

POLITICS OF REGIONALISM AND KOREA: CLASS HABITUS AND IDENTITY

HONG SEONG MIN*

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to critically examine existing theoretical trends on regionalism in Korea, as well as to serve as a preliminary stage toward creating a more appropriate model for its analysis. Without a doubt, regionalism is an extremely important issue in understanding Korean politics. While regionalism is easily found in other parts of the world such as Europe, the United States, as well as the neighboring Northeast Asian nations Japan and China, regionalism in Korea is markedly distinguishes itself from the others in that it wields much greater power as a political variable. It does not merely act as a representation of ideological or class identification. In other words, regionalism is the key issue in order to resolve present problems and to provide new visions for Korean politics.

Keywords: Regionalism, politics of regionalism, Korean ideology of regionalism, class habitus, personal identity, cultural identity,

* Dong-A University, Busan, South Korea

parishong0823@hanmail.net

To date, there has been a series of academic efforts to explain regionalism in Korea.¹ But the differences between the epistemological premises underlying each theory have resulted in a clash of various paradigms. In consideration of the negative effects of regionalism in real politics, the existence of multiple perspectives may be appreciated for their attempt at a more comprehensive analysis; however, if the issues of disagreement are based on erroneous assumptions, these must be subject to thorough verification and criticism in order to establish an accurate viewpoint.

It is ordinary for a political analysis to be inherently based on the worldview or the theoretical perspective of the analyst. In turn, this demands a need for a systematic study on such epistemological premises to gain an accurate understanding of the reality. Now it is only appropriate for us to categorize, compare, and clarify the limitations of each as well as improve the arguments these different paradigms. Through this process, a more complete view on regionalism in Korea can be finally established.

In fact, regionalistic voting tendencies are not exclusive to Korean politics. Especially in terms of validity of elective democracy, it is a very significant factor in western politics as well.² As established by the modern social contract theories, representative democracy of one vote per person starts under the premise that each individual clearly identifies his/her own preferences, which is also clearly expressed through the act of casting a ballot. However, in contrary to this assumption, if a form of political rationality displayed by an individual political subject can be distorted by one's social condition and historical experiences, the attempt to reach a political agreement through election is misguided from the beginning. This is the base of fundamental critique on representative democracy by progressive theorists who are often categorized as practicing critical theory or post-modernist political science (Berry 1990).

By the similar logic, it is possible to examine the cause for perceiving regionalism in Korea as a pathological phenomenon. Regionalism in Korea is viewed as problematic because irrational elements of individuals are drastically distorting the logic of representative system

outlined by modern political theories. Accordingly, analyzing regionalism in Korea requires an in-depth contemplation on the epistemological premises of western modern political theory. Furthermore, it also signifies that we must evaluate the limitations of democratic elective system as well as seek its improvement. In this sense, analysis of regionalism in Korea serves as evaluations of both the unique characteristics of Korean politics and the universality of western democratic theory that spread throughout the globe.

I. THREE PARADIGMS

Theoretical attempts to explain regionalism in Korea can be largely divided into three theories: modernization theory, critical theory, and rational choice. This section of our study will review these three theories and discuss their limitations.

A. MODERNIZATION THEORY

Regionalism in Korean politics is most clearly reflected by voting patterns. Modernization theory attributes the loyalty to primary in group, such as regionalistic and kinship-bound voting pattern, as the evidence proving that Korea is still a pre-modern society. In this regard, the deep-seated pre-modern politics, which depends heavily on pork barreling and personal relations, is blamed for the persistence of regionalism. According to this theory, advancement to modern society will eventually create a participatory atmosphere in Korea and lead voters to vote in consideration of their secondary political interests. Lipset and Huntington are the two most acknowledged scholars of the modernization theory, and they influenced Korean theorists such as Han Bae-ho, Uh Su-young (1987), and Lee Ji-hun (1989).

B. CRITICAL THEORY

The theorists who interpret regionalism in terms of critical theory are influenced by Maxism and are labeled as the "progressive scholars". This group includes scholars such as Choi Jang-jip, Hwang Tae-yeon, and Son Ho-cheol. They agree that societal structure plays a crucial role in forming regionalism. According to Choi Jang-jip (1991), regionalism takes on material base and functions as a dominant ideological mechanism that keeps the ruling class in power. Hwang Tae-yeon (1994) associates regionalism with regional hegemony; pervading state power and economy, regionalism must be categorized under the social dimension between the ruling

1 The analysis of 1998 and 2002 presidential election outcomes shows the severity of regional voting in Korea. In presidential elections, about 90 percent of the votes cast in the Honam district were in favor of Kim Dae-jung in 1998, and Roh Moo-hyun in 2002, the Millennium Democratic Party (MDP) presidential aspirants. On the contrary, around 70 percent of ballots cast in Kyongsang Province were for Grand National Party (GNP) presidential candidate Lee Hoe-chang in the two presidential elections. Such regional voting patterns also appear in parliamentary elections. In 1996 and 2000 parliamentary elections, the MDP and the Uri Party enjoyed the same level of support as in presidential elections in the Honam area while the GNP did in the Yeongnam area.

2 Western academia is looking into the conservatization of workers' voting patterns.

and the ruled. Considering Honam area to have been under “Internal Colonialism”, he asserts that regionalism can be overcome through political coalition of non-Kyungsang areas, which have long been alienated from political power. By thwarting the Kyungsang-bound elite group that has long led the regionalistic power structure, the new regime will be created. To Hwang, this is the legitimate form of defense against regional hegemony.

Contrary to the previous two theorists who gave more weight to materialism and class structure, Son Ho-cheol (1993)’s analysis on regionalism is more complex and detailed. Son points to factors such as structural condition, irrationality, and strategy of the elite for generating regionalism. He holds similar views with the previous two theorists on that regionalism is mainly caused by imbalanced development of regions. However, his views are more flexible and comprehensive in that Son recognizes the importance of superstructural understanding over complex factors such as the following: capacity of political groups, strategic intervention by political forces, and regional political development by region-specific components. Nonetheless, it is clear that all three theorists perceive regionalism as a pathological phenomenon caused by Korea’s political and social structure and not by people’s own sentiment.

C. RATIONAL CHOICE THEORY

The theory is based on the assumption that each individual is rational. In other words, since decision to vote is directed by each individual’s rationality, regionalism is merely exaggerated in portrayal. In Korea, Jo Ki-sook (1996, 200) is the proponent of this theory. She tries to prove the validity of rational choice theory by criticizing the rationale of modernization theory and criticism theory.

First, Jo criticizes modernization theory by stating that the theory erroneously tries to explain correlational events in terms of causal relationships. According to Jo, Lipset’s argument of modernization theory falsely relates economic development as prerequisite to political democracy. Jo asserts that, Lipset places the two variables in a causal relationship when they are outcome of a third variable. Moreover, the modernization theory explains the political problems while emphasizing one nation’s unique value and culture. She also criticizes this as an ignorant attitude of social science theories (Jo-Kisook 1996, 52-53).

Jo disapproves of the criticism theory for two reasons. First, the criticism theory depicts eligible voters as people with full of limitations instead of rational and purposeful. Second, although the critical theorists attempted to find reasons for regionalism in various factors besides economic factors, they failed to combine each factor logically.

D. THE LIMIT OF THREE PARADIGMS: A NEW MODEL FOR ANALYSIS

We have looked through three theories that examine regionalism. These three paradigms are not only at the center of Korean politics but also at the center of modern politics popular in western society. However, the paradigms have their limitations to explain the characteristics of Korean politics such as regionalism, which means that a new analysis model should be created. Therefore, I will discuss the strong and weak points of each paradigm and define an academic goal in studying regionalism. The rational choice theory criticizes other two theories, thus to determine the limitations of rational choice theory will serve the same academic goal.

First, what I criticize about the rational choice theory of Jo Ki-sook is the origin of the political action. According to a renowned thesis of Shin Bok-ryong (1996) that dealt with the historical background of regionalism, it is common for the theorists who study methodology of social science that certain custom and force of habit repeats itself in one’s political action. Nonetheless, the rational choice theory excludes the basic premises in explaining one’s political action. Is it possible to explain one’s decision and action without cultural factors such as emotion or memories? In this sense, rational choice theory evokes criticism because of its way of defining eligible voters, which is an important issue in cognitive theory.

Second, rational choice theory does not consider social structure, which works together with one’s rationality when an individual makes a political decision. It is common knowledge in social science that one’s decision is related to not only internal and structural elements but also to one’s class in society. This is well reflected on the critical theory, but rational choice theory does not discuss social structure, which is well developed by the critical theory.

Therefore, two more elements should be added into the analysis of regionalism. The one is the matter of human nature and the other is the combination of micro-macro elements that affect one’s political decision.

1) In regards to human nature, rational choice theory asserts that one’s behavior is conducted based on his/her own purposes. What does it mean by purposeful behavior? When we associate it with one’s voting pattern, the rational choice theorists argue that people always vote in a consistent way, no matter what their goal is or the condition they face. At this point we have to seriously raise a question whether this argument can be accepted without verification in the real political world.³ Theoretic verification is not enough to support the rational choice

3 To justify regional voting as politically rational choice, the assumption that “regional development means my development” should be met. However, it is rare in reality that both the interests of an individual and a community coincide. Individual and collective behaviors have different logical dimensions to be explained because individualistic methodology focuses on each person’s activities while regional voting is collective

theory, and Jo does not provide any premise in terms of human nature. In addition, her theory is simply based on the belief that people are rational, which she believes has no controversy. As a result, Jo blocks herself from reliable verification on rational choice theory (1996, 46-47).

1) Thus the first review will be on the assumption that human behavior is rational. The rational choice theory bases itself on methodological individualism, which is derived from microeconomy. The most important premise of the theory is that every objective is fully understood by members of the society. We must understand every element in order to comprehend the complexity of society. In other words, we must ingest this huge complex called society through its members (Hwang Su-ik 1994, 71). In sum, methodological individualism argues that human behavior leads to better result when it was done individually. Each individual acts to accomplish one's own goal, through "calculative rationality."

At this point, two questions can be raised regarding the previous premise: First, the rational choice theorists argue that one's behavior is calculative and rational when the action is to accomplish one's own goal and interests. Then what does each individual calculate? What kind of interests does each individual seek? First question is related to philosophical human nature called behavior. In reality, it is impossible for every single human behavior to be classified into rational or irrational. According to Max Weber, human behavior can be classified into categories such as 'affective', 'traditional', 'zweckrational' and 'wertrational'. In other words, human behavior has multi-dimensional traits, not one. Rational theory choice fails to recognize such diversity of human behavior.

Another criticism on the rational choice theory is associated with the premise in achieving one's own goals and interests. When methodological individualism explains one's preference, it uses an accumulative hierarchical structure. That is, if a person prefers B to A and prefers C to B at the same time, she always prefers C to A. The hierarchical structure of preference is possible only when one's desire or interests are already given. However, this is unacceptable in real political world because one's preference is meaningful only when it was expressed by social structure and value.

For example, an individual's interests are formed by capitalistic market condition in modern Korean society. Therefore, ranking one's preference or interests by accumulative hierarchical structure forces the assumption while ignoring a social structure that decides

ones. Therefore, it is necessary to deeply review the concept of rationality behind people's behavior for more convincing explanation about the regional differences in the country.

one's political action. If we try to explain human activities through psychoanalysis, calculative rationality must be seen as habitual activities by "ambitious" or "unconscious" people rather than a set of conscious activities. In this regard, a model set by rational choice theory is overly abstract and far different from people in reality.⁴

Thus, elements such as material condition, experiences, and expectations for the future must be taken into consideration in explaining human activities. What I would like to emphasize at this point is that one's political activity such as decision making is more deeply related to a person's long habit or social custom—named *Habitus* by Bourdieu— than a certain level of rationality. In other words, what we have to resolve in regional voting studies is to figure out how one's rationality, cultural factors, and social customs work together in our society.

2) Let's look at the integration of micro-macro viewpoint. The interconnection between superstructure and political background is very important factor in explaining regionalism in Korea. In fact, the methodology of social science can be divided into two categories: a microscopic study focusing on individual characteristics and a macroscopic study focusing on the entire society. The limit of these two studies is related to reductionism, which tries to explain the social structure on the basis of one's rationality and vice versa. In other words, rational choice theory is locked in reductionism on the ground that the theory tries to explain social structural elements based on one's activities.⁵

4 How to define a subject has long been a cause of controversies in the history of social science methodology. Among others, it is worth mentioning the different perspectives of French sociologists Raymond Boudon (1990) and Pierre Bourdieu (1980) to clearly demonstrate theoretical flaws of methodological individualism. The proposition of "rational individuals and irrational society" in the rational choice theory is repeated in Boudon's theory in different terms as "rationality of individuals and social disorder." Bourdieu, as a typical opponent of such methodological individualism, argued that each individual behavior cannot be separated from objective social structure. He also insisted that historical effects accumulated from the past are behind individual rationality and strategic calculations. Philosophically, methodological individualism is based on Sartre's existentialism and Husserl's phenomenology. And such individualistic theories have critical flaw of being unable to answer the basic epistemological question: how human consciousness originates? Of course, structuralism also carries its own defect of focusing only on social materiality. One good example is Levi-Strauss's structural anthropology. Individual consciousness is excluded from this theory due to social rules of constitution from the first. Similarly, methodological individualism takes no account of the expression of human consciousness, repeating the mistake that human behavior is based on calculative rationality.

5 Namely, macro structural substantiality in methodological individualism, the theoretical foundation for rational choice theory, is not formed voluntarily. The theory says that only individual behavior is voluntary and active. Thus, personal activities could be the true cause for social phenomenon and should form the groundwork for all explanations on political voting. But, generally there are two theoretical dilemmas in this viewpoint. First, individual behavior is not necessarily always microscopic but sometimes macroscopic. Take the example of summit diplomacy and summit talks. It is difficult to define head officials behavior in

Now, the task in methodology is clear. More simply, the best methodology in regionalism studies is to find a way to associate microscopic studies with macroscopic studies. How can we achieve this? Can we say that we have related two studies when we list every single decisive microscopic factors and social structural factors together? Combining two different studies requires new analysis method and new approach, and it is impossible to relate the two studies just in narrating individual and society comprehensively. This issue has triggered controversy for a long time in methodology of social science.⁶ Particularly, many Maxists have concentrated on this problem with the concept of infrastructure versus relative autonomy of superstructure. Therefore, we need a methodological achievement in social science studies in order to complete a proper model for explaining regionalism while meeting the need of methodology, linking microscopic studies with macroscopic studies.

In order for us to fully understand regionalism, we need to get a methodological lesson from theorists such as L. Althusser (1968; 1974) or A. Giddens (1998). For example, the concept of “Surdetermination” introduced by Althusser gives us a hint for dualism of social structure. The concept was adopted by psychoanalysis in order to explaining the formation of subordinate structure and its elements according to the dominant structure. The concept allows the recognition of complex premises of social structure, unfolded not only by the differences between contradictions but also by joining structural elements. In other words, I wish to emphasize through Althusser’s theory that society is a complex formed by consequences of interactions between various social classes. In order to approach regionalism appropriately in Korea, we have to determine society as a flexible complex including various elements, instead of perceiving it as a fixed concept.

Meanwhile, the Structuration theory of Giddens provides us an analysis of all three elements: individual’s selfish behavior, material conditions to regulate the behavior, and the result in macro-sociology derived from the micro-condition. We can find a hint from

such occasions as microscopic although their behavior is individual. It should be recognized that individual behavior could be macroscopic depending on one’s social status and influence. Methodological individualism also ruled out the possibility that macroscopic behavior can exist on its own, in the first place, by confining personal activity only to microscopic and individual dimensions. Collective behavior theory, however, presents macroscopic behaviors with its own *raison d’être* which cannot be understood by simple collection of individual behaviors. Concluding that an “individual” is always the behavioral subject denies any attempts at more concrete understanding on individual motives, opportunities and interests, which interact between behavioral entities and institutions.

⁶ Useful references on this issue in the US sociology; John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan (1977); William H. Sewell, Jr. (1992), Terry M. Moe (2005).

Giddens for synthesizing the micro-macroscopic studies in order to resolve a methodological task in studying regionalism in Korea. Yet, theories of Althusser and Giddens are abstract to apply directly in the Korean regionalism studies. Nonetheless, I strongly believe that the two theorists presented a significant point of view in analyzing social phenomenon, and despite the abstractions, they provide great theoretical sources to explaining the uniqueness of Korean society.

What I have consistently emphasized through this thesis is the fact that one’s rationality is deeply engaged with structure. Therefore, we have to divide one’s activity into two structures: one is ‘interiorization of externality’ where one’s consciousness is formed by external structure and the other is ‘exteriorization of internality’ where one’s inner thought is revealed outside. At this point, the most important analyzed subject should be one’s social identity formation process. That is to say, determining the dualism between infrastructure and Superstructure in Althusser’s theory is deeply connected with the formation process of one’s identity.

II. GENETIC APPROACH TO REGIONALISM: BOURDIEU AND “CHAMP”

As I thoroughly and critically review the various theories dealing with regionalism in Korea, I came to a conclusion. That is, completing a dialectic point of view about subject (micro) and structure (macro) is the way to compensate for theoretical flaws posed by regionalism. In other words, we must unify ‘activity’ and ‘structure’ among elements leading to regionalism, rather than try to explain each of them separately.⁷ The key point is to prove that individual’s activity or behavior is exercised in social structure. I will explain ‘structure’ and ‘activity’ separately and will provide a picture how two elements are mutually dependent in the conclusion.

⁷ Such a methodological conclusion is not first found by the author. Structuration theorists Anthony Giddens (1998), Sztompka (1979; 1991) and J. Larrain (1990) have presented useful analysis framework respectively, provoked by concerns over the loophole. But, as mentioned above, methodological exploration from structuration theory is too abstract to apply to the reality. Korean young scholars such as Kang Myong-goo in his 1993 paper have endeavored to use the method of structuration in explaining the country’s situation yet, with still unsatisfactory outcomes. Against this academic backdrop, I am trying to venture on a new approach in addressing challenges current regionalism studies face. Korea’s regional voting patterns will be explained through a highly realistic theory, which fully reflects concerns over structuration theory in this paper. For that purpose, I will use a theory of Pierre Bourdieu.

A. STRUCTURE

Now, we should have to modify the existing point of view about regionalism. Above all, we have to make a shift in paradigm. Instead of thinking that one's voting pattern is a direct method to accomplish one's certain goal, we have to set each individual onto the society and trace the individuals' complex network that designate their thoughts and activity.

At this point, we can use the concept of 'champ', which is introduced by Bourdieu as an analytical tool. Champ displays the moment when one's political activity unfolds in society. Namely, the concept attentively separates social phenomenon into multi-dimensional spaces for explaining individual's decision and activity. Specifically, the act of voting cannot be explained by a theory of political element alone, but other social factors caused by the press, the academia, the culture and etc. This is how we can analyze the connection between microscopic rationality of individuals and macroscopic structure of society.

Champ determines that there are rules in the game of politics. Whenever a modern politician makes an argument or proposes a policy, it is derived from the structural nature of Korean society and not solely from the politician's convictions. The political rhetoric tends to distort the voters' decision.. In general, voters are illiterate to political terms or legislative situation, so they prefer to select a policy that seems to more suitable for themselves among existing arguments instead of actively examining the issues of politics. On this occasion, some policies are based on the worldview of politicians, but ordinary voters cannot comprehend the ideological implication of the policy and mandate their decision to 'political merchandise' created by a political party or a politician. We can say this phenomenon as a "false identification" between voters and politicians (Bourdieu 1979, chap 8). Regionalism in Korea is a sort of "false identification." We can see an appropriate example when former President Kim Dae-jung was depicted as a representative of Honam areas who will threaten the social order in Korea.

On the other hand, in order for a politician to survive in a political world, he or she has to adapt to a specific mental structure and worldview. Although some scholars expect an epoch-making thought and advanced policy from modern politicians, only freshman scholars hope for it. A key figure who enters a political world as a congressman should overcome a certain barrier, and he or she has to be trained continuously with certain logic and world view. Often, his or her conviction is affected by realistic political logic. A specific bloc of dominant class exists in Korea, and as Gramsci argues, a justifiable ideology supports the dominant class and also enforces newcomers of politics to be adapted to such an idea.⁸

⁸ Korea has been divided into two political camps led by the ruling MDP and the main opposition GNP during

In this regard, the reason that prevents a political party with European-style progressive ideology from emerging in Korea is found in *the rules of the game of Korean politics*, not in the immaturity of party system. In short, the existing rule in Korea does not acknowledge ideological differences but emphasizes the black and white logic of the friend versus enemy; those with different ideologies are considered enemies right away.⁹

Second, it is important to recognize the fact that a political phenomenon is closely related to other social phenomena through political champ. A political phenomenon can be defined as a balanced point formed by articulation between champs. When we formulate a voting pattern in favor of one's own region as a process of forming various opinions, those opinions already has mixed with the logics of other champs. In other words, a political champ is, of course, at the center of producing various political opinions, but other champs such as the media, the academia, and the culture champ also affects those opinions. We are talking about the supply part of political opinions and intellectuals' activity plays key role in this part.

Now, let us review the relationship between the political champ and the media champ. Experts of political shows in TV and radio decide the most important political issues they will deal with while they are writing a report or prepare debates. These activities are crucial in determining a fair political arena. At the same time, the media sorts out civic groups' opinion and naturally takes charge of the champs of the entire media. *The public sphere* that Habermas expected to see no longer exists. Despite of great advances in technology, individuals are getting harder to participate actively because big corporations and the capitalism control the media champs.

The structural flaw that makes the media champ does not play its role as a part of the *public sphere* comes from fierce competition. News articles and comments are cyclic in every media so there is no differentiation among the press and related opinions—the information

every election period, including the 2002 presidential election. The fact that progressive-party platforms have not gone mainstream possibly means the existence of a unique political mechanism that controls and excludes certain arguments in the country. And lawmakers in local constituencies can prove themselves by representing the mainstreamers because parliamentary elections in Korea are to choose a figure more in touch with the majority of the residents. Laws and policies out of mainstream interests are not chosen to be proposed by elected candidates and just remain as a specific part of social interests.

⁹ If further developed, this idea reduces the significance of differences in political ideologies and images among the MDP campaign for selection of presidential candidate in the 2002 presidential race. The differences among candidates could be regarded as minor ones within some specific structures because their policies are made according to the rule of language game. Viewed in the sociopolitical light, races for presidency among those candidates resemble struggles for the exclusive right to symbolic governance. And any candidate elected is unlikely to change the whole mechanism of Korean politics.

is essentially the same. In fact, Korean journalists not only have similar academic titles and backgrounds but they associate with each other intimately. What does that mean? It means that Korean media champ is closed. Therefore, the champ just distributes and reproduces the existing ideas made by the political champ, without restraining the political champ.¹⁰ The opinions generated in the media champ are closely related to the aggressive logic made in the political champ. Arguments discussed in the media champ are dominated by policy experts or professors who are engaged in specific academic champ or political champ. Besides, the status and uniqueness of each political party in Korea are more recognized in their struggle to earn higher offices, without differences in ideologies of progressive or conservative. Moreover, the intellectuals are unconsciously assisting the transformation of cultural capital into political capital. This is how the problems and arguments over regionalism in Korea are repetitively persistent. Although a number of intellectuals and politicians raise their voices to eliminate regionalism, arguments over regionalism are continuing as to the way of political opinions go.¹¹

Third, in terms of culture champ, let's analyze the negative effect shown in the public opinion poll. We have to understand that the way of executing the poll also fuels regionalism. Because the analysis on regionalism in the survey may actually cause people to believe that regionalism exists, even if it does not. In addition, the survey sometimes fans emotion that develops into a regionalism or a regional conflict. This is critical in terms of the purpose of the survey, because the survey is carried out in democratic ideology, under the terms of "understanding the public." The public opinion survey allows individuals' hidden emotions toward regionalism to be expression. Through these expressions, a political opinion begins to form. This can be called "effect of problematics imposed (*effet d'imposition de problematique*)" (Champagne, 1996: 110). For instance, the survey asks "do you think Korea is free from

regionalism?" "Is the current employment system of the government office fair?" "Are the regional developments balanced?" In these questions, the survey already forces people to believe a certain political opinion unconsciously.

B. INDIVIDUAL

The action of an individual who works in the social champ is determined by two motives. First, one's social status and the other, the dual structure of time: the combination of one's experiences from the past and one's prediction for the future. This has two implications.

First, the basic element that determines individual's activity is usually material, but explaining regionalism in Korea with materialism and social status has faced a lot of problems. Second, an individual's activity is not solely affected by one's calculative rationality; rather, individuals are exposed to cultural environment in a society. Why is it that individual's activity does not totally depend on materialistic elements? The most noticeable trait in these dealing with regionalism in Korea is the differentiation between a social class and regionalism in voting. In other words, people tend to believe that once voters cast a ballot regardless of their region, they will vote in terms of a specific interest (Kim Won-dong 1999; Jo Sung-dae 2001). With these evidences, people argue that social class, rather than regionalism, determines the people's voting patterns. Nonetheless, people still argue that presidential elections in Korea are extremely affected by regionalism because of Korea's unique political situation. Since Korea had been in under authoritarian government that did not allow any other political party in the past, so voters in Korea naturally came to believe that they couldn't have a political identity due to lack of social structure. This argument is the mainstream of Korean politics in that the argument tries to explain regionalism with the modernization theory like many other scholars do. It is here, I insist, that needs a cultural approach for analysis of regionalism in Korea. For that, we should rethink of class.

Now, I would like to raise a question on how the social classes are formed. Class analysis used by Kim Won-dong is based on economic capital. When we consider the class only in "economic" term, we cannot go beyond. Therefore, we need to redefine the concept. Of course, we also cannot deny that economic status, as stressed by Marx, is an important variable determining one's social class. It is obvious that the income gap pushes people into a specific social class and thereby divides people into progress and conservative ideology. However, we need to add one point here. People can realize their own social class not only by their economic condition but also by cultural condition, such as repetitious daily routine and experiences, and

10 There are intelligent people appear on TV current affairs programs and make diagnosis and treatment of Korea's political ills. Analyzing their role is critical to understand connectivity between the politics and the media. First, "regulars" to TV debate programs have linguistic limits. They use unilateral languages from their own standpoint, but what they say on TV is accepted by the public as universal. Their professional insights help the public establish certain outlooks on the world. The public, however, has no idea that experts on TV have been self-reinforcing their interpretation and stance.

11 Possibly, one good example of this is Hwang Tae-yeon's work (1994). He wrote considerable amount of books suggesting that the marginalized should form a resistance coalition centering on the Honam for a horizontal regime change. And he frequently appeared on TV to make radical remarks. Still, his political opinions are locked in language game of regional political structure. Such cries for the abolition of regionalism are still affected by regionalism because language has kept being reproduced when the academia and the politics meet. Therefore, social elites could fulfill their roles truly by eliminating the unfair linguistic reproduction.

social values. In this case, the economic elements inherit Marxism while the others inherits Weber's idea.

An important institution that serves as a cultural element is schools. Schools contribute in forming the worldview and cognitive skills of the masses. In modern capitalist society, one's social status is determined by background or academic title, so-called "cultural capital" (symbolic capital), rather than income in general. Besides, "cultural capital" such as education affect more on voters' activity than income does. (Ether 2000; Kim-Wangbae 2001). Considering those studies, one's social class can no longer identified by one's awareness. Instead, one's social class is dependent on cultural elements. Therefore, I prefer to use the term '*Class-Habitus*' instead of class-consciousness. '*Class-Habitus*' proves that individual's social activities are done unconsciously. A lot of thoughts and values such as good/bad, fair/unfair are deeply rooted in one's unconsciousness and these plays a role as a cultural capital while an individual are identifying one's social status. When we can see voting patterns reflecting regionalism in Korea the same way, regionalism in Korea can be assessed with very unique class structure.

According to Bourdieu, 'cultural capital' is benefit one receives as a part of society through education. The cultural capital can make people recognize and express the political reality. The people who lack cultural capital usually do not recognize how they are dominated and exploited. This is the symbolic dominance that exists in capitalist society. As a result, those who don't recognize their classes also miss a chance to find their social class in political world. Theorists who try to explain regionalism in terms of psychology or culture leave out economic variables because they consider class identity as one's introspective element. This viewpoint may pose an obstacle in perceiving that ordinary people's recognition of political world is dependent on economic inequality (Min-kyunghwan, 1991; Na-ganchae, 1991). Therefore, we need to not only redefine the concept of classes but recognize how deeply the cultural aspects are related to economic condition. Too often a lot of Koreans are excluded from marriage or job recruitment only because of the region they live. Likewise, we need to keep in mind when we study one's voting activity that one's cultural condition is directly associated with political and social benefit. In this sense, the analysis that regional votes are determined by personal and collective psychological phenomenon, without consideration of any effect of economic inequality, would be highly hazardous.

Personal and collective recognition on economic inequality obviously lies at the bottom of vote reflecting regionalism. When we look at this phenomenon with further advanced point

of view, class-habitus, we can easily find that the lack of consistent recognition of inequality they experience is the main reason. We can also find the same phenomenon in western society where working classes are becoming conservative. In other words, regionalism coexists the loss of one's class identity and lack of cultural capital, with which people can explain political reality according to their own interest.¹² In conclusion, one's social class is determined by the total amount of economic and cultural capital. It has been the general case in western society that as the amount of economic capital rises, people become more conservative; as the amount falls people become more liberal. In the case of Korea, people with less capital, e.g., laborers in urban area or proletariats outside Honam area, still tend to remain conservative and vote regionalistically. This irony can be explained through the ratio of economic and cultural capital. Therefore, individual political activity of the Koreans cannot be explained by their economy status; rather, it is cultural elements that must be considered.

Hwang-Taeyeon thoughts that civilians in powerless regions can easily form a resistant coalition. However, it did not happen and we can find the reason from the fact that the amount of cultural capital outweighs economic capital when the voters' actions are perceived in terms of class. When the amount of cultural capital exceeds the economic capital, individuals unconsciously adapt themselves to the dominant ideology due to deprivation of self-identity from negative dominance effect. At the same time, a resistant coalition can be formed in theory but it is difficult in reality.

In general, one's political decision has a dual structure, social status (macro factor) and worldview (micro factor). One's social status may be objectively perceivable for the third person, but how far one's political opinion is away from reality is not easily analyzed. Thus many scholars accuse that false consciousness is the reason for large-scale resistant coalition. However, this is commits a common fallacy by not taking the dual structure of economy and culture in forming of social classes; instead, it attributes the cause of regionalism on the psychological elements.

Then it becomes clear that it is necessary to understand individual class status in terms of time. In this sense, considerable number of regionalism studies has rightfully examined the

¹² For example, based on the assumption of rational choice theory, some may criticize that regional voting patterns in the Honam area could stir anti-Honam sentiment from other areas in the long term, and that collective voting of regionalism would not necessarily satisfy individual interests in that area. But, that irrational and emotional voting patterns still continue in the political arena could indicate strong influence of *Class-Habitus*, which works as cognitive inequality. Irrational and collective unconsciousness (*Habitus*) rather than individual rationality decides each person's class identity, and from this, political regionalism is born. In this context, *Class-Habitus* forms political identity comprising both the economy and culture.

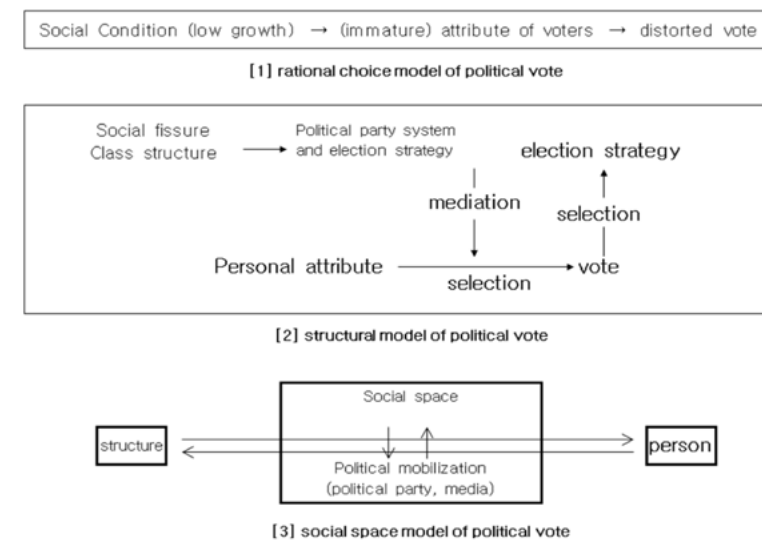
history of Korean regionalism. As suggested by the rational choice theory, it is a theoretical error to evaluate the rationality of a person's political decision-making process at one specific moment. Human memory is critical for forming collective sense of community. It is no doubt that people's memory on the 1980 Gwangju Democratic Movement influenced greatly on building up their identity.

Nonetheless, in relation to class identity, Class-Habitus is more deliberate in its transformation, although the ratio between economic and cultural capital changes frequently over time. This is important in interpreting political behaviors of, particularly, the middle-class. For example, there could be two cases of joining the middle class. One is rising from the lower class due to increased total amount of capital; the other is falling from the upper class for various reasons. Statistics find them both belong to the middle class, but actually those two have wide gaps in political views and behavior. If a person with a radical Class-Habitus moved up to the middle class from below, the person would still present similar political behavior as lower class even after the change in objective status. And even if a person was degraded from the upper class, he or she could still behave conservatively in opinion polls or voting, instead of being resistant to the politics as forced by the changed situation. This could be explained by a conservative Class-Habitus from one's upper-class experiences in Korea.

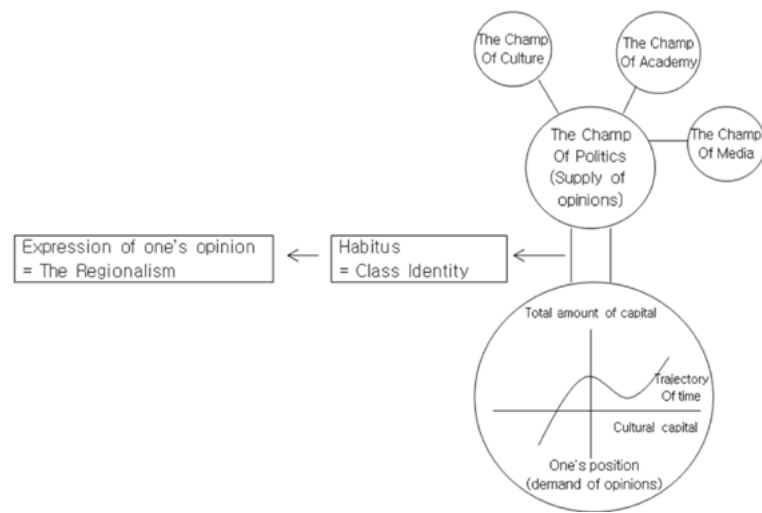
However, it becomes almost impossible to generalize political behaviors of classes if taken into account such cases where cultural capital has high percentage in the total amount of capital. Because the nature of cultural capital has its roots in acceptable and time-tested social values, even the economically poor could be conservative hardliners. This phenomenon can be witnessed in some intellectuals from "noble" families living in the Seoul metropolitan area. Although economically they are categorized as lower class people, they possess enough cultural capital to elevate their perceived class identity much higher than statistical estimations. Therefore, their political attitude can be far more conservative than people with little of both total and cultural capitals.¹³

13 Studies with positive findings on middle-class political potential deal a serious blow when the link between class identity and political behavior is viewed from a time perspective. Han Sang-jin's 'center-forming class theory (jungmin theory)' is a glaring example. He argues that the middle class refers to a growing class from the lower class thanks to Korea's economic development, and the class can achieve far-reaching compromise and inclusion. And Korean middle class is broadening. Han said that people in the middle class generally tend to be more progressive and reformatory for the future. He also predicted if they could lead the society, regional feud of today would be much eased (Han Sang-jin 1991a; 1991b). It is curious, however, if there has been any move for political reform in Korean society with the enlargement of the middle class for the past decade as Han expected. I would like to ascribe the inconsistency between his anticipation and the reality to Han's hasty expectations of the middle class. He caused a sensation in the existing class study circle with his

Consequently, more thorough investigations, which link regional voting to middle-class social nature, should be conducted. At this point, however, it is worth mentioning for future researches that class structure of the society has been transforming since the IMF intervention. What is remarkable among the changes are related to slow disappearance of middle class and to new process of individual identification. The former has to do with capitalistic ills and is not only found in Korean society. But the latter deserves to be studied to look at the changes in individual opinion-making process. By Ulrich Beck (2000)'s terminology, it can be said that the secondary individualization is under way and this is an indispensable social variable to studying regionalism from a class perspective.



1987 paper posing doubts on middle-class conservatism in the county. But he did not fully consider Class-Habitus from the time perspective. In fact, his theory is firmly based on Jurgen Habermas' philosophy of rationalism. If his academic analysis and remedy of Korean society were a mere retrieval of Habermas' rational planning, he could hardly avoid criticisms that his argument is too optimistic about social reform while neglecting in-depth investigation into class behavior. Undoubtedly this is not confined only to Han Sang-jin. Most Korean political scientists such as Kim Won-dong (1999) and Cho Seong-dae (2001) tacitly think of the middle class as having great potential to revolutionize the politics, but it is a dangerous notion that has not been verified.



What has been explained above is diagrammatized in Picture 2. Picture 1 displays three theoretical paradigms mentioned before, and Figure 2 is graphs of what has been told through genetic approach. Figure 1 shows that modernization theory and rational choice theory have similar cognitive bases. There is no consideration on social structural roles and only rationality and irrationality differentiates cognitive premises of individuals. On the other hand, the paradigm of critical theory has some similarities to and differences from genetic approach presented above. To emphasize the usefulness of the proposed theoretical model in this paper, the genetic model explains more details of interaction between a subject and a structure than critical theory. This paper helped completion of holistic approach by unveiling subjects and structures are entangled with various levels of logics in their own areas.

Many studies on regional identity in the country can be summarized to find it as self-consciousness stemming from the relationship between an individual and the social structure (Choi Young-Jin, 1999a: 54), condensation of collective understanding and sentiment, or groups sharing the destiny of who we are (Choi Young-jin, 1999b: 142). Such findings merely examine identity from the subject-centered viewpoint trapped by reductionism, which only treats individuals as a main factor in explaining regionalism. On the contrary, Class-Habitus highlighted in this paper overcomes reductionism by linking self-consciousness, the subject's perspective, with class, a basic social factor. Also Class-Habitus helps precisely understand the connection of macroscopic and microscopic boundaries because it grasps the possibility that political subject's behavior could be both individual and collective. In this context, political identity is not only a mental idea represented by individual self-awareness, but also material interests.

In other words, Class-Habitus is the root of political identity. Figure 2 demonstrates this clearly. However, the formation process of self-awareness is fully reflected in the occasion to create Class-Habitus through cultural factors and time perspective. In terms of social structure, controlling factors of social power and following class interests are substantially reflected. Class-Habitus faithfully describes the dual structure of the internalization of social factors and the externalization of individual consciousness in identity formation.

III. CONCLUSION

In this paper, the formation process of Korea's regionalism has been examined through structural factors from the politics and class factors controlling individual behavior.¹⁴ Logically, methods to find a solution to regionalism would naturally be found within this dual structure. Improving political structures has been recommended most frequently as a way to resolve regionalism in researches so far released in Korea. Among them, large number of researchers claims that local power monopoly should be democratized. On the other hand, measures to overcome regionalism through improved political behavior of individuals have been proposed. They include democracy education for citizens to dispel social prejudice and enlightening movement by civil organizations. Which are completely agreeable.

However, changing political structure is a mere superficial change, not a substantial change in political operation which is the ultimate goal. In other words, even with the democratized political structures, regionalism could stay as it has been. Criticisms arise in the current political situation of the country after, particularly, the Kim Dae-jung administration: did the regime change based on resistant regionalization really overcome malignant regionalism? The shift of power does not entail "who governs". It is important to realize that although Korea's political regionalism is based on economic inequality, its political symbol is being continuously reinforced by language-distorting mechanism, which has nothing to do with economic inequality.

¹⁴ This analytical method unveils that important issues in Korean politics are shaped in the same process as regionalism. South Korea's evaluation of North Korea is a good example. Conservative social forces create Habitus for the masses that portrays the North as a hostile, provocative threat, while Habitus of progressive ones do not. Progressive social forces, therefore, tend to pursue more flexible and generous political measures toward the North.

In this sense, my argument has a lot in common with existing studies investigating regionalism from political mobilization perspective. But political mobilization explains that politicians' intended strategies and tactics spread the symbol of regionalism. The theory in this paper focuses on linguistic structure in Korean politics. The reason why regionalism still prevails is because political language structure has been self-reinforcing. More concretely, there are three political groups unconsciously promote political regionalism.

First are political experts. They are advisors on regionalism issues to politicians. But to be politically expressed, the nature of political issues in the campaign has to fit certain requirements of voters. That is, regionalistic matters have no opportunity to be politically mentioned in the first place because they hardly help politicians with satisfying the voters' expectations on them and could be harmful to political status. Politicians and their aides, therefore, devote themselves only on eye-catching issues on TV programs or in the meeting room. They advocate policies for the people, but only superficially with no substance.

Another group is the media that informs the results of opinion polls and program or popularity rating survey irresponsibly. Reporters are facing heated competition from within and without to deliver hot issues hastily. And they have been busy pointing out political ill practices like regionalism. But that is not what the general public wants to hear. Rather, mass-media reports hinder correct understanding of basic political problems in many cases. The last group is the intelligent elite. They are divided into two categories. One is ideological scholars who are busy annotating. They value pure scholarship and are rarely interested in social background of knowledge. The other group is functionalists who affirm that the scientific nature of knowledge enables us to accurately predict and interpret signs of social crisis. The two schools with disparate attitudes to knowledge share one thing: that they adhere to their own "methods" and "opinions" in comprehension of Korea's regionalism and slow to come up with practical solutions.

Consequently, Korean politics is framed by a unique language mechanism that links politicians, journalists, and scholars. And each behavioral subject is tied to some customary linguistic practices. To overcome this, top priority must go to immediately destroying linguistic structure in politics and establishing fresh political ideology and symbol. From this viewpoint, it becomes clear that political language in Korea's civil society needs to undergo critical analysis. Civil society in Korea should admit that political parties, civil organizations, and interests groups in the country have only limited opportunity to reflect their interests on the politics. The key to resolve regionalism is to recognize that individuals have partial

linguistic resources and the sphere of such language is controlled systematically. It is important to arrange better institutional measures providing individuals with rich linguistic resources to put behind regionalism. That means each individual should develop his or her political sensibility to improve the discernment on significant political issues in society (Canivez 1995).

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