
Introduction

In most of the East Asian countries, in one form or another, the government intervened systematically and through multiple channels to foster development.

—World Bank, *The East Asian Miracle: Economic Growth and Public Policy*

Concerted and conscious efforts on the part of the public and private sector, working together, to discover and upgrade a comparative advantage: I believe that was key to Korea's development experience.

—Wonhyuk Lim, director, Korea Development Institute, 2010

The Korean civil society has a lot of potential. I disagree with those who say that too many civil society organizations are present in the country. It is time for a new beginning and change.

—Won-soon Park, secretary general,
People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy, 2006

The real power in the political system lies in the people . . . the Korean civil society has been focusing on monitoring the abuse of political power until today. But the civil society movement should advance to the next level and act as the agent of power from now on.

—President Roh Moo-hyun, Republic of Korea, 2007

The Korea-US Free Trade Agreement (FTA)—a deal initially signed by executive leaders in the two countries five years previously, but which took several years for US and Korean lawmakers to ratify—finally came into effect in March 2012. In contrast to Korean officials who argued that more than 300,000 jobs would be available and grow the economy, farmers and small business owners were certain that their jobs would suffer as a result of the treaty. Similarly, automobile and steel industries in the US complained that FTA would enable their competitors in Korea to gain a greater market share in the United States. Both winners and losers of the policy actively engaged in different strategies in order to protect their interests. The Korean Alliance against the Korea-US FTA (a coalition of about 300 civic, labor, and farmers' groups) organized massive anti-FTA protests opposing the treaty for several months around the country. Furthermore, both farmers' groups and automobile industry representatives in the United States were busy testifying before congressional committees regarding the benefits and costs of the deal.

The mobilization of interests to voice their views and perspectives in the policymaking process is a common feature of many democratic governments around the world. Yet the specific ways in which interest groups engage in advocacy to influence public policies vary across political systems. The goal of this book is to understand how that policy process works in Korea, what roles different actors inside and outside the government play in determining agendas, alternatives, and outcomes. To answer these questions, I identified a set of 43 issues discussed in different institutional branches and distinct stages of the policy process in the country during the Lee Myung-bak administration (2008–2013). I then conducted interviews with over 100 policy advocates. In order to acquire in-depth knowledge of the issue debates, I supplemented the interviews by looking through publicly available documents to trace government activities and press releases, interest group statements, and newspaper reports. For every issue, I noted who the major players were, who they worked with to win the outcomes they support, and the outcome of the policy debate by the end of the Lee administration.

Studying Power, Policy, and Influence

Power and politics are heavily intertwined. Political actions and behaviors entail exercising some form of power, either directly or indirectly. In this

regard, Lasswell defined politics as the process of determining *who gets what, when, and how* (Lasswell 1936). Empirically, who dominates in the policymaking process and how they dominate are important research questions, answers to which have significant implications for understanding the exercise of power and influence in a political system. Central to the political process are the actors (who), rewards (what), the timing of action (when), and the means to winning goals (how). Public policies are among the most important outputs and rewards (what) of government actions, the reason why concerned parties make constant attempts to win the desired outcomes in the process of policymaking.

Given the importance of power and influence in the political world, academic research to date has paid a significant amount of attention to this topic, relating them broadly to politics and policy. In his study of who rules, for instance, Robert Dahl finds that no particular class or group is able to dominate important decision-making in New Haven, Connecticut. The wealthy possesses important resources but do not control all relevant resources, and citizens easily access politics, particularly through politicians who respond to public demands when they foresee an electoral payoff (Dahl 1961, 91–93). Taking this idea further, others carried out similar examinations of what kinds of interests dominate in the policy process but reached somewhat dissimilar conclusions. Schattschneider's famous quote—"the flaw in the pluralist heaven is that the heavenly chorus sings with a strong upper-class accent" (1960, 34–35)—highlights the bias in interest representation in favor of the privileged population in society (also see Danielian and Page 1994). Though not all researchers agree on who the most powerful actors are, these studies share a common theme of power and dominance—knowing who important players are helps us to understand whose interests are represented in the political system overall.

Similarly, comparative politics research pays attention to *who* are central to policymaking and *how* they work with one another. Depending on the structure of relations between government and interest groups, studies categorize countries into pluralist, corporatist, and statist systems (Lehmbruch and Schmitter 1982; Lijphart 1968; Schmitter 1979). Specifically, the distinctions depend on the degree to which government leads and controls important policy decisions in its relationship with outside interests in the policy process. For example, under corporatist and statist models of policymaking, the government has patterned relations with peak interest associations in policy decision-making and implementation

(i.e., corporatist) (Lehmbruch 1979), or the government directly controls the direction of major public policies (i.e., statist) (Schneider 1991). In this respect, these models are different from the US pluralist model, where multiple groups and actors compete for greater influence in the policy process (see Truman 1951).

In relation to *who* dominates, another important question is *how* policy advocates (the kinds of strategies they use to) influence policy. Research on interest groups and lobbying asserts that policy advocacy can be thought of as a process entailing multiple steps. First, actors and groups must decide whether to mobilize for a policy debate and, if so, what position to take (e.g., supporting policy change in a specific direction). They must also think of suitable and affordable strategies that can assist the process of achieving policy goals. In this regard, researchers have focused on analyzing a wide range of possible strategies advocates rely on, such as building arguments, forming coalitions, picking targets (see Benford and Snow 2000; Hojnacki and Kimball 1998; Hula 1999), as well as institutional contexts under which particular strategies are effective (e.g., Caldeira and Wright 1988; Yackee and Yackee 2006).

In contrast to a number of studies assessing how advocates attempt to shape policy under US institutional contexts, cross-national studies of advocacy and policymaking are relatively uncommon. The few that do exist tend to focus on a particular policy sector, making it difficult to generalize findings to the overall policy process (e.g., Knoke et al. 1996; for exceptions see Baumgartner and Mahoney 2004; Coen 1998; Mahoney 2008). Traditional research in comparative politics argues that state-society relations are key to explaining how public policies are formulated in a political system—who mobilizes in a policy debate and how they interact to exert policy influence. Normatively, a strong and vibrant civil society interacting with the state is important for sustaining democratic governments (Putnam 1993). Cross-nationally, a vibrant society independent of the state (Skocpol et al. 2000) and a society strictly structured by the state (Pekkanen 2006) produce distinct patterns of interest mobilization in the policymaking process. Yet few studies to date take a step further in demonstrating specific ways in which the state-society interaction shapes who dominates in the contemporary policymaking process and how.

Thus, two important questions remain: What political context shapes who dominates the policymaking process, and how do they dominate within and across political systems? This book builds on traditional

comparative politics research on state and society in answering this question. The state-society relationship explains who the major actors are in politics and policymaking, how advocates relate to one another, and what they do to influence policy.

The Korean Case Study

This book relies on the Korean case study for empirical investigation. Korea is suitable in the important features it represents—a strong state traditionally dominating policymaking, with a vibrant nongovernmental sector increasingly engaging in policy advocacy since democratization in 1987. Recent scholarship investigates the evolving role of the state and civil society in politics and policymaking since democratization, although few studies to date offer clear ideas about who dominates in today's policymaking process.

Who participates in and influences the policy process is particularly interesting in the Korean context, where policymaking inside the state has been the central focus of Korean politics research. Kohli classifies Korea as an example of the cohesive-capitalist state, characterized by “centralized and purposive authority structures that often penetrate deep into the society. . . . In their pursuit of rapid growth, cohesive-capitalist states have carved out a number of identifiable links with society's major economic groups and devised efficacious political instruments” (2004, 10). According to Kohli, the Japanese colonial influence (1905–1945) was important in setting the foundation of Korea's modern state organization: “The Japanese made extensive use of state power for their own economic development and then used the same state power to pry open and transform Korea in a relatively short period” (27). Key features of the cohesive-capitalist state were maintained in the Korean republic established in the American-controlled South of the peninsula after the war. Then it was the Park Chung-hee government, during which the state-led planning of the economy resulted in rapid industrialization of the country. Other scholars echo Kohli's view that the statist perspective best describes Korea's policymaking. That is, the state bureaucracy and executive leaders were central to policymaking in Korea, defining clear policy goals and deciding important policy directions. On the other hand, the policymaking process was somewhat insulated from excessive pressure of societal interests (Amsden 1989; Johnson 1987).

In the late 1980s, Korea underwent democratic transition during the third wave of democratization, when a series of authoritarian regimes around the world fell and were replaced by democratically elected governments (Huntington 1991). Civil rights and liberties, which expanded during the liberalization phase, made it possible for political and social groups to form (e.g., labor unions, student groups, etc.). Indeed, massive protests of students, workers, and citizens culminated in political elites agreeing to democratic elections. As the civil society sphere expanded after democratization, recent scholarship began to challenge major arguments and findings of the statist perspective. Scholars argue that the nonstate sphere and citizen power began to grow since democratization (Alagappa 2004), and nongovernmental groups have become increasingly visible in the policy process, engaging in various policy advocacy activities (E. Kim 2009; S. Kim 2004). Whether the rising civil society in policymaking suggests a declining role of state actors remains largely unexplored.

Overall, using evidence from Korea, this book provides a critical case study of how the legacy of the strong state and confrontational civil society shapes advocacy and policymaking in contemporary politics after democratization. In addition, this study also situates the Korean policymaking process in a comparative context by making comparisons with the United States—a task made possible by data sets based on representative sets of policy issues from the respective policy communities. The comparison between Korea and the United States further helps us to uncover how different levels of state and society dominance, as well as features of policymaking institutions within the state, determine advocacy in the policymaking process cross-nationally.

Research Questions and Major Arguments

I examine two important sets of questions. First, how does the legacy of the state-society relationship in a country affect who, among the president, legislators, and interest groups, dominates in defining policy problems, alternatives, and solutions in the policy community today? Additionally, in what ways do patterns of policy advocacy—who mobilizes and how they aim to influence policy—differ across political systems that vary in state-society relationships?

I make three central arguments related to how the legacy of the state-society relationship affects advocacy and policymaking in contemporary

Korea. First, the state-society relationship determines who mobilizes in policy debates, as well as how actors interact in the policy process. Specifically, state actors play an important role as major policy advocates due to a strong state tradition. Similarly, there is a close and recurring policy alliance between left-leaning political parties and civil society groups originating from ties they developed in the process of Korea's democratization. Additionally, strong and structured connections are present between state organizations (e.g., government ministries and agencies) and news outlets in the news-making process. By contrast, media outlets have relatively weak ties with political parties and societal organizations. Consequently, news reports heavily on government affairs and actors, further limiting the ability of parliamentarians and nongovernmental interests to win public recognition for their policy perspectives in Korea. Finally, the kinds of strategies that advocates rely on to influence in the policy community in Korea differ from those used in the United States. These differences reflect distinct state-society relationships, as well as features of policymaking institutions the two countries represent.

Data and Methods

I rely on a mixed methods approach, entailing both quantitative analysis and descriptive case studies of policy debates to illustrate general patterns of policy advocacy in Korea. To fully understand advocacy and policymaking, I draw a representative set of 43 issues from the policy community of Korea from bureaucrats under the Lee Myung-bak administration and legislators of the 18th National Assembly in the 2009–2010 period. In order to select issues that reflect the entire policy community at all levels and stages of the policy process, I selected policymaking units involved in the policy process (i.e., policy divisions within bureaucratic ministries and individual members of the National Assembly) weighted by their level of policy activities. I then interviewed persons in those selected units (i.e., bureaucrats and legislative staff) asking them to list *the most recent policy issue* they have worked on. These issues as described by my interview subjects became part of the issue sample analyzed in the book.

As methods of data collection, I conducted interviews with 107 policy advocates inside and outside the government involved in the selected issue debates using a snowball interview method (an average of three interviews per issue) and secondary data searches of each debate. The

final stage of the data collection process involved transcribing all qualitative information into quantitative indicators in order to assess who gets involved, how policy advocates interact, and what strategies they adopt to influence in the overall policymaking process. This approach allowed me to not only assess the role of various kinds of actors at different stages of the policy process but also to examine how policy actors engage in advocacy to influence policy under various issue contexts (e.g., highly partisan issue debates). Furthermore, the data collection method is identical to a previous project on advocacy and policymaking in the United States (Baumgartner et al. 2009), which allows direct comparisons across two political systems. In addition to the policy community data, I present a content analysis of actor appearances in all front-page news stories of *Dong-A* and *Hankyoreh* dailies (newspapers representing two ends of the ideological spectrum) in the year 2008 to further assess who dominates the news—the policy community communicated to the public.

Organization of the Book

The overarching goal of the research is to examine involvement, interaction, and influence in the contemporary policymaking process in Korea. I examine the roles different actors play in determining which problems are discussed, what solutions are considered, and what outcomes are decided across a range of policy issue debates in Korea. Additionally, I place advocacy and policymaking in Korea into comparative context by examining different ways that advocates mobilize and adopt different kinds of strategies to influence public policy outcomes in Korea and the United States.

Specifically, four major research questions are analyzed here. First, what roles do the executive and the legislature play in defining policy problems, alternatives, and outcomes? Second, how does the legacy of the state-society relationship shape mobilization and influence of nongovernmental interests in policymaking? Third, how does news—the medium through which the public learns about the policy community—promote or hinder the degree to which policy actors inside and outside the government engage in public policy debates? Finally, how do institutional differences between Korea and the United States shape policy advocacy patterns in the two countries?

In chapter 2, I review past research on Korean politics and policymaking and lay out theoretical foundations. Next, chapters 3 to 6 examine each of the empirical questions mentioned earlier. Specifically, chapter 3 shows how politics defines policy agendas and moves issues forward in the policymaking process. Here, I specifically look into differences across issues discussed in executive and legislative branches and demonstrate the visible role bureaucrats played in shaping policy alternatives and outcomes. Looking primarily at a subset of issue debates that involve prominent civil society groups, chapter 4 illustrates how the politicized nature of the civil society both strengthens and limits its role in the Korean policymaking process. Chapter 5 demonstrates how patterns of media attention to actors in the policy community further restrict the ability of nongovernmental interests and legislators to play leading roles in the policy process in Korea. In chapter 6, I examine how patterns of advocacy and policymaking differ in Korea and the United States—two political systems with distinct state-society relationships and institutional characteristics. Chapter 7 concludes by listing major findings and discusses academic implications.