather, searching for other vehicles carrying the presidential message more directly to the public has become one of the primary orders of business for the current Cheong Wa Dae.

Presidential Relations with the Party: Emerging Rebellion against the President within His Own Bastion

The character of the president's party as a political machine and the presidential supremacy over his party used to be the most important component of the imperial presidency (Park 2004). Yet, President Roh has publicly and occasionally declared that he would not be concerned with his party's candidate nomination in the general election for the National Assembly or gubernatorial elections, and that he would promote transparency in managing political funds. If a president cannot dominate the national legislature by means of his party ties and so the presidential party gets independent of him, the president has no choice but to seek other ways to exert an influence for governing

the country. The imperial presidents did give-and-takes or bargaining, offering members of the National Assembly the political incentives like funds or re-nominations and in return securing their loyalty or a promise of legislative cooperation. Lacking such incentives, the president is now likely to adopt a "going public" strategy.

Conflicts between President Kim Young-sam's Cheong Wa Dae and his party showed the following features. First, such conflicts remained largely dormant until the presidential party began to raise a voice demanding policies attractive to voters with the election time approaching. Second, members of the National Assembly from the presidential party seldom criticized Cheong Wa Dae in a direct manner. Although some leaders of the presidential party might have complained to presidential staff, President Kim Young-sam was never targeted. Third, when the presidential party involved in a conflict with the administration, the latter won presidential favor. In this way, the presidential party could not help but lose its autonomy due to the president's tendency to go alone as well as to his administrative bureaucracy-centered style of governing.

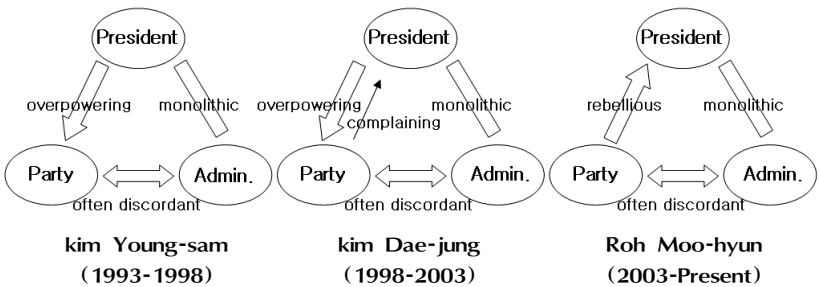
The practice of presidential party members not to criticize the president without an intermediary remained into the term of President Kim Dae-jung. The presidential party disparaged some administrative officials on the grounds that the party could better represent "the president's heart." Overall, President Kim Dae-jung was in a dominant position relative to his party and continued to run alone. Only in the later years of his term, a sign of change was shown in the president's relationship with the party. As the next presidential election got close, the presidential party began to express growing disaffection toward the running-alone president and moved to rejuvenate the party. In December 2001, the presidential party or the Millennium Democratic Party adopted the policy of separating the party's chairmanship from the na-

tional presidency.

The party vs. Cheong Wa Dae complications intensified under the Roh presidency. The president has now become a target of uttered attack form his own party members. The president's Uri Party, organized in September 2003 by pro-Roh politicians who split away from the Millennium Democratic Party, showed internal dissension since after the president's reinstatement in May 2004 from the impeachment by the National Assembly against the president. The president party became increasingly torn apart in the wake of its defeats in a series of by-elections. In an unprecedented manner, fundamental criticisms were raised by the members of the party against the president, such as those concerning his "amateur-like" style of governing, the bribery scandal of the administration, the overall economic policy, and the policy of sending troops to Iraq.

In brief, the party-president relations have transformed during the three presidencies from a hierarchical bond with overly strong party discipline to a more individualized and pluralistic one (See Figure 2). This transition has brought about great difficulties for the president in handling even his own party, and become the condition under which he is induced to turn to the public rather than to the political circle (Cook and Ragsdale 1998; Kernell 1997).

Figure 2. Relations among the President, Administration(Admin.), and his Party



The Reform of Presidential Candidate Nomination: Opportunity for an Outsider Politician

Considering a political party's function of political elite recruitment, especially in regards to presidential candidate delivery, party reform has a huge impact on the presidency. In the United States, the Democratic Party's reform of the presidential candidate nomination procedure at the end of the 1960s conferred an opportunity upon outsider politicians (Kernell 1997, 38-44). A similar reform took place in Korea before the last presidential election of 2002.

Started by some advocates of reform within the presidential party (then, the Millennium Democratic Party or MDP) in mid-2001, voices for promoting the party's internal democracy grew. Instead of responding positively to such reform pressure, President Kim Dae-jung unilaterally changed party leadership in September. Then the president and his party suffered from electoral defeats in the by- and re-elections for the National Assembly in October. Finally, the party reached an internal agreement in December 2001 to take the measures as follows: holding an open, though still limited, primary for the presidential candidate nomination; abolishing the party presidency exercising unitary leadership; and separating the party's top leadership position from the

chief executive of the nation. Previously, 9000 party representatives constituted the electoral college for choosing the presidential candidate. In the newly introduced quasi-open primary, the size of the electoral college expanded to some seventy thousand persons. More importantly, 50 percent of the electoral college were "outsiders" by previous standards (that is, ordinary party supporters); 30 percent, the party's registered rank-and-file; and the remaining 20 percent, the party representatives.

What did the new nomination system bring to the presidency? On the one hand, the support of outsider citizens and common members became more consequential than the influence of the incumbent president or party elites in the nomination process. Organized votes by party elites were devaluated in this unprecedented large-scale nomination procedure. As a consequence, a rather progressive and populist candidate Roh Moo-hyun was able to win the party's presidential nomination regardless of the party elites' preferences. Another core of the reform, separation of the party chairmanship and the nation's presidential office, made it difficult to acquire the party elites' loyalty towards a new presidential candidate. This resulted in tense relations between the presidential candidate and party leaders as well as in weakened party cohesion (Kang 2003b; Jang 2002; H. C. Lee 2003).

Under the newly designed rules, many political resources that had been regarded as critical lost their luster, including long and extensive political career, close connections with the incumbent president, gigantic political donations from the Chaebol, and the reputation among colleague politicians. Overnight, rhetorical ability and high popularity among ordinary party members and supporters became outmost important political resources. Roh Moo-hyun was in an outsider position within the MDP because of his non-mainstream ideological disposition and regional base, not to mention his short political career. However, the changed rules

provided an opportunity to an outsider politician without any traditional crucial merit, like Roh, whereas they took away advantages from insider politicians.

Recurrent Divided Government

In the aftermath of the 1987 democratization, the situation of divided government has repeatedly emerged in Korean electoral politics. In the first four consecutive National Assembly elections in the democratic era, the presidential party has failed to secure a majority status in the national legislature (See Table 1).

Table 1. Divided Government after General Elections in Democratized Korea

Year	Presidential Party	Strength in the National Assembly
1988	Democratic Justice Party	125 seats (41.8 %)
1992	Democratic Liberal Party	149 seats (49.8 %)
1996	New Korea Party	139 seats (43.5 %)
2000	Millennium Democratic Party	115 seats (42.1 %)
2004	Uri Party	152 seats (50.8 %)

The former President Roh Tae-woo had to make great efforts for working with a combined majority of three opposition parties in his first two years. Then he merged his party with two opposition parties led by Kim Young-sam and Kim Jong pil. The former Presidents Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung also faced the situation of divided government. But they could cope with it by merging political parties under their command or inducing defection from opposition parties by using the president's political resources in the give-and-take with opposition politicians or parties. President Roh Moo-hyun's predecessors anyhow managed relations opposition parties in the National Assembly to their favor. This is why divided government had not immediately led to

the rise of public presidency until the beginning of the Roh Moo-hyun presidency.

President Roh Moo-hyun would and also could not manage the situation of divided government in such arbitrary ways as his predecessors. He did not ignore public criticism of his predecessors' way of coping with divided government. The coalition between President Kim Dae-jung's National Congress for New Politics (the predecessor of the MDP) and the United Liberal Democrats was formed for the sake of political convenience in spite of inter-party ideological distance and it became increasingly fragile with the president becoming a lame duck. The practice of the president party's "lending members of the National Assembly" to its coalition partner to make it a formal bargaining body within the National Assembly and also that of "scouting members of the National Assembly" from the opposition party were criticized by the media, the opposition parties, and the public at large. This demonstrated the peril of non-electoral adjustment of legislative strength for the president's party.

At the time of President Roh's inauguration, his MDP commanded approximately 38 percent of the National Assembly seats relative to the main opposition GNP's 56 percent. As mentioned earlier, in seven months after President Roh's being sworn in, the pro-Roh faction split from the MDP and organized the Uri Party with about 17 percent of the seats. In this context, President Roh was impeached by the National Assembly and reinstated later by the Constitutional Court. President Roh's Uri Party recorded a landslide victory of garnering 152 seats or 51 percent of the seats in the 2004 general election, which made possible the first appearance of unified government in the democratic era. But the period of unified government lasted only for ten months, because some Uri party members of the National Assembly were deprived of their seats in the wake of the Supreme Court's rulings on their illegal campaigns. Since then, the presidential party never won a

single seat in by- and re-elections.

In which way does this routinization of divided government affect presidential strategy? The chronic fear of divided government combined with the constitutional design of frequent by- and re-elections engenders a phenomenon called "permanent campaigning." While being constantly conscious of electoral purpose, the president needs to make legislative success for daily governing with the opposition controlling the legislature. In all probability, the president is induced to go public.

Effects of the Media on Campaigning and Day-to-Day Presidential Politics

In modern politics, where the boundary between campaigning and daily governing has broken down, a radical change in the former is likely to be reflected in the latter. In Korea, the new media, both television and the Internet, did not begin to be utilized at earnest for campaigning until the 1997 and 2002 presidential elections, respectively. In this study, the authors stress not only the quantitative aspect of technological development and usage, but also the institutionalization of the media usage in presidential politics.

For Korean presidential elections, television campaigning was instituted by a newly revised election law in November 1997. By this reform, outdoor mass rallies were banned, and campaigning through the media was placed at the center of electoral politics. So, even though Korea went through a radical technological development during the second half of the 20th century, its political utility was realized only after the revision of the election law in this democratic era. In particular, televised debates of presidential candidates in the elections of both 1997 and 2002 turned out to have a critical influence on the election results. Several studies indicated that Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun were the winners in almost all viewer surveys of their respective televised

debates (H. J. Kim 1997; D. S. Lee 1998; Kang 1999; 2003a). Whether or not debates on television have a decisive impact on voters' candidate choice may be controversial, but television has settled as a major vehicle of presidential election campaigning. The institutionalization of television campaigning soon led to that of the television going public system also for day-to-day presidential governing.

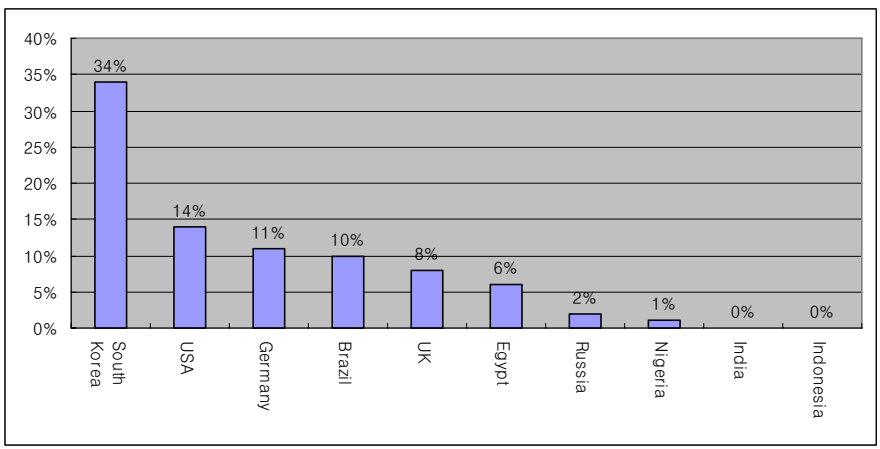
The idea of using the Internet as a political tool has rapidly become a popular topic of discussion in regards to electoral campaigning. The technological features of the Internet, including speedy delivery of information, interactivity, and narrow-casting, are among the reasons that helped it make a breakthrough in Korean electoral politics (H. J. Kim 2003). Particularly, the last feature can be the basis of a leap towards the presidential strategy of going public beyond campaigning. Whereas the practice of televised addresses or town hall meetings guarantees the quantitative efficiency in time and viewer size, the on-line method of going public shows its merit in the opposite direction. While the fragmented and segmented on-line space may be limited for calling a large number of people to one site, it works fine for itemizing presidential issues and sending select messages to the mass classified according to their political tastes, patronized sites, and connecting times. During the Roh presidency, this omni-directional Internet going public has been materialized by Cheong Wa Dae using extensively its homepage, the e-mail, various blogs, on-line town hall meeting, portal sites, and so forth.

Technological potentials of the Internet are not sufficient to explain its vigorous utilization in daily presidential politics. Its explosive political effects as seen in the 2002 presidential election can be accounted for with regards to the following: 1) the quantitative trends of its users, 2) the level of trust in the Internet as a news source, and 3) the aggressive presidential cultivation of the online space.

To begin with, Internet users across the nation dramatically increased from 45.7% in December 2000 to 71.9% in June 2005. The distribution rate of Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Lines (ADSL) in 2005 was 24.9 per 100 people, and it has since been the consistently highest figure among the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (The Korean Network Information Center).

In addition, substantial public trust in the political information gained from the Internet is a prerequisite for its political influence. Figure 3 demonstrates the level of public trust in the Internet as a news source in different countries. In Korea than in any other country, the Internet is valued by a greater number of respondents as a primary source of political information compared to the other kinds of media (television, newspaper, radio, magazine, and friend/family/colleague).

Figure 3. The Internet as the Most Important News Source



Source: BBC/Reuter/Media Center Poll: Trust in the Media, May 2006.

Why do such a conspicuously high percentage of Koreans consider the Internet as the country's most important news source?

In addition to the fact that the absolute majority of the nation uses the Internet regularly, there has also been a great amount of public discredit towards the press, especially television and newspapers. According to Table 2, responses of high or some trust in the press reduced from 23.2% in 2000 to 19.4% in 2004, whereas distrust moved from 16.2% to 31.8% during the same period (J. W. Park 2005: 8). Noticeably, it was recorded that almost one-half of the respondents had a negative attitude toward these two traditional media sources in the presidential election year of 2002. From Figure 3 and Table 2, it can be inferred that the lowering trust in the press led to the growing influence of the Internet. As the conventional press got discredited, the public became more inclined to adhere to alternative media, which in this case came in the form of the Internet.

Table 2. Trust in the Press in Korea

Year	2000	2002	2004
Highly (%)	0.3	0.9	0.2
Somewhat (%)	22.9	24.4	19.2
Neutral (%)	60.6	28.8	48.8
Hardly (%)	15.8	42.8	30.4
Never (%)	0.4	3.1	1.4
Number of Cases	1,200	1,255	1,200

Source: J. W. Park 2005: 8.

Third, for a president, the Internet as a media source is like a secret chamber to make direct contact with the public. To sidestep the unfavorable press surrounding the presidential office, President Roh gave some Internet news organizations more opportunities to deliver the presidential news, and even experimented with the Internet himself and designated space on it to put his own message out to potential readers. Additionally, the

Internet town hall meeting of March 2006 was broadcast live by the five biggest portal sites. They were the co-hosts of the meeting, and they advertised this presidential public event on a large scale a month before it was held. The Cheong Wa Dae blogs opened in these portal sites constantly reproduced the president's central agenda for resolving economic polarization, which had been declared at the New Year's televised address and press conference the previous January, and thus demonstrated the president's agenda-setting ability by successfully limiting the subject of the Internet meeting to this particular agenda.

In summary, the Internet has equipped the president with a large number of users and with technological support as a form of political infrastructure. On the foundation of these minimum conditions, the weakening trust in the formal media as well as President Roh's strategic cultivation of the on-line space have enlarged the political influence of the Internet in Korea. Because of its magnified effects, subsequent presidents and presidential candidates cannot help but consider the Internet as a main place for their public activities.

Ⅳ. TRENDS IN PRESIDENTIAL PUBLIC ACTIVITIES

Given that the presidential strategy of going public in democratized Korea is determined by the particular institutional changes in the political environment as mentioned above, an increasing trend towards the public presidency is expected to be found during the terms of the recent three consecutive presidents, Kim Young-sam, Kim Dae-jung, and Roh Moo-hyun. To verify it, the study will examine changing levels of the presidents' public activities, including 1) television/radio addresses and studio appearances, 2) press meetings, and 3) political overseas travel.

Televised/Radio Address and Studio Appearance

As opposed to text-based media, television and the radio are both considered to be rather direct and friendly means for a president to appeal to the public at home. In the first place, the well-organized configuration of the stages, camera angles, prepared scripts, and established audience realize the expected situations and effects. This kind of mass media guarantees the maximum efficiency to meet as many as possible within the limited time when presidential messages are delivered.

To begin with, it should be noted that the number of presidential televised addresses and appearances in studios have both been rising considerably from four (Kim Young-sam) to eight (Kim Dae-jung) and also to ten (the first half of the Roh administration) according to Table 3. In addition, while the programs on which President Kim Young-sam appeared were mainly for entertainment, the two succeeding presidents appeared more on programs for public discussion as a form of town hall meeting or as revolving around a one-hour presidential speech (See Table 4). These more serious programs aired on prime time meant a more aggressive presidential use of television. It is also noteworthy that President Roh attempted to expand presidential public activities into the radio for the first time.

Table 3. Presidential Television/Radio Addresses and Appearances in Studio

President	Kim Young-sam	Kim Dae-jung	Roh Moo-hyun
Television Address	4*/4	6*/8	10*
Radio Address	0	0	1*
Total	4*/4	6*/8	11*

Note: *Addresses and appearances only for the first half of a presidential term.

Table 4. Broadcast Programs of Presidential Addresses and Appearances in Studio

President	Kim Young-sam	Kim Dae-jung	Roh Moo-hyun
Discussion or Debate	1*/1	3*/5	8*
Entertainment	3*/3	3*/3	3*
Total	4*/4	6*/8	11*

Note: *Addresses and appearances only for the first half of a presidential term.

How can the propensity of presidential television and radio activities concentrated during the first half of a president's term be explained? First, the initial 30 months are the period when expectation dominates criticism. As the expiration of a presidential term draws closer, a clear reduction in public approval happens without exception. Given the single-term presidency, a president is likely to be a lame duck in the second half of this term. Secondly, it is attributed to the immanent strategic limitations of going public. Choosing to go public by television is a competitive way to promote public favor of the presidential agenda and of policies, but it involves enormous political risks to the presidents themselves (Kernell 1997: 107). The diminishing size of television viewers, while presidential discussions are being held over again, shows the opportunity cost that communicating by way of televised address imposes (See Table 5). Furthermore, the presidential monopoly of channels may at times even provoke sentiment against the president, not only from the public but also from the broadcast workers, the print media, and the opposition party.

Kim Dae-jung's televised studio "talks with the nation" were viewed as both a genuine democratic practice and an empty public relations policy that had extended from the policies of previous authoritarian leaders. The first such talk on May 1998, which came after Kim had been in office exactly 100 days, was only one month before local elections, but nevertheless received significant favor from the media and the public. However, the situation was

markedly different in February 2000, when Cheong Wa Dae eventually reversed its plans to deliver its third address two months before a general election due to antipathy from the opposition party, the media, and the public.

Table 5. The Rate of Viewers of President Kim Dae-jung's Television Talks with the Nation

Television Talks	January 1998	May 1998	February 1999	March 2001
Rate of Viewers	53.30 %	40.50 %	35.30 %	26.60 %

Source: *The Sisa Journal,* March 14, 2001.

In this context, President Roh's attempt to diversify media policy in the areas of broadcasting time, media choice, and the programs for his appearance reflects a strategic decision to avoid these apparent risks of presidential television talks, as well as an attempt to cultivate a niche amongst the public and within its issues of concern.

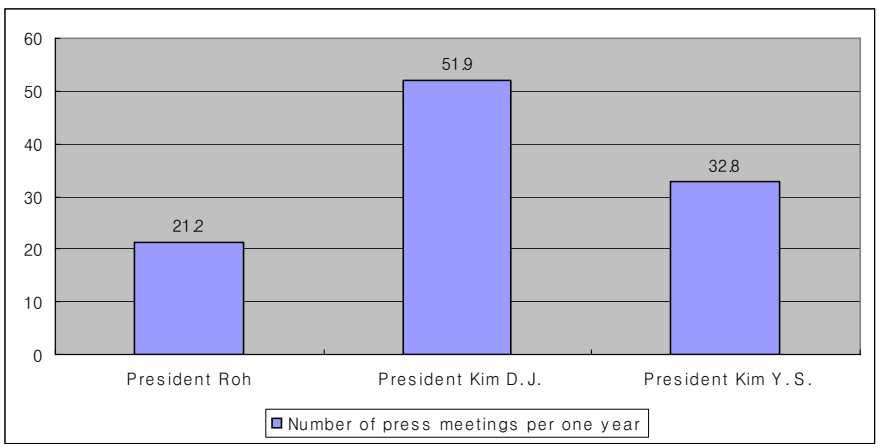
Presidential Press Meeting

Presidential television/radio activities and press meetings have in common the fact that they are forms of media-mediated public communications. Yet, the latter is rather close to the president-press communications relationship, while the former is related to the presidential public meeting system. First, a press meeting is held for both the reporters and their employers who of course seek presidential news coverage (Eshbaugh-Soha 2003: 348). Second, apart from this general point, the presidential press meeting is considered by both sides as a means of private communications between Cheong Wa Dae and selected news organizations under the imperial presidency or its vestige. Third, unlike for live broadcasting, the presidential message in the press meeting goes through more or less arbitrary interpretations of journalists, having both directions of favor and criticism during

press meetings. Therefore, even though the press meeting is an essential public activity, it is far from the policy of going public as we understand it here.

According to Figure 4, presidential press meetings were held on an irregular basis during the terms of the three presidents, with the overall frequency showing a downward trend. Whereas President Kim Dae-jung had conspicuously held frequent press meetings (51.9 times per year on average), it radically dropped in the Roh administration to 21.2 per year for his first thirty months). Considering the private interview-centered practices of Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung, they had a similar press relationship despite the disparity in the frequency of their press meetings. By contrast, the much smaller number of Roh Moo-hyun's press meetings suggests a different kind of press relationship.

Figure 4. Presidential Press Meeting per Year



Roh declared presidential press conferences would be held for any important political issue or policy rather formally, openly,

and on a large scale. This meant that a new relationship was being pursued by severing the old adherence of the two sides represented by presidential private interviews. The result is, interestingly, a distinctly low record of press meetings being held. From this, it is inferred that for President Roh a presidential press meeting would be a way to maneuver the press or a political rival in a more controlled and publicized fashion. Moreover, holding press meetings would no longer be regarded as an efficient route to deliver the presidential message to the public and the political circle. Instead, the president would have to cultivate direct ways to go public.

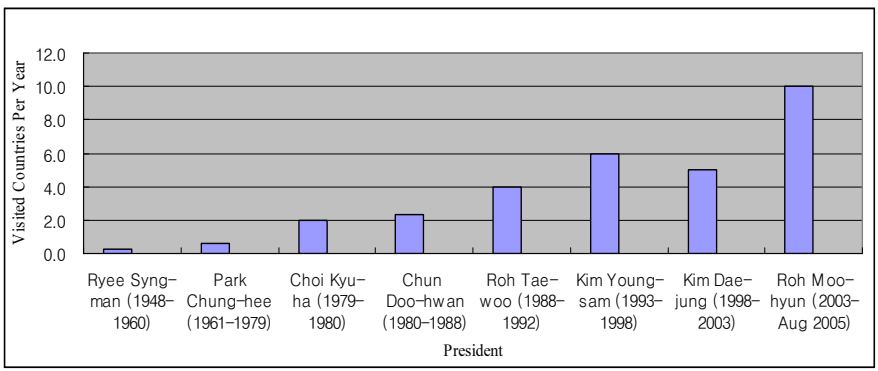
Political Overseas Travel

Reasons for presidential visits to foreign countries include attending summit meetings, conducting important economic negotiations with transnational corporations, and giving addresses at plenary sessions of such international organizations as the United Nations. The "president-like image" projected by those activities has its own effects apart from any official goals. For one thing, presidential overseas travel takes up a large part of presidential new coverage (Seol 2005: 399). As a "hard working leader" and "international participant," a president has a chance to be awarded more favorable news coverage than usual, and this may even provide an opportunity for the president to expand influence to other politicians via the public at home (Seol 2005; Cook and Ragsdale 1995).

Figure 5 shows a clear upward trend in presidential visits to foreign countries. Compared to President Kim Young-sam (six countries per year) and Kim Dae-jung (five countries per year), Roh Moo-hyun recorded double the number of his predecessors' foreign country visits in the first half of this term. This fact becomes more interesting when considering that President Roh had a suspension period (from March to May 2004) due to the pas-

sage of the impeachment motion against him in the National Assembly.

Figure 5. **Presidential Visits to Foreign Countries per Year**



Ⅴ. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The preceding analysis has corroborated a recent trend toward the public presidency in democratized Korea. In explaining this tendency, significant political institutional changes since the country's democratization should be given greater attention and more detailed examination than a president's idiosyncratic factors, such as presidential personality or character. The relevant institutional factors for the emerging public presidency include the withering degree of presidential press control, the reform of presidential candidate nomination and increasing independence of the presidential party, the recurrence of divided government, and the institutionalization of media campaigning with growing usage of the Internet for the president-public communication.

Like any other presidential strategy, that of going public may have negative as well as positive consequences. By making direct

appeals to the public, the president may create a policy environment in which institutionalized policy deliberation is bypassed or discouraged for making hasty policy decisions. Also, presidential public activities may end only in political rhetoric, symbolic events, or public entertainment lacking in substantive policy delivery. Consequently, the public presidency can be vulnerable to being condemned as "populist" in the eyes of the press, opposition, and watchful public. If the strategy of going public backfires this way, it will rather undermine presidential authority and influence. In the first half of the Roh Moo-hyun presidency, the president relied more heavily on the strategy of going public than did his predecessors. But President Roh made no significant success in policy delivery, which stirred public criticism and disapproval of his presidency. The case of President Roh suggests that the public presidency does not necessarily entail enhanced public support for the president.

Notwithstanding its shortcomings as a presidential strategy, going public has gained growing gravitational force in Korean presidential politics. For a typical example, President Kim Dae-jung's visit to North Korea could build a momentum of public support for his "sunshine" policy toward the North. Furthermore, a set of the institutional changes conducive to the public presidency will continue to produce such effects for the years to come. Hence it is of tremendous importance, in the context of Korean presidential politics, to seek a systematic understanding of how the presidential strategy of going public affects the interaction of significant policy actors in the process of governing the country.

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