The Effect of Residential Segregation on Class Identification: A GIS Analysis on the So-called ‘Gangnam Style’ in South Korea

1. Theoretical Background

- Class, Marx (1848)
  - “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.” (cf. Class in itself, and class for itself)

- Death of Class, Clark & Lipset (1991)
  - “Are social classes dying?”
    - Economic growth, and the increasing complexity of competing identities

- Distinction, Pierre Bourdieu (1979)
  - **Habitus** refers to the physical embodiment of cultural capital, to the deeply ingrained habits, skills, and dispositions that we possess due to our life experiences.
  - **Fields** are places where people struggle for position and play to win.
  - “Capital, habitus and field as a means of interpreting the preferences, tastes, strategies and actions of metropolitan gentrifiers of various sorts.” - Parker et al. (2007)

2. The Expansion of Seoul

- Rapid Industrialization and Urban Expansion
  - The hub of the 11th biggest GDP nation in 2015
  - In 1963, when Gangnam was incorporated into the capital, it was one of the poorest districts in Seoul.

- Aggressive Movement Policies of the Government
  - Gradually rich families have gathered around the district.
    - 1. Prestigious high schools were forced to move into Gangnam.
    - 2. The government developed large and expensive apartment blocks.

- The Rise of the Gangnam District
  - Gangnam became the most fashionable district in the 21st century.
  - The luxury life of Gangnam residents is ludicrously depicted in a music video, ‘Gangnam style,’ which surpassed two billions YouTube views.

3. The History of Seoul

- Seoul (Hanyang) was designated as the capital of Joseon in 1384.
- Japanese colonial rule (1910-45), and the Korean War (1950-53)

4. The Rise of the Gangnam District

- The capital of South Korea
- In 1963, when Gangnam was incorporated into the capital, it was one of the poorest districts in Seoul.
- Gradually rich families have gathered around the district.
  - 1. Prestigious high schools were forced to move into Gangnam.
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5. Analytic Strategy

- **Data and Sample**
  - The Seoul Welfare Panel Survey (SWPS) data (N=3,323)
  - From the Seoul Welfare Foundation
  - The Statistical Geographic Information Service data
  - From the National Statistic Office in Korea

- **Variables**
  - Dependent variables: class identity, and perceived income
  - Independent variables:
    - Individual factors: income, occupation, and education
    - Social factor: spatial variables (25 sub-districts of Seoul)
    - Control variables: female, age, marital status, number of household members, type of housing, size of house, employment status, and recent economic change

- **Estimation Strategy**
  - Structured Additive Regression (STAR) Model
  - BayesX 2.1 (http://www.statistik.lmu.de/~bayesx/bayesx.html)

6. Model Comparisons

- **Structured Additive Regression (STAR) Model**

7. Empirical Findings

- **Individual Factors**
  - Income, occupation, and education are still decisive factors of class identification.
  - Nonetheless, the explanatory power of the socioeconomic variables are not strong.
  - Other individual factors have statistically significant effects, but the explanatory power is subtle.

- **Social Factors**
  - After controlling the socioeconomic factors and all other individual factors, the effect of spatiality is significant.
  - The final model includes the structured spatial factor. The model fit of the final model is better than other models which includes the unstructured spatial factor and does not assume any spatial effect.

8. The Spatialization of Social Class

9. Implications

- **The Whole is More than the Sum of its Parts**
  - WHOLE = SUM + 𝛼

- **The Spatiality of Subjective Class Identity**
  - **Individuals → Spatial factors**
    - The characteristics of a space is not fixed, but fluid.
    - Once Gangnam was the poorest district in Seoul in the 1950s.

- **Spatial factors → Individuals**
  - Space factors exercise independent influence over individuals.
  - High class identity of Gangnam residents is not fully explained by their objective socioeconomic status.

- **Residential Segregation Reinforces Class Division**
  - They are high class, so they live together in adjacent districts.
  - They live together, so they have even higher class identity.

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