Master' s Thesis

Empirical Analysis on the Effect of Social Class

on Social Capital and Political Activity in Korea

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Abstract

This thesis attempts to investigate the effect of social class on social capital and political activity. Since the Asian financial crisis in 1997, Korea has experienced tremendous changes in various fields. One of the significant changes was the collapse of the middle class. Since then, social class has been paid attention as it was believed to influence many social phenomenon. The previous study argued that Korea's "regionalism voting" started to change, and that social class plays an important role in determining voting behavior. Accordingly, this thesis raises questions how does social class affect the formation of social capital and political activity. Before the thesis moves on to the main argument the topic, it was necessary to examine the relationship between social capital and political activity, which has long been studied in political science. The thesis draw on the fourth wave of World Value Survey in seventeen OECD countries and conducted multivariate regression analysis between social capital and political activity. The findings suggest a strong association between social capital and political activity, especially individual trust, social norms, network, sex, age, income, education, size of town determine political participation in a statistically significant manner.

In the case of Korea, the thesis pays attention to the effect of social class in the relationship between social capital and political activity. To verify the relationship, the thesis considers social class as the only independent variable and regards others as dependent variables. The analysis provides evidence that those belong to higher social class are highly likely to have (1) greater level of public confidence; (2) wider network; (3) and higher education. Finally, this

thesis attempts to check validity of the indices of the social capital and political activity. The data analysis using the result of the seventeenth presidential election in Korea and Seoul's 25 district-level statistics identifies the validity of such indices of social capital and political activity.

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1. Introduction

South Korea achieved the institutional democracy after the 6·29 Declaration in 1987. Since then, the key topics in the study of democracy have been (1) ideological confrontations and continuous development of democracy in the context of the Cold War conflicts between South and North Korea; (2) how does neo-liberalism influence democracy. Until now, due to the ideological confrontations between the left and the right, Korea has been sustaining an abnormal form of democracy in that national security takes priority over democratic rights. In addition, the financial crisis in 1998 has given rise to fundamental changed of social and economic conditions, and internal and external political economic factors have become central issues of democracy in Korea.

In these circumstances, the issues of how democracy in Korea would sustain and continue development have been dealt with important research topics in the political community. Among other issues, this thesis will discuss "social capital," which can embrace important topics in political science such as neo-liberalism and ideology confrontations, and extend the issues to include the relationship between social capital and political activity.

Before dealing with the relationship between social capital and political activity, the thesis firstly focuses on voting behavior in Korea that could be considered as a proxy variable for political activity. In the elections that have been conducted since 1987 the keyword of voting behavior was "regionalism." The Yeongnam and Honam regions have competed to achieve political power, and thereby the voting behavior based on these two regions has been indicated as obstacles to preclude the sustained and continued democracy in Korea.

However, changes of the regionalized voting behavior have been perceived after Korea has experienced the financial crisis in the late 1990s. As structural change in society has been caused because of the financial crisis, which means that the middle class has totally collapsed. The changes have been accompanied by the reduction of real income, the decrease in the self-employed, and the fall of home owners. Also the voting behavior has begun to show the patterns of "voting based on social class,"

This thesis accordingly assumes that the fundamental change of social class is an essential element that determines levels of social capital and political activity. In other words, social class will influence the components of social capital, and thus they eventually affect political participation. Therefore, the thesis will discuss the relationship between social capital and political activity with its focus on social class as a decisive variable.

The thesis contains a total of five chapters. The first chapter attempts to define social capital that there is still no agreed definition. Based on the operational definition of the thesis, previous studies on social capital and political participation are reviewed, and then it is drawn from the studies that it is social class that should be investigated importantly in the context of Korea. At the end of the first chapter several research questions and hypothesis are to be settled concerning how the social class has effects on the establishment of social capital. The second chapter describes research methodology. This thesis conducts empirical analysis using survey data collected from the fourth World Value Survey. The third and fourth chapters are the main part of this thesis. The third chapter is replication of the previous studies that verifies the

relationship between social capital and political activity by utilizing the World Value Survey data. Some survey questions from the World Value Survey are to be selected in accordance with the operational definition of the thesis. Then I attempt to produce political activity index, as well as three components of social capital. With these indices, multivariate regression analysis is to be carried out in order to investigate the relationship between a dependent variable and independent variables. The fourth chapter is about the Korean case. Firstly, Korea's level of social capital and political activity are to be investigated. After that, the thesis aims to show that social class, the independent variable, plays an important role in the establishment of social capital in an era of neoliberalized society. With results of regression analysis, some implications are to be drawn. The last chapter concludes. Summary of the analysis and policy implications are presented. Also, I will complete the thesis by describing the limitations of the thesis.

1.1 Definitions

The aim of this thesis is to analyze the relationship between social capital and political participation, and the effect of social class on the formation of social capital in Korea from the perspective of comparative politics. Thus, I contribute to a deeper understanding of the relationship between social capital and political activity. In the course of investigating factors that exercise influence on political activity, I focus on the concept of "social capital." Theoretical analysis on social capital has been emerged since the 1980s in

political science, and achievements of the analysis have been discussed and applied to a variety of socioeconomic fields such as economic development, community development, and establishment of social well-being (Diamond 1999; Edward and Foley 2001). Before I analyze the relationship between social capital and political activity, I firstly produce an operational definition of social capital and then explore the role of social capital and of other causal factors. This thesis, therefore, will widen the understanding of social capital and political activity.

Social capital is a controversial concept and there is no agreed definition in the academic communities. Since Hanifan (1916) used the term "social capital" in his study about local support for rural schools, many scholars have applied and used the term in different contexts and various fields (Jacobs 1961; Bourdieu 1972; Coleman 1988; Wellman and Scot 1990). Although the term appeared almost a century ago from now, considering the efforts by scholars to investigate the relationship between social movements and democracy, the study of social capital dates back to 19th century. Alexis de Tocqueville (1835) tried to relate concepts of social connectedness and pluralist tradition in America, and John Dewey (1899) also used the idea of social capital that is similar to the context of the present study.

It is Robert Putnam, however, who popularized the term social capital in the academia. In pursuit of finding factors that determine political results between northern and southern Italy following the political reform and regionalization in the 1960s, he tried to conceptualize and define social capital in this book *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Putnam 1993). In this book, social capital is referred to the "features of social organization, such as

trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions" (Putnam 1993: 167). He also defined the social capital as "features of social life—networks, norms, and trust—that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objects" (Putnam, 1995: 664-5). Coleman (1990) defined social capital by its function, saying that "they all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure" (Coleman 1990: 302) and added that the use of resources embedded in social networks is central element. Norris (2002) also argued that social capital has two components—social networks and social trust. By analyzing data in Western democracies, Norris showed that social trust has an important effect on political participation. Fukuyama (1997) conceptualized it as "informal values or norms shared among members of a group that permit cooperation among them."

In short, there exists agreement about three components of social capital: "trust," "social norms," and "social networks." Based on this review of existing literature, this thesis defines social capital as "the private and public trust in the formation of human network, and social norms inherent in members of society as a form of criteria for desirable behavior." This definition includes the three major concepts of social capital such as trust, social norms, and network that the previous studies mentioned.

1.2 Literature Review: Social Capital and Political Activity

Political activity has become a main research topic in comparative politics since the 1960s and there existed a huge amount of researches investigating determinants of political participation (Almond and Verba 1963; Verba *et al.* 1978). By categorizing group participation as indicators of political activity, Putnam (1995) collected evidence to argue that throughout the post-war period, levels of interaction in the US had fallen continuously. He pointed out that declining rates of political activity in the US are closely associated with the erosion of social capital (Putnam 2000). Verba *et al.* (1993) analyzed civil participation in the US more specifically in accordance with race and ethnicity. They used large-scale surveys of voluntary activity, and found that African-Americans are slightly, and Latinos are substantially, less active than Anglo-Whites. They added that the resources such as education and religious preference are associated with race and ethnicity. In a similar sense, Verba *et al.* (1995) demonstrated that those who have acquired civil skills from organizations, church or job places are more likely to participate in civil activity. Besides area focus on the US, many studies provided empirical evidence on other areas. Seligson (1999) attempted to replicate findings by Putnam in Central America and showed that participation in community-level associations alone is a consistent predictor of democratic behavior at an individual level. In other studies with focus on India, Krishna (2002a) highlighted the role of "capable agents," who can help individuals and communities participate in public decision-making process. Blomkvist (2003) also conducted empirical analysis on India's 31 different rural and urban localities to demonstrate the role of political

participation and social interaction. There are a variety of other studies with regional focuses on post-Soviet countries (Dowley and Silver 2002; Letki 2003) and United Kingdom (Henn *et al.* 2007).

In the case of Korea's research on social capital, it has been basically approached from the three perspectives. The first perspective comes from the public administration field. Its main focus is on how does civil participation help to achieve the successful local autonomy (Song 2006; Lim 2005; Soh 2004). Furthermore, there are other studies on satisfaction level of employees at an organizational level in public entities; on index development to measure social capital (Yun and Oh 2007; Bae and Kim 2006; Park and Lee 2005). The economic community has been focusing on factors to explain economic development. As traditional factors such as labor and capital come to reveal limitations to completely explain economic development, scholars have paid attention to other factors like human capital and social capital (Lee 2009; Woo *et al.*). In addition, recently it has been tried to expand the definition of social capital to include current trends of social networking in cyberspace.

By the way, in the study of social capital in Korea it is important to note that Korea's study on social capital has special socioeconomic backgrounds. As Korea experienced unprecedentedly rapid industrialization and democratization in the late 20th century, social conflicts which have been repressed during such processes have erupted on the public sphere in the early 1990s. In ways to find solutions to such problems, civil communities came to recognize the necessity to improve Korea's social capital so as to find solutions to such social conflicts (Kim 2007). Second, after the nation severely experienced the Asian financial crisis in 1997, social trust issues have been raised as one of the major causes

of the crisis. It has been said that the Korean society lacks credibility in private and public sectors, and concluded that the absence of credibility may cause the crisis. Thus, academics started to pay attention to specific measures to promote it (Lee 1998). Several empirical figures also showed Korea's low level of social capital. According to the survey analysis, Korea ranked 22th out of 29 OECD countries (Lee *et al.*, 2009) in terms of social capital. The analysis divided social capital into four components: confidence, norms, networks, and social structure. It showed that Korea is deficient in confidence, norms and social structure, and finally concluded that Korea's social capital is at a low rate compatible with that of Italy. Han (2007) also supported this results; Korea was the lowest among the countries surveyed: the figure of social capital is 2.73 (Korea), 6.63 (Sweden), 4.31 (Japan), and 3.63 (America). Therefore, as an effort to find solutions, many studies have attempted to find socioeconomic measures in order to set up democratic value and norms in Korea (Lim 2004; Song 2007; Park 2009). Jang (2002) attempted to connect establishment of democratic governance with civil societies that have higher degree of social capital and greater satisfaction of political participation. Kim (2006) made conceptual approach to the study of social capital and raised questions underlying in methodologies of social capital study in Korea. He explored how to apply social capital studies that originally have taken root in Western democracies to Korea society. To a wider degree, Park *et al.* (2005) found causal factors between social capital and political participation in Korea, China and Japan. Also Kwak and Holbert (2001) analyzed how the use of media including Internet influences civil participation, confidence and satisfaction in local communities. They concluded that there is a statistical significance between social capital and participation in cyberspace such

as the Internet. The most closely connected studies with this thesis is done by Song (2007, 2010). Based on survey conducted at Kyunghee Univ. in 2007 and 2010, he implemented empirical analysis by conceptualizing social capital as public goods composed of trust, norm and horizontal networks. In this studies, the more people participate in organizational, donations, volunteer activities, the greater degree they participate in political activities.

In conclusion, there appears to be a large amount of studies on social capital and political participation, and analytical usefulness of social capital research when using statistical approach with empirical survey data. As there is no consistent definition of social capital, many studies have tried to categorize it and most of them do so with the following three components: trust, social norms, and network although how to define each of these components vary from each studies. In Korea, the growing number of studies attempts to have empirical approaches using survey data, there is no time-series, continuous analysis that allows us to identify the trend or changes of social capital and political activity. In addition, as survey questions differ in each of the studies, there are arbitrary aspects of research in defining social capital.

1.3 The Effect of Social Class on Social Capital in Korea

As is mentioned above, after the financial crisis in 1998, social class should be considered as an essential factor in investigating the relationship between social capital and political activity. The social class has also become one of the most decisive factors in determining voting behaviors in Korea in the last

decade. However, Park (2001) raises questions on the hypothesis that Korean voters tend to vote in accordance with their regional basis. From the result of the sixteenth general election in 2001, he argues that various structural factors of Korea determine the voting behavior as it is vulnerable to ideological conflicts and lacks social basis in terms of party politics. This argument is opposed to the voting behaviors of regionalism. Thus it has been attempted to explain the voting behaviors in the 2000s by other factors rather than the regionalism. Cheong (2003) analyzes the sixteenth presidential election in 2002 and highlights that Korea starts to appear voting behaviors based on social class in the two party system. Sohn (2010) also argues that in the general election in 2004 and in the presidential election in 2008, it is obviously shown that they vote in accordance with their social class considering their residence location, home ownership, and education.

As it can be verified from these studies, Korean voters have tendence to move from traditional regionalism voting to social class voting. Given that social class has been raised as an important variable in determining political participation, how and to what degree does it influences the formation of social capital are also set up as essential research questions. In other words, issues of the relationship between social class and social capital in the context of Korea should be investigated before verifying statistically significant relationship between social capital and political participation.

In previous studies on social capital, however, social class did not investigated as an important variable (Song 2010, 2007; Letki 2003; Claibourn and Martin 2000). They only consider social class as one of the elements of demographics such as sex, age, income, and education in mutivariate regression

analysis. Therefore, this thesis will set up a multivariate model in which social class is an independent variable in discussing the relationship between social capital and political activity. In specific, how and to what degree does social class affect components of social capital will be important research questions of this thesis. The result of the regression analysis can support the main idea of the thesis concerning the transformation of voting behavior from regionalization to social class voting. At the same time, it can be also examined that to what degree does the political activity index reflect the real-world circumstances.

1.4 Research Objective and Questions

Research objectives of this thesis is to (1) replicate previous studies on social capital and political activity using the recent survey data of the fourth World Value Survey; (2) provide empirical evidence on the argument that social class has become an important and decisive factor in the 2000s. The results of this thesis will serve as policy implications to enhance political activity in Korea, thereby improving the quality of democracy. Thus, this thesis is prerequisite for such political purpose.

To achieve these ends, research questions that this thesis focuses on are summarized in the following way:

Q1: In Korea, if social class affects voting behavior to a greater degree, it also influences social capital?

Q1-1: If social class influences social capital, how it increases or

decreases the three components of social capital—trust, social norms, and network—to a statistically significant manner?

Concerning the first survey questions, this thesis assumes that (1) among the two trust—individual trust and public confidence—people in lower social class are more likely to have lower public confidence than those belong to higher social class; (2) individual trust has nothing to do with social class. This is because those belong to lower social class tend to have higher dissatisfaction in the current social system so that their level of public confidence in terms of administration, legislation, and judicature would be relatively low.

Also it is also conjectured that people in higher social class would have deeper understanding on social norms because they would have longer period of education. With respect to social class and network, this thesis assumes that there is no relations between the two factors. The second research question of the thesis is below:

Q2: To what degree can the indices of the components of social capital and political activity reflect the real world?

As is mentioned above, how to define social capital and political participation is still confusing issues. Also, issues concerning to what degree do such indices reflect the real world have always been raised before dealing with the relationship between social capital and political activity.

Thus, I attempt to examine this issue. Firstly I check the validity of indices of the social capital and political activity by using data in the seventeenth

presidential election, as well as data collected from Seoul. If this thesis fails to check the validity of the indices, it would weaken the entire argument of the relationship between social capital and political activity.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Data Description and Collection

The World Value Survey (WVS)[1] is a worldwide research project that investigates people's beliefs and political and social values led initially by Ronald Inglehart for every 5-6 years. It is conducted by a network of social scientists since 1981 in almost over 100 countries. The WVS covers comprehensive questions about socio-economic and political issues such as the environment, work, family, politics, national identity, security, culture, and subjective well-being.

The preferred method of sampling for WVS surveys is the full probability sample. In some cases, however, due to cost of full probability sample, WVS allows quota sampling for some countries that meet conditioned criteria. The minimum sample size is 1,000 and the WVS covers all residents (not only citizens) between ages of 18 and 85, inclusive. The mode of data collection for WVS surveys is face-to-face interviewing. Other modes (e.g. telephone, mail, internet) are not acceptable except under very exceptional circumstances and only on an experimental basis.[2]

In this study, I draw on the fourth wave of the WVS (2005-2008). It was administered in more than 80 countries around the world. The most recent wave has included additional survey questions in order to identify people's sense of

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1) The World Value Survey website: http://www.worldvaluesurvey.org
2) http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs/articles/folder_published/survey_2005/files/WVS-rules_for_PIs_wave5.pdf

political participation and organizational activities although the WVS is originally intended to investigate social norms and values for cross-national comparison.

For the purpose of this thesis, I firstly I choose 17 OECD countries: Germany, Italy, Spain, USA, Canada, Japan, Mexico, Australia, Norway, Sweden, Finland, South Korea, Poland, Switzerland, Chile, Slovenia, and Turkey. Other OECD countries that are not on this list have to be, regrettably, ruled out because they lack data of several important questions.

In Korean case, I use the voter turnout in the seventeenth presidential election in 2007 in order to compare voting participation and social class. The focus of the analysis is on the Seoul Metropolis. There are 25 autonomous districts in Seoul and I collect such district-level voter turnout in 2007. The turnout data is available on the National Election Commission of Seoul.[3] Another data resource is Seoul Statistics,[4] which is conducted by Seoul on a regular basis. It collects basic statistics in various topics such as demographic, economy, industry, culture and tourism, welfare, environment, education, public health, etc. Among these statistics, I select "higher education entrance rate" in 2007 and "per capita living area" in 2007 to use these statistics as proxy variables.

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3) http://http://su.election.go.kr/main/main.php
4) http://stat.seoul.go.kr

2.2 Conceptual Framework

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                    │                                 │
                    │                                 ▼
┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────┐
│              │   │ - Trust              │   │ - Political Acitivty │
│ Social Class │──▶│    Individual Trust  │──▶│   Membership         │
│              │   │ - Social Norms       │   │   Participation      │
└──────────────┘   │ - Network            │   └──────────────────────┘
                   └──────────────────────┘          ▲
                                    ┌────────────────┘
                        ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
                        │ - Socio-demographic Factors       │
                        │   (Age,      Sex,      Income,     │
                        │   Education, Class)                │
                        └──────────────────────────────────┘
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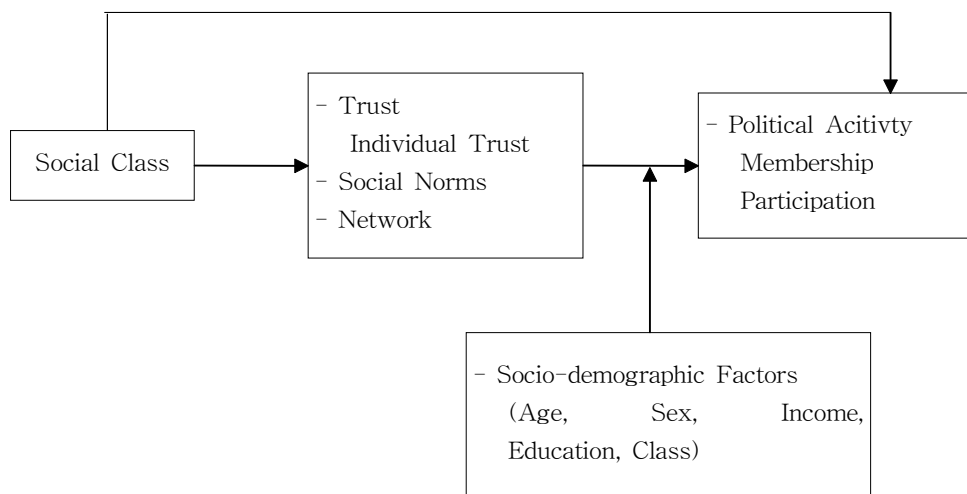
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

As it is confirmed at the literature review above, is it highly likely that three components of social capital have effects on political activity. This thesis segments trust on the basis of individual trust and public confidence. The basic relationship that this thesis investigates is the effect of the component of social capital on political activity. According to the study by Krishna (2002b), however, it is important to note that social capital by itself cannot always explain the major part of the variations in outcomes. His analysis points out that appropriate mediating factors are needed to verify the relationship between social capital and political activity. Therefore, in this regard, I attempt to incorporate other factors that seem to influence political activity into my analysis model, which are socio-demographic factors such as sex, age, income, education, and

class. In the study of Korean case, I regard "social class" as important factor that affect the formation of social capital and political activity. Social class is rearranged in ten sections from the lowest to the highest in accordance with their income. In this analysis, social class is the only independent variable and dependent variables are individual trust, public confidence, social norms, network, and other socio-demographic figures. The regression analysis can show to what degree social class affects on each of these variables.

2.3 Basic Models

To verify the relationships and conjectures in the previous section empirically, I set up the following equations:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon \tag{1}$$

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \beta_7 X_7 + \beta_8 X_8 + \beta_9 X_9$$
$$+ \beta_{10} X_{10} + \varepsilon \tag{2}$$

Y: political Activity

X_1: individual trust

X_2: public trust

X_3: social norms

X_4: networking

X_5: sex 0 or 1 (dummy variable)

X_6: age

X_7: income

X_8: subjective social class

X_9: education ranges

X_{10}: size of town

α : intercept

ε : error term

This is the starting point for the multivariate linear regression. Y is the dependent variable and X_1, X_2, ..., X_{10} are the independent variables that determine Y. The main purpose of this model is to estimate the coefficients β_1, β_2, ..., β_{10}. The thesis assumes that these independent variables influence the formation of the dependent variable, Y. However, these independent variables would not completely affect Y because of the presence of the error term, which plays as disturbing element in the relations of the two variables.

2.4 Data Processing and Analysis

First of all, I select and code survey questions for construction of political activity and social capital indices. With these manipulated data I carry out multivariate regression analysis. The data sets are cross-sectional unit. The analysis is conducted using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) ver. 18.0.

3. National-wide Approach on Social Capital and Political Activity

3.1 Political Activity Index

As a first step to analyze the link between social capital and political activity, I attempt to create a social capital index, which enables us to gain a sense of the level of political activity in 17 OECD countries. The index is also used as a dependent variable when analyzing multi-variate regression. The problem lies in how to define political participation. It is rather complicated and controversial, and is a contextual concept in that it differs from a variety of societies with cultural and historical diversity (Verba and Nie 1972). However, social trust and membership in voluntary associational activities have been regarded as important preconditions of civil society (Almond and Verba 1963). Putnam (1995) also articulated that associational membership is the source of social trust.

This thesis also considers people's associational activity and how their activity is actually revealed on a public stage in a comprehensive sense as important. Thus, the political activity index is composed of "membership" and "participation." This classification is in the same vein that previous studies have conducted (Song 2007, 2010). Components of the index is in the table below.[5]

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[5] As for political membership, survey questions of the WVS 2005-2008 are V27 ~ V33. With respect to political participation, survey questions V96 ~ V99 are selected.

Membership	Participation
Labor union	Signing a petition
Political party	Joining in boycotts
Environmental organization	Attending peaceful demonstrations
Professional association	Other
Humanitarian or charitable organization	
Consumer organization	
Other	

Table 1: Factors of Political Activity Index

Each individual respondents were asked whether he or she had been members of the organizations and had participated in such political activities. They were given two points for having been a "active" member and one point for "inactive" member. For political participation, each people gained one point if he or she joined such activities. Thus, total political activity index of individual respondents ranges from 0 to 11. This index is used as a dependent variable for the entire analysis of this thesis.

Based on the WVS data, I computed the average of those individual data in order to have broader understanding on political activity at national level. With this average we can verify and compare Korea's level of political activity with other countries surveyed. Below is a comparative summary of political activity.

Country	N	Mean	S.D.
Italy	1012	2.14	2.22
Spain	1200	1.16	1.75
USA	1249	3.31	2.73
Canada	2164	3.18	2.96
Japan	1096	1.53	1.79
Mexico	1560	2.01	2.64
Australia	1421	2.87	2.35
Norway	1025	3.52	2.66
Sweden	1003	4.01	2.37
Finland	1014	2.27	2.20
S Korea	1200	1.25	2.00
Poland	1000	1.20	2.12
Switzerland	1241	3.09	2.38
Chile	1000	1.57	2.28
Slovenia	1037	1.53	1.93
Turkey	1346	.49	1.22
Germany	2064	1.53	1.90

Table 2: Political Activity Index of Seventeen OECD Countries

Some descriptive statistics are provided. As table 2 and figure 2 shows, South Korea's political activity index is relatively low; it is 1.25 and ranks 14th out of 17 OECD countries. Scandinavian and North American countries such as Sweden, Norway, USA, and Canada are generally ranks higher than Latin American countries like Mexico, Chile. Turkey ranks the lowest on the list in terms of political activity.
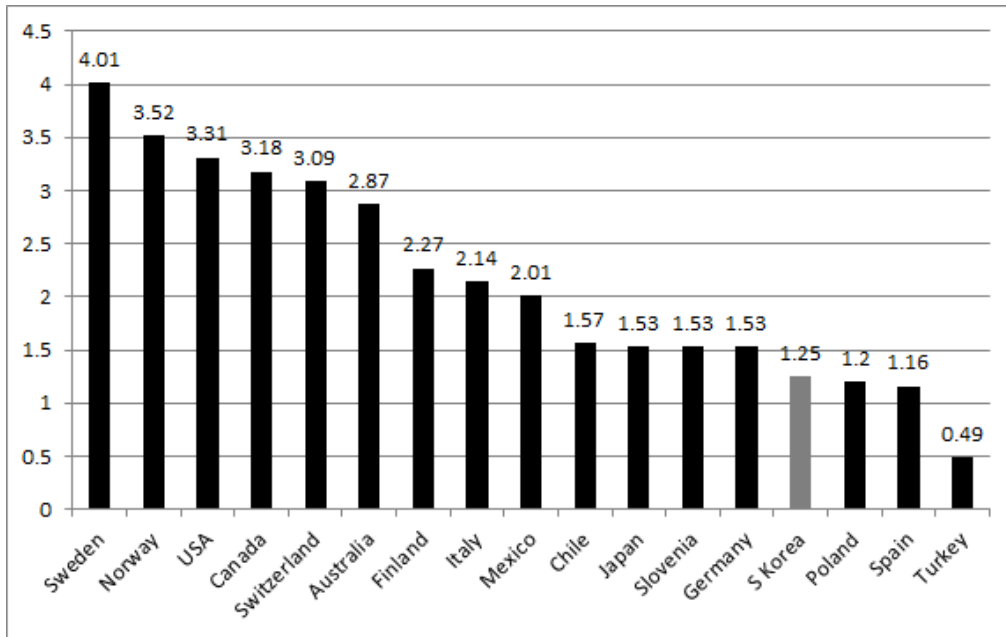
Figure 2: Political Activity Index

The result above leads us to raise several questions. First, which factors contribute to formation of political participation. Second, why the political activity index is different from each other. In particular, why South Korea lags behind other countries in the political activity. As far as the first question is concerned, I conduct statistical analysis to investigate the relationship between social capital and political activity using national-level data. As a significant proportion of previous literature on social capital attempted to figure out which elements of social capital attribute to political participation or activity, I also implement similar approach. The second question is discussed at the next chapter.

3.2 Empirical Analysis

This chapter aims to present empirical analysis of social capital and political activity. As a first step to implement the analysis, it is essential to determine how to define social capital; the process is based on the previous studies. Components of the social capital are statistically compared among seventeen OECD countries and used as independent variables. After all, by establishing models between social capital and political participation, this thesis can answer the two questions raised above.

3.2.1 Three Components of Social Capital

This paragraph attempts to establish the link that factors of social capital significantly determines political activity. Components of social capital for this thesis refer to "trust," "social norms," and "networking." The trust index measures people's general degree of confidence. It constitutes individual trust and public confidence, which means how people trust others and treat people in a fair manner. If respondents rely that they mostly trust others, they get 1 point. Whether people would try to take advantage of you or try to be fair is investigated by 10-point scale. If they think people would try to be fair, respondents get 1 point and the point decreases by .2 point at every one-tenth. Individual trust toward family, neighborhood, those who they know personally, meet for the first time, those with another religion, another nationality is also surveyed. Respondents get one point if they trust them "completely"; if they

trust them "somewhat", they get .5 point. These eight questions constitute individual-level trust so the index ranges from 0 to 8. In the public confidence index I calculate people's level of confidence in administration, legislation, and jurisdiction. If they have "a great deal" confidence in such authorities, they get 1 point and for "a quite a lot" confidence, they get .5 point; otherwise, they get none.

Trust	Individual Trust	(1-1) People generally trust others
		(1-2) People try to be fair
		(1-3) People trust their family
		(1-4) People trust their neighborhood
		(1-5) People trust those who they know personally
		(1-6) People trust those who they meet for the first time
		(1-7) People trust those of another religion
		(1-8) People trust those of another nationality
	Public Confidence	(1-9) People have confidence in the courts
		(1-10) People have confidence in the government
		(1-11) People have confidence in Parliament
Social Norms		(2-1) It is important to help the people nearby; to care for their well-being
		(2-2) It is important to behave properly; to avoid what people say wrong
Network		(3-1) People who are church or religions members
		(3-2) People who are sports or recreational members
		(3-3) People who are art, music or educational members
		(3-4) How often people attend religions services
		(3-5) How often people talk with friends or colleagues

Table 3: Survey Questions of Components of Social Capital

Social norms measure general patterns of behavior that is inherent in people's thought.[6] When respondents are asked if they think it is important to help the people nearby or to care for their well-being, they get 1 point. Also, if they believe people should always behave properly or to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong, they get 1 point. In the case of networking index, I try to measure interconnectedness of people through various types of social organizations.[7] If respondents are an active members of (1) church or religious organizations, (2) sport or recreational organization, (3) art, music or educational organization, they get 1 point. For inactive members, they get .5 point. Furthermore, they are asked, apart from weddings and funerals, about how often do they attend religious services these days. They get 1 point if they get more than once a week, .8 for once a week, .6 for once a month, .4 for only on special holy days, .2 for once a year. Another question is asked to indicate whether they talk with friends or colleagues last week to obtain information. They get 1 point it they did so. Thus, the network index ranges from 0 to 5. Above the table shows concrete survey questions of these three components.

In this study, I analyze 21,632 survey data of the WVS from 17 OECD countries. To give first impression of these independent variables, I present descriptive statistics below.

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6) The WVS questions concerning social norms are V84 and V87.
7) The WVS questions are V24 ˜ V26, V186, and V229.

	N	Mean	S.D.	Min.	Max.
(1-1)	21632	.34	.47	.00	1.00
(1-2)	21632	.30	.32	.00	1.00
(1-3)	21632	.86	.30	.00	1.00
(1-4)	21632	.44	.34	.00	1.00
(1-5)	21632	.56	.34	.00	1.00
(1-6)	21632	.17	.25	.00	1.00
(1-7)	21632	.28	.30	.00	1.00
(1-8)	21632	.27	.29	.00	1.00
Individual Trust Total	21632	3.21	1.66	.00	8.00
(1-9)	21632	.35	.34	.00	1.00
(1-10)	21632	.23	.30	.00	1.00
(1-11)	21632	.19	.28	.00	1.00
Public Confidence Total	21632	.77	.75	.00	3.00
Total Trust	21632	3.99	1.98	.00	11.00
(2-1)	21632	.62	.31	.00	1.00
(2-2)	21632	.49	.35	.00	1.00
Social Norms	21632	1.11	.54	.00	2.00
(3-1)	21632	.29	.38	.00	1.00
(3-2)	21632	.26	.40	.00	1.00
(3-3)	21632	.16	.34	.00	1.00
(3-4)	21632	.33	.34	.00	1.00
(3-5)	21632	.78	.42	.00	1.00
Network	21632	1.82	1.04	.00	5.00

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of the Three Components of Social Capital

According to the descriptive statistics, while respondents trust their family (.86) and those who they know in person (.56), they least trust those who they meet for the first time (.17). They have more confidence in courts (.35) than any other authorities. In total, the trust index is produced as 3.99. The social

norms index is 1.11, which shows relatively high degree. It is shown that respondents often talk with friends or colleagues (.78) and attend religious services (.33). Many of them are members of church or religious organization (.29). It can be inferred from the result that social networking is mostly established in the form of personal relationships. Also, the religious membership plays an important role in establishing their networks. It remains to be seen if these three components of social capital is statistically significant in increasing political activity.

3.2.2 Analysis Result

In the first step, I estimate the baseline model (1) containing only individual-level components of social capital for simplicity. This is to verify the existing literatures and researches that social capital has positive influences on political activity.

	β	Sig.	Std. Error
α	-.069	.148	.048
Indiv. trust	.303***	.000	.010
Pub. confi.	-.004	.857	.021
Social norms	-.190***	.000	.028
Network	.811***	.000	.015
R^2 (adj. R^2)	.186 (.186)		

*. p<0.05, **. p<0.01, ***. p<0.001

Table 5: Regression Result

The table 5 shows the result of the ordinary least square regression. The result implies that individual trust as well as networking significantly determine political activity. Also the magnitude of the coefficients are considerable. Their coefficients .303 and .811 mean that a unit point increase in individual trust and networking leads to an increase in political activity by .303 and .811 respectively. In addition to the estimated effects of individual trust and networking, political activity is also influenced by the social norms. It has a negative coefficient and is hence associated with political activity in a negative manner. One unit increase in the social norms decreases political activity by .190 unit point. Other two factors, intercept and public confidence, do not have statistically significant effect on political activity. The model showing link between political activity and components of social capital yield R square value of .186. To check the autocorrelation among error terms, it is necessary to identify the Durbin-Watson statistic: the value of it is 1.697. These estimated results have been leading to the conclusion that three components of social capital significantly influence the political activity, which verify the existing result of literatures.

3.2.3 Comprehensive Multivariate Model

As is pointed out above and many studies have long recognized political-economic variables, as well as demographics to be strong predictors of political activity, this chapter incorporates the following variables into the model: age, sex, income, social class, political orientation, education, and size of town.

This means that this chapter uses (2) multiple regression model. It is widely believed that older generations have been identified as highly likely to participate in political activity than the younger generations since they have more experience and greater stake in society that they need to sustain. Also, those who with huge amount of socio-economic resources such as higher income, can utilize those resources to political activity like campaign donations. Furthermore, more educated people are more likely to participate in political activity than less educated people (Verba *et al.* 1993). Besides, it is also necessary to examine the role of size of town and subjective social class. Whether size of town and social class encourage higher political activity are controversial issues, so this thesis attempt to analyze the data. Finally, how one's sex affects political activity is also tested in this chapter. Table 7 below shows frequency and percentage of total respondents in accordance with sub-categorization.

		Frequency	%
Total		21632	100.0
Sex	male	10196	47.1
	female	11417	52.8
	not available	19	.1
Age	15 ˜ 24	2540	11.7
	25 ˜ 34	3796	17.5
	35 ˜ 44	4217	19.5
	45 ˜ 54	3934	18.2
	55 ˜ 64	3355	15.5
	65 and more years	3758	17.4
	not available	32	.1
Income	Lower step	1917	8.9

	second step	2104	9.7
	Third step	2524	11.7
	Fourth step	2774	12.8
	Fifth step	3184	14.7
	Sixth step	2266	10.5
	Seventh step	1885	8.7
	Eighth step	1227	5.7
	Ninth step	775	3.6
	Upper step	977	4.5
	not available	1999	9.2
Social class	Upper class	223	1.0
	Upper middle class	4727	21.9
	Lower middle class	7577	35.0
	Working class	5376	24.9
	Lower class	1062	4.9
	not available	2667	12.3
Education	No formal education	329	1.5
	Incomplete primary school	989	4.6
	Complete primary school	3273	15.1
	Incomplete secondary school: technical/ vocational type	1685	7.8
	Complete secondary school: technical/ vocational type	4309	19.9
	Incomplete secondary school: university-preparatory type	1364	6.3
	Complete secondary school: university-preparatory type	3631	16.8
	Some university-level education, without degree	1923	8.9
	University - level education,	3972	18.4

	with degree not available	157	.7
	2,000 and less	2129	9.8
	2,000-5,000	1390	6.4
	5,000-10,000	1026	4.7
	10,000-20,000	1213	5.6
Size of town	20,000-50,000	1556	7.2
	50,000-100,000	1434	6.6
	100,000-500,000	3172	14.7
	500,000 and more	2350	10.9
	not available	7362	34.0

Table 6: Demographic Factors

In order to have brief impression of these factors, the next table provides simple bivariate Pearson correlation coefficients that show the relationship between demographic variables mentioned above and three components of social capital.

	Indiv. Trust	public Trust	Norms	Netwo rk	Sex	Age	Incom e	Class	Educa tion	Size of town
Indiv. trust	1	.244**	.129**	.217**	−.004	.086**	.184**	.184**	.182**	.131**
Public trust	.244**	1	.095**	.062**	.010	.000	.063**	.130**	.043**	−.109*
Norms	.129**	.095**	1	.071**	−.038**	.042**	.048**	.007	−.076**	.012
Network	.217**	.062**	.071**	1	−.012	−.002	.148**	.059**	.197**	.137**
Sex	−.004	.010	−.038**	−.012	1	.003	.069**	.010	.043**	−.006
Age	.086**	.000	.042**	−.002	.003	1	−.083**	.021**	−.251**	−.014*
Income	.184**	.063**	.048**	.148**	.069**	−.083**	1	.312**	.361**	.117**
Class	.184**	.130**	.007	.059**	.010	.021**	.312**	1	.283**	−.082**
Education	.182**	.043**	−.076**	.197**	.043**	−.251**	.361**	.283**	1	.093**
Size of town	.131**	−.109**	.012	.137**	−.006	−.014*	.117**	−.082**	.093**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 7. Pearson Correlation Coefficients

Pearson correlation coefficients are presented in Table 00. At first glance, a high correlation at the 0.001 level between income, education and most of the other variables is apparent. However, there is no correlation between individual trust and sex; age, sex and public trust; subjective social class and norms; sex, age and network.

	β	Sig.	Std. Error
α	-1.790^{***}	.000	.074
Indiv. Trust	$.216^{***}$	.000	.010
Pub. Confi.	.049	.017	.021
Social Norms	$-.116^{***}$	.000	.028
Networking	$.716^{***}$	.000	.015
Sex	$.135^{***}$	.000	.030
Age	$.155^{***}$	.000	.009
Income	$.052^{***}$	.000	.006
Social Class	.021	.102	.013
Education	$.180^{***}$	.000	.007
Size of town	$.071^{***}$	.000	.005
R^2 (adj. R^2)		.234 (.233)	

*. $p<0.05$, **. $p<0.01$, ***. $p<0.001$

Table 8: Regression Result

In this comprehensive model, the above analysis concurs with the conjectures above that demographic factors have a positive influence on political activity. Men are more likely to participate in political activity than women (.135). Unit increase in age leads to .155 increase in political activity. Also as respondents' income and education increase by one unit, they participate in political activity by .052, and .180 unit respectively. Size of town is also an important factor. It enhances political activity by .071 unit. In the case of social class, however, it does not have significant relationship with the dependent variable.

3.3 Aggregate Social Capital and Political Activity

As great numbers of existing literature on social capital and political activity conclude that society with plenty of social capital can secure active political activity. Although discussions above also have been leading us to the conclusion of positive role of social capital on political activity, this section shows such relationship to a detailed degree.
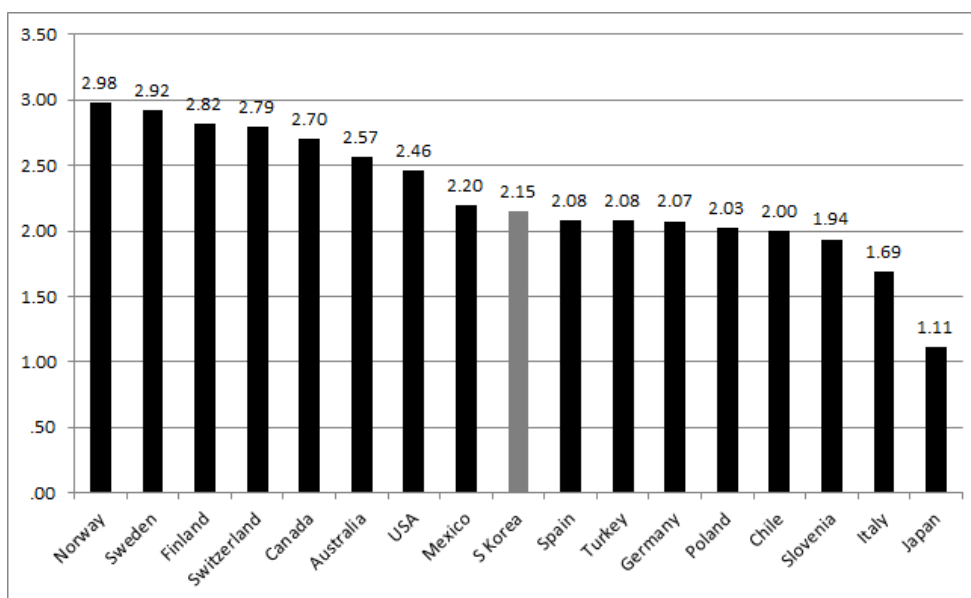

Figure 3: Aggregate Social Capital Index

Figure 3 shows the level of social capital among seventeen OECD countries. Korea ranks 9th in terms of social capital. Scandinavian countries ranks the highest, and North American countries such as US and Canada have high

degree of social capital. It is surprising that Japan is placed at the bottom of the list. This aggregate social capital index is produced by adding three component of social capital: 33.33% of "trust" plus 33.33% of "social norms" and 33.33% of "network." The aggregate social capital index is used as independent variable for simple regression analysis below in order to explore the existing literature is valid for the data in this thesis.

	β	Sig.	Std. Error
α	-.200***	.000	.045
Social Capital	1.036***	.000	.015
R^2 (adj. R^2)	.125 (.125)		

*. p<0.05, **. p<0.01, ***. p<0.001

Table 9: Regression Result

As is shown at Table 8, unit increase in the aggregate social capital index leads to unit increase in political activity. According to the analysis, this index can explain the dependent variable by 12.5%, which is relatively lower than the previously discussed multiple models. Nevertheless, this simple model allows us to verify the relationship between social capital and political activity in a statistically significant manner.

This thesis also provides a scatter diagram of aggregate social capital index and political activity for reference. We can visually identify the relationship with

this scatter diagram. It is presented below at Figure 4. It shows that there is affirmative association between social capital and political activity.
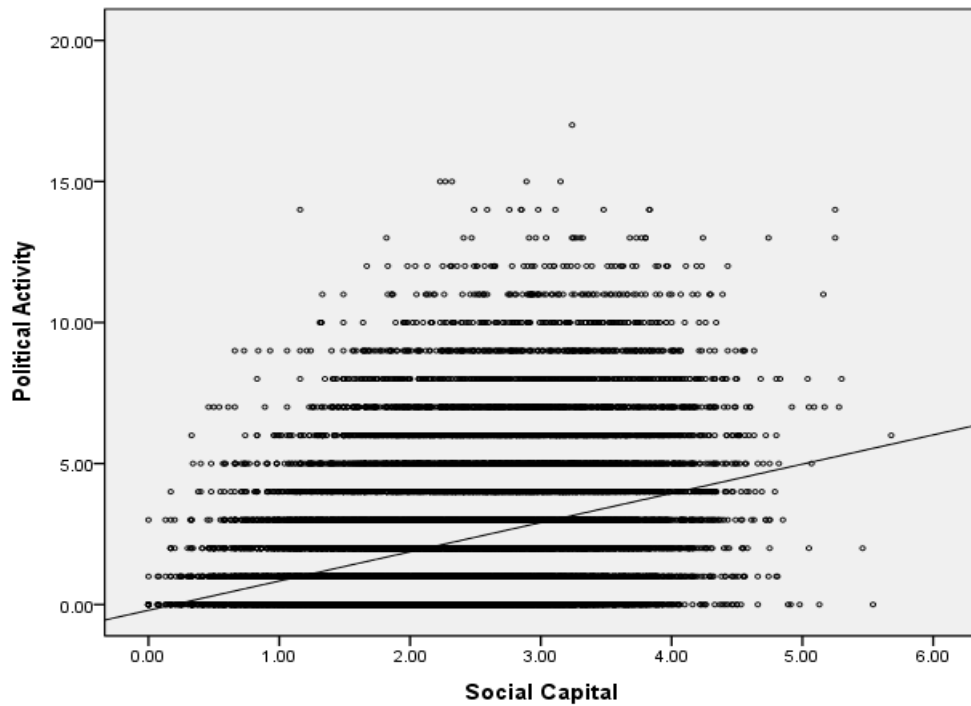

Figure 4: Scatter Diagram of Aggregate Social Capital Index and Political Activity

4. The Effect of Social Class on Social Capital and Political Activity

4.1 Empirical Analysis

4.1.1 Comprehensive Multivariate Model

In South Korea, Socio-demographic elements in South Korea is divided into sex, age, income, social class, and education. One of the socio-demographic elements considered at the previous chapter, subjective social class, will not be analyzed in this analysis due to data unavailability in the fourth WVS.

The number of male and female respondents is almost same. Male respondents are 598 (49.8%) and female respondents are 602 (50.2%). Of the total 1200 respondents, those who are in their 20s or 30s account for almost half of the sample. Respondents from 15 to 24 are 164 (13.2%), 25 to 34 are 301 (25.1%), 35 to 44 are 265 (22.1%), 45 to 54 are 222 (18.5%), 55 to 64 are 179 (14.9%), and 65 and more years are 69 (5.8%). As far as income is concerned, more than half of them are below average income. They are also likely to regard themselves as low class. With respect to education, Korea people tend to receive higher education; 53.4% percent of them completed college-level education.

		Frequency	%
Total		1200	100
Sex	male	598	49.8
	female	602	50.2
Age	15 ~ 24	164	13.7
	25 ~ 34	301	25.1
	35 ~ 44	265	22.1
	45 ~ 54	222	18.5
	55 ~ 64	179	14.9
	65 and more years	69	5.8
Income	Lower step	46	3.8
	second step	78	6.5
	Third step	133	11.1
	Fourth step	195	16.3
	Fifth step	323	26.9
	Sixth step	200	16.7
	Seventh step	154	12.8
	Eighth step	55	4.6
	Ninth step	8	.7
	Upper step	6	.5
	not available	2	.2
Social Class	Upper class	8	.7
	Upper middle class	284	23.7
	Lower middle class	650	54.2
	Working class	189	15.8
	Lower class	68	5.7
	not available	1	.1
Education	No formal education	16	1.3
	Incomplete primary school	19	1.6
	Complete primary school	58	4.8
	Incomplete secondary school: technical/ vocational type	22	1.8
	Complete secondary school: technical/ vocational type	73	6.1
	Incomplete secondary school: university-preparatory type	34	2.8
	Complete secondary school: university-preparatory type	338	28.2

Some university-level education, without degree	177	14.8				
University – level education, with degree	463	38.6				

Table 10: Demographic Segmentation in Korea

	Model (1)			Model (2)		
	β	Sig.	Std. Error	β	Sig.	Std. Error
α	.256	.160	.182	– .063	.885	.437
Indiv. trust	– .029	.524	.046	– .032	.487	.046
Pub. confi.	– .010	.902	.084	.025	.763	.085
Social Norms	.072	.564	.125	.050	.687	.125
Network	.534***	.000	.052	.553***	.000	.054
Sex				.445***	.000	.112
Age				.145*	.003	.049
Income				.021	.619	.042
Class				– .168	.059	.089
Education				.052	.157	.037
Size of town						
R^2 (adj. R^2)	.083 (.080)			.108 (.100)		

*. $p < 0.05$, **. $p < 0.01$, ***. $p < 0.001$

Table 11: Regression Result in Korea

As is shown at Table 11, result of the regression result in Korea is quite different from the above discussed regression analysis. When utilizing the 5th WVS 2005-2008 data, we cannot identify many statistically significant relationships between independent and dependent variables. In model (1), which considers only the three components of social capital and political activity, network is found to be the only valid variable at the 0.001 significant level. Incorporating demographic factors in Korea, model (2) shows that network, sex, age significantly influence political activity.

	Survey questions	Mean
	(3-1) People who are church or religions members	.33
	(3-2) People who are sports or recreational members	.26
Network	(3-3) People who are art, music or educational members	.18
	(3-4) How often people attend religions services	.41
	(3-5) How often people talk with friends or colleagues	.73

Table 12. Mean Value of Network in Korea

As Table 12 indicates, Korean people' s network mainly consists of personal and religious relations. They tend to talk with friends or colleagues and often attend religious services. Many of them have religious rather than other types of memberships. Thus, it can be concluded that personal and religious network plans an important role in promoting political activity. With respect to sex, men are more likely to participate in political activity than women. It seems that

Korea's traditional pattern of male-dominant society has been still remaining in the 21st century. Furthermore, the older Korean people are, the more actively they influence political activity. This result concurs with the conjecture above and national-wide analysis.

4.1.2 The Effect of Social Class on Social Capital

In this section I set up models to investigate the effect of social class on social capital. The only independent variable is social class, which is decided in accordance with respondents' income. Income level is divided by a decile rank. Dependent variables of this model are individual trust, public confidence, social norms, network, political membership, political participation, age, and education. I conduct simple regression analysis between the social class and these dependent variables respectively.

Dependent Variables	Independent Variable: Social Class		
	β	sig.	std. error
indiv. trust	.023	.263	.021
pub. confi.	.039***	.000	.011
social norms	.004	.622	.007
network	.133***	.000	.017
pol. membership	.041	.135	.027
pol. participation	.033	.826	.014
age	-.169***	.000	.023
education	.330***	.000	.030

*. p<0.05, **. p<0.01, ***. p<0.001

Table 13: Regression Result (Independent Variable: Social Class)

Table 13 is the result of the regression analysis. It shows that social capital has nothing to do with individual trust to a significant degree. This result identifies the conjecture of the thesis. Also, the beta value of .039 means that as social class hikes, respondents are more likely to have confidence in public authorities, which concurs with the conjecture. In the case of the social norms, however, the result of the regression analysis does not concur with the conjecture. The thesis assumed that as social class escalates, respondents are more inclined to have sense of higher degree of social norms because they would be exposed to higher and longer period of education. The result only shows the linkage between social class and education; the beta value of education is .330. As far as the dependent variable of network is concerned, this thesis conjectured that social class and network are not related each other. However, the regression result appears that social class and network is interrelated; the beta value is .113. Even if this thesis did not conjecture on the age variable, the regression analysis shows that those belong to higher social class are relatively younger.

In short, social capital serves as the important factor that affects public confidence, network, and education. Among other variables, a strong relation is witnessed at the education variable. It is originally intended to show that those who belong to higher social class have more chances to receive higher education, so that they have deeper understandings on social norms. However, the thesis fails to show the entire linkage. Nevertheless, these results verify the conjectures of the thesis concerning the main argument of the thesis that social class plays an important role in forming social capital.

4.2 Voting Participation and Political Activity

4.2.1 The Seventeenth Presidential Election Case

In order to reaffirm the main result of the regression analysis in the previous section, this section attempts to strengthen the link between the social class and political activity in terms of voting participation by using data from the seventeenth presidential election in 2007. This thesis focuses only on Seoul because living conditions are more similar among each administrative districts than comparing other parts of South Korea. First, I present the voter turnout of the presidential election in Seoul's 25 districts. Then I produce several proxy variables to represent the social class and education variables because of the lack of data at each district levels. Thus I utilize "per capita living area" data to substitute social class as in Korea it is likely that those belong to higher social class are likely to live in more spacious area. Also, to represent the variable of education, I use "higher education entrance rate" in each districts. In the end, I manipulate political activity index of the WVS data in accordance with social class, and then compare it with the turnout of the presidential election. The purpose of this operation is to show an association between the voter turnout and political activity index.

	turnout (%)	living area (per capita, m^2)	higher education entrance rate (%)
Seocho	66.3	34.97	63.05
Nowon	65.6	24.34	65.28
Songpa	64.9	30.91	67.21
Dongjak	64.2	28.01	69.64
Dobong	64.1	27.46	62.13
Gangnam	64.0	30.20	69.83
Jongno	63.8	30.45	72.16
Yangcheon	63.8	26.02	75.27
Gangdong	63.8	23.45	72.03
Guro	63.5	27.82	68.03
Yeongdeungpo	63.2	28.04	67.29
Seongbuk	62.9	28.38	60.96
Dongdaemun	62.5	27.77	58.14
Seodaemun	62.5	28.58	74.35
Gangseo	62.4	25.48	71.71
Jung	62.2	25.10	60.77
Seongdong	62.1	27.07	58.27
Mapo	61.8	27.71	77.15
Gwangjin	61.7	26.08	77.01
Yongsan	61.3	30.81	73.65
Gwanak	61.0	28.24	60.51
Gangbuk	60.5	23.54	57.91
Geumcheon	60.5	25.02	73.03
Jungnang	60.4	25.14	65.53
Eunpyeong	60.1	26.88	72.98

Table 14: Voter Turnout and Per Capital Living Area in 25 Seoul Districts

In Table 14 I present the voter turnout in the seventeenth presidential election and per capital living area at a district level in Seoul. The top six in terms of the turnout is Seocho, Nowon, Songpa, Dongjak, Dobong, and Gangnam. With respect to the living area, the top six is Seocho, Songpa, Yongsan, Jongno, Gangnam, and Seodaemun. Seocho, Songpa, Gangnam are all

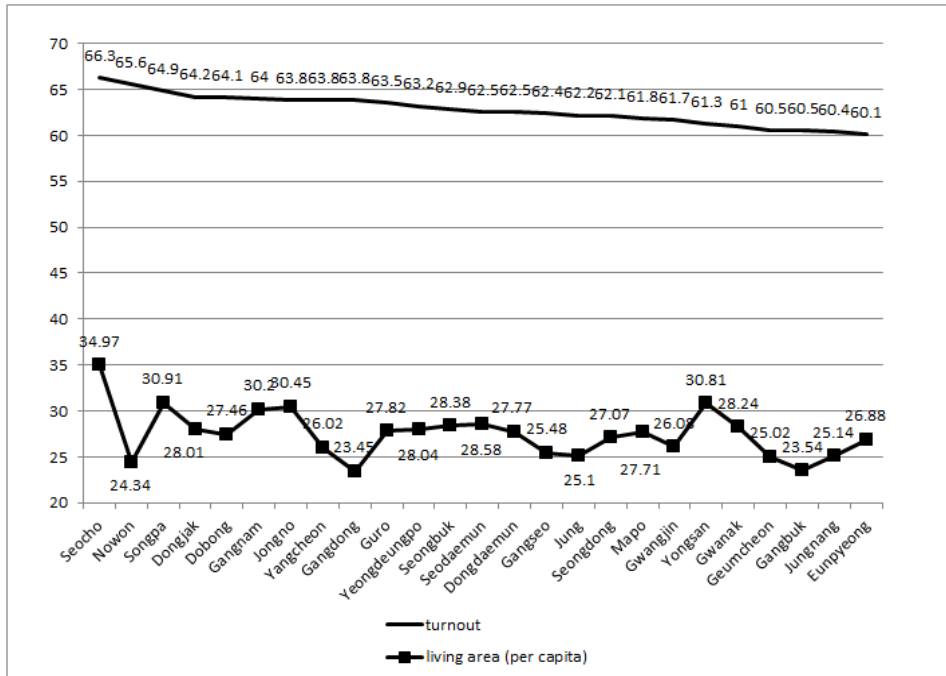in these top six lists. To verify the relationship between the two variables, I visualize it at the figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Voter Turnout and Per Capita Living Area in 25 Seoul Districts

In figure 5, the relationship can be identified that districts with higher voter turnout would have tendency to live in larger per capita living area, and vice versa. In other words, people living in relatively rich districts in terms of per capital living area, they participate in the election more actively. Even though the regression analysis in the previous section did not show any significant relationship between the social class variable and political activity variable, their proxy variables of the turnout and the per capita living area are proven to have

the similar linear trend. With this result,

Next I attempt to underline the relationship between the per capital living area and the higher education entrance rate in each districts in Seoul for the purpose of strengthen the regression result in the previous section.
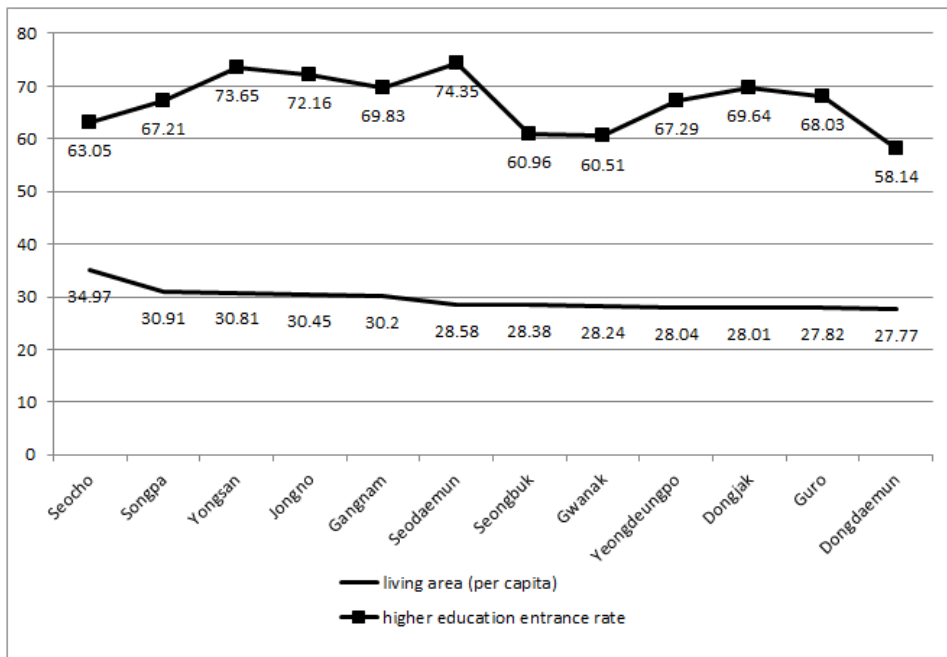

Figure 6: Higher Education Entrance Rate and Per Capita Living Area in 25 Seoul Districts

Here in figure 6 shows the relationship between the two variables. As there was no evident relationship when considering a total of 25 districts, I only present the districts of top twelve living area. Citizens living in richer districts are highly likely to enter higher education, which concurs with the previous

result that higher social class would lead to higher education.

	social class									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
participation	5	31	70	124	196	101	103	31	5	0
membership	41	42	65	93	230	136	116	41	2	26
total	46	73	135	217	426	237	219	72	7	26
frequency	46	78	133	195	323	200	154	55	8	6
pol. activity index	1.00	0.94	1.02	1.11	1.32	1.19	1.42	1.31	0.88	4.33

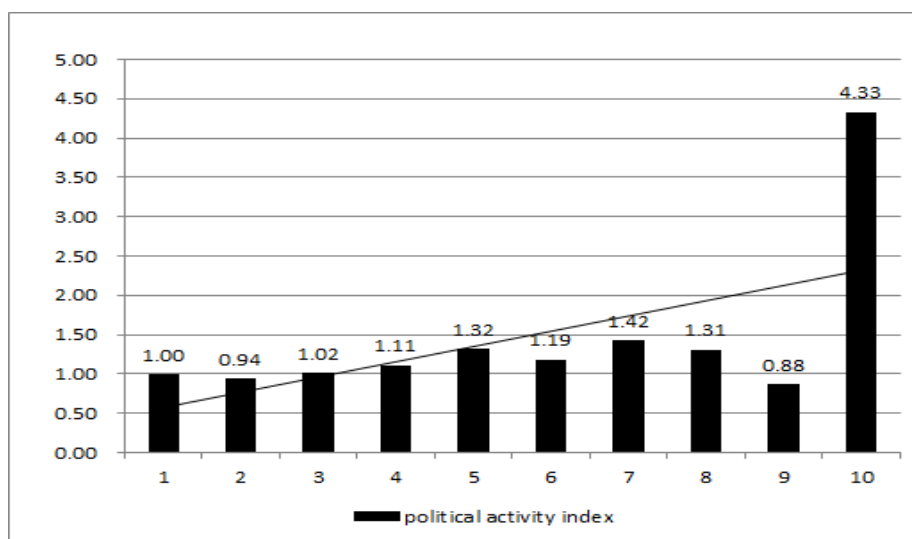Table 15: Political Activity Index arranged in Accordance with Social Class

Figure 7. Political Activity Index in accordance with social class

Lastly, I investigate the link between the voter turnout in the presidential election in 2007 and political activity index drawn from the WVS. The purpose of this manipulation is to check the validity of the political activity indices.

If we compare figure 5 and figure 7, there is a similarity of the two figures. The figure 7 shows the political activity index rearranged in accordance with social class, and reveals that as social class increases, political activity index are also hikes to some degrees. This relationship is also evident in the figure 5.

4.2.2 Analysis Result

In the research question section, I raised issues of how do the indices of social capital, especially political activity reflect the real world phenomenon. To examine the question, I set up the two proxy variables: the per capita living area and the higher education entrance rate. When it comes to the relationship between social class and education, the result of the regression analysis shows statistically significant relationship. This is verified by the two proxy variables calculated from 25 districts in Seoul. This conclusion answers the second research questions that the indices of the study reflect the real world. We can also identify the positive relationship between voting participation and social class in terms of living area; higher class is highly likely to participate in voting. It also concurs with the argument that voting behavior based on social class plays an important role in elections, although the relationship did not be identified by the regression analysis at the previous section. Lastly, the political activity index produced by the WVS and rearranged in accordance with social

class seems to have similar correlation as the figure 5 reveals. Thus, the thesis concludes that to some degrees, the indices of the social capital, demographic elements, and political activity do reflect the real world phenomenon.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Summary of the Thesis

The major aim of this thesis is to support the argument that social capital is the determinant of political activity. Social capital is a decisive factor in enhancing the higher levels of political activity that I relate with richer, fuller seventeen OECD countries. With the most recent World Value Survey 2005-2008 data I further elaborate the relationship to contribute to a deeper understanding of social capital and its impacts on political participation.

After Robert Putnam popularized and conceptualized the term "social capital," intense empirical search was started in the late 21st century. Research on social capital and political activity has been broadening its scope and scale; initial area focus was widened from Western democracies to various countries in the world. Also owing to the development of statistical method and good quality of survey data, intense quantitative research have been conducted. Yet, there is still no consistent and agreed definition of social capital so it is considerably hard to compare each researches. Nevertheless, due to the absence of the agreed definition of social capital, it is allowed to investigate social capital at various viewpoints. In this thesis I made operational definition of social capital and political activity in order to conduct empirical analysis. Below I recapitulate major findings of the analysis.

First, this thesis found that three components of social capital—trust, social norms, and network—are good predictors of political activity in the seventeen OECD countries. In addition, their influence on political activity is statistically

positive. Results drawn from the comprehensive multivariate model that incorporates socio-economic demographics verified that factors such as sex, age, income, education, and size of town should be importantly considered in analyzing the relationship between social capital and political activity. Among the socio-demographic variables, education (.180) has stronger influence on political activity than any other variables. Second, when aggregating three components of social capital, this thesis was able to identify the relationship between social capital and political activity, which has long been discussed in political science. The findings suggested a statistically significant association between the two variables. An increase by unit point on the social capital would mean that the respondent would have to score 1.036 point higher political activity. Finally, the analysis turned to Korea's case. First I also present the multivariate regression analysis incorporating socio-demographic factors, and then attempt to investigate the effect of social class on the establishment of social capital. Following the financial crisis in the late 1990s, Korea has been witnessing changed social structure; the collapse of middle class. Since then, the social class has been believed to play an important role in elections. Unlike the traditional trend that people tend to vote in accordance with their living location, the result of the seventeenth presidential election in 2007 supported that social class affects voting participation. In the course of analysing the relationship, I attempted to show that the proxy variables—the per capita living area and the higher education entrance rate—which substitute the indices of the study can reflect the real world phenomenon.

5.2 Policy Implications

The results of the thesis can lead us to draw several policy implications. First, it is necessary to set up policies placing greater importance on social class. As the main results of this study show that those belong to lower social class are less likely to participate in political activity, it is essential to come up with measures to increase the participation in the long run.

Also, current discussion on welfare policy in Korea should consider the relationship between the social class and political participation. Even if the aim of the welfare policy would be to secure the minimum quality of living and finally recover the middle class, it would also serve as decisive measures to sustain and develop democracy to a greater degree.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations of this thesis. First limitation is involved in research methodology. This thesis used individual-level survey data as social capital is characterized by interpersonal relationship, but further developed argument into society-level phenomenon such as political participation and activity. Thus, the analysis level does not match with each other (Stolle and Hooghe 2003). Furthermore, this thesis could not sufficiently explain the effect of social capital on political activity because in the regression analysis the value of R square is relatively low. In further studies, it would be needed to investigate other factors that affect a dependent variable.

It is also necessary to implement survey in a continuous basis. To identify the changed of social capital and political activity, the survey based on the same questions should be made over a long period. Questions of the WVS are not coherent in every waves so it would be impossible to conduct research on a consistent basis. Thus, it is necessary to develop survey questions and index of social capital in the future.

Lastly, these days we are witnessing the formation of network appears on cyberspace. People come to know each other and make relationship through the Internet. Thus, Internet-based participation and network formation should be important research questions, and how to measure such phenomenon and to collect data in cyberspace would be interesting research topics.

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