

Public and Private in South Korea's Education Reform Vocabulary: An Evolving Statist Culture of Education Policy

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Statism is a political economy that prevails in many East Asian countries. This paper explores its negative role in South Korea's education reform since the restoration of civilian democracy in 1993. It takes note of South Koreans' aberrant use of the terms 'public education' and 'private education' and the frame of reference for policy discourses based thereupon. It then shows how this frame of reference restricts the grasp of structural educational problems and the practical context in which to explore policy measures for what the policy makers pursue, liberalisation and diversification. Finally, it relates the aberrant use of the terms to a statist culture that has evolved through the years of military elite's developmental policy and continues to determine the scope of discourses in a post-military era. By doing this, the paper seeks to expand the political economy discourses of statism and institutionalism in the field of education.

Political economy of education, statism, institutionalism, private education, public education, education reform, Korea

INABILITY TO REFORM EDUCATION

To note in South Korea's education reform during a decade of civilian democracy, 1993-2003, is the phenomenon that each government begins with a promise of paradigm shifts but ends up business as usual (Cheung and Scott, 2003). Both civilian groups, parents, teachers and other interested parties, and government leaders agree that big changes are in order for solving structural problems in education and coping with the new era of democracy and globalisation. Central to the problems is intense competition for university entrance basically due to the state's rigid control of education and the resultant uniformity of teaching and learning (Kim, 1999). The solution is pretty clear to both civilians and government leaders: liberalise the education system and diversify teaching and learning. Nevertheless, the reform policies that the civilian groups envision and the policy makers actually develop are usually a set of 'dos and don'ts' handed down by the state with limited options for schools and universities to choose from. Thus, the rigidity of state control remains, so too do the uniformity of teaching and learning and, in effect, the intensity of entrance competition.

The literature offers a few possible explanations of the unsuccessful education reform. A typical case can be what South Korean sceptics bring up, that the policy makers, and the government itself, have no real desire for education reform because of their vested interests (for example, Lee, 1999). A solid yet indirect scholarly support for this explanation may be Schoppa's (1991) analysis of Japan's failure in education reform in the 1980s. In his study, Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone's liberalising and diversifying education reform drive was frustrated by the so-called 'immobilist politics' of Ministry of Education officials and Liberal Democratic politicians in the Diet, who cared for their own interests more than for their government's agendas. Eventually,

thus, Nakasone's reform drive became scaled down to the policies of state-dictated liberalisation and diversification similar to what South Koreans employed later. South Korea's education system was built on the foundation left by the Japanese. After their departure, policy makers persistently borrowed from them not only policy ideas but the policy-making procedures permitting bureaucratic manipulation. For this reason, Schoppa's point can bear upon South Korea.

Another explanation can be inferred from the so-called 'institutionalist' case introduced by the circle of scholars in political economy who disagree with the statist interpretation of the role of the military elite's strong state in economic development. The statist holds that South Korea's miraculous economic development, similarly to Japan's and Prussia's, was due to the state's enlightened control and management of the economic activity of civil society with priority on development (for example, Amsden, 1994). The institutionalist says this account is too simple to be true because although state policies may well initiate economic development, they cannot sustain it. The reason is that institutions in civil society, especially institutionalised state policies, can later on filter and often frustrate new policies no matter how strongly they are handed down (for example, Evans, 1992). Even now, in this view, the developmental state's statist policies can still remain entrenched in the education system as self-sustaining institutions and inhibit changes. In fact, most vocal in opposing liberalising and diversifying policies have been schools and universities, which were framed within, and are benefiting most from, the entrenched institutional set-up that provokes entrance competition (for example, Kim, 1997; Lee 1999).

While basically not denying such possible explanations, this paper explores another area of concern, which may shed some new light on the issue. It takes note of South Koreans' aberrant use of the terms 'public education' and 'private education' and the frame of reference for policy discourses based thereupon. It then shows how this frame of reference restricts the grasp of structural educational problems and the practical context in which to seek liberalisation and diversification. Finally, it relates the aberrant use of the terms to a statist culture that has evolved through the military years and continues to determine the scope of educational policy discourses.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EDUCATION AND EDUCATION POLICY

Theoretically, the concepts of public and private education emerge upon the state's intervention in education. Before state intervention, one can say, education as a service is an object of trade on the market. With state intervention, then, the education market is divided into a **public** sphere, in which the state sets up and operates educational institutions, and a **private** sphere, which operates according to market rules¹. Public education refers to the educational services that are supplied in the public sphere, and private education to those that are traded in the private sphere. More simply, public education occurs in public schools while private education takes place in private schools.

Admittedly, this distinction may not always accurately reflect the reality, for state intervention varies in degree and in kind. In Smith's (1904, p.182) vision, for instance, public education was that for which the state would pay "a very small expense" in order to "facilitate . . . encourage . . . and . . . even impose upon almost the whole body of the people the necessity of acquiring those most essential parts of education". The state might establish its own schools and charge affordable fees. Or it might partially fund private schools to educate as many pupils as possible with limited resources. Smith, however, advanced this vision a century before his country launched a national system of public education. Since the latter event, state involvement in and commitment to public

¹ The public sphere here is not completely outside the market if the latter is defined as the place of trade, for education in the public sphere still involves some forms of trade, such as miscellaneous fees and reduced tuition fees.

education grew until it came to offer primary and secondary education to all with small or no fees, and to make higher education available to all qualified and desirous individuals at low fees. The state in many countries now does not need to rely on private schools for “facilitating, encouraging, and even imposing . . . the most essential parts of education”. As a rule, it leaves private schools alone so that they can pursue their private interest freely and independently so long as they meet minimal standards. The South Korean use of the terms is aberrant.

The simple distinction provides policy-making and study with guidelines for determining what problems to address and what not, and what measures to employ and what not, for public and private education. For example, when the governments in North America lately decided partially to fund private schools for the reason of their efficiency, with endorsement by such studies as Chubb and Moe (1990), the critics argued that public monies should not be given to private schools for the simple reason of their efficiency. They did so on the ground that such monies were raised for the public interest, which public schools served, not for the private interest entertained by private schools. In fact, most of the reform policies employed North America did not focus on assisting private schools but, rather, on improving efficiency in public schools by introducing such elements of private education as choice and competition while maintaining their integrity as institutions of public education.

THE ABERRANT CONCEPTS OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EDUCATION AND REFORM AGENDAS

In the South Korean usage, however, the terms refer to different objects. ‘Public education’ (*konggyoyug*) means an education that takes place in the regular schools of all levels (primary schools, middle schools, high schools and universities) whether they are public or private institutions. ‘Private education’ (*sagyoyug*) stands for an education that occurs outside the regular schools. (Henceforth, these terms will be placed in quotation marks when used in the South Korean sense.) A study conducted on behalf of Korea Development Institute (KDI), a major government think tank for economic policies, distinguishes them in the following way²:

‘Public education’ means the institutionalised form of education that the state controls, including education in state, public and private schools at all levels. ‘Private education’ means those educational activities that occur outside the school in such forms as after-school day cramming lessons at home and in *haguon* [street cramming schools]. (Kim et al., 1997, p.9)

This study, then, lists further examples of ‘private education’: home-delivered daily drill sheets, extra-hour cramming sessions in the regular schools, television cramming programs provided by the Educational Broadcasting System (EBS), and computer-based cramming lessons.

Strictly, this exemplification contradicts the given definition, because the in-school extra-hour cramming sessions are directed by the Ministry of Education, and the EBS is a state-run institution. Both can therefore be said to be ‘institutionalised forms of education that the state controls’. Moreover, street cramming schools and even home-based tutoring sessions are not entirely outside state control: the former is said to be ‘supervised and guided’ by the state and the latter banned by law (Law Concerning the Establishment and Operation of *Haguon*). Even so, however, it is clear at least that the study’s authors mean by ‘public education’ an education that takes place within the regular school during the regular school day, and by ‘private education’ what occurs outside the regular school and after the school day. It is also apparent that the hard

² The study was published by the Korean Association of Researchers in Educational Finance and Economics (KAREFE) and partially distributed by the Ministry of Education.

core of what is referred to by 'private education' consists in cramming practices in preparation for university entrance competition.

The contrasting of 'public education' with 'private education' now yields a frame of reference for policy discourses. Since education normally takes place in the regular school—more precisely, since the regular school is there for conducting education normally—'public education' is normal and desirable. Whereas, the cramming practices of 'private education' outside the regular school are not normal: they perform the unnecessary functions of regurgitating what has been taught in the regular schools. Moreover, they are offered in return for high fees and require extra time of the students who have already spent the day in their regular schools. Therefore, they are undesirable. From this, it is inferred that the state's education policy has to promote 'public education' and suppress 'private education'.

This frame of reference is well represented in the key policy agendas repeatedly adopted by all civilian governments and in the topics of major policy documents. One such policy agenda concerns 'private education expenditures' (*sagyoyug-bi*), which studies have estimated as far exceeding 'public education expenditures' (*konggyoyug-bi*) (Kong and Paek, 1994), or as 'intolerably high' (Kim, 1997), or 'the highest in the world' (KITA, 2003). At issue here is of course not that South Koreans spend far more money for private schools than for public schools, but that they expend far more for after-school day cramming sessions than for education in the regular schools. Here, especially notable on the dimension of policy development is parental financial burdens. While expenditures for 'public education' are split between the parents and the state, those for 'private education' are borne entirely by the parents. This is an important policy concern, because such financial burdens can cause public discontent, undermining public support for the government.

Another related agenda that has been persistently brought up in the policy discourses of the civilian era addresses the 'collapsing public education' (*konggyoyug punggoe*). The focal concern here is that the students give priority of their study to after-school day cramming rather than to learning in the regular school. At schools, they mostly care only about the records of their performances in tests, examinations, and other activities that will be supplied to the university or college they will be applying for later. They spend so much time for after-school day cramming that many of them, often the majority of the class, fall asleep during the rituals of school teaching.

Quite logically, thus, discourses on policy development run in the direction of 'reviving public education' (*konggyoyug toisalligi*) and 'uprooting private education' (*sagyoyug buribobgi*), or at least 'reducing private education expenditures' (*sagyoyug-bi kyonggam*). That is to say, it is upheld that policies have to restore education in the regular schools to a normal state and free the students from the necessity of purchasing additional cramming services.

THE ABERRANT CONCEPTS INHIBIT EDUCATION REFORM

The question of university entrance competition, the central concern of the policy discourse that called for liberalisation and diversification, was addressed within the frame of reference based on those aberrant concepts, and by tackling the policy agendas induced by the concepts. And this resulted in blocking, instead of facilitating, liberalisation and diversification. A typical case of this irony was the first civilian government's education reform program published on 30 May 1995 by President Kim Young Sam's Education Reform Commission (PERC, 1995). The approach employed in this document was also visible in the major policy papers of the subsequent Presidents Kim Dae Jung, 1988-2003 (CNEC, 2000) and Roh Mu Hyun, 2003- (Insuwi, 2003).

The PERC's document began with pointing to the fact that the world was now globalising to one of "unlimited competition without national borders", in which a nation's economic survival and prosperity would depend on its global competitiveness (*kuggakyongjaengryog*). The latter, in the

PERC's analysis, consisted in the abilities to carve out niches for the nation in the global market by producing small quantities of many marketable commodities rather than a mass production of uncharacteristic goods. In order for education to support this, the PERC observed, teaching and learning had to be liberalised and diversified and its quality improved, so that the members of the nation, well educated in diverse fields, could move on to carving those competitive niches. Unmistakably, it also implied that the liberalisation and diversification policies should also be necessary for free initiatives in the new civilian era as opposed to the controlled and regulated *modus operandi* under military dictatorship. In this vein, the PERC now turned to the structural problems related to university entrance competition and 'private education' expenditures. The uniform knowledge with which South Korean students competed for university admission was not suitable for the globalising world, for it would weaken the nation's competitiveness. 'Private education' expenditures, on the other hand, were a waste of valuable resources given that they were spent for rote learning and drilling of what had been already learned.

However, the PERC, and the subsequent policy developing agencies, explored policy measures within the aforementioned frame of reference and, consequently, the measures they came up with were misleading. When the serious problems of entrance competition were perceived to be the surge of 'private education' and its soaring costs, and when all this was perceived to come from the collapsing 'public education', as noted in the previous section, such perceptions already suggested what policy was necessary, normalise 'public education', thereby to reduce 'private education' expenditures and eventually to uproot 'private education'. Here, the policy makers turned their attention to determining the normal and abnormal states of 'public education'. At the heart of their perceived abnormality was the unsatisfactory quality of, or the absence of 'substance' (*naeshil*) in, 'public education'. The key to normalising this type of education, therefore, was the provision of quality to 'public education,' or in 'substantiating public education' (*konggyoyug naeshilhoa*). The policy measures thus presented in most of the major policy papers of three civilian governments (PERC, 1995; CNEC, 2000; Insuwi, 2003; KEDI, 2003) included the following typical examples (PBSPE, 2002; BE Kwangju, 2002):

- reduce teacher-student ratios;
- improve the school's learning environment;
- improve the quality of teaching and learning, and, for this,
- upgrade teacher quality by training teachers in graduate schools rather than in undergraduate programs.

The policy agenda of reducing 'private education' expenditures, however, did not yield straightforward policy measures. Those that have so far been recommended in policy papers were multidirectional and often not to the point. Both Kim Young Sam's and Kim Dae Jung's governments tried to uproot 'private education' by resorting to the military regime's legislation banning it with severe penalties. They both tried to make the question items of the state entrance examination at times a bit easier and at times a bit harder hoping to reduce demand for 'private education'. As well, they tried to reduce 'private education' expenditures by expanding state-run television and in-school cramming sessions in order to attract students away from after-school day cramming.

None of those policy measures did, and could, work in the way they were expected to. The policy measures to substantiate 'public education' to fight 'private education' and its expenditures were based on the assumption that the students sought help from after-school day cramming because of the unsatisfactory quality of education in the regular schools. This assumption was mistaken, because, generally, the quality of education in after-school day cramming classes was no better than that of the regular schools. In fact, their learning environment was much worse. Their

teacher-student ratios were no better. Furthermore, the instructors of such classes were no better qualified for professional teaching. The real cause of the flourishing cramming classes was that the regular schools were engulfed in an intense university entrance competition. They themselves crammed their students in preparation for an annual nationwide state entrance examination, incessantly testing and ranking them, and, on this basis, marginalising those students who failed to be ranked high. Where higher ranks were limited in number, the great majority of students had to be marginalised and their reasonable way to sidestep this misfortune was to seek help from outside.

The root cause of the failure in policy making and scholarship was the dichotomy of regular schools and after-school cramming classes. The aberrant labels generated false concepts of public and private education, and the latter in turn concealed the fact that after-school cramming classes were actually an extension of the regular schools in university entrance competition.

STATIST POLICIES AND INSTITUTIONS IN EDUCATION

If the terms were used in a way widely accepted outside South Korea, the whole picture of the country's problematic educational system would emerge entirely differently. Private schools would now be seen as belonging to the private sphere, only public schools remaining in the public sphere. The latter would appear to demand priority in state intervention and support while the former would require freedom and independence.

Viewed in this perspective, the existing institutional arrangement of education clearly reveals numerous problems. To exemplify a few problematic legal provisions:

- Laws stipulate that, by nature, both public and private schools bear 'publicness' (*konggongsong*) (Education Basic Law #9-2).³ They are both subject to guidance and supervision by the provincial Superintendent of Education on matters of operation (Primary and Secondary Education Law (PSEL) #6). Private schools' bylaws, like those of public schools, must be approved by the Minister of Education at the level of primary education and by the Superintendent of Education at the level of secondary education (PSEL #8).
- Both private and public schools must teach the state's curriculum (Ordinance Enacting Primary and Secondary Education Law Ch.4, p.1; Regulations Concerning Different Types of Schools #4) and use state textbooks and, for the subjects for which such textbooks are unavailable, choose from those approved by the state through strict approval processes (Regulations Concerning Textbooks #3). Both are subject to supervision and guidance by the Minister of Education and by the Superintendent of Education in operating the state-imposed curriculum and teaching methods (PSEL #7).
- The duties of private school teachers are identical as those of public school teachers (Private Schools Law #55). They both can be said to be 'civil servants' (Educational Civil Servants Law #2).

On the other hand, the state, through District Education Offices, allocates students to private schools equally as to public schools, and pays teacher salaries as well as some other important

³ South Korean scholars often defend this stipulation by referring to the established concept of 'education as a public good.' They claim that since education is a public good, educational institutions are public by nature. This claim does not hold tight. Education as a public good is a concept of political economy justifying state intervention in education; it does not refer to the *nature* of education.

expenses, such as school construction costs, in order to supplement financial shortfalls from state-controlled tuition fee revenues.

What is important to note in this connection is uniformity in teaching and learning in public and private schools and in the method of student selection at the level of higher education (Kim, 1997; Koh et al., 1998). State-imposed curriculum and textbooks, and even state-approved textbooks, are produced and approved on the principle of providing a so-called 'right' answer for each question to be dealt with in classrooms. Therefore, all schools, public or private, teach the same knowledge, skills and values. Given this, the viable method for universities and colleges to employ in selecting from the applicants outnumbering state-set student quotas must be one of ranking them by testing who remembers more than who of what all have learned commonly. Here, the state administers once-a-year entrance examination for all those who desire higher education and requires universities to select students on the basis of their scores (and some other scores produced in the way the state sets) (Higher Education Law #34-1; Ordinance Enacting Higher Education Law #31-42). And the larger the scale of competition, the higher its intensity and the demand for higher education (Kim, 1999). While the stakes in university entrance are high in South Korean society, all schools, public or private, have to prepare their students for the state examination by organising regular and irregular examination and test competitions, by ranking students in the order of their scores, and by discriminating against those ranked low. They thus drive their students to after-school cramming classes. The real causes of the collapsing 'public education' and the soaring 'private education' expenditures are here apparent: a rigid state control of education and uniformity of teaching and learning.

If South Korean policy makers and scholars abandoned their aberrant use of the terms of 'public education' and 'private education', they would readily notice that liberalising private schools would help diversify teaching and learning. If certain degree of freedom were also permitted to public schools as well, and if the state relinquished its unnecessary control of student supply and demand at all levels of schools, entrance competition, as well as cramming practices, would soon cease to be a policy issue. This would be the case given that private schools accommodate one-third of students in lower secondary education, two-thirds in upper secondary education, and four-fifths in higher education. But their non-discriminatory perception of public and private schools prevents them from seeing this venue of policy-making and scholarship. For this reason, although they generally understand that uniformity of teaching and learning due to excessive state control of education is a serious problem, and that survival and prosperity in the globalising world demands free and diverse educational activities, they end up with misdirected policies. Typically, they try to improve educational logistics by increased state intervention in all schools through such means as state-dictated liberalisation and diversification and further restriction on the freedom and independence of private schools.

A STATIST CULTURE OF EDUCATION POLICY

The point of interest, however, is not that South Koreans have created false problems by improperly using the basic terms but, rather, the reasons why they have done so. The most obvious fact to note here is the institutional residues of the statist education policies employed through the decades of military elite's developmental policy. The key elements of the policy were: (a) that the state must control education for the security of power; (b) that available resources should be allocated maximally to strategic industries and minimally to less important areas such as education and, for this, student quotas must be maintained low; and (c) that possible discontent due to entrance competition should be prevented by the state's direct administration of the competition (Kim, 1999). The first element entailed the uniformity of the curriculum and textbooks on the principle of supplying one right answer for each question dealt with in classrooms. The second element kept student places in educational institutions persistently short

supplied and entrance competition inevitable. This situation engendered widespread social discontent already in the late 1960s. The military government reacted by increasing private schools in order thereby to meet the rising demand for education. Its measures included eased requirements for setting up and operating schools, equal student allocation as to public schools, and partial funding. Finally, the third element intensified entrance competition and, simultaneously, caused demand for education to rise further (Kim, 1999). Most of those policies are in place even now. Given all this, the public status of private schools in South Koreans' conception is correct *prima facie*, for after all they spend public monies, albeit partially, and teach the same material in the same way as public schools.

However, a puzzling fact remains unaccounted for. It was sporadically from the last years of military rule and more visibly after the inauguration of the first civilian government in 1993 that the terms 'public education' and 'private education' came to have a wide currency in the sense now established. The earliest example of using 'public education' inclusively of public and private schools, which I could locate in the South Korean educational literature, is a 1989 publication (Kim, 1989, p.133). About 300 books and articles on education reform published between 1992 and 1994, however, were already using 'public education' and 'private education' in the way established now (Kim, 1995). Moreover, it was during the first civilian government of President Kim Young Sam that the Education Basic Law was legislated with the aforementioned provision that all schools ought to bear 'publicness' (*konggongsong*) regardless of there being public schools or private schools. It is quite clear that 'public education' and 'private education' as conceptual devices for educational policy discourses were an invention of the civilian era, not the years of statist developmental policy.

A suspicion, then, arises that the civilian era did not in fact sever itself from the traditions set by the military years but, rather, inherited them and moved further ahead. Whereas the strong military state gradually annexed private schools into the public sector, the civilian leaders, and their policy makers and policy scholars, are now vindicating the annexation on the dimension of conceptualisation and theorisation.

At least two facts come forth to endorse this suspicion. One is that South Korean policy makers and scholars seldom employed the terms of public education and private education through the military years. Educational studies conducted during the military years, except the last few years, mostly used 'school education' (*haggyogyoyug*) for what they now call 'public education' and 'after-school education' (*koaoegyoyug*) for what they now name 'private education'. They distinguished between 'private schools' (*saribhaggyo*) and 'public schools' (*kongribhaggyo*) but generally they did not do so between the public and private spheres in education. Nor did they clearly associate the state with public schools. The cluster of connotations they attached to 'public schools' and 'private schools' basically suggested that private schools were poor in quality and facilities and corrupt in management while public schools were not. So their arguments were typically that the state should more deeply intervene in private schools to improve their poor quality of education and facilities, and eliminate corruption (Chon et al., 1969). In short, they took both public and private schools to be in the public sphere and in need of state intervention and control. Now, by employing the term 'public education' for both public and private schools they neatly incorporate this traditional view to a unique statist theory of public education.

Another fact is that this continuity is observable not only in the works of the conservatives who stick to the status quo but also those of the progressive teachers in the Korean Teachers Union (KTU; *Chongyojo*), who have fiercely resisted the military elite's developmental dictatorship and vigorously pursued to dismantle its remaining institutions. Their vision of private schools is well summarised in the declared goals of a recently formed KTU-led National Movement for Revising the Private School Law (NMRPSL): 'democratisation of governance' and 'prevention of

corruption.’ For the former goal, they demand a private school’s board of governors to be made a public institution, and a school council, comprised of teachers, parents and students, to be the decision-making authority. They also demand the existing board of governors to be replaced by a state-appointed board as soon as a dispute erupts over mismanagement between the board and the teachers, and any board member involved in a scandalous dispute to be permanently excluded from the school.⁴

To be noted here are two points. First, progressive teachers take mismanagement as a key problem of private schools and envision its solution in their takeover of the schools’ governance jointly with the parents and the students. They thus leave out an even more important area of concern, the state-school relationship. Ignore the legitimacy of the takeover of a privately-owned school by its employees and customers, and suppose that the teachers indeed have taken over the school’s governance. The state’s control of the curriculum and other aspects of school operation will remain unaffected. So the uniformity of teaching and learning will continue to restrict their freedom of governance and provoke entrance competition, in- and after-school cramming sessions, and the alleged ‘collapse of public education’. Progressive teachers are of course concerned about the state’s control of education; ironically, however, their response is that the state-education relationship must be reinforced instead of reduced. They claim that education, whether in public or in private schools, should remain thoroughly in the public sphere and any so-called ‘neo-liberal’ conspiracy for independent private schools should be thwarted. Their reason is that the conspiracy aims to transfer financial responsibility for education from the state to the people, as if monies for state-controlled ‘public education’ come from elsewhere.

Second, because of this perspective, progressive teachers do not see that the real cause of mismanagement in private schools lies in the state-education relationship they embrace with the aberrant label of ‘public education’. Where the state guarantees private schools of necessary student supply by equal allocation as to public schools, and revenues from tuition fees and state subsidies but, simultaneously, deprives them of freedom to implement their own educational programs, the remaining concern for the owners should be to exploit as much power and money as possible out of the school of which they are in charge. However, this would be highly unlikely if they are left free and independent and if the state-education relationship were revised to the effect of ending entrance competition, for their immediate concern now should be survival and prosperity in competition for new students. The owners would have to expend large sums of money for developing marketable educational programs and improving the quality of teaching. Free private schools in this case would be beneficial to public schools, for which the state should now have more financial resources. Clearly, the statist frame of reference maintains a firm grip on the progressive South Korean teachers, preventing them from seeing beyond the status quo.

CONCLUSION

What, then, is the final cause of the failing liberalising and diversifying education reform efforts in a civilian era? Unwillingness to reform due to vested interest is apparently there, not only with policy makers, but also with the progressive teachers. But that cannot be taken as the final cause unless a dangerous assumption is granted that they are all self-seekers. There are of course institutional residues from the developmental years, such as state entrance examination, the uniformity of curriculum and textbooks, and state intervention in private schools. But they are not the final cause, either. What we have seen is clearly a lot more than mere institutional residues. The final cause should be a political economy, a mindset or a culture of statism, with which South

⁴ ‘Saribhaggyobob: Iroke bakuoya handa’ (online), <http://www.pslaw.or.kr>. See also ‘Hyonshigi haggyo munje-oa Chongyojo-ui Taean’ (online), <http://moim.ktu.or.kr/eduhope>.

Korean policy makers and scholars, as well as progressive school teachers, are too familiar to be aware of. The roots of this culture may go back further beyond the military years.

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