

Economic Globalization, Politics, and Administration in Korea: In Search of Possible Solutions to Lingering Problems

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The article addresses a critical examination of lingering problems of economic globalization, politics, and public administration in Korea. The underlying assumption is that without effective governance of society and public administration, the continuous success in economic and social development may not be sustained. To cope with domestic and international challenges, policymakers and public administrators play a vital role in transforming society and public problem solving by collaborating with multiple publics, civic organizations, government institutions, and business organizations. The article offers suggestions for how politics and administration may be improved and also stresses the need for critical pragmatism as a new conceptual frame for understanding political and administrative action.

Keywords: Globalization; Administrative Reform; Ethics; Organizational Capacity Building; Disaster Prevention; Performance Measurement; Trust Building; People's Consciousness; Political Incivility; Executive Responsibility; Critical Pragmatism

Introduction

Globalization is a multi-faceted process of political, economic, social, and cultural activities that have been greatly increased by the flow of knowledge, information technology and human interactions. The globalization phenomenon is an emerging process in which a web of social, political, and economic relationships is complex and fuzzy. It also means the interdependence and interconnection of nation-states, cultures, human activities, people's life experiences, and economic and material exchanges (Albrow, 1996; Rodrik, 2012; Robertson, 1992; Jun and Campodonico,

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1998). As new global changes emerge, it would have considerable influence on the process of domestic policymaking as influenced by political and economic situations. Globalization processes accompanied by rapid changes have also created political instability in many countries as people increase their consciousness of their existence in a changing world.

The main theme of this essay is not to regurgitate the need for economic globalization that many policymakers, economists, and business entrepreneurs tend to advocate, but to address lingering problems of politics and public administration and share some thoughts concerning political and administrative changes. The underlying assumption is that economic and social development cannot be sustained if policies are not supported by a large percentage of the people and the effective governance of politics and public administration. To cope with domestic and international challenges, the nation state plays a vital role as the central body of formulating and implementing policy.

Paradoxes of Economic Globalization

To a large extent, globalization as applied to the Korean context has been an extension of modernization and economic development as advocated by the leaders in the early years of development. Economic globalization in particular is stressed by government authorities and business leaders, to promote exports, international trade, and cultural exchanges, among other transformations.

South Korea has accomplished the most impressive economic development in world history, rising from merely \$87 of per capita income in 1962 to \$23,000 in 2014. In order to understand the country's success, we must remember the developmental contexts in terms of political history, presidential leadership in the early years, and, most importantly, the contributions of administrators, farmers, big enterprises in particular, and citizens at large (Yoo, 1986; Bark, 1983; Ro, 1996; Jun and Yoon, 1996; Jung, 2014; Whang, 1987). As the country gradually transformed from an autocratic regime to a democratic political system beginning in the early 1990s, citizens began to demand more freedom, participation, and equality. Rapid economic development has also led to consumerism, inequity, value conflicts, and demand for better welfare policy.

Since the early decades of economic development, the country's economy has greatly depended on the contributions of large corporations ('chaebol') like Samsung Electronics Company, Hyundai Motor Company, and LG Company—for example, the Samsung Corporation shared 17% of national gross domestic product (GDP) in 2013. However, if these companies' economic performance falls due to the state of the global economy, it also has significant effects on the domestic economy. As the global economy becomes sluggish and declines, or is cyclical, as in recent decades, the middle class tends to shrink, and this impacts on the national economy in addition to the hesitation of international businesses to take greater investment risks (Rodrik, 2012; Millot and Tourmois, 2010). Thus, the Korean

economy is increasingly dependent on economic conditions in other parts of the world, particularly in the Eurozone, the USA, Japan, and China. To some extent, the global economy is a lot like the weather—unpredictable and potentially catastrophic.

To meet the challenges of an uncertain global economy and other unforeseeable future events, I strongly feel that the country must make some serious changes. Policymakers and Korean people in general have to realize that economic globalization and socio-economic development during the last five decades have made possible the building of prosperity, with the benefits of infrastructure, consumer goods, healthcare, technological convenience, and welfare programs for many. However, we cannot be too sure that Korea's progress for next 10-20 years may produce equal or higher results. From the standpoint of public policymaking and administration, policymakers need to pay more attention to: (1) the uneven impact of economic globalization and development on the domestic conditions; (2) good governance of public administration as well as improvement in the political climate; and (3) development of more balanced policymaking to sustain the economy and welfare programs. For example, when unanticipated disasters such as the sinking of the Saewol ferry boat in April 2014, the collapse of buildings, or subway accidents occur, not only do the economic activities of the country slow down but this, in turn, discourages foreign investment as well. Are policymakers and administrators ready for next big disaster? I personally feel that the increased responsibility of public administrators, entrepreneurs, economists, scientists, and citizens can offer more possibilities for preparing for the future challenges and unanticipated disasters, rather than expecting a more positive contribution from Korean politicians, who are divisive in policy agenda and legislative proposals. If political development accelerates, that would be a bonus to Korean development.

Changes needed in Public Administration

In the following, I would like to share a few thoughts on matters which have received greater attention in recent years and that require radical changes in ways of governing administrative institutions and improving the responsibility of public administrators.

Beyond Conventional Administrative Reform Strategies

The effective implementation of a new reform policy calls for going beyond the conventional approach to change. Administrative reform has become a common policy strategy for newly elected presidents as they undertake the task of improving efficiency in delivering public services or eradicating corruption. After a major crisis, the central government has always tried to establish new regulations as well as to rearrange authority structures and change reporting procedures. As time passes, rather than preventing future crises, the reforms produce perplexing results—more failures than

successes. When new reform measures are introduced, policymakers often overlook the costs of enforcing the new regulations.

New regulatory policies to control the market economy can demonstrate a lack of understanding of the cultural behavior of merchants. Rhee (2014) illustrates the failure of policy to regulate the market economy due to the inefficient enforcement of government policy, with a resulting inefficiency of the market economy. Government policy has also failed to understand the culture of strong individualism and competition in Korea, with a lack of cooperation between individuals and business entities. Self-centered behavior by merchants often acts contrary to the behavior of mutual respect and cooperation assumed by other competitors in market situations. Some vendors and store owners bribe officials to overlook the enforcement of rules applied to them. Government rules and regulations are established in order to maintain appropriate social and economic order as well as to set the conditions for some generally accepted ways of behaving and to guarantee legal equality. Strong individualism and the competitive spirit of business entrepreneurs is a good motivating factor for economic success. However, for the coming decades, since it is hard to expect the same pace of development as in the past 50 years, it is necessary to enhance the spirit of collaboration in social and economic relations and to realize the importance of complying with the established laws.

The disasters in recent years have also proven that most reform programs have not only produced marginal results, but also have not been able to sustain their impact in implementing the intended goals of new rules and regulations. These unsatisfactory outcomes of reform stem from a variety of factors, including politics, the informal nexus between government officials and business entrepreneurs, an ingrained culture of corruption, inadequate financial support to implement regulations, skepticism, and lack of support by administrators and citizens (Quah, 2011). Many administrative reforms tend to be symbolic in a political sense, and they tend to be reactionary and introduce an incremental solution to a complex problem—such as traffic control in the metropolitan areas, reducing accidents in subways, introducing new building regulations, or reducing waste in the management of welfare programs. By enforcing new regulations and procedures, public services may be improved in the short run, but these problems are complex and interconnected with other complex issues, and an incremental solution alone cannot produce a sustained effect.

Since administrative reforms largely emphasize the enforcement of objective measures, they grossly underestimate the subjective, human elements. Because reform policies must be implemented by the people inside and outside government agencies, new reform strategies must be supported by public administrators, interest groups, and citizens, who must realize the need for reform and commit themselves to the efficient and effective implementation of reform policies. Furthermore, unless the citizens exercise their responsibility to protect their 'rights and privileges' and to assume their role in complying to rules and regulations in a civil society, there is a great danger to the preservation and promotion of democracy (O'Connell, 1999; Ehrenberg, 1999). The essential point is that reform policies may have good intentions

to improve the efficiency of government institutions and policies, but without strengthening the responsibility of administrators and enhancing the role of citizens and encouraging their participation, effective implementation of reform policies is not likely to occur.

Building Organizational Capacity and Raising People's Consciousness

The need for organizational capacity building is, of course, not a new concern, especially in the literature of development administration. In my opinion, Korean public administration has come a long way as compared to the first several decades of development. Today, administrative organizations use highly sophisticated information technology, modern structures and functions, and networking procedures for achieving their goals. Furthermore, the government agencies are staffed with highly educated personnel. However, the flexible implementation of these functional, structural, and technical elements depends on how well they are utilized in terms of providing services to the public and solving small and large problems, as well as dealing with unanticipated future problems. Government agencies tend to be stagnant, and members become less active and complacent in their routine activities. Thus, they develop an organizational culture of maintaining the status quo, aiming largely at the continuation of existing tasks and maintaining their positions.

What is needed is to ask some hard questions: are these organizations able to deal with innovation and creativity? Do organizational members feel pride in managing the quality organization? How can institutions and members improve performance and continue to learn? Do they feel that they are encouraged to express their ideas of alternative ways of doing things or even reporting unethical conduct occurring in their organization to the authorities? These questions require not only empirical fact-finding efforts, but, more importantly, they deal with many qualitative and human issues that are historically embedded in Korean administrative culture, particularly related to the problem of hierarchical authority and awareness of the people.

In today's turbulent world, there is a greater need to develop flexibility and confidence in administrative culture—a culture in which administrative organizations and people are able to adapt, learn, and change in an era of uncertainty and volatility. Both business and public administration need to prepare for unanticipated crises and alternatives for problem solving. We are not only concerned with changes in the economy and business, but of other larger issues around us, such as technological change, explosion of information, cyber security, politics, organizational networking, and improving the overall quality of public administrators. Many of these organizational issues involve qualitative elements such as social skills, values, emotions, motivation, consciousness, and commitment. The wave of rapid change is forcing us to consider new ways of dealing with numerous challenges. This is why building organizational capacity is an ongoing exercise of improving and learning the processes of governing and governance internally and externally. At the same time, organizational members need to be continuously trained and retrained to cultivate their

own potential and be more aware of problems such as a lack of motivation and critical consciousness.

Preparing for Unanticipated Disasters

Recent accidents should have taught people to be wary of the unethical conduct that allowed such failures to occur. If officials and business entrepreneurs think that correcting the current problems and making a few procedural changes will be enough, they are badly mistaken. A common tendency of policymakers when proposing solutions to prevent future disasters is the reorganization of government agencies for the purpose of making a clear chain of command and to assign the major responsibility to manage crisis prevention and restoration. When the source of a problem is related to poor structural arrangements and ambiguous functional responsibility, reorganization and functional consolidation may be a solution—otherwise they solve very little.

The case of creating the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2003 during the George W. Bush administration, which consolidated about 22 diverse federal agencies into one huge cabinet department, illustrates this phenomenon well. Many of the issues faced by this cabinet department are the results of the reorganization that established DHS. When the Homeland Security Act was passed, the reorganization was in response to post-9/11 fears, and done without adequate planning and resources. Since its inception, the organization as a whole has been struggling with numerous issues, such as creating a new culture, cross-agency cooperation, training people, fighting terrorists, and other emerging crises.

The problem of the hierarchical governing of DHS may be illustrated in the case of handling a crisis. On 29 August 2005, Hurricane Katrina hit America's Gulf coast and caused several breaches in the levees protecting New Orleans, a city with a population of around 500,000 people. The subsequent flooding of most of New Orleans, 70% of which lies below sea level, resulted in catastrophic flood damage, the death of 1,836 people and over 600 people missing, and a massive evacuation effort. Without discussing the details of this disaster, some major problems of response included: (1) no one at the higher-level of the federal government was well informed about the disaster, (2) the evacuees' pleas for help were ignored, (3) the bureaucratic chain of command at the federal, state, and local governments were unreliable and unprepared to deal with crisis, (4) bureaucrats were blaming other bureaucrats at different level of government, (5) networks of communication were slow, and no one seemed to take responsibility, and (6) the lower-level bureaucrats were waiting for orders from above before taking any action to help people. While the government agencies failed to deliver relief its people, however, business organizations, nongovernmental organizations, such as the American Red Cross, and thousands of volunteers acted swiftly and helped the evacuees.

Both the Hurricane Katrina and the sinking of the Saewol ferry on 16 April 2014 off the coast of Korea offer some important lessons. When any kind of crisis occurs, the

most important action is human collaboration involving multiple agencies, not about a chain of command. The ability to manage the disaster situation will require leadership skills to coordinate, mobilize, and unify multiple agencies, even involving nongovernmental organizations. In other words, the crisis is not likely to be solved by placing the responsibility on the Blue House in Korea or the White House in the United States, because an executive order given by the president to the agency director and staff may simply not be sufficient ensure a timely response to a crisis situation, inter-agency coordination, or collaboration the people. However, there is one huge difference with the Saewol disaster in Korea the sinking of the boat which, caused the death of 304 people resulted from: (1) so-called 'layers of corruption'; (2) long-standing ties between government regulators and business entrepreneurs; and (3) the inhumane conduct of the captain and crew of the boat by abandoning the ship and the passengers in order to save their own lives.

In summary, the job of public administration is not just to fix the problem. More importantly, it must be to implement new regulatory requirements for safety, quality, and excellence. To settle for anything less would be a profound error. If people are aware of a potential problem affecting safety, they should take immediate action to correct it and report to the agency. The most foremost challenge in preventing a disaster is the difficulty in changing the consciousness of people; it is not only related to the problem of administrators who do not enforce the rules and regulations to ensure public safety, but also citizens who do not obey them and thus cause danger to themselves.

Cautious Use of Intractable Performance Measurement

Since the latter part of the twentieth century considerable progress has been made in gaining widespread acceptance for performance measurement as an ongoing part of performance management—at all three levels of government in the United States and increasingly within private nonprofit organizations (Hatry, 2014, 2007). This is a good attempt to find out how well each organization and their employees have been doing. The Korean government has also been using performance measurement in which the recent approaches seem to be modeled after the practices used in the United States. The basic purpose of a performance management program (or program evaluation) is to provide executive leaders with quantifiable data to make better informed decisions.

Korean public administration could gain some significant insights into the improvement of performance measurement systems by learning from the use and misuse of performance measurement in the United States. Since the enactment of two laws, the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) and the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRAMA), 95% of federal government agencies are required to administer performance measurement by development measurement instruments. The first law requires each agency to develop an annual performance plan to (1) identify annual goals and measures covering each

of its program activities, (2) discuss the strategies and resources needed to achieve annual goals, and (3) validate its performance data. The second law largely states that the agency should align goals and objectives to demonstrate how performance contributes to organizational objectives and goals in service of the mission. These laws have established the requirement to measure performance, but have led to some misconceptions and pitfalls that have hindered the successful implementation of performance management programs. While there are many successful cases of using performance measures, cases of failure seem to be rising in recent years.

For the past 10 years or so, dozens of government agencies at the federal, state, and local levels in the United States have adopted a performance measurement program called 'PerformanceStat'. Recently, the US Office of Management and Budget stated that various Stat programs, such as CitiStat, StateStat, PortfolioStat, and TechStat have saved government agencies millions of dollars, and some agencies are developing their own approach to a Stat program. For example, about seven years ago the state of Maryland, under the leadership of former Governor Martin O'Malley, started the StateStat program which involves setting goals, measuring performance, hitting deadlines, getting results, and making the progress report. This process has applied to the 16 strategic goals dealing with job creation, education, security, sustainability, and health. Although the StateStat sounds good in terms of design and in delivering some quantitative results, the effective implementation of the program depends on how well the goals and results are related to the accomplishment of the original purpose of the StateStat program. Behn, who is an advocate of the Stat approach, suggests that the success of any Stat program depends on the commitment of leaders, managers, and individuals who implement the program (Behn, 2014).

However, there are numerous cases where the performance measurement programs do not produce the intended results due to deliberately misleading information by managers and employees, which Moynihan calls 'performance perversity' (Moynihan, 2008). For example, employees at the US Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals were once known as the leading agency in implementing performance management. Lately, however, the investigative reports found that hospital employees falsified performance data on patient waiting times for appointments in order to receive larger bonuses. As a result, some veterans died because of the delay in an appointment to see a doctor for treatment.

In recent years, the cheating scandals in the school districts which manage schools at the elementary, middle, and high school levels have become a major problem in the nation's education system. One hundred and twenty schools across 20 cities in the United States were involved in cheating on test scores. In Atlanta, Georgia, the school superintendent, as well as 35 teachers and school principals, resigned because of 'a scandal allegedly driven by pressure placed on teachers to falsify test-score results. These educators who were convicted of conspiracy to boost students' test scores received stiff sentences by the County Superior Court Judge' (*Los Angeles Times*, 15 April 2015). Educators in cities including Baltimore, Cincinnati, Detroit,

Houston, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Newark, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC, have also been caught up in cheating allegations involving standardized tests.

Although this author does not have sufficient information concerning the practice of performance measurement in Korean government institutions, the abovementioned cases raise some puzzling questions concerning the effective implementation of any evaluation system. While performance measurement reports often provide useful information for legislative and administrative decision-making, oversight, and transparency, some reports and plans that were once useful have become outdated and, more importantly, divert time and resources away from official agency operations. For the most part, the information provided by performance measurement systems has been shallow and not always sufficiently timely to help executives and managers operate throughout the year. What is most important in performance measurement is to ask some hard questions: are we measuring the right things? How can we avoid superficial measurement? What are the incentives for people to misuse the measures or to conduct honest evaluation? The design of a measurement system may be good, but if employees do not trust the management and are afraid of punishment based on the result, it is hard to expect the data provided by them to be reliable.

Restoring Trust as a Means to Making the Public Safe

The lack of trust in government and public employees is rooted in a long history in Korea. Bribes and gift-giving to officials and politicians have been culturally ingrained in people for centuries. Such traditional behavior is hard to curtail in a short period of time; it is necessary to find ways to change the consciousness of people to make them more critical of unethical conduct by government, politicians, and businesses, and take responsibility and action to develop a relatively clean and healthy society. Although corruption in government is not as rampant as in recent years, the Corruption Perception Index developed by Transparency International indicates that South Korea scored 55 points on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean) and ranked 43 among 175 countries and territories in 2014.

Trust is an integral part of any culture, and it is the responsibility of leaders in a society to ensure trust. If leaders do not take that role seriously, pay lip service, and also act contrary to their values, it can pollute a society and create a corrosive cynicism that affects the citizens. For example, several former presidents since 1948 have been accused of a certain degree of corruption while they were in office. And people also hear often about charges of misconduct and corruption among public administrators. Thus, unethical behavior by leaders can affect the key elements of government performance—quality services, trust, and collaboration. When a government agency introduces a developmental project, by simply inviting community feedback, listening, and responding, public officials will gain the support and trust of the people who will be affected by the proposed development, including some who opposed it at first. As such, officials must act in a democratic way so that operations can foster open and transparent communication, to increase understanding and more collaborative action.

The basic goals of transparency are to enhance democratic governance by improving openness, administrative operations, and responsiveness to the public. As government becomes more transparent, people can be better informed about what political leaders are doing and how public administrators are implementing the laws, rules, and regulations. Of course, there are some exceptions as applied to very sensitive national security issues. Informed citizens can also help prevent the passage of bad laws and pressure elected officials to be held accountable for irresponsible acts. Moreover, citizens can contribute to better administrative practice; openness of practice and action can help government agencies anticipate and solve problems before they become crises—for example, preventing disasters such as the Saewol ferry, regulating polluting industries, and even informing about the potential danger from nuclear power plants that might occur in the future.

The revival of public trust is Korea's most pressing challenge. As discussed earlier, complex issues like corruption, unethical behavior by incompetent politicians, lack of public safety, and declining morality and ethics in government have greatly contributed to a high degree of distrust among citizens (Jun and Kim, 2002). Recent scandals involving corruption in the area of procurement of military equipment and weapons indicate corruption at high levels in the military. This kind of corruption has occurred for decades in numerous business negotiations.

As more laws and rules are established to control corruption, some people still find ways of getting round those measures in order to gain personal interests. Thus, short-term and long-term strategies must be introduced by government. Transparency in proposing legislation and its interpretation and the imposition of regulations, transparency in government operations, and transparency in government procurement and contracts are some examples of improving trust in government.

Striving for Public Service Integrity as a New Ethic

Another long-term strategy is to develop an organizational culture of integrity. In searching for solutions to the problem of corruption, we must look beyond the traditional strategies of monitoring, control and punishment of employees who engage in unethical conduct. Government needs to find ways of creating a culture of new public service 'that generates its own high standards, norms, and internalized controls' (Anechiarico and Jacobs, 1996: 207), in which organizational members help each other develop an image of their workplace being corruption-free and conducting administrative work ethically. Thus, employees understand good governance as a process by which societal institutions, diverse groups, and individuals participate in making the organization democratic—how they interact to achieve common goals, values, and socio-cultural-economic activities.

What is needed most is the conscious creation of a new ethic and a new outlook on reform efforts aiming at anticorruption in government, to make them more beneficial to citizens. The purpose of reform must be reformulated as an increase in administrative responsibility, efficiency, and accountability, but also the promotion of the

common good of citizens. An organization that fosters a new philosophy of governance will be an ethical organization, because it will be value based and mission focused, and its members will believe the organization exists to serve the citizens. Thus, support for administrative reform requires a change in values and a sense of ethical integrity, just as reform policies may be required to implement new values and new moral standards. Although anticorruption laws and organizational policies seem to reduce corruption cases, as a result of spending resources on surveillance and control of employees' behavior government agencies often tend to spend less time in performing actual administrative work. However, the degree of corruption varies from agency to agency; it has a lot to do with a culture of organization. Some organizations that handle government contracts and procurement are more prone to corruption because of gift-giving in appreciation of a contract granted or goods purchased.

Public administrators must realize that they will be better off if they act ethically, because helping others will increase the quality of working life and the psychological benefits of doing the right thing should be clear to administrators. When an administrator conducts his or her work ethically, they have appreciable control over what happens. On the other hand, when a person acts unethically by receiving bribes, granting favors, and compromising on enforcing a regulatory requirement, they will live in fear when a disaster occurs such as the collapse of a building.

The development of an ethical consciousness contributes to the growth of a variety of virtues, including courage, humility, compassion, and caring for clients (Jun, 1991: 212). The ethical feeling of an administrator can also be described as being able to grasp the meaning of public service and commitment to improving the organization so that it is respected and trusted. Facing a heavy workload, job dissatisfaction, and the financial burden of meeting family obligations, some employees seem to compromise their sense of ethical integrity and are inclined to take a bribe. Without raising the ethical consciousness of administrators, public agencies could become dysfunctional, inactive, and find it difficult to restore public trust.

In the ethical organization, public administrators are expected to act in a professional manner and will be judged by their conduct as they interact with citizens. The first step toward the creation of an ethical organization is to train new employees before they are indoctrinated into the old bureaucratic culture. Next is to retrain those already working in the organization, teaching them about ethical issues and exploring ways to correct them. Another constructive way of raising ethical consciousness is to publish stories of people who have done courageous and ethical work in serving a citizen or reporting a corruption case in their agency. Most state governments in the US have employee suggestion programs that financially reward workers for improving services and saving money. When an employee suggestion is adopted, he/she can earn from \$1,000 up to \$10,000 for an implemented idea (*Governing*, 24 November 2014). New alternative strategies require strong support from higher executives and managers so that employees are willing to take a risk in performing their

work. In the long run, a high level of ethical responsibility depends upon the creation of an ethical culture in institutions and society as a whole.

Enhancing the Consciousness of Citizens and Developing an Ethical Community

One promising way of dealing with ethical issues such as bribe giving and accepting, or public safety issues, is to educate citizens to get involved and to take responsibility as citizens in the community. As concerned citizens, they can play an important role in creating an ethical culture by demanding changes in local and central government, such as forming a social movement to change the school curriculum by including a civic education to help students learn proper ethical behavior and citizen responsibility in a civilized and democratic society. Or they can help other people to act ethically, including government officials. They also need to be more aware of their responsibility by electing those politicians who seem to be committed not only to promote their local interests and social innovation projects but who also have ideas for improving society. Change possibilities may also be generated by widespread participation of citizens and nongovernmental organizations through social media and social interactions.

Public administrators and community leaders should reach out to citizens to make contributions to their community and be part of a social movement toward the development of a civilized and mutually caring community. Without improving the consciousness of the people, it would be unreasonable to expect that Korea will be respected as an advanced and civilized society even if the average per capita income rises to \$30,000. In social gatherings, people complain about badly behaved children in the public space, corruption among public officials, and rising crime. But many people seem to be indifferent and not interested in taking action to solve community problems. Since government alone cannot develop a healthy community, citizen participation is essential in a democratic society. Various types of public forums could help raise people's consciousness to take action rather than ignoring ethical issues, although they are not concerned with immediate family and personal problems. Leaders and volunteers can work together to raise public sensitivity to the problems of declining morality and ethics and to find constructive ways to resolving them. Although most people tend to side with economic issues, the important partners in the community movement are still families and young people, and they should be mobilized and encouraged to participate.

A good community may be conceived as having an informal social contract between the government and the citizens; the former has a basic responsibility toward the citizens and acts for the public good while the latter has to accept individual responsibility towards society. Citizens should not expect government to be responsible for solving all major problems. In fact, government cannot solve all problems without the support of citizens—problems such as the economy, maintaining social order, national security, preventing crime, and moral and ethical issues. As Immanuel Kant argued, in a civil society, 'understanding duties ... enable us to overcome the barbarism of using others as instruments for satisfying our private interests' (Ehrenberg, 1999: 113). He

further stated that in a moral community, acts of autonomous individuals are subject to 'the universal ethical standards of the categorical imperative' (or a set of procedures).

How can we build a community movement for change so people can actually participate? First, there has to be a social force to help people realize their community has some serious problems or to build a healthy community in which people help each other learn to improve their situation as well as to give inputs to local officials. Building an ethical and active community is the responsibility of everyone. Community leaders and local officials can help to initiate a grassroots movement toward the improvement of community culture in which people respect the rights of others and act compassionately to help people in need before indulging their individual interests. For example, various studies have shown that people's participation in promoting a sustainable environment and controlling growth issues has made a significant difference in improving the quality of their community. As O'Connell says, 'Along with citizens fulfilling their responsibilities to make government effective, civil society depends on government to protect and foster active citizenship and private initiative' (O'Connell, 1999: 41).

Responsibility of Policymakers: What is the Right Thing to do?

Perhaps one the most annoying issues in Korean politics today is the poor performance of politicians in the National Assembly. They tend to avoid the tough policy issues and argue for questions that generally reflect their political and ideological interests. They urge social groups and nongovernmental organizations to demonstrate in the streets. These politicians are interested in promoting their political interests instead of contesting their views in the legislature through rational dialogue and discourse. Unfortunately, this is often not just a Korean phenomenon as we also see it in other countries, including the United States.

The most important responsibility of policymakers and public administrators is getting the things done right, but, more importantly, doing the right things that matter most to citizens and to society, so that citizens try to do the right things too. For example, when politicians are interested only in promoting their personal economic interests, political popularity, or political ambitions, and do not pay much attention to the greater public good, then the country cannot move forward, and as a result the citizens suffer.

Most importantly, the president can actively mobilize the people in order to create an ethical and compassionate society. President Gyun-Hae Park, like most former Korean presidents, is a passionate and caring leader who seems to be committed to changing dysfunctional elements in government and helping the citizens. However, President Park needs to articulate her goals and visions more clearly and listen to different voices. She could be further benefited by exercising her social skills to persuade the politicians who disagree with her policy positions. Her good intentions and vision alone is not enough to accomplish the desired outcomes.

Setting goals and policy agenda should be formulated in the context of the broad public good rather than simply reacting to a survey of public opinion or the pressure of a special interest group. They may serve the short-term political interest of politicians, but could create confusion among citizens and social disorder. For example, support for the expansion of social welfare programs, such as the free-lunch program for students, free day-care centers, and free education, are certainly popular among lower-income groups and the disadvantaged in society. However, applying this policy to every family regardless of their income is likely to create many unintended consequences, such as the problem of uncontrolled public spending which will result in escalating government debt. Thus, overseeing public spending and the nation's financial health is not only the responsibility of policymakers, but ultimately rests on the shoulders of the President, especially when the government faces a fiscal crisis.

Exercising Public Leadership

The role of public executives is not comfortable in a complex society. They face difficulty in shaping values and making hard choices. Executives and organizational leaders are defined more by their responses to crises and important public issues as well as their ability to solve them by exercising their practical and critical reasoning. In my opinion, President Syung-Man Rhee was not only the leader who struggled to establish an independent and democratic Korea after liberation from the Japanese occupation in 1945, but was also responsible for rescuing the country from invasion by North Korea and restoring social order. Another leader who made a great impact in Korean history is former President Chung-Hee Park. Despite the frequent criticisms of his authoritarian leadership, more people today tend to appreciate his achievements. He was the leader who lifted the Korean people from extreme poverty and transformed the nation into an industrial society. Today, many world leaders praise him as the person largely responsible for Korea's prosperity and economic success. Certainly, he laid the foundations for Korea's industrial and socio-economic development.

I would like to mention another important responsibility of leaders: if we are going to meet our future global challenges, leaders in the public and private sectors will need to develop certain qualities. The old hierarchical ways of governing and problem solving need to be transformed into a more horizontal and networking governance to foster open and transparent communication, to increase understanding and more collaborative action, and to encourage public employees to become more proactive in serving the public.

Another important quality is to stress activities that aim at innovation and creativity. Although innovative strategies to export more goods in the short run are necessary, in order to compete and survive in the global marketplace, businesses must develop new products derived from new creative ideas. In the past, the central government has supported research funds to improve products to better compete in the global marketplace. To compete in the future and to make scientific contributions to humanity,

the government needs to provide more resources for basic scientific research as well as encourage universities and research institutes to develop creative projects for social innovation. Large business corporations must invest more resources in inventing new products, going beyond the improvement of existing products. For example, the success of Apple Company under the leadership of Steve Jobs was largely due to the development of new creative products. Mr. Jobs built one of the most creative companies in the world, and the company's products were almost 'impossible to clone' at first. His innovative achievements have energized not only the computer industry but also the music and entertainment industries.

Another important factor in the public handling an emerging crisis is to exercise the collaborative and networking skills of a leader. For example, the response to the Ebola crisis in the United States is an interesting example of tackling an infectious disease. In 2014, Ebola was public enemy number one in the United States. About 1,000 people were monitored by health officials, and several schools in Texas and Ohio shut down because of a single patient who had boarded a plane. One person who contracted the virus in his native Liberia died at the hospital in Texas largely due to misdiagnosis by a doctor. In handling Ebola, the most important step required by organizational leaders is to integrate, mobilize, and unify multiple organizations including government agencies at the federal, state, and local levels, hospitals, and nongovernmental and international organizations. Collaboration calls for a network of leadership skills in which leaders work with each other in sharing current technical and healthcare information relevant to handling of suspected Ebola cases. By early November 2014, for the first time in two months, the United States was free of the deadly effects of the Ebola epidemic. The West African nations recently decimated by Ebola have come closer to ridding themselves of the disease. Fighting against Ebola clearly demonstrates that in emergency situations, innovative solutions can be constructed as people come together with all kinds of cross-functional skills, their passion, and their individual talent.

When South Korea reported its first confirmed case of Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) on 20 May 2015, the Ministry of Health and Welfare and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention were slow in responding to the situation. The officials and staff were unprepared to deal with a little known disease like MERS. Due to the lack of trained healthcare workers, and the shortage of resources and hospital facilities to tackle the problem, the disease spread rapidly. About 70 days later, when the MERS crisis was over, the country had experienced a great trauma which resulted in the deaths of 36 people, 186 infected, and 16,700 people in quarantine (*Hankook Ilbo*, 27 July 2015). Since its beginning, the Korean economy has declined further, with falling exports, low consumer spending, and declining tourism. Some important lessons are that not only was the government unprepared to handle the serious healthcare crisis, but many citizens also ignored the healthcare alerts and precautions sent out by government officials, and they were less concerned with the welfare of others than with their own familial care.

Thus, public leadership today may be viewed as the policymakers' ability to help prepare citizens to learn civic responsibility and better collaboration to overcome

crises, exercise compassion, and work jointly to achieve shared values. Leaders need to listen and learn to work with diverse groups and help them learn how to help others beyond their selfish interests.

The Incivility of Politicians and the Problem of Consensus Building

Perhaps the most incompetent group of public officials in the view of the Korean people may be the politicians in the National Assembly. Oftentimes, politicians seem to have low level of tolerance over competing political interests and legislative affairs. As a result, they tend to be very ineffective in resolving complex issues and in handling legislative agendas. Since opponents do not respect the opinions of the other party, it is difficult to create a collegiate atmosphere which would improve the political outcomes. Politicians should try to empower themselves to raise the sense of civility and learn leadership skills. Civilized behavior by policymakers is a lot more than just being nice to a specific social group and citizens. As Brescia (*PA Times*, 8 August 2014) avers, 'It's a leader's respect for the preeminence of facts in social dialogue. Civic leaders of our times need to analyze, reflect, and appreciate positions of many stakeholders in the public arena'. They should critically examine the laws and regulations that are established to protect the public. Policymakers should refrain from acting upon their political gains but advocate more of the interest of the broader public over a special interest.

For example, concerning the difficulty in establishing a special law to help the families of the victims of the Saewol ferry boat disaster, should the government be responsible for realizing the demands of the victims' families? This is a question which the politicians should settle through the democratic process of critical debate in relation to the constitution and other established laws. As viewed by citizens, insisting on the views of each political party may be interpreted as avoiding the discussion of many hard questions. If the legislators pass a new law, would they be willing to create another law in case of other major disasters caused by private entrepreneurs as might happen in the future? For the victims' families, it is the right thing to do. On the other hand, what would be the effect on the general public and national policymaking in the long run? Considering other important national priorities and financial conditions, is this really the right thing to do? Incremental solutions to satisfy short-term political and social demands by a special group could produce many unintended and negative consequences in the future.

The deadlock in policy action of government in the absence of intelligent and rational dialogue would bring hardship for citizens. This will create economic havoc for businesses when new regulations and policies are delayed because of inaction in the legislature. The need for policymakers to listen to the public voice is far greater today. They also need to better explain what they do and why, rather than merely insisting on their ideological preferences or acting on pressure from special interest groups. When politicians from each political party avoid dialogue in building the middle ground and compromising their views, self-righteousness and incivility flourish.

People have seen this phenomenon occur frequently in Korean politics. They also recruit young people to support their cause through the use of the Internet and street demonstrations. Because most politicians try to defend their own political interests, negotiation with people who disagree with on political positions are very difficult. When they disagree with each other, show no respect for opponents' ideas, and face an uncomfortable debate, they tend to be unable to control their emotions and demonstrate uncivil behavior. There is a desperate need to act in a civilized manner when conducting political matters and building consensus through contestation and rational dialogue.

The Need for a New Philosophical Perspective: Toward a Critical Pragmatism

The history of the past seven decades has proven that the practice of capitalism and democracy is the best framework for Korea's development—certainly it is a better economic and political system as compared to the wretched conditions in North Korea. However, in meeting the complex challenges, it is time to use a new philosophical perspective in order to improve the limits of both capitalism and liberal democracy. The following list suggests some reasons for injecting a critical pragmatism into Korean politics and administration:

- The need for critically examining the limits of capitalism and finding ways of reducing inequality. For example, markets do not always maximize the welfare of all citizens.
- Critical analysis of the limits of liberal democracy and continuously reconstructing the framework of a resilient democratic system that can reflect the changing aspects of society.
- Raising pragmatic questions to meet the challenges of possible Korean reunification in the near future.
- Critical reflection on how to eradicate corruption and improve ethics and transparency.
- Realizing the failure of the 'sunshine policy' during Presidents Dae Joong Kim and Moo Hyun Roh toward North Korea as well as the ineffectiveness of the hardline policy of President Myung Bark Lee, there is a need to explore a more balanced approach based on mutual dialogue and respect between North and South.
- Need to interpret and reinterpret the history of constructing the Republic of Korea and its democratic foundation. Students must learn valid historical knowledge.
- Critical discussion over terminating outdated regulations that impede the safety and the welfare of the public.
- Policymakers and administrators need to critically examine ways of doing their jobs effectively and also communicating what they are doing.
- Realizing inherent shortcomings of objective knowledge (factual information or objective epistemology) in policymaking and public administration, and the

complementary nature of subjective knowledge (human knowledge or subjective epistemology).

The above ideas imply that in making pragmatic and democratic decisions, we need to exercise a critical perspective that emphasizes the process of dialogue and discourse. One of the frustrating aspects of Korean politics has been the struggle between the leftist ideology and the conservative, right-oriented ideology. The former tends to be dogmatic insofar as it lays claim to a priori validity and tends to be at odds with capitalistic economy and representative democracy. Their ideas are not considered as a convincing framework for dealing with current conditions in Korean society. However, this social force against the autocratic and conservative regimes since the early 1960s has become a significant among young people as they engaged in a social movement toward democratization and participation. Reflecting on the current conditions of Korean society, I think the far leftist movement has now outlived its usefulness as a social force for political change and for solving today's complex socio-economic problems. There is a need for the far-left politicians to look toward the center-left approach while the far-right conservatives search for a compromise toward the center. Since there are so many polarizing voices in Korea, I think there is a hunger for political consensus. The real problem is that centrism is not as appealing to those who cling to strong political interests and political ideologies.

The Practice of Critical Pragmatism

In discussing critical pragmatism, I want to introduce what critical pragmatism is and how policymakers and administrators can practice a critical, pragmatic approach, rather than reviewing the philosophical development of critical pragmatism. In recent years, critical pragmatism has been gaining a broader recognition among many philosophers and social scientists, and they have begun to revise critical theory along the lines of 'pragmatic turn' (Bernstein, 2010; Rehg and Bohman, 2001; White, 2004; Kadlec, 2007; Frega, 2013). In order to practice critical pragmatism, participants in the process of political negotiation or administrative problem solving need to make a certain degree of commitment to resolve the differences in order to avoid political and administrative deadlock. Participants in the process listen and learn through the practice of democratic means (Ansell, 2011). They realize that outcomes such as a mutually agreed solution are 'socially constructed' and open to further contestation and change by participants until a majority of participants understand and agree (Jun, 2006). Perhaps the important aspect of critical practice is to go beyond the simple practice of following the procedures and process of interaction. Both policymakers and public administrators they need to be self-reflective (self-critical) of their own knowledge, assumptions, and expert identities. This process is time-consuming, but it may give them opportunities for new learning and allow them to adjust better to the complicated context of challenging situations.

The value of critical pragmatism is that it promotes a dialogue and discourse between participants allowing them to understand different views and ideas by analyzing the reasons underlying their positions. They must realize that dialogue and persuasion are better than force, street demonstrations, or violent means to fight opposing views. They should be able to engage in rational discourse by presenting their views with reasons through the deliberative process (Bohman, 1996; Jun, 2006). As Chambers says, discourse interaction requires 'maintaining respect and impartiality' in which discursive actors need to be 'open to persuasion, willing to meet halfway, and sincere in their search for agreement' (1996: 207). In real political situations, since most political actors tend to engage in dialogue strategically rather than discursively, mutual respect and constructive interaction are often ignored. As they interact later and begin to understand and learn from the ideas of the other party, the possibility of reaching an agreement may arise.

There is a difference between pragmatism and critical pragmatism as applied to problem-solving activities. The pragmatic approach is concerned with skills, strategies, and accomplishment of goals following instrumental procedures. For example, in public administration, employees are trained to be passive learners who should perform their work in a certain 'correct' way. In this process, they are socialized in the workplace not to raise questions as to the desirability of those procedures and operations. On the other hand, the critical pragmatic approach acknowledges the necessity of the pragmatic way of performing organizational tasks in order to ensure reasonable efficiency in administration. Also, employees are empowered to question existing organizational norms and policies, participate in making constructive criticism, and explore alternative ideas. Thus, the critical pragmatic approach offers more possibilities for changing and innovating organizations. It is a balanced approach to the improvement of organizational practice in which people are empowered to exert their critical consciousness.

Critical pragmatism can provide policymakers and public administrators with the best of both the pragmatic need to learn skills from those who have better knowledge and to express their new ideas in order to improve the situation through conversation and active participation. As the critical pragmatic approach is utilized by a critical and change-conscious person who confronts the problem of routine works, roles, and functions, and is committed to redefine and change. This change-oriented person is willing to engage in change activities, to work with other actors, and to seek enlarged possibilities for organizational improvement and human action. A new change may only be made possible by the people themselves who think in a new way. In an environment in with an old habitual way of conducting politics and administration, a more critical, less pragmatic emphasis for problem solving would seem more appropriate. For example, public officials who are accustomed to interacting with citizens in a detached and bureaucratic manner certainly need to exercise more critical reflection on their own behavior and actions. Responsible policymakers and administrators must ask themselves whether what they are doing should be done at all, and why they are doing it. These are important questions for retaining a sense of purpose and

responsibility in conducting public affairs. In public administration, it is important to pressure employees into critically examining old ways of doing things as dogmatic, passive, and undemocratic, and transforming toward more flexible, active, democratic practices.

Concluding Observations

There is a great opportunity for Korean leaders to restore the trust necessary to address future global and national challenges. In closing, let me repeat this again. Lack of political will by Korean policymakers has been immobilizing the people and slowing down the country's opportunity to succeed. Public administrators are in a unique position to exercise leadership and correct many issues, to help break through today's gridlock, and to transform towards a more compassionate, caring, and active society. I think the most important requirements for Korea to succeed in the future are ethical integrity, effective leadership and problem solving, changing people's consciousness, improving civility, social responsibility, and placing collaboration over competition. When the current problems of politics, administration, and society improve, Korea will be much more progressive.

Furthermore, the challenge for the next few decades is in learning how to exploit the possibilities for improving the quality of life while keeping up with sustainable development, and also rewarding the creators and social innovators, the hard-working people, and the volunteers for improving the community. This is a challenge and an urgent call to action. To achieve long-term and short-term goals, policymakers and public administrators need to collaborate much more, working with multiple actors in sharing collective consciousness and learning through the dialogue and discourse which is essential for deliberative and pragmatic democracy (Ansell, 2011). The country needs innovative and creative solutions to seemingly intractable problems. Positive changes can happen when good policymakers and public administrators do the right things and commit themselves to serve the public good.

The challenge of the next few decades is to revitalize the political process by building a strong democracy, to improve the effectiveness of public organizations, to retrain public administrators, and to engage in renewal by becoming an active participant in the global environment. Better politics and administration at the national and local levels is the way to better politics and democratic collaboration at the global level (Jun, 1996).

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