

## Introduction: Climate Change, Cosmopolitanism, and Media Politics

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The four papers shown in this special section have been chosen out of the 20 papers presented in an international conference on the overall topic of “Climate Change and Risk Society: New Trends of Megacity Transformation” held at Seoul National University from July 9-11, 2014,\*\* with Professor Ulrich Beck who delivered a keynote public lecture “Emancipatory Catastrophism: What does it mean to Climate Change and Risk Society” at Press Center in the downtown of Seoul in the afternoon of July 8, 2014.

Beck’s concept of global risk society starts from the recognition that modernization has produced new forms of risks that cannot avoid with advanced technology development. Modernization became a root cause of modern risks which are deeply embedded in modern society itself. In particular, global ecological risks threaten the survival of humanity. Perhaps, one of the most critical type of such global risks is climate change, a representative cross-boundary and inter-generational environmental problem. Material growth of the modern society has boosted by fossil fuel combustion, leading to climate disruption. Another representative global risk is driven by radioactive disaster. The Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011 has clearly demonstrated how vulnerable the nuclear power plant system is and how globally dangerous the leakage of radiation is once it breaks out. Even though the nuclear damages depends on the distance from the source and

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direction of the wind, no country cannot be free since we all share air and ocean, as in the case of climate change. As long as we live on this planet, there is no way to escape from these global risks. We are locked in this shared ecological condition.

Within this background, however, Beck raised two points decisively in his Seoul public address. First, he made a sharp confrontation with all kinds of pessimistic, apocalyptic outlooks of climate change and defended a European tradition of critical theory by advancing an interesting claim that climate change tends to produce emancipatory consequences on politics, social movements, human action and norms. Second, while departing from the apocalyptic inclination of climate catastrophism, he also made a sharp confrontation with a technologically oriented, top-down, an elite-centered approach to climate change, in the form of scientific solution and emancipation, and instead defended a practical, bottom-up, and action-theoretical approach to emancipation.

There are numerous examples of international consultation aiming at a technological solution of climate change. For example, the 20<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (COP-20) of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was held in Lima, Peru in December 2014. Delegates from 196 countries just managed to reach a new global climate change agreement, called "Lima Call for Climate Action." The agreement requires every nation in the world to commit itself to cutting planet-warming greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, with no divide between developed countries and developing countries in terms of GHG emissions reduction obligation. However, this agreement has to be signed by world leaders in Paris next year in COP-21. Every nation is required to submit a detailed domestic policy plan which will be published on the United Nations website for transparency and accountability. As we know, scientists have argued 2°C increase above the pre-industrial level is dangerous. The global society already reached agreement not to exceed the tipping point at COP-15 held in Copenhagen in 2009. Could we then be rescued from emerging and eminent climate risk through aggressive cooperation? Even though the Lima Accord lays the foundation for a possible agreement in Paris, unresolved questions and huge divisions among countries still remain.

It is here that Beck intervenes decisively. Indeed, climate change has become the most challenging global risk in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is experimenting human survival on this planet. In spite of small step forward in Lima, Peru, it is not clear whether that political breakthrough will achieve prevention of 2°C increase over the preindustrial average. The sum of

national post-2020 reduction targets may short of the amount required. There is good reason for many to remain skeptical. What is far more important than this for Beck is that climate change is not a global risk that can be technically solved by international cooperation. On the contrary, climate change, as a bad outcome of industrialization and capitalist development, tends ironically to produce unexpected emancipatory (good) consequences changing the whole society including our way of understanding the world in a more reflexive and participatory development. In other words, he claims that a great new transformation, or metamorphosis, of the world has already started as triggered by global risks such as climate change.

The key question is then where the action-theoretical energy comes from for this transformation of the world. The 2014 Seoul conference has provided many outstanding papers dealing with salient aspects of cosmopolitan change and urban transformation. However, in view of the fact that the social construction of risk mediated by communication offers a reliable answer to the question, we have chosen 3 papers which shed a new light on the role of the media and public sphere. Another point to be clarified is that, upon agreement with Beck, his Potsdam address in November 2013 is presented here instead of his Seoul lecture since the latter was already reserved for the special section of *Current Sociology* in Volume 63(1), 2015, together with dialogue papers. We are very pleased to introduce Beck's Potsdam address which is full of theoretical imagination and implications.

In this special section, Beck offers the concept of emancipatory catastrophism as a dialectic or metamorphosis of catastrophism. Man-made catastrophes evoke reflexivity on the past decision driven to self-destructive consequences. He argues that the radicalization of modernity with improved reflexivity and cosmopolitanism, rather than the abandonment of modernity, is required in the era of the world risk society. The old approach based on nation-states fragmented by their own short-term interests becomes powerless in solving this newly emerging world risk. In this context, Beck calls attention to (world) cities as cosmopolitan actors and proposes methodological cosmopolitanism. In this special issue, Beck encourages us to grasp the goodness of catastrophic climate risk beyond captured by its badness. He guides us with eight theses showing how climate change, as an impetus to transform, might save the world. Although climate change is "the embodiment of the mistakes of a whole epoch of industrial capitalism," it awakes reflexivity on the existence of the connected cosmopolitan community at risk.

Young-Do Park and Sang-Jin Han present the profile of “another’ cosmopolitanism” to give an alternative answer to cope with the age of global risks represented by climate change. “Another” implies that East Asia provides as original and imaginative a world view of cosmopolitanism as the western tradition. In this regard, they pay careful and sympathetic attention to Neo-Confucian traditions to reconstruct the layers and functions of the concept of *Tianxiaweigong* as a powerful concept for a global publicness. One of the central claims raised by them is that global risks we face today require a global publicness and this public space can be well articulated from a neo-Confucian perspective. Furthermore, they suggest that reflexive cosmopolitan publicness has to embrace dual tasks to solve both democratic and the ecological deficits, which may arise if publicness is narrowly institutionalized. These two tasks are how to keep and upgrade democratic reflectivity, on the one hand, and the ecological reflectivity, on the other. They argue that the driving force of emancipatory cosmopolitan transformation comes from the experience of public deliberations on the anticipated risk of humanity as well as cosmopolitan publicness which keeps the democratic principle of inclusion alive. This argument shows an important trajectory of normative reconstruction of tradition as a conceptual basis of emancipatory catastrophism.

On the other hand, the action-theoretical energy for cosmopolitan change sensitizes our attention to the fact that public perception on climate risk is socially constructed. How and why do citizens in different societies perceive progress and seriousness of climate change differently? Social constructivism gives answer on this question. Risk communication shape dominant risk perception of each society and mass media plays an essential role in risk communication. Mass media intervene scientist, politicians and the public, while publicizing socially important issues, enhancing citizens’ awareness and affecting policies by delivering news. In particular, media’s strategies of framing climate issues and events are critical. Thus, media analysis can contribute to understanding of each country’s different understanding about the shared risk of climate change.

Sun-Jin Yun, Dowan-Ku, Nyunbae Park and Joon Han analyzed three main newspapers selected based on political inclinations, subscription rates, influence and credibility. They found that climate skepticism or denial has lost its legitimacy in Korea. Instead, the economic opportunity to be created by climate response is of central concern in Korean media, in spite of slight differences among newspapers. Korean media have paid attention to economic opportunity created by climate responses rather than focusing on

economic burden. Because of increasing international pressure and its export-oriented economic structure, proactive actions to climate change are considered to be necessary and inevitable for continuous economic growth. National interest in economic growth, not climate suffering in coming future, is the main concern in preaching the necessity of climate responses. Policy-making, technological fixes, and consumer behavior change, rather than significant social transformation, are proposed as the proper climate responses and each is framed as a path to economic opportunity.

Midori Aoyagi explored the relationship between media coverage and public perception. According to her study result, Japanese newspapers put highest coverage on climate change in 2007 and 2008. However, more coverage was given to global financial crisis starting from 2008 and the Great East Japan Earthquake accompanied by nuclear disaster in 2011 than climate change. This trend was identified by the outcome of the national public opinion survey. Risks involved with more immediate impact are prioritized in the public concern. She found the there was relationship between Japanese public opinion and media's frame and news coverage. However, it is not clear whether the public were influenced by how the mass media framed national and international issues and how much coverage those issues received or whether mass media pay attention to what the public is concerned about.

For the success of methodological cosmopolitanism, it is necessary to ask who the main cosmopolitan actor is and why. It is also important to explore how a cosmopolitan community of risks is formed. No less crucial is empirical studies that show clearly how (world) cities have played a role to cope with climate change as cosmopolitan actors. Given the fact that the success of the modern preoccupation with wealth and power has cumulatively and collectively made the most serious global risk, climate change, it is time to transform the very human beings' socio-economic activities. Methodological cosmopolitanism might be a proper answer for that transformation.

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