



EDITOR'S COMMENT

Ever since August Comte coined the term “sociology” in the late nineteenth century, the newly established discipline has significantly contributed to our understanding of society and social life. Although sociology was a latecomer in the family of social sciences, its founding fathers, most notably Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim, presented new ways of analyzing society, which was undergoing a transition from the traditional one to the modern. Sociology in Korea evinces a very comparable trajectory in its development. The institutionalization of sociology in the Korean academic world occurred relatively late, as the first department was established in 1946 at Seoul National University. However, the development of the discipline was remarkable, especially considering the strict control of the Korean society by the dictatorial regimes that ruled prior to Korea’s democratization in 1987. The Korean government of the time was reluctant to allow the further establishment of sociology departments in major universities, which were considered to be the main source of resistance against the regimes. With the inception of democratization, the main obstacle was eliminated and sociology departments blossomed; at present, they total 40 departments nationwide.

This development in the institutionalization of sociology departments demanded the formation and later expansion of the Korean Sociological Association (KSA), which was established in 1956. It began with the initiative of 14 members, and Sang-baek Lee was selected as its first president. The Korean version of the association’s official journal, *Korean Journal of Sociology*, was first published in 1964 and KSA acquired the membership of the International Sociological Association in 1966. From that point to the present, KSA has hosted numerous conferences, including two regular meetings each year, and *KJS* has published numerous research papers in various subjects; both of these endeavors have been essential to promoting a better understanding of Korean society. Currently, KSA has 578 members. KSA has also produced many subdivisions focused on various subfields of sociology, including social theory, political sociology, economic sociology, sociology of culture, historical sociology, and rural sociology, to name a few.

The qualitative development of Korean sociology is all the more noteworthy. Primarily due to its dynamic transition from the traditional to the modern era, Korea has provided a very fertile ground for sociological research. It began its modern period with a series of tragedies: Japan’s colonization in 1910, the division of North and South Korea after liberation from colonial rule, and the Korean War in 1950. Poverty and political dictatorial regimes further deteriorated and distorted Korean society. Eventually, however, Korea overcame all these difficulties and achieved economic development and political democratization. These achievements were never won without struggle; rather, the Korean people sacrificed their

sweat, blood, and lives for these memorable accomplishments. Through this process, Korea experienced very dynamic and continuous transitions, which have offered many research problematic ready to be exploited. Eager to take advantage of this opportunity, Korean sociologists developed their own theoretical and empirical research products.

With all these developments, the time is now right to globalize Korean sociology so that its results can be shared with colleagues throughout the world. Professor Dooseung Hong, the current president of KSA, has led the path toward the globalization of Korean sociology and has decided to publish the English version of *Korean Journal of Sociology*. Along with sixteen members of the editorial board, I am truly happy to take responsibility for editing the journal. It will be published biannually and provide an open window to anyone with an interest in Korean society and Korean sociology. It welcomes original and creative research products in Korea and abroad, the publication of which will further facilitate our understanding of Korean society and sociology in general. More than anything else, the main theme of the biannual meeting of KSA this year is, symbolically, to represent the aim of KJS, “Korea in the World; the World in Korea.”

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