

Korean Politics and Complex Systems Theory

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ABSTRACT

The political system of Korea is closely linked with the lower-level systems of Korean politics since it has the dynamic system that changes consistently through the interactions of external factors and a slight change in the early conditions of one system can bring about a tremendous change in the entire system. Therefore, it is important to understand Korean politics in this sense. The modern system of Korean politics rather operates on an axis of chaos and disorder than order. A political phenomenon is one that is totally linked with each other rather than having a temporary or isolated nature and its chaotic and dramatic nature is further enhanced in the environment of Korean politics as it gets to the recent times. This phenomenon may be regarded as an expression of systematic characteristics that are derived in the macroscopic procedure that Korean society is seeking stabilization as a complex system.

Therefore in order for us to understand Korean politics, we need to recognize the complex properties linked to the problem of Korean society itself and dynamics of surrounding situation. Korean politics is getting more complex as it gets to recent days. The meaning of complexity can be interpreted in two ways. One is that the ground of Korean politics is getting complex and the other would be that the behavior patterns of political figures that play on the ground have been further complicated as compared to the past.

Keywords: Korean politics, complex systems theory, catastrophe theory, non-linearity, complexity

INTRODUCTION

While the society in the 21st century is expected to be further diversified and decentralized, these diversification and decentralization of our society could be regarded as the least coping measures (logic of self-systemization) to complexity. The society we are living is diversified day by day and the matters in our society are getting complex so that they could not be judged by one standard. In such a world, we should not stay in a biased and simple-minded way of thinking. All the time, we have adhered strictly to a way of thinking that analyzes things by separating them. We have focused on how each part are operating after dividing everything into parts, but we have not responded to the problem how the whole is operating from the parts linked with each other. When handling a problem through the theory of complex systemization, the most important feature of this theory is that "the whole is viewed through one." The society we live consists of various subsystems and social phenomenon is made through the complex interactions of these subsystems. The life itself is created under one complex system and our recognition and behavior also are

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complex and systematic. Summarizing the characteristics of complex system, the thinking of complexity theory could be characterized by the thinking patterns described as in the following.

First, the complexity theory is based on the nonlinear thinking rather than the linear cause and effect principle. Since a numerous number of systematic components that are interacting in various ways can bring an unpredictable behavior, it is impossible through a deterministic linear thinking. Second, we need to think the whole rather the part. Third, this refers to the relational and interactive thinking rather than the mechanistic thinking like the world view of Newton's that the world is geared precisely as in a gear wheel of watch. Fourth, thinking should be made while considering that a phenomenon may have discontinuity rather than continuity. Fifth, this refers to recognizing objects and events through integration rather than reduction. Various attempts have been actively made to apply the theory of complex system in the contemporary politics, economy and business administration. This theory has been applied in the field of business administration through the fractal management technique and in the field of politics from the studies of understanding political psychology and applying them in the political fluctuations and international relations. Hence, the analysis direction of Korean politics should be shifted to anew paradigm rather than analyzing the political/social phenomenon on the basis of Newtonistic deterministic thinking (such as blood relation, regional relation and academic relation). It is the point that we have to analyze political phenomenon beyond deterministic thinking.

CASE OF NON-LINEARITY IN KOREAN POLITICS

The mathematician Godel's theorem that "the truth or falsehood of a mathematical subject may not be determined without moving to another field beyond the field of mathematics" can be exchanged with a hypothetical proposition that "in order to understand well about Korean politics, we need to jump out to the outside of politics and the conventional paradigm should be changed."

While the irregularity and complexity that are commonly observed in the natural phenomenon were remained as a phenomenon that could not be understood well despite of a long period of efforts, the efforts seeking for the regularity or order hidden within the irregularity and complexity based on the chaos theory are made actively in recent years. Likewise, the irregularities and complexities that could not be explained well with past theories have appeared recently in the Korean politics and hence, it is urgent to study them through the theory of complex system.

Even in case of Japan, they are actively practicing the policy establishment based on the complexity theory when establishing a national policy. We also have come to a political climate that can apply the theory of complex system to the political phenomenon as new paradigm. If we try to find the examples corresponding to "extermination of dinosaurs" in Korean politics, there would be many cases and the so-called "Bukpoong" can be regarded as one example.

Prior to the government of Daejung Kim in 1998, the governing party had used the militarism of North Korea as a deterministic variable for the victory of presidential campaign. However, the result of opinion survey told that the submarine cases of North Korea occurred twice in July of 1998 did not influence much on a special election in the Gangwon province. Prior to that, the governing party had used the belligerent attitude of North Korea that occurs prior to elections by connecting the

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conservative/stable attitude of eligible voters intentionally or spontaneously to make them acting favorably for the election.

However in the special election of filling a vacancy in 1988, the "Bukpoong" deployed under an assumption that "the belligerent attitude of North Korea may work advantageously to the governing party by stimulating the stability mentality of eligible voters" had not appeared as being connected linearly to the logic. The "Bukpoong" logic has disappeared like the case of dinosaur extermination while spinning around the methods used by past governments as the so-called "Sunshine Policy" of Kim Daejung government appears.

Also under the control system of IMF, South Korea even in the politics was influenced by foreign investors. The power of international investors like George Soros has accelerated the political reformation and structural reorganization of Korea as well as the economic system. The president Daejung Kim, in order to raise confidence of the international investors like George Soros, has run the reformation of domestic political and economical systems powerfully. The president Daejung Kim in his own house of Ilsan, immediately after winning the presidential election, has met Michel Camdessus the head of International Monetary Fund (IMF), George Soros the President of Quantum Fund, Sanford I. Weill the President of US Traveler's Group, and Lawrence Summers the Deputy Secretary of the Treasury. Then, he has met David Lipton a deputy secretary, James Hamon the President of the Export-Import Bank of US, and Alwaleed bin Talel bin Abdulaziz Al Saud a Saudi Arabian prince and billionaire. Daejung Kim the successful candidate of presidential election in Korea together with the activities of stabilizing the investment mind of major foreign figures has tried hard to draw social consent while appealing to reform the Tripartite Commission of labor, business and government and pain sharing in order to improve the international credibility of Korea. In other words, he has tried hard to drive reformation of domestic politics and economy and political stabilization in order to raise the international credibility of Korea.

The betting on investment in Korea and investment amount, which were made through the "Enter" keys of computers in relation to the funds and securities companies located in New York, has brought a wind of reform like a tornado in the politics of Korea by flying over to Korea like a butterfly. And, one unwise word of leader can make the national economy running up to a catastrophe like striking a match. The world finance market is governed by the dynamics of chaos. One trivial word or behavior made by a president of central bank in US or Germany can lead to a crash in the stock price of New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), drawing the simultaneous crash in the world finance market. Thereby, this can make a tremendous impact on the politics of one nation. Consequently, the political system of Korea is closely linked with the lower-level systems of Korean politics since it has the dynamic system that changes consistently through the interactions of external factors and a slight change in the early conditions of one system can bring about a tremendous change in the entire system. Therefore, it is important to understand Korean politics in this sense.

APPLICATION OF CATASTROPHE THEORY TO KOREAN POLITICS

The modern system of Korean politics rather operates on an axis of chaos and disorder than order. A political phenomenon is one that is totally linked with each other rather than having a temporary or isolated nature and its chaotic and dramatic

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nature is further enhanced in the environment of Korean politics as it gets to the recent times. This phenomenon may be regarded as an expression of systematic characteristics that are derived in the macroscopic procedure that Korean society is seeking stabilization as a complex system. Therefore in order for us to understand Korean politics, we need to recognize the complex properties linked to the problem of Korean society itself and dynamics of surrounding situation.

When looking through the catastrophe theory, the catastrophic crisis in Korea had the characteristics as in the following. The concept of total crisis in Korean society has been used since the government of Taewoo Noh and this concept has reached to its peak under the control of IMF system. However, Korean crisis is complexly linked in the overall perspective rather than only the side of economy and this is the crisis that has started from the ignorance, obstinacy and surrounding situation of politicians and policy makers. The symptoms of crisis have occurred abruptly since the government of Taewoo Noh and also, they were magnified and worsened gradually. A specific part has temporally raised a functional disorder and at the beginning, they did not make a considerable influence over the entire system. As they exceeded a certain limit, Korea has faced a serious crisis situation.

The stabilization of democratization Since the Declarations on the 29th of June at the end of Doohwan Jeon's Government has become the driving power of promoting many reformations as it continues up until the government of Youngsam Kim. However in the un-systemized state, the tendency of democratization and commercialization in the slow speed of politics and economy has acted as the fundamental cause of crisis in Korean society since the reformation was made on people rather than on the systemization of Korean society under one principle. Therefore, the efficiency and legitimacy of the system has started to crash; leaders did not know in which direction the highly diversified and information-oriented world was moving; and, they could not establish a countermeasure. In this situation, symptoms of the crisis has been exposed everywhere and Korean society has come to a moment just before a catastrophe as the symptoms of financial crisis are amplified and worsened. Especially due to the imprudent negligence of Hanbo Corruption Case and financial failure of Kia Motors, large companies had failed in a chain but the government did not know what to do about them. Loss of credibility in Korean economy that was derived from these ultimately led Korea to be under the "IMF control system."

As the result, they have appeared to be a fall in the efficiency and legitimacy of political system. Therefore, the crisis of Korea has not occurred due to the cozy relations between politics and business, high-cost and low-efficiency structure, labor dispute and extravagancy, but more attention should be made on the fact that the government did not have the awareness and capability to cope with the sudden changes of internal/external situation. Looking at the fact that the relief loan of IMF was made due by a pressure of US rather than by a will of Korean government, we could see that Korean leaders were not aware of crisis symptoms that have been exposed in the internal/external environment within the system. After all, the IMF crisis has appeared from a crisis of catastrophe that the crisis begun in the process of democratization has expanded throughout the society in the state not having overcome the crisis.

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INCREASE OF COMPLEXITY IN KOREAN POLITICS

Korean politics is getting more complex as it gets to recent days. The meaning of complexity can be interpreted in two ways. One is that the ground of Korean politics is getting complex and the other would be that the behavior patterns of political figures that play on the ground have been further complicated as compared to the past. The former, as the phenomenon appearing as population grows and society is highly developed, refers to the Korean society moving into the "living system evolved further" if borrowing an expression from the living system. The latter refers to holding a more complex network as compared to the past in the process of building communication in order to survive from the fluctuations of complex society. Therefore, Korean people try to have communication coalition with each other against sudden social fluctuations. Korean politics in comparison to the past has also become more urgent to understand the competition relationship between fluctuation and communication in this perspective.

In this highly information-based society as the world becomes complex and uncertain from the complex functions and problems interlinked to politics, society, economy, foreign policy and military affairs, we have to find a way to survive in this complicated and uncertain world. To do so, it is important to discover cause of complexity and uncertainty and new sciences like chaos, self-organization, complexity, dissipative structure, and new thoughts of evolution may provide a meaningful result in discovering these causes. In other words, we need to consider and settle politics as an unstable complex adaptation system. All the accidents and problems occurring in Korean society are not those that hold a temporary or isolated nature and they are complex subjects that are generally linked one by one, hence getting influence from a dynamic change in the surrounding environment.

For example as the relations between North Korea and South Korea and changes in the international situation are rapidly developed, it is not certain in which direction they move. And as the interests of surrounding powerful countries change multi-dimensionally according to the time and place and they are entangled, we have to establish the policies against North Korea and surrounding countries under a frame of complex system. Especially after the cold war age, international relations were getting extremely complicated. Recently, the successive summit meetings of big powers around the Korean Peninsula show the reality of international relations that have been fundamentally changed after the cold war age. Under a confrontation structure of the cold war age in the past, the strength of tension was high, but the demarcation of international relations was clear and accurate and the diplomatic relations was also simple. However after the cold war age, countries could not cope with the changing international relations with the behavior and attitude of the past. Accordingly in the diplomatic relations of South Korea, we shall have to manage the goal awareness and strategy of foreign policy and the complexity of diplomatic environment.

KOREAN POLITICAL SYSTEM AS A COMPLEX ADAPTATION SYSTEM

Politics is a social ability that is responsible to find a balance under chaos that is an "edge of chaos." The "edge of chaos" is a clue that can solve the political problem itself and Korean society may not escape from a disorder if politics gives up the ability.

It is considered as reasonable to analyze Korean politics with the complex adaptation

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system theory. For example, the political coalition made by one party with another party to acquire the political power can be regarded as an effort to obtain competitive advantage in one hand from the parties of not having a coalition and on the other hand it can be a strategic adaptation to acquire the political power. Accordingly, the profit outcomes of power acquisition by one party are determined by the interactions (and their strategies) with the other party. On the other hand, the ability that can change the behavior of the other party along with the time shows an adaptive behavior. Even the struggles to have political coalitions within one party in order to determine strategic agendas could be regarded as one complex adaptation system.

After all, the national phenomena such as stream of complex international politics in the North East Asia that South Korea is facing with, delicate trouble and reunification issue between North Korea and South Korea, political/social conflict, and various policy failures and market failures may be diagnosed and treated through an analysis of complex system theory.

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