

# The Growth of Economics Profession in Korea

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## I. Introduction

Since the introduction of economics in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the economics profession in Korea has survived incessant political ordeals. One of the most severe hardships was the subjugation of Korea to Japan in 1910. Even after independence from Japan in 1945, the growth of the community was not smooth at all. The Korean War, which broke out in 1950 after the attack of the North Korean communist regime, in 1950, demolished the entire basis of academic activities, and cost the South Koreans a decade for recovery. The rapid growth of the economics profession was made possible, along with fast economic development, in the 1960s as seen in Table 1.

As what Samuelson calls the Neo-classical synthesis has dominated worldwide economic thinking in this period, most Korean economists have favored mainstream economics. It should be noted, however, that Korea's initial condition before the rapid importation of the Neo-classical synthesis differed from that of other Western countries.

To investigate how the economics profession has been growing and changing since the introduction of Western economics, we will use both statistical and descriptive analyses. For a quantitative explanation, we will look at the composition of the publications of Korean economists who lived in Korea or overseas in terms of the classification method adopted in *Journal of Economic Literature* (see Appendix 1). For a qualitative explanation, we will examine the profiles of Korean economists to gauge

TABLE 1  
THE NUMBER OF PUBLICATIONS IN 1897-1985

	1897- 1909	1910- 1945 <sup>3</sup>	1945- 1950	1951- 1960	1961- 1965	1966- 1970	1971- 1975	1976- 1980	1981- 1985
articles <sup>1</sup>	157 (1)	1,648 ((379))	419 (0)	254 (23)	667 (132)	1,224 (132)	2,229 (275)	1,903 (205)	,885 (163)
theses <sup>1</sup>	--	6 (6)	--	16 (14)	21 (18)	83 (31)	180 (67)	157 (79)	235 (136)
translated works <sup>2</sup>	17 (9)	49 (21)	79 (21)	145 (1)	65 (3)	29 (4)	96 (39)	77 (18)	159 (23)
books	12	54	64	156	235	306	418	460	1,858

Sources: Ki-Jun Rhee (1980), *Data on the Development of Economics in Korea*; Korean Printers Association, *Books in Print 1954-1985*; 29 Periodicals of Korean Universities, Research Institutes, and Associations.

Note: 1. The number in parentheses is the number of articles written in foreign languages.

2. The number in parentheses is the number of translated articles.

3. The ending date of this period was Aug. 15, 1945, the day that Korea was liberated from Japan.

how economics was imported, and what kind of role economists have been playing in policy-making.

The next three sections will perform the quantitative analysis, the first one for the period before 1945, the second one for the period between 1945 and 1960, and the last one for the period after 1961. The fifth section will discuss some qualitative aspects.

## II. The Initial Conditions: 1897-1945

### A. The Introduction of Economics

Since the ports were opened in 1876, enlightened Korean intellectuals began to study Western sciences, including economics. The first articles in economics were written by Korean students studying in Tokyo, Japan. In their newsletter in September, 1897, Yong-Sun Uh wrote an article entitled "On the Introduction to Economics" and Sung-Mo Oh wrote "On the Relation between Co-operation and the Division of Labor." Quite a few works, however, began to appear in about ten years. From 1906 to 1910, 166 articles were published, out of which 45 were about general economics, 41 about economic growth, 21 about monetary and fiscal theory, and 28 about agricultural economics. (see Table 2)

The quality of these articles was not excellent, but they had some historical value, indicating the concerns of the Korean intellectuals. First of all, we find that there was an upsurge in the demand for the knowledge of economics. Actually, most of the articles in the field of general economics dealt with the basic concepts of economics, and many periodicals introduced economics in a series of articles.

In the field of economic growth, like the British classical economists,

TABLE 2  
THE COMPOSITION OF ECONOMICS LITERATURE IN 1897-1909

field	000	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	total
newly written books	8	1	—	1	1	—	1	—	—	—	12
translated books	6	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	8
articles	39	39	1	21	6	—	15	28	6	2	157

Sources: See Table 1.

most writers focused on manufacturing or commercial industry as well as the role of entrepreneurs in increasing private wealth as a basis of a national wealth.

In the field of monetary and fiscal economics, authors were concerned not so much about theory as national debt. Many articles in the field of agricultural economics dealt with the forestry problem.

Several factors explain why the diffusion of economics in Korea had not been a gradual process. The first thing we have to look at is the establishment of modern school systems. Political economy was included in a curriculum of modern schools, such as one established by the government in 1883 (which was later named The Halifax School for Interpreters in 1886), and schools for teaching foreign languages.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, private schools, such as Pai-Chai College and Kyung-Shin School, were founded by Western missionaries, even though records don't exist concerning the kind of textbooks that were used in teaching economics. Some enlightened Koreans also established modern schools, such as Heung-Hwa School (1898), Kwang-Heung School (1898) Han-Sung School (1899), in which economics was taught as one of the requirements. In 1905, Bo-Sung College was established, and economics was taught at the undergraduate level for the first time. The first principal of this college, Hae-Young Shin, was the co-author of textbooks of economics and public finance, including *Economics* with Eung-Sang Won (1907-08) and *Public Finance* with Moon-Sang Yoo (1907-08). He had been a teacher of the above-mentioned Kwang-Heung School, after studying at the Keio School in Japan.

The Keio School played a major role as the Mecca for Korean students. The first group of students, including Gil-Jun Yoo, studied at this school in 1881. Forty four students, including Jay-Pil Suh, were taught here in 1883, and 114 students were sent by a government fund in 1895. We can conclude that the establishment of modern schools and the return of students educated in Japan began to take effect about ten years later, or

<sup>1</sup> Jae-Un Kang (1981).

around 1907. Moreover, the need to help build a nation state by studying economics seemed to be urgent, as a nation was on the verge of being invaded by foreign countries.

Because the Keio School played an important role in introducing economics to Korea, the contents of economics taught at that school is worth consideration. The founder of the Keio School, Hukuzawa, began teaching economics in Japan in 1868, with a view to Westernizing Japan. He used the Japanese translation of F. Wayland's *Elements of Political Economy* (1837) as a textbook. This was an introductory book based on the classical system. In Japan, not only introductory works, such as W. Ellis's *Outlines of Social Economy* (1846), but also many great works of authors in the classical school, such as Smith, Ricardo, Malthus, and Mill, had been already translated. Between 1867 and 1897, more than 270 books, written in English, French, German, Italian and Dutch, were translated.<sup>2</sup>

Along with the liberal ideas of the classical economists, the German historical school was also introduced in Japan in the late 1880s. List's *The National System of Political Economy* was translated in 1889, and Professor Wada taught the doctrines of the historical school at Tokyo University in 1884. Wada's textbook was translated into Korean in 1908.

Judging from the state of economics in Japan, the Korean students were confused by two contending trends in economics, namely the liberal theories of the classical school and the protectionist ideas of the historical school. To make matters worse, the early Neo-classical economists, such as Jevons and Marshall, were introduced without being rigorously examined.

For example, in the article of Young-Sun Uh, the utility theory of value was mentioned as a theory to explain the value of goods, but the concept of "marginal" did not appear. In their textbook, Seung-Hee Park and Jeong-Kyoon Choo discussed the methodologies of both the classical and historical school, and explained the marginal utility theory of value. At the same time, they supported reformist ideas while denying both Smithian

<sup>2</sup> S. Takahashi (1953).

individualism and egalitarian socialism. This showed that the Korean intellectuals did not have a consistent system of economic thought at that time.

### *B. The Connection with the Enlightened Confucianism*

It is undeniable that Western economics was introduced into Korea via Japan, but it is interesting to investigate the connection between Western economics and the pragmatic school of Confucianism (shillhack-pa) which emerged in Korea in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Some economists argue that the pragmatist ideas of these scholars, who were opposed to the idealistic aspects of traditional Confucianism, paved the way for the introduction of the Western ideas. A closer look at their ideas, however, reveals that a cultural and philosophical gap existed. These scholars, pragmatic as they were, did not fully understand the separation of the civil society from the state in Western countries. Korean intellectuals tended to think of economics as a policy tool to administer the state effectively, because they did not conceive of a society as a thing independent of a state. Even after the introduction of the classical school of economics, Korean scholars were prone to interpreting free competition merely as a way for the less fortunate to catch the privileged in a society, without understanding the concept of *homo economicus* and Smith's idea of invisible hand.

The tendency toward statism in the mind of intellectuals was not a phenomenon peculiar to Korea. Japanese economists began to support the ideas of the German historical school in the 1890s. Many early American economists also favored protectionism after studying in Germany. As J. Parrish (1967) pointed out, academic activities were hardly possible without the experience of studying in Germany. In the period of 1870-1900, 53 out of 76 major economists studied in Germany.

Even though the emphasis on the role of a state was unavoidable in the less developed countries, the question remained concerning the existence of what Schumpeter calls the preparation period before the science of economics. Schumpeter argues that a gradual process existed of accepting

the market economy as an independent being, first by the shift in ideas of philosophers as to the market economy and secondly by the discussion of economic agents as to current economic events.

With respect to these two criteria, it is doubtful that the pragmatic school of Korean Confucianism really understood the market mechanism from the perspective of manufacturers or agricultural producers, although many scholars suggested practical policies to advance the monetary system and technologies. Some scholars argue that in the mid-19th century Korean intellectuals began to think of the people as autonomous beings and then as the independent agents of the social life. Others argue that new economic thought could not be born without throwing away the Confucian idea of a human nature. In this light, more studies are needed concerning the existence of mercantilism as the precursor to capitalism in Korea.

### C. Economics under the Japanese Regime

When the Japanese took over in Korea in 1910, the still-young economics field in Korea stopped developing. The Japanese military police seized textbooks written by Koreans and banned the publication of periodicals. The first decade under the Japanese regime was a dark decade devoid of any academic activity. Most of the works published under the Japanese rule were done in the 1920s and 1930s. As is seen Table 3, 54 books, 49 translated works, 1648 articles, and 6 theses were

TABLE 3  
THE COMPOSITION OF ECONOMICS LITERATURE IN 1910-1945

field	000	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	total
books	17	7	4	3	1	—	—	20	2	—	54
translated works <sup>1</sup>	24/13	0/1	—	1/0	3/3	—	0/1	0/1	0/1	—	28/21
articles <sup>2</sup>	325	323	8	95	7	—	65	512	223	90	1,648/379
theses <sup>2</sup>	0/2	—	—	—	—	—	—	0/2	0/1	0/1	0/6

Source: 1. The number before (after) the slash refers to the number of books (articles).

2. The number before (after) the slash means the number of articles written in Korean (foreign languages).

published during this period.

Since the early 1920s, economics was taught at two private colleges and two public colleges. In addition, there were students studying economics in Japan. Korean professors were teaching at the two private colleges, and very few Korean economists were engaging in research at colleges and institutes in Japan.

Although Kyoung-Sung Imperial University, the only university in the colonized Korea, did not have a department of economics, economics professors engaged in active research in economics. With the opening of this school in 1924, economists established an organization to study economics, and in 1928 the Institute of the Korean Economy was established through the efforts of Professor Hiroshi Shigata. Japanese professors published about 30 articles in a series of publications by this organization. Their contributions concentrated on applied economics, including topics such as economic history, finance, money, agriculture, labor, and economic relations between Korea and Japan. Not a single theoretical work was published. In the field of economic history, their studies often were intended to justify the colonization policy of Japan by emphasizing its positive effects on the capitalist development of Korea. This has been proved incorrect even by contemporary research. For example, in his article, "On Land Reform as a Starting-point in the Stratification of Rural Societies" (1933, in Japanese), a Korean economist, Moon-Kyu Park, showed that the Japanese agricultural policy did not fully dismantle the feudal economic relations in rural areas in Korea.

Now let us look at the contributions of the Korean economists. First, noticeably they were also concerned about economic history and agricultural economics. Second, most of the economists at colleges were influenced by the Marxist methodology, which also had been dominant in Japan at that time. Third, non-academic economists adhered more vivid picture of the economy. Fourth, we cannot find any theoretical work, except a few articles about Marxist theories. In this respect, the work of Haeng-Joong Yun is noteworthy, in that he introduced Keynes's economics. However, he mistakenly treated Keynes as the supporter of govern-



ment regulation, similar to theorists of Nazism like O. Spann and Gottle.

Then the question arises why Marxist economics became dominant in Korea. It is partly because Marxism became a tactics in the nationalist movement and partly because the Koreans studying in Japan were influenced by Japanese Marxists. In the 1920s, much Marxist literature was published in Japan, as capitalism brought about unequal development across industries and areas. Moreover, the Marxist economist, Emil Lederer, who was a friend of Hilferding, had been teaching at Tokyo Univeristy for four years since 1923. The dominance of Marxism in Japan directly affected the economics profession in Korea, even though there were a few Japanese economists who tried to introduce orthodox economics, including works by Cournot, Jevons, Walras, and Marshall.

### III. The Stage of Stagnation: 1945-1960

#### A. *The Years of an Ideological Struggle: 1945-1950*

The independence of Korea in 1945 brought about political freedom, but the economics profession could not change abruptly. Marxist economics, which was introduced as a weapon against Japanese imperialism and thus severely suppressed in the second half of the Japanese regime in 1930-1945, leapt the front and gained political and ideological hegemony. Influenced by the dogmatic Japanese economists, the Korean Marxists put an emphasis on the value of economics as the study of revolutionary tactics. At any rate, due to the political freedom, more than 500 works were published in this period (see Table 4). It is noteworthy that half of the 64 newly written books and 91 percent of the translated books

TABLE 4  
THE COMPOSITION OF WORKS IN 1945-1950

classification	000	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	total
newly written books	32	13	2	4	—	—	—	12	1	—	64
translated books	53	3	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	58
articles	86	108	3	24	23	—	28	116	22	9	419

Sources: see Table 1.

belonged to general economics (or the *JEL* number 000). More specifically, 25 out of the 64 newly written books dealt with either general economics (010) or economic history (040), and 45 out of the 58 translated books were about either history of thought (030) or economic systems (050) according to my survey. Among 419 articles published in various journals, though they did not specialize in economics, 108 articles dealt with economic development (*JEL* number 100) and 115 works were about agricultural economics (700). These numbers show how the interests of Korean economists were distributed in this period (see Appendix 1).

As mentioned above, excluding the pioneering works of some academic scholars, such as Ho-Jin Choi, Moon-Hwan Choi, Ki-Jun Cho, Seung-Je Ko, and Tae-Hwan Shin, most of the literature published in this period was Marxist. Moreover, excluding the translation of the first volume of Marx's *Capital*, Ricardo's *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, and Marshall's *Elements of Economics of Industry*, the translation of economics textbooks published in Soviet Russia were prevalent. However, it is regrettable that these works were influenced by the most dogmatic faction among Japanese Marxist groups.<sup>3</sup> The Korean Marxists failed not only to analyze the economic conditions objectively, but also to develop "scientific" economic theories. This was the sad case, which showed how crucial the thought of economists would be in determining their policies and political behavior, as Keynes once pointed out.<sup>4</sup> To make matters worse, it is very doubtful that the Korean Marxists understood what Marx really meant, because most of them could not read the original German version of Marx's *Capital*. The Korean Marxists seemed to believe in what they thought were Marxist doctrines after reading the pamphlet version of Marx's works.

### *B. The Korean War and the Recovery Period: 1951-1960*

The Korean war which broke out in June 1950 not only destroyed the

<sup>3</sup> This faction dominated the public universities in Japan in this period. (see M. Brofenbrenner (1956)) However, it should be noted that more theoretical contributions were made by other groups, such as one led by Uno. (see T. Sekine (1975)).

<sup>4</sup> J.M. Keynes (1936), Chapter 24.

Korean economy but also entirely shook the intellectual society. Most of the leftist scholars went to the communist regime in North Korea, either voluntarily or by force. This was the third time in which a political change stunted the development of economics, the first and the second one being the subjugation (1910) and the independence of Korea (1945). However, unlike other two instances, the end of the Korean war in 1953 gave Korean economists a new stimulus not only to develop economics as a scientific tool to understand the modern economy without being subject to politically slanted views, but to learn it directly from the Western countries. Professors at Seoul National University, Yonsei University and Korea University tried to study and teach modern economics as a science.

Three professors, Tae-Hwan Shin, Seung-Je Ko and Ho-Jin Choi, established the Korean Economic Society in 1952. In their opening announcement, they declared that they would seek to advance the current level of economics, by discussing papers presented in this association and to exchange achievements with scholars in other countries. In the next year, this society published the first academic journal in economics, *The Studies in Economics*. The first issue included Shin's article, "The Concept of Monetary Equilibrium", Choi's "Fichte on the Closed Commerical State", Ko's "An Introduction to the History of the Mining Industry in Korea", as well as other papers. The importance of these contributions can not be overemphasized, in that they introduced the method of positive economic analysis.

Starting with these contributions, the Korean economists became active in the 1950s. Five hundred and thirty works were published in this decade, out of which 156 were newly written books, 144 were translated books, and 230 were articles (see Table 5). The composition of these works, shows the concerns of the Korean economists at that time. Thirty-five percent of the newly written books were general introductory works (000), including textbooks. The percentage of the field of economic growth was 22%, and that of monetary and fiscal economics was 16%. These numbers reflected the need for economics education and the efforts to recover from the war.

TABLE 5  
THE COMPOSITION OF WORKS IN 1951-1960

classification	000	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	total
newly written books	55	35	8	26	7	—	3	15	5	2	156
translated books	97	20	3	10	4	—	—	4	6	—	144
articles	128	32	5	12	9	—	7	37	19	4	230

Sources: see Table 1.

The translated works published in this decade outnumbered those published in either the 1960s or the 1970s. Sixty-seven percent of them belonged to general economics. More specifically, the number of works which belonged to economic theory (020) and history of thought (030) was larger than the number of works in the sub-field of general economics (010). This was probably because the Korean economists were interested in learning new theories, such as Keynesian economics, and new methodologies that could replace the Marxism that was prevalent before the Korean war.

The composition of articles also shows that economics in this decade was still underdeveloped. Among articles in the field of general economics (000), 77 were about studies in economic history (040), while 15 were theoretical works (020). This disproportion stemmed largely from a lack of creative theoreticians, in comparison to economic historians, who had been relatively active even under the Japanese regime. Furthermore, most of articles in the field of economic growth (100) were concerned with either descriptive country studies (120), economic fluctuations, or inflation (130). The small number of articles in the sub-field of economic planning (110) was startling, because it reflected the inability of the Korean economists to administer development policies. Actually, the contributions of the Korean economists to the shaping of economic policies in this decade were negligible, whereas the advice of American specialists, such as Arthur Bloomfield or Nathan, was influential, as the Korean economy was strongly supported by American aid. The lack of efforts to analyze the working of the national economy might be understandable in the vortex of ideological struggles before and during the war, because some Marxists

wrote about the planned economy in the U. S. S. R. even without trying to understand its applicability to Korea or to investigate the working of the Korean economy before 1950. After the war, however, Korean economists should have tried to formulate policies to develop the Korean economy, which at the time was one of the poorest in the world.

In contrast with the paucity of positive analyses of the economy, the efforts to translate books written in English were tremendous. Many introductory textbooks, including Samuelson's *Economics* and *A Textbook of Economic Theory* by Stonier and Hague, as well as such classics as Keynes's *General Theory* and Hick's *Value and Capital*, were translated. Not only the mainstream contributions, such as Pigou's and Duesenbury's, but also the non-mainstream achievements, such as Dobb's and Hayek's, were introduced. In addition, a lot of works about economic growth and development were translated. For example, the contributions of W. A. Lewis, Nurkse, Tinbergen, Domar, Myrdal, Kaldor and Meade were translated.

It is undeniable that these contributions made a great contribution to the further understanding of economics, but it is doubtful whether translation directly brings the understanding of theoretical frameworks. For example, the translators of Hick's *Value and Capital* might not understand general equilibrium economics, because it is almost impossible to understand general equilibrium theory without knowledge of the Neo-classical tradition since Walras, as Samuelson pointed out.<sup>5</sup> It was not until the early 1960s when these works were used as references in economics course in universities that the Korean economists began to understand what these works really meant.

#### **IV. The Development of Economics Since 1961**

##### *A. The Growth Pattern of Economics in 1960-1979*

The economics field in Korea has witnessed rapid growth since 1961. Several factors contributed significantly to the development of economics

<sup>5</sup> P. Samuelson (1947), Foreword.

as an analytical tool to understand economic phenomena, not as weapon in an ideological war.

First, many introductory textbooks written by authoritative authors such as Samuelson, were used in the 1960s. Second, along with these new textbooks, new courses were developed and taught. For example, mathematical economics and econometrics were taught by Hyung-Yoon Byun at Seoul National University, and other universities followed this. Third, Korean economists began to recognize the practical value of economics, by studying development economics. The translation of important works continued as it had in the 1950s. For example, Ki-Jun Rhee and Jong-Chul Lim translated Myrdal's *Economic Theory and Under-developed Regions* in 1960, and Hyun-Jae Lee translated Hirshman's *The Strategy of Economic Development* in 1965. Fourth, the role of economists was extended from teaching and research to participating in policy-making. Economists began to take part in making development plans or monetary reform either by giving advice as a member of government advisory boards or by becoming high-ranking government officials. Fifth, research institutes were established and the academic journals were published. In 1961, the Institute of Economic Research was established at Seoul National University, and the quarterly journal, *The Korean Economic Journal* was published. Other journals published were annually or irregularly by universities, but the first quarterly journal in economics prompted discussion among economists. Finally, the return of economists studying abroad began to make an impact on the curriculum and the content of lectures. Most members of the faculty in the 1950s had been educated in Japan, although a few of them had opportunities to study in the United States for a short time. Quite a few economists who were educated or had been teaching in the United States returned to Korean universities and research institutes in the 1960s.

These six factors contributed to the rapid growth in the volume of achievements in the 1960s and the 1970s. As seen in Table 6, the number of articles doubled every five years until 1975. The number of newly written books has increased. while that of translated works has de-

TABLE 6  
THE COMPOSITION OF WORKS IN 1961-1985

period	field	000	100	200	300	400	600	700	800	900	total
1961	A	96	32	10	49	8	6	23	5	6	235
	B	32	17	1	2	3	2	2	2	1	62
1965	C	177	96	12	66	67	30	95	85	39	667
1966	A	60	20	4	29	8	5	12	12	3	153
	B	5	7	1	6	1	1	2	1	1	25
1970	C	250	152	33	72	149	54	216	197	101	1,224
1971	A	115	37	21	27	34	8	34	18	12	306
	B	28	10	2	5	4	0	4	2	2	57
1975	C	386	242	94	105	468	109	339	325	161	2,229
1976	A	147	57	30	59	52	15	21	25	12	418
	B	16	13	4	5	11	1	5	2	2	59
1980	C	312	241	95	109	295	188	339	174	150	1,903
1981	A	184	81	10	29	56	25	20	34	21	460
	B	67	25	2	3	23	7	0	6	3	136
1985	C	437	379	189	306	559	357	323	198	137	2,885

Note: A refers to newly written books, B translated books, and C articles.

creased.

Looking at the composition of articles, we find the advancement of economic research. The field of general economics (000) which had been dominant until the 1960s dropped behind international economics (400). The rise in the field of consumer economics (900) and the drop in the fields of domestic monetary and fiscal economics (300) and economic growth (100) were also noteworthy. This change seemed to reflect the export-oriented development strategy of the Korean economy. Moreover, we can notice that the articles in the field of international economics were concentrated on the sub-field of trade relations (420) and international investment (440), rather than on pure trade theory (410).

When we look at the composition of each sub-field in Appendix 1, more detailed patterns emerge. Some of the remarkable features are: (i) the increase of pure economic theories (020) in contrast with the decrease of history of thought (030); (ii) the increase of economic growth

theory (110) in comparison with country studies (120); (iii) the increase of econometric models (210), relative to data analysis (220); (iv) the slow increase of industrial organization (610) or industry studies (630), in contrast with the stagnation of economics of technical change (620).

The composition of books differed slightly from that of articles, in that the share of general economics was still large. However, the increase of the number of books about monetary and fiscal policies written in the 1960s and books about international economics written in the 1970s was noticeable. The composition of translated works showed a similar trend, even though the total number decreased sizeably relative to the number in the 1950s.

Another remarkable feature of the development of economics in this period was its internationalization, which could be shown in terms of two indices. One is the increase of M. A. or Ph. D. theses written in foreign languages, most of which are English (see Table 7).

The other interesting index is the number of articles published in foreign journals by Korean economists (see Table 8). From 1970 to 1985, 746 articles were published in periodicals listed in the *Journal of Economic Literature*. The composition of the articles was evenly distributed, with a minor difference between those in theory-group (000-400) and those in applied economics (500-900).

In contrast with the relatively even distribution of articles published in foreign periodicals, articles published in Korean journals concentrated on general economics, international economics and agricultural economics, whereas few articles focused on econometrics and industrial organization (see Table 9).

Judging from the composition of sub-fields, we can notice that the articles published in foreign journals tended to be more theoretical oriented than those in Korean journals. For example, the articles in foreign journals concentrated on theories, like growth models (110), econometric models (210), monetary and fiscal theory (310), trade theory (410), and industrial organization (610).

These sub-fields seemed to contain topics on which the Korean eco-



TABLE 7  
THESES IN ECONOMICS: 1910-1985

	000	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	total
1910-1945	0/2	—	—	—	—	—	—	0/2	0/1	0/1	0/6
1945-1950	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1951-1960	2/3	0/3	—	0/4	0/1	0/1	0/1	0/1	0/1	—	2/14
1961-1965	2/1	0/5	0/1	0/4	0/2	1/1	0/1	0/1	0/1	0/2	3/18
1966-1970	20/5	7/6	3/6	5/4	1/5	2/3	7/0	7/0	7/0	0/2	53/31
1971-1975	38/3	10/7	4/12	11/4	12/12	12/3	10/11	10/11	10/11	6/4	113/67
1976-1980	21/7	6/15	1/8	5/12	8/15	12/4	5/7	10/7	10/7	10/4	78/79
1981-1985	25/14	12/23	3/9	7/11	18/36	14/15	9/8	4/8	7/12	7/12	99/136
Sum	108/35	35/59	11/36	28/39	39/71	42/27	31/30	31/29	23/25	23/25	347/351

Sources: Ki-Jun Rhee (1980); the National Assembly Library, *Catalogue of M.A. and Ph.D. Theses in Korea, 1980-1986*; Jang H. Yoo, "Economics Ph.D.'s: A Real Over-Supply?", paper presented at the Second International Meeting of the Korean Economists, 1986.

Note: The number in front of slash refers to theses written in Korean, and the number after slash refers to theses written in foreign languages, mostly in English.

TABLE 8  
THE COMPOSITION OF KOREANS' ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN FOREIGN JOURNALS IN 1970-1985

period	field	000	100	200	300	400	600	700	800	900	total
1970		1	5	—	1	5	1	—	—	1	14
1971		5	5	1	—	1	—	2	2	5	20
1972		5	5	2	4	7	3	5	5	6	39
1973		5	6	1	4	5	3	—	—	1	25
1974		4	6	9	7	10	—	4	4	1	45
1975		5	4	3	3	1	3	6	3	1	29
1976		7	1	7	3	4	3	—	2	1	28
1977		—	1	1	—	2	1	1	1	2	9
1978		—	2	2	—	2	1	—	2	—	9
1979		6	4	12	13	6	5	2	7	4	59
1980		5	3	10	8	2	4	6	1	3	42
1981		11	3	9	9	6	7	9	8	12	74
1982		5	6	9	8	3	9	11	6	8	64
1983		12	9	11	21	10	12	12	4	3	94
1984		14	6	10	15	12	15	3	10	10	95
1985		12	8	4	32	9	11	10	7	7	100
Sum		97	74	90	128	85	78	71	58	65	746

Sources: AEA, *Journal of Economic Literature*, "Subject Index of Articles in Current Periodicals", March 1970-Dec. 1985.

nomists might have a competitive edge, especially in econometrics and mathematical economics. This pattern is similar to that of Japanese economists. According to data gathered from 57 American journals, articles written by the Japanese economists were concentrated in these fields.<sup>6</sup> Comparing the number of articles and their rate of increase, Korean economists were as productive as Japanese economists in the late 1950s and the early 1960s, because the number of articles of Japanese economists published in American journals increased from 10 in 1945, to 58 in 1959, to 216 in 1964, and up to 409 in 1969.

#### B. Economic Research in the 1980s

In the first half of the 1980s, the number of articles, translated works and newly written works increased by 50 per cent, 100 per cent, and 10

<sup>6</sup> See Professor Sato's research in Y. Tamanoi, *Economics in Japan*, 1971.

TABLE 9  
THE COMPOSITION OF ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN KOREAN JOURNALS IN 1970-1986

	000	100	200	300	400	600	700	800	900	total
1970	61	19	3	13	48	18	56	39	30	287
1971	61	19	9	15	42	14	53	41	33	287
1972	78	36	12	18	83	18	66	82	23	416
1973	80	46	28	20	109	15	63	76	28	465
1974	85	53	13	19	120	17	87	64	42	500
1975	85	86	34	31	80	26	76	65	36	517
1976	85	87	29	34	80	24	100	63	54	556
1977	121	49	30	26	70	35	98	53	43	525
1978	23	23	8	2	13	9	46	26	22	172
1979	39	31	13	16	63	42	51	14	11	280
1980	35	51	15	32	89	84	50	19	22	397
1981	72	61	27	33	86	56	69	27	16	447
1982	52	64	25	32	95	51	48	32	14	413
1983	99	84	32	72	103	60	74	45	31	600
1984	105	78	48	80	103	93	62	50	36	655
1985	109	92	57	89	172	97	70	44	40	770
1986	77	78	41	87	128	76	72	29	27	615
Sum	1,265	957	424	619	1,484	735	1,141	769	508	7,902

percent, respectively, in comparison to the number in the second half of the 1970s (See Table 6). This increase might be a good sign, showing that the productivity of economists was active and healthy, in that they tried to engage in creative research or the translation of classics, rather than writing elementary books whose contents so far had been far from illuminating.

Considering the trend of the change in the composition of fields, we find some interesting things. First, international economics (400) still enjoys its dominance, except a few years in the late 1970s in which natural resources (700) became a major concern of economists due to the crisis of resources. With respect to the sub-field in international economics, we find a shift of concern from trade relations (420), which was frequently addressed in the 1970s, to balance of payments and international finance (430), which were critical issues in the 1980s.

Second, in the field of general economics (000), pure theory, history of thought and economic history share equal portions in the 1980s, in con-

trast with the disproportionate dominance of economic history (040) in the 1970s. The continued neglect of the study of economic systems (050) looks strange, particularly in light of the fact that Korea is a divided nation in which two conflicting systems, namely capitalism in the South and socialism in the North, co-exist.

Third, industrial organization (600) become a hot topic for the Korean economists. This field now assumes the fourth place in the quantity of publications.

Fourth, domestic monetary and fiscal theory (300) has begun to regain its importance, relative to international economics.

Finally, some of the neglected fields, such as labor economics (800) and welfare economics (900), remain minor fields, probably because Korea's development policies are growth-oriented. However, as labor relations, education, and health become new social problems, more studies in these fields are expected to be done.

## V. Some Qualitative Aspects of Economics Profession in Korea

### A. Profiles of the Korean Economists

Besides the remarkable increase in the number of articles and books, the development of economics should be analyzed in terms of the quality of products.

One index to measure the quality of academic products is the citation index.<sup>7</sup> According to Blaug's calculation, among 1,000 active economists whose works are most frequently cited,<sup>8</sup> only one economist, Tong H. Lee at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, was born in Korea.

Moreover, this index is hardly applicable to the case of articles published in Korean journals, because neither much discussion nor many efforts to read and cite articles written in Korean have existed, except for a few cases.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> M. C. Lovell (1973) suggests one method of calculating this index.

<sup>8</sup> These belong to the top 6% out of 17,000 economists. See M. Blaug (1986), pp. 504-5; pp. 931-5.

<sup>9</sup> The hot debate on "the extinction of the middle class" between professor Jong-Chul Lim and

TABLE 10  
THE AGE COMPOSITION OF ECONOMICS PROFESSORS

	under 30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56-60	61-65	over 66	total
public universities	5	33	39	28	25	16	10	10	—	166
private universities	10	66	93	118	79	66	32	20	5	489
sum	15	99	132	146	104	82	42	30	5	655

Sources: The Ministry of Education, *The Members of the Faculty at Public Universities in 1985*; *The Members of the Faculty at Private Universities in 1985*.

Note: 1. The faculty includes full-time lecturers.

Despite these poor performances both in the international community and inside Korea, the future of economics in Korea is not gloomy. A promising sign is that the faculty at Korean universities is getting younger on average. Considering the fact that on average an economist writes his path-breaking paper at the age of 38 and a quarter, or seven and a half years after Ph. D. degree, whereas his reputation peaks at the age of 45, or fourteen and three quarter years after his Ph. D. degree, we might say that economists remain fairly creative until the age of 45. Table 10 shows the age composition of economics professors in Korea.

In 1985 about 60 per cent of faculty members were under the age of 45, whereas the same figure stood at 53.6 per cent in the 1980-81 academic year. A younger age composition implies higher productivity of the stock of Korean economists.

### B. Economists in Government

In addition to academic achievements, the other important contribution of economists was their participation in formulating economic policies in Korea. Many competent economists have helped shape development strategies since 1961, indirectly by giving advice or directly by becoming government officials, such as prime minister (Duck-Woo Nam, Hyun Jae Lee), cabinet member (Seung-Yoon Lee, late Sang-Chul Suh, Woong-

professor Chang-Yul Lee occurred in 1966.

Bae Rha, Il Sakong, Man-Jae Kim) or advisor to president (Young-Chul Park and Seung Park). The influence of these economists is hard to measure, because day-to-day policy operations are affected easily by the political pressures of different interest groups, and by the opinion of non-economists surrounding top decision makers.<sup>10</sup> The influence of those who gave some advice as a member of the advisory board and the impact of academic economists appear to be more vague, due to the communication gap in terms of language, direct applicability, and personal relations.

However, we can notice that the development strategy of Korea is somehow affected by the Neo-classical growth theory, as leading participants in government were educated in the tradition of Neo-classical economics which has been dominant in the universities not only in America but also in Korea. We can guess that non-economist government officials have been more easily affected by the policy advice based on the Neo-classical logic, because of their college education.

### *C. The Import of Economics*

It is undeniable that the progress of economics in Korea depends and will depend on the import of economics from Western countries. Recently, some Korean economists have begun to worry about the applicability of imported theory, especially Neo-classical theory, to the Korean economy. These economists criticize that Neo-classical economics lacks historical, institutional, and political considerations. In response to this criticism, other Korean economists argue that the abstract tools of analysis can be applied universally. However, since the analytical aspects and the political elements of a theory are connected so closely that they cannot be rigorously distinguished, we should scrutinize both aspects in selecting the suitable theories, after studying the ideological backgrounds. For example, the controversy between the traditional Keynesian economics and new classical economics cannot be understood without considering the different views on the role of government.

<sup>10</sup> In this respect, Nelson's research on the British case is interesting. (see R.H. Nelson (1987))

Therefore, economists should be concerned more about the connection between the institutional or political elements and the analytical aspects of theories. In this respect, more studies in three minor fields should be done. The first field is economic history, especially research in economic histories of Western countries, without which the methodology of the study of Korean economic history cannot be improved. The second field is history of economic thought, which is needed to understand the place of each theory. The third one is political economy or non-mainstream economics, including dependency theory. There has been a growing interest in this field recently, but the level of research is still primitive, partly because its research history is so short and partly because researchers confuse positive analysis with political propaganda.

My suggestion that Korean economists be careful in importing theories does not mean that the further importation of economics is unnecessary. Conversely, we cannot overemphasize the importance of intense communications and contacts across countries in developing theories, as was seen in the impact of the immigration of European economists, such as Schumpeter, Machlup, Harberler, Leontief, etc, on the development of the American economics in the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>11</sup>

## **VI. Concluding Remarks**

The quantitative analysis of this paper has shown that the economics field has developed remarkably in Korea since 1961, not only in the number of products but in their quality, in contrast with the desperate situation of the 1950s due to the war.

In addition to this macro-approach, we could also mention some individual achievements by Korean economists, such as illuminating textbooks written in Korean or English and seminal papers published in first-class journals. However, the scope and history of economics in Korea are too limited to make this "great man" approach sensible.

<sup>11</sup> E. Craver and A. Leijonhufvud (1987), pp. 173-82; The other interesting case would be the importation of German economics into America in the last quarter of the 19th century. (see J. Dorfman (1955)).

Therefore, at this stage of development, more individual efforts should be exerted to understand advanced theories in the tradition of each school. As a matter of course, we should not forget its ideological orientation in understanding either mainstream or non-mainstream economics. Moreover, an individual economist should make his pre-analytical view clear. After the long accumulation period of these individual efforts, a fruitful interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary analysis would be possible.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> In this light, Schumpeter's remark that basically there does not exist a social science, but many social sciences, is illuminating. (J. Schumpeter (1915)).



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