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### The Change and Structure of Korean Education Policy in History

Kaeunghun Yoon\*

Abstract: South Korea developed national economy to escape poverty and education was the most significant tool for being rich individually and nationally. Actually, for past decades, Korea education policy focused on public education to provide equal educational opportunity for all and was evaluated to be successfully. However, increasing income of people in Korea society, people wanted to be richer. These desire brought serious competitive social atmosphere and even, Korea education policy was to face a particular set of problems caused by an intensified gap between the rich and the poor in their level of education due to excessive investment in private education. As the result, in these days Korea education policy was to have the problem that reconstructs public education and decrease private education. To contemplate the problem of Korea education policy, this paper identifies the current characteristics of private education that arguably are the root causes of education problems in Korea; understands the historical development of this problem by tracing the development and evolution of Korea's education policy; and analyses the structural problem of education policy that has caused the expansion of private education.

Keywords: state-educational, private-education, inclusion, competition

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### Introduction

Nationwide, Korea faces a particular set of problems related to education policy, arguably caused by an intensified gap between the rich and the poor in their level of education due to excessive investment in private education (Yoon, 2010a). In general, Korean society, which views education as a means of moving up in social class and creating wealth (Yoon, 2010a), has lost confidence in public education.

There have been efforts to solve these problems, for instance, through regional educational support centres, and policies that promote the use of the Internet to support learning. However, evidence reveals that regional educational support centres for adolescents has not sufficiently addressed the gap between the quality of private education and that of public education (Yoon, 2010a). Many middle school and high school students for whom the centres were established were playing computer games, rather than using the computers for educational purposes. Many other students stopped by and used the centre computers at no cost before proceeding to their private educational institutes (Yoon, 2010a).

As an example of the influence of economic disparities in educational opportunity, Yoon (2010a) reveals evidence of an observation of a particular 3rd grade student waiting among other students for his turn to use a computer, which would come only if one of them offered their seat. When it was suggested to him that they would use the computer for a long time, and that he should go home to use a computer, he replied that he needed the Internet to finish his assignment, but he did not have a computer at home. Since computers and access to the Internet were available at his school, it was still not clear why he came to the community centre to wait for a turn. As I continued to talk to him, I came to understand that he worried that his friends would become aware of his poor economic situation that prevented him from attending a private educational institute after school. Rather than risking alienation from his friends by staying at school to use the computers there to finish assignments while they went to attend private lessons for piano or English, he came to the community centre to use the computers, sometimes waiting for over an hour for access to a computer (Yoon, 2010a).

Evidence reveals that the education gap cannot be resolved by the current institutions and policies for public education in Korea (Yoon, 2010a). Moreover, the gap tends to increase, as students with parents who

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provide them with financial support that gives them access to private education receive a higher quality education that is fast-tracked within a supportive environment. Yoon (2010a) demonstrates that a fundamental problem in the education system in Korea is the absence of education policies that enable public education to compete with the high quality of comparatively expensive private education. As a result, in general, Koreans have low expectations of public education. This paper aims to identify the current characteristics of private education that arguably are the root causes of education problems in Korea; to understand the historical development of this problem by tracing the development and evolution of Korea's education policy; and to analyse the structural problem of education policy that has caused the expansion of private education.

The term 'public education' refers to the national and other public schools that are established and managed by the government and other public organizations. Unless specified, it implies public schooling (Na Byeonghyeon, 2001). 'Private education' refers to tutoring, home study, compensatory learning, and preparatory lessons in arts and physical education, and has been recognized as being in contrast to the concept of public education (Ko Hyeongil, 1998). Specifically, it has been translated in English in the context of such terms as 'private education', 'private institution', 'private tutoring', or 'private school' (Ko Hyeongil, 1998, p. 21). In addition, when the concept of private education is defined, the location where the education takes place becomes important. For example, if education occurs within the buildings of a public institution, it is considered public education. If it is provided in other places, it is deemed private education. In addition, if individuals pay for education, it is considered private education; if public institutions pay for it, it is public education. The government defines all education except regular classes in elementary, middle and high schools, and education for special abilities and aptitude after school, as private education (Korea Educational Development Institute, 2003).

Jeon Seungheon (2005) describes the fundamental problems of private education as follows: Private education interferes with normal operations, causing differences in growth of student identities based on interventions provided by private education for those that can afford them, and promoting frustration in students, a development that reproduces social and economic inequities that hinder social integration. The result of not offering the same education opportunities for all is a waste of available national

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resources that distorts the market and the national economy. In a contrary argument, Kim Younghwa (2004) suggests that private education does not cause an educational gap, and instead, is able to satisfy various educational demands that are not met by public education.

However, as entrance exam competition for middle schools has become fierce since the late 1960s, the phenomenon of private tutoring has arisen, becoming a serious social problem. Parents have wanted, and have been willing and able to pay for, private tutoring with family wealth resulting from Korea's economic development during this time. Over this period, the gap of educational opportunity continued to widen, based on level of family income (Lee Donhee, 1983, p. 318). To address this, the government announced 'measures to reduce private educational expenditure' as its comprehensive and middle-short term educational policy (Korea Educational Development Institute, 2003). There were five core components of the policy: first, the use of E-learning education materials as 'compensatory class after school', to negate the need for private tutoring after school; second, the acquisition of excellent teachers; third, a teacher evaluation system, to ensure the quality of public education; fourth, the expansion of student choice at all levels of the education system; and finally, improvement of the University entrance system (Yoon, 2010a).

Unfortunately, this policy had little impact, as parents continued to pay for private education after school to enable their children to achieve higher scores and University admission. Consequently, to raise the standard academic level, the government created 'self-governing private high schools' to be given wide discretionary authority in the selection of students and teaching methods. In doing this, the government shifted the supply of high quality education to the private sector, rather than offering varied and effective public education (Jeon Seungheon, 2005). This resulted in the creation of good private high schools for University admission, and more parents paying for private education of middle school students to enable them to access the more selective private high schools. The government policy had attempted to maximize the efficiency of public education by establishing these self-governing private schools as a more desirable option for parents looking for private education options because of disappointment with public education, in effect, focusing on increasing private educational expenditure, rather than on the purpose of education. The difference between the self-governing private schools and other public high schools was that the former obtained elite students, while the latter's

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students were chosen by a local educational committee (Yoon, 2010a). That is to say, the self-governing private schools were able to obtain funding from parents and school foundations, and allowed the selection of elite students from middle school throughout the country for University admissions testing (Yoon, 2010a).

The desire of parents to send their children to places of higher quality education to enable them to gain economic and social capital (Bourdieu, 2000) is considered a source of development of the nation, underpinning potentially dramatic economic growth. However, at the same time, it causes demand for, and rapid expansion of, private education; a loss of confidence in and expectations of public education; and the widening of the educational gap between those who can afford private education and those who cannot. The position of the present author is that this is the current challenge to be resolved by educational policies in Korea. To address this challenge, this paper asks three questions: First, how have educational policies been developed historically in Korea? Second, how can analysis of education in Korea, and the loss of confidence in and expectations for public education? Third, what are the implications for policy that emerge from this analysis?

### The Post-War Education Policy of the Rhee Syungman and Subsequent Governments (1945–1960)

The year 1945 is significant for Korea because the Allied Forces won World War II, Japan was evicted from Korean soil (on 15 August), and Korea was divided into two. The South was occupied by the U.S., and the North by Soviet Forces, to settle conflict and establish the independent governments within each. General Headquarters (GHQ) governed South Korea for three years (Yoon, 2010a). Education policy under GHQ influence was mostly focused on the democratization of education, which meant education for all, equality in opportunity, political decentralization, compulsory education policy and an adult education plan (Chunsuk, 1975).

Through the subsequent Constitution and the Korean War, the education policy of Korea focused on educational reconstruction under Japanese influence (Hiroshi, 1987), emphasising anti-communism and, in accordance with the policy of education for all, the implementation of compulsory

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education for better opportunity (Hiroshi, 1987), alongside a policy for Illiteracy Eradication (Hiroshi, 1987). Under GHQ governance into the 1950s, these policies aimed for 'maintenance of public security of South Korea, seamless establishment of the independent state, and eradication of Japanese influence out of the peninsula to construct a democratic society', and 'to eradicate the remaining militaristic ideology for democratization of Korea' and the propagation of democratic ideology (G.H.Q. U.S. Army Forces, 1946).

Implementation of compulsory education and other educational policies was achieved through GHQ-led reorganization through the Committee of Education of Korea, comprising academic experts in fields of Elementary Education, Intermediate Education, Professional Education, Cultural Education, Female Education, Advanced Education, General Education, Medical Education and Agricultural Education (Chunsuk, 1975). Ordering the restructure of elementary schools nationwide on 24 September 1945 (upon enforcement of General Order #4 on 17 September 1945), the Committee banned using Japanese textbooks, mandating Korean texts in all education processes and practices. However, eradicating illiteracy using Korean emerged as a barrier, as more than 80% of Korean citizens could not use Korean, as a result of previous Colonial Education policies (Chunsuk, 1975).

After the three-year GHQ rule, South Korean President Rhee Syngman and his government established a unified education policy in 1948, which put great significance on the development of personal or individual identity through education, as a 'contribution to the development of a democratic state, by rounding up a proper personality and self-containment (Excerpt, Article 1 of Education Act)'. Such a policy was to present the ultimate value of education and the ideal character of a human being (Yoon, 2010a).

With the onset of the Korean War, the education policy of Korea put more emphasis on national defence, declaring a 'Wartime Education Policy' (Chunsuk, 1975), and began anti-communism education as the War subsided. Under the slogan of 'Improvement in Anti-communism Education Contents and Simplification of Lifestyle', the government engaged once more in ideological unification through the development of the character of the citizen. Investment was made in education as a resource, after being devastated during the course of the three-year Korean War, with a view to generate an economic boost and develop the character of the people. The Education System featured American-style components

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such as democracy and education<sup>1</sup>, and a Japanese-style administrative body<sup>2</sup>, in which elites that belong to a particular administrative organization operate for their own profit. Post-war education policy focused on the School System of '6-3-3-4', Conception of Local Educational Operation System, Compulsory Elementary School Education, Improvement in Intermediate and Advanced Education, the Establishment of Education Colleges and Schools, the Implementation of Middle School Entrance Examinations, Post-War Restoration of Education Facilities, Training and Deployment of Teachers and Expansion of Compulsory Education, Consolidation of Technical Education and Implementation of Education Policy for Educational Autonomy (Chunsuk, 1975; Yoon, 2010a).

After Rhee Syungman resigned, President Yoon Bo Seon and Prime Minister Jang Myeon led the educational policy based on the slogan 'Man of Decent Character', and focused on 'Educational Progressivism of America' advocated by John Dewey, swerving away from knowledge-based education (Chunsuk, 1975). The educational policy of the government of Yoon Bo Seon focused on democracy and teachers' freedom to develop the educational curriculum, following theory advanced by Dewey and such as is found in Finland today (Sahlberg, 2012).

# The Education Policy for Anti-Poverty of the Park Chung-Hee Government (1961–1979)

### Politico-economic Status

In the wake of the Korean War, with the nation's economy struggling and dependent on foreign aid, the Rhee Syungman government pushed an agriculture-driven economic policy. Farmers and agriculture industry had no option but to bear the cost of price stabilization until the industrialization of the agricultural structure in 1960. By the time of the 1961 Military Coup (16<sup>th</sup> May), led by Former President Park Chung Hee

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> G.H.Q. US Army Forces, *Regulation of Political Parties*, Ordinance Number 55, 23 February 1946, Official Gazette United States Army Military Government in Korea No.1, Sept,1945 – September,1946, Part I.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> G.H.Q. U  $\cdot$  S Army Forces, Education in South Korea (Summarized by Dr. H.G. Underwood, 1947.6).

and his servicemen, the Korean economy suffered turbulence regarding anti-poverty and economic modernization. Scores of corrupt entrepreneurs were charged with the secretive accumulation of wealth under Rhee's protection; to justify the process of regime change by the government, the Supreme Council for National Reconstruction reverted such wealth to the national Treasury (Lee Jaehi, 1999). Most of the imprisoned entrepreneurs were released, however, on condition of their contribution to the industrialization of Korea, as it was deemed impossible to have economic growth without them. Park Chung Hee retired from the Army to run for the presidency and after his 1962 election, his official government focused on 'Economic Development and Industrialization' (Park Sangsub, 1986; Hochul, 1995).

Korea experienced a decline in foreign aid in the 1960s, as aid was replaced by credit assistance as a result of financial burden on the U.S. economy (Ilyoung, 1984). Consequently, President Park focused on long term economic growth, rather than the priorities of the education policies of the 1950s, establishing an Economic Plan Authority, which enabled an export-driven economy by way of cheap, qualified labour, and the boost of the global economy. The Korean economy of the 1960s saw significant growth, as demonstrated in Table 1. Please note in particular the 61.1% growth in exports in 1963.

Table 1. The Growth Rate of Export and GNP (%): 1962 - 1971

			5	1		( . )				
	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971
GNP	2.2	9.1	9.6	5.8	12.7	6.6	11.3	13.8	7.6	8.8
Export	31.7	61.1	37.9	45.8	42.9	34.0	45.1	35.4	34.0	28.5
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Source: Amsden Alice, Asia's Next Giants: South Korea and Late Industrialization, New York, Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 66.

Under the export-driven high growth rate, Park's economic policy experienced an increasing trade imbalance, with significant imports of more raw materials, paying back amounts owed from credit assistance, and a global drift toward protectionism, leading parties to implement trade restrictions to safeguard their own interests. This economy was in need of a boost to the Gross Domestic Product to match the dramatic increase in exports.

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The lack of investment in Korean agriculture, which had caused grain supply shortages in 1968 (Jang Shanghwan, 1991), also led to a significant imbalance between industry and agriculture. President Park instituted the New Community Movement to prioritize human resource development to underpin domestic economic growth, the development of agriculture and industrialization (Lee Mangap, 1973; Park Jinhwan, 1979; Yoon, 2010a).

### Education Policy for Human Resource Development

In strong need of high-quality, well-educated labour, the government brought the concept of 'Human Resource' into its education policy at that time, under the theme of 'development of the effective and functional human resource out of education policy' (Choi Jangzip, 1985 p. 184.). Overhauling the entire curriculum that had first been established in 1954, President Park stressed 'Independency', 'Productivity', and 'Practicability' in education, securing the skilled, technology-oriented human resources required for industrialization.

Compulsory elementary education and expansion in the education curriculum had continued from the aforementioned GHQ period, and solidified during the course of Korean War. The education system became more competitive during Park's presidency, with an increased rate of recipients of intermediate education from 35.1% in 1966, to 40.8% four years later (Kim Eunmee, 1998).

Repealing the Education Autonomy System, President Park enacted the Temporary Education Act in September 1961, established at least one Education Collage in every Province nationwide in 1962 and opened the first technical high school (five-year course). Korean education was significantly reformed in 1968, to improve the status and education curriculum of the university, to adopt its first University Entrance Examination in an effort to afford equal admission chances nationwide, and to abolish the middle school entrance examination in the standardization of middle schools. In December 1968, with the enactment of the National Charter of Education, President Park presented his educational ideology as well as his view on the desired aspects of life and education. Based on his remarks in 'The Second Economy', from his related official press conference in 1968, President Park and his followers emphasised antimaterialism and commonly agreed upon the importance of establishing a sound lifestyle and values for the sustainable development of the nation. Accordingly, it can be said that the National Charter of Education is the

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materialization of 'The Second Economy'. From the standpoint of education policy, the Education School System was revoked in 1962, and replaced by the Education College (two-year course), which was later replaced by the Education University to train teachers for intermediate education. In 1970 and 1972, the Technical College and the Correspondence College were established, respectively. During the foresaid period, Korean education had faced quantitative growth, raising correlative problems on matters of overpopulation in school, oversized schools, lack of teachers, a drop in the quality and content of education, and overcompetition among intermediate students. Scores of policies were suggested and enacted to cure these problems, in an effort to, once again, restructure the education system of the nation (Yoon, 2010a).

Overall, the education policy of this period attained significant growth, quantitatively, thereby living up to the demands of a growing society, as well as presenting problems related to over-competition for college entrance examination.

#### Economic Development and Reformation of Consciousness

Facing politico-economic struggles during the 1960s, President Park cleared off the vestiges of his industrialization policy, which represented the lopsided development of the nation. With Korea's traditional concept of agriculture focusing for the most part on self-containment, the farmers' interests had always been pushed aside, as the production machine in line with the national agricultural policy of 'Production Increase'. Such policy led to an imbalance in income level, limiting the growth in income for agricultural areas to 50–60% of that of urban areas, which enjoyed fourfold growth in GDP during the period 1962–1970. The annual growth rate of GDP in agricultural areas was limited to 4%, as opposed to 20–25% for the industrial growth rate (Rhee, 1973).

Along with the importation of U.S. farm products (in accordance with U.S. Public Law No. 480) in 1955, farmers in Korea should have kept pace in the pricing of their farm products with the decreasing prices and governmental policies aimed at price stabilization to stimulate the growth of the nation. The implication of their failure to do so was that, on the whole, they did not understand the relationship between their pricing and international trade, because they were generally excluded from learning and educational opportunities. Farmers simply accepted the circumstances as

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their fortune and life (Son Insu, 1987). To change their thinking, education for farmers through President Park's policies was needed (Yoon, 2010a).

Economic inconsistencies, inherent in the imbalanced, export- and conglomerate-oriented development, eventually threatened President Park's administration, which lost some of its seats in the ensuing General Election and support in the Presidential Election of 1971. Boosting agricultural areas was deemed the quintessential solution in the wake of these politico-economic threats, by means of domestic market expansion, realization of goods value and the enhancement of farm production (Yoon, 2010a).

Heavily burdened with the expenses of agricultural development, the simultaneous effort to win political support was deemed something that Park's government could not afford while fast-forwarding industrialization (Yoon, 2010a). The New Community Movement (the Saemaul Movement) was intended to resolve this problem, handing over the economic boost to the agricultural areas by means of self-containment. Improving lifestyle and focusing on the idea of 'self-reliance' and 'diligence', the Movement incorporated New Community Education to push the development of the national economy, as well as the democratization of society, all in an autonomous way. The modern values of the New Community Movement helped establish the Korean Democracy, often referred to as the New Community Democracy. Swerving into political education, education policy under Park's presidency put great emphasis on the sovereignty, aiming for the reformation of 'civic consciousness' (Yoon, 2010a).

Alongside this focus on political education represented by the New Community Democracy was 'educational welfare', intended to benefit underprivileged children. Korea National Open Middle School, Korea National Open High School, and Korea National Open University were all established at that time, in an effort to provide distance learning media, as well as a special school for working students. Teacher welfare took a big leap, with the enactment of the 'Private School Teacher Pension Law', to secure occupational stability. Relevant laws and regulations, including the 'Public Corporation Establishment and Operation Act', the 'School Operation Property Standard for Educational Foundation' and the 'Academic Promotion Law' were correspondingly enacted, to provide for private school finance and to take better control of the governing laws (Yoon, 2010a). The government established distance education institutions for the expansion of educational opportunities, and to ensure that teachers

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had strong motivation regarding education, laws were enacted for enhancing the welfare of teachers (Lee Donhee, 1983).

Overall, education policy in New Community Movement era was mostly for political education, via community-level development and the nationwide promotion of heavy industries. However, producing a highquality labour force and highly centralized policies could be construed as restrictive and non-democratic, posing a problem for 'educational democracy'.

### The Educational Policy for Democratisation of the Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae-Woo Governments (1980–1992)

The 1980s were years of political turmoil, beginning with the assassination of President Park, who had so greatly contributed to significant national growth through the New Community Movement. President Chun Doo Hwan took the reign the same way that Park did, by cracking down on the Gwangju pro-democracy movement and struggling with pro-democracy movements nationwide that were led by students and factory workers, while simultaneously pushing the export industry and investing in middle-east Asia and other foreign countries (Construction/Oil Development). Chun's administration declared democracy on 29 June 1987, promising the transferral of presidency by way of democratic voting. In economic terms, President Chun diversified exports while upturning domestic demand, exceeding the supply. Also contributing to Korea's economy during this time were the Seoul Olympic Games of 1988 (Lee Jaehi, 1999). Consequently, sustainable growth was experienced during the 1980s, by gaining control over the conglomerate-led structure dominated by heavy industries. Because of the pervasive problem of collusive links between corporations and the government, the 1980s economy was more or less dictated by the government.

Collectivism prevailed during this time as well, stirring up labour disputes, as human rights and social security issues became influential. Overall, the Korean society of the 1980s could be described in sum as a time of 'social conflict', where growth and conflict (Pro-democracy Movement) co-existed.

With growing interest in education, followed by consistent economic growth and a hike in income, President Chun adopted the 'School

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Transferral System' in 1969, and promoted the High School Equalization Policy in 1974, increasing the rate of high school enrolment and thereby causing over-competition for university entrance in the late 1970s. With growing income inequality reflecting in education opportunities, President Chun banned private lessons for high school students, as well as capping the number of university graduates (referred to as 7.30 Measure). Under the slogan of 'Educational Innovation, Cultural Creation' and setting a goal of democratic, righteous and welfare-oriented society, Chun's government also established an educational framework, amending the Constitution in favour of education policies.

One notable amendment is Article 29 (5) of the 5th Constitution (8<sup>th</sup> amendment, 25 October 1980), on lifelong education. Enactment of the 1982 'Social Education Act' provided every citizen a chance to be the recipient of lifelong education, to not only supplement school education, but to also improve the civic consciousness. Education policy under Chun's presidency pivoted on Constitutional amendment to provide variation of education opportunity, and democratization of education, featuring 'hair and dress code liberalization' and private lesson ban. Due to the military origin of the regime, however, it was unable to resolve over-competition in education.

### The Educational Policy for Globalisation of the Kim Young Sam Government (1990–1997)

With the Cold War era on the wane in the early 1990s, the world became more globalized; Korea concluded its military regime, and President Kim Young Sam established the so-called 'Civilian Government'. Upon 6.29 Declaration by President Roh Tae Woo instituting presidential voting, which is deemed the essence of democratic movements, President Kim won the very first 'democratic' presidential election in the post-military era. Kim's Civilian Government took a neoliberal direction, with the declaration of a globalization plan and a new millennium just around the corner, at the press conference of the 2nd APEC meeting (17 November 1994), in line with the APEC's globalisation vision and forecast. The plan comprised unification, economic development, cultural bounty and ethical decency; in practical terms, this meant easing regulations and elevating 'market principle' in the varied fields of economy, administration,

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education, etc. (Bosun & Hakhan, 1998).

With neo-liberalism prevailing across the globe, and a change in U.S.-Korea policies from a national security focus to an emphasis on economic boost, Korea faced global demands for an open market and globalization. Kim's conservatism, as well as that of his U.S.-educated advisors, was in line with this neo-liberalism, and thereby friendly to the easing of regulations and privatization (ex: Real System in Finance/Public Concept of Land/New Policy about Conglomerates/Industrial Relations Reform Committee).

Kim's administration maintained the existing education policy track, while forecasting and preparing for IT-based education, recognising the civilizational significance of a new millennium. In light of predicted levels of competition, with globalised open-ness and sharing, preparation for techoriented IT-based, multi-lateral education was inescapable. With education being the only way to live up to such necessities, Kim's Civilian Government, under the slogan and goal of 'New Korea, New Education' and 'Creation of New Korean, for Advanced Korea', established reformminded, individualised, IT-based, and globalised education. Declaration 5.31 Educational Reform Report (of the Education and Reform Commission) implemented neo-education policies, keeping pace with globalization, in the information era.

Recognising the problems of the military regime's education policies (i.e., memorization-oriented education; unilateral education; and quantitative education for industrialization), this Commission derived opportunities to be creative, and espoused reform-minded education policies by establishing the foundation for lifelong education, and recommending recipient-oriented education (bi-lateral education in favour of recipients, boosting competition among educational suppliers); variation in education, swerving from the unilateral, hierarchical education to provide varied curriculum and schooling (Elementary/Intermediate/Advanced) to foster student potential, creativity, and personality; autonomous, responsible school operation (stepping away from an administrative body, and reflecting the recipients' opinion); liberal, equal education (equal opportunity for self-development); informationbased education (reform-minded, multimedia-based education without time or spatial limitation); and quality education (service-minded education administration for a comprehensive support system). Based on these recommendations, the education policy of Kim's administration addressed

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the following aspects: 1) Variation and specialisation of the University; 2) Procurement of an education budget (5% of GNP); 3) Establishment of a school appraisal system and multi-lateral education; 4) Establishment of occupational education; 5) Reformation of elementary/intermediate schooling; 6) Reformation of governing laws, regulations and taxation; 7) Presentation of varied opportunities for university entrance; 8) Policy reformation for teacher welfare; 9) Autonomous, responsible private school; 10) Alleviation of private education expenses; and 11) Public childhood education (Education and Reform Commission, 1995).

These reforms were intended to establish variation and specialisation of education, in a recipient-oriented way that deviated from centralised administrative control, as self-responsible, autonomous management units of education. Breaking from the common notion of the traditional education of the military regime, Kim's administration merits special attention for its transformative education philosophy, in preparation of the drastic change to come. Coercive reformation of the educational structure and application of neo-liberal market principles to the field of education, and serious budgetary limits for educational policy remained obstructions to a perfect education system.

# The Education Policy of the Kim Daejung Government in Economic Crisis (1998–2002)

In the Pan-Asian economic crisis of 1998, which started with the plunging Taiwanese Bhat, the Korean economy was devastated. The government, led by Kim Dae Joong and often referred to as the 'People's Government', intended to focus on worker's welfare. On the other hand, with regard to economy policy, drastic conversion toward the market economy, an open market, and other neo-liberal economic policies were on the horizon, together with easing regulations and corporate privatisation, such as a telecommunications company to be called KT (Yongjo & Gangbok, 2006). Education policy at that time corresponded to the economic recovery effort, pivoting on 'competition', 'performance', and 'efficiency'. From the socio-cultural perspective, Kim's administration stressed the development of IT technology, demanding that education policy remain competitive in the international field of technology.

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Reformation of education policy placed great emphasis on human resources, shifting from industrial to knowledge-based society, and for the strong resilience from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout. Competition-based education administration adopted a policy appraisal system by the Education Committee and a university appraisal system, with varying financial support according thereto. The People's Government also established a 'Human Resource Development Basic Plan', hinging on human resources and knowledge-based growth, to maximize the efficiency of policy implementation (Yoon, 2010a).

The education policies under Kim's presidency first featured the structural reformation of the administrative body, by establishing the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development in light of the significance of human resources for competitiveness in the global economy, in order to increase exports and support finding a larger market abroad. Reformation of the school curriculum (often referred to as the '7th Reformation') was another notable departure, suggesting a 'Neo-education Reformation Plan' via the Education Reformation Committee, which was the presidential advisory body of education. The Neo-education Reformation Plan suggested the three different 'variation-focusing' principles of expansion of the curriculum and managerial autonomy; diversion into multi-lateral, recipient-oriented education for student aptitude and capability; and adoption of self-initiated education for student creativity. Lastly, there was the 'Early Retirement Policy of Teacher', recognizing the problem of setting the retirement age at 65 years of age. Deemed to have deviated from its predicted purpose of 'procurement of skilful teachers' (Chosunilbo, November 12, 1998), the teacher retirement age was set earlier than before, to open the door for young teachers and to save on salary expenses (45 million won per teacher reaching retirement age, or sufficient amount to pay out three different young teachers) (Younghwa, 2004). When enacted, one retirement granted opportunities to three different young teachers, with fewer students allocated to each teacher. This was also deemed to resolve the teacher unemployment problem (Chungangilbo, November 3, 1998).

Notwithstanding the above, the Early Retirement Policy had a downside as well, causing insecure teachers to be unable to focus on their teaching duties, as well as causing demoralization, with negative effects on the quality of education. Teachers also opted into 'Voluntary Retirement', causing the pension to be depleted. Modern society regards the Early

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Retirement Policy as a failure that caused education quality to drop, in addition to the early retirement of quality human resources (highly experienced, and good educational professionals). BK 21 (Brain Korea) was one governmental-level business budgeting 200 billion won a year for seven straight years (1.4 trillion won in total) for human resources development, in preparation for the new millennium. Supporting the regional footholds for graduate school research and the regional universities in line with the industrial demand, the business was to conduct quality research programs, as well as produce quality human resources. Also of focus was industry-university cooperation, for the sound foundation of industrial development, as well as the national competitiveness (Mun taeksu, 2001, p. 11). BK 21, however, was perceived as causing problems with special favours between recipients and non-recipients, causing university grading. Support was lopsided to the big universities and the field of science, as measured by research performance, often outperformed by these recipients. Overall, BK 21 is considered to be a system where selective performance and the aforementioned problems co-exist (Yoon, 2010a).

In sum, the education policy of Kim's administration was based on neoliberalism and individual responsibility and autonomy, improving the existing education policies in favour of competition and ranking, although it has been regarded as impracticable in light of 'political reality'.

### The Educational Policy of the Roh Moohyun and Lee Myungbak Governments: Between Welfare and Competition (2003–Present)

The term 'Education Welfare' signifies the particular type of education presenting equally both opportunity and quality of education (The Ministry of Education and Human Resources, 2004), the value represented by President Roh and his government, aiming for provision of sufficient education to the people, based on student aptitude and capability (Lee Hyeyoung, 2003, p. 254).

There are a few policies represented by Roh's administration, including the designation of education welfare regions. These were intended to prevent a lack of education for underprivileged children and students, to improve their academic and physical ability, as well as building decent personalities and meeting cultural demands. Education welfare was

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supported by a network, such as 'Home-School- Regional Community' (Yoon, 2010a).

After-school activity was another effort of Roh's administration to provide better education opportunity, to benefit student creativity and personality. The purpose of after-school activity was to satisfy private education demand within the school-level, alleviating private education expenses and benefitting educational equality by protecting the educationvulnerable (i.e., underprivileged or provincial) groups (The Ministry of Education and Human Resources, 2007).

Special education was another notable education welfare area of Roh's administration, with economic affluence and growing demand for education for the challenged. Education support for multi-cultural family children was also involved, with growing numbers of international marriages and foreign workers who married and settled in Korea. These 'culturally vulnerable' classes were highly likely to be exposed to underachievement in education, due mostly to their imperfect Korean language, financial struggles, and social isolation. Free education for the underprivileged and other education welfare programmes were comprehensively pushed forward under Roh's presidency, highly in favour of the underprivileged, multi-cultural families, and provincial areas in poor surroundings (Yoon, 2010a).

Appearing to be welfare-oriented, the political ideology of President Roh was in line with Kim's neo-liberalism, pivoting on human resource and self-improvement education devoid of government intervention, and establishing decentralisation of education policy; granting equal opportunities to the underprivileged; activating correspondence education for more opportunities; improving college entrance-focused school education; and promoting human resource development and lifelong education (Yoon, 2010a).

Though appearing to focus on educational welfare, a value disregarded by the former governments, the education policy under Roh's presidency contained problems as well including over-easing regulations, decentralizing policies and reflecting neo-liberalism and competition, as Kim's government had done. Improvement of school education, in part, contributed to deviation from the college entrance focus, in favour of student creativity and diversity, but caused the less confident students to rush to private institutions, thereby widening the education gap between classes. Overall, Roh's policy enhanced diversity and creativity in education and developed high quality human resources, but at the same

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time, it expanded the private education market and led to the deterioration of public education (Yoon, 2010a).

President Lee took the reign from Roh under the slogan of 'Autonomous Diversified Education System', advocating practical decentralization of education policy; high school variation projects; and three-phased autonomous university entrance (Yoon 2010a). Education policies applied to provincial areas had been decentralized, to the extent practicable for the respective regional administration body, handing over the entitlement to the regional Education Offices. Variation in principals' appointments, increased teacher hiring, and notification of school information were part of the effort for autonomous school operation (Yoon 2010a). The high school variation project was intended to alleviate competition and secure varied human resources, by establishing Dormitory Schools, Meister Schools, and Autonomous Private High Schools. An admissions' officer system and narrowed university entrance exams are other efforts to ease education competition (Yoon, 2010a). Lee's administration has further succeeded the policies of the previous government, in areas such as focused welfare for region, school, and student property; basic academic ability guarantee and state scholarship; childhood education improvement; special education support; and after-school activity for dual-income families (Yoon, 2010a).

With focus on easing competition and private education expenses, Lee's administration recommended varied educational tracks and job opportunities for students, while facing downturn insecure teachers' authority and schooling system. Though showing the limitations of a governmental role, Lee's administration stressed the significance of 'household education', prompting parents to recognise the importance of decency in student personality. The education policy of the post-IMF bailout era has balanced on education welfare by granting equal chances to the underprivileged.

### The Shift from Public Education to Private Education

The history of Korean educational policy shows evidence of several triumphs (e.g., the overcoming of a national illiteracy rate of 80%, the enforcement of compulsory education, and the creation of an educational environment of lifelong learning). Historically, Korean educational policies

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have quantitatively expanded the educational opportunities available to people. In fact, the quantitative expansion of educational opportunities is at the core of Korean educational policies (Yoon, 2010a).

How have parents and learners evaluated and understood this quantitative expansion of educational opportunities? Generally, they believe that the most significant purpose of education is to ensure that people are able to find high-paying jobs and lead happy lives (Kim Younghwa, 2004). Many parents and learners have welcomed the opportunity to provide educational opportunities for all at first, believing that students would be able to obtain high paying jobs in the areas of law, and medicine, etc. They considered this educational policy to be the best way to realise social mobility. In fact, some learners did secure high-paying jobs after completing their education; however, these learners studied hard and had parents who invested heavily in their education (Yoon, 2010a).

With the changing economic situation in Korea, the educational policy of lifelong learning was enforced, because learners needed opportunities to continue their education and maintain their economic status (Youngdal, 2007). Korean educational policies proceeded to expand educational opportunities from compulsory education to lifelong learning. The government attempted to increase the nation's welfare by instilling a strong passion for education among learners and parents. However, although most learners now had education opportunities, parents whose children studied in public schools worried that their children might not do well in life, and felt the need for new ways to realise more effective learning achievement. If their children were to secure high-paying jobs in a competitive job market, they needed to learn what students at private schools were learning, rather than what other public school students were learning. These parents had a strong passion for education, and felt the educational policy providing equal learning opportunities to public school students to be unsatisfactory (Yoon, 2010a).

This article now analyses why educational policies have not lived up to the aforementioned passion for education, first from the perspective of the history of educational policies and development of democracy in Korea, and then from the perspective of globalization.

#### Educational Policies and Democracy

With economic growth and the development of political democracy in Korea, educational policies could turn to focus on the provision of

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educational opportunities for all. To promote this, the Chun Doo-hwan government enforced partial restrictions on what could be taught to primary and secondary cram school students. However, towards the end of the 1980s, with the development of political democracy in Korea, these restrictions were lifted (Yoon, 2010a).

The movement to bring political democracy to Korea noted that the regulation of private education deprived people of taking advantage of diverse learning opportunities. Therefore, all such regulations were discontinued, and a variety of educational opportunities came into being. Additionally, democratic thinking in school management was accepted as a significant factor in the provision of equal educational opportunities. Concrete examples are the enhancement of teachers' classroom autonomy and approval of teachers' unions as legal organizations, which freed school management from government control. As a result, teachers could teach their own classroom subjects without being limited to a government-enforced framework. Educational policies took into account teacher autonomy in the classroom and autonomy in school management, and allowed freedom of choice with regard to public and private education (Yoon, 2010a).

When teachers won autonomy in their classrooms and their teaching, they focused on teaching diverse subjects such as liberal arts, physical education, art, and music, all of which had little to do with college admission examinations. However, parents soon began complaining about this. Such complaints were often directed at teachers who were members of teachers' unions. Nonetheless, teachers who supported the political left wing continued to teach such subjects, leading to anxiety among parents about the state of public education. Consequently, after their children finished secondary education at public schools, parents began sending them to private cram schools, where they could learn subjects that would help them with university/college entrance examinations (Yoon, 2010a; The Ministry of Education and Human Resource, 2007).

Even though educational policies have seen quantitative expansion (e.g., increase in the number of schools since 1945) and diversified learning content, thanks to political democratization, parents have turned away from public education, which they do not believe to be effective in preparing their children for university/college entrance examinations. In other words, while the aims of educational policies—the provision of educational opportunities for all, the diversification of learning content, the

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democratization of school management—were positive, they could not live up to the needs of the actual beneficiaries of the policies, the students and parents. Additionally, in the 2000s, educational policies faced the political challenges of globalization. Globalization led to inconsistencies between the validity of the aims of educational policy and educational beneficiaries' needs. The following section will analyse the problems created by globalization for educational policies (Yoon, 2010a).

#### Dilemma of Education Policy and Globalization

Since the 2000s, many young Korean students travelled to the U.S. with their mother, because learning English, the most global language, became an important goal for Korean children. Once the significance of English language had been understood, parents found it insufficient to send children to English institutes in Korea. Consequently, they expected their children to study in the U.S., and to enter Ivy League universities such as Harvard or Yale, to have a successful life (Yoon, 2010b). In the process of globalization, parents recognized that speaking English like a native speaker might expand their children's potential role to the world beyond Korea. Economic assistance is usually required, for children and their mother to live in the U.S. Thus, a new type of family developed, in which the fathers, who came to be called 'wild goose fathers', sent tuition fees and money for living expenses for their children and wives in the U.S. (Yoon, 2010b).

As the importance of English language generated this phenomenon of separate living of families in Korean society, the government implemented a policy of early English education from third grade, revising the curriculum which previously required that English be taught from grade 1 in middle school. The government intended to accept the needs of parents for English education and to resolve inequality of English education, which many parents could not afford through overseas study (Yoon, 2010b).

However, despite the intention of the government policy, the early English education caused another social problem. When the government introduced English education from grade 3 as an educational policy, parents had in mind to teach English even earlier. Thus, there was a dramatic increase of private English language centres and English kindergartens. Private education for exam preparation was lowered from the elementary level to kindergarten level (Yoon, 2010b).

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Thus, even though the government adopted a policy that was intended to resolve the economic burden of learning English, it had the result of moving up the period of private education and increasing the economic burden. Early English education in Korea was introduced to cope with trends in globalization, to reduce the burden of educational cost of English to parents and to realize equal opportunity of English education. However, it caused the opposite result, making Korean parents give high priority to the significance of English for earlier introduction by the government policy. Thus, it appears the educational policy in Korea seems not to have sufficiently considered the mentality of parents, who create the demands of the educational market. Of course, such dependence on private education is caused by a fundamental lack of confidence in the quality of public education. Another reason is that parents think if their children follow public education strictly according to the educational curriculum, they seem to fall behind the competition (Yoon, 2010b).

The government also attempted to permit special high schools to have rights and freedom of curriculum planning to advance Korean and overseas universities beyond the uniform curriculum of all high schools in order to resolve earlier competition to some degree. For example, such high schools include autonomous private high schools with rights of free curriculum, foreign language high schools with specialized education for language, and science high schools nurturing science- and technology-talented students. In doing so, the government intended to prevent brain drain of early overseas study, and to restore reliability of public education by allowing an in-depth curriculum faster than private academies (Yoon, 2010b).

However, this creation of elite high schools caused unexpected results. It was that the entrance of elite high schools was recognized as the fast track for the universities with the best reputations. As a result, lectures on private academies were organized for students who wanted to enter elite high schools. Thus, it generated an increase of private academies and competition. From the perspective of parents, general high schools seemed to have a lower level of curriculum compared with those elite schools. Thus, they aimed for their children to enter those schools. The competition to enter elite high schools through private education began at the kindergarten level, and continued with two distinctive tracks of competition for English and for the entrance exams of an elite school (Yoon, 2010b).

Public education supplying an in-depth curriculum at elite high schools, and accepting parents needs for preparing their children for prestigious

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overseas universities by reducing educational cost by diversifying curriculum, led to opposite results. Such diversified education policy by expanding elite high schools overlooked the fact that every parent regards their children as elite, and invests in education without reservation. In the end, education policy for restoring the reliability of public education by diversifying public education caused the increase of private education. Thus, it casts doubt on the possibility of restoring reliability of public education and reducing private education in South Korea.

## The Paradigm Shift of Educational Policy (from Quantitative to Qualitative)

From the historical perspective on Korean education policy, disbelief among the beneficiaries of education in the success of the quantitative expansion of educational opportunities and qualitative improvement continues over the long term. In the initial stage, the task of educational policy was to remove illiteracy and expand opportunities for school education, which met with sufficient success through quantitative expansion. However, when people came to regard graduation from reputable universities as a short cut to financial means and happiness, parents felt that public education was deficient. This caused a lack of confidence in public school education by parents, and dependency on private education.

Based on such results, the Korean educational policy seems to have three issues to address. First, should Korean education continue to change to satisfy the needs of parents who are beneficiaries of education? Alternatively, should education policy provide general and universal content, necessitating learners to obtain additional course study on their own? Education policy in Korea stands at a crossroads between these two options. Second, it seems important to create educational policy that seeks qualitative improvement, because public education was not able to satisfy parents or children through quantitative expansion. This would mean the closure of quantitative expansion of public education. Third, how would the government policy provide for students who could not afford private education in terms of educational welfare? In particular, if public education falls behind private education in the qualitative sense, it cannot provide

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formative educational welfare. Educational policy in the context of active welfare needs to satisfy qualitative demands, as well.

### Conclusion

Education policy in Korea has evolved according to political and economic change over time, addressing illiteracy education, obligatory education, minimizing entrance competition, expansion of lifelong education, improvement of English education, etc. However, all of these policies focus on quantity rather than quality, causing the beneficiaries of education to have a lack of confidence in public education. That is to say, Korean education policy paid too much attention to quantitative expansion. However, parents continue to promote voluntary investment in education in order to win over the competition, which makes public education less useful than ever. Education policy seems meaningless to parents with a passion for education and financial means.

Thus, public education seems to focus only on beneficiaries of education who have economic hardship without the ability to afford private education. Though it may be meaningful in terms of educational welfare, it is questionable if the role of educational policy itself is executed. If education policy is to play a meaningful role in the education of its citizens, Korean society must consider the principle of authentic educational welfare through qualitative improvement.

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