

Organizer and Chair: **Kim, Soochul**, Soongsil University, Korea

Excavating Risk Culture in Korea

Are we living in a risk society? Risk is really real? How is risk or imminent threat represented in our society? Ulrich Beck defined risk as a 'becoming real'. However, this does not mean that there are no persons, institutions, and populations that are at risk and affected by risk. Rather, what this concept tells is that the risk object is both a hybrid social fact and an internal product of varied discursive struggles and negotiations.

Discourses on risk are real enough for public health authorities, institutions, and organizations to invest considerable amounts of resources and credits into increased security and regulation. Moreover, as demonstrated in the case of the recent mad cow disease controversy on US beef in Korea, discourses on risk are also deeply political in that publics challenge the existing expert knowledge system and call into question the governmental risk management system, while bringing new forces into the current social activism like the candlelight demonstration in 2008.

What this session seeks is a critical discussion on the discursive formation (or the social, cultural, and political aspects) of risk making in contemporary Korea. The session brings together academic efforts from diverse disciplines and perspectives - such as cultural studies, sociology, communications studies, science and technology studies (STS) - to critically examine the social, cultural, political, institutional, and technological contexts from which risk-related representations, interventions and public responses to risk management emerge. Questioning the social, visual, technological, scientific, and political aspects of risk culture, the session discusses what reshape norms on risk in contemporary Korea.