

Editor's Introduction

As the world faces challenges posed by the ongoing Russia-Ukraine War and Gaza conflict, along with long-term demographic, democratic, and ecological crises, the *Korean Social Science Journal* (KSSJ) remains dedicated to its mission of capturing a diverse array of social phenomena in localized and globalized contexts, making use of the latest trends and developments in theory and methodology in the process. Although a great deal of our articles center on Korea, the more journal issues we publish, the more we recognize how closely the issues Korea currently confronts relate to the conditions of global society. It therefore comes as no surprise that the articles in this issue attest to the cross-border encounters and comparable social contexts that characterize the contemporary world.

A year after the momentous unveiling of Chat GPT, along with several other advanced chatbot tools including Google's Gemini and Microsoft's Copilot, artificial intelligence (AI) has become one of the most discussed subjects and has also seen a significant rise in academic research. In step with this heightened interest in the topic, Seohyun An and Gunho Lee open our issue with an enlightening study on public attitudes toward AI in the context of South Korea titled "The Public's Attitudes and Psychology on AI Issues: An Analysis from the Perspectives of Agenda-Setting Theory and Need for Orientation." Utilizing Agenda-Setting Theory and its interrelated concept of Need for Orientation (NFO), An and Lee investigate how favorable and unfavorable media coverage of AI can influence public opinion regarding this quickly advancing technology. Their research is one of the first (if not the first) studies to bring the topic of AI to the scholarly literature surrounding Agenda-Setting Theory. The authors contribute to this literature by emphasizing people's need to seek out information "not just to acquire knowledge, but also to satisfy their subjective needs, such as their need for self-confidence and/or a sense of belonging." As the world continues to respond and adjust to the new technological reality, the implications of such findings will become increasingly relevant in the months and years ahead.

Apart from the AI revolution, a significant development shaping the world socially and politically, even if gone unnoticed by many, has been an increase in acquisitions and mergers by firms of emerging market economies. Examples of these include the acquisition of the UK company Jaguar and Land Rover by the Indian conglomerate Tata Motors and the Swedish firm Volvo by the Chinese multinational Geely Global. In his aptly titled article "Dreams Come True?: Navigating the Challenges of Utilizing Knowledge from Advanced Economies in Emerging Market Multinational Enterprises," Jong Min Lee argues that despite acquiring knowledge assets and well-known brands from firms of advanced economies, Emerging Market Multinational Enterprises (EMNEs) often struggle to secure the advantages they might otherwise expect. In doing so, Lee poses a direct challenge to the springboard investment perspective, which emphasizes how acquiring firms in advanced economies can help emerging market economies offset their competitive disadvantages. Against this perspective, Lee draws attention to the various obstacles that the acquiring companies face with respect to information asymmetry, their insufficient absorptive and recombinant capabilities, and organizational inertia. Highlighting these largely overlooked challenges, the author emphasizes the need to focus more on the entire

* Please note that the views of the contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the KSSJ editors and/or the Korean Social Science Research Council (KOSSREC).

acquisition process, including long-term outcomes, rather than merely fixating on the initial act of outward expansion.

Lee's observation of organizational inertia in the business world connects with our next piece, "COVID-19 and the Rise of the Neo-Developmental State in Korea," which examines COVID-19's impact on post-pandemic executive authority. Rather than finding that the pandemic effectively reoriented South Korean governance in the direction of the welfare state, authors Hyun-Chin Lim and Kwang-Yeong Shin reach the conclusion that the developmental state model of previous presidential administrations has persisted in the form of a Neo-Developmental State, as evidenced by the enduring presence of a "cult of bureaucracy" within the state apparatus. The authors interpret the Neo-Developmental State's emergence in South Korea to be part of a broader trend of the "globalization of the pandemic," triggering a "de-globalization in which the nation-state regained its sovereign power." The authors base their conclusion on a decades-long historical analysis spanning decades of South Korean presidential administrations. They observe that, even under the comparatively progressive Moon Jae-in presidential administration, the relatively autonomous Ministry of Economy and Finance "regained its hegemonic power in managing the budget." As a result, despite the vast social disruptions stemming from the pandemic, the government allocated just a modest fraction of its budget to social spending, compared to other countries. The authors attribute Korea's ongoing socioeconomic woes, including its persistently low birth rate, to its failure to break free from the developmental state's trajectory.

Finally, for our last article in this issue, we remain in the policy realm with "Philosophical Analyses on Interpenetrated Policy Humans and Nonhumans in the Study of Policy Thought." In this piece, author Hae-young Lee delves deep into Classical Chinese philosophy to uncover notions of interrelations between humans and nonhumans (i.e., things). These are critical matters of concern for certain conscientious policymakers, whom Lee refers to as "policy humans." In short, as Lee puts it, "Things, i.e., nonhumans, can be recognized as the subjects and themes of policy." In today's world where AI and other technological advances such as the Internet of Things (IoT) are gaining traction, Hae-young Lee's inquiry into Confucian and Taoist principles regarding the "interpenetration" between humans and nonhumans, as well as the need to consider such relationships in policymaking decisions, can be considered timely. Is it enough to deliberate over how these new technologies, animals, and various immaterial "things" may benefit humans? Or is it essential, as Hae-young Lee claims it to be, to remain cognizant of how our motivations for policymaking may overlap and/or interfere with the interests of nonhumans?

We hope that these articles will inform readers of some of the latest methodological choices and novel arguments in social science research while also sparking new scholarly inquiries and collaborations. As the official journal of the Korean Social Science Research Council, KSSJ is actively seeking original research studies on a broad range of topics within the field of social sciences, with a special focus on Korea-related topics. We offer a timely double-blind peer-reviewed review process to ensure a high level of quality and scholarly engagement and are open to special issue proposals as well. To maximize the visibility of our contributors' publications, we remain an open-access journal. For inquiries or submissions, feel free to email us at kssjournal@gmail.com.