A Comparison of University Students' Political Culture in the Levantine States and South Korea

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Contents

I. Introduction
II. A Brief Review of Political Culture Studies
III. East Asian and Korean Political Culture Studies
IV. Middle Eastern Political Culture Studies
V. Explanations about Our Sampling and Survey Technique
VI. Working Hypotheses
VII. Findings
VIII. Conclusion

Key Words: Political Culture, Political Development, Confucianism, Islam, Subject Political Culture, Political Participation
I. Introduction

The political culture of university students could be a very important variable to predict the future course of their countries. Upon graduation, they are joining with the main workforce and becoming the next generation for further development in many different areas of their countries. In the long process of their education, they have learned and become accustomed with the dominant political culture of their society. As a result, the political culture of university students has a lasting influence in their socioeconomic and political behavior for the rest of their lives. Although political culture and its socialization can be a powerful explanatory variable for social transformation, its application on the countries in East Asia and the Middle East has varied at different time.

Many social scientists, for example, argued that the Confucian tradition in East Asia in general, and South Korea in particular, had a negative influence on national development in the region. Their main arguments against Confucianism included the lack of respect for individualism, disrespect for commercial activities, the rote education of Chinese classics, and the lower status for women among many others. Once some East Asian countries succeeded in industrialization, however, some of these negative arguments became positive factors for their socioeconomic development. For instance, anti-individualism in Confucianism became the basis for social harmony, the tradition of respecting seniors and elders became filial piety and the basis for a collective identity, and the legacy of the rote education to pass government examinations to enter public service became parents’ overwhelming enthusiasm to educate their children.

On the other hand, many specialists of the Middle East are still arguing that the lower level of political and economic development in the region is mainly due to the cultural background of the Arabs and their religion, Islam. They usually bring up many elements of Arab culture to explain the underdevelopment of Middle East. They explain that the lack of separation between religion and politics is one of the main reasons for the low level of political development and that the Islamic law of inheritance is the main obstacle for the development of large business entities. This arguments are,
however, not only inconsistent with the historical evidence of the Middle East but also incompatible with the East Asian experience. There were many large business organizations and trading companies during the period of Islamic empires, and the Arabs have been known for their business skills for generations. Also, the small and medium-sized companies are the main backbone of industrialization in Taiwan.\textsuperscript{2} The correct explanation might be somewhere else. For instance, at the present time, these business skills are not utilized enough in the Middle East because of other obstacles, including the authoritarian nature of many governments and the legacy of Western colonization. As a result, a causal relationship between political culture and development is very risky and problematic.

The purpose of this paper is not to propose a new theory about political culture but rather to present a balanced explanation about the different levels of political and economic development of the countries in the two regions, which are far apart but share many similarities. To do so, we employ political culture theory to test whether or not existing cultural arguments explaining East Asia and the Middle East are supported by our empirical data. Although our data gathered from university students could have some discrepancies from those of general populace, they can show you what is really going on each society. To compare the political culture of university students in the two regions, we used the same questionnaire to collect data in a relatively short interval in the two regions and processed the data in the early part of this year. Because the data presented in this paper comes from only university students, our conclusion is tentative and may need further investigation.


II. A Brief Review of Political Culture Studies

Studies about political culture have a long history. Plato and Aristotle, along with relatively modern thinkers, including Rousseau and Tocqueville, emphasized the importance of culture. However, cultural studies with empirical data appeared only after the Second World War. During the heyday of Behavioral Movement (BM) in the late 1950s and 1960s, political culture studies received great attention. American scholars, who were discharged from the wartime military services, along with many refugee scholars from Germany and Italy, contributed to the development of political culture studies. The development in research methodology and technology, including sampling and interviewing methods, scoring and scaling techniques, and statistical analysis, greatly facilitated the cultural studies. Early political culture studies focused on national character studies, which were pioneered by Alex Inkeles. It was, however, soon discredited because of its ethnocentric characteristics. It was the publication of Civic Culture by Almond and Verba in 1963 that sparked present day political culture studies. They included many different aspects of culture to explain political development, including citizens' abilities of cognition, affection, and evaluation of their political system and its performance. This pioneering work had a strong impact on political culture studies and stimulated other students to follow their approach. However, political culture studies have lost ground since the early 1970s to alternative approaches, including rational-choice theory and institutional analysis.

The main reason for that was its lack of causal explanatory power between political structure and culture. For example, the main purpose of Civic Culture was to determine the relationship between the level of civic culture and a stable democratic political structure. According to the findings by Almond and Verba, at least for themselves, there was a relationship between the two, and expectedly, the countries with the highest level of civic culture, the Great Britain and the U.S., had the most stable democracies. This finding was,

however, soon challenged by other researchers, who argued that the causal relationship could be reversed.\textsuperscript{5} U. S. political culture, for example, has changed since the Vietnam War and the Watergate incident. This means that the performance of a political system also causes changes in political culture. This reductionist approach has strongly undermined the usefulness of political culture studies. The second criticism was from the Marxists, who argued that the class structure in a society affects political attitudes. As a result, the political attitudes do not have any independent or autonomous power to explain political changes.\textsuperscript{6} The third one comes from the scholars studying of communist countries. According to them, the separation between political attitudes and behavior is impossible. If we separate the two, it means that we admit the conservative propensity of political culture. The last criticism comes from rationalist theorists. They argue that certain political behavior could be explained with a political actor's expected material gains in a short period.\textsuperscript{7} As a result, they say that political culture is a residual variable, not a main one.

All of these criticism have some merits and shortcomings. The first one argues against the one-way causal relationship between political structure and culture. Subsequent studies, however, found a two-way relationship, and most scholars of cultural studies agree with this. The second and the third one were discredited since the advent of institutional approach and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The institutionalists have found that the state, unlike what was previously thought, is an autonomous actor and has a major role in directing political and socioeconomic development in society. Also, in the former Communist states, researchers have found the continuity of pre-Communism political culture in Russia and Eastern European countries. The rationalists' argument also has problems in being accepted. They argue that political actions are explained by actors' expectation of a short-term material gain. If this is the case, then another question follows. On what basis do they decide


\textsuperscript{7} Ibid.
the preference of materials? To answer this question, one must go back to culture studies. Aaron Wildavsky argues that the political preference configurations essential for rational-choice approach are also rooted in political culture studies. As a result, political culture studies are still useful in explaining political and economic development.

In recent years, political culture studies were resurgent in three distinctive areas, including advanced industrial societies, former Communist states, and newly industrialized countries (NICs) in East Asia. Culture studies in advanced industrial states were pioneered by Ronald Inglehart using a set of surveys he administered in Europe and the U.S. The main argument of his theory is that the generations born in Europe and the U.S, after WWII had experienced a continued peace, rapid economic growth, rising educational opportunities, and increased media exposure. As a result, the socialization of this generation has down-played the importance of the old political and socioeconomic issues and instead emphasized the importance of other issues, including the quality-of-life, the environment, and citizens' increased participatory role in the governmental decision-making process. The importance of these issues has varied depending on the economic conditions in these countries, but they have been relatively good indicators for citizens' preferences in political issues. In former Communist states, researchers found that their political culture has not very much changed from that of the pre-Communist period in spite of the education of Communist ideology by the state for a long time. Their studies emphasize the continuity of political culture. Also, scholars are still debating the relevance of the Confucian tradition in East Asia to explain its success in industrialization drive.

Most recently, Lisa Wedeen proposes a semiotic approach to cultural studies. According to her, we can improve political culture studies by analyzing citizens' political attitudes, especially in authoritarian states. This approach

may be very useful to analyze Middle Eastern states because many of them are authoritarian and use many symbols to increase their legitimacy to rule. Her main argument is, until now, political scientists have not paid much attention to the use of rhetoric, symbols, personality cult, and religious rituals by the state, even though they have profound effects in molding and changing citizens' attitudes toward their political system. According to Wedeen, this use of symbols is observable; therefore, we can collect and analyze the contents of these symbols to explain political development in those countries. By doing so, she continues, we can avoid one of the main problems in culture studies, which is the ambiguity of data collection.

III. East Asian and Korean Political Culture Studies

East Asia consists of many countries that encompass a large area. Many scholars, however, agree that although there are many different ethicoreligious branches, East Asia share the Confucian tradition, which has been the main cultural explanation for their success in industrialization. One of the most well-known scholars studying East Asia is Adwin Reischauer, who first emphasized the pervasiveness of the Confucian mentality in contemporary East Asia. In his argument, he includes not only Japan and the four mini-dragons (Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea) but also overseas Chinese communities and socialists East Asia (mainland China and North Korea). According to him, Confucian ethic is reflected in government leadership, education, work force, and social values, which provide a necessary background and powerful motivating force for the rise of industrial East Asia.12) Needless to mention Max Weber’s Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,13) the

Confucian ethic may have some roles in East Asian development. However, the
correlation between value orientation, attitude, and performance in East Asian
development and the Confucian ethic is not very clear. However, the
underlying assumption that culture matters and that economic facts and
political institutions are laden with cultural values was neither trivialized nor
relegated to a residual variable. In the academic community, there was a
remarkable convergence of views on the need to problematize the Confucian
hypothesis and to provide a sophisticated cultural and historical background to
the Confucian thesis in current interpretive literature on East Asia.

Even though there is an agreement on the importance of the Confucian
tradition in East Asia, the problem is in determining Confucianism's influence
on East Asian development. Even if it plays some role, it is both elusive and
pervasive. We are, on the one hand, at a loss in identifying and defining how
the Confucian ethic actually works in economic organization, political ideology,
and social behavior. On the other hand, we are impressed by its presence in
virtually every aspects of interpersonal relations in East Asian life. As a result,
scholars have tried to determine that relationship using a variety of methods,
including investigating the core curriculum in moral education, ancestral
veneration in family ritual, styles of protesting among the intelligentsia,
symbolic resources in the development of a civil society, the formation of a
political ideology, and networking in economic behavior.

In spite of using all of these methods, it is still difficult to find out the
precise boundaries and significance of the Confucian influence in industrial
East Asia. As a result, there are two main indirect arguments about the
relationship between East Asian development and Confucianism. One is
focusing on how the Confucian tradition in belief, attitude, and practice
continues to impede or facilitate and guide the modern transformation, and in
the process, how it is being rejected or revitalized and fundamentally
restructuring East Asian societies. The other one is to emphasize the
coexistence of Confucianism and modernity. According to this group of
scholars, the experience of development in East Asia suggests not the passing
of a traditional society but the continuing role of tradition in providing the rich
texture of an evolving modernity.\textsuperscript{14} We can then apply this argument to other

\textsuperscript{14} Tu Wei-Ming, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 6.
oriental ethicoreligious traditions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. Then, we need to elaborate some characteristics of the East Asian society that are different from Western society.

The centrality of the family in East Asia is not only as a basic social unit but is also a metaphor for political culture. Although the structure and function of the family varies among the countries in the region, the family’s supreme role in capital formation, power politics, social stability, and moral education is comparable in all the countries. The idea of the state as an enlarged family may have lost much of its persuasiveness, but the metaphor of the family is still widely present in all forms of social organization. Moreover, family-style connectedness is characteristic of many prominent modes of interpersonal communication based on educational, territorial, and religious ties. As a result, East Asian societies are less adversarial, less individualistic, and less self-interested. Also, they are more concerned about group solidarity in politics, business, and society at large.

South Korea, as one of the countries in the region, still embrace Confucian traditions in all areas of socioeconomic and political activities, although its rapid industrialization and the influence of Western materialism have significantly changed many aspects of the society. According to an eminent Korean sociologist, one of the traditional elements in Korean society is that Koreans are extremely emotional, which may be manifested in warmth and intuitive understanding and also in passionate outburst, hot temper, and excessive radical action. They also have extravagant lifestyle and wasteful behavior. In interpersonal relations, they have unusual hospitality, and at times, excessive and often irritating kindness causes encroachment of privacy. They occasionally lack the ability to separate the public and private, the formal and informal, and the official and unofficial due to strong emotional involvement. They also lack the spirit of obeying laws, emphasize on saving one’s or another’s face, and are fond of formalistic ritualism or ceremonialism. In principles of social organization, they prefer authoritarianism, placing strong emphasis on hierarchical relationships and order in terms of parent–child, elder–youth, male–female, and superior–subordinate status positions. They also emphasize on longevity, ancestors, and children, especially an abundance of male offspring. Although many of these elements are partially influenced by
paganism, shamanism, and Buddhism, Confucianism has had a dominant role in shaping these characteristics.

In Korea, Confucianism was the predominant ideology of the Yi Dynasty (1392–1910), which lasted for more than 500 years. Confucianism was adopted and practiced by the ruling class and became a very rigid ideology governing statecraft, principles of social organization and human relations, and behavioral norms. Confucianism, however, lacked prosperity-promoting tenets. This can be observed in various traditional values of Koreans. For example, the old Confucian view placed commerce and manufacturing at the bottom of the occupational and social hierarchy. In traditional Korean society, the idealized social status order put scholars and government officials at the top, followed by farmers, artisans, and lastly merchants as unproductive profit-takers. This growth-deterring value system had to be replaced by new values that emphasized business and entrepreneurial activities in the recent decades. The old value system, however, is deeply rooted and until recently, the most brilliant Korean students aspired to become government officials, lawyers, or professors. One of the results of this tradition is the great emphasis on education; this is why education has become one of the most important socioeconomic issues in Korea. It is very common in Korea for parents to sacrifice their lives solely for the education of their children.

According to a recent survey, Korean society is still saturated with Confucianism. In spite of the increasing popularity of Christianity among Koreans, South Korea is the most confucian country in all of East Asia, even more than Taiwan or mainland China. Although it is very difficult to find out how many Koreans still believe in Confucianism because of the fact that it is not an organized religion and hence has no registration procedure, “all men are Confucians.” Even those Koreans who selected “no religion” when they were surveyed turned out to be predominantly Confucians. Also, even those

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who identified themselves as Christians and adhered to Christian values and practices were very much inclined to Confucian values and practices as well.\(^{17}\) That means Confucianism is pervasive in Korean society and its value orientation is mainly transmitted to generation to generation through family indoctrination.

IV. Middle Eastern Political Culture Studies

We can divide the political culture approach on the Middle East into two groups: one group is the reductionists and the other is the empiricists. The reductionists are composed of historians, anthropologists, and essayists among others. They are the biggest group and have the longest history. The main argument of this group is supported by textual and historical evidences of the region, and they insist that the characteristics of Islam and Arab culture have had negative effects on political development in the region. According to them, Islam has supported the peoples’ submission to the rulers, similar to their submission to their God, Ala. As a result, Islamic political culture does not have any autonomous public sphere; therefore, there is no separation between the spiritual and temporal.\(^{18}\)

The reductionists also argue that Arab culture is the impediment for political development in the region. They refer back to Ibn Khaldun, who argued that tribal *asabiyya* (social cohesion) is the main source of their power. Once a tribe is settled in a city or town, their *asabiyya* becomes weaker because of their easy life. Then, a tribe in the desert that has a higher level of *asabiyya* invades the city and kicks the settled people out into the desert.\(^{19}\) As a result,


Arabs are not willing to submit to a state or a central government. Meanwhile, other scholars bring out many negative Arab characters to explain the lower level of political development in the region. They include the shame and honor culture, Bedouin substructure, child-rearing practices, extremes and emotions, conflict proneness, hatred of the West, and fellahin personalities among many others. Still, some others insist that the Arabs have a strong collective desire to entrust their problems to grand schemes, such as pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism. As a result, they have a strong tendency to escape from reality and submerge in fantasy. They also say that the Arabs are yearning for a Mahdi rather than democracy.\(^{20}\) In conclusion, their main argument is very similar to those of national character studies, which was discredited long ago.

Researchers using the empirical approach are usually skeptical about traditional thinkers and try to develop theories using more scientific survey methods and statistical analysis. Morroe Berger(1964), who had done field research to gather data about political attitudes in the Middle East, found that the Arabs are more prone to formality, lack of trust in others, hostilities, and primordial units. Waterbury also found that politics in the Middle East is dominated by factionalism and clientelism.\(^{21}\) Leonard Binder studied the relationship between the degrees of social mobilization and radicalism.\(^{22}\) Dankwart Rustow(1965) surveyed Turkish elite culture. Clement Henry Moore(1970) studies about political culture in Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria. Marvin Zonis(1971) studied the Iranian elite's political culture under the Shah' government.

One of the cross-country surveys in the Middle East was conducted by Saad Eddin Ibrahim. He found that "Arabs remained deeply concerned about the 'all-Arab' national problem, but also discovered significant subregional variations."\(^{23}\) More recently, Suleiman surveyed cultural attitudes of young

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\(^{20}\) Ibid.


\(^{23}\) Saad Eddin Ibrahim, Trends in Arab Public Opinion Toward the Problem of Unity, Beirut: Center for Arab Unity Studies, 1980.
Tunisians and found three subcultures among them, Arab-Islamic, secular, and mixed.\(^{24}\) Other scholars also found that tribalism and ethnic conflict are resurfacing in the Middle East. As a result, it is very difficult to unite the citizens. Therefore, the prevalent pattern in Middle Eastern politics is coercive domination either by a strong ethnic group or political elite.

Thus far, we have seen how the political culture approach in the Middle East has evolved. We divided this approach into two different groups of schools, traditionalists and empiricists. The former group usually draws their data from literature and history, while the latter gathers their data from field surveys. There have been a considerable amount of political culture studies about the region, although there are much less studies on this region than in any other regions, such as Latin America, Europe, and East Asia. It is mainly due to the difficulties in conducting field research in the Middle East. Among many other reasons, getting permission to conduct surveys from the states in the region is very difficult and a time-consuming process. Also, due to the high rate of illiteracy, it is very problematic to collect valid data. To solve these problems, we entered the Levantine states as tourists and our sampling is from college students in the region.

V. Explanations about Our Sampling and Survey Technique

To compare University students' political culture in the two regions, we chose eight universities each in the Levantine and South Korea. In South Korea, we conducted questionnaire surveys in Korea University, Seoul National University, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (HUFS), Myongji University, Chungang University, Suwon University, Konkuk University, and Honam University. The survey was conducted in June 2003. A total of 836 students were surveyed. In the Levantine area, we chose three universities in Jordan, including the University of Jordan in Amman, Yarmuk University in Irbid, and Al-Ahliyya University in Amman. In Lebanon, Lebanon University in Beirut and Balamand University near Tripoli were chosen. In Israel and Palestine, Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

\(^{24}\) Michael W. Suleiman, "Political Orientations of Young Tunisians: The Impact of Gender," *Arab Studies Quarterly*, vol. 15, no. 1, 1993, pp. 61-80.
Bar-Ilan University near Tel Aviv and Birzeit University in Ramallah were chosen. The total number of the students surveyed in the Levantine area was 649. In both regions, the number of students surveyed at each university varies due to different accessibilities to universities and cooperation from school authorities. The population for our field survey is the total number of university students in the four Levantine states and South Korea. Our sampling should have been drawn from the population randomly, but in the Levantine area, this is practically impossible for the reasons mentioned above. To be more practical, we used a convenience sampling method.

**Table 1: South Korean Sampling**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seoul</td>
<td>Korea Univ.</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seoul National</td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myongji Univ.</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chungang Univ.</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Konkuk Univ.</td>
<td>118</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seoul &amp; Yongin</td>
<td>HUFS.</td>
<td>116+171=287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suwon</td>
<td>Suwon Univ.</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwangju</td>
<td>Honam Univ.</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 locations 8 Universities total 836 students

**Table 2: Levantine Sampling**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>Univ. of Jordan</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yarmuk Univ.</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Al–Ahliyya Univ.</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Lebanon Univ.</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Balamand Univ.</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Hebrew Univ.</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male Students</th>
<th>Female Students</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levantine States</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>808</td>
<td>677</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were also some variations in the way the student filled out their questionnaires. In Jordan, students were asked to fill out the questionnaire in two classrooms. Later on, a researcher suggested conducting the survey in the library. Students in the library had more time and were more relaxed, and the environment was calmer and allowed for better concentration. It is also the place to choose male and female students half and half, and to mix younger-looking and older-looking students together to have a better sampling. Students in libraries were also more cooperative to the researchers than students in classroom or in corridors, who were either busy in preparing for class or in finding their classrooms. At the University of Jordan, the researcher used both classroom and library surveys. At Yarmuk University, only library surveys were used. In Lebanon, the situation was a little different. The researcher contacted officials at Lebanon University in Beirut, but they did not allow him to distribute direct surveys; instead, they suggested that some professors would ask students to fill out the questionnaires on behalf of the researcher. At University of Balamand, the researcher directly asked students to fill out the survey. In Israel and Palestine, the researchers combined the two methods. In South Korea, we applied the same method we used in the Levantine area to gather more comparable data.

Our questionnaire was divided into 7 sections. The first section asked
students how much they know about Korea and the Levantine states. The second was about education, the third about social activities, and the fourth about religion. The fifth section was about the economy and the sixth about politics. The last section was about personal information that was needed to facilitate statistical analyses. The questionnaire was constructed carefully and revised many times in Korean and then translated into Arabic. To check the suitabilities of the questionnaire in terms of concepts and phrases for Levantine students, we pretested it with Arab students at the mosque in Ee Tae Won in Seoul. Our field research in the Levantine area was conducted in January, and the field research in South Korea was conducted in June 2003. The statistical analyses was performed by SPSS with consultations from the Statistics Department in Korea University.

VI. Working Hypotheses

The main purpose of this paper is to compare university students' political culture between the Levant and South Korea. More specifically, we want to determine whether or not their political culture is anti- or pro-democratic in terms of democratic theories which are generally accepted in the field. We define the independent variable, political culture, as preferences toward societal and political values, including education, religion, equality, political participation, and government's performances. The dependent variable, political development, was defined as a process in which the state and civil society continuously interact to accommodate citizens' ever-increasing socioeconomic and political demands. To find out a relationship between these two variables, we constructed working hypotheses.

1) According to generally accepted democratic theories, democracy cannot be either imposed from above or imported from abroad. If so, it cannot thrive. This implies that democracy needs prerequisites which are embedded in society, including tolerance of different religious, ethnic and political beliefs, the respect of individual rights, and trust among members of different groups among many others. According to Almond and Verba, it may be a kind of
civic culture. One of the main obstacles for democratic development in the Middle East is, according to Bassam Tibi, the subordination of individuals to the groups. For political development in the Middle East, he continues, the Arabs should first learn the importance of individuals as free human beings.\(^{25}\) South Korea has the same problem. As mentioned earlier, Korean society is dominated by Confucianism, and one of the main tenets of Confucianism is social harmony, meaning less emphasis on individual rights and achievements. As a result, in both the Levantine states and South Korea, we can hypothesize that there will be a strong tendency to de-emphasize the individual interests over those of tribes and society in general among university students.

2) Islam has been considered one of the main problems for political development in the Middle East by both laymen and specialists. The main argument for that is the togetherness of the religion and politics. As a result, many non-Muslims regard that Muslims consider religion too important to separate it from other areas of their lives. Due to this, Islam is their first priority and all their lives are dominated by their religion. As a result, they could not be secularized. Also, the state of Israel was founded by Judaism, and one who was born to a Jewish mother became a Jew and had a right to be an Israeli citizen. Although religious spectrums are diverse among the Israeli citizens, Judaism is the main pillar of the Israeli state, and in reality, the state imposes religious observances and duties on the public. As a result, considering the importance of religion both for the Arabs and the Jews, there will be a strong emphasis of religious values in all areas of personal and social activities among the students. On the other hand, Korean society is secularized and therefore, Korean university students may not be very much inclined toward any religion.

3) It is generally agreed that the level of economic development is strongly associated with both the democratization of a country and the stability of the existing democracy. The level of economic development can usually be measured by the amount of GNP/GDP; per capita income; the number of TV, telephone, and car owners; the volume of trade and finance; etc. But

considering the given condition of the economic nature in the Middle East in general and rentier and semi-rentier countries in particular, the above mentioned statistics are not as accurate in judging the level of economic development in general. Oman’s per capita GDP is, for example, three times more than that of Jordan, $9,960 and $3,347 in 1998, respectively, but we cannot say the Omani economy is more developed than that of Jordan. Therefore, how they think of economic conditions in their countries is more useful in analyzing the general attitude of the people toward economics. Due to the semi-rentier economic condition and the traditional patron-clientelism in the Levantine states, including Israel, government economic policies emphasize distribution rather than growth. As a result, there will be a strong inequality, in either reality or perception, in the distribution policy because the government has a strong discrepancy in this policy. Everybody agreed that South Korea has achieved a significant level of economic development; however, due to its rapid development and government policies favoring capitalists, a growing number of Koreans complain about the gap between the haves and have-not. Therefore, there should be a strong negative feeling about the present economic situation and the future of economic improvement in the two regions.

4) Discovering political attitudes in Middle Eastern countries is very problematic because people do not want to discuss politics nor be asked about politics. The phrase, "Don’t ask and don’t answer," is very applicable to political matters in the region. Generally speaking, this is due to the authoritarian political nature. Discussing politics is considered taboo, and people do not want to fall into trouble because of that. Also, most governmental organizations, especially authorities in charge of security, do not usually allow foreigners to conduct surveys about political opinion. They could argue that it is a matter of national security. Considering these matters, we can assume that a general political attitude of the people in the region would be very passive and alienated. Also, the level of their sociopolitical participation will be very low and their attitudes toward government performance will be very negative. On the other hand, South Korea achieved democratization, and its civil society is developing rapidly. As a result, its political culture may be very close to a participant political culture.
5) Both the Levantine states and South Korea have been strongly influenced by Western powers, especially the U. S. In the Levant, due to their daily conflicts between Palestinians and Israelis, four major wars between Arabs and Jews, and U. S. backing of Israel, there will be a strong anti-Western and anti-American feeling. Especially because of the extremely unpopular U. S. invasion to Iraq, this anti-American attitude is increasing. In South Korea, the anti-American movement got its momentum since the killing of two middle-school girls by a U.S. armored vehicle. Also, there were many demonstrations condemning the U.S. invasion of Iraq. When we consider this situation, both Levantine and Korean students will strongly blame Israel and the U.S. for Arab problems.

VI. Findings

1) The first hypothesis is confirmed in the Levant but rejected in South Korea. 53% of Levantine students answered that societal rights are more emphasized in school education, while only 22% of Korean students did so. As mentioned before, the two region have been dominated by the tradition of emphasizing group interests over individual ones. This tradition is still very much alive in the Levant, but it is rapidly declining among Korean university students. In the Levant, however, the results vary considerably. In Israel, 61% of students surveyed favor individual rights in school education, and in Lebanon, this number is greater than 53%. Meanwhile, among Jordanian, Palestinian, and Arab-Isareli students, a clear majority prefer the opposite. More than 60% of the Palestinian and Arab-Israeli students said that societal rights are their first priority in school education.

In both Levantine and Korean societies, family is the basic unit of social organization, and their traditional values strongly emphasized family solidarity and close relationship. As a result, it is expected that they are family-oriented. In both areas, a clear majority of respondents said that family interests are their first priority; however, the variation is considerable. More than 78% of Korean students said that family interests are their first priority while 52.4% of Levantine students said the same. Surprisingly, more than 35% of Jewish
students put clan interests first. 35% of Levantine students said that their national interest is their first choice while only 19.3% Korean students said the same. Over all, the importance of family interests is predominant, but Levantine students are more inclined to group interests, especially in Israel and Lebanon, where university students still consider clan interests important.

When the students were asked who they would ask for advice if they encountered a problem, their first choice was their parents and the second choice was friends (Levantine students) or self (Korean students). Korean students are a little more self-oriented. Notably, both teachers and religious leaders have a small role in giving advice to students in making decisions in two regions. This result of Levantine students is very consistent with results from a survey conducted on 12th grade students in the West Bank in September 2002. According to the survey, their first choice for advice was their parents (45.4%), the second was self (19.8%), and the third was friends (19.5%).

Question #1: Of the following, which one do you think is more emphasized in school education?

Question #2: Of the following three interests, which one is your first priority when you have interest-conflicts among them?

Question #3: When you have to make an important decision, whose advice do you usually take?

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jordan</th>
<th>Lebanon</th>
<th>Israel</th>
<th>Palestine</th>
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<th>L/A S. Korea</th>
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<td>47.0</td>
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<td>Societal Rights</td>
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</table>

2) The second hypothesis was partially confirmed by both Levantine students and Korean students. Expectedly, religion is very important in both their education and everyday lives for Levantine students. However, it is also very important for Korean students, although they do not prefer religious education in school. An absolute majority of Levantine students (80.1%) said that religious education is necessary in school. In Israel and Lebanon, the percentage was much lower than that of other countries, but a clear majority still believes in it. The lower percentage of the Jewish students who believe this reflects the increased secularization of Jews, with exception to the followers of the orthodox branch. The Lebanese result may be due to the long civil war among the different branches of religions. The Jordanian students have the highest percentage in advocating religious education in school. It can be explained by their identity with the Hashemite dynasty, which originated from the Prophet.

We found that, in general, there is a relationship between the students’ religious identities and its influence on their daily life. With exception to the Jordanian students, only around 50% of the students said that their religion has a very strong or strong influence on their life. On the other hand, a considerable number of the students said that their religion has only weak or
very weak influence on their life. The percentage of students who said that their religion has a very week influence on their daily life was more than 25%, especially in Lebanon and Palestine. This is a very surprising finding. It can be explained by their disappointment in religious activities that have been unable to solve present political problems in their countries. The frequency of going to the mosque is also lower than we have expected. Except in Jordan, the percentage of the students going to mosque three times or fewer in a month is more than 20%, although we considered that female students usually stay home on Friday. Especially in Lebanon, the percentage of the students going to mosque once a month is 23.2%. Among the Palestinian and Arab-Israeli students, the percentage was 13% and 16.1%, respectively. Compared to U.S. data (43% going to church monthly),27) it is not higher than we assumed. The percentage of students fasting during Ramadan is very high in the all four countries. With this data, we can say they are very religious, but this could be because of other reasons. Ramadan is a religious observance, but it is also a socializing period at night for friends and family members. Because of this, the result may not correctly predict their religious adherence. In conclusion, the students are religious. But according to our data, they are not as religious as we previously thought.

Surprisingly, Korean students are more religious than what we thought. According to the data, the influence of their religion on their daily lives and the frequency of church or temple attendance is high. The results are almost similar to those of Levantine students. The percentage of Korean students who answered their religion affects on their daily life either very strongly or strongly is 47%, compared to 58.1% of Levantine students, and the frequency of church or temple attendance four times per month is 31.5%, compared to 31% of Levantine students.

To sum things up, religion is not a suitable variable to explain the different levels of socioeconomic and political development. As a result, we should be very careful when we consider connecting some religious elements with other social phenomena. Many scholars have argued for a long time that religion has

27) The percentage is provided by Dr. Choe Young Chul, who quoted it from Ira Sharkansky's book.
had some influence on social development, but its influence might have been dispersed into society. Therefore, if any, it is very difficult to pinpoint its role. Otherwise, we may be in a position to make another ethnocentric statement. Our finding reconfirms a recent study by M. Steven Fish, who argues that Islam has nothing to do with authoritarianism.\(^{28}\)

Question #1: Do you think that religious education is necessary in school?
Question #2: How much does your religion affect on your daily life?
Question #3: How many times do you go to mosque, synagogue, church or temple per month?

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Question #1</th>
<th>Jordan</th>
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<th>Israel</th>
<th>Palestine</th>
<th>Arab-Israeli</th>
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<td>36.0</td>
<td>16.5</td>
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<td>2 times per month</td>
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<td>1 times per month</td>
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</table>

3) Our hypothesis is confirmed. A clear majority of the students expressed their negative feeling about the economic situation in their countries. Levantine student are more negative about the situation because more than 72% of them said "bad or very bad" while more that 80% of Korean students said "average or bad." Both groups of students are very pessimistic about their job prospect after graduation.

Concerning inequality in their societies, more than 91% of Korean students answered that the gap between the have-nots and have-nots is either "very big or big," while 74.3% of Levantine students said the same. Among the Levantine states, more than 93% of Israeli students said the gap is either "very big or big," which is even higher than that of Korean students. It is very interesting to discover that students from more economically developed countries feel a bigger gap between the poor and the rich in their countries. Regarding the reasons for the inequality in their countries, Levantine students choose economic policies, politics, and the class system, respectively, while Korean students blame the class system, economic policies, and politics, respectively. 51.3% of Korean students choose the class system for the first reason for the inequality, while only 12.1% of Levantine students did the same. Also, about 20% of Israeli students, the highest percentage from the Levant, blame the class system for the inequality. Due to its rapid capitalist development, Korean students believe the rich become richer and the poor poorer. Another interesting finding is that Arab-Israeli students choose politics for the main reason for the gap. We can assume that it is due to socioeconomic discriminational policies by the Israeli government against its Arab citizens.

About 60% of Levantine students favor economic development over political development, while Korean students are fairly divided between the two. Both Israeli and Arab-Israeli students have the highest percentage in favor of economic development, while Lebanese students have the highest point for political development first. When the same question was asked in Korea in 1993, 49% of the surveyed Korean people preferred economic development to political development (Dho Shin). As a result, our finding is very much
consistent with the previous result.

Question #1: How do you think about the present economic situation in your country?
Question #2: What do you think about your job prospect after graduation?
Question #3: Do you think there is an inequality in economic spheres in your country?
Question #4: If yes, what do you think is the main reason of that?
Question #5: Between economic development and political development, which one is your first priority?

Table 6

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<tr>
<th>Question #1</th>
<th>Jordan</th>
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<th>Palestine</th>
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<td>29.2</td>
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<td>Very big gap</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
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<td>10.4</td>
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<td>24.3</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>15.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>A little gap</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
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</table>
4) Our hypothesis is partially confirmed. The hypothesis was to find out what kind of political culture students have, in terms of Almond and Verba.29) We found out that both Levantine and Korean students have a subject political culture. In general, students are alienated from their countries’ political system, their level of political participation is very low, and their attitudes toward governmental performances is also poor. In their social activities, about 70% of Korean students surveyed said they belong to organizations in school, while about 40% of Levantine students belong to social and cultural organizations out of school. Only about 30% of the Levantine students said that they belong to school organizations. Notably, the number of students belonging to religious organization in the Levant is very few, less than 10%, with the exception of Jordan. In both regions, the number of students belonging to political organization is very small, 10% in the Levant and 1% in Korea. The number of students who have experience in voluntary work in the last two years is about 45% of the surveyed students in the two regions.

More than 90% of Korean students said that citizens are more involved in

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29) For explanations about subject political culture, see Almond and Verba, Civic Culture, pp. 17-18.
the decision-making process for their community, while about 54% of Levantine students said the same. Remarkably, Lebanese and Arab-Israeli students have a very negative attitude toward citizens' involvement in the decision-making process. More than 50% of the Lebanese students said that they do not want more involvement by citizens in the decision-making process. This trend may be explained by political instabilities and a long period of the civil war in the country. This figure is quite opposite to that of Jewish students.

A majority of students in both regions said that they are strongly or very strongly alienated from political systems. A clear majority of the students said that either their opinion or actions has no influence on governmental decision-making process. Surprisingly, the Jewish students are more negative on their influence on government than other Arab students, with exception of the Arab-Israeli students. Unlike our assumption, according to the data, the Israeli political system is more closed and separated from its citizens. Our findings are consistent with those of Joel Migdal's. According to Migdal, Israel, from the beginning, was dominated by the state because of its origin, continuous wars, and main concerns for security. The general populace is the bystanders of the state. Many of decisions about prices, salaries, and the length of reserve services are decided by the state. To sum things thing up, students’ political participation in the two regions is relatively low and they are alienated from their governments. Most of these results are characteristics of the subject political culture, which is in between parochial and participant political culture. According to Almond and Verba, participant culture is most suitable for liberal democracy. As a result, students’ political culture in the two regions is not yet ready for a liberal democracy.

There is a strong aspiration for further development of parliamentary system in the Levant. About 85% of students in Lebanon and Palestine wanted their parliamentary system to be more active, while the percentage from the Jewish and Arab-Israeli students is relatively lower, 70% and 60%, respectively. On the other hand, Korean students are not very interested in further development.

of parliamentary system. Compared to the high percentage of Levantine students, only 54% of Korean students said that they either agreed and strongly agreed with further development of the parliamentary system. Also, 38% of Korean students said that they do not have any opinion about that. Are they already tired of their parliamentary system because of continuous quarrels among members of the parliament?

Question #1: Of the following organizations, are you a member of any of them?

Question #2: Did you have any experience in volunteer work in the last two years?

Question #3: Do you agree that citizens have to more involved in decision-making process for their community?

Question #4: Do you think either your actions or opinion influence on the governmental decision-making process?

Question #5: Do you agree that the parliamentary system should be more developed in your country?

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question #1</th>
<th>Jordan</th>
<th>Lebanon</th>
<th>Israel</th>
<th>Palestine</th>
<th>Arab-Israeli</th>
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<th>S. Korea</th>
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Question #2

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Question #3
Strongly agree 28.3 10.0 44.6 28.7 21.1 27.0 40.9
Agree 26.7 19.1 45.5 23.8 21.1 27.2 50.9
Don’t know 22.1 21.8 5.0 20.1 34.2 21.0 6.2
Disagree 10.4 24.5 4.0 14.7 15.8 14.0 1.4
Strongly disagree 11.7 24.5 0.0 12.6 7.9 11.3 9.5

Question #4
Strong influence  6.3 16.9 2.0 11.8 8.1 9.0 1.4
Influence  11.3 15.3 25.7 16.2 10.8 16.0 17.6
Don’t know  17.9 14.4 8.9 20.6 16.2 16.0 25.9
No influence  21.7 30.5 44.6 27.2 37.8 32.3 42.0
No influence at all  33.3 22.9 18.8 24.3 27.0 25.2 12.8

Question #5
Strongly agree  46.3 57.6 28.0 62.5 44.4 48.0 8.0
Agree  24.2 28.0 42.0 22.1 22.2 28.0 46.0
Don’t know  15.4 5.9 23.0 6.6 19.4 14.0 38.0
Disagree  3.3 5.1 7.0 5.1 8.3 6.0 7.1
Strongly disagree  1.3 3.4 0.0 3.7 5.6 3.0 2.0

5) The hypothesis is confirmed. About 60% of Korean students blame the U.S. and the West for Arab problems of development, and only 10% of them blame Israel. On the other hand, only 38% of Arab students blame the U.S. and the West and about 24% for Israel. Only about 10% of Korean students think Israel is the major problem in Arab development. About 70% of Palestine students also blame for the U.S. and the West for their problem, while only 7.6% of them consider Israel the major problem. Considering their daily conflict with the Israelis, the percentage is surprisingly low. It is also interesting that 16.7% of the Arab-Israeli students blame their own political and economic problems as the obstacle in recovering the Islamic golden period. On the other hand, 53.5% of the Lebanese students said that Israel is the biggest problem. This is explained with the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and its occupation of Southern Lebanon for an extended period of time. Some 20% of Korean
students think that the Arabs' political and economic system is the major obstacle for their development. In conclusion, a majority of the students surveyed in both regions believe that the U.S., the West, and Israel are the main obstacle in Arab development, although the percentage varies in different countries. In general, there is a strong anti-American feeling in the two region.

Considering the fact that Islam and politics are unable to be separated, 44% of Arab students said that this is not a problem for development, while 53.5% of Korean student said that it is an obstacle. It is interesting to find out that more than an average of 20% of Arab students agree that it is a problem. More than 30% of Lebanese and Palestinian students agree that the lack of separation between religion and politics is an obstacle for Arab development.

Surprisingly, the percentage of student who blame Israel for Arab problems is relatively low, with exception to the Lebanese students. It is even more surprising that only 7.6% of the Palestinian students blame Israel for their problems. A clear majority of Korean students also blamed the U.S. and the West for blocking the Arabs attempt to regain the golden period, and only 10% of them blamed Israel for that. This is a surprising finding because we assumed that a majority of Korean students would blame Israel for Arab problems due to their familiarity of wars and conflicts between Israelis and Arabs.

Question #1: Of the following, which one do you think is the greatest obstacle in recovering the Islamic golden period?

Question #2: Some scholars argue that the togetherness of Islam and politics is an obstacle for economic and political development in the Arab world. Do you agree with that?

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jordan</th>
<th>Lebanon</th>
<th>Palestine</th>
<th>Arab-Israeli</th>
<th>L/A</th>
<th>S.Korea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question #1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The U.S. and the West</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>60.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Own pol. &
economic problems  5.8  10.9  3.2  16.7  7.3  20.3
Science and technology  3.8  5.9  6.1  3.3  4.0  1.6
Others  11.3  1.0  10.7  3.3  5.2  7.3

Question #2
Strongly agree  4.6  18.8  14.7  20.0  2.0  7.9
Agree  5.4  17.0  15.4  2.9  8.1  45.6
Don’t know  13.3  16.1  24.7  28.6  17.0  37.9
Disagree  24.2  25.0  27.9  22.9  20.0  7.1
Strongly disagree  41.7  23.2  27.2  25.7  24.0  1.6

To discover any relationship between the Arab respondents in these two questions, we used Guttman Coefficient of Predictability (lambda) and Goodman and Kruskal’s Tau (tau). The correlation lambda is suitable for calculating relationships between either nominal variables or nominal and ordinal ones. To verify the relationship further, we calculated tau because one is ordinal variables. The main aim for these two methods is to find out any relation between the respondents who answered these two questions. For example, there is no correlation between the students who answered that the West is the greatest obstacle in the recovery of the Islamic golden age and the students who said that they strongly disagree with that fact that the union of politics and religion is an obstacle for political and economic development in their countries. The value of lambda has no value, and the tau is 0.079.

VII. Conclusion

Thus far, we have analyzed our data gathered from Levantinian and South Korean university students to discover their political culture concerning

educational values, religious beliefs, and economic and political attitudes. According to our findings, both groups of university students have a subject political culture, which is usually belonged to societies in transition between tradition and modernity. Levantine students are still more tradition-oriented, emphasizing religious values and group interests, while Korean students are much more secularized in these values. Unlike what some scholars argues about Korea, the traditional values of Confucianism have passed away from Korean university students. As they have argued, Confucianism may have had influences in the former generations, who were the main contributors for Korean industrialization, but for today’s generation, its role is not as strong as before.

More significantly, Levantine students are less religious than we previously thought, and Korean students are much more religious than we expected. As a result, religious variables are not very useful to explain the different level of development in the two regions. In the economic areas, both groups of students believe that their society has a big gap between the poor and the rich. Surprisingly, more than 90% of Israeli and Korean students think that this gap is serious. We assumed before that people of rentier and semi-rentier states think that there is a wider gap between the poor and the rich, but we were wrong. The more a country developed, the wider gap people think exists. Levantine students prefer economic development over political development, while Korean students want a balanced development between the two. In political areas, students of the two regions are strongly alienated from their political system and fell as if they have no political influence. Concerning Arab development, both Korean and Levantine students think that the U.S. and the West, rather than Israel, are the main obstacle for that, with exception to Lebanese and Palestine students.

To discover if there is any correlation between the level of students’ religiosity and their differences in political orientation, we figured out lambda, gamma, and tau values, depending on their relevance. However, we found none of them to be meaningful. For example, we analyzed the correlation between the students’ frequency in attending the mosque and their educational value preference. There is no gamma value, which means that there is no correlation at all. We also figure out the gamma value between the frequency of mosque
attendance and the preference for the separation of religion and politics. The \textit{gamma} value is \(-0.076\), which also means that there is almost no correlation. We tried several more pairs with \textit{lambda} and \textit{tau} values, but none were meaningful. What does that mean? It means that many of the students are religious, but their religion does not have any influence on their value preference. On the other hand, their religion does not have any explanatory power to predict their value orientations.

In sum, according to our finding, we can conclude that Arab culture and religion is not the main variable for the political and economic underdevelopment in the Levant, as many scholars have argued. In the same way we can argue that East Asian Confucianism is not the main variable in its industrialization. Rather, we can find the main contributing factors for the industrialization in the relationship between the state and society, correct economic policies, and international environment. As a result, the Levantine states can also be developed politically and economically when these conditions are favorable. Especially since the 9/11 event in 2001, many people are concerned about Islamic fundamentalism. But as we have seen in this paper, this concern should be limited to Islamic radicals. These radical groups are taking over civil society while the Middle Eastern states are retreating from their roles in socioeconomic and political developments. As a result, there is a widening gap between the capacity of the state and the development of civil society. This gap is being filled by Islamic fundamentalism. According to a recent study, that will be one of the main factors for violent transformations of Middle Eastern politics in the future.\footnote{Sheri Berman, "Islamism, Revolution, and Civil Society," \textit{Perspectives on Politics}, vol. 1, no. 2, June 2003, pp. 264-266.}

Levantine university students are as religious as many other students in different countries. They are not fanatics of Islam. Less than a majority go to mosque weekly, as in many Western countries. As M. Steven Fish argues, Islam cannot be a variable to explain the political problem in the Muslim countries. According to him, only one variable, the attitude toward women, is meaningful in explaining authoritarianism in the Muslim world.\footnote{M. Steven Fish, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 24-37.} University students are more educated than the general populace. As a result, we can
assume that they are more open-minded and have a better understanding of socioeconomic and political issues than the general public. As many social scientists have argue, the level of education is strongly associated with the level of political development in each country. The political culture of university students in the Levantine area is more similar than different to the political culture of Korean students. Therefore, their political culture cannot be an obstacle for any major development in socioeconomics and politics. Rather, we can find both obstacles and solutions in other areas, including political leaders, the class system, and the relationship between the state and society.
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레반트와 한국 대학생의 정치문화 비교연구

박찬기, 정상률, 금상문
고려대 HUFS HUFS

정치문화와 정치·경제발전의 연관관계는 사회과학의 행태주의 운동 이후 거듭된 논쟁을 반복하고 있다. 특히 1963년 알몬드와 바버에 의한 "시민문화(Civic Culture)"의 출판 이후 정치문화에 대한 연구가 활성화되었고 그후 많은 후속연구가 이루어졌다. 그러나 이 두 변수들의 상호관계에 대한 의문점이 계속 제기되고 원인과 결과에 대한 상반된 주장이 현재까지 계속되고 있다. 본 연구는 이러한 상관관계를 재정의하고자 레반트지역과 한국 대학생들의 정치문화를 비교하여 두 지역의 정치·경제발전의 차이를 설명하고자 했다.

두 변수의 상호관계를 분석하기 위해 첫째, 개인과 단체에 의한 차이점, 둘째, 일상생활에 있어서 종교의 중요성에 대한 차이점, 셋째, 경제발전의 전망과 현 상황에 대한 견해, 넷째, 정치문화의 유형, 다섯째, 미국과 이스라엘에 대한 견해 등에 관한 가설을 설정하였다. 연구결과 가설 1, 3, 5는 유의미한 것으로 분석되었으나 가설 2와 4는 무의미하였다. 즉, 한국대학생들은 개인의 권리와 이익을 철저히 중요시하는 반면 두 지역의 대학생들이 모두 자국의 경제발전 전망에 대해 회의적이며 미국과 이스라엘이 아랍세계의 가장 큰 원인으로 생각하고 있다. 한편 한국 대학생도 일상생활에 있어서 종교적인 요인을 강조하고 있고 두 지역 대학생들이 과도기적인 신민적 정치문화(subject political culture)를 가지고 있는 것으로 나타났다. 중요한 점은 개인과 단체의 이익에 대한 견해를 제외하고는 두 지역의 대학생들이 정치문화적 측면에서 유의미한 차이를 나타내고 있지 않다는 것이다.

레반트지역은 중동의 일부분으로 많은 학자들은 이스라엘을 제외하고는 이슬람교의 역할을 정치·경제발전의 부정적인 요소로 보고 있다. 또한 한국은 유교사상이 지배하던 동북아지역에 속하는 국가로 유교의 영향이 경제발전뿐만 아니라 경제발전에도 부정적인 요소로 주장되어 왔다. 그러나 한국을 포함한 동북아 국가들이 경제발전과 민주화를 달성하면서 오히려 유교의 영향을 정치·경제발전의 긍정적인 요소로 주장하는 학자들이 증가하게 되었다.

그러나 현지실문조사를 통한 연구결과 정치문화적인 요소, 특히 종교적인 요인으로 두 지역의 정치·경제발전의 차이를 설명하기에는 문제점이 많고 오히려 다른 변수, 즉 국가와 시민사회와의 관계, 정치지도자, 계급구조, 정치·경제제도 등에서 찾는 것이 보다 타당하다는 것이다.

[주제어: 정치문화, 정치·경제발전, 이슬람, 유교, 신민적 정치문화, 정치참여]