

# **A Critical Review of the British State-Society Relation through Discourse Configuration for Policy-making**

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Received December 18, 2006; final version accepted January 26, 2007

In light of the competing conceptions of the strength of the British state which lie behind contemporary debates on many of the topics to be dealt within a variety of literature, this article examines competing models of the British state. It explores the environmental factors that posed challenges to the British state's capacity to ensure the implementation of its policies, and the state's capacity to act autonomously in the policy process and its potential to structure, if not impose, patterns of political behavior on citizens and local governments. The specific focus of this article is an examination of the extent to which the British state is a political actor in its own right, with its own preferences, and with the capacity to influence the political process to its own ends. Someone may argue that the 1980's was a time which challenges the traditional understanding of the British state as a weak state. Instead, this article contends that the British state has been a strong state that has not been determined by the content of a certain policy idea, but by 'who drives the discourse channel toward the public acceptance.'

**KEYWORDS:** Strong State, Weak State, State's Autonomy, Communicative Discourse, Coordinate Discourse

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## **I. Introduction**

The analysis to nations' types conducted by B. Badie and P. Birnbaum recognizes the United Kingdom as Weak State not acquiring the autonomy towards its social class. Even though the center of controlling the society existed, it was not a highly advanced nation, enough to implement strong bureaucracy to have power over the social class. 1) On the other hand, scholars are inclined to interpret that the regulatory reform of the Thatcher administration did not signify the deregulation meaning the retreat of the state. Rather, they were associated with reorganization of control system. At the same time, it also implies conversion of protectionism toward liberalism with respect to economy by the fortification of supervision system. 2) However, no substantial evidence has come out to support both divided assertions.

For this regard, the puzzle we will deal with is "Has the society of the United Kingdom substantially experienced the turn-over against the traditional state-society relationship?" The plausible answer for this matter will be that United Kingdom has not shown the conversion in terms of state-society relationship, but the intrinsic ability to reform the social structure and to secure the autonomy. This opinion is based on the following reasons.

First, the weak or strong state would not be derived from the idea of neo-liberalism, but be dependant on who has led the discourse by the time of an agreement upon certain policy. Second, the United Kingdom's neo-liberalistic reformation in 1980, which emphasized the market theory, has shown an image of a strong regulatory nation by strengthening discretion of the executive. However, this image turned out to be historical legacy containing the property of a strong state grounded on the absence of the local government, low-rate of autonomy, and single-actor political system by the centralized authority of core executive 3) rather than contemporary change.

Third, while the representative of the political party that has been sustained by close association with society was getting challenged due to deterioration of voting and affiliation with the party, conditions for a so-called "strong and institutionalized nation" had been established. This phenomenon does not only stick to the 1980's case, which implies that there might be another factor to formulate the strong state other than neo-liberalism. Fourth, the systematical character mentioned above has preserved framework that is supplementary with regard to the creation of communicative discourse conducted by singer-actor, and simultaneously, is not supportive to coordinative discourse performed by multi-actor. Within this frame, the United Kingdom has maintained a strong state with utilizing policy-making discourse initiated by the nation.

Despite recognizing the complexity to comprehend the decisive moment and change when it comes to state-society relationship, alternative explanations related to past understandings will be suggested. It is necessary to point out

the similarity in which the discourse type the United Kingdom holds could be inducing the shock of systematical variables. 4) The United Kingdom and Germany have been selected as a target of comparative study not only because they are powerful countries in Europe, but they also represent similar transformation in terms of state-society relationship. On the other hand, the 1980's, the glorious developing era in the 1980's, the world-wide depression era in the 1970's and the progressive era in the 1990's are discussed as turning-points of research. Furthermore, for the explanation, substantial data of Jan-Erik Lane and Syante Ersson who are eminent in comparative politics have been applied to the content. 5)

The rest part of this writing consists of four sections based on the puzzle mentioned ahead. In the second section, we will review each theory of state-society relationship such as strong, weak, and disoriented state models. In the third section, we will see the function of policy discourse and the aspects of British policy discourse and in the fourth section, the continuity and discontinuity of political factors that construct a state's autonomy. In the end, these reviews will lead to some political implications and further research topics to be developed.

## **II. Theoretical Access of Method for Categorizing Nation-Society Relationship**

### **1. Traditional Approaches for Categorizing State-Society Relationship**

State-society relationship is classified into strong, intermediate/disoriented, and weak state theories by Stephen D. Krasner, strong, weak, and disoriented state theories by Robert Elgie and Steven Griggs. Also, Theodore J. Lowi suggested a case-by-case categorizing method. Krasner said that it is the power of the toward its society which is the core analytic characteristic of a nation's capacity to overcome internal resistance. 6) In classifying the power of the nation, Krasner suggests three ideal forms of state-society relationship-weak, intermediate/disoriented, and strong states based on the resistability to social pressure, the ability to change behaviors of private sector, and the capacity to change a social structure. 7)

A weak state can resist to social pressure but has no ability to change behaviors of private actors. 8) Reverse, a strong state can change behaviors of private actors and economic structure per se for a certain period. Also, it can create a new economic actor and foster a new economic sector with subsidiary policies such as a loan and tax reduction. Meanwhile, intermediate/disoriented state can be resistable to private sector's pressure and persuade it to follow the policy for national interest. However, it cannot change the structure of domestic environment. 9)

In this regard, Elgie and Griggs' theories of strong, weak, and disoriented states are similar to Krasner's classification. They used four standards in categorizing: the degree of disintegration of a state, independency to demands of social actors, a state's capacity to assure the fulfillment of policy, and the political authority allocated to a state. 10) According to their classification, a weak state is featured with inability of fulfilling policies and lack of autonomy not independent from social groups. In the level of sector, a weak state lacks leading departments and it has a widely spread authority and a competition and disunion between departments. Departments of a weak state usually do not have enough professional knowledge and insider's information, and also has a strong tendency of mobilizing interest groups. 11)

On the other hand, the power of a strong state is concentrated in a single department which has a dominant power of decision making, and when it comes to decision making, cross-agency approach is preferred. 12) In this case, decision making of the former is made in the level of sector, and that of the latter is in the level of a comprehensive approach. Departments of a strong state mostly have sufficient information of insiders and professional knowledge. Thus, its tendency of mobilizing interest groups is low. A disoriented state model implies that a state's autonomy is determined by the nature of policy sector and a certain level of policy decision. A disoriented state theory avoids taking a broad view to state-society relationship and classifies it by systemic features. Instead, it prefers the diversity of strong and weak states in the balance of a nation and its society. 13)

Lowi's classification is close to the type of disoriented state. Lowi developed the concept of a range of conflicts suggested by E. E. Schattschneider to classify types of policy in each case such as distribution, regulation, and redistribution policies of the U.S. government. According to Lowi, classification of state-society relationship can be fluid that a state can reveal an aspect of a strong state in a certain case but also an aspect of a weak state in other cases. 14)

In this debate, we can find out some essential concepts on 'autonomy' and 'capacity' of a state in explaining state-society relationship. 15) According to Skocpol's definition of a state's autonomy, it "pursues and sets the goal of not reflecting demands or interests of its society, class or social groups." 16) Capacity of a state means "to carry out official goals even in the resistable socio-economic environment and overcome the virtual or provisional opposition of strong social groups." 17)

State-society relationship is, according to Skocpol, the relationship between interacting a national actor and a social actor. Although, their relationship is not equal. She reports that a state is identical to the state structure or bureaucracy and it functions as an independent entity and actor. It can organize the types and characteristics of political activities of social actors to participate in a state's activities or exercise their influence. 18)

Likewise, the national approach has the limited methodology in possessing a unique position concentrating on issues of governing and regulation. It emphasizes institutional regulation on private activities and conflicts and disintegration

within a political system. 19) The national approach, which stresses the institutional regulation of private behaviors, assumes that social actors are confined to the structure which determines and limits their political volunteering and just national interests. Therefore, political outputs are not merely the sum of actors power. 20) It is the function of a state to offer institutional regulations. National approach considers a state as a structure and simplifies an entire process of making consensus with the masses; how to make a discourse supporting the necessity and appropriateness of policies; how to deliver it to the masses in the process of policy making.

Meanwhile, national approach, which concentrates on conflicts and disintegration within a political system, is based on the concept of independent power of a modern state. That is, nationalism focuses on the capacity of a state which can make a decision to regulate collectively in a society and enforce social groups to accept that; and which can penetrate, regulate, supervise, inspect, and train those social power such as local entities, individual and social groups who resist to the decision of a state. 21) Therefore, national approach observes state-society relationship as the dichotomy between the structure and actors, which is a static approach, and overlooks interactions between the structure and actors.

There is another approach to compare each country's different structure of discourse for policy-making as this article suggests, besides to consider variations of state-society relationship based on the concept of autonomy and capacity, which shows some contradictions. To put it clearly, this article supports that the comparative approach is more proper and will explain about it in detail next.

## 2. Alternative Perspective for Categorizing State-Society Relationship

Existing studies about state-society relation have been conducted with priority given to a state's capacity that changes social resistance and a state's autonomy to its society. Unlike the concept of national power, discourse persuades the masses to build up the necessity and appropriateness of a policy and constructs and manages policy programs making consensus on them. Thus, discourse for policy-making shows the intrinsic attribute of a state's power leading the process of discourse which is laid on changes in policies.

The problem is that function of discourse for policy-making varies in countries and also has some commonalities. We can rise a basic question of the causality between dynamics and the attributes of variables. However, efforts in this study is relatively less than those of the institutional approach. It is very meaningful to study state-society relationship based on discourse configuration for policy-making which has less been paid to.

Studies about different variations and functions of discourse supplement existing studies about changes in policies. They have mainly concentrated on interest-oriented reactions and dependency on institutional process of actors, and the level of culture and identity. They explain about interests and orientation of groups who agree or disagree to changes in policies and describe the process of their dependent development, institutional regulations and opportunities. Also, it suggests how to understand their interests to policy-makers and cultural rules and norms to change policies. Therefore, their studies are static and explain well about continuity than changes. 22)

On the other hand, studies about different variations and functions of discourse shows how to overcome conflicting interests; how to change the concept of interest; how to overcome institutional barriers; how to overcome the political-cultural ones who ignores changes; and how to create a new political-cultural rule. 23) Therefore, it can explain how a state's power to its society can be exerted in reality based on the concept of a state's capacity and autonomy.

Usefulness of studies about discourse can be found in policy theory. Policy theory can be categorized into narrow-range theory, general theory, and middle-range theory according to the range of application. Among these, general theory has a number of cases to deal with (*i.e.* expansion of extension) and the number of attributes in the theory is minor (*i.e.* curtailment of intention), so that it is highly valuable for scientific generalization. Nonetheless, today's general theory is criticized that it cannot include many kinds of values of various case analyses for its excessive parsimony. And it is the study about policy network that is suggested as middle-range theory which has a specific approach to cover case analysis and general theory.

Policy network is an organizational complex which is connected with dependency of resources. 24) A number of actors seek their own interest and interests of their groups and a state while policy-making of each branch is done within policy network. And in the process of seeking interests, recommendation, consultation, professional knowledge, and technocratic rationality are used through the process of discourse for policy-making suitable to regulations of everyday decision-making. 25) And policy network is regarded as an approach that people who are taking different models of power distribution and the process of policy-making under liberal democracy can accept at the same time as a concept of the level of middle range. 26)

Thus, this article compares the influence of government and that of social power shown in the process of policy-making in the level of middle range between making simple theory and case analysis. And it assures where the ideas for policy are originated from and who fosters them, who the real policy arbitrator is and who possesses the most effective professional knowledge. Moreover, it will decide the process of discourse and compare the British system of discourse concerning to political factors structuring a state's autonomy and their changes. Especially, this requires theoretical review of functions of discourse before explaining about variations of discourse configurations for British policy-making.

### III. Dynamics of Function and Configuration of Policy-making Discourse

#### 1. Function of Policy-making Discourse and the Configuration of British Policy-making Discourse

Many actors are engaged in policy network about decision making and the policy-making process. In this course, the policy actor needs a common language and ideational framework as a means to make the public consent to necessity and appropriateness of the policy. It is a discourse that originates the common language and the ideational framework. The discourse in this part means all remarks which policy actors mention to the public and each other so as to produce and justify the policy program. 27) Europe has depended on the specific process of the discourse which is a main 28) part of the democratic governance in order to justify policy construction or switch. These discourses contribute to solidify a political identity, define a political action and interpret political event.

Two groups are involved in the process of interaction of policy discourse. One is to produce ideas for policies. The other is to deliver those to the public. The former conforms to a coordination area and the latter conforms to a communication area. Therefore, discourse plays at least two parts such as a coordination function, a communication function and so on. If I say in more detail, the coordination function of discourse offers the common language and the ideational framework to the policy actor. Thereupon, the policy actor constructs a policy program, discusses an advantage, adjusts a policy program and draws an agreement about implications for policy programs.

The communication function offers a policy actor a means to persuade the public through discussions and explanations. This is used as a way to convince the public of that the policy developed by coordination is necessary and appropriate. At this point, Convincing the public of necessity of the policy is named as a 'cognitive function' and persuading the public of appropriateness of the policy is named as a 'normative function.' 29)

The public can be divided into two types. One is a 'general public' who can not be notified of the government policy during the coordination step. The other is an 'informed public' who is able to meet with the policy. Thus, the general public is to manifest dissatisfaction in the communication step or to choose 'action' path by election. Here, if objections of social groups are not so strong to the government policy, the government does not modify the policy ideas which remain at the communication step and perform it. The neo-liberal fiscal policy under Thatcher government could be performed without a problem through these processes. On the other hand, the informed public consists of the press, the leader of an interest group, experts and an opposition party. They often participate in the communication step and the coordination step. In Britain's case, the informed public is allowed to take part in the communication step, not in the coordination step. Contrary to this, Germany shows that the informed public participates in the coordination step rather than the communication step. 30)

In Britain, policies show a tendency to be formed by a government-driven policy actor group which is under tight control. In this case, Generally the policy actor represents the elite in a government party and they tend to form the policy amidst an absence of outside input from external groups such as opposition parties, social partners, local government and interest groups. During the policy formation process highly controlled, although an idea is originated from an epistemic community 31) and promoted by a discourse coalition or an advocacy coalition, 32) over all policy coordinators consist of government related actors who coordinate the policy program structure and have the best resource about expert knowledge. 33)

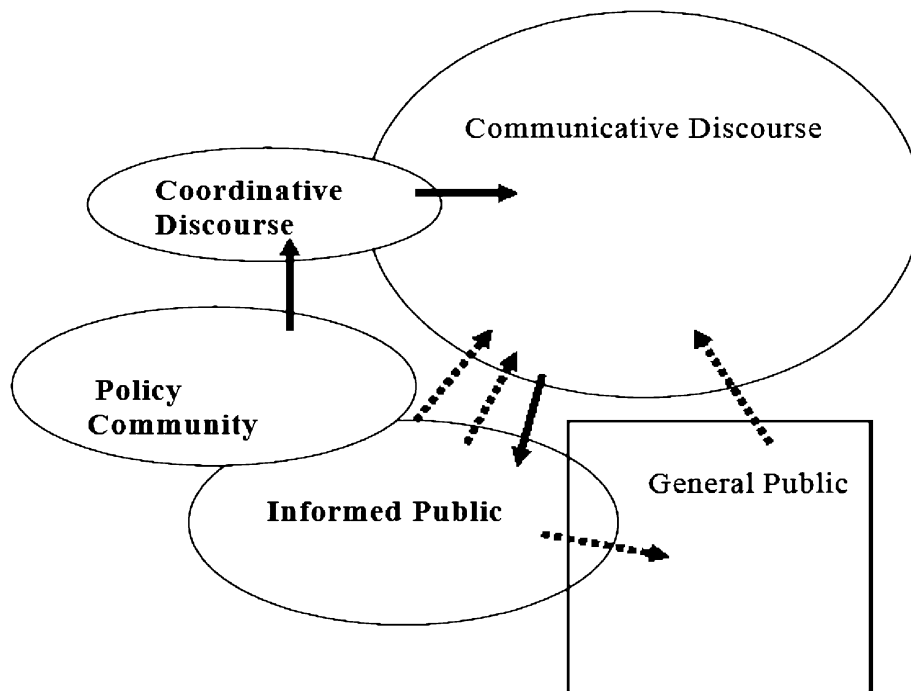
In Britain, the government leads public opinion about a main policy entrepreneurship at the wide public sphere. The public can not have a significant influence at the government originated public sphere. The reason is the fact that the coordination talk is relatively insufficient with an interest group which is affected most, though it is an open discussion occurred at the discourse's coordination stage. A policy is rather formed by a small group of elites at the coordination step.

After that, it is scrutinized by the public at the stage of communication. Therefore, through this thorough scrutiny, the public and the interest group get to have an opposite view and when they express it in action, it remains generally at the stage of communication. In other words, the 'action' path of social communities to a policy is available only at the stage of communication. <Diagram1> describes this kind of the British discourse's configuration.

#### 2. Political Factor Forming Policy Discourse Structure

As a modern state was developed, executing a political authority became official and the movement to institutionalize it was carried out. In this context, the meaning of institutionalization is that the political system is administered by the institution such as a rule or a norm, which clarifies the principle of organizational diversification and functional specialization. It is expected that various characters of a political system and culture often have an influence on discourse's various structures which decide the construction and switch of a policy. The reason is that political system and culture institutionalize the mechanism for carrying out the political organization's decision and construct the optional condition. Consequently, It is the essence of a political system that the political decision is predictable. With this political system process, demands of civil society are tied to decisions and actions of elite politicians. So, state-society relationship can be analyzed by two axes: the state's autonomy and the society's influence. 34) What the society's influence stands for in this context is the ability of the citizens, communities, and groups which can show the government, the direction of a policy decision, and the performance.

Fig. 1. Discourse Configuration in Britain.



Note: → indicates involvement and influence.

Source: Schmidt(2002), p.241.

Then how can the state's autonomy and society's influence be identified in a concrete way? Above all, in Britain, an organizational angle and an agential angle are two aspects to look into the political factor to shape the discourse process and construct state's autonomy. First, the attribute of a single-actor-system can be derived from the organizational angle. The meaning of the attribute of a single-actor-system in this context is that the central government takes the lead in the policy decision process. In the British case, this system has been maintained due to the absence of the independent local government, the activity of core executive, an election system, characteristics of government construction, and so on. 35)

On the other hand, the society's influence, an opposite concept of the state's autonomy, can be measured by using institutional autonomy as a proxy. In this context, 'institution' means a chain of relationships which support an influence of the citizens and the local government. Therefore, systemic autonomy is not only civil rights to a state, but also the extent of regional decentralization. Consequently, if a state has a single actor system and a low systemic autonomy, it shows systemic feature of centralization and has a weak systemic regulation power to a state. From this, it is to take on the attributes of a strong state, in which the citizens and social communities have little influence on the state.

As a way to confirm a state's autonomy and society's influence specifically, the agential angle can produce a connection between a party and society. Raising a change of this connection corresponds with examining a change of the state's nature. The party's role as a knowledge intermediary becomes essential so as to intervene between interests and thoughts of social actors and also communicate those facts to the political actors who frame a policy. Contrary to France, a bureaucrat-centered government, Britain is party elite-centered that closely connects the executive government and the Parliament according to the principle of the winner-takes-all. Therefore, the change of a party channel induces the configuration of policy discourse to be changed and resultantly shapes the frame of a state-society relationship.

Surely many other factors can be mentioned apart from the above. However, how the configuration of British discourse process has remained and changed will be focused on. During this process, what this article is saying is that even with the change of times, the man of power in British government has been changed due to the support of particular social communities. Also, the policy discourse of Britain has depended on a communicative discourse and that the process of acceptance of a policy discourse has always been under the leadership of the government that took the political central power. From the organizational angle, this continuance of communicative policy discourse structure is comprehensible along the lines of particular systemic coherence which originates those situations. From the agential angle, it results from weak relationships between political parties and society. In the following context, emphasizing those facts, I am to confirm whether political factors which form the state's autonomy have shown the continuance with the change of times.

## IV. The Continuity and Discontinuity of Political Factors Forming State's Autonomy

### 1. Characteristics of a Single-actor-system Shaping Discourse Process

Table 1 gives an outline of several view-points which parliamentarism of Britain and Germany had until the middle of 1990. The executive and the legislature interact to impose and dispose the Cabinet, control on the legislative agendas, dismiss the Congress, and provoke new elections. Several issues can be brought up to measure the problem of distribution of power over the interaction. Those issues can be how much authority the executive has over committees (A), how difficult it is using a vote of confidence (B), how much authority a member of parliament and a minister are allowed to have, who has control over the agenda in parliament, and so on. After considering all the factors, the executive autonomy of Britain shows 4 and Germany shows 2. However, the difference of figures does not mean that Britain has a strong executive.

Given the distribution of a government's central power, the British government is very different from other European governments. Generally, Britain has been called a party government. A party government refers to parliamentarism which has strong belief in parliament and also that the degree of dependency of a ministry on parliament is high. The judicature neither passes judgment on the decision or law of a parliament applying to a higher standard, nor does it judge whether it is violating the constitution. Also, the British government is not separated from parliament and the ministry is regarded as a special group of parliament. It virtually shows a strong form of separation of rights with the absence of the administration's rights. Therefore, when parliament has lost its credibility, the ministry cannot be maintained. It implies the image of a weak state in which the British government emphasizes parliamentarism. However, it is the ministry that rules parliament.

Table 1. Comparison of the Executive Power.

Country	Committee (A)	Confidence (B)	MP/Minister (C)	Agenda (D)	Overall Scores
UK	2	0	1	1	4
Germany	0	1	1	0	2

Note: (A): 2 = Strong, 1 = intermediate, 0 = weak (B): 1 = difficult, 0 = intermediate (C): 1 = allowed, 0 = not allowed (D): 1 = government, 0 = congress

Source: (C) and (D) from H. Dring (ed.), *Parliaments and Majority Rule in Western Europe* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1995), (A) and (B) from H. Dring, "Parlamentarische Kontrolle in Westeuropa: Strukturen, Probleme und Perspektiven," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B 27/96 (1996), pp. 42–55. This table is quoted from Lane and Ersson (1999), p. 216.

However, according to experts studying the British government system, it is interesting that the British traditional ministry government system since the 1960's has changed into the prime minister government system. 36) Additionally, Patrick Dunleavy and R. A. W. Rhodes, who are famous for the study of British politics suggested another approach called the "core executive approach" in studying models of British states; according to their analysis, it is core executive not prime minister which is the pivot of British politics. Core executive in this context is not a government's department such as the ministry of foreign affairs and the British Commonwealth of Nations or government such as the prime minister office. Core executive is the concept to distinguish certain parts of central government and it controls and orders overall government's policies, not assisting a certain department and not engaging in a certain policy area. 37) British core executive is consisted of the ministry (including the prime minister), cabinet committee, cabinet office, prime minister office, a part of the ministry of financial affairs, the major legal office of government, and central organization. 38)

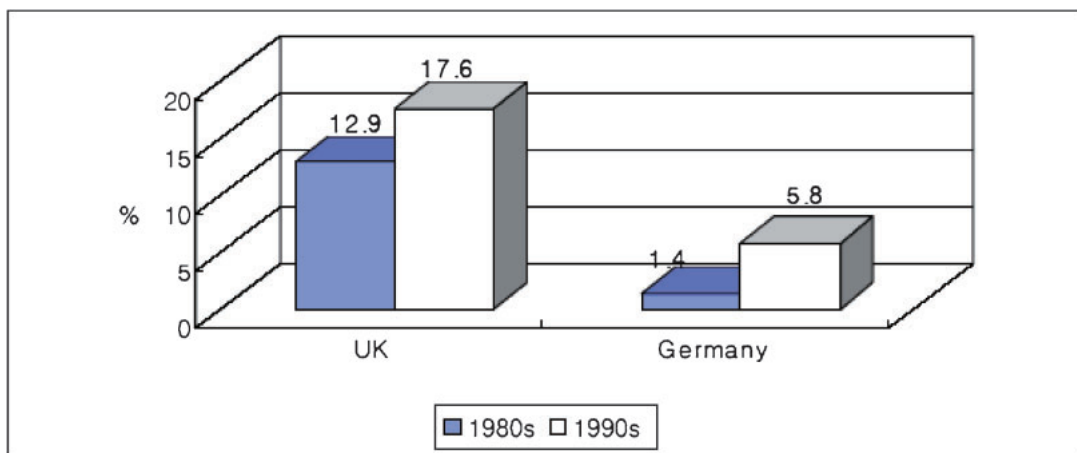
In a core executive approach, the prime minister is the predominant actor but it is one of actors in a sense of the relationship and institution that make core executive. 39) And it considers that prime ministers, public officers, and cabinet ministers are restrained by external organization, the rule of game, the structure of institution, other actors, and the coherence of their activities. This is because prime minister government, ministry government, and the presidential system are meaningless in the structure of core executives. And the core executive's power is based on the subordinate relationship rather than orders; and the subordinate relationship is based on overlapping networks. Within the networks, actors even like prime ministers, who possess abundant power resources have to be dependent on other actors to achieve their goals. Thus, true nature and form of core executive are not dependent on a certain actor's individuality and it is ran by a union of actors rather than orders from the prime minister. 40)

Britain has been contacting to the executive and pressure groups in the level of development and fulfillment of policies. Consultation and mediation has been maintained as a traditional policy-making process and it constitutes 600 institutional organizations called selected committee yearly and intimate policy network between a government and pressure groups. This makes the model of the British state seen as a weak state whose process of policy-making can be penetrated easily by interests of pressure groups. But the network between a government's policy planning committees and pressure groups is constructed by discussion of public officers and the cabinet meetings. 41) The problem is that

core executive is the pivot which leads the complex committee system and networks among official partners, cabinet committee, and prime minister. Thus, there is no intimate relationship between the British government and pressure groups not like as seen externally. Some may assert that pressure groups can exert their power through parliament, however, generally considered that the British parliament does not have a powerful authority as much as the American congress, so it cannot be the target of lobby. 42)

The British government is composed in a different way compared to the so-called party government of Europe considering that the British model of government composition, like the German model, does not form a coalition government. Party government structure which involves a coalition government offers more than two party channels for various social groups to participate in the process of policy-making discourse. Differently to this, the party which produced the most parliament members becomes the Ministerial party and the leader of the party is selected prime minister following the principle of the winner-takes-all in Britain. Further, members of an absolute majority party become to rule parliament. Due to this, there is a problem of asymmetrical representativeness for social groups in participating the process of policy-making.

Fig. 2. Comparison of the UK and Germany in Disproportionality (unit: %).



Source: Lane and Ersson(1999), p.200.

It is 'disproportional' to evaluate how proportionately social groups are participating in the process of policy-making. Disproportional means the gap between the proportion of the gained votes and seats in election and it can be calculated by dividing total sum of gap between every party's votes and seats by two. The reason that it is divided by 2 is that when there is a certain amount of parliamentary seats, winning seats for one political party would mean losing seats for the other. Thus, when the disproportionality rate is 0, this means that all the political parties obtained the same numbers of parliamentary seats as the rate of votes obtained. As the Fig. 2 implies, UK has a high disproportionality rate while Germany has relatively lower disproportionality rate.

High proportionality shows how much the strategic choice of speaking out during policy making process through political parties is unavailable to the social group. Generally the large political parties, through elections, hold more parliamentary seats than the number of votes obtained. On the other hand, small political parties occupy relatively less parliamentary seats. Although this phenomenon has the effectiveness of preventing the political parties from running for election all at once, it also excludes the interests of a certain social group. Thus, most countries choose the proportional representation format in order to eliminate this kind of disproportionality rate so that they could stop the social crack. 43) However, the United Kingdom chooses the simple majority format instead of the proportional representation format. Through this diversity of countries' election systems, the way that the social group participates in policy discourse occurs variously. 44)

## 2. The Absence of an Independent Local Government and Systemic Autonomy

The other political element that makes up the characteristics of the United Kingdom's political discourse is the fact that the local government is absent. This aspect contrasts the situation where multi-level governance is raised to the surface and local integration is accelerated. Today, the state's role within governance is not fixed and the degree of it is increasing according to the situations. As a result, decision makers acknowledge the necessity of having the capability to manage the environmental variables during the policy making process. Through this link, in order to mobilize resource transcending the borders between public and self, the elites of local, region, and state tried to attach private enterprise, self-governing body, and other social actors together. Ultimately, these attachments were aimed to strengthen the opportunity to lead the society towards the politically defined goals.

United Kingdom currently operates the policy making system with three different levels: Westminster's administration and legislature at the state level, the systemic institution that entrust authority to Wales, Scotland, and North Ireland at the local level and the European Union at the international level. 45) Former Westminster's sovereign power is now shared with other institutions, and hence, quite a lot of Westminster's previous authorities were transferred to these coexisting institutions.

Then, does this aspect suggest that a centralized government is absent? My answer would be no. The United Kingdom is different from other European countries because it does not have a powerful local government like Germany. Currently, the independence of Wales, Scotland, and North Ireland's parliament is restrictively accepted through devolution. However, taxation authority, which represents the state power, is only partially permitted to Scotland's parliament while the rest parliaments do not have any. Rather, the United Kingdom's local governments are usually characterized by clear racial backgrounds and strong local identities. Moreover, through administrative culture regarding unwritten laws and also through customs such as British people's acceptance of the Westminster restriction, the strong control over local actions is still possible. Thus, contrast to the European local governments, the United Kingdom's local government is only able to act within the limit given by the parliament. 46)

As discussed above, institutional autonomy indicates how much the local government holds systemic autonomy. As Table 2 shows, Germany, a country which traditionally has high systemic autonomy, has a channel that enables the local government's voices to be heard in the policy making process. On the other hand, United Kingdom's local government's autonomy is so low that the systemic autonomy rate scores 1.

Table 2. Institutional Autonomy Index of the UK and Germany.

Country	Federalism (0-3)	Special Territorial Autonomy (0-2)	Functional Autonomy (0-2)	Local Government Discretion (0-3)	Overall Scores
UK	0	1	0	0	1
Germany	3	0	0	1	4

Source: Lane and Ersson (1999), p. 187.

Due to the spread of welfare state, the duty to fulfill the local government system has been expanding in the Southern Europe. According to this kind of expansion of the local government system, the demand of autonomy was more satisfied. Nevertheless, contrasting to this kind of trend, the United Kingdom was heading towards centralized authority. The United Kingdom adheres to the Westminster's governing model and does not permit the autonomy of local governments. Policy decision making is based on the two-party system which is lead by systematized opposition-party's minority and government-party's majority. Here, according to sovereignty of parliament rule, the major actor is the parliament of the government-party, the leading cabinet and the main administration. However, this does not mean that the autonomy of local government is meaningless in the United Kingdom. At least until the Thatcher administration came in, United Kingdom's local governments also held quite a lot of autonomy. 47) Hence, this kind of the United Kingdom's peculiarity, where the contrasting two elements which are the sovereignty of parliament and autonomy of local government coexist, is named "dual polity." 48) Commenting on the inefficiency of this dual polity, Thatcher carried out a reform. Therefore, the British local government of the United Kingdom met a new stage under the Thatcher administration. Under the slogan of "rolling back the frontiers of the state," 49) the conservative Thatcher administration enforced the state authority in the fields of industrial relations, education, and local administration. More than anything else, the United Kingdom's central government authority was enforced by eliminating bureaucratic protests and minimizing the size of the government. The Thatcher administration minimized the size of the bureaucrat structure judging that the bureaucratic structure was not efficient in practical terms. Moreover, by appointing a capable person from the private sector to a responsible position, Thatcher tried to strengthen competitive power.

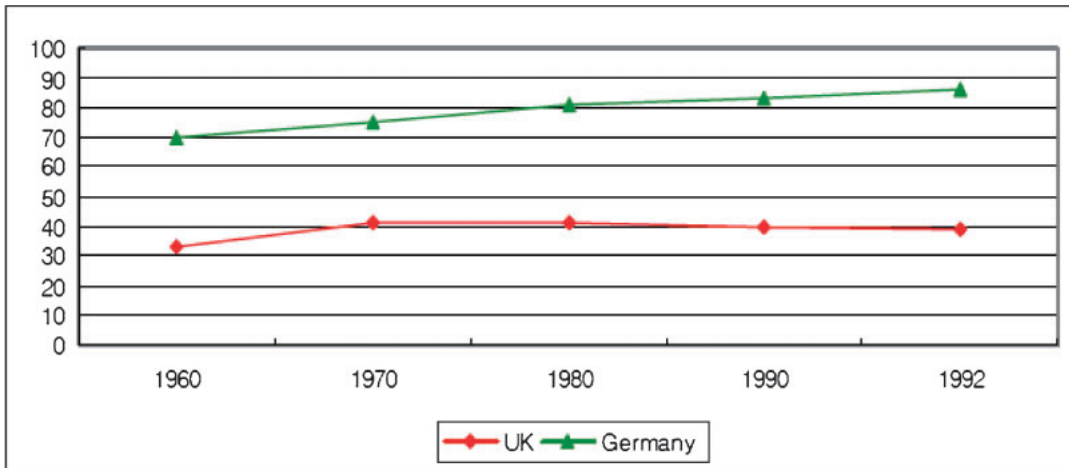
In addition, the power of central government became stronger by minimizing local government power, 50) While the Thatcher administration reduced the central government's budget given to local government from 63% to 49%, 51) by substituting local tax for poll tax and local society tax which are under central government authority excluded local government from the central based decision making structure. These efforts were met with protests. Thus, they were withdrawn in the future. Moreover, enterprise tax decision making was reverted to the central government from local governments. 52) Ultimately, these sets of systemic restructure accelerated centralization of power, and were even headed towards government authoritarianism. In this aspect, some evaluate the 1980s as the turning point of the regime's true nature. However, as one can see through Fig. 3, while Germany has uplifted the local government autonomy for the last 20 years, the United Kingdom has rather traditionally maintained her systemic characteristics. 53)

### 3. The Challenge of the Connection between Political Party and Society

The fact that the political party which functions between the state and the society, helps us understand the state's true nature. To be more concrete, there has been conflicts and competitions between the Conservative Party and



Fig. 3. Regional and Fiscal Autonomy Indexes.

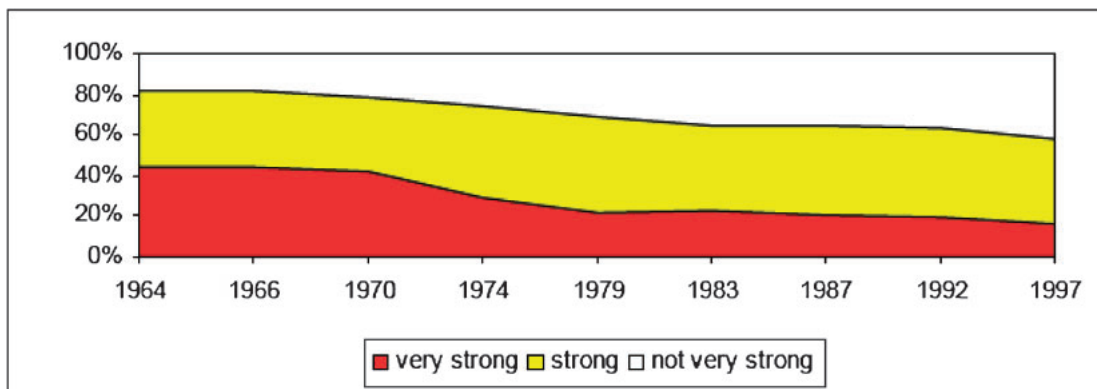


Note: This index measures the proportion of local and regional government final consumption in relation to general government final consumption.

Source: This figure is reconstructed by the author based on the raw data from Lane and Ersson(1999), p.188.

the Labor Party regarding Keynesian consent. In the political and relational viewpoint, despite the change of circumstances, before the 1979 election, the Conservative Party was the discourse channel that spoke for the interests of enterprise and ‘the City’ which is a London Financier. Meanwhile, the Labor Party spoke for the labor class and the labor union. 54) Actually, these two political parties initiated the coexistence and compromise between capital and labor. Also, they enjoyed the exclusive possession of political representation from their exclusive supporting force. Through this, the order of the British state structure could be assumed as a political party based on indirect intervention and mediation.

Fig. 4. The Strength of Party Identification, 1964–97 (the UK).



Source: BES cross-section surveys, 1966-97.

Through the United Kingdom’s past voting rate and the British people’s strong sense of belonging towards political parties, we can get two important facts. One, they are representing a “participation type” political culture which the social actors are sensitive to political changes. As it is shown in Fig. 4, 55) during 1964–66, 44% of the British people felt a “very strong” sense of belonging to political parties while only 18% felt a “weak” sense of belonging. 56) As Fig. 4 indicates, the sense of belonging is slowly decreasing than the previous year in all the elections with no exception. 57) Through this, we can find out that the connection between social forces and political parties are loosening in the British society from the 1970s.

Another index which shows the weakening connection between society and the political party is the decline of “class vote” and the increase of “voting mobility.” The former indicates the relation between voter’s class and political party

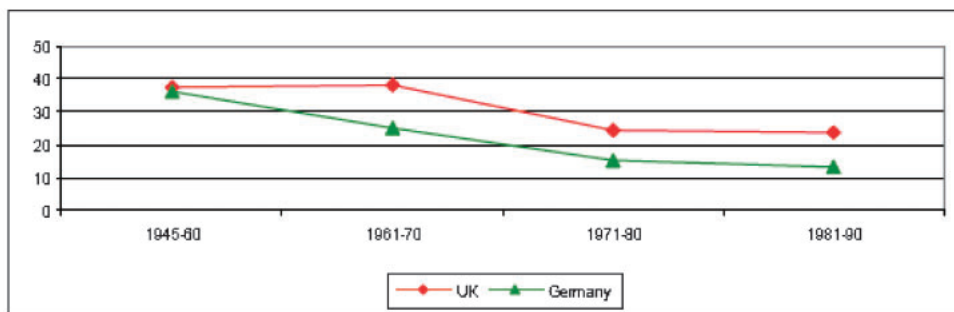
preference, and the latter indicates how the political party, which used the supporting votes of the Conservative Party and the Labor Party, changes from yearly elections. Figure 5 (a) shows how the class voting rate of both the United Kingdom and Germany is slowly declining from elections starting from the 1970s. In the case of the United Kingdom, the propensity of class voting rate was at the peak (the score was 37.3%) in the 1950s and 60s, while in the 1980s it fell to 24.3%. Meanwhile, as Fig. 5 (b) indicates, although the voting mobility rate in the United Kingdom is higher than the average of the thirteen Western European countries, it is constantly rising until the early 1980s. All these facts prove that the traditional link that the political party and the society once had is becoming weak. Then, what is the political implication that this situation suggests? We can summarize it in to the following two aspects.

First, as the link between society and political party weakened, the political party changed from a phase of being a large political organization, dependent to the general public, to an elite organization which is led by a small scale of elites. 58) In the interviews that I did, the consent from actual politicians on this part can be found. The primary examples of scholars are Richard Katz and Peter Mair. Actually, there needs to be another essay on this part. This is also proved by the fact that the United Kingdom’s leading force of policy discourse changed from the 1960s’ cabinet based system to prime minister based main Administration. This, of the political party, also provided a political environment that formed a neo-liberal business state in the United Kingdom. To be more specific, the political party system played the role of mediating the state and the society during the compromise of Keynesian. However, as the political party became apart from the social power due to the weak connection between the political party and society, the state is able to manage the pressure from the society’s political and economical demand with relatively less sensitivity than before. 59)

Second, as the political party’s traditional function that spoke for the common interests of the labor class and capital class drooped, the political party’s dependence on the state has escalated. Through this, the political party was able to be relatively freer from social pressure, and if this kind of changed political party obtains political power, the state

Fig. 5. Class Voting and Voting Volatility (unit: %).

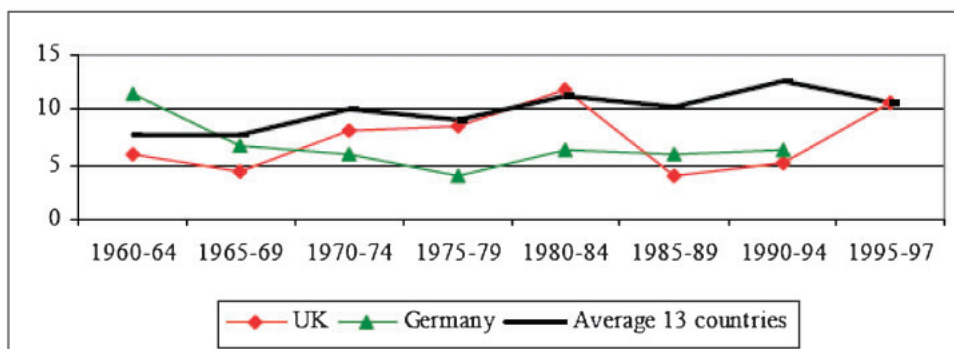
(a) Class Voting in Europe, 1945-90 (Alford index)



Source: This figure is reconstructed by the author based on the raw data from Geoffrey Evans(ed), *The End of Class*

*Politics? Class Voting in Comparative Context*(Oxford: OUP, 1999), p.32.

(b) Voting Volatility (net volatility, 1960-97, unit: %)



Source: This figure is reconstructed by the author based on the raw data from Mogens Pederson, “Electoral Volatility in Western Europe, 1948-1977,” in Peter Mair(ed), *The West European Party System* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p.202; Lane and Ersson(1996),p.131.

autonomy will relatively increase. Increased state autonomy makes it easier to maintain or pursue neo-liberal business state or strong regulation state.

In conclusion, the United Kingdom state's structural form which the political party spoke for the social group's interests met a turning point as the sense of belonging towards political party declined. Also, the potential possibility of the state's autonomy and capability of the society to extend came to the end. However, the decline of the sense of belonging to political party and the increase of voting mobility is not always proportionate to the enforcement of state authority. This is because the influence of a political party is not proportionate to the rate of voting support. Fundamentally, this is because there is a direct influencing channel such as citizen voting in a country's policy decision-making process. There needs to be another essay on this issue. Also, since it does not coincide with this essay's original purpose, it is irrelevant. 60) In addition, the increase of voting mobility did not only occur in the 1980s, which is the turning point of the United Kingdom's structure, but was continuously going on from the 1960s. From this, we can not conclude that the increase of voting mobility is the significant causation of the changed relations of state and society.

## V. Conclusion

In conclusion, we can obtain the following political implications through the examinations written above. The United Kingdom is a two-party system state which the Labor Party and the Conservative Party have traditionally taken power. These political parties, each based on contrasting supporting force, have carried out policies that shows propensity for enterprise and labor union. They certainly have at least the resisting power from non-supporting forces. Hence, from the nationalistic view, the United Kingdom can be comprehended as a weak state according to Krasner's classifying criteria. Nevertheless, looking at the relations of the British state and society concerning who led the ideas in the policy discourse, it is hard to see the United Kingdom as a weak state.

However, the United Kingdom has traditionally operated a discourse channel whose main focus is for the state to persuade the general public of policy ideas. In this discourse channel, the main actor is the cabinet which is composed of political elites. On this, the traditional policy making process of the United Kingdom was through state-led route. The British political system, a winner monopoly system without the system of proportional representation, increases the possibility that British government will be led by the supporting social force. However, the state-society-relation type is heading towards the features of strong state. Ultimately, the British state-society relation is not determined by the government's propensity to regulation and re-regulation, but has been shaped by who manages the discourse channel which provides the necessity and propriety of policy change.

Meanwhile, the whole story of whether the United Kingdom in the 1980's experienced a contrasting transition of traditional state-society relations can not be explained merely through the examinations of this essay. This is because this essay does not deal with the significant viewpoints that follow below. First, this essay does not explain how the government was able to raise consent for policy change and how it was able to overcome national protest (in the aspects of interest, system, and culture) to these changes. Thus, there needs to be a case study that provides specific discourse process. Refer below. 61) Especially, a specific case study on how the influence on discourse process, from political transition under Thatcher administration, shows which kind of difference or continuity from the era before Thatcher needs to be conducted. Second, although this essay is trying to analyze mainly political and systemic variables, it did not positively analyze the shock of actor-centric-variables from the functions of each state's different discourse forms. To solidify this essay's argument, the estrangement of individual approach method needs to be lessened through parallel case-centric approach and variable-focused approach. If the importance of these approaches and the limitation of individual approaches are recognized, it is appropriate to aim at the intersecting point of causal conditions through the parallel approaches of both from the middle range level. 62)

Third, in the contemporary United Kingdom, the notable policy changes such as liberalization, deregulation, Europeanization, decentralization of labor market, etc., reduced the communicational discourse channel in which the government plays a central role. Hereby, the United Kingdom is getting closer towards multi-actor system from the traditional single-actor system. Thus, the analysis of these changes has great value as a future research theme.

Forth, the examination of the viewpoint of the actor which leads the state-society relations in a certain political field will also be an interesting future research theme. In the British case, the main communicator is the prime minister. The problem is that the ability of individual prime minister varies when performing their roles. Also, there is a possibility that the prime minister's ideas or his/her own nested interests within state interest could shape the state-society relations. 63) These series of research provide a different viewpoint of the previous typology of state-society relation.

As a result, whether the United Kingdom in the 1980's experienced a contrasting transition of the traditionally state-society relations could be fully understood only after considering the above viewpoints that this essay did not deal with. I hope that this essay provides one part of this understanding so that it could stimulate the research of the rest.

## Notes

- 1) Bertrand Badie & Pierre Birnbaum, *The Sociology of the State, Eng. Trans. By Arthur Goldhammer* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

- 2) Steven K. Vogel, *Freer Markets, More Rules: Regulatory Reform in Advanced Industrial Countries* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996); A. Gamble, *The Free Economy and the Strong State: The Politics of Thatcherism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1988); Dennis Swan, *The Retreat of the State: Deregulation and Privatisation in the U.K. and the U.S.* (Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988); Michael Borrus, et al., "Telecommunications Development in Comparative Perspective: *The New Telecommunications in Europe, Japan, and the U.S.*," *Berkeley Roundtable on the International Economy* (BRIE) Working Paper No. 14 (1985); Jill Hills, *Deregulating Telecoms: Competition and Control in the United States, Japan and Britain* (Westport, Conn.: Quorum, 1986); Michael Moran, *The Politics of the Financial Services Revolution: The U.S.A., U.K., and Japan* (New York: St. Martin's, 1991).
- 3) This issue will be covered in the later section.
- 4) However, it does not mean that it only confines to causality of actors' variables.
- 5) It may be dangerous to have only a single datum, but as other works do not show a big difference comparatively I will not repeat overlapping parts.
- 6) Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.), *Between Power and Plenty: Foreign Economic Policies of Advanced Industrial States* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), p. 55.
- 7) Steven K. Krasner, *Defending the National Interest: Raw Materials Investments and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 55.
- 8) Krasner (1978), pp. 56–57.
- 9) Krasner (1978), p. 57.
- 10) Robert Elgie and Steven Griggs, *French Politics: Debates and Controversies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 7; P. Hall, *Governing the Economy: The Politics of State Intervention in Britain and France* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986), pp. 164–66.
- 11) Elgie and Griggs (2000), p. 11.
- 12) M. A. Atkinson and W. D. Coleman, "Strong states and weak states: sectoral policy networks in advanced capitalist economies," *British Journal of Political Science*, 19-1 (1989), pp. 47–67.
- 13) A mixed state is subdivided into two types; one is the type that emphasizes restrained nature of state's power and the other emphasizes changeable nature of state's power. See also Elgie and Griggs (2000), p. 16.
- 14) Theodore J. Lowi, "American Business, Public Policy, Case Studies and Political Theory," *World Politics*, 16-4 (July, 1964), pp. 677–715.
- 15) Katzenstein (1978).
- 16) Theda Skocpol, "Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research," in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Theda Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 9.
- 17) Skocpol (1985), p. 9.
- 18) Skocpol (1985).
- 19) Stephen D. Krasner, "Approaches to the State: Alternative Conceptions and Historical Dynamics," *Comparative Politics*, 16-2 (1984), pp. 224–225.
- 20) Krasner (1984), pp. 224–225.
- 21) Bob Jessop, "Putting the States in Their Place: State Systems and State Theory," International Symposium held by Kyungnam University, *Marxism and the New Global Society* (October 25–27, 1989); Bob Jessop, *State Theory: Putting the Capitalist State in Its Place* (Cambridge: Polity, 1990).
- 22) Vivien A. Schmidt, *The futures of European capitalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 209.
- 23) Schmidt (2002), pp. 209–210.
- 24) Maurice Wright, "Policy Community, Policy Network and Comparative Industrial Policies," *Political Studies* (1988), p. 606.
- 25) Ben Rosamond, *Theories of European Integration* (London: Macmillan, 2000), p. 123.
- 26) David Marsh and R. A. W. Rhodes (eds.), *Policy Networks in British Government* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 257–259.
- 27) Schmidt (2002), p. 210.
- 28) James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, *Democratic Governance* (New York: Free Press, 1995).
- 29) Schmidt (2002).
- 30) Consequently, the difference between states makes a difference in the connection between publics. In concrete, informed public in Britain open the discourse channel to general public. On the contrary, in Germany, informed public does not open it. The detail discussion is irrelevant.
- 31) It means the network of many experts. The influence and consensual knowledge of the people having expert knowledge over complicate problems play an important role to make a regime. Refer to below. Roger Tooze, "Regimes and International Cooperation," in A. J. R. Groom and Paul Taylor (eds.), *Frameworks for International Co-operation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990); E. B. Hass, "Why Collaborate? Issue-Linkage and International Regimes," *World Politics*, 32-3 (April 1980), pp. 357–405).
- 32) It means the group of people who share a conviction system. This group pursues policy goals intentionally, not

- as like cognitive community's technocratic features. Refer to below. Paul A. Sabatier and Susan Hunter, "The Incorporation of Casual Perceptions into Models of Elite Belief Systems," *The Western Political Quarterly*, 42-3 (September 1989), pp. 229–261.
- 33) Schmidt (2002), p. 240.
  - 34) Jan-Erik Lane and Svante Ersson, *Politics and Society in Western Europe*, 4th Edition (London: SAGE, 1999).
  - 35) Refer to the following section for further details.
  - 36) Martin J. Smith, "The Core Executive and the Modernization of Central Government," in Patrick Dunleavy *et al.* (eds.) *Developments in British Politics* (London: Palgrave, 2003), p. 61.
  - 37) P. Dunleavy and R. A. W. Rhodes, "Core executive studies in Britain," *Public Administration*, 68 (Spring, 1990); Ian Holliday, "Executives and Administration," in Patrick Dunleavy *et al.* (eds.) *Developments in British Politics* (London: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 88–89.
  - 38) Holliday (2000), p. 89.
  - 39) Smith (2003), p. 62.
  - 40) Smith (2003), p. 62.
  - 41) According to the result of a research, it is the most effective process for pressure groups to have an influence as the former case is 58% and the latter is 27%.
  - 42) Leonard Freedman, *Politics and Policy in Britain* (Longman, 1996).
  - 43) Kenneth N. Waltz, "Globalization and Governance," *Political Science and Politics*, 32-4 (Dec. 1999), pp. 693–700.
  - 44) Through this link, in order to mobilize resource transcending the boarders between public and self, the elites of local, region, and state tried to attach private enterprise, self-governing body, and other social actors together. Ultimately, these attachments were aimed to strengthen the opportunity to lead the society towards the politically defined goals.
  - 45) A. Gamble, "Policy Agendas in a Multi-Level Polity," in Patrick Dunleavy, Andrew Gamble, Ian Holliday and Gillian Peele (eds.), *Developments in British Politics* (London: Macmillan, 2000), pp. 290–307.
  - 46) T. Wright (ed.), *The British Political Process: an introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).
  - 47) Lane and Ersson (1999), p. 180.
  - 48) M. J. Goldsmith and E. C. Page "Britain," in E. C. Page and M. J. Goldsmith (eds.), *Central and Local Government Relations* (London: Sage, 1987), pp. 68–87.
  - 49) John Kingdom, *Government and Politics in Britain: An introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999).
  - 50) Gamble (1988).
  - 51) These efforts were met with protests. Thus, they were withdrawn in the future.
  - 52) Gamble (1988).
  - 53) Of course the states sometimes intervene in class problems through economic and welfare policies that manages the macroscopic demand.
  - 54) Freedman (1996).
  - 55) G. A. Almond and S. Verba, *The Civic Culture* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967).
  - 56) I. Crewe, B. Sarlvik and J. Alt, "Partisan Dealignment in Britain 1964–74," *British Journal of Political Science*, 7 (1977), pp. 129–190.
  - 57) I. Crewe and K. Thomson, "The Courts, Devolution and Judicial Review," *Public Law*, (1999), pp. 274–303.
  - 58) In the interviews that I did, the consent from actual politicians on this part can be found. The primary example of a scholar is Richard Katz and Peter Mair. Actually, there needs to be another essay on this part.
  - 59) Richard Katz and Peter Mair, "Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy: The Emergence of the Cartel Party," *Party Politics*, 1 (1995).
  - 60) Fundamentally, this is because there is a direct influencing channel such as citizen voting in a country's policy decision-making process. There needs to another essay on this issue. Also, since it does not coincide with this essay's original purpose, it is irrelevant.
  - 61) See Oh Suk Yang (2004).
  - 62) If the importance of these approaches and the limitation of individual approaches are recognized, it is appropriate to aim at the intersecting point of causal conditions through parallelizing these two approaches from the middle range level.
  - 63) Oh Suk Yang (2003).

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