

Glocal Agora and Basic Income in Korea

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1. Marxism and Basic Income: For the Communistic Basic Income

Until early 2000's, traditional marxists were mostly critical or cynical to 'basic income' discourse. The reasons of their criticism are: "The racism against foreigners will increase with the conflict based on their participation in 'basic income' as receiver."(Heller 2001, 1039) "It grants the bread of public charity to imaginary participation in the play of pleasure without the participation in the necessary economic activity."(Haug 1998, 200) "It narrowed down the criticism against capitalism to the problem of distribution."(Heller 2001, 1039) However, Heller acknowledged that 'basic income' may be realized when the labor does not become commodity, and accordingly, when capitalism is abolished(Heller 2001, 1039).

Haug's criticism against 'basic income' is irrelevant. According to the advocates of 'basic income', it is not the bread of charity but the reasonable right based on contribution to production, because not only the employed laborer but also all social members produce the 'commune property' as 'cognitive property' and therefore, expand the surplus value of society. Their arguments are based on substitution of labor value theory for intellect value theory.

But, marxists can't advance only with a simple rejection of the 'basic income' school's argument. In order for marxists to overcome their theoretical and political limits, they should expand the labor value theory by reinterpreting the relation between labor value and social "general intellect"(*Grundrisse*, 594; MEW 42, 602) or "associated intelligence(assoziierten Verstand)"(MEW 25, 267), and by reinterpreting the double mechanism of 'exploitation(Exploitation,

Ausbeutung)' within the process of production and 'expropriation(Expropriation)' outside the process of production. Haug makes the labor value theory rather thin than plentiful.

Heller's criticism against 'basic income' has far missed the point. For the 'cognitive capitalism' school, 'basic income' is not a problem of mere distribution but the issue of right involved in contribution to the surplus value production in a new stage of capitalist production. If Heller expands the concept of 'income according to needs' beyond 'basic income' in a society based on abolition of capitalist relation, he can go beyond the limits of 'basic income'.

Fortunately, it is the reality that 'basic income' is gradually accepted among marxists such as Blackburn(2000) and Callinicos(2006) as well as Howard(2002, 2006) and E. O. Wright(2005). However, their discussion doesn't expand the marxist discourse in the face of 'basic income', but rather follows the representative discourse of it.

One cannot deny that infants, pensioners, and housewives contribute to the production of surplus value indirectly at least, even if only the employees produce surplus value directly. Their indirect contribution to the surplus value production is not limited to 'mass intellect' or cognitive property and the contemporary capitalism since the 1970's, as 'cognitive capitalism' school argues.

All social members contribute to production of surplus value directly or indirectly. As 'cognitive capitalism' school argues, all the consumers give capitalist and waged laborer the information about the amount of consumption and the knowledge needed for the production gratis. Development of internet expands consumer's contribution to the production.

But in addition to this, the very existence of every social member and his demand are the necessary condition for the maintenance and accumulation of capital. For example, when the population grows, the capital expands the

production and is able to enjoy the economy of scale. On the contrary, if the population decreases, the capital may suffer a loss or go into bankruptcy. Furthermore, as Marx pointed out, capitalists use the social capital of all social members, as if it were their own, for the sake of increasing the profit based on the development of credit system and stock company (MEW 25: 487 and 507). Namely, capitalists mobilize all the capability and property of the society in order to expand the profit of capital. In other words, according to Marx, the direct exploitation happens during the process of capitalist production, but the capitalist expropriation is not limited to the process of capitalist production or 'original accumulation'. Rather, it is accomplished against at the expense of all social members and in all times. In other words, since the Marx' time, *capital is a power which monopolizes the social property of all the social members, privatizes most of the profit, but socializes all the loss based on the combination of credit system and stock company.*¹ Furthermore, *the contemporary capitalism based on credit system and stock company system is a mode of production which doesn't maximize the production according to ability but rather maximizes an 'unearned income' in the form of interest, dividend, and speculative income, and immensely wastes social time and productive power.*

The entire social capital and capitalist state as his guardian should make constant efforts to increase the population because of their profit earned from it. For this reason, the capitalist class should also make an attempt to pursue

¹ Capital is defined as "self value-added value" in *Capital* vol. 1. But the notion of capital is supplemented and expanded according to the progress of description as many other notions. After the transformation of surplus value into profit in *Capital* vol. 3, it is supplemented to the notion of capital that capital produced profit (MEW 25, 386). And after credit and stock company are described, capital belongs originally to all the social members based on the deposit and stock. Furthermore, the mechanism of socialization of loss in case of the capital bankruptcy can be extracted from Marx' pointing out that crisis brings about the mass unemployment (MEW 23/568). Of course crisis causes pain not only to the laborer but also to capitalist.

the social welfare politics such as providing basic security of life for the low income for the sake of its profit. This is the reason why 'unconditional basic income' is also realizable in capitalism.

If based on Marx, we can advance further. In communism, the income based on capital, property, and speculation shall be abolished and distributed to all social members. This argument is compatible with Marx's thesis that not only exploitation but also expropriation should be abolished.²

This income concept based on Marx may be named as 'communistic basic income'. This 'communistic basic income' integrates 'basic income within capitalism' and therefore, it is much more quantitative than 'basic income within capitalism'. Naturally, the laborer receives labor income in addition to 'communistic basic income'. Then, the character of labor shall be changed from obligatory labor into more desirable labor. When 'communistic basic income' integrates 'basic income within capitalism', the possibility of solidarity between marxists and 'basic income' will grow further.³

This thesis is also an argument that Marx' two phases of communism should be integrated into one principle of communism. Namely, it is an argument that the principle of communism should not be divided into two principles as "distribution according to achievements" and "distribution according to needs". These should be integrated into one principle of 'distribution according to achievements and needs' from the beginning to the end of communism.⁴ This

² Howard also understands Marx's position in this way, as he writes: "Marx, who holds that all exchange value is the result of labor, acknowledges that not all wealth is due to labor, since nature also contributes, sometimes lavishly and sometimes without any admixture of labor."(Howard, 2005: 126)

³ The thesis of 'income of social solidarity' based on abolition of capitalist relation is different from Seong U.-M.'s thesis of 'basic income' which presupposed maintenance of capitalist system. Furthermore, Seong U.-M.'s 'basic income' is different from my thesis, at the point that she supposed the financing for 'basic income' with the taxation on the capital transfer and the raise of direct tax(Seong U.-M. 2002, 59-60).

⁴ Van der Veen/Parijs also regard 'unconditional basic income' conceptually as the same with Marx' "distribution according to needs" in the higher phase of communism. Naturally their 'basic income' is a partial principle of distribution and realizable also in capitalism. But

thesis means that a regular ratio of income should be distributed based on achievements and the other ratio of income should be distributed based on the needs as equal income to all the social members according to the age and handicaps(see for the details Kwack N.-W. 2006a).

Naturally, this 'communistic basic income' may have to be associated with 'basic income within capitalism' as a transitional form which is financed through the taxation on the capitalistic unearned and speculative income and so on. This is the concept of the basic income model by Kang/Kwack/Lee(2009) in Korea.

2. Glocal Agora and Glocal Basic Income

Basic income discourse has mostly focused on the national space. But recently, basic income discourse is expanding to the global and regional spaces(Füllsack, 2006; Van Parijs, 2010). Naturally, basic income may also be realizable and sustainable in local space(Vanderborght/Van Parijs, 2005: 41-42). Basic income ranges from global to local space. In this sense, 'glocal basic income' may be conceptualized. However, one needs to conceptualize the relation between glocal space and glocal basic income.

Many radical urban theorists like Mitchell concretize the concepts and 'the right to the city' of Henri Lefebvre and the 'spatiotemporal utopianism' concept of D. Harvey with the struggle to make public spaces a realm of justice. He focus on a more open, more just, more egalitarian society and urban public spaces, especially for the homeless people excluded from urban spaces(Mitchell, 2003: 8).

they see that their 'basic income' model reaches to the higher phase of Marx' communism, when the ratio of 'basic income' increases to the maximum(van der Veen/Parijs 2006, 14f.).

But the concept ‘public spaces’ is too unclear for one to understand common open spaces where everybody can enjoy these spaces freely and equally. Because ‘the public’ includes the meaning of an administrative disposition by certain political communities or their representatives with a specific sovereignty, hence the possibility of privatization of public spaces for a specific individual or group.⁵ Therefore, one needs to use other terminology in order to conceptualize open and sustainable utopian common spaces..

In doing so, one needs to take into account more dimensional overlapping character of multiple social spaces such as global space, regional space, nation–state, and local spaces.

In this sense, social spaces are always glocal spaces, although a social space of local community may be more local than global. Therefore, glocally open egalitarian spaces to everybody can be conceptualized as ‘glocal agora’ namely, glocally communal space.

‘Glocal agora’ is inspired from the ancient Greek agora, but differs from Greek agora in three points: 1) ‘Glocal agora’ is open to everybody; 2) It also includes non–material spaces like open egalitarian cyber communities; 3) It embraces economic means for the ‘real freedom for all’(Van Parijs) vis–a–vis political and cultural dimensions.

This economic means for real egalitarian freedom and opportunities for everybody is unconditional basic income for all, distributed ‘according to everybody's needs’(Marx) as communistic goods. This unconditional basic income consists of cash and kind.⁶

⁵ In this regard, the notion “community–space(Gemeinwesen Raum)”(Blaschke, 2006a: 34) is more relevant as “public space” to understand the open space for all the member of a community. But “community–space” may exclude the non–member of a community. Therefore its relevancy is also restricted. Likewise, “public ownership” cannot be unconditionally admired because “*Public ownership* is ownership by political communities or their representatives”(Van Parijs, 1995: 5) hence includes the possibility of bureaucracy.

⁶ The most advocates of basic income don’t regard the kind like free education and health care and so on as basic income, although they agree for the expanding of in–kind welfare side by side monetary basic income. But Van Parijs regard in–kind universal welfare as well

Unconditional basic income for all may extend to global community, regional communities, nation-states, and local communities. This extension may open the way for unconditional basic income to become overlapping communistic goods in these spaces. In this sense, this overlapping basic income may be conceptualized as 'glocal basic income'.

However, glocal basic income, global and local alike, should be financed by additional taxes on the capitalistic unearned income such as personal interest·dividend·rent and the capitalistic speculative income gathered by financial and immobile properties. For the emancipation and solidarity of the most people including the greatest part of labor class and precariat, glocal basic income should not be financed by a tax on 'employment rent'(Van Parijs, 1995: 119ff.) or 'all sources of income' including labor income of Kipping and Blaschke.⁷ By doing that, glocal basic income may be better connected with the labor emancipation and the strategy for the transition to a new communism of the 21st century where all the income may be 'labor income + a communistic basic income'.

This glocal basic income may take different forms according to the dimensions of communities. In a global community, it takes the form of cash rather than kind, although it does not exclude the possibility of kind such as the global climate and so on.

as monetary universal grant as basic income: "The concepts of wealth and income can easily be defined at a level of abstraction sufficient to ensure that they apply to non-monetary and monetary economies alike." He differentiate the forms of the desirable in-kind basic income. 1) For formal freedom: police and courts, military defence, 2) positive externalities on everyone's opportunities: education or infrastructure, 3) cost saving freely available goods: clean air, cleaning of street, quieter footpaths, 4) health care and so on(Van Parijs, 1995: 42-44). But he seems inconsistent. Although he emphasizes that the "in-kind basic income constitutes an essential ingredient of the means made available to every member of society"(ibid., 44), he acknowledges also that "the opportunity dimension of real freedom granted to everyone should be secured through a monetary income, rather than through a grant in kind."(ibid., 41)

⁷ The 'employment rent' of Van Parijs or the higher taxation on labor income of Blaschke and Kipping as the main source of basic income may bring about the protest of many wage laborers or injury the motivation of labor. Therefore, it is questionable if 'employment rent' in Van Parijs's concept is both politically and economically sustainable as Van Parijs intended.

However, in a local community, glocal basic income may take the form of kind such as parks where one can walk unthreatened by car traffic, school meals, and care service for children and the handicapped. In this sense, basic income can also be a part of the left-wing radical movement in urban and local communities vis-a-vis the struggle for glocal agora like the participatory and direct democracy in local communities.

3. Local Basic Income in Korea

Free school meals are advocated by many Korean people recently, which brought the victory of opposition parties in the country-wide local election of Jun. 2, 2010, who promised the universal free school meals. Free school meals also have positive externalities like encouraging eco-agriculture and revitalizing local economies. Some radical supervisors who have been elected in the local election with the promise “universal free school meals” are also the advocates of basic income in Korea. The popularity of universal free school meals may be a step toward the general basic income in Korea. This is why the in-kind grants like universal free school meals must be regarded as a basic income.

Locally, we may also imagine a free mass traffic as another in-kind basic income. Free mass traffic may have the positive externalities like clean air, socially reduced traffic cost, the increase in real income of the low-income people and so on. The Socialist Party in Korea called for this free mass traffic in the local election, but its demand didn't invoke the social echo. Notwithstanding, free mass traffic can have great potential like that of free school meals in Korea, because it is obviously beneficial to most people.

Such in-kind grant may be an entrance to the more general basic income. Our advancement to the general basic income will be more realistic when we regard such in-kind grant as a basic income. Furthermore, this vision makes basic income more popular, abundant and sustainable. Therefore, the advocates of basic income need to integrate different non monetary grants into basic income,

and extend this in-kind basic income, which will be grow bigger as human's basic needs increase. All this will make it easier for basic income to be realized.

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