

The Development and Prospects of Korean Human Geography

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I Introduction

The modern human geography of Korea has experienced rapid changes since 1945. Korean geographers overcame the chaos after the liberation from Japan and the Korean War and established degree courses at universities during the 1970s and 1980s. These efforts led to the rapid progress of human geography in the 1990s and the 2000s.

This study aims to outline the development of Korean human geography by periods, examine recent research trends, and finally bring up some future prospects. For these purposes, articles published in the *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, Ph. D. dissertations in geography from Korean universities, and articles¹⁾ on the development process of Korean human geography are reviewed. Particularly, it is important to examine papers published after 2000, since Korean human geography has changed quantitatively and qualitatively since the 29th International Geographical Congress. Due to space limitations, it is impossible to summarize every research result of Korean human geography in this paper. Therefore I will mention only a few articles when necessary to demonstrate major research trends.

At the outset, it is worth noting the generations of Korean geographers because the periodization of Korean human geography is clearly related to them. Korean geographers can be divided into four generations. The first-generation geographers are those who, after liberation from Japan, organized academic associations, taught geography in degree programs, included geography in the secondary school curriculum, and trained geography teachers. The second-generation geographers are those who received an education from the first-generation geographers, traveled abroad to learn the concepts, methodologies and philosophy of western geography, and conducted verifications through applications at home. The third-generation geographers are those who completed their masters or doctoral courses largely at home in the 1980s, taught by the second generation of geographers. Finally, the fourth-generation geographers are those who have been academically active in the institutes for national policy or regional development since the 1990s, taught by the third generation geographers or abroad. Most Korean

1) (1) Kim, K. H., 'The development of human geography and methodology since 1945,' (The Organizing Committee of the 29th International Geographical Congress, ed., *Korean Geography and Geographers*, 2000), pp. 158-194; (2) Kim, K. H., 'Topics of human geography,' (The Organizing Committee of the 29th International Geographical Congress, ed., *Korean Geography and Geographers*, 2000), pp. 195-265; (3) The National Academy of Sciences, Republic of Korea, ed., *Academic Research of Korea : Human Geography*, 2002; (4) Hyong, K. J., 'Sixty years history of the Korean Geographical Society as a numerical record,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 40-6, 2005, pp. 748-761; (5) Park, S. O., 'Retrospects and prospects of sixty years of geographical studies in Korea,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 40-6, 2005, pp. 770-788.

human geographers are members of the Korean Geographical Society, which has a membership of about 1,500 as of 2005.

II Periodization of Korean Human Geography since 1945

(1) Foundation and reorganization (1945–1970)

Korean modern geography began in 1945 but had to reckon with much difficulty and chaos. Japanese colonial rule and the Korean War caused so deep a rupture in its continuity that geographical studies needed to be built again from scratch.

After the liberation from Japan in 1945, the most urgent issue for the first generation of Korean human geographers was to systematize geography education in the secondary schools, so they gave priority to training geography teachers and translating western geography textbooks into Korean. The Choson Geographical Society, the first formal academic society of geography in Korea, was established in September 1945 and became the Korean Geographical Society in 1949. In 1951, graduate courses in geography were established at both Seoul National University and Kyungpook National University.

In the 1960s, when the national economic plans were phasing in, geographical knowledge was in great demand. The need encouraged Korean geographers to concentrate their efforts on streamlining geographical knowledge. This was also the period when research papers began to broach economic issues and applications of western geographical concepts in urban regions. Also, the second generation of Korean geographers who had studied abroad returned home, bringing with them the methodologies of western geography, and taught the third generation. Increasing numbers of research papers on human geography necessitated a geography journal. The journal of the Korean Geographical Society, *Geography* (later called *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*), was first published in 1963.²⁾

(2) Infancy (1971–1980)

Until 1980, Korean human geography had been developed gradually by the first and the second generations of geographers. From the first half of the 1970s, when economic development began to take off appreciatively, the national spatial structure was reorganized. Increasing numbers of people migrating out of the country side and into cities caused numerous problems as urban populations suddenly swelled. Squatter settlements appeared along with a host of other problems. Along with rapid economic development, the demand for geography-research manpower increased and the amount of research on cities, economics, society, culture and history increased.

In the 1970s, many people who traveled abroad in the 1960s to study began returning with Ph. D.s fully versed in the geography research methodologies used in foreign countries, and they introduced western geography to Korea. Human geographers were most interested in the applications of these western theories to living spaces in Korea. The quantitative revolution and

2) Kim, *op. cit.*, footnote 1), pp. 158–162.

theoretical geographical research in the U. S. geographical society drew particular attention, and many young Korean geographers advanced research based upon logical positivism. Urban and economic geography played a leading role in adopting the new geographical theories.

(3) Growth (1981–1990)

In the 1980s, geographical manpower grew rapidly owing to the increase and expansion of departments of geography and geographical education in universities. Also, a number of introductory textbooks and technical books on geography were written or translated into Korean and became popular. The third-generation geographers became active at home, and graduate courses were established from the mid-1980s. The number of researchers who completed their doctoral courses at home increased, many of them taught by the second generation of geographers. The publication of introductory textbooks and the normalization of domestic doctoral degrees contributed greatly to spurring research on human geography³⁾.

Accordingly, geographical research increased. First of all, the number of papers published in academic journals increased more than twofold compared to the 1970s. Also, geographical research extended into applied fields. If the 1970s were the period when positivism was introduced to Korean geography, the 1980s were the period for humanistic geography, structuralism and diversified research subjects such as regional differences, welfare, and city housing problems. Around 1987, the movement for democracy changed political and social structures and enlarged the scope of learning. As a result, the research from both the progressive geographical and structural schools began to flourish. It was also a period when new understanding blossomed regarding the importance of regional, historical and cultural geography. In particular, unearthing and re-interpreting geographical references from historical Korea were of great interest⁴⁾.

(4) Jump and rush (1991–2000)

In the 1990s, Korean human geography experienced great changes both in quality and quantity, owing to preparation for the 29th IGC and the enthusiastic activities of the fourth-generation geographers. Eight academic associations were founded in the 1990s, following the foundation of the Association of Korean Cultural and Historical Geographers in 1989. Each of the associations began to publish its own journal. The number of papers published in the academic journals and by domestic Ph. D.s. increased more than four times over the number published in the 1980s⁵⁾.

In the 1990s, along with the diversification of the capitalist economy, the construction of high-speed communications networks and the Internet, the scope of geographical study rapidly expanded. Then the government endorsed globalism and paved the way for the concept of post-modernism. Interest in this generated paper after paper on the side-effects of an increased economic volume and the problems of capitalism. Industrial geography embraced flexible

3) Lee, C. and Lee, K. S., 'Overview of human geographical research,' (The National Academy of Sciences, Republic of Korea, ed., *Academic Research of Korea : Human Geography*, 2002), p. 10.

4) Kim, *op. cit.*, footnote 1), p. 164.

5) Park, *op. cit.*, footnote 1), p. 780.

production systems, restructuring, multinational corporations, and businesses linking industry and research institutes. Additionally, it surveyed producer services and advanced industries. As the national economy was incorporated into the world economy, the scope of geographical learning enlarged. After the Lio Conference, environmental problems emerged as a topic of major interest for geography.

From the 1990s in particular, there were growing numbers of scholars stressing political and economic approaches or applying social theories to geographical issues. However, the body of this research is limited.⁶⁾ The 29th IGC provided momentum for these distinctive changes. After eight years of preparation, Korean geographers held the Congress successfully, with more than 2,300 geographers attending from around the world. The 29th Seoul Congress is considered one of the most successful in IGC history.

(5) Maturity and globalization (2001–2005)

Since 2000, Korean human geography has reached maturity and has been globalized. The quantity of research results has exploded: From an average 27.7 papers a year in the 1990s to 77.6 papers a year in the 2000s. *The Journal of the Korean Geographical Society* has been bi-monthly since 2003, including two English versions a year. This growth is due to the expansion of the academic manpower of those who are in domestic graduate schools or studying abroad. Also, it is clearly related to the fact that the evaluation of academic achievements has become important for employment or promotion.⁷⁾

The academic activities of the first generations of geographers have been completely finished, and the fourth-generation geographers, who were taught by the third generation and not related with the first generation at all, have become vigorous in academic activities.

Since the 29th IGC, many Korean human geographers have become members or chairs of International Geographical Union commissions, and more geographers have attended international conferences. Also, along with the globalization of Korean universities, many of them have conducted research overseas. The number of international research exchanges has been unprecedented, because many of the geographers who had completed Ph. D.s abroad came to be employed by overseas universities.⁸⁾

The 29th IGC has also had indirect effects on Korean human geography, such as the improvement of the Korean image, the rethinking of geography, the expansion of job opportunities related to geographical education, and increases in the supply and demand of geography and maps. In addition, Korean human geographers have held many seminars and symposia on national issues, such as the new administrative capital city, to collect extensive opinions from geographers and have tried to promote geography widely, participating actively in much research for national policy-making.

6) Kim, *op. cit.*, footnote 1), pp. 164–166.

7) Hyong, *op. cit.*, footnote 1), p. 757.

8) Park, *op. cit.*, footnote 1), pp. 773–782.

III Topics and Recent Research Trends in Korean Human Geography

To provide an overview of the research trends in Korean human geography, articles from comprehensive geography journals are classified by topics. The comprehensive journals include the *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, *The Geographical Journal of Korea*, and the *Journal of the Korean Association of Regional Geography*. Of the 1,551 articles carried in comprehensive journals since inception, 934 involved human geography. Details by period are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Human versus Non-human Geography Papers in Comprehensive Journals.

Unit : papers (%)

	Human Geography	Non-human Geography	Total
1963-1980	99 (60.4)	65 (39.6)	164 (100.0)
1981-1990	184 (65.9)	95 (34.1)	279 (100.0)
1991-2000	343 (58.4)	244 (41.6)	587 (100.0)
2001-2005	308 (59.1)	213 (40.9)	521 (100.0)
Total	934 (60.2)	617 (39.8)	1,551 (100.0)

Source : Park, S. O., 'Retrospects and prospects of sixty years of geographical studies in Korea,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 40-6, 2005, p. 775. Modifications to the table made by the author.

Over the course of 40 years, papers on economic and urban fields, which were traditionally considered important, obviously have decreased in number, whereas population / society, political, regional and other fields have increased (figure 1). Also, research trends in domestic Ph. D. dissertations are largely similar to those of geography journals, with economic geography

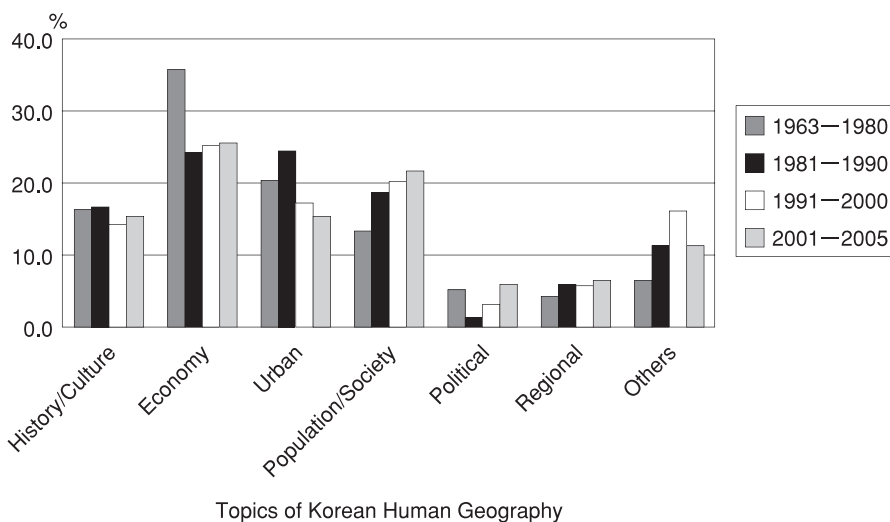


Figure 1. Topics of Korean Human Geography in Comprehensive Journals.

Source : Park, *ibid.*, p. 775. Modifications to the graph made by the author.

leading the numbers followed by cultural and historical geography.

(1) Cultural and historical geography

Cultural and historical geography of Korea has been active since 1963, when *Geography* was first published. Most research topics in the 1960s involved the locations and forms of human settlements from historical and ecological points of view and initial research on the historical geography of Korea using old maps. In the 1970s, old Korean maps, the configuration and pattern of civilian houses, and human settlement provided the main research subjects. On the other hand, studies on landscape and Feng Shei (geomancy) began, which contributed to the expansion of the research subjects and methodologies of cultural and historical geography.

Research subjects such as old maps, civilian houses, and settlement were continuously studied in the 1980s. This decade also saw Korean cultural and historical geography make rapid progress, because the number of papers published in the major academic journals increased greatly and the subjects and methodologies became diversified.

In the 1990s, studies on the historical geography of Korea, which had stagnated during the 1980s, revived. The main research topics consisted of old maps, including *Taedong Yochido* (Map of Korea), *Feng Shui*, *Shirhak* (practical geography) of the Choson Dynasty, and the *Shirhak* scholars.⁹⁾

In the 2000s, Korean cultural and historical geography has continued examining previous research topics but also has initiated distinctive studies, including those of landscapes, the sense of place, old maps, reconstruction of past city landscapes and clan families. As for the study of landscapes, Jin examined how the contemporary sacredness of Mt. Chirisan has been modified through the reworking of the embodied experiences of the mountain.¹⁰⁾ Several studies are elucidating the meaning of place, place identity, and the sense of place. Lee and Shin made an interesting study of Koreans' sense of home. They wrote that for Koreans, *kohyang* (home) provides clues with which to determine the meaning of life, that is, the prototype of life that works as a mirror in their consciousness.¹¹⁾

Ogino performed a study on the process of place identity formation through a case study of the '8th School District of *Gangnam*,' the best school district in Korea. She confirmed that it was possible for novel middle classes in Korea to invest in the education of their children and to endeavor to enact new customs of life and culture, distinct from other class groups, because the social class system was not fixed and the possibilities for vertical social movement and job movement were open.¹²⁾

To reconstruct the landscape of the past, Kim conducted a study of the Han River Valley in the late Chosun period. He paid special attention to the critical roles of overland routes, inland

9) Ryu, J. H., 'Cultural and historical geography,' (The National Academy of Sciences, Republic of Korea, ed., *Academic Research of Korea : Human Geography*, 2002), pp. 60-74.

10) Jin, J. H., 'The transforming sacredness of Mt. Chirisan from an utopian shelter into a modern national park : focused on the escapist lives of 'Mountain Main,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 40-2, 2005, pp. 172-186.

11) Lee, E. S. and Shin M. S., 'Koreans' sense of home : an analysis of the relationship between their ethos and relevant geographical attributes,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 35-3, 2000, pp. 401-426.

12) Ogino, C., *The Making of Most Preferred '8th School District' of Gangnam, Seoul, Korea : A Case Study of Place Identity Formation*, 2004, Ph. D. Dissertation, Seoul National University.

waterways and factors of production for the development of regional trading systems.¹³⁾ On the other hand, Lee tried to reconstruct the urban structure of *Hansungbu* in the Chosun Dynasty by analyzing historical documents, old maps and geography books, field surveys, mapping and interpretation.¹⁴⁾

(2) Economic geography

a. Agricultural geography

The trends of Korean economic geography have largely been related to the process of economic development. Among all geographical studies, agricultural geography became the first area in which an advanced academic system was established. In the 1960s, the major subjects for agricultural geography were the classification of agricultural regions and setting up a general index for the classification work. There were also studies of special crops and special agricultural regions. Since the 1970s, however, along with the rapid industrialization and the development of the industrial location theory, industrial geography superceded agricultural geography.

Since the 1980s, the topics of agricultural geography have been broadened to geographical distribution of agricultural management, environment-friendly agriculture, agricultural tourism, agricultural market opening, agriculture policy, and so forth.¹⁵⁾

In the 2000s, the research topics of agricultural geography include special agricultural systems and specialized agricultural regions. For example, Jung examined the region-specific irrigation system and water-control methods used harmoniously with environment of the Mt. Chiri region.¹⁶⁾

b. Industrial geography

Studies of Korean industrial geography began in the 1960s, centering on the classification of industrial districts. Since the 1970s, along with industrial development in Korea, industrial geography has played a leading role in Korean economic geography. Since the 1980s, when the world economy became post-industrial, research subjects further expanded to include changes of industrial location by the organization and strategies of multinational corporations, the development policy of high-technology industries by nations and regions, and the development of science research complexes.

In the 1990s, analysis methods and research subjects were further diversified to include industrial reorganization and regional economies, flexible manufacturing systems, the role of multinational corporations, industrial networks, and spatial linkages of industries and industrial complexes. In the 2000s, extensive research has been conducted on various topics such as industrial restructuring, inter-firm networking, regions' functions for producing and diffusing knowledge, and the construction of regional innovation systems (RIS).¹⁷⁾

13) Kim, J. H., *Transport Networks and Marketplaces of the Han River Valley in the Late Chosun Period*, 2002, Ph. D. Dissertation, Korea University.

14) Lee, H. K., *The Urban Structure of Hansungbu in Chosun Dynasty*, 2004, Ph. D. Dissertation, Seoul National University.

15) Kim, K. H., 'Rural and settlement geography,' (The National Academy of Sciences, Republic of Korea, ed., *Academic Research of Korea : Human Geography*, 2002), p. 170.

16) Jung, C. Y., 'The irrigation system of the rice cultivation in Mt. Chiri region,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 35-2, 2000, pp. 227-241.

17) Park, S. O., 'Economic geography,' (The National Academy of Sciences, Republic of Korea, ed., *Academic Research of Korea : Human Geography*, 2002), pp. 97-142.

Lee *et al.* carried out a study on the industrial restructuring process of the textile and apparel industries to examine the effects of flexibility strategies and the spatial division of labor on production systems.¹⁸⁾ Also, Woo wrote on the restructuring process of the shipbuilding industry and the structure of community cooperation.¹⁹⁾

A study on spatial demand and estimation for knowledge-based industries concluded that there was a very high preference for the firms to locate in the capital region, the city of Seoul and its surrounding areas, even though rents are very high and available land is scarce, because of the new advanced information, skilled laborers, venture capital, and the high quality of producer services available there.²⁰⁾

There has been a series of research on innovation and regional innovation systems. In a case study of the advanced electronics industry in the capital region of Korea, Moon suggested that for SMEs (small- and medium-sized enterprises), agglomeration is a very important factor in saving costs and performing learning and innovative activities.²¹⁾ Recently, in a study of the industrial and innovation networks of the long-lived area of the *Honam* region, Park *et al.* suggested that innovation networks could be developed as a virtual innovation cluster in the rural areas and could be the basis for the development of rural innovation systems.²²⁾

c. Geography of commercial activity, services and distribution

Research of commerce, service, and distribution geography became relatively active in the 1980s. Until the 1980s, major research subjects consisted of periodic rural marketplaces, marketplace structure and distribution channels for respective items.²³⁾ In the 1970s, along with the introduction of the central place theory, extensive discussions were made regarding periodic rural marketplaces.

In the 1990s, however, service-industry-related studies centering on producer services emerged, in contrast to the general study subjects of the previous period. This research trend seems to have been influenced by the great increase in the of service economy and the recent changes in Korean industrial structure, along with the rapid growth of producer services in big cities.

In the 2000s, studies on producer services have proven one of the most popular topics in economic geography. Lee analyzed the impacts of producer services on spatial changes at the national level and at the intra-metropolitan level in Seoul.²⁴⁾ Choi presented a paper on the spatial characteristics of public business-to-business electronic marketplaces (public B2B e-MPs). She concluded that public B2B e-MPs were not irrelevant to physical space and physical proximity

18) Lee, C. W., Park Y. C. and Kim E. J., 'The restructuring of textile and apparel industry and the spatial division of labour on production system in Daegu,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 35-2, 2000, pp. 207-225.

19) Woo, Y. S., 'A study on the restructuring of shipbuilding industry and the structure of community cooperation : the case of Sinhyeon-eup in Geoje, Korea,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 40-4, 2005, pp. 402-415.

20) Kim, K. S., Choo, S. J and Nahm, K. B., 'Spatial demand estimation for the knowledge-based industries in the Capital region of Korea,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 38-3, 2003, pp. 363-374.

21) Moon, M. S., *Industrial Agglomeration and Innovative Performance of Firms : The Case of Advanced Electronics Industry in the Capital Region, Korea*, 2000, Ph. D. Dissertation, Seoul National University.

22) Park, S. O., Song, K. U. and Jeong, E. J., 'Industrial and innovation networks of the long-live area of Honam region,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 40-1, 2005, pp. 78-95.

23) Han, J. S., 'Review and perspectives on the study of geography with respect to commerce & distribution,' *Geography*, 14, 1990, pp. 311-320.

24) Lee, Y. G., 'Locational dynamics and spatial impacts of producer services in Korea,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 38-3, 2003, pp. 444-462

and that customized spatial strategies were required for successful online businesses.²⁵⁾

On the other hand, there are analyses of the changes of distribution systems caused by information and technology and the changes of market systems caused by large-scale discount stores. Kim explored locational characteristics and customer shopping behaviors of large discount stores in Korea, revealing that the hinterlands of the discount stores in Daegu were larger than those in Incheon, implying that locational factors were important in their evolution.²⁶⁾

d. Transportation geography

Research on transportation geography has been active since the 1980s, dealing with cargo transportation systems, traffic networks and commuting. These three topics have comprised the main subjects for research on transportation geography until recently. In the 1990s, the research scope expanded to include ports and airports. Also, the study of commuting has expanded, related to selection of residential locations and gender. Also, rapid development of the information era drew attention to the research on information related industries. Cho conducted a study of changes in commuting patterns in relation to the development of information and communication technologies.²⁷⁾

In the 2000s, papers have been presented on delivery systems, commuting patterns, and rural changes due to information and telecommunication technologies.

In a study of the spatial-temporal distribution of private passenger cars, Lee and Han wrote that there were key factors responsible for regional types of diffusion.²⁸⁾ Also, Kim and Han conducted a study of the commercial and physical distribution system of the agricultural physical distribution center of an agricultural co-operation.²⁹⁾

Huh conducted a survey to examine what the *E-village* Project has meant for the people in *Hwangdun*, a remote village in Korea. In particular, the survey focused on the characteristics of the households with computers and of the computer users, including the ways in which people used their computers, the kinds of problems and difficulties the users have faced, and the changes in *Hwangdun* after the introduction of computers to the village.³⁰⁾

(3) Urban geography

In the 1960s when Korea began to move ahead with rapid industrialization, the national economic base changed from an agricultural to an urban economy, and urban geography branched off from settlement geography. Under these circumstances, the urban geography research focused on urbanization, city growth, and analysis of city functions.

25) Choi, J. S., 'Spatial distribution of the operators of public Business-to-Business electronic marketplaces in Korea,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 38-3, 2003, pp. 426-443.

26) Kim, W. K., *The Locational Characteristics and Customer Behaviors of Large-scale Discount Stores in Korea*, 2003, Ph. D. Dissertation, Seoul National University.

27) Cho, S. H., *A Study on the Spatio-temporal Behavior of Telecommuters*, Ph. D. Dissertation, Seoul National University.

28) Lee, J. K. and Han, J. S., 'Spatial diffusion process of private passenger cars in Korea,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 36-1, 2001, pp. 52-65.

29) Kim, S. H. and Han, J. S., 'Receipt area and regional types of delivery in agricultural products physical distribution center : a case study on agricultural products physical distribution center of *Cheongju* agricultural co-operation,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 38-1, 2003, pp. 104-126.

30) Huh, W. K., 'Computers and the internet in rural areas : the case of *Hwangdun E-village*,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 36-5, 2001, pp. 501-515.

In the 1970s, efforts were made to examine the research trends and theories of western urban geography, such as the central-place theory. Many research papers were based on statistical analysis of cities, and spatial analysis geography was established for urban studies.

In the 1980s, research became even more diversified. Urbanization and city structure continued to be the major research topics and research was conducted mainly under the framework of spatial analysis geography. However, it came to be criticized by the end of the 1980s, and behavioral and political-economic approaches were introduced to the studies of urban economy to replace it. Recently, urban geography has become less active, with relatively fewer papers and books on the subject having been published since the 1990s.³¹⁾

In the 2000s, the main research topics have included urban planning history, urban systems and structure, and the characteristics and regional differentiation of housing. Lee focused on the changes in spatial structure patterns related to urban planning history in Pusan.³²⁾ Also, Son identified the structure of homogeneous regions and functional regions in Seoul based on B. Berry's 'general field theory of spatial behavior.'³³⁾

In a study of inter-urban differences in housing price changes, Hahn wrote that during the period of housing-price decline after the economic crisis of the IMF and of its recovery, the degrees of house prices changes were not even across the country. As a result, the gap in the economic conditions in housing markets between the Seoul metropolitan area and the other parts of the country has widened.³⁴⁾

'Residential-Commercial Mixed-Use Buildings' have been emerging as a new housing type, and Jeong confirmed that social and class factors were important in choosing this specific type of housing but that also the characteristics of the neighborhood area played an important role in the selection of a residential area.

(4) Rural geography

Both rural and urban studies dealt with settlement geography until 1960. As urban geography was separated from settlement geography, rural studies in the 1960s started to focus on the location, structure and functions of rural, fishery, mountain and other functional villages. However, the lack of rural geographers resulted in the lack of conceptualization and theorization of rural research subjects. After the 1980s, when research methodologies were systematized and rural settlement became conspicuous as a serious social problem, research topics were diversified to include landscapes and spatial structures of rural settlement, the formation and regional socialization of clan villages, the changes in rural settlement and policies caused by rural to urban migration, and rural development.³⁵⁾

31) Kim, I., 'Urban geography,' (The National Academy of Sciences, Republic of Korea, ed., *Academic Research of Korea : Human Geography*, 2002), pp. 143-167.

32) Lee, S. H., *A Study on the Changes in Spatial Structure Pattern in Accordance with the Aspect of Urban Planning History of Pusan*, 2000, Ph. D. Dissertation, Seoul National University.

33) Son, S. H., 'The homogeneous regions and functional regions in the internal structure of Seoul,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 39-4, 2004, pp. 562-584.

34) Hahn, J. Y., 'Inter-urban differences of housing price change during the period of economic depression : the case of Korea,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 35-5, 2000, pp. 717-729.

35) Kim, K. H., 'Rural and settlement geography,' (The National Academy of Sciences, Republic of Korea, ed., *Academic Research of Korea : Human Geography*, 2002), pp. 169-212.

In the 2000s, rural areas have been confronted with many problems such as depopulation, agricultural market opening, and rural sustainability. Thus, much research has been conducted to identify and solve the problems. Lee studied the regional distribution of fallow lands in Korea and its changes from 1980 to 1999. He concluded that the factors which caused the fallow processes in Korea were socio-economic (labor shortage, intensive farming, less favored farmland conditions) and cultural (non-resident landowners, psychological ties between rural areas and urban areas³⁶⁾). According to a study on agricultural market opening in Korea by Chung, agricultural / rural policies need to reflect long-term, macroeconomic changes, and regionally / locally-based agricultural structure.³⁷⁾

(5) Social, population and political geography

a. Social geography

Even though it has not been long since social geography was established in Korea, research in the area has expanded rapidly. Social geography research began in the 1970s. Some studies focused on residents' cognition of natural disasters and their responses to them and on consumers' purchasing behavior.

In the 1980s, positivism fell under criticism and alternative viewpoints for interpreting geographical phenomena were actively discussed. Structuralism and political-economic approaches were introduced, and many studies were performed on residential areas, education, welfare and minority groups.

Social geography research has blossomed along with the rapid social changes in Korea after the democratization of the late 1980s. Research subjects expanded to examine regional inequality, uneven economic developments, women and the aged, labor and unemployment, and so on. In particular, many researchers devoted attention to unemployment and social polarization after the IMF crisis of the mid-1990s and to quality of life.³⁸⁾

In the 2000s, research topics in social geography have become even more diversified, including studies of homelessness, educational inequality, and urban poverty. Choi studied the differentiation in the reproduction of educational capital according to residential area, which is determined by the socio-economic status of parents. She concluded that the reproduction of "educational capital" in regions where highly educated people were segregated was very different from that of other regions.³⁹⁾

b. Population geography

In the 1960s, along with the rapid urbanization of Korea, studies were conducted on city functions, composition of population, urbanization and population, population increase and decrease, and population movement. In the 1970s, analysis of population went beyond the

36) Lee, H. B., *A Study on the Fallow of Over-depopulation Area in Rural Korea*, 2000, Ph. D. Dissertation, Seoul National University.

37) Chung, H. S., 'The dilemma of rural development and agricultural market opening in Korea: the perspective of farmers,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 36-5, 2001, pp. 578-592.

38) Kim, J. H., 'Social, population and political geography,' (The National Academy of Sciences, Republic of Korea, ed., *Academic Research of Korea: Human Geography*, 2002), pp. 213-243.

39) Choi, E. Y., 'The differentiation of reproductions of educational capitals and the formation of the gated city,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 39-3, 2004, pp. 374-390.

descriptive dimension, and research was performed on population changes and estimation in urban areas and population distribution.

In the 1980s, research subjects became diversified, covering for example the impact of population movement on agricultural regions, population structure changes in metropolitan cities, and rapid growth of urban populations. Special attention was paid to migration and population-depopulation.

However, population geography research has stagnated since the 1990s. Chough made one of the few studies of population geography. In his comparative study of Korea and Japan, he investigated how a variety of population elements are related to specific regions.⁴⁰⁾

c. Political geography

Since the 1970s, researchers began to focus on political geographical studies and investigated traditional topics such as the armistice line, administrative districts, and the transfer of capital. Since the late 1980s, myriad studies have been conducted on the location of provincial capitals, voting patterns, reunification of Korea, and regional gaps.

Since the 1990s, political geography has presented much research highly related to epochal changes such as democratization, globalization, and deregulation.

The high volume of research has continued into the 2000s, including topics such as deregulation policy and regional development, regional inequality and environmental problems, studies on East Asian problems and China's open-market policy, the changes in spatial policy after the reunification of Germany, and the new global political order. Choi examined the New Security Strategy of the U. S., which can be seen as a reflection of its new imperialism, and explained the current geopolitical situation of East Asia in terms of the new imperialist foreign policy of the Bush administration.⁴¹⁾ On the other hand, Lee confirmed that geographers could develop a new area of the 'Geography of International Relations' that deals with the World Trade Organization, oceans, environment and climate issues, free-trade agreements, as well as territories and boundaries.⁴²⁾

(6) Regional studies

Only after the mid-1980s, when the Korean academic climate based on western geography was criticized, did discussions begin on the necessity of regional studies. There have been many theoretical proposals on how to develop regional geography in Korea : (1) renaissance of regional geography ; (2) regional geography as one part of Korean studies ; (3) exploration of alternatives by the introduction of overseas regional studies ; and (4) a new regional geography connected with various social theories.⁴³⁾ The amount of empirical studies, however, have relatively

40) Chough, H. C., 'A comparative study on the population change and the aged in Korea and Japan,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 36-4, 2001, pp. 356-381.

41) Choi, B. D., 'The new imperialism, new security strategy of the U. S., and the future of East Asia,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 38-6, 2003, pp. 887-905.

42) Lee, K. S., 'Geographical studies and international organizations : concerning international standardization of the geographical name of East Sea,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 39-1, 2004, pp. 1-12.

43) Sohn, M. C., 'Regional studies,' (The National Academy of Sciences, Republic of Korea, ed., *Academic Research of Korea : Human Geography*, 2002), pp. 339-380.

been small compared to theoretical debates. In his study of the need for area studies, Kim (2000) wrote that geographers can contribute to area studies with investigations into space, spatial relations and assessments of the natural environment.⁴⁴⁾ In the 2000s, outstanding research has also been presented in Ph. D. dissertations.

Lim investigated how Costa Rica, one of the main coffee-producing countries, interacts in the global coffee economy.⁴⁵⁾ On the other hand, Kim studied the process of the politics of identities around regions and ethnicities with a case study of the Republic of Buryatia and investigated the emergence of region identity after the collapse of the Soviet Union.⁴⁶⁾

(7) Others

a. Applied geography (regional development and environment)

J. S. Yook was the first person in Korea to conduct research in the field of applied geography. He performed basic studies for the National Land Development Plan and wrote about various problems with regard to the development of natural resources and industrial waters.⁴⁷⁾ With the advent of the National Economic Development Plan in the 1960s, the establishment of industrial complexes, the expansion of agricultural lands, and the development of water resources became major policy issues, and applied geography became much in demand. In the 1960s and into the 1970s, geographers in the field of applied geography conducted extensive research on development-related social problems and other pressing issues.⁴⁸⁾

Since the 1980s, it has been widely argued that geography has to contribute to solving current social problems, which has resulted in increases in manpower, organizations and the number of publications on applied geography. In the 2000s, the main research topics in this field have seemed to shift from development to conservation. While most research had been conducted to apply developmental theories and models to development policy in the early stages of regional development, now many researchers focus on the harmony between development and conservation, considering environment and sustainability important.

Lee and Hwang established a procedure for building sustainability indicators, which are required for measuring and evaluating the degree of sustainable development in cities and regions.⁴⁹⁾ On the other hand, Choi, critically explored environmentalism, especially environmental justice, a concept suggested or implied in the theory of liberalism, which has been the ideological foundation of contemporary society.⁵⁰⁾

44) Kim, H. S., 'The characteristics of area studies and their relationship to geography,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 35-2, 2000, pp. 243-258.

45) Lim, S. J., *Time-space Manifestation and Regional Differentiation of the Costa Rican Coffee Economy*, 2005, Ph. D. Dissertation, Seoul National University.

46) Kim, H. S., *Regionalism and Regional Identity in Russia in Transition : A Case Study of the Republic of Buryatia*, 2005, Ph. D. Dissertation, Seoul National University.

47) Lee, H. Y., 'Applied geography,' (The Organizing Committee of the 29th International Geographical Congress, ed., *Korean Geography and Geographers*, 2000), p. 345.

48) Lee, H. Y., 'Applied geography,' (The Organizing Committee of the 29th International Geographical Congress, ed., *Korean Geography and Geographers*, 2000), p. 345.

49) Lee, K. K. and Hwang, H. Y., 'The study on the procedure to build urban sustainability indicators : based on a case study in America,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 35-2, 2000, pp. 307-319.

50) Choi, B. D., 'Liberal environmentalism and environmental justice,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 40-6, 2005, pp. 671-693.

b. Tourism geography

In the 1960s and into the 1970s, only a few researchers were interested in tourism geography. The growth of per capita income and leisure time since the 1980s, however, have increased the demand for tourism, and thus geographical studies pertaining to tourism have increased rapidly.⁵¹⁾ Tourism geography has been one of the most popular fields in geography in the 21st century. Topics are diversified, including tourist site development and regional development, tourists' behavior, cultural tourism, international tourism, and place-marketing strategy.

Lee, in her case study of *Suanbo* hot spring, made some suggestions to boost *Suanbo*'s tourist business by using a "tourism destination area life cycle"⁵²⁾. Song compared the differences among Korean tourists' behavioral patterns according to socio-economic characteristics and tourists' residences.⁵³⁾ Cultural tourism is very popular in Korea, and Shim analyzed the development conditions and characteristics of the cultural tourism that has become popular since the early 1990s in a case study of *Kangjin* and *Haenam*, Korea.⁵⁴⁾

As for place marketing, Lee questioned whether place-marketing strategy could be a new theoretical and practical alternative to enhancing place identity and developing local culture. And he adopted the viewpoint of cultural politics to understand 'local culture-oriented place-marketing strategy'.⁵⁵⁾ On the other hand, Baik confirmed that there were some instances of success in place marketing by introducing elements unrelated to the places. She analyzed previous debates on place and place marketing and investigated the possibility of creating "placeness"⁵⁶⁾.

IV Conclusion

Korean human geographers are inclined to participate in solving various national problems beyond the academic sphere, which is one of the main characteristics of Korean geography. Many geographers have been active not only in university research institutes but also in those for national policy-making or regional development, such as the Korea Research Institute for Human Settlements, the Korea Information Society Development Institute, and the Seoul Development Institute. Some of them have expanded into private companies, corresponding to social needs for geography, and these activities have also had a good influence on the development of geographical research. Also, many geographers have influenced national policy-making decisions. This active participation seems to have led the rapid development of Korean

51) Huh, W. K., 'Applied geography,' (The National Academy of Sciences, Republic of Korea, ed., *Academic Research of Korea : Human Geography*, 2002), pp. 291-338.

52) Lee, Y. H., 'The device to activate *Suanbo* hot spring followed by tourism destination area life cycle,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 35-3, 2000, pp. 473-788.

53) Song, Y. C., *The Behavioral Patterns of Korean Tourists by Their Socio-economic Characteristics and Residential Areas*, 2002, Ph. D. Dissertation, Chonnam National University.

54) Shim, S. H., *The Popularization of Cultural Tourism and the Social Construction of Space : A Case Study of Kangjin & Haenam*, Korea, 2000, Ph. D. Dissertation, Seoul National University.

55) Lee, M. Y., *The Place Marketing Strategy and the Cultural Politics of Space : A Case Study of the Club Cultures at the Hong-Dae area in Seoul*, 2003, Ph. D. Dissertation, Seoul National University.

56) Baik, S. H., 'The introduction of art festivals in small cities and the creation of placeness,' *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, 39-6, 2004, pp. 888-906.

geography.

This paper has briefly examined the development and characteristics of Korean human geography by periods : (1) foundation and reorganization (1945–1970); (2) infancy (1971–1980); (3) growth (1981–1990); (4) jump and rush (1991–2000); and (5) maturity and globalization (2001–2005). Also, research trends since 1945 were reviewed by topics such as cultural and historical geography, economic geography, urban geography, rural geography, social / population and political geography, regional studies, and others.

Some prospects for Korean human geography can be summarized as follows. First, traditional research of systematic geography such as urban, rural and population geography has stagnated and continues to do so. Second, economic geography of systematic geography has remained strong and will be broadened along with the development of information and technology and the region's growing need for innovation. Third, some research fields will become more diversified and broadened because of social diversification and the cultural turns of the 21st century. These fields include tourism geography, regional studies, cultural and historical geography, social and political geography, sustainable development and environmental conservation. This also means that integrative studies are more needed than those of any single discipline. Last but not least, Korean human geography will have to focus more on interdisciplinary studies, applied research, and international academic exchanges to meet social needs.

The Development and Prospects of Korean Human Geography

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Korean modern geography started when the Korean Geographical Society was established in 1945. The 60-year history is by no means long, but Korean geography has seen dramatic growth in both quality and quantity. Owing to the growth of Korean geography, Korea came to hold the International Geographical Congress (IGC) in 2000, which has been said to be one of the most successful congresses in IGC history. Korean modern geography can be divided into five periods : from inception through the 1960s, the 1970s, the 1980s, the 1990s, and after the year 2000. Each period shows distinct characteristics, and especially great progress has been made since 2000. Korean human geography has been trying to analyze the actual circumstances and problems of the land and search for solutions in keeping with Korean society, which has experienced wide spatial changes and problems related to urbanization, industrialization, rapid economic growth, and recent cultural developments. It has made broad contributions to society both academically and socially because research outcomes have extended beyond academic

theory to policy making and participation.

This study aims to outline the development of Korean human geography by periods, to examine recent research trends, and finally to raise some future prospects. For these purposes, articles published in the Journal of the Korean Geographical Society, Ph. D. dissertations in geography from Korean universities, and articles on the development process of Korean geography are reviewed.

Key words : Korean Human Geography, the Korean Geographical Society, rapid growth, contributions to society