

# **Introduction to Symposium on Public Administration and Governance in a Time of Global Economic Turbulence: Searching for New Paradigms**

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Almost every country in the global village is suffering from the economic downturn that began with the American financial crisis of 2008. As many specialists confess, existing social science theories can hardly diagnose or prescribe solutions for today's economic crash (Rubin 2009; *Economist* 2009). Without appropriate uniform theoretical models or policy tools, each country has been struggling to find its own solutions to the crisis through trial and error. Only after emerging from the depths of the crisis might it be possible to review these efforts and theorize about them.

It was in this context that an international conference was held by the Korea Institute of Public Administration (KIPA) in Seoul on October 9, 2009.<sup>1</sup> The conference aimed to give participants an opportunity to discuss and learn from each other about a number of issues: the characteristics of the current economic crisis in Korea and its major partners, including China, the European Union, Japan, Taiwan, and the United States; ways to overcome the crisis; and the most relevant paradigms of public administration and governance to be institutionalized in the future. More specific questions for the panelists included the following:

- In the current global economic crisis, triggered by the American financial crisis, what are the causes and features of the socioeconomic crisis and the difficulties that your country now faces?
- What efforts are government and public administration in your country making to overcome the crisis?

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1. The KIPA (<http://www.kipa.re.kr/>) is the only national think-tank in the public administration and governance field in Korea under the National Research Council for Economics, Humanities and Social Sciences. The international conference ("Public Administration and Governance in a Time of Global Economic Turbulence: Searching for New Paradigms") was organized to commemorate the 18th anniversary of the foundation of the KIPA.

- What paradigms of governance and public administration will be institutionalized during the process of overcoming the crisis and thereafter?

This special symposium of the *Korean Journal of Policy Studies* (KJPS) presents the conference papers after they were revised substantially based on the panel discussions and anonymous referees' comments. B. Guy Peters and Jon Pierre provide an overview focusing on the Western countries. Then, six case studies focusing on five countries are presented by B. Guy Peters (United States), Stephen Wilks (United Kingdom), Changzheng Dai and Xuan Qiao (China), Jemma Kim (Japan), Jae-ho Eun (Korea), and Huck-ju Kwon and colleagues (Korea). Finally, Mei-hua Cheng and Chyung-en Wu offer a broader and more fundamental critique of modern Western ideas on public administration and governance and provide an alternative approach based on traditional Asian thought.

The purpose of this symposium is to provide a wide range of readers with comparative experiences and insights on public policies and governance systems in a time of global economic recession. As editor of the symposium, I hope the purpose is achieved fully enough to inspire readers to further discussions on the wide variety of issues raised in the articles.

## REFERENCES

- Economist*. 2009. Where it went wrong with economics and how the crisis is changing it. July 18-24: 9, 58-60, 61-62.
- Rubin, R. E. 2009. The international financial crisis and perspectives on the re-arrangement of the international economic order. Paper presented at the International Conference ("Korea in a Reshaping World: Global Korea 2009") of the Presidential Committee of Future Vision and the National Research Council for Economics, Humanities and Social Sciences, Seoul, February 23.