WHO CAN BE CONSERVATIVE? - REVISITING THE THEORY OF LEISURE CLASS BY THORSTEIN VEBLEN WITH THE WVS DATA

By

JUNG, Wooyong

THESIS

Submitted to

KDI School of Public Policy and Management

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

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ABSTRACT

WHO CAN BE CONSERVATIVE?
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By

Wooyong Jung

Nowadays in democratic countries, it is not difficult to find a particular voting pattern in which people who are less educated, older, and receive less income tend to vote conservative parties. South Korea is no exception where the political preference among different groups defined by income, age, education level has been clearly divided. This study tried to find the logic behind the voting pattern in Korea by delving into the formation process of political orientation. To this end, it revisited Veblen's theory, according to which only two groups of individuals can keep their conservativeness either willingly or passively: one group which has enough wealth to stand against the pressure of change; and the other so destitute that cannot even afford to think of the change and adaptation. In order to prove this, this study applied the WVS data conducted in Korea since 1990 to the theory using several pooled OLS and logit models. As a result, this study showed that the conservativeness decreased as the level of income increased; however, the extent to which the conservative orientation reduced became smaller. It meant that the upper crust and the bottom of a society showed more conservative inclination than other groups of people. Also it was proved that the cohort effect clearly exists in the formation of political orientation. That is, individuals are largely influenced by their own growth environment when the political orientation was established.

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1. Introduction

In many countries where the democratic election system has been once settled down, it is not difficult to find a particular voting pattern in which people who are less educated, older, and receive less income tend to vote conservative parties. South Korea (hereafter Korea) is no exception where the political preference among different groups defined by income, age, education level has been clearly divided. The contrast, especially by age group, was most noticeable in the last presidential election which was described in the media "a showdown of generations (Park, 2012)." As a result of the ferocious race, the conservative candidate, Park Geun-hye was elected thanks to the wholehearted support from the over 50s. More than 70 percent of voters over 50s voted for her, while only less than 40 percent of the remains vote in favor of her. Also as the less educated and low incomers showed their higher preference towards her, the hackneyed voting pattern clearly appeared once again.

Watching the voting pattern, a couple of questions was raised: what makes some people conservative and others liberal, and what makes the conversion in one's political orientation from conservative to liberal or vice versa in life? Have age, income and education level had meaningful influence on one's political orientation? If yes, how much has each of them done?

On one hand, intuitively thinking, it seemed somehow improbable that the most vulnerable group of a society turned their back on liberal parties and instead supported the conservative because it would be more likely for social welfare system to be expanded by liberal parties than by the other. On the other hand, their voting behavior can be made sense of because the group of people, who are older, less educated, and has less income, tend to be rather passive about political issues, skeptical of attending political rally, and less interested in statecraft.

Many scholars have tried to find this logic behind the tendency using various concept and theories from several different academic fields. Most of their studies took data from

election result or exit poll which seems to be the most distinct and safest way to prove the voting pattern. With the data it is possible to prove the cursory phenomenon, but totally insufficient to ferret out the fundamental reasons behind the pattern. Especially, over-dependence on the election result or exit poll exposes these studies to an adverse trap in which the scholars are just busy showing one moment or one time period of election, so easily overlook the process of forming one's political orientation through whole life to fit the mold of his or her own time period.

In his most famous book, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, Thorstein Veblen once cast serious doubt on this pattern and provided a very plausible and interesting point of view which is similar to the concepts of Social Darwinism to a large extent. According to him, being liberal or conservative is one's adaptation process facing the incessantly changing society or institutions; thus, individuals who have more capability to withstand the chronological changes and who are less exposed—or less sensitive—to the demands of the time are able to keep their conservative inclination (Veblen, 1899; pp.147-160).

On the basis of Veblen's idea and from the Social Darwinism perspective, this study tried to find the logic behind the voting pattern, that is, reasons why the older, less educated, and less incomers tend to vote for the conservative candidate by delving into one's formation of political orientation. In other words, it investigated who can stay conservative by enduring the social change longer against the demands of their own time and being more unconcerned about the change, so not feeling the necessity to change themselves as keenly as the others in society. Thus, it set up the following hypotheses on the assumption that every individual is conservative:

- H_0^1: Individual who is in the highest income tier can withstand the demand of change longer than the middle tier; thus she or he shows relatively conservative inclination at any single moment.

- $H_0 2$: Individual who is in the lowest income tier is relatively less sensitive to the social issues and mostly unconcerned about the demand of change; thus she or he shows relatively conservative inclination at any single moment.

Before testing these hypotheses, this study went through relevant literatures first so that it could widen the scope of investigation and mine multiple approaches for insight. Most of all, by revisiting *The Theory of Leisure Class* in the very first part of the next section, it tried to understand his theory in depth. In the third section, then this study tested the abovementioned hypotheses in earnest by applying a real-world dataset to several linear models. The methodology used in the section can be split into two parts. In the first part, it formulated definition and characteristics of conservative and liberal orientations in order to check if the self-positioning well reflects one's political values; and in the second part, based on the results of the first part, it examined the hypotheses by bringing various factors affecting one's political orientation into the models.

2. Formation of Political Orientation

Measuring one's political orientation can have various meaning in that a number of social, psychological, cultural factors affect its formulation. For this reason, scholars having once studied this topic used a wide variety of methods and approaches which can be chiefly divided twofold in terms of where they put their final research destination: exploring one's explicit political orientation or implicit orientation. The studies on explicit orientation has frequently used the data from election results or exit poll, and measured ostensible disposition on the map of political orientation. On the other hand, the studies on implicit orientation have focused on one's inner formation of political orientation, and put its focus onto factors having influence on the process of the formation. These studies exploited the data not only from the

election-related but even from various disciplines such as psychology, sociology, biology, etc.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study basically focused on the implicit political orientation because the primary purpose of this study was to understand an inherent logic behind explicit political behavior, and heavily relied on the theory Veblen had once set up. That is, being conservative is an immensely human instinct, and whether or not keeping the conservative inclination depends on how long she or he is capable of withstanding the incessant demands of the times. Like all other species, Veblen saw the life of human being as a process of selective adaptation, in other words "a natural selection of the fittest habits of thought" and "a process of enforced adaptation of individuals to an environment which has progressively changed with the growth of the community and with the changing institutions under which men have lived." (Veblen, 1899; p.147)

To put it another way, the law of inertia in physics can refer to the social system and life style. The social system and life style of individuals which have been once structured tend to be sustained unlimitedly. Individuals in this sustained social system are instinctively and unconsciously all conservative because the handed-down institutions and habitual social customs are, in itself, the source and the result of conservatism. However, the living environment is changing continuously, and at some points, it no longer accords with the unchanged social system. This discord is becoming the initial impetus of social evolution, and it is the very time when the natural selection test for the fittest habits is about to begin (Veblen, 1899; pp.149-150).

Once the test through which the fittest institutions or customs survive started, individuals in the institution are forced to accept the periodic changes and readjust to new

environment. During the process, most importantly, there exist gaps among individuals in terms of the timing of embracing the change (see Figure 1). For instance, when the social attitudes towards slavery started to change and the abolition of it had come to the fore, some immediately supported the abolition while others remained as proslavers and retarded the progress. We usually say the latter "more conservative" who hung in the longer against the abolition. That is to say, the conservative used to keep their conservative inclination by holding out against the chronological change of the period as long as they could. Longer they can stand against, thicker their conservative tint is.

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework
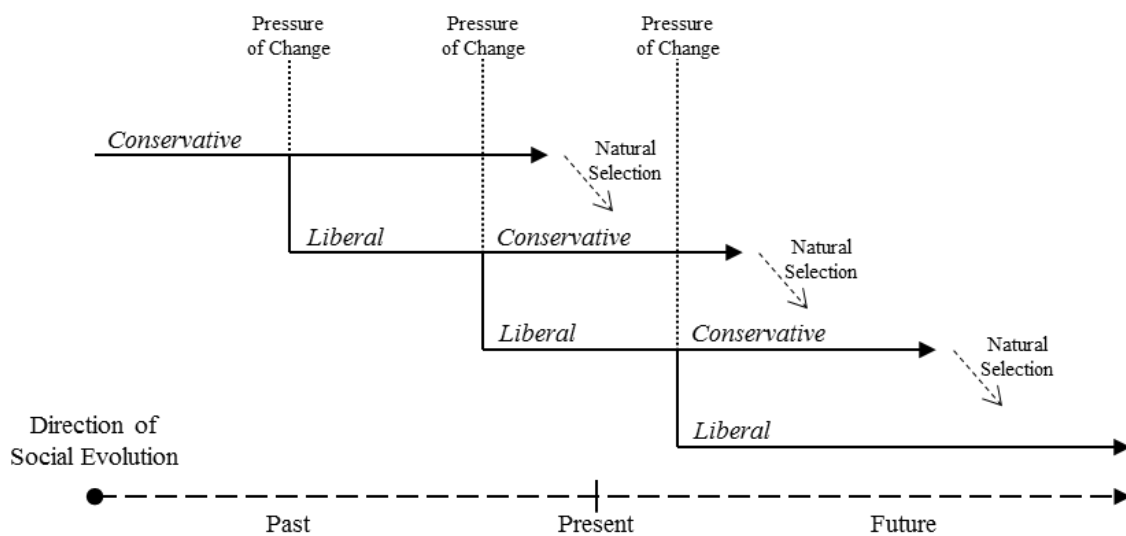
If so, the next question is who then will be the group hanging in the longest and what allows them to act on human instinct while other groups relinquish pursuing the instinct—or comfort—and adapt themselves to a new institution. According to Veblen, the pressure forcing individuals to readjust themselves to a new environment takes the form of "the pressure of pecuniary exigencies", and the group of individuals who is able to ignore the economic constraints is "wealthy leisure class" (Veblen, 1899; p.153). This presumption is

not novel at all as Veblen stated, but the logic behind is totally different; that is, the wealthy group is conservative not because of the vested interests and accumulated property that are easily maintained in the old institution they belong to. Because, for everyone, changing life style and thoughts is an irksome toil against instinctive comfort, the group of wealthy people has no motivation to get into the toilsome process which would be imposed on the life of others who are not wealthy enough to avoid the pecuniary exigencies.

In addition to the leisure class, most interestingly, there is another group of individuals who does not—more precisely and in contrast with the leisure class, cannot—take the change. Veblen stated about this group of individuals, "[t]he abjectly poor, and all those persons whose energies are entirely absorbed by the struggle for daily sustenance, are conservative because they cannot afford the effort of taking thought for the day after tomorrow (Veblen, 1899; p.159)." Since they can barely afford to think of the future and take a look around themselves, the time and resources spent on the change is a mere waste or extravagance. It is the safest bet and the most frugal manner for them to follow the existing system just as the wealthy class is willing to maintain. That is to say, the conservatives can be divided into two types: one is the wealthy class, or voluntary conservatives, and the other the poor class, or passive conservatives. The former tends to tie up the latter to conservatism by capturing the money stream, reducing the capability to accumulate property and finally withdrawing the energy for innovation so as to maintain their vested interests (Veblen, 1899; pp.159-160).

This theory of Veblen gave a huge insight to exploring the latent reasons of the voting pattern that is the older, less educated, and less incomers tend to support conservative parties, and in a broader sense, it provides a plausible, if not perfect, clue about why those individuals are conservative. From now on, this study will turn its gaze into one's voting behavior, especially class voting, and try to explain the political behavior of upwardly mobile individuals which Veblen didn't quite deal with.

2.2 Literature Review (LR): Voting Behavior

Studying voting behavior has been the most basic method used to measure explicit political orientation. In accordance with the rise of political sociology since the early 1930s when all political and social upheavals had been heightening, studies on voting behavior was considered as an "index of regional differences in social structure" (Bendix and Lipset, 1957, p.80). Especially, under the context of the Cold War, those studies became empirical studies of political decision-making closely related to studies on ideologies and economic power.

Early writings on voting behavior chiefly focused on class voting. Many studies set up a simple hypothesis that is individuals tend to vote in favor of their class, so the rich votes for conservative candidates and the poor for liberal or radical candidates (Brady, 1943; Hunter, 1953; Mills, 1956). In particular, these studies emphasized the behavior of elite group in society composed of business executives and high-level government officials, and concluded that the elite group had been completely acting on collectivism by supporting conservative parties regardless of the qualities of policies.

While the simple dichotomy on class voting kept being used even by recent political sociologists, some scholars didn't agree to the symptom of class voting. Comparing political behaviors in the several Western countries such as the United States, Germany, Sweden, Finland, France, Britain, etc., Bendix and Lipset confirmed a wide range of variance that is in each country, political behavior in different classes appeared in various ways (Bendix and Lipset, 1957, p.90). They recognized that in a society individuals are required to show political orientation in accordance with their social status. Since one individual can usually have several social status at the same time in terms of her or his occupation, ethnicity, affiliation, etc., the political behavior can appear in various ways (Bendix and Lipset, 1957, p.84). However, the study seems to too much rely on specific cases, so neglect to watch a

macro-trend in which, a myriad of unique individuals notwithstanding, there might be a collective behavior in any form.

Becoming an extension of the studies on voting behavior, the class voting has been studied by many scholars with several different academic disciplines. One of the attempts to dig up the origin of class voting was carried out by Lipset and Rokkan in 1967. In their most famous book, Cleavage Structure, Party System, and Voter Alignments, they provided a new milestone to political sociologists by exploring the so-called "cleavage structure" (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). They tried to explain the origin of social cleavage and resulting party system by comparing those in the several Western Europian countries and even Mexico and Japan, and found the National Revolution and the Industrial Revolution in almost every country had promoted and developed the cleavage structure (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967, pp.13-14). Especially, they drew and analyzed constellations of conflict lines among polities and found four distinct types of cleavages: two resulted from the National Revolution and the other two from the Industrial Revolution. The former cleavages include the conflict between "the central nation-building culture and the increasing resistance of…distinct subject populations in the provinces," and the conflict between the Nation-State and the churches, while the latter includes "the conflict between the landed interests and the rising class of industrial entrepreneurs," and the conflict between workers and employers (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967, p.14).

In this structure, one particular point worth noting is that the cleavages from the Industrial Revolution can be understood in the same vein with social mobility and it was not quite tackled by ThorsteinVeblen. He didn't give much information on the individuals whose class has been upwardly moved in terms of increasing income or property. As this study will deal with in the later part of this paper, studying the social mobility, that is investigating how the nouveaux riches politically act and which side they take after being rich, can give a great

insight into the formation of political orientation. Bendix and Lipset provided two opposed possibilities based on historical evidence: the nouveaux riches can either be further radicals such as the eighteenth century French bourgeoisie or be further conservative like the late nineteenth century German bourgeoisie (Bendix and Lipset, 1957, p.85). This symptom can be somehow explained by the concept of "double movement" coined by Karl Polanyi (Polanyi, 1944). Adding to his own definition of double movement in which he was chiefly concerned about the market separated from society, it can be interpreted in a broad sense that when there's one main direction of a movement, a counter-movement always occurs under the name of social protection in order to intervene in an event. Polanyi inquired closely from the industrial revolution in England in the late 18th century to the World War II, and found the counter-movement used to be supported by individuals who were immediately affected by the deleterious event—in his time, usually the working class and the landed gentry gave a huge support to the counter-movement against the newly emerging trading classes (Polanyi, 1944, p.138).

As Polanyi as well as Veblen found, it has been easily observed that the lowest class of a society teams up with the highest class of the society against a social transformation led by newly emerging middle class even when the change would bring a better life for the poor. Veblen attributed this ally relationship to the characteristic of the wealthier that is in a community it is more likely for the rich to have reputable position and acquire "a certain honorific or decorative value" than any other classes (Veblen, 1899; p.156). Therefore there has been often a social atmosphere created following the wealthier class with large and unconditional respect. This phenomenon is also well revealed in the Indian caste system. Through the process of "Sanscritizaiton", the Brahmanical customs and rites—which were usually prohibited for the other caste to follow—were spread out not only to the castes immediately below Brahman, but even to the lowest caste (Srinivas, 1956; p.481). It was

possible due to the characteristic of Hindu society which was a strong hierarchical society and composed of a number of small groups. In order to bask in privileges of higher caste, each small group pretends to be a higher caste, so they imitated the rites and lifestyle of higher castes and finally the Brahmanical customs were found everywhere in society (Srinivas, 1956; p.481-483).

So far this study went through the formation pattern of political orientation by exploring famous literatures of prominent scholars, but, unfortunately, these writings cannot provide more substantive evidence due to the lack of data. As mentioned earlier, this study traced the already-revealed social phenomenon with a practical dataset. From now on this study will go through the literatures having tried to find the same pattern in Korean society, and then delve deeper into the substance of it.

2.3 LR: Political Behavior in Korea

As observed in the first part of the introduction in this paper, the aforementioned general approach to the formation of one's political orientation can be applied in full to Korea's case. In particular, Koreans are absolutely great objects for studying this topic—that is, to see how an individual forms and develops her or his own political inclination through the whole lifetime—in that the Korean War in 1951 to 1953 had laid Korea to waste and brought almost every household to the relatively equal starting position in terms of economic fundamentals. Under this context, the initial studies of one's political behavior in Korea chiefly focused on whether or not the basic assumption, which the political sociologists this study has seen in the previous part had once set up, was correct. In other words the initial studies in Korea have argued over the existence of class voting. While some scholars indicated that, due to the war, the political force of socialism wasn't able to entrench in Korean society, so the pattern of class voting has hardly appeared in Korea's political history

(Choi, 1996; Sonn, 1995; Baek, 2003), some asserted that class consciousness, so class voting, seems to exists depending on maturity of civil society in Korea (Lee et al., 2013). Of course, these studies in common owe setting up their hypothesis to the election data, and it has some severe limits in that the election data cannot catch a whole picture of one's political behavior, but a snapshot of one specific moment.

On the extension of the studies on class voting, researches to find the voting pattern in Korea—the older, less-educated and less-incomer are inclinable to support a conservative candidate—have been also actively conducted by many scholars. The voting pattern have been observed since 1988 when a direct presidential election system was first promoted in Korea, and it has been a symbol of generation gap with the last presidential election as the culmination, and now it became a fertile spawning ground for social conflict between the older and younger generation. Scholars have tried to explain this social symptom in terms of age and cohort effects, and afforded plenty of evidence that demographic factors—such as age, gender, income, region, education level, the number of children etc.—are important determinants of voting behavior (Shin, 2001; Kang, 2003; Lee, 2008; Park, 2010; Lee et al., 2013; Noh et al., 2013). Shin(2001) once studied the effects of age and sex composition of voters on election outcomes and effects of population distribution and redistribution on Korean political development. Lee et al.(2009) studied the class consciousness in Korea and how it has affected one's political orientations and attitudes. Despite tons of studies including these papers introduced here that found many factors affecting one's voting behavior or the results of elections, there are few studies that deal with more radical causality linking formation of political orientation to behavior.

Owing to its implicit political characteristics in Korea, studies on voting behavior necessarily and spontaneously dealt with generational conflict. Park(2010) observed that the average age of members of National Assembly of Korea has decreased and drew a conclusion

that the conflict among generations had resulted from the transfer timing of political power. In particular, he asserted that the generational conflict went into a latent period since 2007 when the conflicts pattern no longer appeared in the same year presidential election and the general election in 2008. Yoon(2009) also diagnosed that the politics relying on generation was replaced by social movements. However, these superficial approaches to the symptom cannot explain the very guts of the matters and exposed themselves to the fallacy of hasty generalization. In reality the generation cleavage once again became the essential factor of the presidential election in 2012, it proved that exploring political behavior simply relying on election results can mislead into biased results.

2.4 LR: Other Factors Affecting Political Orientation

2.4.1 Psychological Approaches

In addition to the sociological and political approach to individual's political orientation, psychological researches have added further depth and breadth to a large extent to the studies on political behavior. Using the Big Five traits as a measure of personality which indicates openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism, Gosling and his colleagues found that openness and conscientiousness are the strongly related traits to one's political orientation (Gosling et al., 2003). They stated that there was a positive correlation between openness and liberalism while the same relation was found between conservatism and conscientiousness. In the Big Five personality traits, openness reflects individual's preference for "novelty and sensation seeking", and conscientiousness refers to "dutifulness and self-control" (Dunkel and Decker, 2012).

In terms of the child attachment security, the parent-child relationship is also an important factor affecting the formation of one's political attitude (Lakoff, 2002). In Lakoff's model, children grown up under "strict father" home environment, or insecure attachment,

tend to be more conservative, while children from "nurturing mother" home environment, or secure attachment, are more likely to be liberal. Moreover, the degree to which people accept their parent's political orientation is highly related to their emotional quality of adolescents' relationship with their parents (Dunkel and Decker, 2012). In other words, having a good rapport with parents during the adolescent period helps people to adopt parents' political orientation without reserve. Emotion has been also a key indicator showing one's political orientation. In particular, disgust sensitivity such as fear and loathing of homosexuality has a positive relationship with conservatism (Invar et al., 2009). Regarding issues of purity, Inbar et al. made a research on American individuals after controlling for religious affiliation, and found that—not surprisingly—more conservative individual displayed a propensity of shunning homosexuality.

As observed above, the most important factors of the psychological approaches are the timing and method: when individual's identity development takes place and in which manner it is revealed. In his study, Berzonsky assessed individual differences in identity development using the identity style model (Berzonsky, 1989). According to him, identity processing style can be split into three different styles: informational, normative, and diffuse-avoidant. Unlike the informational style with which individuals define themselves by their values and goals, the individuals who have the normative identity style see themselves through their family, religion, and ethnicity (Berzonsky, 2004); thus they tend to adopt their life goals or standards that are borrowed from others, and this normative identity style is highly associated with conservative attitudes.

2.4.2 Genetical Approaches

Beyond the psychological approaches, a set of scholars has focused on genetics which, they argue, plays at least some role in shaping one's political orientation. This approach is

associated with the Big Five approach explained above in that one's personality represented by the Big Five is genetically inheritable to a large extent (Riemann et al., 1997; McCrae et al., 1998; Kandler et al., 2010).

According to Jang et al., the contribution of the genetic traits to the five dimensions of Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness was roughly 41%, 53%, 61%, 41%, and 44% respectively (Jang et al., 1996). It provides a large part of the individual differences compared to the environmental explanation. Riemann and colleagues also conducted behavior-genetic research on personality by twin study of both monozygotic and dizygotic twin pairs and reconfirmed earlier findings that personality represented by the Big Five was substantially influenced by genetic traits (Riemann et al., 1997).

3. Methodology and Discussion over Self-positioning

In order to approach to the primitive factors deciding one's political inclination from more fundamental perspective, this study borrowed the data from the World Values Survey (WVS) that is the largest cross-national dataset exploring people's values, beliefs, and public opinions, and has been used in a number of academic articles of social science. It has been conducted since 1981 in almost 100 countries including South Korea. Although its validity has been called into question by some scholars, and been checked with various methodologies (King et al, 2004; Johnson and Mislin, 2011; Donnelly and Pol-Eleches, 2012). Most of results have proved its validity and reliability in spite of some minor critics on several questions. Furthermore, since those critics chiefly focused on its cross-national validity or compatibility rather than that of within-country, it won't be a matter for this study using survey results obtained only in Korea.

The survey questionnaire is comprised of over 1,000 questions among which this study focused on 5 key questions related to individual's attitudes towards politics and social issues

and some of basic information such as age, gender, religion, the number of children, etc. Out of six times surveys carried out in Korea—in 1982, 1990, 1996, 2001, 2005, and 2010—this study took five of them except for the 1982 survey, considering data availability; thus the total number of sample amounts to 6,100 Koreans aged from 17 to 91, and the range of their birth year is from 1900 to 1991.

The methodology used in this study is twofold: first, self-positioning check using logistic regression and pooled ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models to set up a definition of conservatism and liberalism and drawing implication of self-positioning, and second, least squares dummy variable (LSDV) estimators with applying the WVS data to Veblen's thoughts to find what makes individuals remain conservative. On the basis of these two stages, this study finally drew conclusions by combining them. The overall flow of the two stages is in Figure 2, followed by the details of each stage.

Figure 2: Overall Flow of the Stage 1 and 2
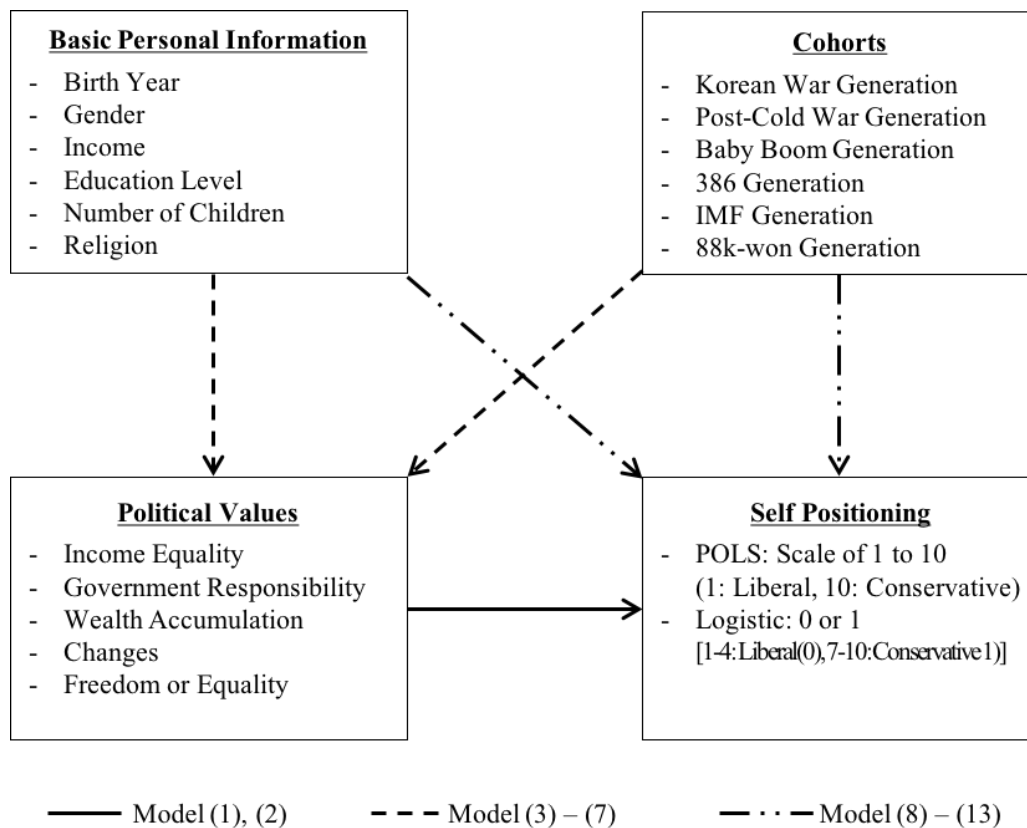
3.1 First Stage: Validity of Self-positioning [Model (1) to (7)]

Once Conover and Feldman raised skeptical eyebrows on the traditional mass belief systems in which one individual can be simply put on a single ideological scale bar (Conover and Feldman, 1983). Using a schematic model, they showed that individuals form their political orientation in diverse and rich ways (Conover and Feldman, 1983, p.121). Furthermore, according to them, there is no clear logical links between one's political orientation and their ideological self-positioning (Conover and Feldman, 1981).

Considering the self-positioning in question, in this study a self-positioning check was designed so as to understand how individuals connected their own political values to the self-positioning. In other words, through the self-positioning check, it was possible to confirm which political value affected one's decision to locate themselves on the coordinate of political orientation, and ultimately check if the self-positioning is reasonable.

The dictionary definition of conservatism is "belief in the value of established and traditional practices in politics and society" and "dislike of change or new ideas in a particular area,"[1] while the definition of liberalism is "belief in the value of social and political change in order to achieve progress."[2] Along with these dictionary definitions, the self-positioning check was designed in which five questions from the WVS questionnaire were picked up and fitted on the self-positioning on political scale using logistic and pooled OLS models. The five key questions are:

- E035. *Income equality*: "Incomes should be made more equal." vs. "We need larger income differences as incentives."

- E037. *Government responsibility*: "People should take more responsibility to provide for themselves." vs. "The government should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for."

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[1] Merriam-Webster, accessed on August 2, 2016, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conservatism.
[2] Merriam-Webster, accessed on August 2, 2016, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/liberalism

- E041. *Wealth accumulation*: "People can only get rich at the expense of others." vs. "Wealth can grow so there ́s enough for everyone."

- E047. *Changes*: "I worry about difficulties changes may cause." vs. "I welcome possibilities that something new is beginning."

- E032. *Freedom or equality*: "Freedom above equality." vs. "Equality above Freedom."

All questions but "E032" are on a scale of 1 to 10 using a Likert-type scale, and all of them are readjusted in order for being closer to 10 to indicate more conservative ideas and for being closer to 1 more liberal. In spite of many ongoing discussions on the Likert scale with its validity as interval variables, this study basically treated all explanatory Likert-type variables as interval data. Also in the model (1), the self-positioning indicator which is a dependent variable was transformed to a categorical type to be fitted in the logit model: 0 for the liberal who answered 1, 2, 3, or 4; and 1 for the conservative who actually answered 7, 8, 9, or 10 on the 1 to 10 scale of political orientation. To make a clear demarcation, respondents who answered 5 or 6 were removed in the first stage.

3.2 Second Stage: Application of Veblen's Ideas to a Real World [Model (8) to (13)]

On the basis of the results of self-positioning check in the first stage, this study in earnest explored how an individual forms her or his political orientation. Tracking Veblen's ideas—that is, all are instinctively conservative and whether staying as conservative or becoming the liberal depends on one's voluntary or mandatory choice of adaptation to a new living environment which has survived through the natural selection process of society—this study brought basic information of the WVS respondents into the model, such as birth year, gender, income, education level, religion, the number of children, etc. Especially, to identify the symptom that individuals—who are older, less educated, and have less income—tend to have conservative-tinted characteristics, this study included three key variables: age,

education level, and income. Furthermore, by inserting a quadratic term of income into the model, this study tried to find the increasing marginal conservativeness along with income being raised.

In order to panelize the cross-sectional data collected in five different years, this study categorized the whole sample into six cohort groups by their birth year. For the criteria for cohort classification, this study basically used what Park once set up in his essay (Park, 2009), and somehow revised it in accordance with the purpose of this study. Considering historical events and the characteristics of generations, the cohort classification used in this study is as follows.

- *Korean War Generation*:   born before 1940
- *Post-Cold War Generation*:   born in 1941-1950
- *Baby Boom Generation*:   born in 1951-1960
- *386 Generation*:   born in 1961-1970
- *IMF Generation*:   born in 1971-1980
- *88k-won Generation*:   born in 1981-1991

4. Results

In order to assess aforementioned invalidity of self-positioning of political orientation, both logistic and pooled ordinary least squares models were performed. Unlike what Conover and Feldman were concerned about, the self-positioning indicator showed strong relationships with the fundamental political values of individuals in both model (1) and (2) (see Table 1).

Table 1: Logit and OLS models estimating the validity of the self-positioning

	Dependent variable:	
	Self-positioning	Self-positioning
	logistic	*OLS*
	(1)	(2)
Income equality	0.083***	0.054**
	(0.032)	(0.022)
Government responsibility	0.112***	0.094***
	(0.031)	(0.024)
Wealth accumulation	0.127***	0.072***
	(0.030)	(0.022)
Changes	0.084***	0.056***
	(0.029)	(0.021)
Freedom or equality	0.108	0.195**
	(0.107)	(0.077)
Constant	−1.086***	4.735***
	(0.366)	(0.275)
Observations	743	1,169
R^2		0.048
Adjusted R^2		0.044
Log Likelihood	−356.997	
Akaike Inf. Crit.	725.994	
Residual Std. Error		2.254 (df = 1163)
F Statistic		11.806*** (df = 5; 1163)
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

According to the result, the conservative can be defined as follows: a person who thinks that larger income difference is needed as incentives; who less prefers government intervention into her or his own life; who thinks there's enough wealth which can be available for everyone; who are concerned for any difficulties changes bring about; and thinks freedom is over equality. The liberals have, of course, exactly contrary political values.

Based on this definition, this study investigated that what factors affected each of the key political values, and if there is a cohort effect. As a result, there was no factor among the individuals' basic information which consistently have an influence on the political values,

but except for "Income equality" and "Freedom or equality", there appeared the cohort effect significantly operating (see table 2). In particular, regarding the "Government responsibility" (model 4), all explanatory variables but the gender dummy showed statistically significant influence. The regression is:

Government reponsibility

$$
\begin{aligned}
&= 5.27^{***} + 0.06\ Squared\ income^{***} - .70\ income^{***} + .10\ Education\ level^{***} \\
&\quad - .02\ Female\ - .30\ 386 generation^{***} - \ 1.77\ 880 kgeneration^{***} \\
&\quad - .74\ Babyboomgeneration^{***} - .76\ Postcoldwargeneration^{***} \\
&\quad - 1.87\ IMFgeneration^{***}
\end{aligned}
$$

As expected, compared to the Korean War generation, all cohorts emphasized more responsibility of the government, and the IMF generation and 880k generation appeared to have the strongest liberal inclination in terms of the government responsibility. The result is plausible in that the two cohorts who were born in 1970 to 1991 have suffered from the severe structural problems such as the unemployment crisis.

Table 2: Pooled OLS models with cohort dummies estimating the effect of cohort on each key question

	Dependent variable:				
	Income equality	Government responsibility	Wealth accumulation	Changes	Freedom or equality
	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Squred(Income)	0.003	0.059***	0.015**	0.002	−0.005
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.012)	(0.003)
Income	0.164***	−0.702***	−0.039	−0.057	0.062*
	(0.062)	(0.061)	(0.059)	(0.121)	(0.033)
Education level	−0.067**	0.104***	−0.016	−0.092	0.075***
	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.077)	(0.021)
Female	−0.166**	−0.022	−0.052	−0.538***	−0.071
	(0.071)	(0.070)	(0.071)	(0.188)	(0.051)
386 generation	0.006	−1.303***	−0.365**	−1.892***	0.042
	(0.151)	(0.149)	(0.145)	(0.301)	(0.082)
880k-won generation	0.691***	−1.773***	−0.739***		
	(0.194)	(0.191)	(0.185)		
Baby-boom generation	−0.069	−0.740***	−0.255*	−1.403***	−0.056
	(0.150)	(0.147)	(0.145)	(0.287)	(0.078)
Post-coldwar generation	−0.071	−0.758***	−0.150	−0.705**	0.038
	(0.153)	(0.150)	(0.146)	(0.308)	(0.084)
IMF generation	0.265	−1.869***	−0.758***	−2.287***	−0.070
	(0.162)	(0.160)	(0.159)	(0.609)	(0.169)
Constant	5.826***	5.270***	6.503***	6.923***	1.673***
	(0.201)	(0.198)	(0.192)	(0.438)	(0.118)
Observations	5,957	5,949	4,764	1,164	1,188
R^2	0.026	0.065	0.020	0.060	0.029
Adjusted R^2	0.025	0.064	0.018	0.053	0.022

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

In accordance with such findings above, this study identified that the self-positioning variable well indicates one's political orientation reflecting fundamental political values. On the basis with this result, this study in earnest dived into the analysis on Veblen's ideas using the logistic regression models focusing on its applicability to the real world. As a result, the thoughts of Veblen were backed up by the regression models (see Table 3). That is, since the pressure forcing individuals to relinquish conservativeness and readjust themselves to a new environment takes a form of economic squeeze, it is likely that persons, who have enough wealth to stand against the pressure, or who cannot afford to spend time thinking of politics due to hardships of life, so instead just follow the existing system, remain conservative. The negative estimates of income notwithstanding, the positive estimates of the quadratic term of income well describe this phenomenon, or the increasing marginal conservativeness. The cohort effect here also appeared clearly. Just like the results of model (4), the younger cohorts, the stronger liberal inclination observed. However, contrary to expectation, the education level doesn't show a significant relationship with the political orientation. Furthermore, neither do the interaction terms between income and cohort. This result suggests that, within a cohort, the level of income doesn't affect the political orientation much.

Most significantly, as predicted, the cohort effect seems to have a strong influence on self-positioning. Compared to the Korean War generation who were born before 1940, all other cohorts showed more liberal inclination. The 386 generation used to blame the younger generation to be neither critical nor progressive towards political issues as much as they were, but according to the results, the 880,000won generation proved to be more liberal than the 386 generation. Confronting the worst situation of job market, it seems plausible that the social atmosphere of era affects the younger generation's political orientation. It reminds that the pressure of change takes a form of economic squeeze. Also this has a thread of

connection with what Mannheim once indicated; that is to say, political orientation of young

adults heavily relies on the opportunity their society provided (Mannheim, 1952, p.297).

Table 3: LSDV Models estimating the effect of income, education level, age and cohort

	Dependent variable:		
	Self-positioning		
	(8)	(9)	(10)
Squared(Income)	0.038***	0.025***	0.024***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Income	−0.409***	−0.271***	−0.239***
	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.060)
Education level	−0.025	0.017	0.011
	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.021)
Age	0.036***		
	(0.002)		
386 generation		−1.445***	−1.155***
		(0.119)	(0.230)
880k-won generation		−2.060***	−2.361***
		(0.153)	(0.380)
Baby-boom generation		−0.966***	−0.889***
		(0.118)	(0.239)
Post-coldwar generation		−0.579***	−0.721***
		(0.120)	(0.247)
IMF generation		−1.974***	−1.665***
		(0.128)	(0.278)
Interaction(income*386gen)			−0.063
			(0.046)
Interaction(income*880kgen)			0.055
			(0.070)
Interaction(income*babyboomgen)			−0.019
			(0.048)
Interaction(income*postcoldwargen)			0.026
			(0.050)
Interaction(income*IMFgen)			−0.062
			(0.052)
Constant	5.286***	7.385***	7.299***
	(0.207)	(0.154)	(0.203)
Observations	5,924	5,925	5,925
R^2	0.064	0.085	0.086
Adjusted R^2	0.063	0.084	0.084

Table 4: LSDV Models estimating the other factors affecting political orientation

	Dependent variable:		
	Self-positioning		
	(11)	(12)	(13)
Squared(Income)	0.009*	0.009*	0.044***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.006)
Income	−0.059	−0.061	−0.458***
	(0.051)	(0.051)	(0.061)
Education level	−0.020	−0.020	−0.009
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.027)
Age	0.033***	0.037***	0.025***
	(0.003)	(0.006)	(0.004)
Number of children	0.082***	0.079**	0.144***
	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.039)
WVS 1996	−1.556***	−1.238***	
	(0.093)	(0.285)	
WVS 2001	−1.405***	−1.259***	
	(0.092)	(0.287)	
WVS 2005	−1.132***	−1.367***	
	(0.094)	(0.282)	
WVS 2010	−1.545***	−1.075***	
	(0.096)	(0.281)	
Interaction(age*WVS1996)		−0.008	
		(0.007)	
Interaction(age*WVS2001)		−0.004	
		(0.007)	
Interaction(age*WVS2005)		0.005	
		(0.007)	
Interaction(age*WVS2010)		−0.011*	
		(0.007)	
Catholic			−0.203**
			(0.095)
Confucianism			−0.896**
			(0.430)
Others			0.063
			(0.169)
Protestant			−0.032
			(0.088)
Constant	5.485***	5.347***	5.589***
	(0.209)	(0.261)	(0.264)
Observations	5,867	5,867	3,792
R^2	0.122	0.123	0.070
Adjusted R^2	0.121	0.122	0.068

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

In Table 4, this study brought the WVS implementing years, the number of children, and religion into new models, (11), (12), and (13) in order to estimate various factors which might have affected the political orientation. As a result, it appeared that the political orientation significantly differs depending on the implementing year, and compared to that base year 1990, it seems that conservative inclination has been reduced to large extent—surprisingly more than 1 point. This may be explained by transforming social atmosphere of Korea in which well-developed social welfare system considered as much important as economic development along with the increasing human rights since 1990s. People in 1996 or later put more value on equality than freedom and expect extended roles of government for social welfare than in 1990. In other words, from Veblen's perspective, the time gap of turning into liberal had been significantly reduced between 1990 and 1996. Since 1996, however, the gap seems much the same. Regarding this constant trend further studies should be tackled.

Also, as predicted, individuals who have more children showed more conservative inclination, and religious individuals, regardless of religion, have more conservative characteristics, especially believers in Buddhism [the constant in model (13)].

These results have some policy implication in that now the conservative can be clearly divided into two kinds: one is the willing and active conservative composed of wealthy individuals and the other is passive and reluctant conservative of the poor. Although the two extremes meet under the name of conservative, they are totally different in terms of motivation and willingness to be conservative. Of course, this study doesn't claim that liberal is better than conservative, or vice versa. However, at least, it emphasizes that the passive and reluctant conservative group is not as sound as the active and willing conservative group, because being conservative resulting from ignorance and indifference to politics can damage

the backbone of democracy. Thus, this study suggests reducing the population of passive conservatives through narrowing income gap and providing easily-accessible information.

5. Conclusion

Every individual is conservative when they become a member of a society and start a social life. This conservative inclination continues because individuals tend to act on their instinct just like the law of inertia. However, the environment around them rapidly changes, and new institutions or systems are needed along with the change. At this moment, individuals—who were once conservative—were divided into two groups in terms of their willingness to accept the change: one group remaining conservative and the other group giving up the conservativeness. Due to the hard effort striving against instinct, staying conservative is always an easy bet if she or he is able to overcome economic pressure; thus, only two groups of people, who have enough wealth to stand against the pressure of change and who are so destitute that cannot even afford to think of it, keep their conservativeness either willingly or passively.

This study—demonstrating that the abovementioned hypothesis from Veblen is quite well suited for the real world—tried to look at the behind scenes of individual forming her or his own political orientation. Unlike the previous literatures whose superficial approaches for exploring one's political inclination cannot touch the very guts of the matters, this study has academic meanings at least in that it brought up the subject and linked the endogenous factors explained by the Veblen's theory to the real world WVS dataset.

The results of the regression models in this study showed that the conservativeness decreased as the level of income increased; however, the extent to which the conservative orientation reduced became smaller. It meant that the upper crust and the bottom of a society showed more conservative inclination than other groups of people. It provides an insight into

explaining some of the voting patterns in Korea which the older and low-incomer support a conservative candidate. Although this study couldn't directly clean up the cause of that the less-educated individuals tend to be more conservative, probably it is because the less educated earns less income.

By placing cohort dummies in the models, this study showed that the cohort effect clearly exists in the formation of political orientation. Put it another way, an individual is largely influenced by her or his own growth environment when the political orientation was established. Most of all, since the IMF generation and 880,000-won generation showed stronger liberal inclination, Veblen's hypothesis—the groups of individuals who cannot overcome the economic burden become liberal—seems to be somehow proved.

Consequently, it can be stated that all individuals are conservatives heading towards liberals, like the proslaver in old days who now is called a racist not a conservative. Only differs the timing of readjustment to be liberal. Because it is impossible to remove the difference among individuals, there are always conservatives and the liberals co-existing, so does conflict between them. If the conflict cannot be completely eliminated, it might be the best political solution to reduce the frequency and extent of conflict. For this end, it can be a good approach for policy makers to focus on providing sufficient information on social issues with easy accessibility, and narrowing income disparity, so that the passive conservative is able to put themselves on the upward flow of social mobility. Ultimately, the gap between individuals' timing to be liberal would be reduced, and the conflict also be possibly moderated.

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