Ecosystem of Policy-related Knowledge

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I. Concept

1. Definition of Policy-related Knowledge
2. Model of Ecosystem of Policy-related Knowledge

II. Analysis: Korea's Ecosystem of Policy-related Knowledge

1. Lack of Diversity
2. Limited Interactions among Intellectuals
3. No Selection Mechanism to Cope with Environmental Changes

III. Conclusions: The Strategy for Revitalizing Korea's Policy Related Knowledge Ecosystem

1. To Promote Diversity
2. Interaction via Competition
3. To establish an adaptive selection mechanism
I. Concept

1. Definition of Policy-related Knowledge

2. Model of Ecosystem of Policy-related Knowledge
Definition of Policy-related Knowledge

- A body of knowledge that various levels of government use to make DECISIONS on public affairs
  - To set important public agendas and implement (or revise) policies

- Why do we need HIGH-QUALITY policy-related knowledge?
  - Because uncertainty and complexity are increasing in the affairs of state
  - Because fragmentary knowledge is often inadequate to deal with ever-complicated economic, social, and political environments of today’s society
  - Because high-quality policy-related knowledge can solve critical problems and help make sound public policy decisions

⇒ Policy-related knowledge = intellectual infrastructure that can help maximize efficiency and effectiveness of governance
Process of production, distribution, and consumption of policy-related knowledge = FOOD CHAIN in natural ecosystem

- The “ecosystem of policy-related knowledge” covers people and organizations that participate in the process of production, distribution, and consumption of policy-related knowledge.
II. Analysis: Korea's Ecosystem of Policy-related Knowledge

1. Lack of diversity
2. Limited Interactions among Intellectuals
3. No Selection Mechanism to Cope with Environmental Changes
Unhealthy Ecosystem of Policy-related Knowledge

Lack of Diversity

Limited Interactions

No Selection Mechanism
Lack of Diversity

■ In the past, Korea’s public policies were MADE exclusively by the public sector or government agencies
  – Since the Asian financial crisis of 1997, the number of economic, political and social research groups has dramatically increased.
  – At the same time, government has begun tapping into private think tanks for policy ideas.

■ In order to better understand their diversity, we at SERI have examined...
  – Scope: 9 significant policy issues between 2003-2005; 1,249 reports related to the issues.
  – Method: contents & citation analysis

■ Results: Korea’s ecosystem for policy-related knowledge was NOT diverse, despite think-tanks’ dramatic growth
  – Political and social issues: Producers of policy-related knowledge have failed to provide differentiated and diverse knowledge
  – Intellectuals dealing with economic issues do use diverse policy-related knowledge, but their opinions are not as diverse as expected.
[Network Structure of Debates over Political and social issues]

[Network Structure of Debates over Economic issue]

[Role of Each Producer in the Debates over Economic issue]
No close interactions among intellectuals

We analyzed how frequently Korean intellectuals CITE the works of other intellectuals

- Although the number of think tanks has increased dramatically, they do NOT compete against or cooperate with other think tanks
- Korean intellectuals are more dependent on overseas analysts than on local analysts

[**Korean Intellectuals' Interaction**]

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In the past, state-owned research centers CUSTOMIZED policy-related knowledge for the government policies
- Government-driven knowledge selection mechanism failed to efficiently adapt to environmental changes

Mechanism to select useful policy-related knowledge in an efficient and fair manner has NOT been established yet
- Because the relations between knowledge producers and consumers have failed to catch up with systematic change
III. Conclusions: The Strategy for Revitalizing Korea’s Policy Related Knowledge Ecosystem

1. To Promote Diversity

2. Interaction via Competition

3. To Establish an Adaptive Selection Mechanism
Intellectual facilitating to knowledge producer & expanding cooperation

- Openness
- Efficient circulation of knowledge
- Generative relationship

Healthy ecosystem for policy-related knowledge

To establish an adaptive selection mechanism

- Social trust
- Self control

Specialization & Creative coordinating of knowledge

- Structural diversity
- Intentional chaos

Interaction via Competition

To Promote Diversity
To Promote Diversity

■ DIVERSIFY knowledge producers and STRENGTHEN the role of knowledge producers as knowledge coordinators

- Upgrading social tolerance level: Individuals need to tolerate different opinions
- Establishing a consultative body under supervision of the president

■ Government needs to pursue ambitious projects

⇒ To promote GROWTH of the ecosystem for policy-related knowledge
  - Government and National Assembly need to cooperate to set forth future strategies
  - Government also needs to set up a permanent agency to pursue large-scale national projects
Ecosystem must be OPEN to the outside knowledge that is FIT for the ecosystem

- Korea should strengthen domestic research capabilities by securing budget and encouraging private sector donation
- Korea needs more exchanges with overseas knowledge ecosystems via joint research

Promote the exchange of knowledge while saving cost

- Free flow of knowledge in Washington D.C. can be a good model for Korea to follow
- In a location where there is no shortage of consumers of the knowledge
- To take advantage of the arena of debates such as National Assembly’s hearing sessions and supra-partisan research activities
To Establish an Adaptive Selection Mechanism

- Government should SELECT useful knowledge and OFFER rewards for the knowledge provider
  - To make its selection process transparent
  - To involve diverse parties in the knowledge assessment process

- Government and knowledge consumers must have FAITH in the knowledge provided by specialists
  - Government needs to further open its information to the public (e.g., expanding public database system)
  - Improve management system of organizations that use policy-related knowledge such as the National Assembly and political parties
Thank you!