

Conflicts Between Classes in Modern Korea: Source for Social Development

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September 2013

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While conflict is seen as something that challenges traditional norm and stability, it is also a path towards positive change and development needed for the well-being of a society. This paper attempts to study three kinds of conflicts that modern Korean society (after 1945) went through, mainly focusing on how these conflicts brought the development and if the general pattern can be found in the conflicts. This paper also attempts to show how Korean society can utilize ongoing conflicts between classes in order to achieve further development in the future, and how to develop a specific model for Korea.

Keywords: Conflict, Modern Korea, Social Development.

I. Introduction

A society is composed of different groups that compete for resources and have different interests. Thus, different social groups will have different controls over the resources, and it is certain that such groups will not always form consensus on every social issue. Especially the modern Korean society went through fast economic development and change in social construction along with the globalization and democratic movements, leading to diverse and serious exposure to social conflicts. Korean society also showed a unique and diverse way of resolution to those conflicts, and several interesting examples of how different types of conflicts can contribute to the development of the society.

Even though in Korea the traditional distinction of people disappeared after its declaration as a republic, there still exist economic, social, and political classes of people. The conflicts between such classes have been part of history of modern Korean society. Until now, Korean sociologists have focused on decreasing the intensity and frequency of such conflicts. However, they overlooked the fact that such conflicts contributed to the development of Korean society in several ways. This paper will analyze and discuss how these conflicts has contributed to the development in Korean society, and if there is any pattern in this conflict-resolutions in Korea to be used in the future.

Although the definition of conflict includes psychological tension and interpersonal discord, this paper will deal with only the intergroup conflicts that meet such criteria as have two or more actors opposed to each other on a certain social issue, and have definitive and visible attempts to interfere with the action of the other. In this paper, conflicts will be divided into three different types: economic conflicts, social conflicts, and political conflicts. The grouping will be relative, not absolute. In some cases, individuals who were categorized to a class in certain conflict may be categorized as another class in a different conflict, The term 'class' represents the different hierarchical social category to describe each group involved in the conflict.

II. Conflicts in Korea

2.1 Economic conflict

Korea went through dramatic changes in its economics. After the Korean War, Korea remained one of the poorest countries in the world. In 1960s its gross domestic product per capita was \$79 , lower than most Latin American and some sub-Saharan African countries (Chun 2010). However, it went through a rapid growth from 1960s to 1980s. In 1990s, Korean economy met the Asian Financial Crisis, but it soon recovered from the Crisis with the help of government-directed investment. Because of these dramatic ups and downs, the economic gap between the people started to grow because the government policy tends to support the conglomerates through these changes while lacking and orderly sustainability of economic balance between the people (Kim 2004). There are two different types of economic conflicts – one is the labor conflicts between the employees and the employers. The other is the conflict between the different economic classes, conglomerates and laborers. Both conflicts were common in modern Korean societies, and contributed to the society in two different ways: one was to prevent the inheritance of hierarchical division of people according to their economic status, and the other was to seek balance between welfare and economic growth in Korea.

The labor movement of Korea began from 1970s. Although labor was very active in Korean society, the 1970s Korea maintained the labor union as a state-controlled, representing the interest of the management rather than the employees, and frequently preventing and breaking strikes, and spying on any hint of independent unions. It had a mosaic of small-enterprise unions under its control, making it almost impossible to create labor union. It was especially hard upon the women, especially teenage women who were the major population of workers in the textile industry. The age of the textile industry workers was mostly between 18 and 22, and the working condition was extremely poor (Cumings 1997). However, at that time, those who were critical of such working conditions were arrested. For example, the poet Kim Chi Ha was prosecuted under the National Security Law for his poems that describe such situation accused of promoting 'class division, thereby allowing poetry to be manipulated as North Korean propaganda'. Considering that the Korean War was just halted a decade ago, the sensitivity of Korean government to such action was somewhat understandable, but the condition was becoming more inhumane, especially under Yushin system, a system created by

president Park Jung Hee to control the economy and politics. The Yushin system may have been essential to the solution of problems in Park's state-business coalition, but its government upon its people created a mass labor movement against the business and its coalition with the state for the first time. Since the opposition leaders and their party had no connection with the laborers and common people, labor protest and unionization thus arose largely outside the political system, leading to consecutive series of strikes during late 60s and early 70s, starting from the American electronics firms Signetics and Oak Electrometric Corporation strike in 1968 (American Friends Service Committee 1970).

In 1970, a textile worker Chon tae-il immolated himself in order to protest against the businesses and corporations and to obey the labor standards act, which shocked the entire nation and spurred many groups into action. His death was not in vain as it mobilized and motivated other workers to take up the struggle, and this eventually led to the creation of labor unions that were gradually able to secure workers' rights. Also, his death became a catalyst for uniting many university students, some religious officials, and the newspaper media, which continuously silenced their support the workers (Ryu 2005). Finally, after decades-long sacrifices of countless individuals, Korea now seemed to have an economic system that does not nauseate its economically less lucky yet major population and finally brought forth an economy of which all Koreans can be proud (Cumings 1997).

However, the conflict continued. Recently, Samsung was accused of exploiting younger workers by exposing them to the danger of cancer and to the leak of hydrofluoric acid, to which Samsung has claimed that the acid leak wasn't in gas form (Sakr 2013). However, the case was serious enough to create the new term 'Samsung Cancer'; referring to it that the workers caught blood cancer once they were employed to Samsung. The known numbers of the Samsung employee who caught cancer and died from it were 55 at the year 2011. However, Samsung claimed that it was a 'natural' number of cancer patients rate for a single company. Only after a few people made an international protest and the accident became an issue throughout the nation, and Samsung apologized publicly for the workers' death caused by the hydrofluoric acid leak at one of its factories.

Such conflicts between the company and their employees are not known to the public at the first time because most of them are resolved by the Union and not publicized, and most of Korean companies want to keep their good public images. In addition, the workers must comply to the company in order to keep their jobs because of the instability of the most jobs.

Because of the conflicts created by Samsung and its employees, people are now more aware of the danger that exists in these companies, and are therefore more careful when they are being employed. Even those people who are not directly related to the job market are still aware of such problems. Furthermore, as the society starts to pay an attention to the working condition of these people, the safety of the workers and became better. The conflict between government and employees are supposed to contribute to the enhancement of working conditions and product safety.

Conflict between conglomerates and laborers also played a huge role in the economic development of Korea. Up to 1990s, the Korean government still had its support on the Conglomerates, with the resources preemption and tax redemption. For example, the First Five Year Economic Plan set in 1961 included rapid industrialization by promoting large businesses. The Government Industrial Policy set

the direction of new investment, and the Conglomerate were to be guaranteed loans from the banking sector. In this way, the Conglomerate played a key role in developing new industries, helping Korea to become one of the Four Asian Tigers (Jung 2009.). However, such phenomenon disappeared after the criticism of the conglomerates by the public started to rise. During the Asian Financial Crisis, people started to witness that while many of the businesses fell down into failure, the conglomerates maintained their businesses through the means and the power they have gained from the Five Year Economic Plan. Seeing this, many of the public who lost their jobs and businesses started to protest against the government and the conglomerates. The Factory-Worker Protest of 1975, Busan-Masan Democratic People's Movement of 1979 all happened around this time.

Politicians such as Kim Dae-Jung started to blame the Conglomerate for not giving much place for the smaller businesses to develop. Therefore finally under President Kim Dae-Jung, elected in the wake of the Asian financial crisis, the government made several efforts to reform the economy. Several laws were made to prevent the conglomerates from having too much power, such as the law for separating finance from industry and the law for limiting the amount of government investment. Although such laws did not prevent the conglomerates from dominating the Korean economy, such laws did give a way to the smaller businesses as a result of their struggle to break through the walls of conglomerates in the economy, resulting in a diverse and more circulating economics in Korean economics. Economic conflict contributed to enhancement of the working environment and public safety, and also brought public attention to issues of human rights and government policy regarding Korean economics.

2.2 Social Conflict

Korea was always known for its education zeal, especially after 1960s. The College and high school enrollment had nearly quadrupled in the period 1948-60, with most universities and certainly all of the best ones were in Seoul (Cumings 1997). Sending one's son 'up to Seoul' for school was a national ambition, but Korean universities did not require a whole lot of their students. Korean students graduated with skills at about the level of American college juniors, and got the education they needed for their careers mostly in high school. Yet there was a strong incentive to stay in college, and then in graduate school, since job were often unavailable upon graduation. Such notion of university degree's changed role as mere 'working permit' rather than the proof of intellectual level of the students often lead to conflict between different intellectual classes, especially regarding the job market and the skewed education system of Korea. Also, when Dr. Hwang Woo-Suk was charged with embezzlement and bioethics law violations after it emerged much of his stem cell research had been faked on May 2006, Korea's practice of making 'star' with the intellectuals based on their academic background were also started to be criticized both by the public and the media.

The reform implemented by the Ministry of Education in 1980 was designed to make the system fairer and to increase higher education opportunities for the population at large, reflecting such issues in the disparity created by those who have received upper education and those who did not. There were several steps to the reform, including the prohibition of private, after-school tutoring. Formerly, private tutors could charge exorbitant rates if they had a good "track record" of getting students into

the right schools through intensive coaching, especially in English and in mathematics. This situation gave wealthy families an unfair advantage in the competition. Under the new rules, students receiving tutoring could be suspended from school and their tutors dismissed from their jobs. However, such reforms, although ideologically popular, were soon disregarded as they proved to be impractical and created more illegal teaching and tutorials that were even more limited to the families with economic support and political power.

Although these conflicts did result in a chaotic change and experiment with the education and academics, they did not change the zeal and the passion of Korean society. However, one thing that was achieved by the conflicts between different intellectual classes was that the Korean society was able to avoid the error of Group Think, which refers to a psychological phenomenon that occurs within a group of people, in which the desire for harmony or conformity in the group results in an incorrect or deviant decision-making outcome. Korean societies tended to have Group Think especially in terms of academics or nationalism because of their homogeneity and because of the belief that the human resource is one of the most important and competitive resource in Korean society. This is also because while Korean traditional society extremely valued cooperation over conflict because of its homogeneity and its value of peace among the people, the conflict between these classes has led Korea to the fastest development in terms of technology, culture, and economy. Therefore, the education and the person who succeeded in receiving a good education were often put in top criteria in Korean societies, resulting in excessive legacy in job market and a new hierarchy created by the academic backgrounds of an individual. However, as the conflicts in intellectual classes became a major issue for the public, people started to avoid such group think, and became more logical. Many of the job market started to use blind recruitment in their recruitment, and there were several attempts to have an education reform that focuses not on the preparation for the upper school but rather on the creativity and the development of each individual child's talent.

2.3 Political Conflicts

The political history of Korea should be studied carefully to address the conflict between different political classes. There are two types of political conflicts: one is the political conflict between the government and the public, and the other is the political conflict among the people. Korea, although a democratic society, did went through dictatorship of Syngman Rhee and Park Jung Hee, despite the economic development at the time. Those who praised South Korea's economic development rarely spoke of this dark side and all too often tended to justify the authoritarian politics of successive regimes in terms of the harsh requirements of development and security vis-à-vis North Korea, or the Confucian tradition, or the immaturity of Korean politics (Cumings 1997). However, from 1960s, the democratic movements started to spread in Korean society, and the conflict between the people and the government continue to today. Another conflict between different political classes is the conflict between the major party and the minor party within the government. Although Korea is not a two-party system, the parties were divided into two alliances, although they went through consistent division and unification throughout Korean history.

One of the earliest political conflicts between the people and the government is the April Revolution, in which a popular uprising in April 1960, led by laborers, student groups, and professors overthrew the autocratic First Republic of South Korea under Syngman Rhee, leading to the peaceful resignation of Rhee and the transition to the Second Republic. The event was triggered by the discovery of a body in Masan Harbor, that of a student killed by a tear-gas shell in demonstrations against the elections of March. For the first time the opposition Democratic Party organized the government, with Chang Myon as prime minister, who was a well-educated man from a landed family. Still there was no left wing and no labor union that had a major impact in South Korea, and it still had remarkably narrow political spectrum. The government hardly made an important move without consulting the embassy. Despite such weakness, the Second Republic was still South Korea's first democratic regime, and the foundation of Korea's democratic development.

The April Revolution also contributed to finish the agenda left over from the liberation period. There were around six hundred officers in the National Police who had served the Japanese, nearly all of them in the key positions. Most of them were quit or were fired in 1960s.

Although there were many losses of lives during the April Revolution and the other political movements that triggered April Revolution, the revolution did succeed in overthrowing the autocratic government. As The government of Syngman Rhee was the very first government of Republic of Korea, it was very likely that without the April Revolution, the Korean government would have lasted the tradition of autocratic government instead of the modern day democratic government with 4-year, non-repetitive term for the president and direct election system. It also created a new bicameral parliamentary system, and weakened the presidential power of the Korean government, trying to create a balance of power between the branches of the government. Such conflict is termed as 'content conflict', referring to the conflicts that increase motivation and stimulating discussion. Such content conflict is what led to the development of Korean's active participation in politics in modern day Korea.

Another conflict between the people and the government that also contributed to the social development was the recent conflict between the people who opposed Free Trade Agreement with the U.S. FTA, which is a highly divisive issue in Korea, was met by the great worries and opponents. The citizens were worried about transparency, the environment and labor standards say the deal was deficient as it was agreed on behind closed doors. The worry even became larger when the Korean Advertising Broadcasting Agency blocked the running of an advertisement produced by farmers protesting the deal (Mekay 2007). Several massive protests against the FTA have taken place in the country. A nation-wide protest on November 22, 2006 was reported to have drawn 65,000 to 80,000 people, with 9,000 to 20,000 of them gathering at the city hall in Seoul. A protester named Heo Se-uk set himself on fire Sunday shouting "Stop the Korea-U.S. FTA" outside the hotel where negotiators were meeting (Olsen 2008). Although many of the fears created by the people were later found out as the rumors, it was not the fact about the FTA that contributed to the developments of the politics in South Korea. It was that the people again decided to rise against the political decision of the government, against what they believed as wrong, and the government now took the voice of the general public as an important factor to mend and to reflect in its policies. The fact that many of the

facts claimed by the public also has a great meaning because the fact that the government was right in such facts and yet the government decided to take the public opinion into account and went on to revise the Free Trade Agreement with the U.S. implies that the government started to take the public opinion more seriously than the actual benefit or facts, referring to the growing public power and influence in South Korean Politics. In addition, the population of the people who were involved in the protest consisted of many different economic classes, different age groups, and different genders, which shows how social conflict can lead to a great range of social attention and active participation by the people of all classes and all social groups.

Often the conflict between political parties are frowned upon by the Korean people as many Korean people believe that the political parties, whether conservatives or liberal, are consisted of people from well-to-do classes. However, the conflict between the political parties also contributed to the development of Korean politics as well in several different ways. The conflicts of the political parties attributed to the reason why the Korean politicians became more aware to the idea and the needs of the public, as well as the ideology of their own political parties. Because the political parties were in consistent competition against each other, and because the Korean political system is based upon the direct election by the people, the Korean politicians now focuses on the people's idea. It can be seen in the increasing usage of SNS and attempt to make direct speech to public by the politicians. The good example of such phenomenon is the last South Korean presidential election held in 2012, in which the two parties had their candidates to represent very different political parties yet both candidates were very much focused on the ideas and the wants of the people. The Lee Myung-bak government pursued the reduction of bureaucracy and attempted to create more a laissez-faire economic policy, and despite the fact that he was elected in a landslide victory and received initial approval ratings of 70%, Lee's ratings had declined to below 30% by 2012 (Friedhoff and Kim 2012). At the end of 2011, Park Geun-hye assumed control of the Grand National Party, which was subsequently, renamed the Saenuri or New Frontier Party in February 2012. The name change could be seen as the attempt to show the public that she was detached from the Lee's government, which shows that the Park already regarded the public opinion as the important factor of the winning factor of the conflict. Such phenomenon could be seen in Democratic United Party as well. Although they had the candidate Moon Jae-in and were quite different in their political agenda with Unified Progressive party or Ann Chul-Soo who was an Independent candidate, the party attempted to relate themselves to the other two candidates when they realized that the public support were focused towards the other candidates, claiming that the major goal was to 'destroy' Saenuri or New Frontier Party. Although such political tactics was not strong enough to win them the president, it clearly shows that the rivalry that can be seen in political conflicts between the two parties is based upon the idea of the general public, which means that the support of the general public and their political participation would play a greater role in determining the future and direction of the politics.

III. Contribution of Conflicts to Korean Society

3.1 Contribution of Economic Conflicts

The basic mechanism driving social change is increasing awareness leading to better organization. Often, although people realize the problem, people do not feel that such problems should be addressed for the sake of stability and order in the society. In such aspect, the conflicts between the employees and employers brought the attention of Korean public to the problem of class division in economics and that unless that they are changed, the division between the economic class would stuck like the class that Korean society traditionally held – the Yangban and the commoners, which were originally social classes that people could alternate from one to the other but later became inherited social class similar to the western feudal nobility system. Some economic conflicts happened because of the immaturity of Korean society, but the resolution of such conflicts could also happen because of the immaturity of Korean society. The economic conflicts in Korean society prevented the Matthew effect from taking place as the major phenomenon in Korean society, which is the phenomenon where "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer" (Gladwell 2008).

Economic conflict is the most frequently seen form of conflict in Korean society. It also shows the common patterns of conflict resolution in Korean society. As the economic conflicts go through such resolution, the economic conflicts in Korea have contributed in two ways.

First of all, economic conflicts contributed to the development of media and agenda setting in Korean society. It can be seen that in many of the major economic conflicts, there are two types of mediators: one is the government and the other being the media. Until later 20th century, the media of Korean society took a role as the opinion leader of the Korean society, and from late 20th century to current period, the media is the agenda setter in Korean society. As these mediators took part in the resolution of economic conflicts, the Korean society became much more cautious regarding the illegal lobbying and economic gains of conglomerates and the economic system, and the information regarding such conflicts became much more accessible not only to the people involved in the conflicts but also to the public.

Second, the economic conflict contributed to the rights of laborers and improvements of working condition. By having the public and the government be focused on the issue of rights of laborers and the importance of companies in Korean economy, the laborers who were not guaranteed of safe working environment and sufficient income were now able to retrieve their rights, and the companies that needed more financial support from the government and the public could receive their support.

3.2 Contribution of Social conflicts

Social conflicts also had similar contribution to Korean society. The social conflicts in Korean society allowed the Koreans to reflect on the important values of Korean society, especially at the time when Korea went through change into republic. As the Korean society struggled between the traditional and new value, the social conflicts that arouse from such clash of values have trained people how to set and interpret the new value for Korean society.

3.3 Contribution of Political conflicts

Throughout the history, Korean public went through many demonstration and conflicts, through which the public founded a solid method to reflect their will to the politics. Although Korean electoral system first developed from the indirect electoral system of the U.S., it now has become the direct electoral system which reflects the will of people directly. Also, because of the consistent political conflicts, the Korean public has become more interested in the politic of Korea, shown by the high participation rate in vote.

IV. Discussion

4.1 Model for Conflict contribution to Korean society

4.1.1 Importance of Model Development

The importance of studying Korean conflicts lies with the fact that although the history of conflicts that happened throughout the history of modern South Korea is comparatively short, they still shows and summarizes well the conflicts that are occurring throughout the history and in present times in many countries. In addition, considering that the Korea has developed a very fast development in its economics despite a few threats towards its economic development, in its education system and its education level despite very critical disparity between the education level of the public, and in its success in democratization of the government despite the fact that South Korea is still technically at war with North Korea and fell under several danger of dictatorship, the way Korea has resolved such conflicts can be a good model for other Asian countries who are going through same economic, educational, and political problems in their societies that result from too rapid development of society and the chaotic confusion between the dictatorship and people's attempt and will to participate in their country's politics and economic policies. Many of the countries are also facing globalization and have to choose between their homogenous, traditional ways and the modern, global ways, as Korea did and still does. Such problems are what modern Korean society went through, and the fact that Korean society resolved them and used them to contribute to its social development can lead to a creation of general model for resolving conflicts for the other countries as well that are in similar situation as past Korean society.

4.1.2 Existing Models for Conflict Resolution

Goldfien and Robbennolt stated that there are five major styles for conflict resolution: avoidance, yielding, competitive, cooperation, and conciliation (Goldfien and Robbennolt 2007). The resolution styles used in certain conflict vary, depending on the characteristics and environments of the groups involved in the conflict and the characteristics of the conflicts (Goldfien and Robbennolt 2007).

In order to define the resolution used to solve a conflict, the balance between pro-social and pro-self behavior should be measured. It is clearly related to the relationship between traditional value and modern of Korea. While the traditional value is better for yielding and competitive resolution, in modern Korean society the Korean value directs the conflict resolution towards cooperation and conciliation conflict resolution.

Avoidance conflict resolution is when an individual or group has reduced concern for its own outcomes as well as the outcomes of others, trying to avoid the conflict in all. This can hardly be seen in Korean society, as most of the conflicts between class in Korean society lead to some form of agreement and many compromise along with it, instead of avoidance.

Yielding conflict resolution is when an individual or group has high concern for the others, taking passive pro-social approach. Although this is often seen in the past when one side was clearly weaker than the other, nowadays it is hardly being seen in Korean society due to the power of media and active public concern.

Competitive conflict resolution is when an individual or group has high concern for themselves, which could also be seen in conflicts in the past, when one side was clearly stronger than the other side. However, as is the case of Yielding conflict resolution, such conflict resolution has decreased in modern Korean conflicts.

Cooperation conflict resolution is when an individual or group has concern for their own outcomes as well as in the outcomes of others, which is the usual method for those who are involved in the conflict. Because of the media and the public support, the two classes that are involved in the conflicts have more access to the information and the opinions of each side. Also, because of the complexity in modern Korean society, it is being more and more clear that in any types of conflict, one cannot clearly decide whether a policy would completely benefit one's own group or the other.

Conciliation conflict resolution is when there is an intermediate-level of concern for both personal and others' outcomes, which is a resolution used by the Korean public not directly involved in the conflict itself. Although people may not be involved in the conflict, Korean public tend to have high interest in the conflict because of its effect on the society. However, as those who are not involved in the conflict can see the conflict in objective view, they tend to have intermediate level of concern for their own and the others' outcomes.

4.1.3 Korean Model for Conflict Resolution

It can be seen that the most used method of conflict resolution in Korean society is cooperation and conciliation method. Yet, the method used in Korea is different from the cooperation and conciliation method described by Goldfien and Robbenolt in that in the process, what is thought of as the most important is not meeting the balance between each side's benefit, but is more about fulfilling the value of Korean society set and confirmed by the past conflict.

In such decision process, the decision makers are not only the people involved in the conflict, but also public of Korean society who are believed to have free access to the information regarding the conflict. Therefore, in Korean conciliation model of conflict resolution, the most important criteria is the public acceptance and with which side the public sympathize with.

This is because of the high interest of Korean public in the conflict, and because of the rapid development of media and social network that allows the public and the people involved in the conflict to have direct and fast access to information and opinions of each side.

Therefore, it can be assumed that if the development of media and the interest of Korean public are maintained, the conflict resolution in Korea will still be a collaboration of cooperation and

conciliation resolution, with the media and the public involvement as the third party that affect the speed and outcome of resolution. This is important because it can be a measurement of how a society may change the methods of resolution depending on the amount of information available to the two classes and the third parties. Also, this can be an implication that the development of media and conflict resolution may be stimulant to each other.

4.2 Argument against Conflict

Disorder created by the conflict is still not desirable because of the disorder and the threat it creates to the stability of the people. However, the past history of both Korea and the international society shows that the means of conflict is becoming more and more peaceful. Even the president Obama of the United States argued for the peaceful protest contributing to the well-being of the society, in which he claimed that "it was non-violence, moral force that bent the arc of history towards justice once more (Obama 2011). Herbert Butterfield argued that An order is not a thing bestowed by nature, but is a matter of refined thought, careful connivance and elaborate artifice. At best it is a precarious thing, and though it seems so abstract it requires the same kind of loyalty, the same constant attention, that people give to their country or to the other private causes which only the order enables them to follow, which clearly shows that the involvement of people and their will is more important even in establishing the order (Butterfield 1968). The conflict between the classes in Korea happens because the society and the government cannot fully reflect the interest of every social groups, and because each social groups are divided in forms of 'classes' due to their difference in control of the economic, intellectual, and political issues of the society, despite the Korean society's attempt to have all the voices of the society reflected. If a conflict cannot be avoided, it is best to lead such conflicts to the most effective way possible to make a resolution that can be helpful to the development of the society. Although conflict may not have been the only way to lead to such development, the conflicts that happened throughout the history of Korea surely did lead to such development through the process and the resolution of the conflicts.

V. Conclusion

This paper has studied a few examples of conflicts that were categorized into three types, focused on conflicts of modern Korean society.

In the first 60 years of the new country, Korea went through diverse conflicts at different levels and of different issues. Korean society gained a world status as an avatar of rapid industrial growth and modernization, a society with education zeal and intellectuals who rank highly on international comparative assessments when compared to students of most Western education systems, and as a society that has achieved its democratic movements so that the CIA World Factbook describes South Korea's democracy as a "fully functioning modern democracy (The World Factbook 2013).

However, to achieve such names Korea also had to go through many conflicts and turmoil among its people, with millions of lives lost. As can be seen in this paper, the conflict in Korean society has

contributed to Korean society in various ways. However, such conflicts were not just cause of discord in Korean societies.

In fact, such conflicts contributed to the development Korean society, with its liberty as a nation and liberty for its people defines them to be – the liberty from the closed hierarchal system that prevents people from going up the economic ladder; the liberty to receive information and express opinions; and the liberty from political suppression and dictatorship.

As Tocqueville said about the relation between the liberty and conflict, “Liberty is generally established in the midst of storms; it is perfected by civil discord, and its benefits cannot be appreciated until it is already old”. Tocqueville’s quote fit the modern Korean society, with the liberty ‘perfected by civil discord’.

Many economic, social, and political conflicts of Korea allowed for many changes that allowed Korea to become more developed country through the conflicts and the process of resolution. They contributed to the development of media and growing public interest in Korean society. When analyzed to specific resolution pattern, they also showed that the relationship of Korean people have changed from the yielding and competing against each other to cooperating and conciliating with each other, which is a general resolution pattern expected to be found in future Korean society.

Further research can be done on conflicts and its contribution to development in other societies with unique characteristics as Korea, and eventually a research on combining the empirical studies in order to set a common theory on how conflicts can be managed by the nation-states in order to create a positive synergy that will lead to a long-term development and stability of the society. Although this paper has discussed about the types of conflicts, the contribution of each conflict types to modern Korean society, and how the conflict resolution of Korea can be generalized into its own model, further research can be done to find out whether a society may change the methods of resolution depending on the amount of information available to the two classes and the third parties. Also, using the Korean model, the relationship between the development of media and conflict resolution could be also deeply studied, and may be applied to the other societies and their conflicts.

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