햇볕정책과 여론:
지속성과 변용의 관점에서 본 실증분석

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ABSTRACT

The Sunshine Policy and Public Opinion:
Empirical Analysis of Surveys from the Perspective of Continuity and Alteration

This paper examines continuity and alteration of the sunshine policy in the next government by analyzing survey data the Kim Dae-jung government, conservative newspapers, and liberal newspapers have respectively taken for last four years. Let alone the governmental data, survey outcomes of the liberal and conservative newspapers suggest that the sunshine policy has strong public support that is roughly higher than 65% on average and the lowest rate was 33.9% in early 2001. The supporting rate of the sunshine policy is 20% higher on average than that to the general performance of the Kim government. This finding can be interpreted

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that the public tends to regard their support to the government with the support to the sunshine policy, which is to be conducive to the continuity of the policy.

In terms of ideological preference, the conservatice elements of South Korean journalism are critical while the liberals are supportive to the policy. Much larger circulation of conservative newspapers is burdensome to the continuity, but pressing the policy to be altered or discarded. One of the most tangible characteristics of South Korean politics, the regionalism, also affects to the sunshine policy to be altered, rather than to be maintained as it has been. Kyongsang province, the largest region in South Korea, has critical attitudes, while much smaller Cholla province shows demonstrate strong support to the sunshine policy in general.

However, two other sociological factors captured in the survey data such as age and education play a role to buttress the sunshine policy. The younger their ages, the higher the supporting rate; the higher their educational background, the higher the supporting rate. These two factors countervalue the ideological influence of the conservative journalism and gerional factor enforcing the public disapproval to the policy. To sum up, considering the strong public support per se up to present seen in the survey data, the higher educational elements and the younger generation, continuity is has stronger inertia than regionalism and ideological traits forces the policy to be altered. In conclusion, therefore, the next government, whatever the candidate, would not change the basic propositions of the sunshine policy, although some parts of it would be inevitably altered. Continuity will undercurrent in the next government’s policy towards North Korea.

Key words: The sunshine policy, public opinion, continuity, alteration