



Selected Proceedings from the 2001 annual conference of the International Leadership Association, November 1-4, Miami, Florida USA

The Political Leadership of President Kim Dae-jung in Liberalization:
Transforming and Liberal?
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Contents

1. Introduction
2. An Explanatory Matrix of Political Leadership for Analysis
3. Examining the Foundations of President Kim's Leadership
 - Conflicting Demands from Environmental Factors: Domestic and International Factors
 - Choices Open for Kim's Political Leadership
4. The Process of Change of the Reform: From Transforming to Transactional Superficial Success of the Reform in the Beginning
 - Deviation from the Transforming Goals of the Reform
 - An Explanation for the Change of Kim's Leadership
5. Reflective Conclusion: Shifting and Divided Leadership

1. Introduction

This paper attempts to analyze the dilemma of political leadership of President Kim Dae-jung in the process of liberalization since the IMF bailout to the Korean government in 1997. This paper explores why Kim's leadership has changed from transforming into transactional. The main reason is that Kim's political leadership got entrapped in the politics of regionalism. The failure of recent effort of President Kim's leadership to attract support from the people is largely due to its entanglement with regionalism, thus losing fairness in the process of reform. This contention can be empirically supported notably by his personal policies in the major political positions as well as in the public sector. Kim's leadership entrapped with regionalism

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can be explained as a major factor to undermine its moral legitimacy that comprises the core of transforming leadership.

Whether transformational or transactional leadership emerges and is successfully effective should be explained in terms of the environment, the organization, tasks and goals, and the distribution of power between the leaders and the followers. [1] Especially in the light of environment, it is argued that more transactional leadership is likely to emerge and be relatively effective in a stable, predictable environment whereas more transformational leadership is likely to emerge and be effective in an unstable, uncertain, turbulent environment. [2] Through this paper, we will argue that this argument does not stand sound by showing that President Kim Dae-jung's leadership has changed from transforming into transactional in the unstable, uncertain, turbulent situation of the so-called 'Age of IMF' in Korea. The changing process of characteristics of Kim Dae-jung's leadership has an inseparable relationship with the goals of reform, environment, and the power relation between Kim and his followers.

The age of IMF endowed President Kim's leadership with a task of overall restructuring of the political and economic system. It even demanded the reflection of morality prevailed over all Korean society. The recent economic crisis in Korea is largely due to inappropriate relationship between politics and economics, specifically the government-*Chaebol* alliance, in the past. More fundamentally, it is often argued that the overall structural problem of politics and economics originates from the moral hazard of Korean society. In coping with this enormous demand, Kim Dae-jung's leadership initiated to reform both the political framework and the economic structure. The reforms of the Kim Dae-jung administration have overarched four major sectors, i.e. the public, finance, business, and labor. In its inception, it was suspicious that the Kim Dae-jung administration, which took over tremendous problems from the previous government, could effectively handle the awful situation. Nevertheless, during the first year, the Kim administration enforced reforming policies, so called liberalization, in both politics and economics and then inhaled a positive response from domestic and international society

Since then, however, the situation has ominously changed. Unemployment has been increasing and reaches a million nowadays. Social discontents for government policy are getting deeper. The reform of politics is far from being achieved and the economic adjustment seems not to be successful. As a result, people have been losing their aspiration for reform, and no more believe in the success of the current reform. Though the Kim administration has tried to persuade people with the engagement policy for North Korea called "the Sunshine Policy" and still persuades them to participate in reform, it is on thin ice. In the course of reform, it is worthwhile to notice that Kim Dae-jung's leadership has changed from transforming to transactional.

In this article, to analyze the dilemma of political leadership of Kim Dae-jung in the process of liberalization, first of all, we briefly touch on the domestic conditions and the international ones surrounding Korea. Here, on the one hand, we focus on power relation in crisis between parties, region and labors and capitals as domestic conditions. On the other hand, we center our attention on the impact of neo-liberalism since the IMF bailout as international conditions. It will illuminate a sharp contrast between the demands from international conditions and domestic conditions. While international conditions require liberal policy, domestic conditions demand communitarian one. This is the dilemma that the Kim Dae-jung government confronts.

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The conflicting claims constrain the freedom of choices for the leverage of Kim Dae-jung's leadership. In the process of reform, people tend to prefer the short-term and immediate interests to long-term goals and benefits accruing from successful reform. In responding to this trend, Kim Dae-jung's leadership tends to get nested in his own power boundary based on regionalism and his long-term followers. This change of situation contributed to the shift of President Kim's leadership from transforming to transactional. The successful transforming leadership can be safeguarded in an atmosphere that the long-term public good be rationally preferred to the short-term and vested interests among the people, and that people are voluntarily ready to take burdens in the process of reform. However, people can hardly endure the long-lasting reform, thus reluctant to shoulder the burdens inevitably stemming from the reform. This spiral process makes the transformational leadership work even more difficult in an unstable, uncertain, turbulent environment. As mentioned above, this paper focuses on the change of Kim's political leadership from transforming into transactional.

2. An Explanatory Matrix of Political Leadership for Analysis

In this section, to explain our point effectively, we will compose a matrix of leadership typology by employing two pairs of criteria. The first pair is comprised of transactional and transforming. The distinction between transactional and transforming leadership is associated with the relations between leaders and followers. Following James M. Burns' definitions, transactional leadership can be summarized as give-and-take of immediate interests by compromise between leaders and followers, whereas the transforming leadership can be defined in terms of the motivation and estimation on the public goals and interests by which leaders pull followers.

The second one is liberal and communitarian. The distinction between liberal and communitarian is associated with the characteristics of leaders' political orientation. The liberal leadership encourages free-market system and competition for jobs through market in economic realm and reasoned agreement on moral issues among people, thus minimizing the government intervention in the private sphere. The communitarian leadership upholds government intervened-market system, stable employment and firm welfare system in economic realm and encourages a good life in terms of the communal values and the common good through governmental policies. Using these criteria, we propose the following matrix.

Figure 1. An Explanatory Matrix of Political Leadership

	Transforming	Transactional
Liberal	I	II
Communitarian	III	IV

Type I is transforming and liberal. To overcome the recent economic crisis in Korea, external conditions require this type of reform. Opening market, reforming political system and anti-corruptions belong to this category. Because it requires drastic and comprehensive change and readjustment of the economic and political structure, people must bear the burden of heavy cost.

Type II is transactional and liberal. In crisis, the reason why transactional leadership is adopted in the reforming process is to lure, with immediate interests, support from people who refuse to bear the burden of heavy cost. People tend to prefer short-term interests to

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long-term ones. When government implements liberal policy, it is hard to give rewards back in a short period. The leadership of Type II involves inherent problem which transactional aspect is inconsistent with liberal one.

Type III is transforming and communitarian. In economic crisis, transforming leadership, which aims to encourage flexibility in market and to reform the structure, has much difficulty in setting communitarian policy. This is because government must bear the responsibility for the failure or delay of liberalization as well as the financial burden. Communitarian demands call for strong government measures for the social safety net guaranteeing the minimum life chances of the least advantaged group such as laborers exposed to the danger of unemployment in the process of economic liberalization. This communitarian demand hampers the transforming goals in liberalization.

Type IV is transactional and communitarian. This type is the most inappropriate to liberalization in economic crisis. It is difficult for leaders not only to take rewards back to followers in short term but also to establish communitarian policy with heavy costs. The two demands are inconsistent. In the wake of comprehensive reform, however, people in Korea tend to be impatient with waiting for the long-term transforming goals. And the least advantaged group strongly demands stable employment and social safety net through government policies. These demands seem to play significant role of delaying the transforming reform.

Using four categories, we attempt to explain the changing characteristics of Kim's political leadership from transforming into transactional. In the wake of reform, people come to get tired with long-lasting reforming. People, who lost their jobs in reforming, demand new jobs for their individual survivals. Amidst this domestic entanglement, however, Kim's government has no other choice but to continue implementing liberal policy to survive in globalization.

Conflicting Demands from Environmental Conditions and the Response of Leadership

After the IMF bailout in 1998, Korea had no choice but to reform the whole structure regardless of the voluntary intention of Korean government and people. Without a chance of absorbing the voices of Korean people, the reform was simply enforced. Some intellectuals compared this reform with the deprivation of sovereignty by Japan in 1910. International condition is the most important factor that the Korean government considered first. However, in meeting this unexpected crisis, it needed time for Korean people to readjust themselves to the new demands. The domestic conditions, i.e. people's attitudes and moral sense as well as the so-far established structures, seem to have played a role of resisting the transforming reform.

Conflicting Demands from Environmental Conditions: Domestic and International

The IMF required Korean government to implement a very strict and strong reform in economics in return for the bailout. [3] The first requirement is to achieve a strong macroeconomic framework. Fundamentally, this requirement aims to lead Korea to open market-oriented system. In the past, most business companies in Korea were under the protection of government and hesitated to be in a perfect competition. Until the IMF bailout, this trend had continued. Any Korean government in the past could not give up the policy for economic growth. To improve the rate of the growth, the government support strategically concentrated on several big conglomerates called *Chaebols*. In return, the *Chaebols* were strong supporters of the political power. For this reason, there was a very strong bond between politics and economics. This bond was one of the strong

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sources of corruption in Korea. In this symbiotic relationship, most big businesses were favored unfairly. Along with this favored position, even the credibility of their disclosing of information on the company to attract the investors, domestic and abroad, was seriously doubted. These practices could seriously damage not only the interests of the investors, but also undermine the soundness of the whole Korean economy. Thus the IMF required the Korean government to improve transparency and timely reporting of economic data.

This pressure from outside the country was a big burden for Kim's government. The government did not have any alternative except accepting the pressure. To overcome the crisis, the only way that the government could take was liberalization of the whole economic structure. This is apparently transforming goal.

Domestic conditions were more complex than international ones. The biggest obstacle is politics itself. Although politics was the core to reform the whole system, politics itself was the objective that should be reformed. Most intellectuals criticize political inability and inefficiency, and argue that politics should be the first target that should be reformed. Because it is widely believed, whether true or not, that politicians had been involved with mal-practices in the past of strong bond between political power and *Chaebols*, reforming of politics and economics at the same time was a dangerous challenge to Kim's government.

Concerning the reform of politics, the obstacle that Kim's government should break was regionalism. Since Park Jung Hee government, the conflict between regions, especially Chulla and Kyungsang province became deeper and deeper. Kim's government could not escape from regionalism, because the main support for Kim came from the Chulla province. However, to reform political system, Kim should get over regionalism. It was the most difficult task that Kim's government was endowed to solve. The dilemma consists in that for President Kim to overcome politics of regionalism means to abandon his strong power base which support the motivation of Kim's leadership. In other words, the politics of regionalism in Korea is the very source of Kim's power. If he abandons his strong supporters and followers for overcoming politics of regionalism, he may be placed into a danger of powerless leadership. Thus, in the political crisis of his leadership, President Kim may have no other choice but to resort to his original power base accruing from politics of regionalism.

The third domestic condition refers to who bears the burden of heavy cost to reform. In the time of developing country in Korea, laborers were situated to bear the heavy burden to enhance economic growth while it was regarded that capitals and bureaucracy enjoyed the sweet benefits. For this reason, labors felt that they had not received fair rewards back in consideration of their relative contribution to the economic development. However, Kim's government seemed to implore laborers for another sacrifice, and promised that the government will reform *Cheabols* and readjust economic structure. This strategy seems to work no more in the process of transforming reform.

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2) Choices Open for Kim's political leadership

Though constrained by conditions, domestic and international, Kim's political leadership still got a gambit of choices. The gambit basically can be reduced to the choice of transforming or transactional. In its inception, Kim's leadership initiated transforming. Especially the conditions from international mentioned above forced Kim Dae-jung to take transforming leadership. It was widely supposed that he could not manage the crisis with transactional leadership that depends upon the exchange of immediate interests. He was to be fair in his appointment to high governmental positions regardless of regions and in the distribution of heavy burdens in the process of the transforming reform. However, it has become gradually believed that Kim's leadership take a road of losing fairness in the distribution of high political positions and of social burdens. Keeping fairness is the most important source in transforming leadership. Leaning towards the politics of regionalism and losing fairness in the distribution of burdens [4], Kim's leadership has gradually changed from transforming into transactional.

The Process of Change in the Characteristics of Political Leadership

Mainly confronting the resistance from social and political entanglements in the domestic in the process of the reform, Kim's political leadership has changed from transforming into transactional. It may be the inevitable choice of President Kim for political survival in consideration of his relative power position. However, this choice may contribute to distort or delay the right route of transforming reform desirable for the Korean people.

Superficial Success of the Reform in the Beginning

In general, Kim's leadership can be defined as strong, personal, and charismatic. His charismatic leadership has been formed through his political career for the Korean democratization movement. People in Korea give their respect for a man who spent 30 years in fighting for the Korean democratization. And many politicians followed him during the democratization. Also many intellectuals and students supported him. In this process, he constructed a very strong leadership. It is often evaluated that his leadership is personal. When he decides important policies, he depends on his own judgment rather than public opinion and institutions. While his personal leadership looks effective for progressive reform, in the light of democracy, sometimes his leadership is inappropriate. However, in the beginning period of reform, Kim's transforming leadership seemed to be working.

His strong and personal leadership was conducive to the reform. He strongly propelled reforming the whole structure and led businesses to liberalization. His innovative reform received positive support from domestic and international society. After one year of his reform that was not yet finished, Kim gained a good reputation that his reform would be successful. Various economic indications were very positive. The economic growth recovered rapidly again. The indicators of economy such as the rate of economic growth, the rate of inflation, the rate of unemployment and the exchange rate of foreign currency etc, were very stable. [5] Korean people expected that the reform would be successfully completed in a short period of time.

There were several reasons for this initial success of his leadership. First, Kim's government was not the one that had caused the economic crisis. The economic crisis was largely due to the mismanagement of previous government. Rather, Kim's government was the only alternative of the Korean people to choose for overcoming the crisis.

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The second reason is that Kim gained support from intellectuals, students, and laborers. They were the most threatening forces to a corrupted government. Kim could be the president by their support. They believed in Kim's capability and moral integrity that he showed in the process of democratization in Korea. For this reason, he could propel the reform without confronting strong resistance. Labors shared the burden of heavy cost for the reform, and students stopped radical demonstrations to the government. This compromise of *modus-vivendi* could be achieved in the consideration of long-term goals.

Third, he tried to detach himself from regionalism. When in the beginning of his administration he allotted high political positions such as ministries, he seemed to be relatively fair in comparison with the cases of previous governments. In addition, he gained relatively high popularity regardless of regional backgrounds except the Kyungsang province that was the home of most of the previous presidents.

Fourth, he accepted the strict and strong demand for liberalization from the IMF. Making use of the strong support from people in the beginning period he could have performed various measures to readjust governmental and economic structure. First of all, he expelled 55 companies with weak competition, and included 72 companies in walkout. And he demanded from the *Cheabols* the transparency of their data for foreign investors.

Kim's government received a good reputation from domestic and international critics and supervisors. His reform was definitely liberal and transforming. He accepted the radical demand of liberalization from international conditions, and performed the innovative reform in both politics and economics. People gave the government a loud applause. The Kim administration responded that the reform could be successfully completed soon. However, the reality of the reform was different.

2) Deviation from Transforming Goals

Two years ago, people would not have expected that the reform would be in danger as it is. For the first two years since the reform was initiated, it seemed very successful. But entering upon the second half of 2000 the situation has changed from bad to worse. Especially people came to be skeptical of President Kim leadership's capability and fairness. There were several reasons for the decline of his popularity from the people. The first is due to forcefully performing several policies without sifting process of sufficient public debates among the people. Some sectors of people showed strong objections. An example is the medical reform policy ostensibly aimed at the clear distinction between the roles of doctors and pharmacists. Of course, the conflict of interests among doctors, pharmacists, and common people are seriously involved with this policy. It is hard to get a reasonable agreement between them. Government implemented the new medical reform policy. But this measure also resulted in dissatisfaction especially in doctors and some people.

Kim's government performed several welfare policies to protect the least advantaged group. Though even before Kim's government, the necessity for social safety net became issued, people paid little attention to the necessity of institutionalizing a sound welfare system because of good economic situation. After the economic crisis, Kim's administration propelled to establish these institutions for guaranteeing the social safety net. For this institutionalizing,

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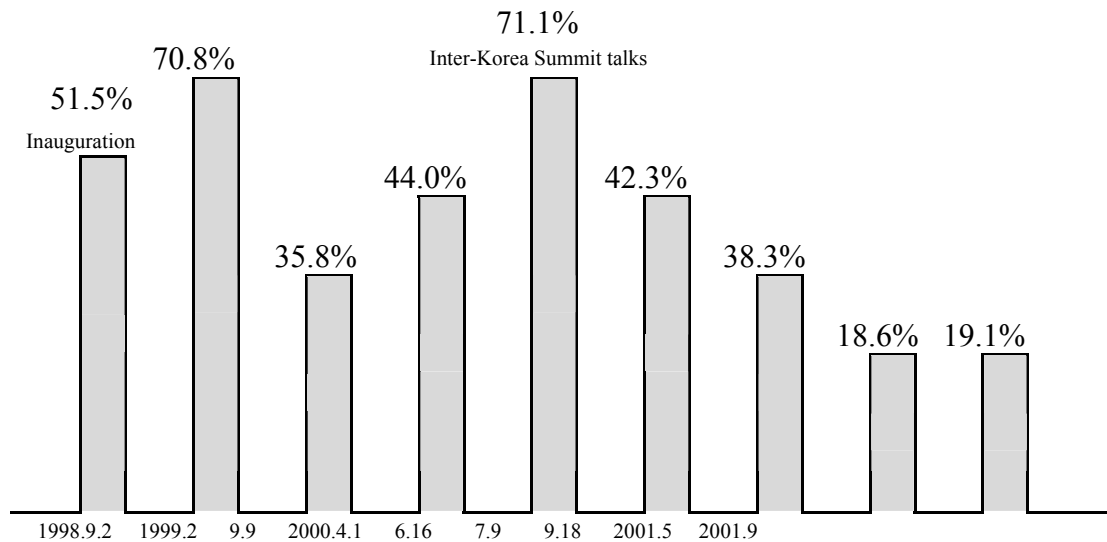
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it was inevitable for people to pay more cost. The expected burden of more cost led people even to think that government implemented an ineffective policy, though in the long run it was for people themselves. However, there was a reason why people thought that way. It is because of unemployment. Unemployment made people unstable. Without a job, they could not stand the difficulty of a destitute life. They need a job to survive. People prefer the guarantee of job security to the social safety net system. This psychology reflects that in the turbulent and unstable situation, people seem to prefer immediate interests to the deferred rewards. Government, however, could not create appropriate chances for employment. It goes without saying that the government could not guarantee the job security preventing unemployment for improving flexibility of labor markets for economic liberalization.

Besides, people got disappointed with the deceptive reform of politics. It may be justified that to steer difficult situation political leadership has to strategically cooperate between parties. However, in this process, politicians tend to put a priority of protecting their own political interests. In this context, it is believed that President Kim did not control this kind of the situation effectively. This belief led people skeptic of moral credibility of his leadership.

It may be conjectured that these reasons may explain for the decline of the popularity of Kim's leadership. We can observe that the popularity of Kim's leadership is seriously decreasing. A recent survey by Gallup in Korea shows the decline of his popularity. In 1998, the poll of his popularity indicated 70-80%. [6] But in the end of 1999, it showed 55.6%, [7] in 2000 37.7%, [8] and in 2001 26.9%. [9] Another survey by the daily newspaper, "Choongang", also showed the rapid declining of his popularity.

Figure 2. Changing Popularity of President Kim Dae-jung



(Source: Choongang Daily Newspaper, Sep. 21, 2001. p. 5)

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In terms of specific sectors, people’s criticism especially concentrates on economic reform. A survey by the daily newspaper, “Choongang”, in September of 2001, shows that 79% is not satisfied with current economic reform. Under 20% gave positive support concerning the freedom of speech, the adjustment of business, resolution of regionalism, and the reform of corruption. As a result, only 19.7% supports Kim’s leadership, and 65.4% thinks that the current Korean society is very unstable, while the opposite response is only 4.5%. [10]

As we can conjecture from the various indications, people are skeptic of Kim’s Leadership very recently. They no more believe that Kim’s government would achieve the transforming reform. To overcome this skepticism, the government tries to show the visible results of the reform, but it seems too late to recover people’s supports.

An Explanation for the Change of Kim's Leadership

Since 2000 Kim’s leadership has been seriously weakening and the reform seems to be halted. A main factor that undermines Kim’s leadership can be approached from the political aspect such as regionalism. First of all, he seems to have failed in detaching himself from regionalism. The regional aspects of Kim’s leadership become obvious when we look into the politics of party, the national assembly, and the appointments of high official positions. When he was elected as president, he gained absolute support over 90% from the Chulla province even though he did get support from intellectuals, students, and laborers. He needed to cut the ties with regionalism to perform the transforming reform successfully. In the beginning period of Kim’s government, he seemed to be fair. Unlike previous governments that favored people of a certain region, he tried to distribute the important political positions in consideration of adequate rate of regional background. People also thought that he had strong and charismatic leadership enough to detach himself from the politics of regionalism.

However, similar with the case of President Kim Young Sam, he also failed in overcoming affective network based on regionalism. A survey by Choongang shows that 90% thinks his policy to resolve regionalism has failed. And only 8.7% thinks that his appointment policy of high political positions was fair. [11]

In the following table, we can observe how the President Kim’s leadership has changed into unfairness through the appointment of ministers in the 8 most important ministries at the four-time reshuffles of the cabinet. This is the table that shows the regional backgrounds of the 8 ministers.

Figure 3. Regional Background of the Ministers of 8 Important Ministries

Time					
Ministry	03/03/1998	05/24/1999	01/13/2000	08/07/2000	Chulla/Total

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Finance and Economy	Choongchung	Chulla	Shanghai	Chulla	2/4
Unification	Pyoungan	Pyoungan	Kyoungsang	Kyoungsang	0/4
Foreign Affairs and Trade	Kyoungsang	Choongchung	Chulla	Chulla	2/4
Justice	Chulla	Chulla	Chulla	Chulla	4/4
National Defense	Chulla	Choongchung	Choongchung	Choongchung	1/4
Government Administration & Home Affairs	Kyoungsang	Kyoungsang	Chulla	Chulla	2/4
Education	Choongchung	Kyoungsang	Manju, China	Choongchung	0/4
Culture and Tourism	Kyounggi	Kyounggi	Chulla	Chulla	2/4
Chulla / Total	2/8	2/8	4/8	5/8	
Choongchung / Total	2/8	2/8	1/8	2/8	

*This table is organized based on the information from Chosun Dailly Newspaper.(13/14/1998, 05/25/1999, 01/14/2000, 08/08/2000)

The second factor is his political compromise to gain the majority in the national assembly, i.e. the political alliance with the United Liberal Democratic Party(ULDP). As Burns points out, reform leaders should make a decision to cooperate or even merge with existing parties. [\[12\]](#) Kim also faced the moment to make a decision to cooperate with other parties for the reform because the Millennium Democratic Party, which Kim leads, is minority in the national

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assembly. The reality as a minority in the national assembly was and is apparently an obstacle to perform strong and powerful policy. To be a majority the MDP tried to ally with the ULDP that is very conservative. On the contrary President Kim's party, MDP, was radical in the past. Ideologically speaking, this political alliance is a compromise between the parties of incompatible political conceptions. This disharmonious political alliance seemed to play a role of undermining the transformational reform. This alliance proved to be not a good choice. The ULDP was reluctant in cooperating to implement transformational policy and many intellectuals and people criticized this inappropriate alliance. Besides, in the process of the alliance, the ULDP proposed a condition that people could hardly understand. In national assembly in Korea, a party has to have over 15 seats in the national assembly to participate in the meeting to decide agenda for discussion before opening a session, but the ULDP has only 12 seats short of 3 seats for forming a floor negotiation group in the assembly. Thus the MDP lent the ULDP 4 seats as a political bargaining. The Korean people condemned President Kim for this political bargaining. They blamed Kim's political morality and he seemed to have lost his popularity with this decision. As Burns points out, leaders can ask sacrifice from followers when they act at much higher moral levels than that of followers. [13] But his decision was one of the worst things in which people doubted his morality.

Another main factor that undermines Kim's leadership is the unemployment. Unemployment deprives individuals of their ability, destroys their family and life. In considering the form of family in Korea, the problem which unemployment causes is more serious because most family depends on the father's income. Therefore, a father's unemployment means that a family does not have any income to manage life. Newsweek of June 8, 1998, shows an example of a family's destruction due to the father's unemployment. The article reported that a man called Choi, who with little prospect of getting a job, killed his wife, two children and lastly himself. It was unbelievable, but a reality in Korea. This magazine also reported that union leaders state that unemployment reached 1.4million. [14]

Historically speaking, Korea belonging to Confucian culture may be characterized by its family-centered society. Although in the modernization process the family is gradually getting to decompose, it remains a strong part of life in Korea. Most people still emphasize the values of family even though their life styles are changing into individualistic. In terms of ontology they still think that family is the most significant source for their lives. They cannot define themselves outside of the family, and their language and the way of thinking are still family-centered. [15] In this traditional context, young fathers care for their parents, wife and children. In this relation, love in the family is one of important factors, which maintains stability of Korean society. Thus deconstruction of family means that society loses a main supporter for social stability.

Kim's government realizes this serious problem, but hardly succeeded in finding an appropriate alternative to resolve it. The young people graduating from university or college this year are undergoing difficulty in getting a job, and in the process some of them are even giving up job-searching. Recently, the government issued that the rate of unemployment of young people has lowered to 6%, but people do not believe it. Even the newspaper "Hankyoreh", which is regarded in favor of Kim's government, reported that the indicator is absolutely wrong. The newspaper contends that the actual rate of unemployment is 12%, blaming that the government intentionally excluded the people who gave up job searching due to serious difficulty in getting a job, when they calculated the economic acting population. [16]

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Besides, many people are feeling relative deprivation in income distribution. Since the reform, while the top 20% of people in wealth are getting more benefit from the reform the other 80% are getting less benefit. This unjust distribution is leading many people to psychological depression, and leading people to doubt the fairness of the reform.

This context seemed to drive Kim's leadership to become transactional and communitarian. People want Kim's government to distribute the just benefit of the reform to them directly, and to create new employment as soon as possible. Many intellectuals began to argue that Kim's liberal policy is wrong, and that it should be revised. They blamed that the current Kim's reform policy relies upon neo-liberalism, making the wealthy wealthier and the poor poorer. Now Kim's leadership has changed from transforming into transactional. But the transactional leadership shows up in the different way from what people want. Give and take leadership is happening within only affective network in politics. This undermines the moral legitimacy of Kim's leadership.

Reflective Conclusion: Shifting and Divided Political Leadership

Characteristics of leadership are changing, floating, shifting, and being divided. We can observe a variety of faces of leadership. It changes in corresponding to the situation and the power relation. However, the success of leadership depends on its right choice and its capability to create a new possibility. Even constrained by its environment, the freedom of choices and the horizon of creativity are always open for leadership.

Since the IMF bailout of 1997 in Korea, international conditions require the Kim Government to implement transforming and liberal reform, but domestic conditions demand transactional and communitarian reform. In this dilemma, starting with an ambition to be transforming, the leadership of President Kim has changed into transactional in facing the strong demands from domestic. However, this change does not gain support from people in Korea and it does not seem to be successful.

Liberalization is the inevitable reality in Korea. This reality of liberalization requests Kim's leadership to be transforming. In the process of liberalization under pressure from domestic that cannot be refused, it is definitely hard for President Kim to give reward back to followers and people in a short time. In this situation, Kim should motivate and persuade people and followers to keep participating in the reform for the better future. But, only when he shows fairness and higher morality, he can ask followers and people to sacrifice their vested interests. The short way to show his fairness and morality is detaching himself from regionalism. The choice for the maintenance of transforming and liberal were open and possible to Kim's leadership. In consideration of international and domestic conditions, this paper argues that a transforming and liberal leadership should be the right choice for the Korean people.

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