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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE ANALYSIS ON RELATIONSHIP TYPE BETWEEN KOREAN SUCCESSIVE  
GOVERNMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL NGO

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to recognize how Korean political environment affects the activity of environmental NGO. Thus, this study analyzed the relationship between Korean successive government and environmental NGO. This research focused environmental NGO as a main sector in Korean civil movement. This study analyzed Korean Federation for Environmental Movement as a delegate of environmental movement group. The research method of this paper was basically established based on new institutionalist perspective. The relationship between government and environmental NGO was independent relationship at Kim Young-sam Government period. The relationship between government and environmental NGO was cooperative relationship at Kim Dae-joong Government period. And the relationship between government and environmental NGO was cooperative relationship at Roh Moo-hyun Government period. Comparable mutual recognition between government and Korean Federation for Environmental Movement was formed at Roh Moo-hyun Government period. This phenomenon is because the relationship type between government and Korean Federation for Environmental Movement at the former Kim Dae-jung Government period lasted. In terms of historical institutionalism, the sustainability of relationship type is due to the characteristics of path dependency and stability which institutions related to environment contain. Finally, the relationship between government and environmental NGO was dominant relationship at Lee Myung-bak Administration period.

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INTRODUCTION

NGO affects the decision making process of national policy and leads social change (Bak, 2002). In addition, NGO plays a role to restrain state power (Bak, 2002). In particular, knowledge-based society and information society are the basic nature of modern society. Therefore, the role of NGO which promotes communication among each part of society is very important. This social trend became important driving force in conducting the study on NGO in various field of human and social science. For example, researches which is based on the understanding of civil society have been conducted in the field of sociology (Jeong 2005; Jo, 2001; Kim, 2003). And the studies on NGO tried to approach from the perspective of power relation in the field of politics (Choe, 2003; Kim, 2004; Sin, 2000). Also, studies on the decision making process of policy and NGO came true in the field of public administration (An, 2002; Hwang, 2009; So, 2002). In addition, integrated approaches to united these sectoral studies have been made.

Environmental movement in Korea has been changed related with political, economic and social alteration. The process of fast economic growth brought about a lot of environmental issues. This fact led the collective behaviour of a lot of citizens in environmental movement. And political circumstance influences the movement ability of environmental movement organizations. In addition, it is analyzed that the relationship between government and environmental NGO is a factor to affect the movement capacity of the environmental NGO. New institutionalism agrees that structural aspect such as the relationship between government and environmental NGO is a major factor to determine the results of collective behavior (Heinrich & Lynn, 2000).

Therefore, the relationship analysis between government and environmental NGO based on New institutionalism can provide important foundation in analyzing the movement capacity of environmental NGO. Thus, this research will analyze the relationship type between government and environmental NGO.

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## PROCEDURE

### Subject

The meaning which environmental movement contains in Korean society movement is very important. Accordingly, this research focused environmental NGO as a main sector in Korean civil movement. And this research analyzed Korean Federation for Environmental Movement as a delegate of environmental movement group. This research was conducted from the viewpoint of new institutionalism. This study analyzed the relationship between government and environmental NGO as a component of political environment which influenced the movement ability of environmental movement group.

### Research Method

The research method of this paper was basically established from the standpoint of new institutionalist perspective. Firstly, this research focused the institution as middle range dimension which new institutionalist presented. Secondly, this study was based on analysis method focusing on literature and data. This study applied both comparative approach method and historical approach method in order to analyze how the relationship between government and environmental NGO made a transition at each government period.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Kim Young-sam Administration Period

It is analyzed that the relationship between government and Environmental NGO was independent relationship before Kim Young-sam Government period. State was not aware of environmental issues fully before Kim Young-sam Government period (Sin, 1999). It was interpreted that NGO's resistance related to nuclear power plant construction caused direct conflict with nation before Kim Young-sam Government period (Sin, 1999). The rigid relationship between governments and civil society groups tends to weaken resistant social movements and suppress the organization of voluntary group (Jo, 2000). But the hostile relationship between government and environmental NGO changed into new relationship since pro-democracy movement in 1987. Pro-democracy movement which had started in the political area extended to social and economic area and changed the relationship between government and environmental NGO fundamentally (Bak, 2000).

Kim Young-sam Government reviewed the legislation to activate the activity and participation of civil society organizations (Bak, 1999). In other words, it is analyzed that Kim Young-sam Government carried out legislation to promote various activities such as the establishment and operation of civil society organizations. Such symbolic cases are to abolish and amend 'Act on the Registration of Society Organizations' and to establish 'Act on the Regulation of Donation Collections' Next, Kim Young-sam Government abolished 'Act on prohibition of Donation Collections' and established 'Act on the Regulation of Donation Collections' in 1995 so that various activities of civil society organizations could be activated.

Kim Young-sam Government allowed civil society organizations to recruit donated money and goods on the basis of 'Act on the Regulation of Donation Collections'. And Kim Young-sam Government regulated the indiscriminate recruitment of donated money and goods by civil society organizations through this act. In addition, Kim Young-sam Government induced the proper use of donated money and goods by civil society organizations through this act. In fact, financial problem is core task in the establishment and operation of civil society organizations. Therefore, it is interpreted that abolishing 'Act on prohibition of Donation Collections' and establishing 'Act on the Regulation of Donation Collections' provide large foundation to activate various activities including the establishment and operation of the civil society organizations.

After all, Kim Young Sam Government showed a positive stance in amending or repealing relevant laws which acted as negative factors to various activities such as the establishment and operation of civil society groups. Thus, it is estimated that Kim Young-sam government contributed to creating basis to activate the activity of civil society organizations (Bak, 2002). However, Kim Young-sam Government didn't support Korean Federation for Environmental Movement along with other NGO actively and didn't guarantee participation in the policy process institutionally. Accordingly, it is analyzed that the relationship between government and Korean Federation for Environmental Movement was independent relationship. In particular, Kim Young-sam Government didn't not only recognize environmental NGO including Korean Federation for Environmental Movement as equal partner in policy decision making and but also carry out active support or passive repression (Kim, J. & Kim, Y., 2003). Thus, the relationship between government and environmental NGO exposed the characteristics of neutral relationship (Kim, J. & Kim, Y., 2003).

And the independent relationship between government and environmental NGO is affected by international NGO (Kim, J. & Kim, Y., 2003). Korean Federation for Environmental Movement developed international solidarity activities with 'Friends of the Earth' which was an International NGO at Kim Young-sam administration period. Kim Young-sam Government was not at the position to actively support or inhibit the activity of Korean Federation for Environmental Movement which united international NGO. Because Kim Young-sam Government had to consider public opinion of international community and diplomatic relations. Therefore, Kim Young-sam Government expressed neutral stance on the activity of the international solidarity of Korean Federation for Environmental Movement.

### Kim Dae-jung Administration Period

Kim Dae-jung Government regarded civil society organizations as an important collaborator in managing state affairs. Thus Kim Dae-jung Government concentrated on institutionalizing the legal system to build open political system so that civil society organizations could participate in state affairs (Bak, 1999). Accordingly, the representative cases of various legal systems which Kim Dae-jung Government introduced were 'Corruption Prevention Act', 'Act on the

Information Disclosure of Public Institution', 'Residents' Audit Demand System', and 'Residents' Proposition System'. In fact, 'Act on the Information Disclosure of Public Institution' was established at Kim Young-sam Government period. Since 'Act on the Information Disclosure of Public Institution' was implemented at Kim Dae-jung Administration period in 1998, civil society organizations utilized this law as a means of controlling government. Namely, civil society organizations investigated the reality of information disclosure on government and administration institution and issued a research report on the basis of 'Act on the Information Disclosure of Public Institution' since 1999. In addition, civil society organizations launched 'National Network for Expense Account Public Movement' in 2000 (Song, 2012). Accordingly, civil society organizations prevented the budget waste of government and administrative institutions and promoted the movement for taxpayer sovereignty recovery through this network (Song, 2012).

When improper administrative actions and unreasonable administrative system violate residents' right, Residents' Audit Demand System is a institution that residents can demand direct audit with more than a certain number of residents' countersignature. Kim Dae-jung Government revised 'Local Autonomy Law' in 1999 and implemented Residents' Audit Demand System across the country since 2000. Eventually Kim Dae-jung Government regarded civil society organizations as an important collaborator in managing state affairs so it concentrated on institutionalizing the legal system so that civil society organizations could participate in state affairs (Bak, 1999). This cooperative relationship is the relationship type that Korean Federation for Environmental Movement supports and leads government's environmental policy on the basis of mutually positive recognition between government and Korean Federation for Environmental Movement.

In particular, such a relationship is possible when there is high social prestige for NGO and NGO's activity gains expertise. There was high social prestige for environmental NGOs such as Korean Federation for Environmental Movement at the time (Kimhogi, 2000; Bak, Jang, Jeong & Jo, 2002). And collaborative relationship formed on the basis of NGO's expertise. In other words, Korean Federation for Environmental Movement has been building professional organizations such as Civic Institute for Environmental Research and Center to Counsel Environmental Law. And Korean Federation for Environmental Movement developed investigation with specialists. Therefore, Korean Federation for Environmental Movement secured the expertise so could form cooperative relationship with government at the period. Because collaborative relationships can be formed at comparable positions between government and NGO (Kim, 2000).

### **Roh Moo-hyun Administration Period**

President Roh Moo-hyun made many efforts to overcome regionalism, the chronic disease of the Korean society (Jeon, 2010). It is analyzed that these consistent efforts for democratization and regionalism settlement implemented by President Roh Moo-hyun affected the relationship between government and civil society organizations.

First, Roh Moo-hyun Government organized chief secretary's offices for public participation and civil society in Blue House so that many civil society organizations could actively participate in decision making process of national policy at central level. And Roh Moo-hyun Government made the forum for public participation in presidential website in order to build a network system which could activate the communication among general public, civil society organizations and national administrators. In this way, Roh Moo-hyun Government built network system for interaction at central level and was in search of the institutional method to converge and reflect the progressive and critical views of widespread general public and civil society groups in national policy making process. To this end, Roh Moo-hyun Government tried to introduce and implement systems for 'Residents' Recall', 'Residents' Litigation', and 'Residents' Referendum'.

Roh Moo-hyun Government activated the participation of local civil society organizations and tried to check local councils and governments through these bills. As a result of these efforts, legislative activities such as systems for residents' recall, residents' litigation and residents' referendum which are oriented towards grassroots democracy have been activated. Eventually, it is evaluated that systems for Residents' Recall, Residents' Litigation and Residents' Referendum are a very organic and efficient tool to check and criticize local government and councils through subjective navigation and action of civil society groups. First, Residents' Referendum System is an institution to decide important policy issues of local government by inhabitants' vote. 'Residents' referendum on attracting the disposal facility for radioactive waste in Boonan' was carried out through Residents' Referendum System in 2004. And 'residents' referendum on combination of Cheongju-City and Cheongwoncounty in Chungcheongbuk Province' and 'residents' referendum on administrative structure in Jeju Province' were carried out in 2005.

Next, Resident's Litigation System is an institution that civil society organizations criticize unlawful and illegal action done by local council and government and carry out inhabitants' lawsuit against local councilor and governor. Civil society organizations carry out inhabitants' lawsuit against unlawful and illegal action including the illegal expense of operational cost by local councilor and governor on the basis of Resident's Litigation System. The institutional significance of Resident Litigation System is to provide the opportunity which can reform and innovate local parliamentary politics and administration through institutional measures. Meanwhile, Residents' Recall System is a device to participate in local politics that local residents and local civil society organizations as the subject of community can check and criticize local councils and government more powerful and actively than systems for Residents' Litigation and Residents' Referendum. The representative case of Residents' Recall System was residents' recall on Hanam City mayor related to the establishment of crematory facility in 2007. In the end, Roh Moo-hyun Administration institutionalized various legislation so that civil society groups could participate in the decision making process of national and regional policy. Therefore, it is analyzed that the relationship type between government and Korean Federation for Environmental Movement was the

cooperative relationship type at Roh Moo-hyun Government period. In addition, comparable mutual recognition between government and Korean Federation for Environmental Movement was formed at Roh Moo-hyun Government period. This phenomenon is because the relationship type between government and Korean Federation for Environmental Movement at the former Kim Dae-jung Government period lasted. In terms of historical institutionalism, it is analyzed that the sustainability of relationship type is due to the characteristics of path dependency and stability which institutions related to environment contain.

### Lee Myung-bak Administration Period

It is analyzed that the relationship type between government and Korean Federation for Environmental Movement was dominant relationship type at Lee Myung-bak Administration period. The characteristics of dominant relationship between government and civil society group are formal civil participation system, the reduction of government institute, the persistence of government regulation and weakening autonomy through direct financial support (Kim & Kim, 2003). It is estimated that Lee Myung-bak Administration applied the various control mechanisms and decreased the autonomy of NGO (Bak, 2010). And Lee Myung-bak Administration stucked to communicating with only specific NGO. In addition, Lee Myung-bak Administration approached supporting policy politically so caused conflict with most of civil society groups. Based on these points, it is analyzed that the relationship between government and Korean Federation for Environmental Movement was dominant relationship.

However, in terms of expertise level and program originality which Korean Federation for Environmental Movement secured, it is evaluated that Korean Federation for Environmental Movement secured independence and autonomy somewhat. On the basis of this point, it is interpreted that government and Korean Federation for Environmental Movement formed cooperative relationship partly.

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The purpose of this research is to recognize how Korean political environment affects the activity of environmental NGO. Thus, this study analyzed the relationship between Korean successive government and environmental NGO. Firstly, the relationship between government and environmental NGO was independent relationship at Kim Young-sam Government period. Next, the relationship between government and environmental NGO was cooperative relationship at Kim Dae-joong Government period.

And the relationship between government and environmental NGO was cooperative relationship at Roh Moo-hyun Government period. Comparable mutual recognition between government and Korean Federation for Environmental Movement was formed at Roh Moo-hyun Government period. This phenomenon is because the relationship type between government and Korean Federation for Environmental Movement at the former Kim Dae-jung Government period

lasted. In terms of historical institutionalism, the sustainability of relationship type is due to the characteristics of path dependency and stability which institutions related to environment contain. Finally, the relationship between government and environmental NGO was dominant relationship at Lee Myung-bak Administration period. This paper focused on Korean Federation for Environmental Movement as a representative environmental NGO in Korea. Thus, this research has many limitations to universalize the strategic and tactical natures of Korean environmental NGO. In addition, civil society organizations and environmental NGOs have political nature and sense. Accordingly, civil society organizations and environmental NGOs could't disclose a lot of group materials, so this study was not able to analyze data enough. Also, this paper was not able to examine financial element, scale of member, and composition sector of Korean Federation for Environmental Movement due to insufficient materials.

In the future, we should carry out our research more systematically and in depth so need complement the limitation of this paper. In addition, we ought to analyze global strategy and tactic of Korean Federation for Environmental Movement. And we need to review international solidarity with other international NGO by Korean Federation for Environmental Movement. Afterwards, we need enlarge research object into global civil society group and environmental NGO and compare internal civil society group and environmental NGO with global civil society group and environmental NGO. Consequently, we should erect universal criteria to study strategic natures of civil society group and environmental NGO. In the future, we ought to study Korean natures of domestic civil society group and environmental NGO through making a comparison between internal civil society group and environmental NGO and global civil society group and environmental NGO. Finally, we should study strategic and tactical natures of global environmental NGO according to the change of political environment, by making a comparison between the functional nature of domestic environmental NGO and the functional nature of global environmental NGO.

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