

How Gagnam Became a Stronghold of Conservatism: Wealth, Local Identity, and Conservative Voting

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Gangnam—the three most affluent districts Gangnam-gu, Seocho-gu, and Songpa-gu in the capital—has a modern, trendy, technologically-advanced image as the center of education, finance, fashion, culture and technology. Gangnam is the area where the wealthiest people are concentrated and its housing prices are the most expensive in the nation. The average income and educational levels of the residents in Gangnam are higher than in other regions. Despite their high educational level, incomes, and cultural capital, when it comes to politics, Gangnam residents, unlike its liberal and cosmopolitan Western counterparts, have strongly supported the conservative party since the mid-1990s. While voters in Seoul generally vote for more liberal and reformist candidates, this political trend does not fit in the Gangnam region.

Yet this political stereotype in Gangnam was not always true. Up until the early 1990s, younger and educated residents living in high-rise apartments in Gangnam were more likely to vote for opposition party candidates against the authoritarian forces and their successors. The current voting pattern that conservative candidates mainly won the elections in this region did not exist twenty years ago. Why do Gangnam residents strongly support the conservative party and its candidates? What brought about these dramatic changes in their voting patterns?

Through an analysis of the Gangnam region, this paper illustrates the popular and spatial bases on which conservative politics was strongly anchored. It is important to examine how political elites and intellectuals built institutional infrastructures and shaped specific conservative narratives (Yang 2020; 2021). Yet, no political elites or parties can succeed without reaching out to a broad constituency and forming a strong popular base, on which the particular political ideas and values can flourish. A bottom-up perspective helps to understand how ordinary citizens widely share particular emotions and sensibilities, and how they come to support a particular political cause.

Analyzing feelings and narratives widely shared by ordinary citizens in Gangnam, I argue that their conservative political positions are closely tied to their local identity. The particular meanings of places—where they are from and where they live—profoundly influence their economic interests and emotional conditions, which in turn lead to particular political positions. Being from and living in Gangnam was the very source of pride and identity for many people there. Gangnam provides their residents with stronger pride and positive perceptions about their places. Thus, the liberal/reformist forces that appeared to challenge status quo order felt menacing for them. Scholars have examined how place-based identities strongly shape how people understand politics. For example, the severe rural-versus-urban divide in the United States made rural residents harbor resentment against their urban counterparts (Cramer 2016; Wuthnow 2018). As Cramer (2016, 217) noted, “place matters more than just as a proxy for which partisans are where. It is part of at least some voters’ fundamental sense of self. One can imagine many other perspectives rooted in the intertwined identities of place and class that matter to politics.”

I coin the term, *anxious materialists*, to refer to citizens in Gangnam. Profiting most from a series of real estate booms and skyrocketing housing prices, Gangnam residents try to maintain Gangnam as an aspirational space symbolized by wealth and cultured lifestyles. Feeling proud of living in a culturally and economically “superior” place, Gangnam residents share discontents about the liberal/reformist governments’ real estate market regulation and

property tax raises. The conservatism shared by anxious materialists is mainly driven by economic calculations to keep their status quo in the uncertain futures.

In this paper, I analyze their “deep story,” a narrative *as felt*, coined by Arlie Hochschild (2016). Emphasizing the roles of emotion in politics, Hochschild argues that ordinary people’s political positions are not so much shaped by ideological beliefs as how they *feel*. Rather than objective economic interests, many ordinary citizens are led by emotional appeal. Thus, without listening to their “deep” stories from their own perspective, we are left puzzled about seemingly contradictory political positions against their own self-interest.

Gangnam: A Home of the Korean Middle Class

Gangnam is the new district created by the government’s urban development project in the 1970s. Before then, Gangnam was a sparsely-populated countryside that was not well connected to the capital. Since the center of the capital was the northern part of the Han River, nobody wanted to live in the countryside where the urban infrastructure was lacking and the living environment was inconvenient. Thus, up until the mid-1970s, what is now Gangnam was merely a cheap, worthless land in Seoul. Beginning in the mid-1970s, however, the government targeted Gangnam to develop a new residential area and promoted urban policies to build urban infrastructures and construct large-scale apartment complexes (Yang 2018). With ongoing construction boom, high economic growth, and the influx of incomes earned in foreign countries, the real estate market was heated with surplus capital and Gangnam was the center of the real estate boom. As high-rise apartment buildings became a symbol of modern, comfortable middle-class living space, apartment living became popular among younger, educated, white-collar families and Gangnam came to be a new destination for middle-class families. Further, as many elite, prestigious middle- and high-schools moved to the Gangnam area beginning in the mid-1970s, many middle-class parents who were interested in children’s education wanted to send their children to schools in Gangnam to make their children study in a more competitive, academically-oriented environment. Thus, all the state policies that were favorable to the development of Gangnam accelerated massive migration to Gangnam, particularly among relatively affluent, new middle-class families, and middle-class living became spatialized in Gangnam.

Although what is now Gangnam became such an aspirational upper-middle class space where most people cannot afford to live because of the astronomical housing prices, Gangnam up to the late 1990s was not completely out of reach for middle-class citizens with well-paying jobs and stable incomes. Given that Gangnam was a newly developed area and resident there were mainly migrants not originally from the area, it is difficult and not even meaningful to discuss political characteristics of Gangnam residents before its development in order to understand the current political landscape. Considering that Gangnam consisted of families of younger, educated, white-collar employees—a prototypical new middle class—in the 1980s, we can speculate that the residents may have preferred political liberalization and democracy by opposing long authoritarianism (Reference). While not perfect data, the results of the 1987 presidential and the two general elections demonstrate that Gangnam residents were *not* more conservative than those in other areas. In the 1987 presidential election, Gangnam residents supported the opposition leader Kim Young Sam (35.31 percent) more than the conservative authoritarian candidate Roh Tae Woo (32.41 percent) by 3 percent.¹ In the 1988 and 1992 general elections, for six seats in the Gangnam area, the conservative ruling Democratic Justice party (Chun Doo Hwan’s party) won only one seat and the opposition parties won the rest of the seats.²

However, beginning from the mid-1990s, with almost no exceptions, Gangnam residents have supported conservative candidates. In the 1996 general election, among the

seven available seats, five seats were won by the conservative ruling party, and continuously in the 2000 general election, five out of six seats were won by the conservative party.³ And up until now, this voting pattern has remained and Gangnam has since been equated with political conservatism. In particular, in the 2004 general election even when the liberal-reformist Uri Party won by landslide in Seoul in a response to the presidential impeachment of Roh Moo Hyun, six seats out of seven in Gangnam were taken by the conservative party. And in the 2012 general election, the conservative party won the entire seven seats in this area.

Figure 1. The map of the Gangnam region



Source: Korean National Statistical Office

Table 1. Presidential Electoral Results in the Gangnam Region (1992-2017) unit: %

Year	Candidates	Gangnam			Seoul	National
		Gangnam	Seocho	Songpa		
1992	Kim Young-Sam	44	42.43	38.42	36.41	41.96
	Kim Dae-Jung	27.55	29.52	34.42	37.74	33.82
1997	Lee Hoi-Chang	53.57	51.81	40.59	40.89	38.74
	Kim Dae-Jung	36.10	38.09	42.48	44.87	40.27
2002	Lee Hoi-Chang	57.48	55.83	48.18	44.95	46.58
	Roh Moo-Hyun	39.63	41.25	48.47	51.30	48.91
2007	Lee Myung-Bak	66.44	64.40	57.77	53.23	48.67
	Chung Dong-Young	14.68	16.10	21.32	24.50	26.14
2012	Park Geun-Hye	60.14	58.60	52.09	48.18	51.55
	Moon Jae-In	39.46	41.01	47.53	51.42	48.02
2017	Hong Joon-Pyo	26.78	25.63	22.40	20.78	24.03
	Moon Jae-In	35.36	36.43	40.30	42.34	41.08

Source: National Election Commission, http://info.nec.go.kr/main/main_load.xhtml
Compiled by the author

Table 2. General Electoral Results in the Gangnam Region (Unit: %)

	Seocho 1	Seocho 2	Gangnam 1	Gangnam 2	Gangnam 3`	Songpa 1	Songpa 2	Songpa 3
1992	New Political Reform 38.68	Democrat-ic Liberal 31.90	Unificatio-n National 46.1	Democrat-ic Liberal 35.50		Unificatio-n National 33.61	Democrat-ic 34.00	

1996	New Korea 48.56	New Korea 44.68	New Korea 38.13	No party 26.06		New Korea 43.28	New Korea 39.73	New Korea 31.95
2000	Grand National 55.34	Grand National 52.94	Grand National 56.46	Grand National 59.39		Grand National 54.77	Millennium -m Democrat -ic 48.40	
2004	Grand National 56.41	Grand National 54.23	Grand National 62.99	Grand National 57.50		Grand National 54.06	Grand National 49.32	Uri Party 38.23
2008	Grand National 75.01	Grand National 60.26	Grand National 64.90	Grand National 62.69		Grand National 61.61	Grand National 61.78	Democrat -ic 46.96
2012	Saenuri 59.10	Saenuri 60.12	Saenuri 65.32	Saenuri 59.47		Saenuri 52.75	Saenuri 49.94	Saenuri 51.37
2016	Saenuri 57.02	Saenuri 46.82	Saenuri 54.81	Democrat ic 51.46	Saenuri 57.80	Saenuri 43.98	Democrat -ic 44.00	Democrat -ic 44.88
2020	United Future 62.6	United Future 53.66	United Future 58.40	United Future 50.94	United Future 65.38	United Future 51.20	United Future 50.46	Democrat -ic 52.48

Note: Only the winning party indicated in the table

Source: National Election Commission, http://info.nec.go.kr/main/main_load.xhtml

Compiled by the author

What factors brought about this change from relatively liberal and progressive political orientation to the opposite in the Gangnam area in the mid-1990s? By the late 1980s and early 1990s before the economic crisis hit, high economic growth allowed most South Korean citizens to enjoy real wage increases and subsequently an improvement of living standards. By then, Korean society successfully produced a solid middle class. In the midst of economic boom, Gangnam illustrated a space where the upwardly-mobile upper-middle- or middle-class residents enjoyed modern, cultured, and comfortable lifestyles. Around the mid-1990s, the new rich represented by affluent Gangnam residents were often depicted in the media as having lavish lifestyles such as international travels and consumption of high-end foreign products. Living in Gangnam became gradually associated with cultural trend, privilege, and wealth. Above all, Gangnam's high property values and good educational environment made Gangnam more aspirational among ordinary citizens, which in turn raised real estate values even higher in Gangnam. Thus, Gangnam became more and more a distinctive and exclusive space in Seoul and in South Korea, as only those who had really high incomes or family wealth could afford to buy a home in Gangnam, unless they lived there before the property values skyrocketed. While Gangnam was an aspirational space, it was at the same time an object of social criticism as well. Gangnam residents were the biggest beneficiary of the real estate booms and their subsequent skyrocketing real estate values. Thus, from outsiders' eyes, Gangnam residents were the ones who made huge unearned incomes with pure luck and were seen as the undeserving rich (Yang 2018). Those who did not afford to own a home or did not benefit from the real estate booms stocked a feeling of frustration and resentment toward Gangnam homeowners and unfair economic

opportunities—the ways in which Gangnam residents accumulated their wealth without hard work and especially those who flipped their properties and earned astronomical values. In sum, Gangnam materialized a sort of contradictions of Korean capitalism—both the celebratory, upwardly-mobile middle class and a source of increasing economic gap in housing and wealth.

Gangnam's political conservatism is closely tied to Gangnam residents' exclusive identity—one that tries to maintain its current “superior” and “privileged” status by making distinctions between them and the rest of others. By doing so, Gangnam residents maintain (or appreciate) their high property values and effectively prevent others from gaining access to their space. In order to keep up with their property values at the certain level, residents of certain apartment complexes often engaged in collective action of not selling their houses below certain prices. Gangnam's exceptionally high property values and exclusive identity formed by its residents explain their voting pattern *against* the liberal-reformist party.

The liberal-reformist government's strong regulation and reform policies in the real estate market generated huge outcry among Gangnam homeowners. The Roh Moo Hyun government coming in power in the early 2000s had to deal with rising property values in the housing market, as the previous Kim Dae Jung government relaxed regulations in the real estate market to boost the economy after the economic crisis in the late 1990s (Kim and Kim 2014, 432). The Roh government aimed to stabilize housing prices for non-homeowners by regulating the highly heated real estate market and containing prevalent real estate speculation. In the early years, the Roh government promoted construction of public housing projects for lower-income families and adopted various levies for high value homeowners. In particular, the Comprehensive Real Estate Holding Tax Act (*chonghap pudongsanse*) was enacted, which imposed a levy on those who owned real estate with a tax standard value above 900 million Korean won. Given that expensive properties were concentrated in the Gangnam area and the average property values in Gangnam were much higher than the rest of the country, there were more Gangnam homeowners who were affected by the new act.⁴ However, in fact, those who were affected by the act and had to pay the Comprehensive tax was only 2 percent of the entire households in the nation, and among those who paid the Comprehensive tax, those who owned more than two houses amounted to 61.3 percent (Lee 2018). Nevertheless, the conservative media and the conservative party alike criticized Roh's policy harshly by identifying the Comprehensive act as “tax bombs” (*sekum p'okt'an*) and “punitive” policy, and tried to capitalize on the opportunity as appealing to Gangnam residents. For example, an article in the *Chosun Ilbo* wrote in 2007:

‘Holding tax bomb’ (*poiyuse p'okt'an*) is coming to approach in reality, and discontents among innocent victims who did not speculate in real estate are escalating. The retired who do not earn high incomes and have no idea about how to pay the tax, homeowners who have had only one house for long, and salaried men who just moved to look for better environments for their children's education are those victims. As the holding tax increases 3-4 times more than last year, they strongly resist, asking if the increases in housing prices are due to their faults. (Kim and Lee 2007)

Citing a case of an old retired couple who owned an apartment valued at 1,300,000,000 won in Gangnam but earned only 700,000 won a month and had to pay about 5,500,000 won for tax, this article emphasizes that the adoption of new real estate taxes hold “innocent” citizens as hostage. Both conservative media and politicians effectively invoked a sense of resentment and unfairness, as well as uneasiness about increasing taxes among Gangnam residents. Even though the new tax schemes did not affect those whose property values were not high

enough, Gangnam homeowners widely shared a feeling that the Roh government attacked Gangnam residents and equated Gangnam residents with speculators. The dominant feeling of being threatened by the Roh government led the majority of the Gangnam population to accumulate antipathy toward the Roh government and his party.

Existing literature in political economy of housing can provide some insights about Gangnam's political conservatism. In their seminal work, Logan and Molotch (1987) argue that growth politics mobilize land-based interests and residents vote for parties that favor their economic interests. In a similar line, political scientist Ben Ansell provides strong evidence on the relationship between homeownership and political behaviors. Specifically, homeowners who experience house price appreciation will become less supportive of both redistribution and social insurance spending, since higher house prices mean more valuable private insurance and hence should lead to lower demand from homeowners for social insurance as a hedge against such risks (Ansell 2014). Likewise, Gangnam residents whose property values are very high and keep appreciating tend to strongly oppose economic regulation, higher taxes, and redistribution by supporting the conservative party that was believed to maintain the status quo of Gangnam through deregulation and tax exemptions.

Gangnam Identity and Collective Sense of Privilege and Exclusion

Isn't our country socialist, is it? It is democracy and capitalist. Then, why does the [leftist] government pressure the haves so hard? (an author's interview with a housewife in her 60s living in Gangnam, conducted in July 2014)

The interview quote may represent the collective sentiment widely shared by Gangnam residents. While it is true that conservative politicians are generally elected in this region without exception, their unwavering support for conservatism does not necessarily mean that they are keen on the conservative party or its candidates. Rather, they vote for a conservative party because they hold strong opposition against its reformist counterpart. The above interview quote may sound that Gangnam residents' antipathy toward the reformist political force comes from anti-socialism and anti-communism. Although the older generations in their 70s and 80s share intense fear and hate toward North Korea and communism, criticism against the reformist forces are closely tied to their class interests and consciousness.

The slogan of "equality" by the reformist forces is seen as deeply problematic among Gangnam residents. They consider their economic success is the outcome of hard work, diligence, and self-development. Equality feels like wealth reaped by hard-working people are taken away to give to low-income people. This value discourages and disincentivizes hard-working people by not rewarding them enough, and it violates the meritocratic system and a sense of fairness. It is believed to be fair for those who worked hard and made incessant efforts to earn more and get rewards. But in their view the reformist forces try to punish those who legitimately enjoy the economic benefits through excessive taxes and other economic sanctions.

In his book *Privilege* (2011), sociologist Shamus Khan describes how a private elite school educates and nurtures the new American elite and notices that elite schools emphasize meritocratic values in achieving certain social positions. Unlike the old elites whose positions were more likely ascribed and who shared a strong sense of entitlement, the new elites believe that individual talents and hard work are the keys to success, thus their good fortunes are considered the outcome of winning in the competitive games. By embodying cultural capital and privilege, the new elites legitimize social hierarchy and inequality. Although the context is different, Khan's explanation of the American new elite has a parallel with Gangnam's new middle class. Gangnam residents believe that their economic affluence and

privilege were *achieved* with educational attainment and cultural capital, not as simple luck or chance, thus their comforts should be seen as *legitimate*. The reformist discourse on equality is seen as not only unrealistic but also harmful.

Because of their strong belief in meritocracy and elitism, they cannot agree with the reformist agendas on redistribution or social welfare. They view that the reformist party and its politicians try to destroy the established order and to rebuild a new order. Yet they share a deep sense of doubts and disbelief about the new world. For example, the Moon Jae-In government's "war against accumulated evils" (*chokpyech'ongsan*) was received in a profoundly problematic way. In their view, not only does the reformist government demonize the rich—specifically, those in Gangnam, but what the reformist political forces do is also nothing more than forming another establishment (*kidukkwon*) (author's interview in January, 2022). The new establishment, which consist of former *undonggwon* and progressive intellectuals, is considered not more competent than the old establishment and even more corrupt and hypocritic. While the left clamors for social justice, morality, and political reform, when it comes to their real lives, they do not live up to their political values. Politicians in the reformist camp often speculated in the real estate, mobilized personal networks to send their children to prestigious schools, and even engaged in sexual harassment. Thus, politicians in the reformist party often become objects of deep hate or contempt. The quote below based on the interview with middle-aged housewives in Gangnam demonstrates their perceptions about the so-called progressive forces:

Isn't it a characteristic that the leftists share? While they all studied in the United States, they claim to be anti-Americanists. They themselves are the graduates of Seoul National University, but they argue for abolishing Seoul National University. It's just ridiculous. Park Won Soon's son or daughter went to study in Switzerland. Is that right? People say that they struggle to support their children studying in China [because it costs a lot of money], but studying in Switzerland, does it make sense? (Chung, 2011)

While Gangnam residents' strong opposition against the reformist party can be seen as a "rational" calculation of Gangnam residents—a decision that the reformist party does not represent their political identity and class interests, there exists an emotional dimension, a deep sense of hate and contempt toward the working class and its representatives.⁵ The working class has often been considered poor, uneducated, unsophisticated, and easily agitated, which are the contrasting characteristics of Gangnam's educated and cultured residents. Former presidents Kim Dae Jung or Roh Moo Hyun were not popular among Gangnam residents not just because of their "radical" and "leftist" policy agendas. It was also because both of them were high school graduates and were considered not culturally refined. Especially, Roh's speeches were often seen as rough and tacky. Even though they were in fact knowledgeable and cultured, it did not matter because their class background was vulgar and they did not share the Gangnam *habitus* in Bourdieu (1996)'s term. A Gangnam resident's remark quoted in a magazine in 2012 before the presidential election demonstrates that beyond their political position, Gangnam residents share a deep emotional animosity toward whom they see as the leftist:

Gangnam residents do not just vote for the Saenury Party (the current conservative People Power Party's predecessor) because they believe that the party would raise the real estate values. It is because of their strong pride that they do not want to support the left party supported by Gangbuk commoners (*seomin*) or coarse young people. Do you think people in this neighborhood would vote for the left party if the leftists

deregulate the restrictions on urban redevelopment plans? Like *cholla* people overwhelmingly vote for the Minju party to prevent the Saenury party from coming in power, people here vote in the same way. In order to avoid the horrendous situation where people who are hostile toward Gangnam and disregard Gangnam's success and its values come in power again, Gangnam residents go to the voting stations tenaciously. (*The Hankyoreh* 21, April 6, 2012)

Seen above, while it is true that many Gangnam residents disagree with policies adopted by the liberal/reformist party, particularly regarding the real estate and housing policies, the feeling of repulsion does not necessarily come from specific policies. Rather, it is closer to a visceral reaction. It is from a strong disregard toward the lower class (often represented by Gangbuk) and their representative reformist party. Gangnam residents believe that those who are on the opposite side of the political spectrum are culturally and economically inferior, and sharing similar ideas with them becomes deplorable.

Most Gangnam homeowners commonly share discontent about the reformist government acts. They commonly said that the reformist/leftist governments criminalize or demonize Gangnam homeowners. Gangnam homeowners is that the homes that they own are their private properties and the government should not violate private property rights and "individual freedoms".

Yet, another interesting part is that not *all* of Gangnam residents are homeowners with high-valued properties or the upper-middle class in terms of their objective economic positions. Almost half of Gangnam residents live in Gangnam as renters-tenants, whose economic interests do not necessarily align with those of Gangnam homeowners. While it is not easy to disentangle the voting patterns of homeowners and non-homeowners within the Gangnam region, given the overwhelming supports for the conservative party, it seems that a number of non-homeowners also vote for the conservative party. Even if they do not own a property in Gangnam, *choosing* to live and rent in Gangnam means that they can afford to pay tens of thousands of dollars for *chonse*, as *chonse* expenses in Gangnam are almost half or more than the housing prices. Whatever reasons they had in living in Gangnam—whether it be children's education, convenient living environments, or something else, they acknowledge Gangnam's values and aspire to belong to Gangnam. For example, most parents to move to Gangnam for children's education would agree that getting into a prestigious college is key to future success and sending their children to elite schools is one of the most important tasks for their families. Others also move to Gangnam, as they are deeply emotionally connected to Gangnam. Those who lived in Gangnam in the past come back to Gangnam, as they feel they do not belong to somewhere else. Or some aspire to live and belong to Gangnam due to Gangnam's "special" and exclusive characteristics. As they buy into the idea of Gangnam as a distinctive space, and have a strong desire to belong to the exclusive world, they tend to strongly internalize a Gangnam identity.

Most Gangnam residents believe that higher property values there are fair, given the well-maintained infrastructure, convenient living environments, and most importantly, residents' higher educational level and cultural capital (Yang 2018). By making distinctions from both parvenus (*cholbu*) who got rich overnight but lacked in cultural taste and non-Gangnam residents who cannot afford to live in Gangnam, Gangnam residents positioned themselves as members of the educated, cultured, and affluent middle class. Thus, they legitimized Gangnam's privileged position.

Conclusion

The 2022 presidential election concluded with the victory of the conservative candidate Yoon Seok-Yeol by the slightest margin ever among all the presidential elections

after democratization. While there were new, interesting voting pattern in this election, such as the gender divide and young Korean men's increasing support for anti-feminism and the right, the same old pattern still remained: the overwhelming support for the conservative candidate in the Taegu-Kyungbook and Gangnam regions. As the Moon government, which came to power with Park's impeachment and the Candlelight Rallies, failed in fulfilling its reformist promises about social and political changes—such as stabilizing rapidly increasing housing prices, achieving fairness and social justice, the moribund conservative party with the impeachment of Park Geun-Hye gained traction again. Accusing the Moon government and its political allies of the corrupt, incompetent “establishment,” the conservative party successfully put up the banner of “regime change” (*chong'ggwon kyoch'e*) and easily gained support from those who were dissatisfied with Moon. In particular, Gangnam residents who were outraged by the recent increase of property taxes (Comprehensive Real Estate Taxes) and TK citizens who were deeply dissatisfied with Moon's policy regarding North Korea were the two main groups that constituted the anti-Moon coalition.

Illustrating collective sentiments and narratives widely shared by citizens in Gangnam, this paper analyzed why these citizens have unwaveringly supported the conservative party. Using the concept of anxious rationalists, I analyzed strong conservatism widely shared by Gangnam citizens. I argued that Gangnam citizens' support for conservative is mainly driven by their class interests as homeowners of high property values living in an exclusive urban space. Their social and economic interests mattered in voting for the conservative party, yet the deep-seated hate and repulsion against the left-leaning forces was even more important. From Gangnam citizens' perspective, the left accused them of being selfish and immoral speculators and tried to punish and take away from those haves. Popular political basis of the right-wing politics is not, however, completely formed and reproduced by ordinary citizens. There are political entrepreneurs—be it politicians, the local media, or intellectuals—that fuel animosity and anger and exploit it on their political ends.

While particular contents and contexts that constitute the popular basis of the right-wing politics in Korea are different from those in other countries, the ways in which ordinary citizens were dissatisfied and threatened with certain social and economic changes—whether it is real or imagined, and the emotions of anger, fear, and hate were activated were common with other countries. Internalizing a feeling of victimhood, they draw strong ground boundaries between them and others.

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¹ Info.nec.go.kr. In Seoul as a whole, Roh Tae Woo received 29.95 percent, Kim Young Sam 29.14 percent, and Kim Dae Jung 32.62 percent of the entire votes. Roh Tae Woo received 36.64 percent, Kim Young Sam 28.03 percent, and Kim Dae Jung 27.04 percent in the entire nation.

² Info.nec.go.kr

³ The only district in the Gangnam area where a liberal/reformist candidate usually won was the third district of Songpa (Songpa pyung electoral district). Traditionally, more of relatively poorer residents from the Cholla region resided in this area and apartments for low-income residents were also built in this area. Thus, the residents' political identity was distinct from the rest of the Gangnam area. But as new urban development projects and gentrification continued over the last decade, more affluent residents moved into this area and the voting pattern may be likely to change in the future.

⁴ Put how many percent got actually affected

⁵ This is not only unique among Gangnam residents. Historically, a strong anti-working-class sentiment has long existed in Korean society. Those who belong to the working class themselves often tried to hide their class identity and wanted to climb the social ladder to get out of their class

background. This is partly related to a strong historical legacy of *yangban* culture that only valued mental work and knowledge production and disregarded physical labor, yet harsh labor repression during the authoritarian regimes by identifying the working class people with a “dirty” and “dangerous” group often agitated by North Korea and communists produced strong antipathy toward the working class as well. For more historical details, see Koo (2001) and Lee (2007).