

## **Introduction**

In October, 2003, the Korean President who had been elected just 8 months before proposed an unprecedented National referendum the result of which might lead him to step down. His shocking announcement, although the referendum was not called due to national opposition, followed the nation's rapidly dropping approval rating of his performance. In a poll conducted by a newspaper company, for example, only 16.5% of the Koreans supported him.

What can explain such a poor presidential approval rating in his early incumbency? Considering that social judgment, including evaluation of a president, involves selective activation of prior knowledge (Wyer & Srull, 1989), and that political information is almost exclusively provided by mass media, it is necessary to investigate how mass media have portrayed the president.

Regarding media effect on public opinion of presidential performance, the study of priming has combined quantitative analysis of media texts and poll data (Pan & Kosicki, 1997; Krosnick & Kinder, 1990; Iyengar & Simon, 1993). One may note that the idea of priming is based on accessibility of knowledge, a psychological concept, determined by frequency or recency of the previous activation of the knowledge. Since the concept of frequency and recency is quantitative, media analysis in previous priming studies has mainly delved into quantifying the news coverage of specific issues (e.g. economic recession, Gulf War, and Iran-Contra disclosure) rather than going through the content of the news coverage of the issues. (Pan & Kosicki, 1997; Krosnick & Kinder, 1990; Iyengar & Simon, 1993).

However, frequency or recency of positive/negative issues covered by news media is just one way that media influence public opinion. Framing research, which initially had focused on media content assuming media-produced frames will influence public opinion, also started

conducting experiments to identify the effect of frames on individuals (McLeod & Detenber, 1999; Raghubir & Johar, 1999; Rhee, 1997). According to framing research, the way the media frame issues or people can affect the audience's information processing, calling attention to some aspects of reality while obscuring the other (Price & Tewksbury, 1997).

Although both perspectives provide different theoretical bases on which different media effects on public opinion are identified, this does not mean that both effects operate independently from each other: An integration of both effects should occur in the complicated process of political judgment, since judgment must involve knowledge activation (Forgas & Bower, 1988; Wyer & Srull, 1989) and a media frame can be a piece of knowledge to be activated or primed. Cappella and Jamieson (1997) also proposed that priming is "the mechanism through which news frames stimulate thought processes and emotional reactions." (p. 59)

Regardless of the possible combination, however, previous studies rarely examined priming of a specific frame in the public political judgment. One of the reasons for this is that framing studies usually do not analyze actual news media nor utilize survey data, they just rely on experiments. Considering the inevitable mixed effects on actual information processing in the public mind, this study investigates how priming of media frames influences political judgment, comparing the result of a framing analysis and poll data of two presidential approval rating.

To identify the frames of the President, one of the commonly recognized aspects of framing research is notable: Frames are better examined by comparison (Entman, 1991). This is because many framing devices in media narratives usually look so natural that one cannot easily and fully detect them. Accordingly, this study compares the media coverage of the 14<sup>th</sup> President and the incumbent 16<sup>th</sup> President. The 14<sup>th</sup> President was selected because the socio-economic situations of the two periods of their incumbency were similar.

The *Policy* frame by which news conveys the image of the policy-performing president, and the *politics* frame that describes the president as an individual politician with his political motivation and strategy are quantitatively examined. In so doing, news narratives are analyzed in terms of the main topic of a story (government/ party/ person), sources (government officials/ party members/ experts/ citizens), titles assigned to the Presidents (Dae-tong-ryung/ Jeong-Kwon), and the style of quotations of the Presidents (formal/ informal). The topic of government, sources of government officials and experts, title of President, and formal quotation of the Presidents are assumed to be the framing devices for the policy frame, while the rests are for the politics frame.

After deciding which frame is assigned to each President, this study compares them with two groups of poll data in which the reasons for people's approval or disapproval of the Presidents were asked in an open-ended question. The priming effect of media frames is examined by comparison.

## **Literature Review**

### **Media Effect Study I: Priming Effect on Presidential Approval Rating**

The main purpose of the study is to identify media effect on the dropping public support of Korean presidential performance. Regarding the public approval rating for a president, priming researchers have explained that the heightened accessibility of social issues caused by frequent or recent media coverage becomes a heuristic device that people utilize to assess presidential performance (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987).

Pan and Kosicki (1997) quantified the news coverage of the Gulf War and the subsequent economic recession in the U.S., and found that the issue predominant in the news coverage became the most frequent criterion by which people evaluated presidential performance.

Krosnick and Kinder (1990) also found that the U.S. intervention in Central America played a larger role in the public's assessment of President Reagan's performance after the Iran-Contra disclosure than before, using 1986 National Election Study data.

Media priming, however, cannot sufficiently explain the plummeting presidential approval rating. It is because the Korean society in the early incumbency of Roh administration did not have an "issue regime," or a period when one "megastory" (e.g., Gulf War, economic recession, and Iran-Contra) absorbs the majority of media attention (Pan & Kosicki, 1997). Accordingly, one may shift the research question to that of how news media framed the president, anticipating that a change of dominant media framing of a president might have influenced the presidential approval rating.

### **Media Effect Study II: Framing Effect on Presidential Approval Rating**

*Previous Studies of Framing Effect.* Originally, such critical scholars as Tuchman (1978) and Gitlin (1980) introduced the idea of framing into American media studies. They tried to identify media framing that they thought contributed to maintaining the status quo. Assuming framing effect on audience, many subsequent studies have delved into delineating media framing of specific issues or groups of people: the anti-war movement and the New Left in the Vietnam-era (Gitlin, 1980); nuclear power (Gamson, & Modigliani, 1989); KAL and Iran Air Incidents (Entman, 1991); downsizing of a car company (Martine & Oshagen, 1997); the poor (Bullock, Fraser, & Williams, 2001); the feminists and feminism (Lind & Salo, 2002) and so on.

Unlike the text-oriented media framing studies, the psychological effect of media framing became a research question in the 1990s (McLeod & Detenber, 1999; Raghbir & Johar, 1999; Rhee, 1997). For example, McLeod and Detenber (1999) investigated the effect of different

frames of an anarchist protest, conducting an experiment in which three television news stories, different from each other in their level of status quo support, were provided to the subjects.

*Framing and Priming.* Although the previous studies did not deal with presidential approval ratings, studies based on experiments provided substantial evidence of the psychological mechanism by which mass media can influence the audience's judgment; text-oriented framing studies have just assumed the effect without measuring the audience's response. The identification of framing effect in an experiment, however, is not an exact substantiation of actual media effect on public opinion since an experiment is not a real situation where political judgment occurs.

When people respond to a survey expressing their presidential approval rating, cast a vote for a candidate in a presidential election, or discuss a political issue with their colleagues, they usually rely on stored knowledge in their memory bin, which is activated on the spot of political judgment (Forgas & Bower, 1988; Wyer & Srull, 1989). The stored knowledge activated should be from their cumulative experiences of being exposed to mass media, each of which is similar to an experimental situation. If one has been exposed to various frames of an issue, the question of which frame is activated in one's political judgment arises, and an experiment studying a simple framing effect cannot provide an answer to it. The question is especially not dismissible when considering that framing is a contested area between sources, media workers, and audience, and different frames compete even in a news story (Carragee, 1997).

Regarding the question of which frame will be activated, the idea of priming can provide an explanation. According to Higgins (1996), priming is "procedures that stimulate or activate some stored knowledge," and accessibility is "the activation potential of available knowledge" (p.134). When applying the psychological idea to framing, it is possible to say that a dominant

media frame should heighten its accessibility in the public mind, just as frequent media coverage of a particular issue heightens the accessibility of the issue in the public mind evaluating a president. To put it differently, the Korean presidential approval rating might have been influenced by a heightened accessibility of a predominant media frame of the president, as the frequent media coverage of the Gulf War positively influenced the American presidential approval rating of former President Bush (Pan & Kosciaki, 1997).

*The Framing Effect Study Using Poll Data.* If framing effect on public opinion should in most cases involve the priming of a specific frame, the next question will be about the methodology to identify the mixed effect. In this respect, Shah, Watts, Domke, and Fan (2002) provided an example of the study combining a content analysis of media framing and poll data. They utilized the ideodynamic model (Fan, 1988) predicting the public approval of a president based upon media coverage to explain the high approval rating of Clinton in spite of his sex scandal. In order to do that, they conducted a longitudinal content analysis in which they examined three frames of the president's sex scandal: Clinton behavior frame, Conservative attack frame, and Liberal response frame. Examining the time-trend of opinion polls on presidential job approval, they concluded that conservative attack and liberal response frames strengthened the public support for Clinton. In other words, the strategic framing of the scandal, which represented the scandal in terms of the political motives of conservatives, extended, rather than weakened, the public support for Clinton struggling against the sex scandal.

Although Shah et al.'s (2002) study may be regarded as an example of investigating framing effect using poll data, it should be noted that the poll data that they used just referred to people's approval rating of Clinton. In other words, whether the arguably significant frames, Conservative attack and Liberal response frames, were primed in respondents' mind was not

tested and observed. In order to look at the dominant media frame that is primed in the public mind, an open-ended question asking the reason for the people's approval or disapproval of the president seems necessary.

### ***Policy and Politics Frames***

As mentioned before, Shah et al. (2002) quantified three media frames that affected the American presidential approval rating. The object of the framing, however, was not the president himself but a specific issue, a sex scandal, in which the president was involved. Since the sex scandal became a "megastory" that generated an "issue regime," the framing of the scandal rather than the president was assumed to affect the public presidential approval rating. Then, when it comes to the situation where there is no issue regime with such a megastory, is it possible and worthwhile to examine media framing of presidential performance in general? A categorization of the frames examined in previous studies may provide an answer.

*Unique Frames/Generic Frames.* An event framed by news media can be a unique one that has a low probability of reoccurrence. For example, the Soviet's shooting down of a Korean airplane, which was framed as "moral bankruptcy" (Entman, 1991) was not an event occurring in ordinary life. Also, the anti-war movement and the New Left in the Vietnam-era (Gitlin, 1980), Palestinian movements (Noakes & Wilkins, 2002), or Clinton's sex scandal (Shah et al., 2002) were events or issues that had their own historical, socio-economic, or political significance, and media framing should have helped establish the significance in the public mind. Accordingly, those unique frames are rarely available for the public to apply to other issues with a different social background. In other words, the probability of media effect in those cases is limited to specific historic events.

On the other hand, elections as a political process, poverty as a social problem, and so on are generic issues that occur across time and cultures. Regarding the pervasive social phenomena, the episodic/thematic frame (Iyengar, 1991), for example, generated different interpretations of poverty; its episodic framing leads people to think of the problem as originating from individual lack of diligence or capacity. Effect studies of the generic frame are especially significant since the issue of poverty is a pervasive social problem that is important to the public.

*From the Issue/Strategic Frame to the Policy/Politics Frame.* Issue/strategy framing of election campaigns should also be a kind of generic frame, significant enough to study, because they involve an important political process. Strategy frames are those focusing on “candidate strategy, win-or-lose aspects of the campaign, and politicians’ selfish interests” while issue frames present “proposals for the problems, information about who is advocating which policy alternative, and consequences of the problems and proposals” (Rhee, 1997, p.30). Both frames were found to affect individuals’ interpretation of campaigns.

Originally, Cappella and Jamieson (1997) posited, “strategic news draws the audience’s attention to the motivations of the people depicted” (p.84), and can cue in the public mind a “strategy-based schema.” The schema “assumes that political actors are focused primarily on winning. Their actions are then understood in terms of the need to appeal to voters (or supporters) or appease those with influence rather than solve problems” (p.118). Accordingly, cynicism in the public mind is expected by the strategic news. The negative effect of the strategy frame, on the other hand, implies that issue framing of a campaign can generate a relatively positive image of candidates, letting voters have the image of candidates as to-be-policy-performers rather than politicians with individual motivations.

One may note that issue/strategy frames can be comprehensively applied to a broader political area rather than limited to elections, since policy issues versus political strategies should involve every aspect of politics. Presidential performance, for example, is also an important political process that the public concerns. As political candidates are represented either as strategic gamers seeking to win an election or the proponents of specific issues, a president also can be depicted either as a politician with political motivations or a national leader performing policy for the public good.

Let suppose that a president is dealing with the press policy. The president's making and proclaiming a specific policy on the news media can be represented both with *policy* frame and *politics* frame. In the policy frame, the specific content of the policy will be reported and the coverage of its social implication and the practical preparation of government to conduct the policy should follow. In some cases, opposition to the policy by experts can also be covered. However, all of this news coverage situates the president in his appropriate position as a national leader dealing with the national agenda. Accordingly, a strategy-based schema of readers mentioned by Cappella and Jamieson (1997) should rarely be cued by the policy frame.

If, however, the news media focuses on the president's personal dislike of the conservative or liberal media as a motive for his press policy, opposition party leaders' more politically motivated criticism, or citizens' indeliberate abuse of the president's policy, the president will not be framed as a national leader with authority. Rather, he will have been framed as more of a politician with individual motivation and political opponents.

In most elections in which multiple candidates compete, strategic framing should cause cynicism about the election in general rather than generate a negative image of a particular candidate. In the case of a president, however, presidency is owned by one person and the

politics frame should damage his dignity as a national leader. Also, readers' attention should shift from actual national problems or policies to such "cynic information" as the credibility or motivation of the president dealing with the policies.

Based on the rationale, two expectations are tested. First, it is expected that the 16<sup>th</sup> president, who suffered a national disapproval of his performance, would be represented with the politics frame unlike the 14<sup>th</sup> president whose approval rating was above 70% at his first year incumbency. The different framing of the two presidents in the Korean press is also predictable when considering that the 16<sup>th</sup> president, who wanted to renovate the Korean press system itself, was in an especially bad relationship with the press. Next, the rationale for the Korean public to approve or disapprove of the two presidents would be consistent with the frames applied to the news coverage of both presidents:

Hypothesis 1. The 16<sup>th</sup> president Roh would be framed with the *politics* frame more than the former president Kim.

Hypothesis 2. The 16<sup>th</sup> president Roh would be evaluated in terms of more of a politician's characteristics than the 14<sup>th</sup> president Kim.

## **Methods**

### **Data**

Chosun-ilbo, one of the leading newspapers is examined. The newspaper was selected because the paper has the biggest circulation and is generally regarded as the most powerful agenda-setter among 10 nationally distributed papers. Data are collected through KINDS, a Korean news website holding all the articles of 10 nationwide newspapers, by using the two Presidents' names as key words for searching. Stories were identified as relevant if they mentioned either president's name.

The news stories of the current 16<sup>th</sup> President and 14<sup>th</sup> President are compared: The news stories of the 15<sup>th</sup> President are not examined because he was inaugurated immediately after IMF crisis in 1997, which brought about a tumultuous social instability in Korea and other East Asian countries. To compare the presidents who were in the office in relatively similar socio-economic situations, the 14<sup>th</sup> president was selected to compare with 16<sup>th</sup> president, and the similarity is briefly examined later in the section.

Since the two public opinion polls used were conducted on March 25, 1993 and July 23, 2003, the news coverage of the two presidents for one month before each poll is analyzed. Only news stories excluding editorials and columns are examined, and this results in a total of 279 articles: 133 articles for the 14<sup>th</sup> president and 146 stories for the 16<sup>th</sup> president. The unit of analysis is the article.

The coverage periods are consistent with the first month of the 14<sup>th</sup> president's incumbency and sixth month of the 16<sup>th</sup> president. Regarding the poll, 1,500 people participated in the 1993 poll and 1,097 people in the second one; both were conducted by Gallup Korea.

### **Content Analysis: Coding**

The analysis is conducted first in terms of the number of the articles dealing with the Presidents. The rationale for the numerical comparison comes from Entman's idea that "the essence of framing is sizing-magnifying or shrinking elements of the depicted reality to make them more or less salient" (1991, p.9). Although sizing is not directly related to the policy/politics frames, it is expected that sizing might influence the public recognition of presidential performance and its importance.

Then, this study codes each story in terms of the main topic: *government*, *party*, and *person*. The analysis of the topic is analogous to Entman's (1991) investigation of

“categorization of act.” He examined how two similar events, the shooting down of the Korean and Iran airplanes, were differently categorized to look at the different frames of the two events. To analyze the different frames of the two presidents, this study investigates how differently they were positioned in news stories: as a government leader, party leader, or an individual.

*Government* refers to all normal activities of the presidents (e.g., announcing a policy, appointing government officials, presiding official meetings to discuss policies, meeting with foreign leaders, and so on). The articles conveying governmental actions to carry out a policy suggested by the presidents, and the evaluation of a policy by politicians and experts are also coded into this category.

*Party* is the category for the articles that deliver the presidents’ activities as a party leader and his relationships with parties (e.g., appointing the leaders of his own party, and ordering his party leaders to negotiate with opposition leaders about political issues like the revision of the election law). Opposition party leaders’ criticism of the presidents not based on the policy issues is another set of stories coded into *Party* (e.g., the criticism of the presidential leadership, morality, etc.). In addition, there were government officials’ corruption scandals in both presidencies. These stories are also coded into the category since the events are not directly related to policy issues, and they are part of the political agenda of opposition leaders in order to damage the presidential image.

*Person* is the topic of all articles that mainly convey the personality, emotional aspects or other individual characteristics of the presidents. For example, the story titled “The irritable President” on July 26 2003, reported that president Roh who had quit smoking started it again, stressed by the heavy load of his work. These types of stories depict the president as an ordinary person rather than a national leader, dealing with his psychological aspects. Also, the news

stories of president's media use, or personal and informal episodes during the presidential performance are coded into this category.

Together with the theme of *party*, this category should be generally inconsistent with the formal image of a president by stirring the role schema of president in the public mind as a leader who is supposed to cope with national issues. In other words, this topic as well as *party*, focusing on his political and personal characteristics, should lead people to be more concerned about the reliability of a president dealing with policies rather than policies themselves. Since a president is the representative to whom the decision-making power to solve national issues is assigned, the shift of attention undermines his power, because previously unquestioned presidential authority is now under public scrutiny. The collapse of presidential authority should be especially salient in Korea, a relatively authoritarian country compared to the Western societies.

Next, the source of each story is examined. According to Entman (1993) frames are manifested by "sources of information" as well as "certain keywords," "stereotyped images," and sentences conveying "thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments" (p.52). The sources are classified into government officials, party members, experts, citizens, and foreign government and foreign media. Experts refer to professors, doctors, researchers, lawyers, and other specialists. A basic assumption in investigating sources is that information given by government officials and experts will be concerned with policies, while party members and citizens provide their evaluation of policies or the presidents based on their political motivations and attitude. Although party members and ordinary citizens can express a specialized opinion about a particular policy, that can be regarded as a rare case in Korean political news coverage. Accordingly, this study assumes a quantification of sources will provide a general picture regarding the policy and politics frames. Since foreign government, and foreign media may

evaluate the presidents in terms of either policy or politics, they are not considered to determine *policy/politics* frames.

Regarding the title, a linguistic consideration should be mentioned. In Korean politics, the terms like “Jeong-Kwon” has had a negative connotation compared to “Dae-tong-ryung” that means a president. The title Jeong-Kwon implies a political power group without legitimacy or public support. As a result, opposition parties or anti-government groups have usually used the term to refer to a president with a negative context. Therefore, the frequency of the terms is examined as one of the framing devices.

Finally, presidential quotations are investigated in terms of their amount and content. The amount of presidential quotations as well as the number of articles covering the presidents is related to sizing, which is, according to Entman (1991), the essence of framing. As mentioned before, it should influence people’s recognition of presidential performance and its importance, even though the sizing might not be directly involved with *policy/politics* frames.

Regarding the content of quotations, this study dichotomizes it into *formal* and *informal*. Informal quotations are operationalized as those that deliver the presidents’ informal comments stating his emotion, motivation, philosophy of life, and other personal ideas that do not directly address policy issues. Formal quotations, on the other hand, are defined as those that deliver his formal order and opinion about policy issues. The quotations, for example, “Journalists are focusing on conflicts more than they cover the government’s good job to sell more papers,” “I can’t make the president any more,” or “I sometimes feel regret being the president” is coded into *informal*. On the other hand, “We will do our best to persuade North Korea to participate in the international meeting to discuss the issue of nuclear weapons,” or “We have to progress toward the period when the average national income is S20,000” is coded into *formal*.

As seen in the examples, whether a quotation involves a specific policy issue is the first criterion for the coding. However, another example provides two other criteria to consider: “They say the reputation of prosecutors worsened due to the president. I think, however, I may feel scared contacting them.” Although the quotation involves a specific policy issue regarding the relationship between the president and the attorney general, the president’s comment does not *provide any presidential guidance on the issue*. Also, the presidential humor that he might feel scared is *unexpected and informal*.

Two people analyzed the news stories: One analyzed all, and the other did 12% of all, which amounts to 34 stories. The inter-coder reliability was .74 for topics, .77 for sources, .81 for titles, and .80 for quotations (Scott’s Pi).

## **Results**

### **Content Analysis**

*Size.* The newspaper covered the two presidents with similar frequency. The former president Kim’s articles amounted to 133 while the 16<sup>th</sup> president appeared in 146 articles. These amounts were somewhat similar considering their portion among the total articles in the national section: The news stories mentioning Kim constituted 23.8% of all and those mentioning Roh occupied 24.0% of the total national section.

The amount of presidential quotations showed little difference, too. Among 133 stories of Kim, 28 stories conveyed his statement (21.1%) whereas 29 articles (21.4%) of Roh quoted him. As a result, the sizing effect, “the essence of framing,” was not found to be a framing device in the coverage of the two presidents.

*Topic.* In terms of topic, however, there was a big difference in the news coverage of the two presidents. The 14<sup>th</sup> president was represented more in *government* stories (62.4%) than

*party* (35.3%) and *person* stories (2.3%). On the contrary, the 16<sup>th</sup> president appeared more in *party* stories (50.7%) than other two types of stories. Also, the proportion of *person* in the news coverage of Roh almost doubled that of Kim (Table 1). The proportional differences were statistically significant.

**Table 1.**

*Source.* Public officials were the most frequent sources in the news of both presidents. In terms of proportion, however, officials working for Kim's administration were more frequently referred to than those in Roh's government, generating 12.3% point difference (Table 2). That the 16<sup>th</sup> president was much less mentioned in the news stories sourced by government officials signifies that he was not situated in an administrative or policy-performance dimension.

Moreover, the quotation of politicians including opposition party leaders appeared more frequently in his stories than Kim's. Also, it is notable that the proportion of citizens' quotations increased from 1.4% to 6.1%. This signifies that the president was situated with more politicians and citizens than the 14<sup>th</sup> president, who was the most frequently positioned with government officials. The pattern of sourcing is consistent with dominance of the party topic in the stories of Roh in that both observations support the hypothesis expecting the politics frame in the news coverage of Roh.

*Title.* In terms of title, there was not a significant difference in the representation of the two presidents: Both Kim and Roh were named predominantly as "President" (90% for Kim and 85% for Roh), and the term of administration was used less than 10% (7.9% for Kim, 7.4% for Roh). The difference showed no statistical significance. Therefore, it is appropriate to say that title was not used as a device for different framing in the news coverage of the two presidents.

**Table 2.**

*Quotations.* Another difference in the representation of the two presidents was found in quotations. Although the frequencies of the quotations in general showed little difference, the stories of the two presidents were different in terms of the content of the quotations (Table 3). In the case of the 14<sup>th</sup> president, he was depicted as stating more formally (19.5%) than informally (1.5%). The 16<sup>th</sup> president, however, was represented with his informal quotations (10.7%) as much as formal ones. This means that the proportion of informal quotation increased by about seven times (Table 3).

The pattern of quotations in the news stories of both presidents implies that the news paper conveyed president Roh's emotional and motivational status as an individual more than that of Kim. The personalization of the president also served to establish *politics* frames. As focusing on political candidates' individual motivation for winning an election leads to strategy frames, attending to the leader's psychic aspects seemed to help establish the *politics* frame. The frame by informal quotations positioned the president as an individual politician who involves strategic negotiation and compromise in the battlefield of politics, and who accordingly suffers emotional stress.

**Table 3.**

Especially, when the newspaper covered negative emotions of the president, he is represented in a way to maintain a positive public attitude. The informal quotation saying "Even though I do my best staying up all night, people don't appreciate me." is a typical example of this style of presidential quotation ("If the President gets angry,".2003). As a result, it can be said that the newspaper quoted both presidents differently as a device for different framing.

In a summary, the content analysis of Chosun-IIbo revealed that the two presidents were described differently in terms of the topics, sources, and the presidential quotations. The current

President Roh was covered with more *party* stories, sources of party members, and informal quotations than the 14<sup>th</sup> president Kim.

Although no sizing effect and little differences in naming the two presidents were found, the former three framing devices seemed to work in a consistent way in that they served to establish *politics* frames in the news stories of the 16<sup>th</sup> president. With the differences in these three aspects (i.e., the topics, sources, and quotations), the first hypothesis that the 16<sup>th</sup> president Roh would be framed with the *politics* frame more than Kim was supported.

### **The Result of Surveys**

In the surveys, conducted by the same institution, the public support for the presidential performance showed a distinctive difference between the two presidents (Table 4). The different approval rating was already expected by another opinion poll mentioned before, and it was the motive for conducting this study.

#### **Table 4.**

Then, what caused the different political judgments in the public mind? Regarding the question, Gallup Korea asked the respondents, in an open-ended question, why they approved or disapproved of the presidents. Assuming that the open-ended question involves what was primed during the respondents' approval rating, this study compared the respondents' answers in the two poll data. Since people responded with so many different reasons that amounted to only a small proportion less than 10%, the most frequent seven reasons for approval/disapproval were compared, considering that the fourth most frequent reason of the disapproval of the 16<sup>th</sup> president amounted to around 10% (9.8%). Since the 16<sup>th</sup> president's plummeting approval rating was the motive for this study, and more than 70% of Koreans approved the 14<sup>th</sup> president, it is reasonable to decide the number of the rationales to be examined based on people's disapproval of the 16<sup>th</sup> president.

As seen in the Table 5 and 6, the seven rationales for approval and disapproval of the 14<sup>th</sup> president were all related to specific public policies: his opening of the presidential official house, Blue House, to the public, nation-wide investigation of public officials involved in corruption, and appointing illegal people as public officials, etc. To put it differently, one can observe the presence of substantive information about policies in all the seven responses. This implies that the president in the public mind was framed in terms of his policies, and the frame was activated when each policy issue was primed.

**Table 5.**

**Table 6.**

On the other hand, the seven reasons for approval or disapproval of the 16<sup>th</sup> president showed a different pattern: Four among seven responses (i.e., “Invigorating discussion-based political culture,” “determined political attitude,” “levity of the presidential speech,” and “lack of leadership”) contained no explicitly substantive information about policies (Table 5, 6). Rather, they were more implicit information concerning his characteristics as a political leader. The other three rationales also did not signify specific information even though they involve policy issues.

Since the 16<sup>th</sup> president’s approval rating was only 30.4%, focusing especially on the reasons for disapproval of him is worthwhile. The most people (24.2%) told that they disapproved of the president because his speech showed too much lightness to be a national leader. Again, the rationale was not based on a specific presidential policy. This is consistent with the fact that his informal quotations were conveyed seven times more frequently than the 14<sup>th</sup> president’s.

The third most frequent reason was “lack of leadership” (14.6%). It also did not provide any substantive information of policies, focusing on the presidential characteristics as a leader.

The rationale was understandable when considering the relative salience in the news coverage of him of the *party* topic and sources of party members opposing the president as a political opponent.

In general, the proportion of the rationale for approving of the 14<sup>th</sup> president based on explicit policy issues was 56.0%. This means that the people approved of the president because of policies that he performed. In other words, the policy frame regarding the president was primed when Koreans evaluated the 14<sup>th</sup> president in 1993.

10 years later, however, people's rationales for approving or disapproving of the 16<sup>th</sup> president were based on implicit presidential character (i.e., 45.4% for approval and 38.8% for disapproval) rather than policy issues (i.e., 13.9% approval and 31.2% for disapproval). Based on the observations, the second hypothesis expecting that the 16<sup>th</sup> president would be evaluated in terms of politician's personal characteristics more than the 14<sup>th</sup> president was supported.

### **Discussion**

Quantitatively analyzing Chosun-Ilbo's news coverage of the two presidents, this study found that the 16<sup>th</sup> president, who suffered from a severely low approval rating, was represented with more *party* stories, the sources of party members, and his informal quotation. Accordingly, the rationales people mentioned for their disapproval of the president were consistent with the pattern of the news coverage, focusing on the implicit construct about the president's characteristics as a politician rather than explicitly substantive information of policy issues that he was handling.

On the other hand, the 14<sup>th</sup> president, whose approval rate was higher than 70%, was represented with more governmental policy stories, sources of government officials, and his formal quotations. In line with the media coverage, most people responded that they approved of

the president because of the policies he had performed. In their response, substantive information of the policies that he dealt with was primed.

The results in this study suggest a few implications for research on the media effect on public opinion. First, the findings posit the idea that media framing of a president influences the public mind by heightening the *accessibility of framing devices*. For example, the heightened accessibility of informal presidential quotations, as a framing device for the politics frame, should have lead people to evaluate the president in terms of his speech style rather than other substantive policy issues. Also, the topic of party and sources of party members and citizens, situating the 16<sup>th</sup> president in a political battleground rather than a governmental office, should have helped elicit the public response, “lack of leadership.” The idea of *accessibility of framing devices* provides a new perspective on the mechanism by which media framing influences public opinion. In addition, it can guide media study to examine media framing effect in an actual situation with survey data, rather than an experiment.

Next, this study identifies other generic frames, *policy* and *politics*. The two frames of a president or presidency, as an expansion of the issue/strategic frames, can be further studied to explain the media effect on the public opinion of presidential performances. Originally, Cappella and Jamieson (1997) posited that strategic news stories help people to learn “less explicitly identifiable things” about politicians “such as whom they trust, who is reliable, honest, and direct...and more cynical information” (p.112). The issue/strategic frames have usually been studied in election campaign coverage.

The idea of the policy and politics frames arose from two identifiable natures of presidency and election. First, the presidential performance of public policy is one of the main processes in politics, just like elections. Second, both a president and a candidate have two

identities. That is, a president is the chief public official who is supposed to seek the most benefit of the public. Also, he is innately a politician who is concerned about grasping and keeping political power. A candidate, too, is a politician who struggles to be a public representative, while still maintaining a position on a particular issue.

In a normal situation, the *policy* frame of a president may be predominant, which means news media tend to frame a president as the chief public official performing policies for the benefit of the public. The *policy* frame, however, may shift into the *politics* frame when social instability increases. In the case of Korea, the two presidents similarly proposed social renovation as the principle of their performing policies. The 16<sup>th</sup> president, however, included news media in the lists of social institutions to be renovated, and the conflict between both was expected even before his inauguration. This Korean case can be one of many political contexts that bring about different media framing of a president.

To examine various conditions generating different media frames of a president may be a topic that awaits further investigation. For example, whether the media framing of a president is different between his early and late incumbency may be studied. In other words, it can be tested if an increase of the politics frame in news media involves a lame duck phenomenon. The *policy* and *politics* frame will provide a useful analytical tool for these studies that attempt to explain media framing of presidency and its influence on public opinion.

**Table 1. The Percentage of the Three Topics Found in Articles on the 14<sup>th</sup> President and the 16<sup>th</sup> President**

	<i>The 14<sup>th</sup> President</i>	<i>The 16<sup>th</sup> President</i>
	(133)	(146)
<b>Government</b>	62.4%	45.2%
<b>Party</b>	35.3	50.7
<b>Person</b>	2.3	4.1

$\chi^2 (2, 279) = 8.377, P < .05$

**Table 2. The Percentage of the Sources Used in Articles of the 14<sup>th</sup> President and the 16<sup>th</sup> President**

	<i>The 14<sup>th</sup> President</i>	<i>The 16<sup>th</sup> President</i>
	(140)	(163)
<b>Government officials</b>	39.3%	27.0%
<b>Party Members</b>	21.4	24.5
<b>Experts</b>	2.3	4.1
<b>Citizens</b>	1.4	6.1
<b>Foreign Government &amp; Press</b>	2.9	3.7
<b>None</b>	34.3	34.4

$\chi^2 (5, 303) = 11.822, P < .05$

**Table 3. The Percentage of Formal and Informal Quotations of the Presidents Appeared in Articles of the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> presidents**

	<i>The 14<sup>th</sup> President</i>	<i>The 16<sup>th</sup> President</i>
	(133)	(149)
<b>Formal</b>	19.5%	10.7%
<b>Informal</b>	1.5	10.7
<b>No Quotations</b>	78.9	78.5

$\chi^2(2, 282) = 13.053, P < .01$

**Table 4. The Approval Rates of the Presidential Performances**

	<i>The 14<sup>th</sup> President</i>	<i>The 16<sup>th</sup> President</i>
	(1,500)	(1,097)
<b>“He is doing well”</b>	70.9	30.4
<b>“So and so”</b>	13.9	9.9
<b>“He is doing poorly”</b>	7.1	53.1
<b>No response</b>	8.3	6.7

Source: Gallup Korea, 1993 & 2003.

**Table 5. The Reasons that the Presidents Were Evaluated as Doing a Good Job**

<i>The 14<sup>th</sup> President</i>	(%)	<i>The 16<sup>th</sup> President</i>	(%)
The opening of the Presidential office to the public	22.0	Invigorating discussion-based political culture	34.8
Coping with official corruption	21.3	Policies for the poor	13.9
Releasing information of public officials' estates	12.7	Determined political attitude	10.6

Source: Gallup Korea, 1993 & 2003.

**Table 6. The Reasons that the Presidents Were Evaluated as Poorly Performing Their Jobs**

<i>The 14<sup>th</sup> President</i>	<i>(%)</i>	<i>The 16<sup>th</sup> President</i>	<i>(%)</i>
Appointing illegal person as public officials	15.4	Levity of the presidential speech	24.2
Rising consumer price	5.8	Lack of efforts for economic recovery	21.4
The suspension of real-name financial transaction system	4.5	Lack of leadership	14.6
Incredibility of released information of public officials' Estates	2.5	Improper labor policy	9.8

Source: Gallup Korea, 1993 & 2003.

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