



Legislators, Bureaucrats, and Interest Groups in Korea: A Review Essay

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The purpose of this essay is to review existing research on legislative-administrative bureaucratic and legislative-interest group relations from the 1970's until the late 1990's in Korea. From a critical viewpoint, the extant literature on the relationship between legislators and bureaucrats or interest groups in Korea is meager, shallow, and outdated. Korean legislative politics is in the process of transition. Although the inertia of old political practices may be still strong, there also exist increasingly significant undercurrents militating against it. The future direction is toward a stronger legislature in a more competitive regime. The current research practices, however, are not likely to measure up to these possible changes. The existing research lacks the diversity in theoretical perspectives and investigative strategies. The tradition of descriptive-therapeutic studies with rudimentary empirical evidence is deep rooted. There exist only some systematically executed behavioral-empirical studies. In addition, the studies drawing on formal deductive theories are a rare breed. It is imperative that old research practices should be overhauled with the introduction of alternative theoretical perspectives and research strategies. The research needs reorientation and innovation. At this juncture, the field of Korean legislative studies probably stands in need of a Fenno who serves as a bridge connecting detailed descriptive studies to those based on deductive theoretical perspectives.

Key Words: legislative-administrative bureaucratic relations, legislative-interest group relations, policy-making power of the Korean National Assembly

I. Introduction

Since the democratization of the regime in the 1980's, the study of the National Assembly has gained wide recognition as an important enterprise among the researchers on Korean politics. In the most part of the pre-democratic authoritarian era, the national legislature remained a symbol of representative democracy with little substantive power. Hence it used to be given a low priority on the agenda for empirical political research. As a result, anecdotal and journalistic accounts abound, but there exists scant amount of serious scholarly research on Korean legislative politics. Moreover, very few scholars have published their works in English so that they can be readily available for the world-wide readership.¹⁾ It is an appropriate time to expose the case of Korean national legislature to comparative legislative research, including that on the U. S. Congress, and to help students of Korean legislative politics catch up with the current state of comparative legislative research.

The purpose of this essay is to take stock of and review existing research on the relationship between the legislature and two elements of its environment, administrative agencies and interest groups, in Korea. Due to the lamentable lack of literature on legislative-administrative bureaucratic and legislative-interest group relations, I draw on even partially or marginally relevant works, and make an endeavor to put these pieces together into a well-focused review.

This essay consists of four parts. First, I discuss briefly the policy-making power of the Korean national legislature from comparative perspectives, relative to other national legislatures and in terms of the recent regime change. This discussion sets the context for this essay, and spurs us to think how the study of the Korean case can enrich the field of comparative legislative research. Second, I attempt to provide a glimpse of the facets of interaction between legislators and bureaucrats by looking closely at the ways in

1) One notable exception may be Professor Chong Lim Kim at the University of Iowa together with his numerous publications.

which the legislature oversees, supervises, and controls administrative agencies. Third, I present the current status of our understanding about the nature and extent of interest group influence on the Korean legislature. Finally, given the overview and appraisal of existing studies, I suggest what kinds of research tasks lie ahead of students of Korean legislative politics, and stress the needs for generating research outputs comparable in quality to those produced by leading scholars engaged in comparative legislative research.

II. Policy-Making Power of the Korean National Assembly

The Korean National Assembly began its institutional life in 1948, and has a turbulent history. The legislature underwent three dissolutions and two more curtailments of its terms amid the whirlwind of regime changes. The recent significant change in the political regime is the transition in the late 1980's from the previous authoritarianism to the current Six Republic's democracy. Under a presidential system, the legislature is given constitutional means of checking the executive. As an institution linking the people with the government, the National Assembly is expected to serve as the agent of democratic consolidation. When it comes to the realities of legislative politics, however, tenacious old practices die hard. Conflict between parties within the legislature is not managed in an orderly manner. The legislature has yet to establish itself as an effective player of its proper roles. Overall, it remains uninstitutionalized (C. W. Park 1997; and his 1999).

In the authoritarian era, the National Assembly could not exercise a policy influence independent of the executive. It used to be called a handmaiden of the executive. Still, even in the democratic era, it is never a legislature whose policy influence is strong. This situation stimulates the lively discussion on the legislative reform for enhancing the legislature as a policy actor (H. Ahn 1978; C. L. Kim and Pai 1981; Y. O. Yoon 1986; C. L. Kim 1988; Bark 1989; and Paik 1995).

Existing studies on lawmaking in the National Assembly have drawn on several

measures, such as the volume and success rate of “member bills” versus “government bills,” the extent of the legislature’s modifying bills, the amount of time allotted for deliberating bills, its capacity to reject the passage of bills preferred by the president, the incidence of legislative-executive conflict shown by the presidential use of his veto power, and so on.²⁾ In general, government bills tend to outnumber member bills, and the former are more frequently adopted than the latter. Bills are perfunctorily deliberated. The legislature hardly fails to approve the bills of presidential preference. These patterns of lawmaking were highly visible in the authoritarian era, and remain intact to a great extent in the first decade of democratic era except for the first half (1988-1989) of the Thirteenth Assembly. In the first two years of the Thirteenth Assembly, the president’s party was in the position of legislative minority and often overwhelmed by the legislative initiative taken by opposition legislators (M. Shin 1985; his 1996; Chung 1988; Y. O. Yoon 1986; and C. W. Park 1999).³⁾

A look at the budget deliberation in a legislature can show the extent of its policy influence. The extent of final modifications made by the National Assembly in the original executive proposal may be a good indicator of its leverage over fiscal matters. Usually, changes come within just one percent of the original proposal. The legislature’s budgetary power is limited in many important ways. The budget and account committee is a temporary special committee which changes membership every year and so does not deal with fiscal matters on a continuous basis. The amount of time for budget review is insufficient and hardly conducive to a thorough examination (Y. Kim 1989; Y. Oh 1989; S. Kang 1992a; his 1992b; and Park 1999).

2) A member bill refers to the one introduced by legislators, while a government bill, by the executive branch. In Korean politics, the term “government” is, more often than not, used in a narrow sense, meaning the executive branch which includes the president, state council (cabinet) and administrative agencies.

3) In the middle of the 15th Assembly (1996-2000), a new period of “divided government” in the American parlance began with the inauguration of a new president, a former opposition leader. Yet we cannot definitely say that the National Assembly then began to exercise its increased policy leverage.

In order to bring the policy-making power of the Korean National Assembly into comparative perspective, and also to trace temporal changes in its policy-making power, an appropriate measure or a classificatory scheme is needed. In classifying legislatures, Mezey has offered a trichotomous scale of policy-making power: strong, modest, and little or none. On this judgmental scale, over two thirds of the legislatures under his study fall into the middle category. Due to little variation on it, the scale cannot discriminate the Korean National Assembly against the British Parliament in the policy-making power. When applying the measure to a legislature across time, it is not likely to show significant variation, either (Mezey 1979, 36). So I would suggest a four-point ordinal scale for assessing a legislature's overall policy influence as follows:

A very strong policy influence: this coincides with Mezey's category of a strong policy-making power. The legislature in this category takes the policy initiative. In policy deliberation, it makes a significant modification of executive proposal, willingly rejects it, and can even substitute its own. It is a central, assertive, independent, and highly autonomous policy actor, participating as a co-partner of the executive in policy process.

A somewhat strong policy influence: this describes a legislature which belongs to the upper echelon within the Mezey's "modest" category. This legislature has a passive, inconspicuous, responding stance relative to the executive in policy initiative. But it closely deliberates policies brought forward by the executive: making significant modifications of executive proposals, though neither frequently rejecting them nor demonstrating much will to substitute policy of its own. In the process of deliberation, this legislature represents diverse opinions and interests, hence making public policy responsive to popular demands. It may be subordinate to the executive in the sense that it plays a secondary policy-making role often overshadowed by the executive. But it is not simply subservient but shows its considerable institutional and functional autonomy. It can set the parameters within which the executive operates.

A somewhat weak policy influence: this description is appropriate to a legislature belonging to the lower echelon within the Mezey's "modest" category. This legislature takes little policy initiative. Its policy deliberation, on the whole, remains of a perfunctory, superficial and limited nature. Modifications of executive proposals are made clearly within the bounds of the executive's preferences. It seldom rejects executive proposals, and lacks the will to substitute its own. The legislature is virtually a subservient rubber stamp, and hardly

said to be autonomous.

A very weak policy influence: this is the same as what Mezey calls little or no policy-making power. A legislature falling into this category carries no notion of policy initiative. Only nominal deliberation exists. It is not at all expected to reject executive proposals nor to modify them even marginally. Its utmost important policy role is to legitimate executive proposals. This legislature is outrightly subservient, and has lost its autonomy.

Now one can apply the above four-fold measure of a legislature's policy influence to the Korean National Assembly. The Ninth through Eleventh Assemblies at the most repressive phase of the authoritarian era were very weak legislatures in terms of their policy-making power. The Twelfth Assembly during the late phase of authoritarianism was a somewhat weak one. In the democratic era, the Thirteenth Assembly during its first two years was possibly a somewhat strong legislature. However, this Assembly later turned into a somewhat weak legislature. Since then the national legislature has remained somewhat weak. In the beginning of the democratic era, the legislature's policy influence increased remarkably. But soon the legislature has become relegated to a weak body again. Change is short, but continuity is long for Korean legislative politics.

III. Legislative Oversight and Control of the Bureaucracy

Researchers have seen legislative-executive relations mostly as the conflict or cooperation between the national legislature and the president. The constitution provides a presidential system based on the principles of separation of powers and also checks and balances. Unlike the United States prototype, however, Korean presidentialism has made the power balance tipped toward the president. This is indicated by the president's emergency powers and significant constraints on the legislative branch in its organization and operation. Not only the constitution but also political practices have led researchers to put much emphasis on the legislature's dependence or executive dominance (H. Ahn 1978; C. L. Kim and Pai 1981; and Bark 1989).

Only a small number of researchers examined legislative-executive relations at the level of interaction between the legislature and administrative bureaucracy. Given that in Korea executive decision-making power is concentrated in the president, his close aides and cabinet ministers, and that the bureaucracy is characterized by a high level of political dependence on the president (Cho 1984, 283; Paek 1982, 478-80), the lack of scholarly concern about legislative-administrative bureaucratic relations may be understandable. But our knowledge of policy process remains incomplete without studying those relations where much of concrete policy action takes place.

In this section, this review discusses Korean legislative-administrative bureaucratic relations by focusing on how the National Assembly oversees and controls the bureaucracy. Legislative oversight, supervision, and control constitute a central aspect of interaction between legislators and bureaucrats in policy process (Loewenberg and Patterson 1979, 269-79). While overseeing the content of implemented policies, and the personnel and budgetary resources involved in policy implementation, the legislature obtains information on the operation of administrative agencies, and holds bureaucrats accountable for their policy actions.

1. Annual Inspection of Administrative Agencies

Major means of legislative oversight and control, provided by the constitution, include annual inspection, specially arranged investigation, and interpellation for questioning ministers orally or in writing. Journalists, legislative staff, pundits and scholars have offered accounts of the legislature's inspection, investigation, and interpellation activities. Some of these accounts describe the oversight procedures the legislature goes through, and the legal backgrounds relevant to oversight activities. Others state problems with current practices of legislative oversight and control, and go further to offer prescriptions for solving the problems. Only a few researchers have attempted to provide some sort of empirical studies on how the legislature deals with administrative agencies, mainly during the periods of annual inspection (M. Oh 1990; H. K. Kim 1996; and J. Park and Lim 1996). Though these studies may not be driven by

systematic theories nor based on explicit hypotheses, they can serve as a foundation for further empirical research. They are reviewed here.

The annual inspection of administrative agencies by the National Assembly is a rarely found legislative procedure all over the world. At the outset of the annual regular session, the legislature establishes a period of twenty days or less for conducting this inspection. Each standing committee oversees administrative agencies under its jurisdiction. Inspection is conducted in committee rooms or on the spot, i.e., at agencies or other places visited by legislators. The legislature once lost the right of inspection during the height of authoritarianism, but has regained it in the democratic era. Owing to such means, the legislature strives to check the executive. Still, as this review indicates below, oversight produces a modest effect. This also tells that the national legislature remains a somewhat weak policy-making body.⁴⁾

2. The Nature of Legislative Inspection

Kim in his study of legislative inspection in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Assemblies defines two types of legislative inspection. One is “policy-oriented” inspection (*cheongchaek gamsa*), whereas the other is “politics-dominated” inspection (*cheongchi gamsa*). The former focuses on the analysis and evaluation of policies, aiming at identifying and solving policy problems. In this type of inspection, legislators draw on obtained documents and their expertise, and apply objective standards, such as efficiency and instrumental rationality. On the other hand, the latter is concerned with who is right or wrong concerning political issues, leading to the exposure of irregularities and accountability problems. In such inspection, legislators are highly sensitive to public opinion. They apply “the logic of politics” and seek partisan interests.

4) In the Korean National Assembly, legislative sessions are not convened in a year-round format. The legislature meets either in the regular or special session. The regular session opens annually on September 1 (earlier, September 10) or the next day if the day is a holiday. The duration of this session may not exceed one hundred days. A special session may be convened at the request of the president or at least one fourth of the total membership. Its duration is limited up to thirty days.

At the early phase of the democratic era in the late 1980's and early 1990's, annual inspections were to a large extent politics-dominated. But later inspections have become highly policy-oriented (H. K. Kim 1996, 27-30).

Kim's study suggests that the shift in the nature of legislative inspection has been brought about by the progress in the regime's democratization. Postulating the policy-oriented type as being ideal, the author judges that legislative inspection has changed in a desirable direction. Park and Lim (1996, 85), however, does not agree with this view. They argue that so-called politics-dominated inspection is an inevitable and normal face of legislative inspection, as long as the inspection is performed by politicians who seek publicity and responsiveness to popular sentiment.

Park and Lim's research illuminates the legislator's electoral and partisan motivation for his or her inspection activity. On the premise that media coverage can mirror individual legislators' enthusiasm about and also actual performance of inspection activities, they have conducted content analysis of the articles on legislative inspection included in major national daily papers during the regular session of 1995. The frequency in which a legislator is cited by the name is used as a measure for the level of his or her inspection activity. The analysis has shown that junior legislators, greatly mindful of their electoral insecurity, received much more frequent media attention than did their senior colleagues. Also, opposition legislators got much more coverage than did the legislators of the president's party(77-84). The measure of inspection activity is somewhat crude, but this study shows the electoral and partisan bases of legislative oversight and control.

3. The Level of Legislative Inspection and Its Problems

How much inspection is there in the Korean National Assembly? Does the aggregate level of inspection vary from one year to another? Obviously, these questions are difficult to answer, because the researcher cannot easily come up with a valid indicator measuring the level of oversight performance by a legislature. Kim sets the regular session as the unit of analysis, and attempts to measure the level of inspection

performance in a regular session. Two measures have been devised: the average amount of time spent for inspection per administrative agency, and the average number of cases per agency in which the legislature demanded the agency to correct past policy action or take a new appropriate measure. In Kim's study, these two measures are strongly correlated (H. K. Kim 1996, 45-7).

All of the studies on legislative inspection, under review here, are considerably devoted to the diagnosis of and prescription for problems endemic to annual inspection in the Korean legislature. Some typical problems, arising from legislators' incapacity to organize and operate inspection, are as follows:

Too many agencies are chosen by the committees for inspection every year. Some agencies are subject to inspection by multiple committees in the same year. Others are only superficially inspected. Still others undergo no inspection even after they have been selected for the inspection purpose.

Legislators demand agencies to submit irrelevant documents in unreasonably large quantities. For information indispensable to inspection, they rely more on administrative agencies than on their personal staff or other legislative support personnel. Administrative agencies and bureaucrats are reluctant to disclose their information to the public. Information asymmetry is serious between legislators and bureaucrats.

Too many witnesses are summoned. Legislators do not call witnesses selectively to take evidence, but blindly choose blocks of bureaucrats, including agency heads. Most witnesses are questioned perfunctorily. There are several cases in which some witnesses' testimonies are canceled after they have been chosen.

During the inspection, legislators behave inappropriately. They question in an authoritarian manner. Their questions are wide off the mark, and reveal the lack of expertise. They raise questions without basic research and on rumors' grounds. They seek their own visibility excessively, and also put too much emphasis on their own partisan or district interests. They are obsessed with exposing irregularities. They fail to check up bureaucrats' follow-up action to correct problems revealed in past inspections.

The existing studies also point out that there are problems with bureaucrats' behavior patterns, too. The bureaucrats under inspection are said to be lukewarm, passive, uncooperative, and sluggish in responding to legislators' request for information and

documentation, and answering the inspectors' queries. Administrative agencies do not expeditiously respond to legislators' demand for rectifying past mistakes and taking further appropriate measures.

Researchers and close observers of legislative inspection end up with a long list of shortcomings and inadequacies concerning the current practices. But their identification of problems is not preceded by systematic inquiries about the causes and conditions of such "undesirable" behavior patterns found among legislators and bureaucrats. As a result, the logical connection is tenuous between the diagnosed problems and the prescribed treatments thereof. Normative imperatives often lead researchers to hasty prescriptions even though they know very little about why legislators and bureaucrats do behave this or that way.

4. Legislators and Bureaucrats in Legislative Inspection: Adversarial?

In which way do we characterize the relationship between the legislator as the inspector and the bureaucrat as the inspected? Is the pattern of their interaction during the inspection harmonious or adversarial? How are they similar or different in what they think about policy making and implementation?

So far these important questions have not been seriously dealt with by any researcher. One study deserves mention. It administered a questionnaire survey to legislators and bureaucrats as well regarding some aspects of legislative inspection. According to the survey results, there exists a wide gap between the two groups in their attitudes toward the inspection. Legislators regard the national legislature as the most important institution for having administrative agencies rectify their mishandlings of public affairs, while bureaucrats see self-inspection mechanism within the executive branch as more important than the legislature for the same purpose. Bureaucrats evaluate much less favorably than legislators themselves do about the level of legislators' special expertise in performing inspection. A majority of bureaucrats complain about legislators' excessive request for documentation and also about their domineering posture. On the other hand, legislators tend to think of bureaucrats as unresponsive to their demands

during and in the wake of legislative inspection (M. Oh 1990).

This survey research hints that there possibly exist disharmony and tension due to incompatible objectives and interests between legislators and bureaucrats. Unfortunately, the study was not extensive enough to delve systematically into the motivations and orientations of those actors involved in legislative inspection. The study should have further illuminated differing views and values about policy making and implementation between two groups of officials. For example, one may study empirically the difference in the relative importance of policy's technical efficacy and its political sensitivity between legislators and bureaucrats. Also, such study can be supplemented by systematic analysis of cases gleaned during the inspection period.

5. Legislators and Bureaucrats in Resource Allocation: Collaborative?

The budget review is conducted as a parliamentary procedure independent of legislative inspection. It performs a policy-formulating function and also engages the legislature in supervising and controlling administrative agencies. The finance and economy board (later, the planning and budget ministry) draws up an overall budget proposal. Once the proposal is submitted by the executive to the national legislature, it is first reviewed by each standing committee which deals with the portion of the budget concerning the administrative agencies under its jurisdiction. At the next stage, the special committee on budget and accounts embarks on an overall examination. Throughout the budget-making process, legislators and bureaucrats interact at three nodes. First, legislators of the president's party and bureaucrats in charge of preparing the budget proposal have a series of consultation behind the closed doors prior to its introduction to the legislature. Second, when the preliminary review is undertaken in each standing committee, committee members encounter their counterpart bureaucrats. Third, at the overall review stage, the members of the budget and accounts committee query the minister of finance and economy together with bureaucrats in his ministry. For researchers, all this suggest that there are multiple points of observing the interaction between legislators and bureaucrats in the budget-making process.

Kang has produced interesting research results on the interaction between legislators and bureaucrats during the budget deliberation in standing committees (Kang 1992a; his 1992b). He provides qualitative descriptive analysis of four committees' proceedings on the preliminary review in the Thirteenth Assembly. Bureaucrats strive to expand their budget or to have it not reduced by defending the significance, validity and feasibility of their programs and projects. The picture of the bureaucrat as a budget maximizer is clearly drawn. Legislators act as advocates for the programs to be implemented by their jurisdictional agencies, rather than as guardians of public funds. Legislators are sympathetic with and even overtly supportive of the bureaucrats whom they are supposed to oversee. Legislators increase the level of spending for the agencies. This pattern is salient especially in the standing committees dealing with a lot of public works projects. This may suggest the existence of policy subsystem in the area of distributive policies, though it has been thus far seriously examined in no research.

One can reasonably surmise that legislators and bureaucrats cooperate much more often than conflict during the consultation between the ruling party and the executive branch prior to the introduction of a budget proposal, and also during the overall review in the budget and accounts committee. For example, at the comprehensive review stage, in line with what the bureaucrats in the economy and finance board desire, members of the budget and account committee cut the spending levels proposed by the standing committees. When it comes to resource allocation, one can observe a different image of interaction between legislators and bureaucrats: legislative committees and administrative agencies are more likely through common objectives and interests to build collaborative relationships than to generate disharmony and conflict.

In addition, it should be noted that Korean legislators frequently seek favor from bureaucrats outside of the deliberation process. Legislators intercede with the bureaucracy by paying personal visits or making phone calls in order to provide particularized services to individual constituents or influence the specific allocation of scarce governmental resources for the benefit of their districts (C. L. Kim and Pai 1981, 186-217; Kim, Barkan, Turan and Jewell 1984, 128; C. W. Park 1988a and 1988b). In a polity where the legislature has a weak policy-making power, the central scene of pork

barrel politics lies in the bureaucracy. Personal relationships forged typically through school ties or common birthplaces are a decisive factor that renders some legislators more effective than others in advocating the needs of their districts before the bureaucrats in charge.

6. The Impact of Legislative Oversight on Administrative Behavior

Legislative inspection is a “police-patrol” oversight method in that it is a direct, regular and planned surveillance of administrative behavior. This type of oversight is time-consuming and costly for the legislature (McCubbins and Schwartz 1984). Given the resources invested, to what extent is the oversight effective? In Korea, are administrative agencies responsive to the legislature? Are bureaucrats effectively curbed by legislators? In light of democratic principles and practices as well, these are important questions.

A host of problems with legislative inspection, listed earlier from the extant research, suggest that legislators are deficient in their competence and information for performing substantive oversight of the bureaucracy. The standard view refutes legislative dominance but indicates bureaucratic dominance: administrative agencies are not responsive to the national legislature. Bureaucrats seem to be responsive only to the president, given the president’s strong and highly centralized decision-making power. This standard view is plausible and persuasive in Korean legislative politics, but has not been seriously tested yet. Empirical questions about the impact of legislative oversight on bureaucratic responsiveness need to be raised and thoroughly examined.

Kim’s study suggests that administrative agencies do not promptly respond to the request of the National Assembly for correcting their malfeasance and inaction pointed out during the inspection. The study, using the annual regular session as the unit of analysis, counted the number of days elapsed from the date of the legislature’s post-inspection request for the executive branch’s necessary action until the date of the latter’s report on the requested action (H. K. Kim 1996, 42-3). In the gross, this may indicate the celerity of bureaucratic responsiveness. This measure varies from one

regular session to another. Still, it leaves much to be desired as a good measure of the effectiveness of legislative oversight.

To figure out the impact of legislative oversight on administrative behavior in a systematic fashion, one needs to observe the interaction between standing committees and the agencies under their respective jurisdiction over a reasonably long span of time. By doing so, the researcher can empirically determine the extent of bureaucratic slippage or drift in various policy areas, that is, how much the administrative agencies depart from the legislature's preferences in policy implementation.

IV. Legislators and Interest Groups

In this section, I review existing literature on interest group politics, with a special focus on legislative decision making, in Korea. Because virtually no scholarly piece has focused exclusively on the interaction between legislators and interest groups, this essay begins with an overview of leading works which treat interest group politics in a general manner. Then, I gradually zero in on the legislative-interest group relations.

By interest groups, I refer mainly to "associational interest groups", that is, organized specialized groups whose major function is to articulate their interests (Almond and Powell 1966, 78). Legislators represent two main types of constituents: interest groups and unorganized district voters. While the former has drawn little attention from students of Korean legislative politics, the latter has attracted considerable scholarly attention. The obvious reason is that, given executive dominance in the making of public policies, legislators are more likely to make great endeavors to meet district voters' particularized nonpolicy demands than to meet generalized policy demands from organized interests (C. L. Kim and Pai 1981, 188-217; C. W. Park 1988a and 1988b). But pluralistic competition activated by the regime's democratization leads researchers to sense an increasingly important role of interest groups in the political arena.

1. Perspectives on Interest Group Politics: Pluralist versus Corporatist

In describing and explaining interest group politics, pluralism and corporatism are two major theoretical perspectives. Pioneering works on Korean interest group politics in the authoritarian era, which relied on structural functional analysis, systems analysis or the group approach, were couched in the pluralist perspective (H. Ahn 1971; B. Y. Ahn 1973; H. Yoon 1975; Yu 1976/77). They assumed a political market in which groups competed with each other in an attempt to put pressure on political elites to make decisions in their favor. In analyzing Korean interest group politics, however, they did not adopt a pure type of pluralism. Precisely speaking, they applied the perspective of limited pluralism (Y. H. Kim 1995). They accepted that groups' autonomy was to a significant extent constrained by the government, and the political market being far short of full competition and biased in favor of groups with plentiful economic resources, typically business interest.

This pluralist perspective fell under criticism by the researchers who adopted the state corporatist perspective as defined by Schmitter(1979). The alternative perspective saw Korean interest group politics in the authoritarian era as based on hierarchically organized, non-competing, officially sanctioned, state-imposed and state-sponsored groups. According to the researchers of this perspective, not the competition among groups seeking their own benefit but the state's control of organized interests was the most fundamental characteristic of the authoritarian regime pursuing industrialization policy (Y. R. Kim 1990; Choi 1984; Chang 1985, 132; M. K. Park 1987; and Chang 1996, 293). Instead of inter- or intra-group dynamics for interest articulation, the dependent relationship of organized interests on the state was the key focus of analysis based on this alternative perspective. The state-labor and the state-capital relations were given inordinate amount of scholarly attention. This perspective became dominant among Korean political analysts, especially among young scholars who found the radical political economy paradigm, such as O'Donnell's theory of bureaucratic authoritarianism derived from Latin American political experiences (1973), relevant to

the study of Korean politics.

With democratization in the 1980's, interest group politics has undergone dramatic changes. The remarkable increase in the number of interest groups indicates the advocacy explosion. In particular, the number of labor organizations and the rate of unionization have shot up. A dramatic change is also felt in quality terms. Organized labor's stronghold has shifted from the manufacturing manpower to white-collar workers. Dissident organizations, which operated underground earlier, have been revitalized and gained *de facto* recognition. Public interest groups, organizing environmentalists, consumers, feminists and advocates of socioeconomic reform have burgeoned. The government itself has adopted more flexible and permissive policies toward interest groups than before (C. Lee 1990; Y. R. Kim 1992; S. Lee 1993/94; Y. R. Kim 1996; S. Kim 1996). Against this backdrop, pluralism gradually regains its strength as a theoretical perspective on interest group politics. Even the previous admirer of the state corporatist perspective recognizes the relevance of the pluralist perspective to the study of recent interest group politics (Y. R. Kim 1994, 7-14). Still, only a few researchers have attempted to apply analytic concepts and research strategies suggested by the pluralist perspective (C. Lee 1990).

As stated above, the state corporatist perspective emphasizes the flow of coercive influence from the state to organized interests. This is why the perspective is seen as valid in the case of authoritarianism. But, in the democratic era, the pluralist perspective, aptly taking into account organized interests' influence on the government, becomes plausible.

Some disciples of corporatism argue that "a pluralist perspective sees political trees only, whereas a corporatist perspective easily beholds the forest" (Y. R. Kim 1994, 4). Their primary theoretical units of analysis are the state, the class or other abstract collectivity. The discourse dwells on the forest level. In their research, however, observational strategy is not much different from the research based on a pluralist perspective. Actions taken by a set of administrative agencies and specific interest groups, which are all political trees in the metaphor, are observed. Inferring from this observation up to the abstract collectivity level makes researchers highly vulnerable to

the fallacy of composition.

A corporatist perspective may render a theoretical lens through which the researcher conceives the state as an organic whole and draws a macro picture about its relations with organized interests. But this makes the researcher blind to the relative weight of each constituent element of the state and to the interactions among the elements in policy process. In the contemporary world, the executive action is readily considered as the state action. In so doing, the role of the legislative branch is overshadowed and ignored. The state can be a unitary actor at some time. But at other times the conflict and cooperation among the legislative, executive and judiciary branches are too important to disregard. A corporatist perspective tends to underestimate the legislature's policy influence much more than dictated by the realities even in the authoritarian regime. Whether it is state corporatism or societal corporatism, a corporatist perspective sees interest group politics as operating largely outside the legislative framework.

In fact, as far as legislative-interest group relations are concerned, the research based on the state corporatist perspective has newly added no significant knowledge to what the perspective of limited pluralism had produced. These studies simply reinforced the following propositions already pointed out throughout the earlier works:

In the authoritarian era, Korean interest groups lacked functional autonomy and were amenable to government control (B. Y. Ahn 1983, 75).

In the authoritarian era, business groups had easier access to and stronger influence on the government than did labor or farming groups (H. Ahn 1971, 105; B. Y. Ahn 1983, 77).

In the authoritarian era, the major target which interest groups desire to get access to and influence was the executive branch (H. Yoon 1975; B. Y. Ahn 1983, 81).

2. Government Control over Labor

The Korean Federation of Trade Unions (KFTU) has officially represented the country's labor force for long. This peak organization retains a massive size of membership, but depends on state subsidy for its operation. In the authoritarian era, this organization was tightly controlled by repressive labor laws and other legal frameworks,

including the national security law. Several researchers scrutinized the state-labor relations largely from the state corporatist perspective (Choi 1984; Y. R. Kim 1990).

Choi defines the state control over labor in the 1970's as an exclusionary type of state corporatism. In his terms, the state control is characterized by the "political demobilization" of labor through "a coercive control system," a conflictual relationship of strong state versus weak labor (1984, 53). Labor representatives were formally included as participants in various advisory or consultative commissions within the executive branch. In such ways, organized labor secured institutionalized access to key decision makers, including the president. But the access was made possible mainly as a device for the executive's gaining public acceptance of labor policies. In reality, workers' rights and union autonomy were drastically curtailed (Choi 1984, 46-7; Y. R. Kim 1990, 224-42). Therefore, workers at grassroots became discontented and occasionally involved in protest actions.

With the regime going through democratic transition, workers aggressively articulated their demands for better wages and working conditions, and for the right to set up another central organization which can serve as an alternative to the pro-government KFTU. Eventually, the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) could be launched and now exists in rivalry with the KFTU (Im 1992). This situation clearly put an end to the state corporatist control over labor.

To resolve labor strife peacefully, recent democratic governments have continued to seek compromise through a tripartite mechanism, in which the government or public interest, labor and business are included. But Korea lacks important conditions for this western European or societal corporatist strategy to work effectively. First, both labor and business peak associations are not capable of making their member unions or firms follow central directives compulsorily. Second, up to the late 1990's, labor has not maintained a close link with any significant political party. Trade unions are not fully given the right to engage in political activities, including political donation, campaigning or alliance making with political parties (Im 1992; K. Shin 1997, 198-9). Prospects for the expansion of workers' political rights notwithstanding, conventional channels for making their voice are still unattractive to them. At times, this leads them to resort to

excessive pressure tactics, such as fervent protests and strikes.

3. Government-Business Relations

Business speaks to the government through such organizations as the Federation of Korean Industries (FKI), the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Korea Traders' Association and so forth. Multiple business peak organizations exist not due to rivalry but largely to a division of labor among them. In fact, their leaders often overlap (B. Y. Ahn 1983, 79-80). Of these organizations, the FKI is run mainly by big business conglomerates, *chaebol*, and is the most powerful (Chang 1996, 294). Its membership size is relatively small, but membership fees alone make it financially independent. It is a cohesive organization and maintains specialized staff for conducting research and articulating its interests (Y. R. Kim 1990, 100; 202-13).

Several researchers approached the state-capital or government-business relations in the authoritarian era, from the state corporatist perspective. The government forced big business owners to organize the FKI. The organization was guided and directed by the government. Nonetheless, differently than with organized labor, the government maintained basically inclusionary and harmonious relationship with business groups (Y. R. Kim 1990, 97; Chang 1996, 295).

The “developmental” executive-centered state with economic development as its primary policy objective induced big business to participate in the making of economic policy and worked closely with it (Johnson 1987; E. M. Kim 1997). Business organizations themselves were not allowed to involve in campaign activity or outrightly endorse specific candidates in elections. Still, businessmen as individuals could easily advance their political career. What is more important, big business served as the major pipeline for legally or illegally financing politicians, especially those of the ruling party. This gave birth to the long-lasting politics-business collusion as is discussed later. In brief, government-business relations used to be mutually supportive (Y. R. Kim 1990, 224-42).

Nowadays Korean big business has grown into the world-class one, and become

confident about their continuous expansion without government support. In the democratic era, the friction broke out between the national leadership and big business, as shown by the Hyundai corporation founder's run for the presidency in 1992 (Moon 1994; E. M. Kim 1997). But, except for such sporadic incidences, the state remains pro-capital and in symbiosis with big business.

4. How Interest Groups Influence Policy Makers: Access Channels and Techniques

There is a consistent body of research on how interest groups get to and influence policy-makers. Yoon made a contribution to the empirical analysis of the access channels and techniques for interest groups' lobbying public policy makers (H. Yoon 1975). His typology has been continually adopted in the follow-up studies, and so the cross-sectional or longitudinal comparison is possible.

Based on the initial typologies of Almond and Powell's (1966, 80-6), and Duverger's (1972, 121-5), Yoon has classified lobbying into two forms, "direct action toward the power elite," and "indirect action at the mass level." The former uses the following access channels and techniques: elite representation (being recruited into the legislature or other government decision making bodies, testimony at the legislature, and face-to-face interview or conference with policy makers), making recommendation or petition directly to them, providing them with research results or other information, helping them with electoral campaigns, inviting them to receptions and awarding them letters of recognition or gratitude. The latter aims at generating mass support for groups' own causes. The access channels and techniques included here are: nonviolent propaganda (public release of resolution, statement, research or inquiry results, and information for the purpose of various campaigns, and public relations), violence-prone or manifestly violent means (demonstrations, strikes, riots and the like).

Yoon applied the above typology to the interest articulation efforts made by the pro-government national teachers' association during the years of 1951 through 1965. He counted the frequency in which each access channel or technique was used by this peak organization for lobbying the relevant policy makers. He found that the teachers' group

much more often resorted to the elite-directed form of lobbying than otherwise. According to his explanation, the reason for this pattern of access and influence was that leaders of the group perceived elite-directed lobbying as effective in authoritarian politics. Yoon and his associate performed the same kind of analysis concerning the access channels and techniques employed by the identical group in the years of 1978 through 1988. They obtained almost the same results as in the previous study (H. Yoon and Y. R. Kim 1989).

A group's relative emphasis on either form of lobbying will obviously reflect the prevailing perception among its leaders about the effectiveness of lobbying channels and techniques. Such perception is affected not only by political environmental factors but also by the group's resources. Over the three decades since 1961, both labor and business peak organizations, the KFTU and the FKI alike, had engaged more frequently in elite-directed lobbying than in indirect mass-based lobbying. Nonetheless, there existed a significant difference in the relative mix of two forms of lobbying between these two organizations. The KFTU, having a large size of membership as its plentiful group resource, used mass-based techniques from time to time. Its effectiveness was limited because the repressive regime did not allow the organization to mobilize a critical mass sufficient to exert pressure upon it, though. On the other hand, the FKI, a sort of elite club boasting of a good connection with policy makers, seldom employed such form of lobbying (H. Yoon and Y. R. Kim 1989; Y. R. Kim 1990, 249-54). In the Korean society with highly personalistic culture, business interests have a tremendous advantage in communicating with policy makers, for the elites in the public and private sectors share regional, school, family, military, or other ties to a great extent (H. Ahn 1971, 106; Chang 1985, 143; Macdonald 1996, 131).

Another study, conducted by Lee, also replicated Yoon's research strategy to investigate any possible change in groups' access channels and techniques due to the regime's democratization(B. Lee 1992, 196-7). He has shown that both the KFTU and the FKI become now increasingly balanced in applying two forms of lobbying. A dramatic change has come to the business group, which feels a sense of democracy and manages an increased frequency of information campaigns usually with the help of the

mass media.

Democratization has brought about new lobbying channels and techniques which were unknown to Yoon at the time of his study. Litigation, the technique of bringing the case before the court, has been recently found feasible. To the existing menu of indirect mass-based lobbying, American style of grassroots lobbying has been added: mobilizing constituents for making phone calls or writing letters to their legislators. In addition, coalition lobbying, the technique of building a united front with other groups, has been tried. These changes are well illustrated in Lee's study of interest group politics which has unfolded in the case of family law revision at the end of 1989 (C. Lee 1990). Women's rights groups unitedly and vehemently pursued to make the legislature revise the law in the direction of promoting gender equality by the use of grassroots lobbying. The groups finally won over Confucian scholars' groups which were opposed to the revision by employing similar kinds of lobbying techniques.

Electoral techniques are now likely to be put to use more frequently than ever before, even though existing laws still constrain their full usage (C. Lee 1996). Interest groups, except for business firms, are legally prohibited from making political financial contributions. Under its name, any interest group is not allowed to do campaign work for or deliver votes to the party or candidate of its preference. Nevertheless, group members can do such things as individual citizens. As the democratic regime becomes consolidated, the legal restrictions on these electoral techniques will be lifted up.

5. The Legislative Arena as an Access Point

The previous studies on interest articulation in the authoritarian era did not fail to mention that the legislative branch had a marginal significance as a point of access or as a target for lobbying. In the regime where the norm of executive dominance was strong, interest groups strived to approach and influence the executive branch, including the president, the prime minister, cabinet ministers, and high-level bureaucrats. These leading officials performed a great role of responding to the pressure and information they received through formal and informal channels. It is a truism that legislative

lobbying was insignificant in the non-democratic political environment.

On legislators' side as well, it was suggested that they seldom came into contact with interest group representatives. In an interview survey of Korean legislators in the late 1960's, only a tiny percent of the respondents said that they had taken any kind of action on behalf of interest groups. Also, very few respondents mentioned interest groups as a major source of information for their legislative work (Woo 1978, 43; C. L. Kim and Pai 1981, 155). Korean legislators interviewed in the early 1970's chose party or electoral district as the most important focus of representation. In this interview, none paid attention to interest groups as the most important focus (C. L. Kim Barkan, Turan and Jewell 1984, 84-5). In fact, it is not unusual in the legislatures with a modest policy-making power that the link between legislators and interest groups appears to be almost entirely missing (Mezey 1979, 202-3).

In the democratic era, executive dominance in policy making continues. But this does not mean that legislative lobbying has gained no significance. As mentioned earlier, the National Assembly has much more strengthened constitutional powers than in the previous authoritarian regime. In the first half of the Thirteenth Assembly, it showed a positive sign of change toward an actually strong legislature, though the change did not keep up for long. As the regime moves along toward democratic consolidation, the legislature's potential for becoming a major policy actor will be increasingly actualized. Considering for all this, legislative lobbying should not be discounted as insignificant in Korean politics and for the research on it as well. Regrettably, most of those who specialize in legislative studies seem to take it for granted that the legislative-interest group linkage is still missing even in the democratic era. A few studies mentioned below suggest that this assumption is wrong.

A study of interest articulation made by economic interest groups, including the KFTU and the FKI, in the earlier years of the democratic era shows that for those groups the legislature has become a much less insignificant point of access than before (B. Lee 1992, 191-5). Another study has analyzed the legislative process of a law requiring the government to pay compensations to public officials discharged forcedly by the military leadership in 1980(J. Kim 1989). Immediately after the regime went through democratic

transition, those former officials were organized. The group made a petition to the National Assembly for compensation. In response to it, the legislature ruled by a majority of opposition parties combined enacted such law. The bill passed by the legislature was initially vetoed by the president. But the legislature passed its modified version, and it was finally signed by the president. This indicates clearly that the legislative arena is important as an access point for interest groups in policy process.

One recent study suggests that some legislative committees are generically more important to interest groups than other legislative committees (C. W. Park 1998b). In general, the committees in the National Assembly are party-dominated. Despite this overall feature, the nature of policy environment is not uniform to all committees. The policy environment of a committee refers to external forces which constrain and put pressures on committees (Fenno 1973). Some committees, such as the committee on agriculture, forest, and fisheries, and the committee on health and welfare, are relatively more influenced by or work more closely with interest groups than other committees. This study, though preliminary, urges researchers to seriously dig into legislative lobbying.

Corrupt practices of legislative lobbying in the democratic era are discussed below. There are numerous articles on them covered by newspapers and magazines. Paradoxically, they are telling pieces of evidence that the legislature is in fact a major point of access through which organized interests seek to influence policy process. Not scholarly researchers but journalists alone, with their peculiar alacrity, keep abreast of changing interest group politics. Unfortunately, their sensational accounts paint too much a degraded image of legislative lobbying. Apart from these stories of degenerate lobbying, we know very little about the specific ways in which interest groups interact with their friend or foe legislators in the legislative process.

6. “Lob” in Interest Group Politics

Rush defines lobbying as “the practice of attempting to persuade those who hold political power to exercise that power in favor of one individual or group ... against

others, or in favor of one policy or set of policies against others” (Rush 1998, 810). Then, lobbying is, by definition, an inherent part of democratic political process. However, as it was in the old days of American politics, lobbying suggests “at worst bribery and corruption, at best undue influence” in Korean politics, too (Rush 1998, 810). *Lobi* in Korean has a origin in the English word of lobby or lobbying. *Lobi* is a corrupt and clandestine type of direct lobbying. Among the public, lobbying means nothing more than *lobi*, and its democratic essence is not readily accepted. In the authoritarian era, even legislators themselves did not recognize the significance of legislative lobbying. In the late 1960’s, one survey of legislators found that an overwhelming majority of the respondents objected to the idea of enhancing interest group activity in the legislative process due to its detrimental effect on the pursuit of public interest (Woo 1978, 43). To legislators, lobbying was tantamount to interest groups’ efforts at influence buying.

In the current democratic era, strengthened constitutional powers of the national legislature have enabled legislators to exercise leverage over policies of enormous economic interests. Involving in such cases, legislators may risk being preyed upon by interested business firms or groups. During the period of the Thirteenth Assembly, 13 legislators were arrested in a string of corruption charges. Some of them illegally obtained financial support from a business association for luxurious overseas travel. Others were bribed by a construction company for inducing administrative agencies to distribute newly developed housing tracts in southeastern Seoul for its benefit (C. W. Park 1994, 184; N. Lee 1985). Of the standing committees in the legislature, the finance committee is the most prominent target of *lobi*, because it has jurisdiction over public finance and banking agencies dealing with such matters as corporate taxes and industrial loans (B. Park 1995, 182-3). Again, other economy-related committees, including those on construction, on commerce and industry, and on energy and national resources, are permeable to frequent *lobi* schemed by interest groups seeking a lucrative goal. It is known that some firms or groups run task forces for gathering information and, if deemed necessary, performing *lobi*, when the legislature is in session (Kwon 1991, 267).

A succession of *lobi* scandals have discouraged legislators to make contact even with

interest groups carrying out a lawful and legitimate type of lobbying. Well aware that this is not propitious to democratic political process, reform-oriented intellectuals argue that a specific legal framework is needed for the disclosure or regulation of lobbying (J. Kang and Kwon 1985, 674-8; Woo 1991, 6). It is desirable that Korean legislative scholars set out to systematically investigate the actual practices of lobbying and the relevant legal stipulations in other legislatures, such as the U. S. Congress.

7. Policy Types and Interest Group Activity

It is emphasized throughout this review that the nature and extent of interest group activity, especially lobbying, depend on regime type, authoritarian or democratic. This is an overarching organizing perspective in this essay. Importantly, however, the nature and extent of interest group lobbying depend on the type of public policy as well. The question is: In which types of policy are interest groups likely to attempt to influence policy makers, including legislators?

On the basis of Lowi's typology of policy measures (Lowi 1964), Kim classified the cases of interest articulation made by two major economic interest groups in a conflictual position, the KFTU and the FKI, into distributive, regulatory and redistributive policy areas (Y. R. Kim 1990, 261). The interest articulation activities of these two peak organizations in the authoritarian era were concentrated in the area of redistributive policy matters. Expectedly, the two organizations were oftentimes antithetical in their policy positions. Another study by Lee (B. Lee 1992) had in mind the same question as Kim's. But the two studies used different research strategies, and their findings were incomparable. Lee focused on pieces of economic legislation passed by the legislature in the early years of the democratic era, and checked whether the KFTU or the FKI articulated their positions pro or con. The researcher classified economic legislation into four types according to what kind of function the state would perform by the specific measure: umpire, provider, regulator, and entrepreneur. This typology was incompatible with Lowi's. The study found that both organizations were likely to place the highest priority on regulatory economic measures for lobbying. Of the

two, the FKI representing big business, was more so. The KFTU's pattern of prioritizing in interest articulation was a less concentrated one. To a significant extent, it expressed supportive or opposing views on umpire measures, such as one for arbitrating labor-management disputes, and also on provider measures intended to meet basic needs of living.

Jung and others (1996) have done a widely replicable and dynamic analysis. This work examines the effect of a policy on the extent of interest groups' legislative lobbying and also on the pattern of legislators' response to the lobbying. Basically, they have applied the Wilson's conceptual scheme of the relationship between policy type and organizational activity (1973, 327-37).

First, a policy with concentrated costs and concentrated benefits generates continuing organized conflict. Interest groups both on supporting and opposing sides are easily mobilized for lobbying. Legislators are highly cautious in the policy-making process. The policy result is likely to depend on the balance of power among the interest groups. This policy process is characterized by pluralistic interest group politics. A good example is the Minimum Wage Act of 1986. In the case, workers and employers were in a conflictual position and workers' demand finally prevailed owing to the political atmosphere of the liberalizing regime.

Second, a policy involving distributed costs and concentrated benefits attracts the relatively strong support of beneficiary groups but little opposition. Legislators are likely to expeditiously respond to the supporting groups. Clientele politics unfolds. This is illustrated by the legislative process of the Telecommunications Enterprise Act made and revised in the 1980's. In this case, the benefiting firms were clientele groups.

Third, a policy incurring concentrated costs and conferring distributed benefits galvanizes the opposition of the interest groups bearing the costs, but receiving no strong organized support. Such policy is rarely adopted. Unusually, policy entrepreneurs, taking full advantage of their personal skill and strategic institutional position, may manage to obtain consent for adopting the policy. This process may be called entrepreneurial politics. The Water Quality and Environmental Preservation Act of 1991 was of the case, where despite the strong objection of organized business the

environmental protection agency along with its allying legislators stood firm to have it enacted.

Last, a policy spreading its costs and benefits produces little political controversy. Interest group activity is likely to be dormant. Technical details and merits of the policy are much debated on, and the legislature decides upon it. Majoritarian politics takes place. As a typical case of it, Jung and his associates offer the Medical Insurance Act, initially made in the early 1960's and revised several times up to the late 1980's.

8. Effectiveness of Interest Group Lobbying

Is lobbying effective in the Korean legislative arena? If it is, to what extent? Which one is more effective, reinforcing the positions of friends who are already supportive or changing foes' positions? Does the effectiveness of legislative lobbying vary from one group to another? What determines the effectiveness of interest group lobbying? One can ask a series of questions regarding the effectiveness of interest group lobbying.

It is more difficult to empirically determine the impact of lobbying on legislative behavior in the Korean legislative politics than it is in the U. S. Congressional politics. Rollcalls have not been institutionalized in the Korean legislature at this writing. The amount of political contribution received by the individual legislator is never known. It is infeasible to try to find any causal link between political contributions and legislators' voting decisions.

One reasonable way of fathoming the effect of lobbying is to compare the content of a bill approved by a committee or the legislature with the positions articulated by the relevant interest groups in the legislative process. In so doing, the researcher can assess whether or not a group has benefited from the output of legislative decision making. In fact, previous researchers have followed this line of strategy. Most of them are concerned with the consequences of interest articulation made by organized labor and business, the KFTU and the FKI, when major bills of their interests were deliberated in the legislature. Their studies suggest that organized labor may be favored in the short run, but that business interest prevails over the long run. This implies that there exists

systemic imbalance between labor and business in the effectiveness of legislative lobbying (for example, Y. R. Kim 1990, 266-8; 273-9). But the existing case studies of legislative measures are, on the whole, too superficial. They lack a detailed inside analysis of legislative process, including legislator-interest group interactions, deliberative work in committees, and floor decision making.

Authors of existing studies, especially of those grounded in the state corporatist perspective, argue that the effectiveness of a group's lobbying is determined primarily by its external factors, most significantly, the regime's inclusionary or exclusionary stance toward the group. In their view, the internal factors, such as organizational cohesion, financial resources, and leadership are secondary forces influencing the effect of lobbying (Chang 1985; H. Yoon and Y. R. Kim 1989, 72-3). Yet this plausible argument on the relative importance of internal or external factors has not been tested in a rigorous manner.

One study has shown that the level of political competition, a regime factor, impinges on the effectiveness of a group's legislative lobbying (Ko 1993). The researcher has examined the pressure exerted by the KFTU and the FKI on the legislature deliberating labor laws in both the authoritarian and democratic eras. The findings go as below. Only the views and interests of the FKI, the most powerful economic elites' group, was effectively mirrored in the revised laws during the authoritarian era when political competition was limited. But the mass-based KFTU has become able to increase the effectiveness of its lobbying in the politically competitive democratic era.

Internal factors for effective lobbying should be given more attention than recognized by existing studies. Businessmen's shared social backgrounds and personal connections with legislators must be a key factor for the competitive advantage enjoyed by organized business in lobbying. Typical pre-legislative careers of the former and current Korean legislators are bureaucrats, generals, professors, lawyers, and businessmen. A small number of former labor union leaders have served as legislators (H. W. Kim 1996). As mentioned earlier, big business is a vital source of political money. Undoubtedly, a group's internal factors, including all kinds of resources, will have a weighty bearing on its effective lobbying. Further research is expected to verify all of these statements.

Researchers have yet to inquire into the conditions under which interest groups lobby the legislature and get much of what they want. Wilson's conceptual framework mentioned earlier may provide some useful insight for this inquiry. According to the framework, the level of groups' intervention in policy process is likely to be highest in pluralistic interest group politics. But he suggests that the condition of clientele politics will render expeditious benefits to the relevant groups.

Along this line of research, Cigler and Loomis have also offered a refined conceptual framework for analyzing the dynamic nature of interest group politics and legislative decision making. The scope of conflict and the number of interested parties help determine what type of politics or policy-making context shapes up and how much effectively interest groups will lobby in their favor. Interest groups are most active in "public confrontation politics" arising when the scope of conflict is broad and the number of people and interests affected by a policy is large. But the effect of an interest group's lobbying is most favorably gained in "niche politics" existing when the scope of conflict is narrow and the number of interested parties is small (Cigler and Loomis 1991, 392-3). When compared with the prevailing holistic perspective of corporatism, this kind of analytic framework is more likely to capture the dynamics of legislative-interest group relations and to produce concrete research results. It will be interesting to see whether Cigler and Loomis's framework is of utility for analyzing the interaction of legislators and interest groups in a different national setting.

9. The Alliance of Policy Actors

In the study of policy making in the U. S. Congress, the terminologies such as "policy subsystems," "subgovernments" or "iron triangles" refer to the fairly stable alliances of Congressional committees, administrative agencies, and interest groups, working closely through mutual accommodation of one another's interests. Also, there are on-going discussions on somewhat fluid "policy communities or issue networks" (Hamm 1985, 574-6; Smith 1995, 113-6).

The notion of policy subsystem or community may sound inappropriate to the

researchers on the decision making in the Korean National Assembly. The legislature does not play a pivotal role in the making of public policies. And, the pattern of decision making in the legislature is neither fragmented nor decentralized. Policy subsystems or communities are not likely to emerge or prosper. Furthermore, legislative committees do not function as the center stage where legislators, bureaucrats, and interest groups work on well-defined policies. In the Fenno's parlance, the committees are of a "permeable" type (1973, 137-8; 278-9). Committee leadership is nominal, and partisan dominance is strong. Committees are not autonomous in relation to its parental body. A sense of collective identity is fragile and transitory (C. W. Park 1998b).

Still, there are signs that some kind of decision structure made up of mutually accommodating legislators, bureaucrats, and interest groups may already exist in its incipient form or be now rapidly emerging. As mentioned earlier, legislators in committees and their counterpart bureaucrats cooperate in the decision making over budgetary matters. Some committees are remarkably more clientele-oriented than other committees. In making some type of policies, clientele politics is observed. A sincere research effort should be focused on the legislative committee-centered policy alliance, though it may have a premature form.

When the analysis is shifted from the level of legislative institution to the macro systemic level, there is much talk and some scholarly investigation about the politics-business collusion or the triumvirate of the ruling party's top leaders, high-level bureaucrats, and big business in the Korean policy process. This is not a legislature-centered but an executive-centered alliance of policy actors. The chief executives, having set economic development as the overriding national objective, induced big business to work closely with key bureaucrats in the formulation and implementation of economic policies. Leading politicians of the ruling party joined the alliance for their role of enacting and legitimating executive policies in the legislature. This macro-level alliance structure has been made pretty much durable in terms of its constituent people and groups due to the long lack of power transfer to the opposition party.⁵⁾ Furthermore,

5) The victory of Kim Dae Jung in the presidential election of 1997 is recorded as the first case of

the alliance structure has been based on several reinforcing mechanisms, such as the recruitment of former economic bureaucrats into executive positions of big business, political donations from big business to politicians, and the intermarriages between the offspring of politicians, bureaucrats, and businessmen (H. Ahn, 1971, 105-6; 115-120; Chang 1985; Shin and Chin 1989).

Pejoratively speaking, the Korean version of triumvirate is a bribery network as well as a policy alliance. The reciprocal linkage between big business and those in power, including political and bureaucratic elites, has cultivated corruption. At the apex of power, former Presidents Roh Tae Woo and Chun Doo Hwan maintained slush funds collected from business conglomerates in return for special favors, such as low-interest bank loans, government licenses for engaging in huge development projects and other lucrative business, tax incentives, and the like. The secret funds were used to support the ruling party and politicians, and other followers. In President Roh's case, it has been revealed that he provided financial support to not only the ruling party's candidate but also the candidate of the main opposition party in the 1992 presidential election. At the next level, connected to its upper level, there have existed dark relations between politicians or bureaucrats and business tycoons. One financial scandal after another has vindicated the existence of these corrupt links (B. Park 1995, 172-80). Fortunately, along with the regime's democratization, the transparency of policy process is tremendously increasing. It remains to be seen that the much-awaited opposition's victory in the 1997 presidential election would provide the Korean polity with a significant momentum for eradicating such corrupt practices.

V. Conclusion

From a critical viewpoint, the extant literature on the relationship between legislators

power transfer to the opposition party through election. However, it should be noted that he could win the presidency owing much to his strategy of forming a coalition with a bloc of former ruling politicians.

and bureaucrats or interest groups in Korea is meager, shallow and outdated. The relevant scholarly research is very limited in quantity. It has produced a coherent body of knowledge on only selected aspects of legislative-administrative bureaucratic and legislative-interest group interactions. As for the national legislature's oversight and control of the bureaucracy, annual inspection alone has attracted attentive researchers. Their studies show the ways the legislature handles administrative agencies and what practical problems arise in legislative inspection. Concerning interest group politics, we have some knowledge about the workings of business and labor organizations, their lobbying techniques, and their relationship with the government. But the focus of existing research is mainly set on the executive branch. So we are left with little systematic knowledge on legislative-interest group interactions in policy process. What is more, we lack in freshly added knowledge on the pattern of interest group politics emerging in the current democratic era.

Existing studies, especially those on legislative inspection, are largely descriptive with a strong normative bent. The researchers describe how political actors interact with one another in policy process. But they come short of asking explicitly why some pattern of interaction exists the way it does. Driven by their normative zeal for giving remedy to current undesirable symptoms, they do make little effort to find the pathological causes and hastily move to prescribe some kind of therapy. Without adequate explanation, the descriptive analysis only is not likely to generate a workable prescription.

A full-blown empirical analysis rarely exists. Hypotheses are not explicitly put forward and rigorously tested against the data. In the existing qualitative studies, typologies or classification schemes are often employed for description. But most of those studies lack an overarching conceptual framework which helps a researcher organize his or her work as a coherent whole. In the previous quantitative studies, data analysis does not basically surpass simple tallies of cases. Sophisticated statistical analysis is almost non-existent.

Theoretical perspectives, which have been adopted in existing studies for guiding the investigators to organize and tackle with research questions, show little variety and innovation. Researchers were led by a pluralist perspective at the earlier stage of

studying interest groups. But this perspective was never further refined, and became extinct in the subsequent research. The state corporatist perspective claimed its relevance to the interest group politics of the authoritarian era and became hegemonic among the researchers. The corporatist perspective focused mostly on interest articulation and representation outside the framework of legislative institution, and was concerned with the state-class relations on a macro level. This perspective is inherently irrelevant to the investigation of legislator-interest group interactions in legislative decision making. Recently, political democratization has made researchers recognize the validity of a pluralist perspective. Still, researchers are only familiar with the outmoded notion of pressure politics. For instance, the notion of information sharing between legislators and interest groups is not known to the community of researchers on Korean interest group politics. The existing concepts, propositions, and strategies for research remain much old and stale.

Mezey (1993, 335) has aptly stated that the individual-level analysis is not central to the studies on legislative politics outside the United States Congress. Congressional scholars used to explain legislative behavior and institutional performance in terms of the individual legislator's goals and objectives. In this sense, for students of the United States Congress, the individual legislator is the primary unit of analysis. In contrast, in the existing research on the interactions between Korean legislators and bureaucrats or interest groups, the primary unit of analysis is the aggregate entity, such as the committee, the legislature, the agency, or the bureaucracy. Therefore, the explanation of institutional performance is not firmly founded on the micro-level attributes or phenomena.

A pile of research questions lie ahead. We need to investigate the interaction of legislators and bureaucrats on other occasions than annual inspection. The two groups of officials encounter each other when legislative investigation and interpellation are held. These two groups also face each other over budgetary matters before and after the budget proposal is introduced to the legislature. More research should be done on these interactions between legislators and bureaucrats. A set of hypotheses are to be generated and tested regarding the level of oversight activity and its determinants for both the

individual legislator and the legislative institution. Again, the impact of oversight on bureaucratic responsiveness deserves a rigorous examination.

As a research topic, legislative-interest group relations need to be given more recognition than previously. It is desirable to examine closely the varying degrees of individual legislators' bond with interest groups and the determinants as well. Future research had better consider a variety of organized interests beyond business or labor groups, including already activated public interest groups. Researchers need to take into account relatively new lobbying techniques, such as grassroots lobbying or coalition lobbying, in the dynamics of legislative-interest group interactions. We need to inquire into the conditions under which interest groups show a high level of activity and have a strong influence in the legislative arena. The question of committee-centered policy subsystems or networks also challenges legislative scholars for future empirical research.

Over the decade since the late 1980s, the Korean National Assembly has undergone significant changes both internally and externally. The regime made a dramatic transition from authoritarianism to democracy. It now goes through the process of consolidation. In the 1988, 1992, and 1994 general elections for the National Assembly, the turnover rate measured by the percentage of first-term members continued to be 40% or more. The president's party fell into the position of legislative minority twice, which had never happened in the authoritarian era. The political party system is all the more fluid because of frequent inter-party realignments in both elections and the legislature. Outcries for internal democracy within a party are often heard. Legislative reform continues to be carried out for building a stronger and more effective legislature.

On the other hand, among legislative scholars, a consensus still remains intact on the image of the national legislature as a weak policy actor overshadowed by the executive. Also, the legislature is seen by most scholars as passive and lukewarm in the making of policies aimed at realizing economic justice, establishing a fair economic order, promoting human rights measures, and bringing about a change in the existing ruling structure. One cannot remove the possibility that ever-changing legislative politics may make the prevailing image and view outdated in the near future. Unless we want our

knowledge to lag behind the changing realities of legislative politics, we are urged to gear up for a series of systematic research.

Students of Korean legislative politics are advised to refine their strategies for data collection and analysis. Obtaining data from interviews with legislators, bureaucrats, and interest group leaders is highly recommendable for studying attitudes and interaction patterns. Some researchers have undertaken surveys of legislators based on the structured interview schedule. On the other hand, very few researchers so far interviewed bureaucrats or interest group leaders in this manner. Aberbach, Putnam, and Rockman's study (1981) is probably the best model for the structured elite interview. For example, by asking legislators and bureaucrats whom they meet and how often, they found varying contact patterns in several western democracies and explored why the patterns differ (233-7). Given the rudimentary knowledge on legislative decision making in Korea, the unstructured but in-depth personal interview seems more attractive for the same research purpose. This type of interview is made as part of participant observation, what Fenno calls "soaking and poking" approach (1978, xiv). This method will surely help researchers get first-hand experiences in legislative decision making, and provide a detailed analysis of it. To add another research strategy, intensive case studies of legislation are much wanted. Whether the case studies are qualitatively or quantitatively pursued, they will suggest useful insights and testable propositions for further research. Thus, the accumulation of case studies on aborted or successfully passed bills are warranted.

Most importantly, the prospective research should be driven by adequate theories. In studying legislative-administrative bureaucratic relations, we need theories which incorporate both conflictual and collaborative aspects of interaction between two groups of officials, and provide useful insights and testable hypotheses about their interactions. We want theories that help explain the workings of political institutions with solid micro-level underpinnings. These theories, given their tested causal propositions, will enable us to search for remedies to the problems encountered at the individual and institutional levels.

Rational choice theories, hardly applied thus far in the studies of Korean legislative

politics, are definitely an alternative for future research. More specifically, Niskanen's (1972) or McCubbins, Noll and Weingast's (1987; 1989) theory of political institutions can be a good candidate to be applied in the study of Korean legislative-administrative bureaucratic relations. Especially, the latter's conceptualization of controlling agencies as a principal-agent problem is insightful. This theory furnishes us with a fresh perspective on the nature of the legislature's relationship with administrative agencies, and on the problems of bureaucratic noncompliance. According to this theory, means of solving the problems are given new meaning and significance. Legislative inspection, investigation, and interpellation, together with budget review, constitute the police-patrol monitoring mechanism. Legislators involve in the "fire-alarm" monitoring of the bureaucracy while interceding with the bureaucracy for performing constituency service. Administrative procedures serve as *ex ante* means of controlling the bureaucracy. Bringing the president as another principal into perspective can make the analysis more realistic and valid than otherwise.

Likewise, for legislative-interest group relations, we need a fresh theoretical perspective. It seems that Wright has come to the point in this regard (1996). Lobbying used to be considered as exercising pressure in policy process. He argues that interest groups use their information strategically and share it with legislators in the lobbying process. This information perspective suggests researchers to delve into the kinds of information provided by interest groups, their proactive or counteractive usage of it, and legislators' response patterns (1-8; 75-113). As long as pluralistic competition is taking place among interest groups surrounding legislative decision making, the information perspective is universally valid beyond the arena of the United States Congress.

As repeatedly emphasized in this essay, Korean legislative politics is in the process of transition. Although the inertia of old political practices may be still strong, there also exist increasingly significant undercurrents militating against it. The future direction is toward a stronger legislature in a more competitive regime. The current research practices, however, are not likely to measure up to these possible changes. The existing research lacks the diversity in theoretical perspectives and investigation strategies. The tradition of descriptive-therapeutic studies with rudimentary empirical evidence is deep

rooted. There exist only some systematically executed behavioral-empirical studies. In addition, the studies drawing on formal deductive theories are a rare breed. It is imperative that old research practices should be overhauled with the introduction of alternative theoretical perspectives and research strategies. The research needs reorientation and innovation. At this juncture, the field of Korean legislative studies probably stands in need of a Fenno who serves as a bridge connecting detailed descriptive studies to those based on deductive theoretical perspectives.

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