

Regionalism and Party System Change at the Sub-national Level: The 2016 Korean National Assembly Election*

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This paper analyzes regionalism in the 20th Korean National Assembly (NA) election in 2016 from a sub-national perspective. It thoroughly analyzes regionalism at both the party system level and individual level with a focus on the latter. At the party system level, overall electoral volatility and party competitiveness increased in the district of the Cholla (Southwestern) region in the 20th NA election, which resembled the 17th election in 2004. However, bloc volatility makes it difficult to confirm this assertion. Moreover, regional representation as a measure of regionalism turned out to be still a crucial factor determining individual vote shifts. More voters in the Cholla region supported the People's Party over the Minjoo Party as their regional representatives. The main findings of this study have significant implications for Korean electoral politics in identifying the key motivation of Cholla voters in supporting Democrat-affiliated parties, as democratization has evolved alongside broader changes in the political environment.

Keywords: Party System Changes, Regionalism, Cholla Region, Regional Representativeness

Against the predictions of experts and pollsters, in the 20th election of the Korean National Assembly (NA), held on April 13, 2016, the ruling Saenuri Party (SNR) won only 122 seats and finished second to the Minjoo Party, which secured 123 seats, despite being completely defeated in the Cholla region (southwestern region), its primary base of political support. In addition, the People's Party (PP), which split off from the Minjoo Party just before the election, won 38 seats, far-surpassing its initial goal of forming a parliamentary negotiation body (20 seats). The 20th election of the NA was the first election in Korean democratic history in which the opposition parties gained a majority and became the dominant faction.¹

Focusing only on the number of effective parties resulting from the 2016 NA election leads us to conclude that the 2016 election, which we might call a critical election, led to a realignment (Yun, 2016). However, it must be kept in mind that realignment does not occur only through the changes in the effective number of parties in one election. To determine

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¹ The Democratic Justice Party, the ruling party that failed for the first time since democratization to win a parliamentary majority in the 13th election in 1988, maintained its dominant position. In the 16th election in 2000, when the ruling New Millennium Party (115 seats) failed to win a parliamentary majority, it won substantially fewer number of seats than the opposing Grand National Party (133 seats) and the Democratic Nationalist Party (2 seats) combined.

whether the 2016 election is a critical election or a deviant election, we need to analyze more closely the results of the 2016 election from the sub-national perspective as a source of any party system change that may have occurred.

From the sub-national perspective, this election is most comparable to the 17th NA election in 2004, among the eight elections that were held after the democratization in 1987. First of all, the Uri Party defected from the ruling New Millennium Party (NMDP), turning the Cholla region into a competitive area for the 17th election of the NA. Second, the Uri Party won in the Gwangju metropolitan area (7 seats) and the northern area of the Cholla region (11 seats). South of the Cholla region (Chollanamdo provinces), 5 out of 13 seats were taken by NMDP, and 7 by the Uri Party. Many studies (Jeong, 2004; Kim et al., 2008) have argued that the 2004 election would be a critical one that would realign the Korean party system. However, the South Korean party system remained the same even after that ‘critical election’.

We were able to detect a substantial change in regionalism going back to the 13th election of the NA, based on a party-level analysis by focusing on the variations in the vote share and number of seats. However, we need to perform a closer analysis in order to determine to what extent the shift in regionalism occurred in the 2016 NA election by analyzing it from both the individual and party system levels. In addition, it is necessary to use a sub-national perspective to analyze the results of the 2016 NA in more detail, which will be discussed below.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the results of the 20th NA election from the subnational perspective, looking at the phenomenon of regionalism² that took place in the Cholla region. There are two reasons for this, among other subnational dimensions. First, the posited transformation is derived from changes in electoral patterns in the Cholla region itself.³ Second, the primary regional focus in Korean politics for almost 30 years, from the first democratic NA election in 1988, has been the Cholla region. Much has been written on regionalism in Korean electoral politics since then. However, much of these previous studies have not paid attention to the source of party system change. This study attempts to fill this gap.

The analysis is based on a 2016 post-Korean NA election survey conducted by the Korean Political Science Association. This paper is structured as follows. First, we will briefly summarize existing studies that tried to explain the regionalism in Cholla. Then, we will look at the results of the 17th NA election, focusing on the Cholla region. We will further conduct a comparative analysis of the results from the 2004 and 2016 elections in Cholla. In addition, we will apply an empirical analysis including variables, measures, and models. The paper concludes with a discussion of the findings and makes suggestions for future research.

² Regionalism in this context refers to a phenomenon in which voters of a certain region support the party that they believe represents their region. In other words, people vote for a party’s local representativeness rather than voting for a party based on individual socioeconomic background, election issues or party platform.

³ The People’s Party (PP)s electoral performance demonstrated significant regional bias. PP earned 38 seats in the 20th NA election (25 district seats and 13 seats from the party list). PP acquired 23 out of its 25 district seats from the Cholla region alone. Further, PP swept almost 90% of the 28 seats that were in contest in the Cholla region.

1. PREVIOUS KOREAN ELECTORAL STUDIES ON REGIONALISM IN CHOLLA

Much research has been conducted on regionalism, a phenomenon that has dominated national politics ever since democratization at the national level really took place. However, little has been written on sub-national regionalism. In this section, after briefly reviewing the extant literature on regionalism at the national level, we will survey relevant studies on regionalism in the Cholla region.

The extant literature on regionalism can be divided according to different approaches that they adopt, including origins, characteristics, and prospects of change. Regarding its origins, there are four competing approaches: 1) the unequal development strategy by the Park Chung-hee government (Kim, 1991); 2) the discrimination in filling high-ranking official positions by so-called Kyeonsang administrations from the Park Chung-hee to Kim Young-sam governments (Jee, 2011); 3) the political mobilization by political leaders, in particular during the electoral competition (Son, 1993); and 4) the socio-cultural distance between citizens from the Cholla and Kyeonsang regions (Na, 1991). As for the characteristics of regionalism, there are two main approaches: the ideological false consciousness mobilized by authoritarian governments (Choi, 1993) and the voters' rational choice under the constraints of regional party competition with an expectation of maximizing the interest of the region they belong to (Cho, 2000). As to the prospect of regionalism, the "continuing hypothesis" (Lee, 2011; Park, 2009) and "changing hypothesis" are in competition (Kim, Choi, and Cho 2008).

Let us turn to regionalism from a subnational perspective, in particular from the Cholla region. First, Jhee (2013) suggested that the Cholla region's biased support for candidate Moon Jae-in of the opposition Democratic United Party (DUP) in the 2012 presidential election was prompted by hostility toward the SNR party rather than it being a rational choice based on the hope that the DUP will strive to achieve regional prosperity. In a later study, Jhee (2014) interprets the attitudes, ideological attributes, and political influence of voters in the Cholla region based on a public-opinion poll following the 2012 presidential election. He posits that voters in the Cholla region are more liberal regarding certain issues such as relations with the United States and North Korea, political freedom, and stronger protection of human rights than voters in other regions. Specifically, while the percentage of voters supporting a US–Korea alliance remains low, levels of support for the abolition of the National Security law and the death penalty, aid for North Korea, and freedom of speech in rallies and protests is significantly higher (p. 42, Table 4). In addition, voters in the Cholla region are in greater accord with the ideology of their regional party than voters in Kyeongsang. However, regarding an experience analysis of voting decisions, he detects a difference between the voting patterns of the Cholla electorate and the national electorate. In the Cholla region voting decision model, an ideological gap with the SNR party was a key variable.

Kim (2007) explored continuities and shifts in the regionalism of Cholla by examining presidential election results by cities and counties. His study shows that regionalism appeared in Cholla's 7th presidential election in 1971, only when he analyzed the results by cities and counties. The 13th presidential election in 1987, the first election after democratization, was when regionalism in Cholla fully emerged.

Han (2013) analyzed regionalism in Chonbuk province (north of the Cholla region) from a regional perspective based on the 19th election of the NA. Han's dataset analysis shows

a discrepancy in regionalism in Chonbuk and Gwangju/Chonnam (south of Cholla region). In other words, Chonbuk demonstrated less regionalism than Gwangju/Chonnam. For instance, the vote share of independent candidates was higher than that of candidates from the Democratic Party. Even in the 19th NA election, the vote share of Democrats in Chonbuk province was lower(?) than in Gwangju/Chonnam. Support for the SNR Party was relatively high as well.

Kim (2010) examined the shifts and changes in the popularity of the Democratic Party in the Cholla region in local elections. His study shows that the success rate of candidates from the Democratic Party overwhelmed that of others in the past local elections, as well as in the NA elections. However, there have been signs of other types of changes. First, the number of people elected from the Democratic Party has decreased, while the number of progressive party candidates entering local assembly elections has increased. Furthermore, independent candidates have frequently won local wards. Kim states that these changes are the result of the relative alleviation or shift in partiality of Cholla regionalism.

Jee (2011) illustrated regionalism in Cholla and Gyeongsang from elite recruitment results based on a candidate's origin instead of residence or domicile. According to his study, the component ratio of ministers from Gyeongsang and Cholla during Kim Dae-jung's presidency was 51.6%, which showed somewhat of an even balance with other regions. During the presidency of Roh Moo-Hyun, representatives from Gyeongsang or Cholla comprised 62.5%, beating other regions by 11%. During Lee Myung-bak's presidency, elites from the Gyeongsang and Cholla regions exceeded others by 4%. In conclusion, his analysis proposes that Kim, Roh, and Lee's governments failed to alleviate regionalism in terms of elite-recruitment results.

Beyond the Cholla region, we can divide the existing studies on voters' motivations and behaviors into two categories.⁴ The first regards regionalist voting behavior as being a rational choice based on the expectation that the party will promote and protect the interest of one's region. Another relatively recent view understands regionalist voting behavior as a manifestation of regional identification with the party. As the regional party system has predominated ever since democratization, regional voters have developed a sense of identification with the representative party in the region that shared their political and ideological attitudes. This identification is reflected in regionalism in elections (Song, 2006; Park, Han, and Lee, 2012; Kang, 2012).

Furthermore, in the course of political transition, various theories have emerged regarding how to measure degrees of regionalism (Kim, 2007). First, while Korean politics were under the control of a political leader from the region represented by the 'Three Kims', the regionalist electoral behavior came to be defined based on voters' hometown. Supporting the candidates from one's province was interpreted as regionalist voting behavior, and this was considered a suitable definition for analyzing regionalism in presidential elections. Secondly, regionalist voting behavior could also be defined as voting based on the hometown of the candidate's party leader. In other words, people support candidates from the party whose leader has the same origin as they do. Such behavior was most prominent in NA elections. Lastly, we could view regionalist electoral behavior as based on the region represented by a

⁴ None of the earlier studies of the Cholla region directly discusses the change in regionalism itself. This could be the reason for regionalism's persistence rather than transformation in Cholla. From the 13th to 19th NA elections, the 17th election was the only election that hinted at a change in the dominance of the Democratic Party.

candidate's party. Democrat-affiliated parties politically embodied the Cholla region, while the SNR Party and previously mentioned conservative parties served the same role in the Kyeongsang region.

The abovementioned literature details how the concept of regionalism at the level of the individual voter has evolved in Korean politics. This study focuses on the concept of regionalism as the electoral behavior of supporting the representative party of a region. The most important question here is what it means to represent a region. Political context influences the representativeness of a region. For example, in the case of the Cholla area, the government turnover of Kim Dae-jung was the most critical concern before Kim was installed. When Roh Moo-hyun became the candidate for the NMDP, the re-creation of a democratic government through a candidate from Kyeongsang became the priority. Democrat-affiliated parties were unsuccessful in the ensuing presidential elections in 2007 and 2012. They also lost in almost all elections during the Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye governments, raising doubts about possible government turnover. As a result, many voters in the Cholla region expressed their concerns about the political representation of the Cholla region and even argued that the region was being neglected by the Kyeongsang-based administration (Roh Moo-hyun) despite overwhelming support from the Cholla region (93.2%).⁵

The key issue during the 20th election of the NA was "the neglect of Cholla's regional interests." The PP called for the liquidation of pro-Roh hegemony and underlined the neglect of the Cholla region throughout the election campaign. Regarding 'neglect of the Cholla region', the argument held that Cholla voters were shunned by the pro-Roh faction in spite of their overwhelming support for the former president Roh Moo-Hyun and the then incumbent candidate Moon Jae-in.⁶ Candidate Moon strongly refuted this argument during his visit to the Gwangju and Cholla regions before the election.

In the Cholla region, however, regionalism initially developed through government turnover and evolved into a new dimension of 'how to represent the Cholla region's interests.'⁷ For the first time in modern democratic history, this election was a competition between the Minjoo Party and the PP over who could best represent the interests of the Cholla region. From such a perspective, existing studies that measure the degree of regionalism based only on the region of a voter's hometown or residence cannot but have fundamental limitations in analyzing voter choices.⁸

⁵ In reality, the key indices that showed the status of Cholla's regional economy, such as its rate of economic growth and gross regional domestic product (GRDP), was significantly lower than the national average. For instance, the Cholla region's GRDP increased at only 0.198%, while the national average GRDP increase (in 2014) was 3.3%. Moreover, per capita GDP was only 81.15% of the national average, and gross domestic income per capita was even lower at 73.62% of the national average in the Cholla region (in 2014) (National Statistics Office).

⁶ The historic origin of 'neglecting' the Cholla region goes back to Roh Moo-hyun's presidency. According to a survey conducted in April 2003, almost half of the citizens (48.4%) of Gwangju experienced government neglect of the Cholla region.

⁷ The argument of Kim Wook (2015) on the secularization of Cholla politics is an illustrative example.

⁸ Jhee (2013: 147) had a valid point in this regard. The region of origin or the residence itself cannot be substituted for regionalism.

2. THE 20TH NA ELECTION RESULTS

As discussed above, to examine the results of the 2016 NA election closely from a perspective of party system change, this study employs two different empirical strategies: bringing the sub-national dimensions back into the analytical framework and analyzing voters' electoral determinants at individual levels.

1.1. Reintroducing the Sub-national Dimension

To determine the occurrence of any party system change in the 20th NA election, we need to pay enough attention to the following two aspects: first, the location of party system change; second, whether any change impinges on the main cleavage of the party system (Mair, 1983).

Table 1 provides a comparison of the electoral results of the three major parties (SNR, Minjoo, and the PP) at the sub-national level. As Table 1 shows, there are substantial differences in the three major parties' electoral performance across the capital metropolitan area, Cholla region, Kyeonsang region, and Choongchung region. At the national level, as discussed above, there was a significant change at the party system level, which expanded from two main parties in the 2012 NA election to three in 2016. A close look at the sub-national dimensions could elucidate the main source of this change at the national level. The performance of the PP, in particular, demonstrated a strong regional bias. It acquired 25 seats in the district, with 23 out of 25 seats coming from the Cholla region. The district vote share of the PP at the national level was 14.79%, and the Cholla region's share was almost half of the valid vote (46.58%). Since the main driver of change in the electoral performance of the PP came from the sub-national level, it is necessary to reintroduce this dimension.

Table 1. Electoral Results of the 2016 Legislative Election – A Comparison of Four Regional Areas

	SNR Party			Minjoo Party			People's Party		
	District	Party List	Seats	District	Party List	Seats	District	Party List	Seats
Capital Metro Area	4,516,600	774,346	35	5,021,596	3,122,420	82	1,828,653	3,291,923	2
	(37.75%)	(31.80%)		(41.98%)	(26.31%)		(15.29%)	(27.74%)	
Kyeonsang Area	2,961,628	2,785,666	48	1,475,157	1,241,691	9	188,208	1,064,284	0
	(49.85%)	(47.14%)		(24.83%)	(21.01%)		(3.17%)	(18.01%)	
Cholla Area	222,391	144,361	2	981,982	788,964	3	1,227,320	1,229,064	23
	(8.44%)	(5.58%)		(37.27%)	(30.49%)		(46.58%)	(47.49%)	
ChoongChung Area	1,038,103	851,873	14	1,010,190	665,273	12	264,838	571,549	0
	(42.26%)	(35.34%)		(41.12%)	(27.60%)		(10.78%)	(23.71%)	
Total	9,200,690	7,960,272	105 17	8,881,369	6,069,744	110 13	3,551,044	6,355,572	25 13
	(38.33%)	(33.50%)	122	37.00%	25.55%	123	14.79%	26.75%	38

1.2. Change at the Party System Level

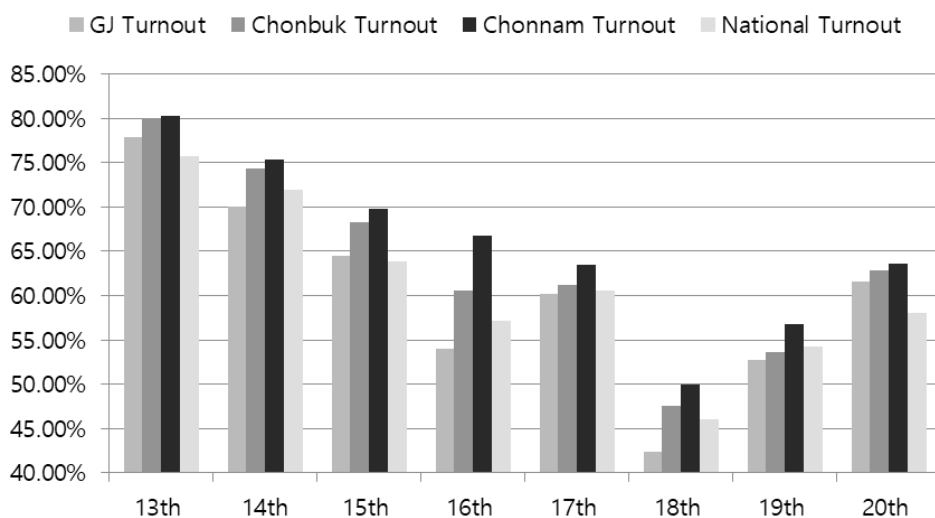
Reviewing the election results in the Cholla area, we notice high voter turnout in the region. Figure 1 compares voter turnout in the Cholla (Chonnam, Chonbuk, Gwanju) region to all regions from the 13th to the 20th elections of the NA.

We can compare the change in voter turnout shown in the 20th NA election in order to verify the level of voter interest. From the 13th (1988) to the 20th NA election (2016), the Cholla area had consistently high turnout. The biggest difference was observed in this 2016 election (4.83%), while the smallest difference was in the 19th election. Voter turnout in the Cholla region (54.2%) and national turnout (54.3%) were practically the same (0.22% difference) as in the 19th election.

The change in electoral composition was the primary reason for the significant gap in voter turnout between the Cholla region and the rest of the country. The PP was formed just two months before the 20th NA election. Thus, the 20th NA election was its first competitive performance in the Cholla region since the 17th election in 2004. Comparably high voter interest in Cholla was influenced by the changeover of the electoral composition. As stated in a post-election survey by the Political Science Association, over two-thirds of voters (69.97%) in the Cholla region were interested in this election. This number is significantly higher than that of all other elections (57.37%).

Second, the most remarkable feature of this election was the defeat of the Minjoo Party and the rise of the newly emerged PP. The Minjoo Party inherited its ruling position in the Cholla area from previous Democratic parties; however, it succeeded in securing only 3 out of 28 seats after this election. On the other hand, the PP won 23 seats and became the new successor representative party of the Cholla region.

To accurately evaluate the results of this election, we need to perform a comparative analysis of previous election results. As mentioned above, the returns of the 17th NA election



Source: National Election Commission of Korea.

Figure 1. Change in Voter Turnout in Cholla Region 13th (1988)–20th (2016) Legislative Elections

Table 2. Election Results in Cholla Region – A Comparison of the 2000/2004 and the 2012/2016 Legislative Elections

16 th Legislative Election	17 th Legislative Election (2004)			19 th Legislative Election (2012)			20 th Legislative Election (2016)		
	Constituency Vote	Constituency Vote	Party List Vote	Constituency Vote	Constituency Vote	Party List Vote	Constituency Vote	Constituency Vote	Party List Vote
New Millennium Democratic Party (NMDP)	66.8% (25 seats)	55.0% (25 seats)	55.3%	United Democratic Party	53.1% (25 seats)	68.0%	Minjoo Party	37.3% (3 seats)	30.5%
Grand National Party (GNP)	3.7% (0 seat)	30.8% (5 seats)	25.8%	United Progressive Party	16.2% (3 seats)	15.6%	People's Party	46.6% (23 seats)	47.5%
United Liberal Democrat	2.0% (0 seat)	0.4 (0 seat)	2.8%	SNR	5.4% (0 seat)	7.3%	SNR	3.4% (2 seats)	5.6%
Independent	27.1% (4 seats)	9.2% (1 seat)		Independent	24.6% (2 seats)		Independent	3.87% (0 seat)	

and its electoral context are the best match for the 20th election. Thus, we used the results from the 17th NA election as a comparison target. We also need to examine the 16th and 19th elections in comparison with the 17th and 20th elections.

Table 2 compares the 17th and 19th election returns with those of the 20th election in the Cholla region. In the aftermath of President Roh Moo-Hyun's impeachment, the Progressive Party seized legislative power in the 17th NA election. Even in Cholla, the regionally dominant NMDP was brutally defeated as a result of impeachment backlash and a deep political division with the Uri Party. After the election, many studies attempted to identify and analyze the 17th election as the critical election. However, in fact, these studies only considered the change in the number of seats and stretched the meaning of election results. In another more precise analysis, the 17th NA election was shown to be an election that presented continuity in terms of party system and voter determination.

The following section will explore this problem in more detail. Electoral volatility⁹ is a quintessential variable in explaining the stability or fluctuation of a party system. We will more closely examine the change in Cholla's party system through this variable. The electoral volatility of the Cholla region in the 17th election was 50.69 according to the Pederson index.¹⁰ However, the NMDP and the Uri Party were originally one big party, and, considering the potential for their later reunion, we can lump the support for each party together into one. In this case, electoral volatility decreased to 20.69. This illustrates that the results of the 17th election are not sufficient to conclude that Cholla's party system fundamentally changed. Electoral volatility is a frequently used index for explaining the stability/fluctuation of the party system. However, it has one critical limitation: we cannot derive the determinants of vote change from this index since it only presents the change in party support between elections. Therefore, we need additional forms of analysis of individual-level vote determinants.

We should analyze vote determinants not only at the party level but also at the individual level to accurately examine whether Cholla's regionalism has changed through this election. We can confirm this change through the shift in people's perceptions of regional representativeness as a determining factor in voting behavior.

Table 3 displays the ranking of the most salient issues in the 20th NA election as perceived by voters. Comparing the results from all respondents to that of Cholla respondents as shown in Table 3, we discovered some interesting results. First, respondents indicated that the first and second most important issues for them are conflicts between social strata (30.21%) and ideological conflicts (23.05%). On the other hand, respondents from the Cholla area chose conflicts between the capital area and other districts (38.52%), and conflicts between Kyeongsang and the Cholla region (26.23%) as the two most urgent issues. Such a reaction reveals the sizable disparity between the voters in Cholla and other areas. Especially considering the predominance of regional issues in the NA election, unlike in the presidential election, there is a greater possibility of Cholla voters paying special attention to regional issues (e.g., issues of discrimination of the Cholla region).

⁹ Electoral volatility is typically indicated by the Pederson Index (Pederson 1979), which is calculated by the following equation: Electoral Volatility (V) = $(ci, t - ci, t - 1) / ci, t$ (where ci, t refers to polling rate of a party i in a given election (t); $ci, t - 1$ refers to polling rate of the same party i in the previous election ($t - 1$)).

¹⁰ This numerical value measured an independent as a single party.

Table 3. Most Salient Issues in the 20th Legislative Election – A Comparison of the National Sample and the Cholla Voters

	Cholla Voter (A)	National Sample (B)	Difference (A-B)
Conflict between Capital Area and Local Area	38.52 (47)	19.18 (233)	19.34
Regional Conflict between Cholla and Kyeongsang Region	26.23 (32)	15.56 (189)	10.67
Conflict between Social Strata	18.85 (23)	30.21 (367)	-11.36
Ideological Conflict	9.02 (11)	23.05 (280)	-14.03
Generational Conflict	6.56 (8)	10.37 (126)	-3.81

Source: KPSA 2016 Election Survey.

Note: Numbers identify percentage, and number in the parentheses is number of observations.

3. ANALYSIS OF INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL ELECTORAL CHOICE – RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1. Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is the change of party support in the 19th–20th NA election. We created a dummy variable for those who supported the Democratic United Party in the 19th election in 2012 but supported the PP in the 20th election in 2016 (1: supporters, 0: others).

3.2. Independent Variable

Regional representativeness is the independent variable in this paper. We measured regional representativeness regarding the issue of ownership over community development based on the aforementioned arguments (refer to Tables 4–5). We created dummy variables for those who endorsed the Minjoo Party or the PP in the question “which party could best resolve the pending issue of regional economic development?” (Minjoo Party: 1, others: 0; PP: 1, others: 0).

The crucial issue in the course of this election campaign was the disturbance of the candidate nomination process in each party. This variable was measured based on the following question: “What is your opinion on each party’s nomination of the candidates?” (1: perfectly done ~ 4: poorly done).

Voter support for the necessity of a third party was also an important election issue in the Cholla region. This variable was measured based on the following question: “What is your opinion on the necessity of a new party to replace the existing political parties?” (1: very necessary ~ 4: not necessary). Since the dependent variable is the vote shift to the PP, we recoded this variable from a negative position (4: not necessary) to a positive one (1: very necessary). Second, the variable associated with the need for a new party reflects an attitude toward a unifying candidate strategy among opposition parties. This variable was measured by the following question: “What is your opinion on having candidates from each party instead of a single candidacy?” (1: very desirable ~ 4: very undesirable). This variable was

also recoded from negative (1: very undesirable) to positive evaluation (4: very desirable) in the same context as the variable for the new party.

Ideological distance was measured by two variables in regard to voters' self-assessment of their ideology and evaluation of the ideologies of the Minjoo Party and the PP, based on the following questions:

In politics, people generally distinguish between progressives (left wing) and conservatives (right wing). On a scale of 1 to 10, which side does the following party belong to? Ideologically speaking, which side do you belong to? (0: progressive ~ 10: conservative).

In order to create a variable for ideological distance, voters' evaluations of each party's ideological position were deducted from their ideological self-placement.

This NA election took place before the presidential election. Thus, we can presume that evaluations of the presidential candidates of each party had a certain impact on election results. The empirical analysis included assessments of each party's major leaders. This variable was measured based on the following evaluation:

This time, we would like to know your opinion on leading politicians. Please refer to the evaluation example and give your opinion on the following figures on a scale of 0 to 100 (100: very positive ~ 50: neutral ~ 0: very negative).

Evaluation of Park Geun-hye's presidency was measured based on the following question: "How would you evaluate President Park's presidential performance in the past three years?" (1: well done ~ 4: poorly done). Since this paper analyzes determinants of support for the opposition party, we deducted variable numbers based on negative responses.

Based on economic voting theory, we included a retrospective evaluation variable on the national and household economy in the empirical analysis. The variable was measured with the following questions: "How has the national economic situation changed in the past four years?" (1: highly improved ~ 5: much declined); "How has your domestic economic condition changed in the past 4 years?" (1: highly improved ~ 5: much declined).

Generally controlled socio-economic variables were included in the experiential analysis: education (1: primary school graduate ~ 6: doctoral graduate), family income (1: below \$1,000 ~ 11: over \$11,000).

4. RESULTS

4.1. Analysis of determinants of party support shifts

What caused the voters who originally supported the ruling Democratic United Party in the Cholla region during the 19th election to shift their support to the PP during the 20th election? Table 4 highlights the results from the empirical analysis of the determinants of the vote shift in the 20th NA election in 2016. Table 5 confirms the main arguments of this study. First, we should look into the Model 1 results, which analyzed the determinants of support for shifting votes from the Democratic United Party to the PP with the national sample.

There was a greater chance of vote shift to the PP among those who believed the PP would better solve regional development issues (significance level .001). On the other hand,

Table 4. Logit Analysis of the Electoral Choice of Vote Shift to People's Party in the 20th Legislative Election

Variables	National Sample		Voters whose hometown is Cholla	
	Coeff. (St. errors)	Marginal Value	Coeff. (St. errors)	Marginal Value
The Minjoo Party's Ownership of Regional Economy	-0.632 (0.422)	-0.014	-1.097 (0.806)	-0.080
People's Party's Ownership of Regional Economy	1.377 (0.371)***	0.032	1.556 (0.692)*	0.114
Negative Eval. of Minjoo Party's Nomination Process	0.537 (0.306)+	0.012	-0.485 (0.552)	-0.036
Negative Eval. of People's Party Nomination Process	-1.036 (0.375)**	-0.023	-1.565 (0.763)**	-0.114
Necessity of New Party	-0.108 (0.197)	-0.003 (-0.007)	-0.217 (0.374)	-0.016(-0.048)
Electoral Campaign of Unification	-0.088 (0.227)	-0.002 (-0.006)	-0.117 (0.367)	-0.008(-0.026)
Ideological Distance from Minjoo Party	-0.142 (0.062)	-0.003 (-0.077)	-0.182 (0.121)	-0.000(-0.012)
Ideological Distance from People's Party	-0.008 (0.008)	-0.000 (-0.028)	0.001 (0.013)	0.013 (0.234)
Preference of Moon Jae-in	0.003 (0.008)	0.000 (0.008)	-0.018 (0.017)	-0.001(-0.140)
Preference of Ahn Chul-soo	0.028 (0.008)***	0.001 (0.096)	0.008 (0.015)	0.001 (0.063)
Preference of Kim Jong-in	0.000 (0.009)	0.000 (0.001)	0.024 (0.018)	0.001 (0.182)
Negative Evaluation of Park government	1.048 (0.416)*	0.023	1.558 (0.780)*	0.114
Retrospective Evaluation of National Economy	0.133 (0.253)	0.003 (0.010)	-0.459 (0.431)	-0.033(-0.199)
Retrospective Evaluation of Family Economy	-0.105 (0.236)	-0.002 (-0.010)	0.110 (0.395)	0.008 (0.030)
Voters raised in Honam	1.000 (0.309)***	0.022	-----	
Age: 30s	1.870 (0.647)**	0.042	1.821 (1.150)	0.133
Age: 40s	1.461 (0.642)*	0.033	1.112 (1.096)	0.080
Age: 50s	1.968 (0.632)**	0.044	1.976 (1.051)+	0.144
Age: 60s and over	2.560 (0.694)***	0.058	2.686 (1.131)*	0.196
Household Income	-0.036 (0.109)	-0.001 (-0.004)	-0.164 (0.188)	-0.012(-0.063)
Education	0.186 (0.234)	0.004 (0.013)	0.121 (0.407)	0.008 (0.027)
Man	0.312 (0.303)	0.007	0.113 (0.532)	0.008
Number of Observations	1058		186	
Pseudo R ²	0.3265		0.3673	

Source: KPSA 2016 Election Survey.

Note: +p≤.10; *p≤.05;**p≤.01;***p≤.001

Table 5. Logit Analysis of People's Party's Issue Ownership of Regional Economic Development

Variable	People's Party Issue ownership of Regional Economy	
	Coeff. (St. errors)	Marginal Value
Negative Eval. of Minjoo Party's Nomination Process	0.557 (0.246)*	0.097
Negative Eval. of People's Party Nomination Process	-0.802 (0.267)**	-0.140
Necessity of New Party	0.262 (0.161)*	0.045
Electoral Campaign of Unification	0.005 (0.205)	0.001
Ideological Distance from Minjoo Party	-0.048 (0.052)	-0.008
Ideological Distance from People's Party	-0.001 (0.007)	-0.000
Preference of Moon Jae-in	-0.030 (0.007)***	-0.005(-0.499)
Preference of Ahn Chul-soo	0.057 (0.008)***	0.010 (0.830)
Preference of Kim Jong-in	-0.015 (0.007)*	-0.002(-0.224)
Negative Evaluation of Park government	-0.237 (0.290)	-0.041
Retrospective Evaluation of National Economy	0.216 (0.197)	0.037 (0.132)
Retrospective Evaluation of Family Economy	-0.073 (0.186)	-0.012(-0.052)
Voters raised in Honam	0.948 (0.274)***	0.165
Age: 30s	-0.739 (0.386)⁺	-0.129
Age: 40s	-0.123 (0.342)	-0.021
Age: 50s	0.022 (0.385)	0.003
Age: 60s & over	-0.218 (0.459)	-0.038
Household Income	-0.100 (0.087)	-0.017(-0.090)
Education	0.297 (0.205)	0.052 (0.158)
Man	-0.316 (0.240)	-0.055
Constant	-3.178 (1.215)**	
Number of Observations	519	
Pseudo R ²	0.2464	

Source: KPSA 2016 Election Survey.

Note: ⁺p≤.10; *p≤.05; **p≤.01; ***p≤.001; Dependent variable of this analysis is voters' appreciation of ownership of regional economic development (1: PP, 0: DP).

the Minjoo Party's issue ownership over the regional economy appeared to have negative effects on voters' shift over to the PP, but was statistically insignificant.

Second, negative evaluation of the Minjoo Party's nomination process had a positive

effect on voter shifts to the PP while lowering the significance level (significance level .10). A negative evaluation of the PP's candidate nomination process was significant in controlling the support for a vote shift.¹¹

Third, the positive evaluation of the PP representative Ahn Cheol-soo (during the election) had a significant influence on vote shifts to the PP. The PP basically rode this election on the strength of Ahn's personal popularity. Regarding the party list instead of district-level vote, which varies in terms of the competitiveness of candidates, the PP won 26.7%, eclipsing the Minjoo party's 25.5%. The so-called "Ahn Cheol-soo effect" enabled such an impressive result from a newly formed party.

Fourth, the negative evaluation of Park Geun-hye's presidential performance increased the chance of votes shifting to the PP. This implies that the PP gained support from some of the Democratic United Party's followers in the 19th general election as an alternative to President Park's government.

Fifth, in regard to the effect of age, voter support shifted among all age groups. However, the significance of the variable was highest among people in their 60s.

Model 2 shows statistical analysis of people from the Cholla region.¹² As in Model 1, the PP's issue of ownership over the regional economy acted as an important variable determining the vote shift. The regional representativeness of the Minjoo Party was statistically insignificant, as in Model 1.

Second, as shown in Model 1, negative evaluation of the PP nomination process had a negative effect on voters shifting to the PP. This is relevant to the nomination process of the PP in the Cholla region. The nomination process of the PP suffered from the aftereffects, as did the two parties. As a result of the nomination process, the PP eventually replaced one candidate in the area and did not nominate candidates for the two districts. Third, only the 60-and-older age group had a significant effect on the vote shift to the PP. This result corresponds to the previous public survey result that voter support was bisected in the Cholla region. Young people supported the Minjoo Party, and old people supported the PP.

These results provide meaningful insights regarding Cholla regionalism. Why did voters choose a particular party among two competing parties that have political bases in a certain region? According to the analysis above, more people in the Cholla region gave their votes to the party that they thought could most successfully settle regional economic issues.

Since the representativeness of the PP on regional economic issues was identified as a key factor in voters' shifting to the PP, the next question is why they thought the PP would be more capable of dealing with regional economic problems. Due to limited survey data, we faced difficulty in conducting a systematic analysis. However, by employing the post-election survey data used in Models 1 and 2, this study examined the determinants of regional representativeness in the Cholla region.

Table 5 illustrates the results of the analysis of the determinants of regional representativeness. A more negative attitude toward the nomination process of the Minjoo

¹¹ Lim Nae-Hyun was the only incumbent congressman left out of the public nomination. Kim Han-Gil and Shin Hak-Yong were the two candidates who dropped out of the race. Kim dropped out due to a conflict within the party leadership, and Shin dropped out because of his bribery trial.

¹² In Model 2, we performed an analysis based on Cholla origin, not Cholla region, due to small sample size. In the public survey by the Political Science Association, the number of Cholla origin cases was 217 out of 1,215 (17.86%), but the number of Cholla region cases was 122 (10.04%). However, the correlation between the two variables was very high (0.6378).

Party increases the perception of the PP being the regional representative, while a greater negative attitude toward the nomination process of the PP increases the perception of the Minjoo Party being the regional representative. (If the leverage of the two parties through a marginal coefficient is compared, a negative attitude toward the nomination of the PP (0.14) was greater than a negative attitude toward the nomination of the Minjoo Party (0.097)). The next influential variable was the preference for the leaders of the two parties. Greater preference for Representative Ahn Cheol-soo increased the rate of people thinking that the PP better represented the Cholla region than the Minjoo Party. On the other hand, increased preference for Moon Jae-in led people to think that the Minjoo Party better represented the region. Interestingly, it had the same effect on an increased preference for Kim Jong-in, chairman of the emergency committee of the Minjoo Party (significance level .05). This shows that voter evaluation of the role of Kim Jong-in is ambivalent. Despite the criticism of his National Emergency Committee career¹³ and self-nomination during the nomination process of party list members,¹⁴ some considered Kim to have contributed to the stabilization of the Minjoo Party, the leading opposition party.

The results above remind us of the analysis of the 19th NA election in 2012 by Kang Won-taek (2012). According to Kang's study, retrospective voting was not in operation in the 19th NA election, considering the results of the 18th presidential election in 2012. Since we are missing a question on the prospect of the presidential election in the survey, an exact measurement is not possible. However, it would be useful to remember that during the electoral campaign, Ahn Chul-soo overcame the pressure of accepting a single-candidate strategy against the ruling SNR both inside and outside PP. During the campaign, he focused on the Cholla region and earned the nickname of Strong Chul-soo (Kangchul-soo).¹⁵

5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this paper is to analyze regionalism in the 20th NA election in 2016 from the subnational perspective. For the sake of thoroughness, this study examines regionalism both at the party system and individual levels with a focus on the latter.

At the party system levels, overall electoral volatility and party competitiveness in the district of the Cholla region increased in the 20th NA election in 2016, which resembled the 17th election in 2004. However, analyzing block volatility (Mair, 1997) makes it difficult

¹³ After Park Chung-hee's assassination, Chun Do-whan seized power and carried out a military coup. Chun and the new army group established a National Emergency Committee as a temporary administrative organization. Chun was able to become the new president after bloodily suppressing strong resistance from the people in Gwangju, capital of the Cholla region. Kim Jong-in was a member of the National Emergency Committee. He was also a member of the NA elected from the national constituency during Chun's government. So, from the viewpoint of a Cholla voter with a painful memory of Chun's government, Kim Jong-in's heavy involvement in Chun's regime was seen as his weakest point.

¹⁴ As discussed above, PP and DP experienced a serious nomination scandal. In particular, Kim Jong-in as a chairman of the emergency committee nominated himself to the second seat in the proportional representation party list, which caused a strong backlash.

¹⁵ Indeed, there is a significant correlation between voters' appreciation of PP's ownership of regional economic development and their preference of Ahn Chul-soo in the Cholla region (0.3855 at 0.000 level).

to confirm party system change in the 2016 NA election. More voters in the Cholla region supported the PP over the Minjoo Party as their regional representatives. In further analysis of determinants of regional representativeness, preference for promising party leaders was a significant determinant of the competitiveness of the two parties.

The main findings of this study have significant implications for Korean electoral politics. As this study demonstrates, since democratization, the key motivation of voters in the Cholla region for supporting Democrat-affiliated parties has evolved as the political environment has changed. Voters in the Cholla region (and from the Cholla region) played a pivotal role in electing the first opposition leader, Kim Dae-jung, to win the presidential election and in re-creating the democratic government of Roh Moo-hyun by overwhelmingly supporting Democrat-affiliated parties. During the Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye administrations, voters in the Cholla region (and from the Cholla region) maintained strong support for Democrat-affiliated parties, hoping that they will return to political power. However, the feebleness of the Democrat-affiliated parties as a viable alternative to conservative governments provoked a dispute over the secularization of Cholla politics (Kim Wook, 2015). According to this perspective, it is time for Cholla voters to support parties based on their secular interest rather than continuing to cling to a delusion of potential governmental change with unconditional support for the Democratic Party.¹⁶

It is possible to apply the concept of evolution of regionalism to Kyeongsang voters' regional voting. For instance, in the 20th NA election, South Kyeongsang voters demonstrated a different electoral choice from those in North Kyeongsang.¹⁷ Through its voters' regionalism, South Kyeongsang has evolved since democratization, from a political stronghold of the democratic movement led by Kim Yong-sam into a political stronghold of conservative parties created by a three-party merger, and then into an epicenter of political conflict under two terms of North Kyeongsang administrations.

This study holds that the 20th NA in 2016 was not a critical election. In order for an election to be called critical, there should be a realignment between parties across the bloc. This change should also be durable (Key, 1955). However, as this study demonstrates, an electoral change occurred in the Cholla region between two parties within and not across the bloc. Furthermore, Cholla voter support for the PP did not stabilize and could fluctuate.

Party system change is a function of demand (voter level) and supply (party level). Party system change is possible only when parties can mobilize voters across a regional stronghold with new issues, crosscutting the regional cleavage. For instance, if the Minjoo Party would

¹⁶ After the 2004 legislative elections when the Grand National Party successfully defended against impeachment backlash under Park Geun-hye's leadership as chair of the emergency committee, the GNP won almost all elections during the Roh Moo-hyun government. In the 2007 presidential election, Lee Myung-bak secured a landslide victory with more than a 5-million-vote margin. Even during the 2012 legislative election, which served as a midterm evaluation of the MB government, the GNP won with a majority of seats. In the following 2012 presidential election, Park Geun-hye won with more than 50% of the vote for the first time. During the Park government, despite the Sewol Ferry incident, the SNR won the local election. In sum, Democrat-affiliated parties have acquired an image as parties that have lost every election since 2004. Based on this backdrop, there was a fierce debate over the future of Cholla politics that has been played in a political stronghold for the Democrat-affiliated party.

¹⁷ The Minjoo Party earned five seats from Busan (38.42% vote-share in the district, only 9.42% lower than that of SNR) and three seats from the Kyeongsang region (31.51% vote-share, 16.99% lower than that of SNR).

be able to mobilize young voters from the Kyeongsang region who have grievances over economic inequality and injustice in Korean society with targeted policy prescriptions, it might be possible for new party systems to emerge.

If so, what would happen after the 19th presidential election? The empirical results that voter from the Cholla region's giving credit to the PP as the political representativeness of Cholla region was significantly associated with their evaluation of Ahn Chul-soo' qualification as the strong presidential candidate. Ahn, however, had a very low performance in the Cholla region in the presidential election. His performance at the national level was also less than voter's expectations. Thus, the PP's representativeness of the Cholla region has failed to win the trust of voters.

The findings of this study have implications for the comparative study. When party system's electoral base is regionally biased (e.g., India and Taiwan), analyzing party system change need a sub-national perspective. Also, analyzing party system change require a close examination at both the party system level and at individual level.

The findings of this study have limitations since this study is only based on the Cholla region in the 20th NA election of South Korea. In a future study, it would be more useful to examine the dynamics of party system continuity and change by comparing the electoral outcomes from Korean and other emergent democracies such as Taiwan from a subnational-dimension.

APPENDIX

Political Parties since 16th Legislative Election (2000)

Party Name	Explanation
New Millennium Democratic Party (NMDP):	Incumbent Party until 11/2003.
Uri Party	Separated from NMDP on 11/2003 and incumbent party until 08/2007
Democratic United Party (DUP)	Largest opposition party created before the 2012 legislative election
The Minjoo Party	Largest opposition party during the 2016 legislative election
The People's Party (PP)	Newly created party before the 2016 legislative election
Grand National Party (GNP)	Conservative Incumbent Party during Lee Myung-bak administration (02/2008–02/2013).
Saenuri Party (SNR)	Successor of GNP, created before the 2012 legislative election.

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