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Conceptualizing the Multicultural Public Sphere: Public Sphere, Rationality and Multiculturalism

Honglim Ryu*

The search for a political order provokes interests in the "art of separarion" between the public and the private; and each society has developed its own way of securing the public sphere as the social space and procedure for collective deliberation. The formation of the public sphere includes perception, idealization and institutionalization; it can also be described as an interactive process of externalizing "the inner public sphere" or "enlarged mentality." Public sphere has been subject to historical change and its dimension has been multiplied; while in the traditional model it was political in nature, the modern public sphere involves political, economic and cultural dimensions with a distinct principle of rationality working in each form of the public sphere. The modern public sphere has thus lived tensions between the imperatives of legitimacy, social integration and economic welfare. The imperatives of legitimation and social integration make it necessary to link critical rationality in public deliberation to transversal rationality in diverse realms of cultural life. Those are the forms of rationality which can curb the imperialist expansion of instrumental rationality beyond its domain of economic efficiency. In this regard, we need multi-focal sensibilities and imagination which enable us to

*Associate Professor (Political Theory), Department of Political Science, Seoul National University. *The Politics of Ethical Discourse*, "칸트주의적 자유민주주의 규범론의 의의와 한계," "해체주의의 윤리적 함의," "현대자유주의사상 연구," "Ethics of Ambiguity and Irony," "한국 정치이념의 역사와 과제" 등(연락처: 전화 02-880-6334, E-mail: honglim@snu.ac.kr)이다.

recognize ourselves in the other and the other in ourselves, being attentive to both universalizable principles of legitimacy and cultural resources for solidarity. This paper attempts to broaden our understanding of the public sphere in view of competing paradigms of rationality and to incorporate the politics of multiculturalism in a tentative plan of conceptualizing the multicultural public sphere.

How to Understand the Public Sphere

The idea of public sphere presupposes a distinction between the public and the private. Historically "the art of separation" had developed with the expansion of communal life beyond the boundaries of tribal society. In tribal societies characterized by homogeneity and close kinship, there existed little need for the public/private separation. A community of friendship (*philia*) made it an ideal to incorporate individuals into the tight fabric of communal life, and based itself on the "ethics of (particular) rules and judgments." With the emergence of larger political communities of strangers, however, the need for a new order provoked intellectual interests in the "ethics of (general) principles." Search for a new order at last led to inventing "the art of separation," and each society has developed its own way of securing the public as a safeguard against tyrannical impulses released from the constraint of traditional norms.

The art of separation relies heavily on the question of how to build up the public realm in both spiritual and institutional forms. In a way, the formation of the public can be characterized by an "experimental process" as John Dewey describes it.[1] Conjoint, combined, associated action has results. Some of the results of human collective action are perceived, that is, they are noted in such ways that they are taken account of. Then there arise purposes, plans, measures and means, to secure consequences which are liked and

1) John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems* (Athens: Swallow Press, 1927), pp. 33ff.

eliminate those which are found obnoxious. Thus perception generates a common interest, which in turn requires a long-term perspective in collective action.

There arise two kinds of interests in view of consequences. In the first, interest and control are limited to those directly engaged; in the second, they extend to those who do not directly share in the performance of acts. When the consequences of an action are thought to be confined mainly to the persons directly engaged in it, the transaction is a private one and generates *private interests*. Yet if the consequences of a trans-action extend beyond those directly concerned and therefore affect the welfare of many others, the act acquires a public capacity and generates *public interests*. When indirect consequences are recognized and there is an effort to regulate them, something having the traits of a state comes into existence. The distinction between private and public is thus in no sense equivalent to the distinction between individual and social. Many private acts are social. And the line between private and public is to be drawn on the basis of the extent and scope of the consequences of acts which are so important as to need control, whether by inhibition or by promotion.

The notion of public sphere is subject to various interpretations, which reflect diverse and conflicting interests in reality. If it is identified with the realm of 'administrative power', the public sphere, losing its critical power, succumbs to practical concerns of public administration. Conceived of as a sphere for collective self-reflexivity, however, the public sphere relates to the realization of our 'emancipatory interests' irreducible to reality. In an important sense, the public sphere itself is an arena for the 'games of interpretation'.

The public sphere is not a physical space in its nature; it comes into existence with the formation of *public spirit*. As the perception of public interests is shared among members of a society to the extent that it is congealed into a principle or an idea of public spirit, the public seeks its institutional embodiment in order to secure its existence for a long span of time. In this way, the notion of the public includes perception, idealization and institutionalization; it can also be described as an interactive process of externalizing "the inner public sphere" or "enlarged mentality."[2)]

'Justification in public' requires "the public use of one's reason," which is a measure of

one's "maturity."[3] Maturity implies the existence of 'inner public sphere', where a transcendental self engages in dialogue with an empirical self. One can objectify oneself and thus develop an inner public sphere through obtaining a 'critical distance' or using one's rational power of transcendence. The inner public sphere performs two critical functions indispensable to *human* life. First, it is concerned with self-identity formation. As I try to answer the question of who I am, I reconstruct my past experiences from the perspective of my whole life. And this process requires me to develop a transcendental standpoint within myself. Second, in the inner public sphere I attempt to justify my own actions, with the question of what I do is just or not in mind. Self-reflexivity helps us to formulate maxims of our action, and to ascertain their universalizability. Indeed the formation of the inner public sphere is a developmental process, which is susceptible to distortions and corruptions. Unless we sustain the 'critical distance', we easily fall prey to chauvinistic self-identification and egocentric self-rationalization.

The metaphor of 'the inner public sphere' contributes to our understanding of the public sphere *per se*. The public sphere, interactive with the 'inner public sphere', performs the two functions of self-identity formation and self-justification. Here *dialogue* takes the form of dialogues between members of a society rather than between a transcendental self and an empirical self. In the social terrain the status of a transcendental self should not be identified with or monopolized by an individual or a group in order to avoid the "domination of men by men." Within the public sphere we are supposed to develop a sense of collective identity through mobilizing our cultural resources; and *multicultural* self-understanding is a *mature* form of self-identity formation and social integration. The public sphere also performs the function of *legitimation*; it curbs the arbitrary use of political power and enables the 'government by discussion' because it encourages 'justification in public' on the matters of public concern.

The public sphere where collective actions take place has been subject to historical

2) rf. Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1978).

3) Immanuel Kant, "An answer to the Question 'What is Enlightenment?'," in *Kant's Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 54-60.

change from the ancient to the modern types. Also its dimension has been multiplied; while in the ancient model the public sphere was political in nature, modern public spheres came to include political, economic and cultural dimensions following the differentiation of distinct "value spheres." Diversification of the public sphere implies the workings of different logic and principle in each dimension: a political public sphere ["Forum"] can be defined in Habermasian terms as the space where critical-rational discussions are carried on, and it is an agonistic sphere where the concern for legitimacy or rational power plays a key role in public deliberation[4]; an economic public sphere ["Market"] is what Hegel called the "system of desire," where the principle of efficiency serves as the internal logic of transactions among actors within the sphere; and a cultural public sphere ["Life-world"] constitutes the background communicative life-world that performs the function of social integration by cultivating solidarity and mutual understanding/learning.

On the one hand, the public sphere presupposes the existence of diverse and most often conflicting interests, opinions and belief systems; on the other, the need for unity, universal norms and cooperation. As responses to the crisis caused by the demise of a community of kinship and friendship, two principles of social contract and extended solidarity became prevalent. In order to overcome the state of nature as the state of acquisitive culture and mutual predation, theories of social contract from the ancient to the modern times have proposed a solution of social cooperation on the basis of utility calculation. In parallel, another proposal has drawn a large audience: the appeal to the brotherhood of a political community. This is the principle of extended solidarity, which was often purveyed in the name of patriotism. As its modern version, the principle of national solidarity is an attempt to extend the sense of kinship and friendship from the tribal society to the nation-state. In contrast, the principle of social contract does not make such an emotional appeal; instead, it tries to find a rational basis for political order that

4) Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. Thomas Berger (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989).

transcends the emotional bond of kinship and friendship. Of course, in the actual process of nation-state building, these two proposals got intermingled and caused subsequent tensions. The modern public sphere, therefore, has lived a tension between rational justification of legitimacy and emotional appeal to solidarity (or social integration).

The question of how to reconcile these two imperatives hinges on the relationship between political and cultural public spheres, which have been closely connected with each other. Resources of political public sphere are mainly derived from the idea of public reason — a rational faculty of transcendence — and a sense of "belonging" or emotional attachment based on cultural resources. In this regard, the public sphere requires both Logos (transcendence) and Eros (immanence). For this reason, despite the tensions between them, political and cultural dimensions of the public sphere have been historically intertwined with each other. The dynamic working of political and cultural imperatives has been a key issue in modern political thought, and the contemporary liberal-communitarian debate can also be located in this context.

Beyond Instrumental Rationality

History reveals that the logic of efficiency wins everywhere; the principles of utility and self-preservation work even in religious or ethnic conflicts. The logic of acquisition wields its "imperial" power in the "colonized" realms of politics and culture; bureaucratized politics and culture industry attest the triumphant march of economic fetishism, in which human beings turn into what MacIntyre calls "Managers," "Therapists" and "Aesthetes."[5] In this situation, the public reason or spirit tends to fade out and the authentic meaning of the public loses its ground. Hence comes the "simulacrum" of public sphere; the discrepancy between "usage" and "meaning" of the term gets more serious, and at last

5) Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 2nd edition (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), pp. 27ff.

private interests take on the mask of public interests. The logic of utility and self-preservation acts itself out in many disguises. As the "dialectic of enlightenment" indicates, even self-renunciation is another expression of self-preservation. Distorted forms of the public reflect the underlying logic of fear — a corollary of that of self-preservation — that hinders full exercise of public reason and transversal understanding of cultural traditions.

Claims to community are always a search for the basis upon which it can or has been established: "The wish and search for community are the wish and search for reason."[6] Reason in its historical process of differentiation, coupled with social differentiation, has taken multiple forms.

Complex modern societies face the task of securing three public goods, i.e., legitimacy, economic welfare and a viable sense of collective identity.[7] These goods stand in a complex relation to one another: excessive realization of one such good may in conflict with and may jeopardize the realization of others. In a well-functioning society, therefore, the demands of legitimacy, economic welfare and collective identity ideally exist in some form of equilibrium. In this regard, the demands of three public goods require the proper workings of three forms of the public sphere; and each is related to a specific form of rationality. The political public sphere is *ideally* based on critical (self-reflexive) rationality; the economic on instrumental (formal) rationality; and the cultural on transversal rationality.

Critical public reason is at once transcendental and autonomous, which is a prerequisite for the realization of "public autonomy" based on legitimacy. Legitimacy here must be thought to result from the free and unconstrained public deliberation of all about matters of common concern. The idea of public reason or the public use of reason plays a key role in responding to the demands of legitimacy. The claims of economic welfare, on the other hand, tend to emphasize the primacy of instrumental rationality and the logic of

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6) Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 20.

7) Seyla Benhabib, "Toward a Deliberative Model of Democratic Legitimacy," in her edited book, *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 67ff.

acquisition. While the logic of market economy serves as a prerequisite for securing "private autonomy" and proves its success by enhancing standards of living, too great an emphasis on economic welfare undermines both legitimacy and solidarity.

The use of the concept and metaphor of transversality in understanding cultural public sphere exhibits "interrelated senses of lying across, extending over, intersecting, meeting and converging without achieving coincidence."[8] The degree of transversality depends upon the effectiveness of a dialogue across the various groups, fostering a recognition of the otherness of each of the groups involved and leading to a "dialectical enrichment." Transversality thus heightens self-understanding through a mutual acknowledgment and encourages shared responsibility. Transversality in this regard "tries to overcome both the impasse of pure verticality and that of mere horizontality; it tends to be achieved when there is a maximum communication among the different levels and, above all, in different meanings."[9]

A transversal logos emerges in the multiple forms of cultural life that make up our communicative practices. The directive of the transversal logos is to acknowledge the reality of the other. The transversal logos requires a critical revision of the postulates of universality as essentialist prescription. This critical revision, however, does not discard the performance of the logos as rational comprehension. The logos is reconstituted but it is not left behind. Transversal thinking enables the achievement of shared understanding and solidarity on both intracultural and transcultural levels, which is to be distinguished from a consensus grounded in universalizable validity claims. This shared understanding and solidarity can be achieved through the struggle for communication across the spectrum of varying forms of life, attentive to the play of similarity within difference and the play of difference within similarity.

The imperatives of legitimation and social integration make it necessary to link critical rationality in public deliberation to transversal rationality operating in diverse forms of

8) Calvin O. Schrag, *The Resources of Rationality: A Response to the Postmodern Challenge* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), p. 149.

9) Félix Guattari, *Molecular Revolution: Psychiatry and Politics* (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 18.

cultural life. Critical (self-reflexive) and transversal rationality working in the "learning process" are the forms of rationality which can contribute to expanding public sphere to the international level. Here the expansion of public sphere should be understood as 'building up solidarity among or putting together public spheres scattered around the world'. Publicness cannot be imposed from above; it can only emerge from below.

In a situation where progress can turn into regression any minute, it will be the fate of reason to conduct a permanent critique of the limitations and shortcomings of our thought and practices. It is the use of critical reason in our age. Furthermore, transversal thinking opens a way to incorporate claims of reason into the cultural realm previously understood as the closed domain of emotional attachment and homogeneity. In a nutshell, critical and transversal forms of rationality should curb the imperialist expansion of instrumental rationality. The globalization of market economy does not necessarily entail that of public sphere. History shows that during the period of expanding capitalist world-system the public sphere as a social space for collective self-reflexivity had been "refeudalized" or "colonized" by the imperatives of system integration.

The Politics of Multiculturalism

Contemporary discourse on multiculturalism clearly shows the close link between political and cultural dimensions of the public sphere: how rational transcendence (universality) can be combined with emotional attachment (particularity) in the contemporary world; and why transversal rationality is important in understanding cultural tradition or identity. Also, by showing that cultural discourses are political in nature, the politics of multiculturalism contributes to the search for a critical/transversal rationality that underpins any authentic public spheres.

The idea of multiculturalism has a historical basis. To do justice to the history, one first needs to understand the monocultural commitments to which multiculturalism arose in response. Monoculturalism also has a historical basis: conditions of emergence,

transformation, resistance and dissolution. To insist that monoculturalism is the natural outcome of rational determination and is thus universally ordained is effectively to deny the genealogy of monocultural conditions.

In the histories of modern societies, one can find monocultural tendencies that are reflected and reproduced along ethno-racial lines of demarcation. The nation-building process involves implementing policies and institutional arrangements for securing political, economic and, most importantly, cultural homogeneity. Monoculturalism as intellectual ideology and institutional practices not only purports to universalize the presuppositions and terms of a single culture but also denies as culture any expression that fails to fit the mold of "high culture." The Western tradition of knowledge formation has always been marked by a multicultural constitution. In the past, however, this multicultural heritage has been represented by, for, and in the interests of those yielding ethno-racial power.

There are few societies in the world today not marked by multicultural heterogeneity of one kind or another. Confronted by demographic shifts as well as by committed, vocal and active social movements, the fragile ground sustaining monoculturalism began to buckle. Multiculturalism and commitments to cultural diversity emerged from the conflict-ridden history of resistance, accommodation, integration and transformation. Accordingly, no sooner had multicultural demands and aspirations begun to be articulated than they were imparted multiple and conflicting interpretations, meanings and implications. Broadly conceived, multiculturalism is critical of and resistant to the necessarily reductive imperatives of monocultural assimilation. But this critical realignment assumes multiple forms. Multiculturalism may be used in descriptive fashion to reference the undeniable variety of cultures, both internationally and within nations. By contrast, it is identified as a normative conception, stipulating the procedural and substantive principles ordering a multicultural society. In this regard, one can distinguish between various kinds of multicultural commitments: conservative, liberal, left-liberal and critical.[10)]

10) Peter McLaren, "White Terror and Oppositional Agency: Towards a Critical Multiculturalism," in David T. Goldberg, ed., *Multiculturalism: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1994), pp. 45-74.

Conservative multiculturalism can be traced to the imperialist attitudes of Europe and North America. Conservative multiculturalists use the term "diversity" to disguise the ideology of assimilation that underpins their position. They are critical of cultural relativism, arguing that hierarchical order among cultures should be maintained. Conservative attacks on multicultural claims to equality among cultures reflect a political judgment that the multicultural condition is symptomatic of demise or destruction of existing hierarchies among different cultures.

Liberal multiculturalism argues that a natural equality exists among races. This perspective is based on the intellectual "sameness" among the races, on their cognitive equivalence or the rationality immanent in all races that permits them to compete equally in the capitalist marketplace. Liberals believe that existing cultural, social and economic constraints can be modified or reformed for relative equality to be realized. This view often collapses into an ethnocentric and oppressively universalistic humanism in which the legitimating norms are identified most strongly with Anglo-American cultural and political traditions.

Left-liberal multiculturalism emphasizes cultural differences and suggests that the stress on the equality of races smothers those important cultural differences that are responsible for different behaviors, values, attitudes and social practices. Left-liberal multiculturalists tend to make "otherness" exotic in a nativistic retreat that identifies differences in a primeval past of cultural authenticity. They have a tendency to make cultural differences essential and ignore historical and cultural situatedness of difference. Difference is understood as a form of signification removed from social and historical constraints. Here the political is often reduced to the personal where theory is dismissed in favor of experience and identity.

From the perspective of critical multiculturalism, which developed within the larger context of postmodern theory, the conservative and liberal stress on sameness and the left-liberal emphasis on difference is really a false dichotomy. Identity based on sameness and identity based on difference are forms of essentialist logic. Both identity and difference are seen as products of history, culture, power and ideology. Critical multiculturalism

advocates the politics of transformation to challenge hegemonic forms of domination. Calling serious attention to the dominant meaning system, it also engages in cultural criticism as a form of resistance based on a reflexive intersubjective consciousness.

In addition, we can find "managed" multiculturalisms that reflect the multiculturalistic practices of multinational corporations. These corporations portray themselves as being committed to the broad tenets of philosophical liberalism, unconcerned with the redistribution of power and resources. Here, multiculturalism assumes the mantles of institutional logic, self-promotion and ideological practice; it serves to contain and restrain resistance and transformation. It is being employed instrumentally by corporations to meet labor needs and maintain worker harmony in an increasingly diversified society.

Generally speaking, the emergence of contemporary multiculturalisms should be understood in relation to the dominance of monoculturalism in the 20th century. Monoculturalism was more or less unchallenged as the prevailing ideology of the first half of the century. More often than not, the challenges of multicultural voices are cast aside as nothing more than politics dressed up as epistemology, the struggle for power played out over the putatively sacred neutrality of knowledge. But if the political charge that multiculturalism reduces pedagogy and culture to a political struggle over power has any meaning, this implies that monocultural commitments are also political and that the struggle between them can be played out only on political terrain.

Multicultural critique is political in the sense that it undertakes to redefine the public values, for example concerning identity/difference, homogeneity/heterogeneity, constitutive of the state in which people live. Identity is generally conceived as a bond: the affinity and affiliation that associates those so identified, extending a common sense or realm of united sameness. It is a tie that holds members of the collective together. The bond, however, can also be a bondage; the tie is something that may hold one in. Identity can be exclusionary for those outside its scope and can sustain fascist social movements as readily as emancipatory endeavors. The politics of identity in this context is conceived as a signifying activity through which identities are created.

The *de facto* heterogeneity of historical experience is deeply at odds with the narrowing

theoretical insistence on social identity that must necessarily presuppose homogeneity. In contrast, the primary unifying assumption of those who argue against multiculturalism reflects the sociopolitical and cultural necessity of homogeneity, which is claimed as a necessary condition for community, civility and even civilization. The fact of heterogeneity, where it is acknowledged at all, is taken to necessitate the aspirations to a set of unifying, homogenizing ideals. In the same vein, homogeneity is considered a natural condition of human social existence and is presumed to be the optimal means for preserving the traditions and customs that are deemed worthy of preservation. But the monocultural argument for homogeneity rests on a highly inaccurate representation of the historical record. In broad strokes, the social condition of human beings is overwhelmingly *migratory*. It is not at all homogeneous in origin. Homogeneity is an artifice. It therefore follows that the notion of homogeneity intellectually and politically presupposes repression. To establish homogeneous social arrangements, it is necessary to repress heterogeneity through a diverse process of containment, exclusion and silence.

A lesson to be learned from the contemporary discourse on multiculturalism is that cultural discourse is ethico-political in character. For example, the question of how to interpret a cultural tradition in a society is directly related to a normative question of what principle should underlie that society's institutional arrangements. Once one conceives of culture as an important resource for social integration in a political community, one can easily discover political concerns in the discourses on multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism in the Korean Context

The contemporary discourse on culture emphasizes the importance of identifying heterogeneous elements within a cultural tradition: the subject of cultural identity highlights issues related to difference and diversity. The culture of vortex characterized by homogeneity and rigid monocultural standard implies the demise of cultural life itself. It becomes evident that monoculturalism betrays the historical experience of cultural

development, and that it can hardly claim legitimacy in responding to contemporary multicultural conditions. In some ways, cultural unity and homogeneity, which are not the natural conditions of human life, involve repression for the sake of certain political purposes. Of course, on the one hand, multicultural conditions contribute to expanding the potential of cultural creativity; on the other, they may turn out to be a hindrance to social integration. The task of maximizing the potential of diversity requires ceaseless efforts without any guarantees. What is called "the rationality of tradition," however, can be attained only with these efforts to cope with the challenge of heterogeneity from both within and without.

Through the discourse on multiculturalism one can realize the importance of questioning how one's own cultural identity should be understood. In case of Korea, the public discourse on cultural identity has been dominated by monocultural perspective under the rubric of "Korean national culture." The themes of "nation" and "national culture" cut both ways: on the one hand, these are the weapons for resistant nationalist movements; on the other, they serve as means for legitimating colonial domination in the hands of imperialist powers. Typical of the nation-state, national culture is a cultural form that represents the uniqueness of a nation and differentiates that nation from others with claims of unity and superiority. In the process, however, it neglects or more often represses internal diversity and divergence.

When conceiving of the nation and national culture as historical constructs, one can attain a clearer understanding of the political nature of the "national culture" discourse. The process of nation building involves the workings of political power and state apparatuses to secure homogeneity by means of establishing a monolingual education system and disseminating a narrative understanding of tradition with an emphasis on commonality of historical experience. National culture includes a set of symbols and belief systems mobilized for the invention of tradition and national identity. In this way, the political process of nation building is intertwined with the narrative formation of cultural homogeneity.

Korean national culture has developed through a dynamic process of historical

continuity and change. From the outset of its formation, Korean culture had been exposed to the influences of neighboring countries. During the period of tribal states, each political community strengthened its communal solidarity and cultural base both by maintaining reciprocal relations with others and by developing a consciousness of unique tradition. In the Three Kingdoms period, the process of acculturation advanced to the extent that the Korean peninsula became a center for commercial and cultural exchange among East Asian countries. Especially, the Unified Shilla Kingdom accumulated a variety of cultural resources that enabled a cultural transformation from the ancient to the medieval stage.

During the period of cultural transformation, there were conflicts between the old and new cultures. Throughout the Koryo Dynasty, however, both Buddhism, which had matured during the Shilla period, and Confucianism were major sources for cultural achievements. Koryo kings were well versed in Confucian thought while also being devoted to Buddhism. Through its international contacts and internal maturity, Koryo achieved a high level of sophistication, uplifting standards in literature and art.

Towards the end of Koryo, however, cultural degeneration had coupled with rigid aristocratic rule and aggravating social contradictions led to the dynasty's demise and the founding of the Chosun dynasty. From its inception, the Chosun dynasty was governed by the ideals of Neo-Confucianism. With a firm belief in the fundamental principles of Neo-Confucianism, kings and scholar-officials zealously pursued policies for remodeling the Korean state and society to conform to Confucian norms. All other beliefs, customs and traditions that were not compatible with Confucian teachings were rejected as heretical. Nevertheless, despite the zeal exhibited by the Neo-Confucianists, the transformation of social mores and practices came at a slow pace over a long period of time.

After the Japanese and Manchu invasions of the late 16th and early 17th centuries, Korea experienced a cultural transformation that led to a more fluid, diverse and sophisticated culture than ever before, which manifested itself in enhanced creativity and originality in regard to philosophy, politics, history and the arts, and in increased openness to new and foreign ideas and technologies. This was the classical Korean culture, the last flowering of traditional Korea before the modern world forced its way onto the peninsula,

bringing about irrevocable changes.

The historical formation and deformation of Korean cultural identity reveal their dynamic character as a collective "learning process" in which the old and the new constantly interact with each other through the workings of acculturation, adaptation, transformation and diversification. One can also find both continuity and discontinuity in the process. Given the historical account, postulating the immutable nature of Korean cultural identity falls short as a legitimate approach to the issue of identity. One needs rather focus on the "process" of identity formation in order to appreciate the principle of dialogicality embedded in the formation of Korean cultural tradition. Tradition in this regard involves a process ranging from the past to the future, a process of negation, integration and creation.

Cultural Identity in an Age of Global Change

Democratization, the politics of identity, claims to cultural diversity (or multiculturalism), and the globalization of market economy are a few of the characteristics of global and historic changes encompassing all aspects of our social life. These tendencies often conflict with each other and lead one to bewilderment. For instance, ecological destruction as a devastating consequence of industrialization, a cultural shift toward material values, loss of meaning and weakening of communal bonds, and moral deterioration all raise questions about the validity of modernization. Despite this trend, however, most of the less developed countries desire modernization. Modernity as an economic and political goal still wields its influence in these countries. Therefore, the big picture of the contemporary world cannot be grasped in simple terms.

Furthermore, the divergent phenomena of homogenization and heterogenization in the global context provoke an interest in explaining the complex and ambiguous nature of globalization. Globalization is more than an economic phenomenon, and it should not be equated with the emergence of a "world system." Globalization is really about the

transformation of space and time; it concerns not only the creation of large-scale systems but also the transformation of local, and even personal, contexts of social experience. Day-to-day activities are increasingly influenced by events happening on the other side of the world. Conversely, local life-style habits have become of global consequence. Globalization is not a single process but a complex mixture of processes that often act in contradictory ways, producing conflicts, disjunctures and new forms of stratification. Thus, the revival of local nationalisms, for instance, and the accentuation of local identities are directly bound up with globalizing influences to which they stand in opposition.

On the cultural level, globalization tends to produce cultural dispersion. Cultural traits, frequently being detached from place and from the confines of the nation, are quite often standardizing, and as such influenced by mass advertizing and cultural commodification. Styles of dress and tastes in music, films and even religion take on global dimensions. This process has been accelerated by the revolutionary changes in information technology; instantaneous electronic communication across the globe now penetrates and restructures the fabric of everyday experience. As elsewhere in globalizing processes, however, there is not a one-way movement toward cultural homogeneity. Globalization leads also to an insistence on diversity, a search to recover lost local traditions, and an emphasis on local cultural identity.

Partly as a result of globalization, one can speak today of the emergence of a post-traditional social order in which tradition, far from disappearing, has changed its status to become open to interrogation or discourse. In earlier phases of the development of modern societies, a refocusing of cultural tradition played a major role in consolidating the social order. Grand traditions were invented or reinvented, such as those of nationalism or of religion. Tradition became an authority that could be turned to in a relatively unquestioning way to confront dilemmas. In a globalizing, culturally cosmopolitan society, however, traditions are forced out into the open; reasons or justifications have to be offered for them.

In a world of global communication, defending traditions in the traditional way is potentially dangerous, for this would constitute a refusal of dialogue in circumstances

where such dialogue is the only mode of mutual accommodation. In the contemporary multicultural context, cultural traditions surely do need to be defended in some contexts, even if not in the traditional way. Cultural traditions need to be saved or recovered insofar as they provide generalizable sources of solidarity. Social solidarity, however, can effectively be renewed only if it acknowledges autonomy, democratic accountability, mutual respect and the intrinsic influence of social reflexivity. This is the point where cultural discourse meets with political discourse on the structuring principles of a society.

Cultural difference can become a medium of hostility, but it can also serve as a medium of creating mutual understanding and empathy, a means of achieving a "fusion of horizons." Understanding the point of view of others allows for greater self-understanding, which in turn enhances communication with others. The shift of focus from monocultural assimilation to multicultural integration characterizes the contemporary discourse on cultural transformation. Unless one avoids the pitfalls of a monocultural understanding of cultural tradition, one cannot keep up with the speed of cultural transformation, which ultimately leads to the loss of cultural potential for accommodation and creation.

Contemporary discourse on multiculturalism sheds light on an effort to conceptualize the multicultural public sphere. One of the key problematics of the public sphere revolves around the question of how to deal with diversity and difference. In this regard, the realities of plurality and heterogeneity, the play of difference, and the ruptures of communication through an insinuation of the reactive force of power, need to be acknowledged. At the same time, however, we are motivated to question the unmonitored slide of plurality into heterogeneity and paralogy, as well as the isolation of the various forms of communicative praxis into self-contained monologues.

The public sphere is an ever-changing space in which free and unconstrained dialogues among 'reasoning', not 'consuming', individuals are to be secured; it also reflects "a spontaneous and grown order," which cannot be formed and maintained through subject-centered, manipulative engineering or construction with a unitary aim and method in mind. For the authentic public sphere, therefore, we need multi-focal sensibilities and

imagination which enable us to recognize ourselves in the other and the other in ourselves, and attentiveness to both the universalizable principles of legitimacy and the cultural resources for solidarity. Furthermore, any form of international public sphere as "openness" to the Other and as "responsiveness" to new challenges requires us to have "*courage*" *to use our own critical reason and transversal understanding* for an enlarged communicative life-world.

abstract

공공영역의 합리성과 다문화주의

유홍림*

정치질서의 수립은 공적 영역과 사적 영역의 "분리" 문제와 관련된다. 공공영역은 집단 행위로부터 비롯된 공공이익에 대한 인식과 그 이념화, 그리고 제도화를 포괄하는 발전적 과정을 통해 형성된다. 그리고 이 과정은 "내적 공공영역" 또는 "확장된 사유"의 외연적 확장으로 이해될 수도 있다. 공공영역은 전통적으로 권력의 정당성과 관련된 정치적 문제의식이 표출되는 토론의 장으로 이해되었다. 그러나 근대 이후의 공공영역은 세 가지 공공재, 즉 정당성과 정체성, 경제적 복지의 실현과 관련하여 정치적, 문화적, 경제적 차원으로 분화되고 다원화되었다. 그리고 각 영역이 독자적인 합리성의 원칙을 중심으로 운영됨에 따라 이들 간의 긴장과 갈등 속에서 일정한 형태의 균형을 추구하는 것은 근대국가가 수행해야 할 중요한 과제 중의 하나가 되었다. 비판적 합리성은 정치권력의 정당성을 확보하는 기초이며, 횡단적 교류의 합리성은 문화생활의 다원성을 존중하는 사회적 유대 형성의 토대이다. 그리고 이러한 합리성은 '시장'의 도구적 합리성이 무한정 팽창되는 상황에 의해 초래되는 폐해를 막을 수 있는 방어벽으로서의 중요성을 갖는다. 자기정체성의 형성에 있어서 다문화주의적 시각의 수용은 단일 문화적 관점에 비해 보다 성숙된 자기이해 및 사회통합의 방식이다. 아울러 정당성의 관심이 집단적인 자기성찰성의 제도화를 통해 지속적으로 유지되는 사회는 보다 성숙된 사회라고 할 수 있다. 본 논문은 상호경쟁적인 합리성의 패러다임에 주목하여 공공영역에 대한 이해를 심화하고, 다문화주의의 정치적 함의를 고찰하면서 배타적인 자기정체성과 편의적인 자기합리화를 넘어선 공공영역의 윤곽을 그려보고자 하는 시도이다.

*서울대학교 정치학과 교수