

Why Does South Korea Need a “Bridge over Troubled Water”?*

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Abstract

On December 9, 2016, the South Korean National Assembly voted overwhelmingly to impeach President Park Geun-hye and, on March 10, 2017, the Constitutional Court unanimously upheld the parliamentary impeachment. This led to a new government headed by a newly-elected president. The terms “good governance” and “bad governance” are relevant to the so-called “Park-Choi gate.” This paper provides a general overview of President Park’s government, focusing on the causes of “Park-Choi gate.” It uses a series of theoretical frameworks—politics-administration dichotomy theory, imperial presidency, and bureaucracy theory—to analyze the causes and effects of this corruption scandal. The results indicate that specific characteristics of the Park administration, including a lack of separation between politics and administration, strong presidential power and leadership, violation of bureaucratic principles, and overemphasis on the New Public Management (NPM) doctrines, combined to give rise to “Park-Choi gate” and Park’s eventual impeachment. By examining how the Park administration governed in terms of the key elements of good governance noted by the World Bank, this study highlights both the importance and the difficulty of designing and managing good governance. It also sheds some light on the direction taken by the new South Korean government, aiming to improve the quality of future governance.

Keywords: “Park-Choi gate,” politics-administration relations, imperial presidency, bureaucracy, good governance

Introduction

In order to answer the question of whether or not South Korea needs a “bridge over troubled water,” we must ask what actually happened, why it happened, who made it happen, and which outcomes it produced. The 2016 South Korean political scandal, Park Geun-hye–Choi Soon-Sil gate (“Park-Choi gate”)¹ involved the extensive influence over President Park of her confidant, Choi who has been on trial since October 2016, was accused of abusing her personal ties with Park to meddle in state affairs including security, economic, and cultural policies. Although she was simply an ordinary citizen and held no official government position or security clearance (reports by several news media including *JTBC* and *Chosun broadcasting Company*), Choi exerted extensive influence over the Korean government, intervening in areas ranging from speechwriting and policy decisions to official nominations. In October 2016, South Korean media began to widely report that Choi had access to confidential information and documents and that, along with the President’s senior staff members, she had allegedly used her power to extort \$60 million from Korea’s large business conglomerates to establish two culture- and sports-related foundations.

On December 9, 2016, the impeachment motion, signed by 171 opposition and independent

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¹ After the Korean judicial system concluded that President Park was directly involved in the scandal, the term “Choi Soon-sil gate” was replaced by “Park gate” or “Park-Choi gate.”

lawmakers, passed overwhelmingly—234 in favor, 56 against, two abstentions and seven invalid votes in the 300-member National Assembly—and Prime Minister Hwang became the acting president. On December 21, 2016, a Special Prosecution Team began a 90-day probe into “Park-Choi gate” that culminated in an official report documenting the involvement of President Park, former presidential aides, conglomerates, and other concerned parties in the scandal. On March 10, 2017, the Constitutional Court unanimously upheld the impeachment of Park on the grounds that Park violated the Constitution and laws through abuse of power, bribery, and coercion in colluding with Choi, and dereliction of duty as a president on the day of the Sewol Ferry sinking, which claimed more than 300 lives. Both the Constitutional Court hearings and the Special Prosecution Team’s investigation compiled lists of presidential wrongdoing that justified the impeachment decision. As grounds for impeachment, the Constitutional Court pointed to Park’s violation of national sovereignty and the rule of law in granting political power to Choi, her abuse of power in appointments of civil servants, her infringement of the freedom of speech and press, and her violation of the presidential duty to protect the right to life and to faithfully carry out presidential responsibilities. Table 1 shows how “Park-Choi gate” proceeded.

Table 1. Timeline of Park-Choi Gate

Dates	Key Events
Late October, 2016	Media coverage began
November 29, 2016	President Park offered to begin the process of removing herself from power
December 9, 2016	National Assembly voted to impeach President Park and Prime Minister became the acting president
December 21, 2016	A Special Prosecution Team’s investigation began
March 10, 2017	The Constitutional Court ruled to uphold the impeachment of Park
May 9, 2017	Moon Jae-in was elected as a new president

Until the final impeachment decision, South Korea was “a nation in trouble.” Not only had the Korean government failed to operate effectively, Korean society was in shock and confusion, and citizens were increasingly divided along pro- and anti-Park lines—a division that came to be symbolized as “candles versus flags.” In downtown Seoul and other cities, large anti-Park candlelight rallies calling for her resignation and impeachment remained fierce for an extended period of time while a relatively small number of Park’s supporters—the so-called “Taegukgi” or Korean flags—held demonstrations advocating the nullification of impeachment. The social division between pro- and anti-Park citizens grew especially deep during the 92-day impeachment trial. Pro- and anti-Park lawmakers also intentionally added to confusion and division, seeking to advance their own political interests and agendas, rather than easing conflicts. “Park-Choi gate” shook the nation to its foundations, wasting a huge amount of national assets and seriously damaging Korea’s national image.

Considering these negative effects of “Park-Choi gate” on the whole country, we need to ask: why did this corruption scandal take place in South Korea? More specifically, we need to consider whether “Park-Choi gate” is attributable to the individuals involved or to flaws in the design and operation of systems in the Korean government. The inherently complex nature of political corruption scandals dictates that, to provide a comprehensive overview of governance during the Park administration, research into “Park-Choi gate” should take various analytic dimensions into account. For example, we must consider the following questions: did “Park-Choi gate” result from 1) illegal power sharing between Park, Park’s senior staff member in the presidential house, and a civilian, Choi, 2) Park’s tactless governance, 3) malfunction in the political system, the public administration system, the civil service system, or the legal system, 4) relations between politics and administration in the

public policy process, 5) South Korea's political, economic, social, ethical, or legal cultures, 6) problems in the system of checks-and-balances between the three branches of government, 7) violations of bureaucratic principles, 8) political indifference in Korean society, or 9) the inability of mass media to detect and report the scandal in advance.

Taking these questions into account, this paper examines the causes of "Park-Choi gate" using three theoretical frameworks: politics-administration dichotomy theory, imperial presidency, and bureaucracy theory. We begin by reviewing the three theoretical frameworks used to explain the causes of the political scandal and present related evidence produced by the Korean judicial system to support our argument. We then provide a description of governance under Park's administration in terms of the good governance indicators set by the World Bank. The political corruption scandal that led to President Park's impeachment and the citizen participation and attention to state affairs during the so-called "candlelight revolution" make South Korea a unique and interesting case study subject. The events that took place in South Korea should provide the international community with a meaningful opportunity to reflect on the meaning of good governance, integrity and trust in government, and the role of the citizenry.

Literature Review

"Park-Choi gate" highlights the importance of integrity in government and good governance. The scandal's immediacy and the fact that the parties involved are in the middle of trials explains the scarcity of Korean literature on this topic. Several studies have examined the scandal from a legal perspective. For instance, Yun (2017) analyzed the impeachment procedure (including the scope of the grounds for impeachment and the characteristics of the impeachment process) by interpreting the South Korean Constitution and the Constitutional Court's impeachment of the president.

Another stream of research has dealt with the theme of integrity in government, focusing on corruption in the public sector. The main research themes vary across the definitions of government corruption (Kim 1998; Choi and Lee 1999; Choi 2000; Kim 2001; Kim 2003), empirical investigation of the corruption of public agencies (e.g., periodical publications by the Presidential Commission on Anti-Corruption, the statistical yearbook produced by the Ministry of the Interior, reports by universities and research institutes, and audit results by the Board of Audit and Inspection Office), and anti-corruption policies and legislation to increase the integrity of government (Cho 2001; Kim and Lee 2001; Jang 2001; Lee, Park, and Lee 2002; Kim 2006; Kim 2012).

Foreign scholars have investigated the various impacts political scandals have on governments, political institutions, and society: lowering regard for government leaders and politicians (Lanoue and Headrick 1994; Clarke et al. 1998; Bowler and Karp 2004), electoral consequences (Banducci and Karp 1994; Hetherington 1999; Cowley 2002), creation and intensification of political discontent (Kasse and Newton 1995; Norris 1999; McAllister 2000), and lack of trust in government (Easton 1965, 1975; Bowler and Karp 2004; Chang and Chu 2006, Morris and Klesner 2010). In sum, both Korean and international studies tend to analyze scandals from political, legal, and administration perspectives, focusing on corruption's negative effects on nations, the causes of corruption, and measures to prevent future political scandals.

To thoroughly examine "Park-Choi gate," this study uses three theoretical frameworks. A considerable amount of Korean research has examined the relations between politics and public administration. Many studies have sought to describe the history of Korean public sector reforms across different presidencies, the impacts of government reforms on bureaucrat-politician

relationships (i.e., the politics of government reform), or the characteristics of various administrations' policy systems. Based on these analyses, scholars have identified a list of key elements of policy system and political system in terms of actors, structures, environments, power, legal system, and procedures. For example, Park and Wilding (2016) reviewed trends in Korean government reforms to determine whether and how Korean administrative reforms result in politicization defined as "the extent to which relationships between the political and executive branch are intertwined" (p. 1060). Table 2 shows the varying impacts of public sector reforms on politicization across three different historical periods that their investigation revealed.

Table 2. Relations between Government Reform and Politicization across Presidencies

Periods	Presidencies	Relations between government reform and politicization
Transitional period (1981-1993)	Chun Doo-hwan Roh Tae-woo	Monopolistic: president as a main political actor
Transformational period (1993-2008)	Kim Young-sam Kim Dae-jung Roh Moo-hyun	Tripartite: president, legislature, and ministers as main political actors
Post-transformational period (2008-)	Lee Myung-bak Park Geun-hye	Bipartite: president and legislature as main political actors

Source: Park & Wilding (2006:1064-1075)

Imperial presidency studies have dealt with the features and limitations of presidential leadership and power that belong to specific presidencies in countries around the world. In line with many imperial presidency case studies, research on bureaucracy theory has encompassed theoretical introductions, practical applications, and evaluations of bureaucratic principles across localities, organizations, and countries in case study format. The next section closely analyzes the literature on politics-administration dichotomy, imperial presidency, and bureaucracy theory.

Case Analysis by Three Theoretical Frameworks

Politics-Administration Dichotomy Theory

For more than a century, the politics-administration dichotomy has been a contentious notion in the field of public administration. Discussions focus on the nature of relationships between administrators and politicians and the proper role of politicians and administrators in the political and administrative process. Although many scholars have attempted to explain why politics and public administration should or should not be distinct from each other, they have reached no consensus on the issue.² Some scholars argue that keeping politics and administration distinct will ensure an effective, efficient, and neutral bureaucracy.³ Others maintain that the two disciplines are too interconnected to be separated. The classical politics-administration relations model is the politics-administration dichotomy, which lay the groundwork for the American public administration system. Developed by Max Weber and Woodrow Wilson, scholars have long debated whether and to what extent public administrators should be involved in the political process. In his book, "The study of

² Overeem (2006: 5) summarized these two strands of the argument: 1) those who think "politics and administration are (and should be) distinct but interconnected" and 2) those who think "politics and administration are (and should be) interconnected but distinct." However, in prior research, the extent of distinction between politics and administration had not been clearly stated.

³ Simon (1976) viewed the relations between politics and administration from the perspective of the fact-value distinction.

Administration,” Wilson (1887) proposed the theory that politics and administration are inherently different. Wilson viewed administration as a managerial, technical process functioning in a sphere independent from politics.

More recently, Svava (1999) argued that the politics-administration dichotomy model is conceptually and empirically incorrect and replaced it with the politic-administration complementarity model. The complementarity model recognizes the need to distinguish between politics and administration while emphasizing interdependence, reciprocal influences, and extensive interactions between elected officials and public administrators in the processes of making and implementing public policy. In a later study, Svava (2006) classified the four possible models of political-administrative relations—the separate roles model, the autonomous administrator model, the responsive administrator model, and the overlapping roles model—based on the distance and differentiation between elected officials and administrators and the level of control of administrators by elected officials.

More specifically, according to Svava (2006: 955-966), the separate roles model involves the subordination of administrators to elected officials and strict separation between politicians and administrators. The autonomous administrator model is defined by the distinct separation of politicians and administrators by means of administrators’ autonomy to resist political leaders’ control. The responsive administrator model involves administrators functioning as subordinate supporters of elected officials and close political alignment between politicians and administrators. In the overlapping roles model, administrators and politicians have overlapping functions and reciprocal influence through extensive interaction. Figure 1 shows that each of the four models has its own extreme form—i.e., the isolated administrators model, the bureaucratic regime model, the manipulated administrators model, and the politicized administrators model.

Figure 1. Possible Models of Political-Administrative Relations: standard (shaded area) and extreme

		Degree of distance and differentiation between elected officials and administrators	
		Very High	Very Low
Level of control of administrators by elected officials	Very High	Isolated administrators	Manipulated administrators
		Separate roles	Responsive administrators
	Very Low	Autonomous administrators	Overlapping roles
		Bureaucratic regime	Politicized administrators

Source: Svava (2006: 956)

In order to analyze and understand “Park-Choi gate,” we must trace the history of the relations between politics and public administration in South Korea. Huntington (1991) designates four types of regime transitions: 1) “transformations” where the elites in power took the lead in generating democracy; 2) “replacements” where political opposition groups took the lead in engendering democracy; 3) “transplacements” where democratization took place from the joint actions of governments and opposition groups; and 4) “interventions” where an outside power instituted

democratic regimes. Democratization in South Korea occurred as a combination of Huntington's transformation and transplacement (Young 2015). The authoritarian regime under the Chun Doo-hwan administration (the Fifth Republic) negotiated regime changes (transplacement) with political opposition. The ruling political party leader Roh Tae-woo met and planned for the drafting of a new constitution for the new Sixth Republic.

Share and Mainwaring (1986: 178-179) propose a typology of democratic transition that differs slightly from Huntington's: 1) transition through regime decline or collapse; 2) transition through extrication by elites with authoritarian power; and 3) transition through transaction between regime and political opposition. Korea's democratic transition belongs to the third type of regime transition in this typology. The arguments of Huntington (1991) and Share and Mainwaring (1986) reveal the evident characteristics of politics-administration relationship in South Korea. First, political control of public administrators became firmly established after democratization in late 1980s. Second, internal accountability through official hierarchy receives greater emphasis than public administrators' external accountability to National Assembly expertise, asymmetry of information, and secrecy of public administration.

In contrast to policy neutrality, political neutrality requires public officials to perform their duties in a politically neutral manner. It requires that they act impartially and implement government policies. In South Korea, public administration involvement in political elections was prevalent until about 1987 (National Police Agency 2007). Since the early 1990s, public administration involvement in elections has almost disappeared for three reasons. First, the reinstatement of local autonomy; local representative assemblies were held in 1991 and elections for local governments took place in 1995. Second, in 2002, the Anti-Corruption Commission was formed as a consequence of the 2001 Anti-Corruption Act. The commission aimed to discover wrongdoing, misconduct, and unethical activities including corruption, fraud, bullying, health and safety violations, cover-ups, and discrimination through whistleblowing, and to protect whistleblowers. The whistleblowing policy decreased public administration involvement in elections. Third, the horizontal political regimes changed in 1998 (Kim Dae-jung administration), 2003 (Roh Moo-hyun administration), 2008 (Lee Myung-bak administration), and 2013 (Park Geun-hye administration).

To determine the causes of "Park-Choi gate," we examine the history of the relations between politics and public administration from the 1963 Park Chung-hee administration to the Park Geun-hye administration, which came to an end in 2016. The variables of our analysis include the fundamental paradigm for government operation, government reform initiatives, the policy environment (e.g. critical political events and disputatious social issues), and the features of the civil service system across respective presidencies. We will explain the causes of "Park-Choi gate" using Svava's (2006) four models of political-administrative relations, which indicate that differences in governmental structure, political dynamics, and cultural values in different countries determine how politicians and administrators interact with each other.

Park Chung-hee Administration (1963-1979)

The basic paradigms for the operation of the Park Chung-hee government were economic growth via state modernization and national security policies that emphasized anti-communism and independent national defense capability. These paradigms were established to bolster the legitimacy of the Park administration's Third Republic, which was tenuous because the regime came to power via a coup d'état. Since the Park administration pursued a government-initiated/dominated export-oriented

industrialization policy, the bureaucratic regime in the context of developmental state represented strong meritocracy, professionalism, and mass production of public services. By contrast, due to the president's domination of the ruling party through nomination of National Assembly candidates, the National Assembly remained relatively weak. In addition, President Park directly nominated one-third of the members of the National Assembly, so the National Assembly did not exercise a proper political function. In short, the National Assembly and political parties became weak as technocrats and military elites took the lead in making policy decisions (Ahn 1994).

In the sixties and seventies, Confucianism, integral to Korean culture since the traditional dynasties, exerted an increasingly powerful influence on the Korean political system. Koh (1996: 191) pointed out that scholars have described the Korean Peninsula as the "most Confucian part of the world," since Korean governments effectively made the best use of ancient tradition to achieve national development and the formation of Korean democracy. In sum, the first Park Chung-hee administration initiated the system of bureaucratic authoritarianism and the latter Park administration strengthened that system.

Chun Doo-hwan Administration (1980-1988)

President Chun Doo-hwan occupied the political vacuum formed by the sudden, tragic death of former President Park Chung-hee. By assuming political and military power and establishing the national salvation committee, Chun aimed to exert complete control over the country. To bolster the legitimacy of the Fifth Republic, he initiated public policies different from those of President Park: restructuring the heavy-chemical industrial sector and chaebols (big business conglomerates) and placing greater emphasis on justice and equality as key principles of the national government. This policy orientation opposed growth, which had been a slogan of the preceding administration. Beginning with the Chun administration, the field of public administration began to adopt the notion of "small government." In the context of the developmental state, the Chun administration's bureaucratic regime functioned as strong meritocracy with some politically-motivated cutback management, strong reform of public administration for expedited and less corrupt public service delivery, professionalism, and mass production of public services. In these circumstances, President Chun dominated the ruling party, while the National Assembly remained very weak.

In April 1987, a series of intense anti-government demonstrations initiated by students and subsequently joined by workers and citizens created extreme volatility in the Korean policy environment. To resolve the chaos and accommodate citizen demands, the Chun administration issued the June 29th Declaration, which included a constitutional amendment to provide direct, competitive presidential elections, amnesty for political prisoners, protections for human rights and freedom of press, strengthening of local and educational economies, and substantial social reform. The June 29th Declaration was a watershed moment in Korean politics, initiating the transition from authoritarian rule to the establishment of a more democratic system. The election of a new president in December 1987 truly opened the door for Korean democracy.

Roh Tae-woo Administration (1988-1993)

The Roh Tae-woo administration's governance ideology focused on welfarism⁴ and democratization, since President Roh had been part of the military dictatorship associated with the

⁴ "Welfarism" is a term denoting all theories, principles or policies associated with a welfare state.

former President Chun. To actualize democratization, the Roh administration attempted to balance power between the legislative and executive branches, adopt the Constitutional Court system for checks and balances, reinstate the local autonomy system by initiating local elections, and guarantee freedom of press by abolishing of the Basic Press Act of 1980. These reforms weakened presidential domination of the ruling party. The Roh administration also implemented a variety of welfarist public policies: assuring labor rights, introducing a national minimum wage system, and supporting economic autonomy by means of privatizing public corporations. Similar to the former President Chun, Roh administration also pursued “small government,” maintaining a bureaucratic regime that supported strong meritocracy, professionalism, and mass production of public services. In 1990, to end the country’s chronic factional political strife, Roh announced the three-party merger. This merger of three opposition parties created the Democratic Liberal Party, a new conservative ruling party with a commanding majority in the National Assembly.⁵ Thus, both the regime and the ruling party of the Sixth Republic underwent transformations.

The defining characteristic of Korean politics was the democratization during the mid-1980s driven by a strong social movement and civic mobilization. Judging from the perspective of policy neutrality, Korean bureaucracy had a considerable degree of autonomy in performing public affairs in a professional manner under the authoritarian regimes that ruled from the Third Republic to the Fifth Republic. By contrast, after democratization, specifically the reforms of 1987, the scope of both the activities and the autonomy exercised by bureaucrats narrowed significantly (Lee 2008). The momentum of democratization in 1987 vitalized the circumscribed politics of the bureaucratic authoritarian regimes and put greater emphasis on the bureaucracy’s responsiveness. In short, notions of democracy, globalization, and welfarism shaped the post-democratization period in the Korean political system, leading to institutional democratization and democratic consolidation.

Kim Young-sam Administration (1993-1998)

Portrayed as the first civilian government after the succession of military regimes initiated by President Park Jung-hee’s military coup d’état in 1961, the Kim Young-sam government pursued the institutionalization of democracy and implemented economic policies to open the economy through globalization. Specifically, the Kim administration purged political soldiers, scaled back military authoritarian agencies, abolished a set of regulatory policies, and opened financial markets to foreign competition. To achieve “small but strong government,” the president enacted three major reform laws—the Administrative Procedure Act, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), and the Basic Law for Regulation. In addition, the country adopted the system of real name banking⁶ in 1993, and, in 1995, the formation of the Presidential Commission for Globalization initiated NPM-based administrative reform intended to support the Kim administration’s globalization initiatives.

Kim (2006: 520) described the Kim Young-sam administration’s policymaking system as authoritarian while characterizing the political system as an institutional democracy. That is, as the political system became increasingly democratic, the roles of public administrators in the public

⁵ In 1990, President Roh united with former Prime Minister Kim Jong-pil and Kim Young-sam, a long-time opposition leader. The three political parties, the Democratic Justice Party, the Unification Democratic Party, and the New Democratic Republic Party, merged into a new party called the Democratic Liberal Party.

⁶ In 1993, Korean government adopted the Real Name Law that required individuals to prove their identity when conducting financial transactions. The objective of real-name financial transaction system was to break the collusive link between politicians and businessmen, reduce corruption, and enhance transparency in financial transactions.

policy process were relatively diminished. In particular, during the regime's latter years, the National Assembly grew stronger while presidential domination of the ruling party weakened. In a nutshell, the Kim administration initiated a transition from a bureaucratic regime to a regime of responsive administrators and "transplacement" with the opposition party headed by the next President Kim Dae-jung.

Kim Dae-jung Administration (1998- 2003)

The Kim Dae-jung administration had very little choice but to perform drastic administrative reforms to cope with the challenges of globalization and economic crisis. Following the 1997 Asian financial crisis, South Korea borrowed \$57 billion as a bailout package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In return, the IMF stipulated that Korea reshape its overall institutions and systems aiming to recover from financial turmoil, improve performance, and create good governance. To overcome the financial crisis, from the beginning of the Kim administration in 1998 to the end of the Roh Moo-hyun administration in 2008, the Korean government has enacted reforms in line with NPM doctrines across public, financial, and private sectors, as well as in labor relations. The Kim administration actively fulfilled strong NPM-inspired reform initiatives including cutback management, privatization, introduction of private sector competition system into the operation of public administration, and performance management like Management by Objectives. The reform initiatives were based on the philosophy of the "parallel development of democracy and the market economy" (KDI 1999; Lee 1999).

Adhering to the NPM perspective, the Kim administration incorporated the logic of competition and market principles into organizational management through the idea of agencification,⁷ which aimed to enhance customer-oriented public service delivery, foster performance-focused management of government with increased autonomy in financial, organizational, and personnel matters, and establish businesslike management. In addition to the NPM-based reform agendas, the Kim administration promoted e-government reforms by establishing the Special Committee for E-Government to serve under the Presidential Commission on Government Innovation with the aim of improving efficiency, transparency, and accountability. The Kim administration's aggressive management reform strategies bolstered the influence of civil society, pluralized policy processes, improved regional and gender representation in the bureaucracy, and opened recruitment for public positions. For these reasons, the Kim administration has been described as the "people's government."

As a result of public sector reform efforts, the transition from the bureaucratic regime to the regime of responsive administrators became much stronger than under the Kim Young-sam government. The decentralization of the National Assembly into committees and subcommittees and congressional initiation of public law enactment (e.g., the Basic Law for Regulation including a provision of regulation impact assessment) increased the legislative power of the National Assembly while weakening presidential domination of the ruling party, particularly during the regime's later years (Kwon 1998, 2005; Hahm and Kim 1999; Kim and Moon 2002).

Roh Moo-hyun Administration (2003-2008)

⁷ The concept of "agencification" is a key element of NPM. Pollitt et al. (2001: 271) defined agencification as "an apparent global convergence in the adoption of the agency form." Talbot (2004: 6) proposed three basic criteria that characterize the NPM style of agencies: structural disaggregation (creation of task specific organizations), performance contracting, and deregulation.

The basic principles for government operation under the Roh administration were decentralization, participatory democracy, social equity, innovation, and balanced local or regional development.⁸ Emphasizing the value of participation and political, administrative decentralization, the Roh administration designed a variety of channels for the public to directly participate in politics, guaranteed the right of the people to recall elected officials as a means of adopting direct democracy, and formulated representative bureaucracy as government personnel policy to reflect the representation of gender, regions, minorities, and civil service positions. The strengthened representative bureaucracy, the introduction of the Senior Executive Service (SES) in 2006, the open recruitment for managerial positions, and the widened and diversified civil society weakened the Roh administration's meritocracy. The Special Law on Decentralization Promotion enacted in 2004 transferred central decision-making authority and functions to localities and abolished special administrative agencies (SAA; local offices of central ministries), shrinking ministerial power and putting some ministries at risk of reorganization (Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs 2005; Kang 2006). In the end, the balanced development policy led to conflict between policy priorities and decentralization.

Following the Kim Dae-jung administration, the Roh administration underscored professionalism in government bureaucracy and NPM-based administrative reforms involving performance contracts and strategic management. At that time, the South Korean government was referred to metaphorically as the "republic of evaluation" owing to the enforcement of the Government Performance Evaluation Act of 2006 (Hur 2012). In a similar vein, hosting the Presidential Conference of National Financial Resource Allocation reflected the performance-oriented nature of governance policy. In addition, the newly established Presidential Committee on Government Innovation and Decentralization (PCGID) played a significant role in developing national informatization and e-government projects focusing on financial management, procurement management, and performance management.

Under the Roh administration, both the National Assembly and the opposition party exercised strong power, evidenced by a series of legislator-initiated acts including the Special Law on Decentralization Promotion of 2004 and decentralization roadmaps of 2003. The more obvious example of this power is the impeachment of the President Roh Moo-hyun in 2004. In a 193-2 vote, the National Assembly suspended his presidential powers as head of state and chief executive until the Constitutional Court dismissed the articles of impeachment. President Roh's impeachment was a direct result of weakened presidential domination of the ruling party and reduced presidential power. Thus, increasing legislative power and the strong influence of civil society gave rise to a regime of responsive administrators during the Roh administration.

Lee Myung-bak Administration (2008-2013)

In 2008, the Lee government laid out an agenda to fulfill a governance ideology aligned with pro-market policies, neoliberal economic policies, and the rule of law. Seeking the status of a highly developed country via economic revitalization, the Lee administration placed increasing emphasis on governing and fostering the nation in a business- and market friendly manner. To accomplish these objectives, the government implemented a series of neoliberal economic policies involving cutback management, reengineering of public corporations, corporate tax cuts, privatization, free trade, and

⁸ The Roh administration formed the Presidential Committee on Government Innovation and Decentralization (PCGID). With full support of the President Roh, as a major agent of government innovation, PCGID aimed to make the Korean government more open, transparent, and closer to citizens.

deregulation. Maintaining the Roh's administration's commitment to NPM theories, the Lee government undertook strong NPM-based administrative reforms through performance contracts, pay-per-performance, and strategic management. Lee Myung-bak was the CEO of a big firm and the mayor of Seoul before his election as president, and his slightly arbitrary, CEO-style leadership weakened the seniority system, particularly for personnel management in local governments and the regime of responsive administrators. Thus, the neoliberal reforms in both the public and private sectors, along with weakening civil service protections (e.g., early retirement) under the Lee administration resulted in decreased autonomy of administrators and limited the extent of depoliticization (Chang 1999; Oh 1999; Kang 2002; Oh 2009; Oh and Chun 2012; Jung, Chun, and Oh 2015; Park and Wilding 2016).

Underlining the subordination of administrators and close political alignment between politicians and administrators, political-administrative relations during the Lee administration were diversified into two different regimes—the regime of isolated administrators and the regime of politicized administrators. In short, low, mid-ranking, and young administrators were subordinated to politicians and subject to separate roles and norms, whereas high ranking administrators tended to become elected officials at the central and local level, indicating shared roles and extremely reciprocal relationships between elected officials and administrators. As a result, under the Lee government, the National Assembly enjoyed strong political power evidenced by a number of legislator-initiated acts and weakening presidential domination of the ruling party in the face of a strong opposition party. The Lee government's unpopularity stemmed from its agreement to resume U.S. beef imports, after the so-called “mad cow disease” incident in 2008. The Four Major Rivers Restoration Project in 2011, estimated to cost approximately \$17.3 billion, was similarly unpopular. These two events caused public demonstrations organized by an increasingly robust civil society that increasingly opposed the administration's major initiatives. These decisive events critically complicated the Lee government's smooth administration of state affairs.

Park Geun-hye Administration (2013-2016)

The Park Geun-hye administration initially governed according to the responsive administrator model and subsequently adopted an approach that combined the isolated administrator model (extreme case of the separate role model) and the politicized administrator model (extreme case of the overlapping roles model). By definition, public officials must maintain “neutral competence” (as proposed by the separate roles model) by exercising professional judgment and maintaining neutral perspectives in the public policy process. Moe (1985) argued that political expectations drive modern presidents to seek “responsive competence” instead of “neutral competence.” In the same vein, Wolf (1999) identified “responsive competence” as a product of the centralized coordination of all organizations designing and implementing policy (pp. 142-143).

Under the Park administration, members of the National Assembly sought politically “responsive competence” from public administrators who acceded to political norms and the preferences of politicians regarding the president's political needs. The representative example is the so-called “culture blacklist”—a list of anti-government artists created by the Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism. According to the Special Prosecution Team's report, the Presidential Office created both “a blacklist and a whitelist” to control artists and thus filter the creation and distribution of cultural content; as a result, the report indicated that the conservative Park administration misused more than \$172 million. Another example involves the demotion or forced resignation of several high-rank

public officials in the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism as a result of direct pressure from the minister and President Park. According to the report, the officials were essentially punished for interfering with Choi's pursuit of personal interests. These events testify to the weakening of protections for the civil servants that took place under the Park administration. In particular, early retirement and reduced job security drove public administrators to act as political agents for elected officials or the majority party.

Owing to their final authority over major policy decisions, members of the National Assembly occupy superior positions, meaning that public administrators had little choice but to support the preferences and expectation of political leaders. In reality, compared to previous presidencies, the number of bills initiated by the National Assembly increased during the Park administration, while the percentage of administrator-initiated acts decreased. As Svava's (2006) possible models of political-administrative relations state, the Park government was an extreme example of the responsive administrator model, "manipulated administrators," in which political leaders manipulate administrators to the extent that administrators became powerless and neutral, and it becomes impossible to maintain professional standards (p. 961). This context contributed to "Park-Choi gate" and President Park's eventual impeachment.

The Park administration's governing vision included new policy goals like economic revival, the people's happiness, cultural prosperity, and peaceful unification; perhaps most importantly, the administration sought to establish trustworthy government. It prioritized a designed new paradigm for government operation, so-called "Government 3.0," which aimed to make government more open, transparent, service- and individual citizen-oriented, problem-centered, and competent—thus pursuing post-NPM principles. Like the Kim Da-jung, Roh Moo-hyun, and Lee Myung-bak administrations, the Park government embraced NPM ideas focusing on government performance evaluation. Park and Wilding (2006: 1074) argued that most administrative reforms during the Park government were geared toward reinforcing rather than streamlining presidential power. Meanwhile, the policymaking power of the National Assembly, evidenced by the number of bills initiated by legislators in the 18th and 19th National Assembly, increased significantly. Strong legislative powers and the active adoption of NPM doctrines align the Park administration with Svava's (2006) responsive administrator model.

The most influential event during the Park administration was the "Sewol Ferry Disaster," which occurred on April 16, 2014 and resulted in the deaths of 304 people. The sinking of the Sewol Ferry provoked widespread social, political, and emotional reactions in Korean society. Many people criticized the actions of the captain and crew, the ferry operator, and the regulators responsible for overseeing its operation. At the same time, Korean citizens censured the South Korean government for incompetence and irresponsibility. Members of the victims' families and the general public expressed deep anger at related government agencies, politicians, and at President Park personally because they believed her ultimate obligation as president was to protect Koreans. Consequently, the Sewol ferry incident stoked citizen disenchantment with the country's political and public administration systems and contributed to Park's political downfall.

Characteristics of Political-Administrative Relations during the Park Government as an Explanatory Factor of "Park-Choi Gate"

Regarding public policymaking and public administration, a series of incidents that took place in the South Korean Presidential Office, several government agencies, and public foundations during the Park Geun-hye administration contravened Wilson's politics-administration dichotomy. The blurred

boundary between policy decision-making and administration generated a malfunction in the system of democratic accountability, leading to deteriorated transparency in the public policy process. The more serious problem was the failure to guarantee the significant value of public administration neutrality in both politics and policy. Disclosures that public officials under the Park administration were unable to say “no” even to unfair and irrational policy decisions and were forced to implement decisions with no questions asked highlight the critical importance of the politics-administration dichotomy. The lack of separation between policy and administration precludes the political neutrality of public officials that the Constitution of the Republic of Korea guarantees.⁹

One reasonable framework for identifying the causes of “Park-Choi gate” and Park’s impeachment considers the relationships between politics and public administration in terms of power difference, division of roles and norms, and the level of control of administrators by elected officials, as Svava (2006) proposes. To this end, this paper investigates the changes in political-administrative relations between 1963 and 2016—summarized in Table 3. Table 4 shows the changes in the number of bills initiated by the National Assembly, which reflect legislative power. Table 5 compares the percentage of administrator-initiated acts among five successive administrations beginning with the Kim Young-sam administration in 1993 and ending with the Park Geun-hye administration in 2016. During the Park administration, administrator-initiated acts were 57%, indicating a low level of legislative power and capacity, despite the fact that Park’s party held a majority in the National Assembly. By comparison, 81.8% of administrator-initiated bills were passed during the Noh Moo-hyun administration even though the opposition party held a majority in the National Assembly. Thus, Tables 4 and 5 reflect the concentrated power of the legislative branch gaining the upper hand in checking and even controlling the executive branch.

Table 3. Changes in Politics and Administration Relations from 1963 to 2016

Presidency	Characteristics of administration’s policy systems	Characteristic of public officials
Park Chung-hee Administration (1963-1979)	Founding of modern bureaucracy ¹⁰ : beginning and strengthening stage of bureaucratic authoritarianism (a combination of military elites and technocrats)	Autonomous administrators in the context of bureaucratic authoritarianism
Chun Doo-hwan Administration (1980-1988)	Cracking stage of bureaucratic Authoritarianism (a combination of military elites and technocrats)	
Roh Tae-woo Administration (1988-1993)	Sinking and dismantling stage of bureaucratic authoritarianism (pluralists policy making with reduced roles of technocrats)	
Kim Young-sam Administration (1993-1998)	Germinal stage of new governance (president-centric authoritarian policy making system)	Responsive administrators in the context of new governance
Kim Dae-jung Administration (1998-2003)	Stage of heading for new governance (president-centric authoritarian policy making system)	
Roh Moo-hyun Administration (2003-2008)	Embodying stage of new governance (participatory and decentralized policy making system)	

⁹ In the Korean Constitution, Article 7(1) stipulates that “all public officials shall be servants of the entire people and shall be responsible to the people” and Article 7(2) mandates that “the status and political impartiality of public officials shall be guaranteed as prescribed by Act.”

¹⁰ According to Max Weber (1962), modern bureaucracy refers to the rational government system on the basis of legal-rational authority as an ideal type.

Lee Myung-bak Administration (2008-2013)	Returning to traditional governance emphasizing the rule of law	Responsive administrators and further diversification into isolated administrators and politicized administrators
Park Geun-hye Administration (2013-2016)	Returning to bureaucratic authoritarianism (president-centric authoritarian policy making system, imperial presidency)	Responsive administrators and further diversification into isolated administrators and politicized administrators

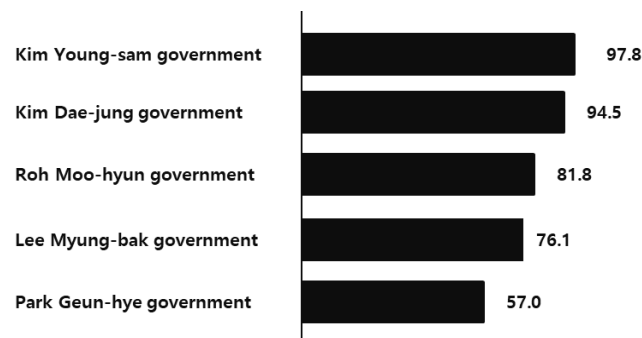
Source: Moon 1988; Song 1999; Moon & Ju 2007; Kim 2008; Lee 2009; Jung, Chun, & Oh 2015

Table 4. Changes in the Number of Legislator-Initiated Enactment

National Assembly	13th	14th	15th	16th	17th	18th	19th
Period	1988-1992	1992-1996	1996-2000	2000-2004	2004-2008	2008-2012	2012-2016.05
Number of Legislator-initiated Enactment	462	252	806	1,651	5,728	11,191	16,729
Presidency: Roh Tae-woo (1988-1993); Kim Young-sam (1993-1998); Kim Dae-jung (1998-2003); Roh Moo-hyun (2003-2008); Lee Myung-bak (2008-2013); Park Geun-hye (2013-2016)							

Source: Chun (2013); National Election Commission (2012); Cha & Kang (2016)

Table 5. Changes in the Percent of Administrator-Initiated Enactment (unit: %)



Source: Office for Government Policy Coordination (2016); Ministry of Government Legislation (2016)

In summary, viewed through the lens of Svava's (2006) models, the Korean government transitioned from the autonomous administrators model to the responsive administrators model. Considering Kim's (2000) argument that political-constraints continued to be a major obstacle to Korean government reforms, conditions like a small ruling party and big opposition party had critical effects on government reform efforts and the compliance of bureaucrats. During the Park Geun-hye administration, public officials were very supportive and extremely responsive to politics (i.e., politicians, elected officials, or members of the majority party who direct political processes), not to the public. Meanwhile, assertive and powerful members of legislature exercised authority in making major policy decisions by controlling or even manipulating administrators (Lee 2008; Kim 2008; Lee 2009; Jung, Chun, and Oh 2015). Accordingly, as public officials became much more responsive to the preferences of elected officials and the National Assembly's policymaking powers increased, policy neutrality of public administrators withered by degrees. .

Tables 4 and 5 depict an interesting, contrasting tendency. Between 1988 and 2016, the number of legislator-initiated acts consistently increased reaching its highest point during the Park Geun-hye

administration. By contrast, the percentage of administrator-initiated acts reached its lowest point under the Park government. The increase in legislative powers is evidenced by the number of bills initiated by legislators, which grew from 806 in the 15th National Assembly (1996-2000) to 5,728 in the 17th National Assembly (2004-2008) and to 16,729 in the 19th National Assembly (2012-2016). Table 6 shows changes in power distribution among major political actors including the president, the National Assembly, the Prime Minister, and the ministries during past presidencies; it depicts the Korean government's historical transformation from the autonomous administrators model to the responsive administrators model.

Park and Wilding (2016) attributed the reduction in both ministerial power and prime ministerial power to presidential efforts to develop the economy and increase control over ministries and agencies. It is caused by the very nature of presidential power guaranteed by the Constitution. Because the Korean president is the head of the government and the chairperson of the Cabinet, which is the highest body for policy deliberation and resolution in the executive branch (Article 66 and 88 of the Constitution), the president is likely to seek control over policy processes at the expense of ministerial power. Additionally, since the Kim Young-sam administration, continuing government reform efforts focusing on NPM principles (e.g., abolishing offices under prime minister or privatizing government-funded corporations) reduced both ministerial power and prime ministerial power. During the Park government, the increasing politicization of presidency along with the decreasing power of ministers and the prime minister laid groundwork for "Park-Choi gate." Thus, grounded in Svava's (2006) models of political-administrative relations, these tables collectively explain why "Park-Choi gate" and the impeachment of President Park ultimately took place.

Table 6. Changes in the Power Distribution among Main Political Actors

Period	1981-1993	1993-2008	2008-Present
Presidency	Chun Doo-hwan Roh Tae-woo	Kim Young-sam Kim Dae-jung Roh Moo-hyun	Lee Myung-bak Park Geun-hye
Presidential power	Strong	Some reduction vis-à-vis ministers	Increasing
Legislative power	Weak	Increasing	Strong
Prime ministerial power	Weak	Increasing	Decreasing
Ministerial power	Weak	Increasing	Decreasing

Sources: Chang (1999); Oh (1999); Jung, Chun, & Oh (2015); Park & Wilding (2016)

Imperial Presidency

The Park Geun-hye government clearly fits the mold of the imperial presidency. The Park government became imperial once it began relying on powers beyond those allowed by the Constitution of Korea. Consistent with Schlesinger's characterization in *The Imperial Presidency* (1973), the presidency under the Park government became uncontrollable and exceeded constitutional limits. This resulted from the Park government's failure to recognize and adopt the fundamental principle that the Constitution of the Republic of Korea established three separate branches of government—the legislative, executive, and judicial—not for efficiency but to prevent abuse of power. Contrary to the Constitution's basic philosophy, Park exercised authority arbitrarily, strongly monopolizing power and ignoring the functions of checks and balances. Park had significant influence over the appointments of most government agency members, no matter their rank. It raises questions about what happened to the legitimacy of power and why this Constitutional breakdown occurred.

During the Park administration, no relevant mechanism existed to restrict the president's actual power and decision-making authority. That is, any control and monitoring mechanisms for detecting and limiting the arbitrary exercise of power in the executive and legislative branches failed to function. Nothing prevented Park from monopolizing and abusing political power. Consequently, Park actively and enthusiastically protected the Choi family instead of serving taxpaying Koreans. One piece of remarkable evidence of Park's abuse of power was her dismissal of two culture ministry officials after they sought an explanation for alleged irregularities in the appointment of Choi's daughter to the national dressage team. The two public officials simply performed their jobs according to professional norms; moreover, they possessed legal rights including lifetime employment as government officials. However, the president's order suspended the rights of public officials stipulated in Article 7(2) of the Constitution.

In general, the power and authority of Korean presidents stem from four sources: the Constitution, their own political parties, presidential institutions including the powerful secretariat, and the legitimacy acquired through their national election. To begin with, the Constitution defines presidential status and authority. A president, who serves for one five-year term, is the head of government, the head of state, the chairperson of the Cabinet, and the commander in chief of the South Korean armed forces. In addition, the president has the power to declare war, propose legislation to the National Assembly, declare a state of emergency, and veto bills. However, the president does not have the power to dissolve the National Assembly. Thus, other research frameworks like the politics-administration dichotomy are additionally used to examine the characteristics of the Park government.

A president's second source of power stems from the political party with which he/she affiliates; this association is a determining factor in the establishment of an imperial presidency (Yang 113). A president's power to nominate candidates for every election is a very strong vehicle for controlling his/her political party and constructing divided rather than unified governments, which can result in a power gap between the presidency and the legislature, and malfunctions in the system of checks and balances. In reality, Korean presidents generally have played a leading role in their political parties when they control the legislature; this deprives members of the legislature of autonomy and political independence. Such behavior led the Korean Constitutional Court to uphold the impeachment of President Park. As a result, executive power grew continuously, making it increasingly impossible to maintain balance between legislative, executive, and judicial powers.

Presidential institutions, including the powerful secretariat, serve as the third source of a president's political power. The Korean president can exercise broad decision-making authority over the organization, staffing, and management of the Presidential Office. The Presidential Office is supposed to support both president and senior presidential secretaries in their handling of state affairs. Throughout Korean history, the Presidential Office has possessed considerable decision-making power. Many people have expressed suspicion about former officials in high positions (e.g., the presidential chief of staff, the senior presidential secretary for civil affairs, the senior presidential secretary for Policy Coordination, three influential presidential aides, and an ex-Culture Minister and Vice Minister) proactively helping Choi meddle in national affairs and accrue illegal gains. How did Choi influence and control these high-ranking officials who had official positions and authority? Choi's power stemmed from her undue influence in the Park administration and the support she received directly from Park; in short, the key element of the imperial presidency enabled Choi to exercise power comparable to that of President Park.

“Park-Choi gate” demonstrates that the entire Presidential Office system is broken. Most strikingly, Choi’s ex-husband and a senior aide to President Park initially recruited the three influential presidential secretaries, who were nicknamed the “three gatekeepers.” According to the Special Prosecution Team’s report, the three aides did not negotiate with Congress, political groups, and other members of the executive branch in implementing president’s agendas. Rather, they concentrated on making dogmatic decisions without open communication or information sharing and protecting the interests of the President, the Choi family, and themselves. In addition, by completely controlling the flow of essential information and people into the Presidential Office, they acted as negative versions of gatekeepers.

The fourth source of presidential power stems from the legitimacy acquired by winning a presidential election. President Park was elected in a national election, so the Park administration at least began with legal-rational authority. By contrast, the Chun Doo-hwan government attempted to bolster governmental legitimacy by diluting its image as a military dictatorship. This is why the Kim Young-sam government was named the first “civil government” as a symbol of the legitimate regime change. Similarly, definitions of presidencies such as the “people’s government” (Kim Dae-jung government) and “participatory government” (Noh Moo-hyun government) express the significance of a regime’s legitimacy, which influences the scope and degree of presidential power.

Park’s involvement in creating a so-called “culture blacklist,” which served as a mechanism for refusing artists state subsidies, clearly demonstrates the imperial nature of her presidency. The special prosecutor found that Park and Choi conspired in committing many crimes, including creating a “blacklist” to intentionally discriminate against artists critical of the Park government along with a “whitelist” used to selectively support people in the cultural sector who favored the government. In 2017, the Board of Audit and Inspection of Korea (BAI) conducted a comprehensive audit and inspection of the Culture Ministry. It found more than 400 cases in which the Ministry had illegally and unfairly discriminated against specific cultural organizations or artists who disapproved of the government. It turned out that the Ministry awarded grants in accordance with orders from the Presidential Office, administered policy programs without proper feasibility studies, and executed the budget unlawfully. The BAI requested that the minister take disciplinary action against public officials who violated laws and regulations, pointing out that public officials did not object to illegal or unjust orders from their superiors. The artist “blacklist” clearly violated the freedom of thought and conscience explicitly guaranteed by the Korean Constitution. Few members of Korea’s democratic society could have anticipated the creation of a “blacklist” to discriminate against and control anti-government artists; most Koreans believed such shocking events only occurred under the military dictatorship that had ended thirty years ago.

Additional evidence of the imperial presidency’s negative impact concerns the powerful apparatus that belongs to the Presidential Office. The Civil Affairs Administration Division of the Presidential Office failed to detect, prevent, and remove certain kinds of corruption committed by President’s relatives and associates. Worse, the division’s chief of staff played a key role in assisting Choi to interfere with national affairs, seek private gains, and participate in unjust, illegal acts throughout the public administration. The Special Prosecution Team and a series of trials revealed that, because of her personal connections with his family, Choi asked President Park to appoint the individual in question as a chief staff of the Presidential Office. The fact that the person in charge of preventing the corruption of the president’s relatives and associates maintained a cozy relationship with Choi and committed illegal and unethical acts by taking advantage of his official position and authority in pursuit of personal interests is deeply ironic. In addition to the failure to monitor

corruption inside the Presidential Office, no high-ranking, independent organization existed to ensure the independence of investigations into the corrupt practices of senior officials in public agencies.

The power President Park exercised over personnel management, especially in the filling of Senior Civil Service positions with career employees or political appointments, further demonstrates the imperial character of her presidency. As a reform initiative under the Roh Moo-hyun administration, the SCS was initially adopted in 2006 to increase competition and government transparency, and to recruit competent, professional staff. However, the SCS enabled Park to misuse the power granted by the people for private gains at the cost of crucial values such as democracy, fairness, legitimacy, and law and order. The representative example is Park's demotion and dismissal of public officials in the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, which violated the constitutional rights of government officials.¹¹

Bureaucracy Theory

Weber (1962) described the bureaucratic form as the ideal means of organizing public agencies. His arguments are supported by the reality that countries all over the world have adopted the bureaucratic form in public and private sectors, although bureaucracy is also well known for producing a set of disadvantages including rigidity, red tape, paperwork, goal displacement, and impersonality. Weber's bureaucracy theory helps explain why "Park-Choi gate" occurred and what outcomes can result from the failure to abide by the principles of bureaucracy theory.

Weber's Principle of Bureaucracy: Technical Competence

Weber's bureaucracy theory stipulates that bureaucrats hold organizational roles on the basis of technical competence, not because of social status, heredity, or kinship. This characteristic manifests in the Korean civil service's system for classifying non-elected government officials based on qualifications and technical competence. During the Park administration, personnel administration in the Presidential Office, government agencies, public foundations, and for Korean ambassador positions resembled the spoils system. The Special Prosecution Team, the Constitutional Court, and several trials found that, by unwaveringly supporting and delegating decision-making authority to Choi, Park empowered a civilian without an official position to assign public positions to her relatives or close friends in pursuit of her own personal interests. A minister was even fired for holding different political viewpoints and administrative styles than the president and secretaries in the Presidential Office. The Park government's personnel management was full of abnormal, corrupt practices including "revolving door greetings" and parachute personnel employment resulting from bribes-for-special-favors. A series of illegal and irrational events by ignoring the merit system posed the greatest threat to uphold the fundamental principle of bureaucracy that shapes the public administration field.

Effective bureaucratic administration relies on recruitment based on merit and open competition. By using presidential powers to pocket billions of won, interfere in state affairs, and facilitate her daughter's illegal high-school graduation and college admission, Choi initiated a massive corruption scandal. She was accused of having influenced Ewha Womans University to change their admission

¹¹ One of the claims in the impeachment bill is that Park infringed the Constitutional rights of freedom of speech and press. However, insufficient evidence made it impossible to conclude that Park pressured the Korean newspaper *SegyeIlbo* to fire its CEO for publishing an exposé concerning the Presidential Office leak (<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/Article.aspx?aid=2998555>).

criteria to admit her daughter and give her course credits without requiring her attendance. Ewha Womans University also operates as a bureaucracy, so major bureaucratic principles should have checked Choi's influence. The university's failure to follow its own criteria for the selection and promotion of students enlarged the scope of "Park-Choi gate" and resulted in legal punishment for the university president, professors, and university employees.

Weber's Principle of Bureaucracy: Hierarchy of Authority

Weber's theory of bureaucracy notes that the bureaucratic organization is based on a hierarchy in which lower offices are controlled and supervised by higher offices. This chain of command principle applied to the Presidential Office and government agencies in the making and implementation of policy during the Park administration. When creating the "blacklist" and the "whitelist," Park's directive passed from the Culture Minister to high-ranking officials and then down along the chain of command. Despite the various advantages of bureaucracy, the principle of hierarchy led the Culture Minister to blindly obey Park's orders regarding the blacklisting of cultural figures. The culture ministry granted state subsidies to conservative artists and denied them to liberal artists. In this way, the Culture Ministry "controlled" artists through the three key art organizations (the Arts Council Korea, the Korean Film Council and the Korea Publishing Publication Industry Promotion Agency) to which artists file applications for state subsidies for their projects. Put simply, the hierarchical order in the executive branch made it possible to administer national affairs with no questions asked.

According to the SBS Broadcasting news documentary, "The Birth of Power," televised on April 30, 2017, Park tended to respond unpleasantly to those who expressed opinions contrary to hers while smiling at those who agreed with her. In a similar context, the news documentary depicts what happened in every cabinet meeting, satirically comparing Park's body language with the body language of the ministers. Park is the only one talking—or, more precisely, reading prepared manuscripts—and the ministers are busy writing in their notepads without talking or making eye contact. The image suggests that, in the Park administration, information exchange did not involve discussion or two-way communication; it occurred from the top down, in one-way directives that were unchallengeable and irrefutable. Why did all the ministers transcribe Park's speech when a stenographer always recorded the sessions in shorthand and distributed the minutes to all ministries right after the cabinet meetings? This behavior was a product placing unnecessary and excessive emphasis on the principle of bureaucratic hierarchy.

That not a single person in the Korean civil service system said "no" to former President Park and high-ranking public officials is astounding. In the U.S., Acting Attorney General Sally Yates and several bureaucrats in the Department of Finance opposed President Donald Trump's executive order on immigration. President Trump fired Sally Yates for betraying the Department of Justice by refusing to defend his executive order restricting travel and immigration from seven majority-Muslim countries. It seems less an issue of individual public official quality and more a product of the civil service system itself. The United State government adopts an open career system, the position classification system, while South Korea mainly uses a hierarchical system, only partially relying on the position classification system, to create a closed career system. Since they have significant opportunities to change jobs owing to an open flow of employment between public and private sectors, public officials in the U.S. are relatively more likely to say "no" to their superiors when pushed to act against their wills and to express opinions based on their belief systems. On the contrary, considering the constrained employment flow between public and private sectors in Korea, Korean public officials take it for granted that they must obey their superiors' commands and that the civil service system

means lifetime employment. The Korean Government Officials Act explicitly obliges public officials to obey superiors' work-related commands (Section 7, 57).

Weber's Principle of Bureaucracy: Recordkeeping, Rules, and Regulations

Weber's bureaucracy theory states that administrative acts, decisions, and rules should first be formulated and put in writing and then rules, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and norms should be used to control the behavior and relationships between roles in an organization. Under the Park government, most public administration occurred via direct orders from the Presidential Office after the chief secretaries took orders from Park. Detailed rules and regulations are necessary for government officials as a frame of reference regarding work behavior and work performance. However, in events such as the creation of the "blacklist" and the "whitelist" and the extortion of donations from large conglomerates to establish foundations, rules, regulations and recordkeeping standards simply did not apply. In place of the system of rules and SOPs, three chiefs of staff to the Presidential Office, the so-called "three gatekeepers," delivered the president's agendas, adjusting the flow of information and persons to the Presidential Office based on their own rules. They also disregarded recordkeeping principles that stipulated recording government decisions and actions in both original and draft forms. Thus, most decision-making processes involving public agencies and the Presidential Office under the Park government occurred through informal communication channels like private meetings or phone calls.¹² Consequently, the loop hole in administering the Korean civil service system contributed to make "Park-Choi gate" happen and continue for a considerable period of time without any halt or restriction from public agencies, political parties, judicial system, mass media, or the public.

On July 26, 2016, the cable news channel *TV Chosun* first reported that the Presidential Office had forced several conglomerates to donate almost 80 billion won (\$71.8 million) to the Mir Foundation, a newly established nonprofit organization (NPO) that aimed at promoting Korean culture internationally. The report indicated that Park's senior secretary for policy coordination used his power to coerce donations by pressuring the Federation of Korean Industries (FKI). In addition, Choi established another NPO, the K-Sports foundation, which aimed to promote Korean sports, and this foundation received donations from the same businesses. The news media expressed suspicions about Choi's use of her personal ties to Park to extort donations from big firms and establish the two NPOs she controlled; news reports also questioned who ran the foundations and why they had been formed in the first place. Park and Choi defended the two foundations as contributors to Park's policy of "cultural prosperity" in South Korea.

On November 20, 2016, for the first time, the prosecution named an incumbent President as a "criminal suspect" on the ground that Park was involved in forcing conglomerates to donate large sums of money to Choi's two foundations. As evidence, the prosecution pointed to the fact that after Park's July 24, 2016 lunch with the heads of 17 top conglomerates during which she explained the

¹² There are examples of government decisions that are inconsistent with the established system of rules, regulations, and SOPs in government bureaucracy. For instance, policymaking decisions regarding the deployment of a terminal high altitude area defense (THAAD) missile defense, the agreement between Korea and Japan on the issue of sex slavery, and the nomination of four national government ministers with extraordinary professional and ethical demerits caused a lot of argument and suspicion in the Korean society. The prosecutor's office, the Special Prosecution Team, and trials ascribed these contentious policy decisions to Choi's interference in key national policymaking and personnel appointments of high-rank positions as a means of acquiring personal and financial benefits.

objectives of the two NPOs, most of them made big donations. In particular, Park and Choi targeted specific conglomerates in desperate need of special favors, including special amnesty for chief officers, special tax breaks, or favorable government interventions, from the Presidential Office. With Park's direct involvement and support, Choi made the behind-the-scenes deals with these business chiefs. Such actions are typical of a crony capitalism (i.e., bribe in return for business favors) that is deeply rooted in Korean society—the legacy of rapid, government-driven economic growth. In addition, some senior government officials at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism offered Choi special favors as she planned the establishment of the Mir and K-Sports Foundations—to raise funds from businesses, and to acquire legal permission for the establishment of the two NPOs. In fact, bureaucrats in the Ministry acted swiftly on Choi's orders to ensure the foundations' approval processes, which usually took several weeks, took only a single day.

Weber's Principle of Bureaucracy: Impersonality

Weber highlighted impersonal authority and impersonal relations as the main features of bureaucracy. This means that office bearers should not bring the office with him/her because of the separation of person from position. Public officials can exercise decision-making authority on the grounds that their official government positions, not individual officials, endow them with authority. In a similar context, superiors should maintain formality when dealing with their subordinates, which correspond to the bureaucratic administration. This paper has discussed the absence of clear separation between politics and administration and the excessively imperial nature of the Park presidency as major causes of "Park-Choi gate." Combined with these issues, the failure to abide by the principle of impersonal authority and impersonal relations also contributed to "Park-Choi gate." All parties concerned used their official authority to achieve personal interests. This is especially true for President Park, the Presidential Office, ministers, public corporations, and the public officials involved in "Park-Choi gate."

Governance under the Park Administration: Good or Bad Governance?

Analyzing the causes of "Park-Choi gate" using three theoretical frameworks, this paper evaluates the characteristics of governance under the Park administration in terms of the key elements of good governance. The World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) project reports governance indicators for over 200 countries for the period 1996-2015, from which they derive six key dimensions of good governance (Table 7). The following section analyzes the Park administration's governance in terms of the key dimensions established by the WGI.

Table 7. World Bank's WGI

Control of corruption	Extent to which public power is exercised for private gain including petty/grand forms of corruption and 'capture' of the state by elites and private interests
Government effectiveness	Quality of public/civil services and degree of its dependence from political pressures, quality of policy formulation/implementation, and credibility of government's commitment to policies
Political stability, absence of violence/terrorism	Likelihood of political stability and/or politically-motivated violence including terrorism
Rule of law	Extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by rules of society (quality of contract enforcement, property rights, the police, and the courts)
Regulatory quality	Ability of government to formulate and implement sound policies/ regulations that permit and promote private sector development
Voice, accountability	Extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their

	government as well as freedom of expression/association and a free media
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Source: World Bank Databank (<http://databank.worldbank.org>)

According to the 2016 Corruption Perception Index (CPI) reported by *Transparency International*, South Korea is the 52 least corrupt country out of the 175 countries included in the index. A public opinion poll conducted by one of Korea's major newspapers *Kukminilbo* indicates that citizens blame "Park-Choi gate" on (in order of importance) the corruption of high-ranking public officials and the upper class (47.8%), serious flaws in the presidential system (21.1%), crony capitalism (11.5%), nepotism and egoism (11.1%), lack of citizen monitoring (3.7%), and don't know (3.6%).¹³ This finding suggests Koreans felt a considerable amount of inner rage about the breakdown of democracy and fairness that "Park-Choi gate" represented. The occurrence of political corruption scandal in South Korea itself signifies misuse of public powers for illegitimate private gains. In reality, "Park-Choi gate" involved various forms of corruption including bribery, extortion, cronyism, influence peddling, and nepotism.

Constitutional Court's decision regarding Park's impeachment highlighted in her violation of the South Korean Constitution and other laws of official duty. Specifically, the four claims in the impeachment bill are: 1) Park's violation of national sovereignty and the rule of law by granting political power to her aide Choi, 2) Park's abuse of power in the appointment of government officials, 3) Park's infringement of the freedom of speech/press, and 4) Park's violation of her duty to protect Koreans' right to life and to faithfully carry out her presidential responsibilities. In this regard, the Park administration can be described as lacking key elements of good governance like the rule of law. In addition, the Constitutional Court found that Park ordered the Presidential Policy Advisor to establish the two foundations and granted Choi to extort more than \$69 million from conglomerates. This directly violates the Constitution, the businesses' freedom of corporate management, and the right to property. It reveals the Park administration's lack of regulatory quality—one of the important indicators of good governance.

In terms of other good governance indicator—government effectiveness, during the Park government, the relation between politics and administration applies to the Svava's (2006) responsive administrators model. The number of legislator-initiated acts and the percentage of administrator-initiated acts suggests that the Park administration was highly dependent on political pressure. Another feature of the Park government was the increasing politicization of the presidency, which accompanied decreased ministerial and prime ministerial power and a set of contentious policy decisions made by the Park administration. Stereotypically, government officials make no effort to improve national affairs. Government officials tend to believe that watching and waiting before addressing problems or undertaking tasks is judicious, since decision-making and active administration necessarily make them accountable. Some Korean scholars named this the "public officials without souls" problem in Korean bureaucracy. In short, all these examples demonstrate the lack of government effectiveness under the Park administration.

President Park and the Park administration also failed to assume public accountability—another indicator of good governance. Applying the accountability criteria proposed by Romzek and Dubnick (1987), the Park government failed to ensure legal accountability, professional accountability, and

¹³ Source: public opinion poll by the newspaper *Kukminilbo* with the Korean Society Opinion Institute (KSIOI) from Dec, 1 to 3 (N=1000 adults nationwide, margin of error= 31% at the 95% significance level) (*Kukminilbo*, December 9, 2016).

political accountability. As the Constitutional Court, the Special Prosecution Team, and the trials proved, the Park administration violated multiple laws and, because of Park's overreliance on her aide, Choi, failed to place organizational activities in the hands of public officials with appropriate expertise. In light of a majority of anti-Park protests for a certain period of time, the Park administration did not seek political accountability due to the lack of responsiveness to the public, elected officials, and interest groups. Instead, the Park administration mainly pursued bureaucratic accountability by concentrating power at the top of bureaucratic hierarchy. It appears that this inordinate pursuit of bureaucratic accountability combined with the failure to assume legal, political, and professional accountability prevented the Park government from effectively and efficiently conducting state affairs. Put simply, the Park administration epitomized bad governance.

Table 8. Types of Accountability Systems

		Source of Agency control	
		Internal	External
Degree of Control Over Agency Actions	High	Bureaucratic	Legal
	Low	Professional	Political

Source: Romzek & Dubnick (1987: 229)

Conclusion

The history of Korean politics suggests that the presidency carries an almost almighty power. In particular, President Park Chung-hee—the impeached President Park's father—was a well-known dictator, and his daughter grew up learning how the president, as a military dictator, exercised complete control over national governance. During the Park Chung-hee dictatorship, Park's opponents were tortured, imprisoned, and even killed. Indeed, while the dictatorial regime ended many years ago, some older Koreans still regard the president as someone whose power cannot be challenged under any circumstances. This explains why a many older people including traditional “Park the Elder” supporters joined the series of pro-Park protests in opposition to the candlelight rallies during the most chaotic period of President Park's impeachment.

In 1993, when Kim Young-sam became Korea's first civilian president after three decades of military rulers, South Korea had the chance to become a genuine democracy. Kim Dae-jung who took power in 1998, established the most well-meaning and functional democracy in the country's history. In 2003, young generations witnessed one of the most critical political events in recent years: the parliamentary impeachment of former President Roh Moo-hyun. The National Assembly, then dominated by the opposition Grand National Party, passed the motion for Roh's impeachment on the grounds that he made supportive comments about his political party. The impeachment motion showed the public that presidents could be challenged and even stripped of their powers. In this case, politicians tried to strip former President Roh off his power, not the people themselves.

More recently, the younger generation experienced the Constitutional Court's impeachment of President Park, which originated from a National Assembly motion for impeachment. Park became the first democratically elected president to be forced to leave office by the combined forces of the legislature, the judicial system, and Korean citizens—the majority of whom supported the anti-Park candlelight protests. Now, all generations in South Korea recognize that not even the president

exercises absolute power and that the people can make a president resign from office. The unique political and governing attributes of previous administrations continue to affect Korean society. In other words, Korea's outdated political system, long mired in corruption, cronyism, and factionalism still exerts a strong impact on contemporary politics and public administration. "Park-Choi gate" and Park's impeachment clearly demonstrate the deeply rooted nature of this history in Korean politics, the presidency, and public administration.

Now, we must employ our three theoretical frameworks to answer the question posed by this paper's title. It appears that South Korea does need a "bridge over troubled water." It needs the opportunity to establish the type of good governance that can move the country forward, heal the division among the people, and address all the dimensions of bad governance that characterized the Park administration. Above all, the new president Moon Jae-in has to change the rules of game by reforming the country's political system, concentrating on establishing clear boundaries between politics and administration and between politics and business. South Korea needs an outspoken, legitimate, and decisive president with powerful leadership skills—not another imperial presidency. Basically, it is imperative to form a culture in which the president, elected officials, public officials, the staff at the Presidential Office, politicians, CEOs, and scholars can say "no" when they are pushed to act against public interests, fairness, legality, rationality, and transparency.

Now, most Koreans agree that greater attention should be devoted to the implementation of political, administrative, and institutional reforms. This is the way to prove a series of countrywide anti-government demonstrations with candlelight change politics, government, and public administration and transform "people power" into positive dynamics. What should South Korea do to prevent a repeat of "Park-Choi gate"? The Korean civil service system needs to take organizational lessons from "Park-Choi gate" and correct the problems of the system. South Korea needs to change the rules of game by overhauling the nation's political system and reforming public administration and management systems. Under the new government, collusive ties between politics and business need to be severed, and public administration and management must actively seek to prevent the creation of such ties.

Clearly, "Park-Choi gate" disgraced the nation and President Park's secret empowerment of Choi to freely interfere in important state affairs angered and frustrated the Korean people. Nevertheless, we should not underestimate the importance of the candlelight rallies, which remained peaceful and orderly and were not led by political parties, politicians, interest groups, labor unions, or religious groups, but voluntarily organized and sustained by the general public, for an extended period of time. Although many people have criticized the candlelight protests, there is no denying that these huge, peaceful gatherings gave the public a collective voice that forced the National Assembly to pass the impeachment motion on December 9, 2016 and finally opened the door for the Constitutional Court to uphold the parliamentary impeachment. In this regard, the scale, duration, and characteristics of the candlelit rallies shed meaningful lights on the future of South Korea.¹⁴

The events of 2016, the year of the historic "candlelight revolution," suggest that, through various avenues, Koreans will continue to have a bigger say in national affairs, politics, the presidency, the Presidential Office, and public administration. After voicing their opinions with candles and seeing the real differences they could make in Korean society, citizens will no longer keep silent about

¹⁴ What started as a crowd of 200,000 on Oct 29 in downtown Seoul grew to 1 million by Nov 12, 1.9 million nationwide by Nov 26, and a record 2.32 million on Dec 3 (*The Korea Times*, December 30, 2016).

injustice, corruption, abuse of public power, or the evils of imperial presidencies. The impeachment of the president and the legal repercussions faced by the secretaries of the Presidential Office and the government officials involved in the corruption scandal serve as strong precedents for the punishment of public figures who violate their obligation to serve public interests. Harnessing the momentum of these significant events, intensive research into “Park-Choi gate” (like that undertaken for this paper) aims to help build a “bridge over troubled water” and ultimately create a new South Korea. In order to start all over again, we need to liquidate the old problematic systems that caused “Park-Choi gate.” Thus, we must hold the people and groups involved in “Park-Choi gate” responsible for their decisions and actions, rebuild national anti-corruption and integrity systems, create a culture opposed to political scandals, and deliberate on good and bad governance.

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