Six Theses of Understanding the Agenda "Locality and Humanities"*

Sangbong Lee

Professor, Korean Studies Institute, Pusan National University
E-mail: sanbolee@pusan.ac.kr

Abstract

This study is to comprehensively understand the agenda named as "Locality and Humanities" which is being implemented by the Korean Studies Institute, Pusan National University. The agenda is to investigate an alternative paradigm of achieving the values of locality based on the critical reflection of a state-centered paradigm in a modern era. It especially plans various studies on locality in which humanities is centered and inter(trans)discipline is emphasized. The contents of the thesis consist of the basic problems of starting the agenda and the main subjects studied. The six theses are very briefly mentioned in the followings. Firstly, the agenda has been established based on the severe local problems of Korea. Secondly, "Local" and "Locality" are sort of a new naming strategy. Thirdly,

locality is multilayered, relational, and fluid. Fourthly, the agenda seeks postmodern values and an alternative possibility of locality. Fifthly, the agenda pays attention to the postmodernistic restructuring of space based on a trans-locality. Finally, the agenda aims to open a new horizon for research on humanities by pursuing interdisciplinary research and praxis.

Keywords: Locality, Humanities, Localitology, Alternative, Postmodernity

Introduction

The "Locality and Humanities" is an ongoing research agenda that has been advocated by the Korean Studies Institute at Pusan National University since 2007. It is a new academic paradigm that pays attention to "locality" as a place for human lives and restructures a nation-centric paradigm of modernity in order to discover various values of local life. This paradigm also further seeks an alternative order where such values are realized. In order to help understand the agenda of "Locality and Humanities" (referred to as "L&H," hereinafter) better, this paper will introduce and elaborate on the agenda's purpose, what it involves, and its significance in the following six theses.

Thesis 1. The agenda (L&H) starts from being aware of problems faced by local realities of Korea

Korea is witnessing an excessive population density in Seoul and the surrounding metropolitan (capital) area. It is so severe that Japan (Tokyo), France (Paris), and Mexico (Mexico City), whose population density in their respective capital areas is very high in a global sense, cannot be compared with Korea.[1] In terms of numbers, the level of population density in the metropolitan area is as follows: as of 2011, roughly half the South Korean population (49.3%) is living in the metropolitan area, which accounts for only 11.8% of the entire land, and the GDP from this population density takes up nearly half (47.1%)the national GDP.[2] That's not all. Most of the nation's political functions and about two-thirds of financial functions are located in the capital area, which is also home to 59.9% of corporate headquarters, while most large cultural facilities including performing arts centers and exhibition halls are located in the capital area as well.[3] Moreover, despite policy-driven efforts that have been made since the 1980s, the phenomenon is intensifying rather than easing. In short, it is quite fitting to call the country the Republic

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1) The metropolitan (capital) area refers to a wide urban area consisting of cities of Seoul and Incheon and Gyeonggi Province. This area formed as Seoul, Korea's capital city, has spread across its surrounding areas. The population density denotes the ratio the metropolitan area takes up out of the entire nation, or the ratio of the metropolitan area/nation.

2) Source: Statistical data of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (http://www.molit.go.kr/USR/WPGE0201/m_52/DTL.jsp) as of June 1, 2013.

3) As of 2009, 59.6% of cultural organizations, 54.5% of performing arts facilities, 53.8% of performing groups, and 61.3% of performances are concentrated in the metropolitan area. Jong-guk Baek, 2010. "Regional Polarization of Higher Education Toward Capital Area and its Ruinous Effects on Local Universities", *Critical Review of History*, Vol. 92, The Institute for Korean Historical Studies, p. 162.

of Seoul rather than the Republic of Korea.

Unlike the capital area that can be likened to a black hole sucking in talent and capital, the provinces have been collectively reduced to a backward place in which those who have fallen behind in the competition would look to the center both with admiration and jealousy. In other words, the divide between the center and the provinces in the political and economic dimensions have widened and intensified, even to the psychological and cultural dimensions. This widening makes the fixated, hierarchical thinking, or the dichotomous thinking of winners and losers and of superiority and inferiority, something general and commonplace. Because of this, it is very difficult and uncomfortable to live in the provinces in a society like Korea.

Such realities concerning the provinces did not result from simple policy choices. At its root, these realities should be seen as a manifestation of the pathology contained in modernity in general. The centralism of modernity has led to a discriminative structure characterized by the dichotomy of "central (the center) – local (surrounding)" (i.e., localization). In other words, amidst the formation of a strong internal identity and outward exclusivity in an ideological space of a nation, the center has emerged as the mainstream and basis for identity, while various provinces were either won over or excluded accordingly. In particular, the unique characteristic of Korea, which underwent rapid, colonial-style, state-directed modernization, made the provinces even more devastated on top of the contradiction caused by modernity in

general.[4] Once a hierarchical, spatial division between the center and the provinces is established due to the aforementioned mechanism, the provinces lose their own unique diversity and turn into a homogenous sub-space. In other words, cities in the provinces lose their own unique names but are collectively called "the provinces." There is no need to distinguish their names like Gwangju, Daegu, or Busan any more.

Once this way of thinking becomes standard, the capital area will be brimming with people flocking to the center, whereas the provinces will have to worry about the void the others leave behind. The metropolitan area becomes a black hole sucking in talent and capital, while the provinces are reduced to a bleak space left with losers of competition, leading to further abandonment in a vicious cycle. Like this, the capital area maintains its spatial dominance over the provinces by continuing to absorb the nutrients of the latter.

Such inequality in the center-local relationship in the Korean society is sometimes even expressed with the word "colony."[5] A.

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4) The fact that primate cities equivalent to capital cities in latecomer democratic countries chose the path towards democratic development belatedly after having experienced colonization have broken the law of order and become disproportionally bloated demonstrates that state-directed growth of primate cities is an important factor behind population density in the capital area. M. Jefferson, 1939. The Law of the Primate City, *Geographical Review*, p. 29.

5) Jun-man Kang, in his book *The Provinces Are a Colony* (2008), describes the unequal relations between Seoul and the provinces, while Tae-yeon Hwang in *Internal Colony and Resistant Regionalism* (1997)analyzes the relations between the center and the provinces. In particular, he compares the relationship between the center and the Honam region, which was dominated by the hegemonial power of the Yeongnam region, to that of colonialism.

Gramsci, in his paper dealing with issues in Southern Italy ("Some Aspects of the Southern Question", 1926)[6] described the region as an internal colony exploited by Northern Italy. This term, which had been used more or less as a vague rhetorical expression, was solidified theoretically by M. Hechter who saw that not only were marginal areas subordinate to the core (central) area economically, but the core area deliberately regulated the distribution of social positions. This blocked off the regional residents' access to higher positions in what Hechter described as "cultural division of labor," and this was behind the formation of an internal colonial relationship between the core and the periphery.[7] While the existing colonialism operates not only on a political and economic gap, but also on a cultural, vertical division of labor of the center and the periphery based on differences in ethnicity or language, the mechanism for internal colonialism is replaced by dialects or specific customs (culture) of each region. In other words, internal colonialism misleads us into thinking that the economic inferiority of the provinces comes from the individual and cultural characteristics of people living in the provinces, reducing all locals collectively to "losers" and making them feelanxious to speak the standard language awkwardly to avoid attention and envy from the central culture (Seoul).

From the perspective of political economy, which seeks the

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6) A. Gramsci, 1994. "Some Aspects of the Southern Question", in R. Bellamy (ed.), *Pre-Prison Writings*, Cambridge University Press.

7) M. Hechter, 1975. *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development,* 1536-1966, Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 36.

cause of uneven growth in the principles inherent in capitalism, it is an inevitable conclusion from capitalism itself, which pursues excess profit and capital accumulation, and cannot be easily addressed with state-directed policy intervention alone. Inequality is like fetters that cannot be removed under capitalism, which characterizes a society with competition and accumulation. Policy intervention for balanced development leads to reduced profit rates from the homogenization of production conditions, which are considered as a process towards a capital accumulation crisis.[8] Therefore, the remedy for spatial bipolarization of the center-local should come from introspection on the centralism of modernity. We all know that a strong mechanism for centralization and identification was at work in the process of modernity's institutionalization with its center placed on a nation-state. In other words, during the process of making the public have the same identity through political, economical, and cultural processes, diverse minority values were either won over and included or excluded. Reason, subjects, men, machines, and competition became the central principles of modernity, whereas senses, objects, women, human beings, and cooperation became secondary considerations.

Then, is there a way to address this spatial disparity between the center and the local? When social inequality spreads over to a physical space, a new social relationship can be formed inversely by reading and interpreting the alignment of the (physical) space

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8) D. Harvey, 2006. *The Limits to Capital*, New York: Verso Books, p.390.

in a different way. In other words, those in the subordinate space (the local) possess their own space exclusively and interpret it in a new way, instead of envying the superordinate space (the center) and engaging in fierce competition. Cultural capital is not necessarily associated with operas or classical music only; hip-hop and jazz can also become cultural capital. Winning the capitalist competition and making a lot of money do not necessarily translate to a happy life. One may lead a truly happy life through an alternative way of living by focusing on nature and people. Capital and population are concentrated in the capital area, but ecological resources are scattered all over the local regions. The problem comes not only from spatial inequality, but also from the way of assigning hierarchical meaning to such inequality and possessing it exclusively, even in the psychological and cultural aspects. Introspection must be made regarding this phenomenon.

Like this, the local in the Korean society is suffering more than any other place. A center is not a pre-determined location and where there is suffering should be the center. That said, to diagnose and resolve the realities of the local in Korean society, the issue needs to be dealt with in adiscourse system that can communicate to the rest of the world. This study's agenda, "Locality and Humanities", starts from a critical mind that recognizes the realities faced by the locals of the Korean society, and is an academic attempt at pursuing a universal discourse system that breaks away from the centralism of modernity.

Thesis 2. "Local" and "Locality" are sort of a new naming strategy

Although the agenda started from recognizing the realities faced by the locals of Korean society, it takes a new naming strategy involving local and locality. In terms of etymology, local is derived from the Latin word "locus" which means "a place," and the Late Latin word "localis" meaning "belonging to a place." Its antonym is "global." In other words, local can be defined as a place or a space in a narrower sense, as a part belonging to global (whole). In this case, just what is local is relative. That is, depending on what is determined as global changes the unit of local. If the world is seen as global, a nation or a region can be local, but in a nation-state, a province would typically be local. Therefore, local can be considered a relative, topological concept whose scale varies depending on what is defined as global.

In Korea, local is often translated into the Korean word "*jibang* (province)", which is interchangeable with "*jiyeok* (area)." The two words mostly represent a lower political or administrative unit under a nation such as a local government and local autonomy, and even when they are used in local (regional) history or local (regional) literature, it often means "a local domain that lies in the substructure of a national unit." In addition, local sometimes means "provincial" in contrast to the capital (Seoul). In Korean society where the divide between the metropolitan area and the provinces is extremely severe as a result of state-directed, fast

modernization, the term "provinces," in contrast to the capital area, is widely used across various fields. In general, the term "area" is mainly used as a value-neutral concept that represents a substructural unit of a nation, whereas the term "provincial" is more often used as a hierarchical concept that denotes peripheral areas as opposed to the center or the capital. However, such usage is not generalized and the terms are used differently depending on a given academic discipline.

To clarify, "local" in the agenda (L&H) research has a closer meaning to "provincial" as a hierarchical concept. This is because the research's critical awareness comes from the peripheral nature of "local" as opposed to the central nature of a country. However, the research also encompasses a value-neutral concept, for it does not overlook the fact that "local" in itself serves as a place where spatiality, identity, and diversity are manifested. Therefore, in order to avoid the prejudice that may originate from the use of existing terminology such as "province" and "area," and to bridge the difference in interpreting fixed terms by each different academic field, this research intends to use the phonetic translation of "local" and "locality" into Korean after defining the two English terms clearly. That is, "local" and "locality" are not simple translations of their English counterparts, but rather new concepts that cannot be replaced with an existing term like "province" or "area." In other words, it is a new naming strategy.

For local or locality to become a naming strategy, the strategic significance of using such terms must be fully explained first.

First, if we pay attention to the topological concept of local (as in "global vs local"), or its *füranderes*(for other) concept, local can have several strata depending on how the whole (global) is configured. In a global context, a nation and a region can be considered local, and if a nation-state is seen as a whole, its cities as part of the substructure are local. In this case, the object is expanded to a concept that cannot be dealt with the existing terms of province or area. Next, if we pay attention to its meaning of "peripheral" as opposed to "central," in addition to a narrow area as a substructure of the whole, local can have another "*füranderes*" meaning of "central vs local." In this case, the term local can include various critical minds involving province in a hierarchical sense. And if we pay attention to its etymology of "a place" or "belonging to a place," the term local may mean a place where a variety of spatiality is manifested. Like this, the term local is a new concept that starts from the "*fürsich*"(for self) meaningsimilar toplaceness originating from the original attribute of the place for human lives. The term local then embraces the "*füranderes*" meaning similar toprovinciality as a peripheral attribute in contrast to the center, and to locality as a narrow attribute as a part of the whole.

The *fürsich* meaning of placeness and the *füranderes* meaning of provinciality or locality contained in local are not irrelevant to the historic experience of local in reality. In other words, it originated from a word that means a place, existed as an independent segment prior to modern times, and became a hierarchical

concept won over by modernity. The term now has a meaning of postmodernity wanting to overcome modern values. In this historical flow lie all attributes of placeness, provinciality and locality, but which attributes are highlighted depends on a given time and situation.

As mentioned above, the agenda starts from understanding the poor realities faced by local in Korean society. It is believed that such realities are not a result of simple institutional or policy decisions, but are outcomes of hierarchical central-local relations contained in modernity. This is another reason why naming is required for local. That is, we need to contemplate the issue of "local" in relation to introspection on modernity in general, rather than looking at it in a narrow scope of institution or policy. This is in order to depart from "local" that is won over and ruled out by the centralistic principles of modernity and to seek a new relationship formed between the whole and its part. This means that a new naming strategy is needed to start from specific realities faced by local in the Korean society and then to establish a discourse on building a new, universal relationship between a national (the center)–local (periphery).

"로컬리티" in Korean is used as a phonetic translation of English word, "locality." Locality in the English-speaking world is used as a noun form of "local" and means "a small area of a country, a city, etc.". Therefore, it is often used in policies and research that involve a city as a unit, and it sometimes means regionality or placeness. Here, regionality refers to unique

characteristics that only exist in a specific region or are found among people of that particular region.[9] Unlike this usage in the English-speaking world, in non-English speaking countries like Korea or Japan, the adjective "local," or "로컬" in Korean or "ローカル" in Japanese, is often used as a noun referring to a specific region or an area, whereas the noun form "locality," or "로컬리티" in Korean or "ローカリティ" in Japanese, is frequently used to denote "regionality" or "provincial characteristics," meaning attributes of a specific region or area.

Locality presumed in this study primarily refers to values or attributes of a specific "local (region)." Furthermore, if we pay attention to how such values and attributes are formed and what characteristics they have, locality can be defined as "a collective whole of a local as a place of living and diverse relations being created through the historical experience of people residing in that locale. It is a highly fluid, multilayered, and value-oriented concept."

In the academic realm, the concept of locality was studied more in social science fields such as geography, sociology, and political science, rather than in humanities. However, because different scholars have different definitions of this concept depending on which aspects they focus on, be it political economy, spatial variability, place identity, and cultural context among others, it is almost impossible to have a general definition of it.

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9) D. Gregory, R. Johnston, S. Whitmore, G. Pratt, and M. Watts, 2009. *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, Wiley-Blackwell, p. 425.

From an academic perspective, what triggered the debates on the concept of locality was a series of research projects on locality that were carried out in the UK in the 1980s. These studies were performed due to the need to understand spatial variability and role change faced by regions amidst the rapid socioeconomic restructuring process over the 1970s and the 1980s. That is, it was necessary to respond to spatial variability resulting from socioeconomic changes by focusing on a unit of locality as a substructure of a country, rather than in a national or global dimension.[10] P. Cooke, who led this research at the time, remarked, "While locality is an attractive concept in terms of geographical research, it is improper to give it a strict and accurate definition,"[11] and J. Urry who was in the same research group argued that "The concept of locality has at least ten different meanings, and different scholars use the same concept in different ways,"[12] indicating that the concept was defined in several different ways, even within the research group.

Some forms of typology can be helpful in understanding the meaning of locality. If we understand locality as values or attributes a specific local possesses, locality can be formalized as "locality in a substratalmeaning" as an inherent attribute originating from locality itself and as "locality in a hierarchical meaning" as

10) S. Duncan and M. Savage, 1991. New Perspectives on the Locality Debate, *Environment and Planning A*, 23(2), p. 155.
11) P. Cooke, 1989. *Localities: The Changing Face of Urban Britain*, London: Unwin Hyman, p. 274.
12) J. Urry, 1987. Society, Space, and Locality, *Environment and Planning D*, 5, p. 441.

an attribute manifested by modernity won over by a hierarchical structure. First, "locality in a substratalmeaning" is associated with the localness of a "specific local" demarcated by time and space, or a kind of unique regionality or placeness. Here, questions like what characteristics are there for a specific local to be distinguished from other locals, how are such characteristics formed, and what does it mean for the lives of people residing therein to hold significance. In order to address problems faced by "local", it is particularly crucial for a local to manifest its substratal values such as diversity, placeness, and identity, which have been distorted or erased by the uniformity, non-placeness, and power that were created by the (nation) centralism of modern times.

Next, locality in a hierarchical meaning is relevant to the realistic attributes of local which have been reduced to a marginalized concept by the (nation) centralism of modern times. In other words, local in reality can be easily downgraded to a symbol of defeat and inferiority by a forced hierarchy with its innate substratal attributes restrained or immanent. Here, locality manifests its attributes like sensitivity, underdevelopment, speciality, irrationality, and women in contrast to such values as reason, development, universality, rationality, and men.

If one must clarify, regional characteristics and placeness are associated with the former attributes, while provinciality and peripheral characteristics are associated with the latter attributes. Understandably, such formalization is just an arbitrary classification,

and in most cases, such attributes emerge in a complex manner. However, the study aims to classify them to help understand the concept of locality better. One purpose of this study would be to remove locality from a hierarchical meaning and move it to a newly manifest locality in a substratalmeaning. One must note that the concept of locality is defined in the West with little emphasis on locality in a hierarchical meaning such as provinciality or its peripheral nature. This is because in the West, there is a strong tendency to understand locality as a concept representing a relatively smaller unit in terms of scale, rather than as a concept that refers to a province as opposed to the center (the metropolitan area), or within the context of a power relationship of dominance and subordination. However, locality in a hierarchical meaning can have substantial use in a situation where hierarchy and disparity between the center and the provinces, as seen in the Korean society, are causing serious problems.

Furthermore, if one pays attention to a local as a place of living and to interactions of people residing therein, one can discover that its attributes as a physical and social space influence people's perception and their way of thinking. In other words, the center-oriented thinking that rules out and suppresses "difference and the minority" under the logic of "the sameness and the majority" is what links the spatial dichotomy of "center-periphery" with "center-peripheral recognition" in perceiving majority vs minority, self vs other, universals vs particulars, institution vs everyday life, and uniformity vs diversity. This aspect can be formalized as

a "locality in an abstract meaning," whose attributes are peripheral values that had been ruled out and suppressed by the center-oriented principles of modernity such as minority, otherness, particularism, everyday life, and diversity. The naming strategy behind locality is also significant in that it can encompass such a diverse agenda that cannot be easily handled with existing terms like a region or an area.

Thesis 3. Locality is multilayered, relational, and fluid

Once the significance of locality as a naming strategy is defined as above, questions like "What exactly is this locality?" and "What characteristics does it have?" are bound to be raised. Just what is locality? Locality, in the ontological aspect, is something intuitive that makes a specific local what it is supposed to be. In this case, research on locality will be about finding something that already exists. However, if we pay attention to the locality's characteristics, research on it is not confined to finding something ontological only. As explained above, if locality is defined as "a summation of various relationships that are created through historical experience of people living in locale as a life space," it has multilayered, relational, and fluid characteristics. In order to approach this relational and fluid locality, a constructive approach is required. In other words, how locality is formed and changed at a specific point of time in a specific space becomes important.

In order to formalize multilayered, relational, and fluid locality in a systematic manner and to interpret it in-depth, a certain form of classification is required. Modern academic disciplines can be seen as a kind of categorization, but the agenda attempts to fluid categorize by centering on components of locality to overcome the boundaries between different disciplines. What are the components of locality? Using previous discussions as a reference, its major components are as follows: (1) natural environmental elements of a specific region, (2) temperament or mentality of people residing in that region, (3) shared historical experience or memory, (4) language as a means of communication or relationships, and (5) institutions or customs that reveal social relations or way of living. While such categorization may seem, admittedly, rather arbitrary, most will agree with such categorization nonetheless. Based on this, we infer five sub-categories as follows: (1) thinking from people's temperament or mentality, (2) time from shared experience and memory, (3) space from natural environmental elements, (4) representation from the language as a means of communication or relationships, and (5) culture from institutions or customs. In other words, locality consists of five components – thinking, time, space, representation, and culture – as five sub-categories that are distinguished from one another but overlapping at the same time. These five sub-categories can be explained in greater detail as follows:

First, thinking (1) refers to the human being's intellectual

activity and ideas. One human being's thinking cannot be isolated from his or her place of residence or social relationships that he or she is in. This is because, from an epistemological perspective, all things exist in time and space, and are recognized through a spatiotemporal experience. Therefore, human thinkingaddsa certain uniqueness to each locale.

Because locality has a variety of time (2) accumulated in it, it is very important to interpret locality's characteristics from time to time. Research on locality focuses not on the chronological history on a single line, but on multiple lines including "spatialized time." Even today, just as time in a rural area is felt differently from that in a city, there were slow time and fast time in the past. This memory of time is history, and history is politics of memory as it can be altered based on the memory's owner and the perspective it was written from. The research on locality aims to contemplate on local history instead of national history, and to decipher differentiated postmodern time instead of homogenized modern time.

Since the study on locality is a way of reasoning with particular attention to space, there will be no dispute for having space (3) as a component of locality. However, space at this time is not a geometric, homogenized one, but is a differentiated space defined primarily with natural conditions. Depending on natural conditions, the way of human life therein, as well as even locality, is bound to change. Spatial research involving locality explores the relationship between postmodern, decentralized spatiality, and locality by

dealing with urban space as the main object. That is, the study aims to decipher the pluralism, autonomy, and complexity of postmodern cities through a critical approach to centralism, power, and marketability, and to pursue an alternative space where the dichotomous boundaries such as center-periphery, subject-other, and men-women are broken down.

Culture (4) is a collective lifestyle of human beings, and thus, human beings are the main agents of it. The reason why the research on locality pays attention to culture is because it is the most important component of locality and is tied to the exploration of human beings. Culture is not something given to human beings, but is created through their lives, and as such, it cannot be separated from a specific time and space in which human lives are taking place. In particular, we are paying attention to local culture in order to clearly reveal the suppressive nature of cultural power dynamics demarcated by modern time and space in the form of the center vs the local and to reflect on it. In other words, we intend to shed light on diverse sub-cultural groups that had been ruled out and suppressed during the process of establishing modern nation-states, and to discover most-modern values such as the alterity or minority.

Representation (5) can be included in culture, but we made it a separate category because it played an important part in forming a modern locality. Representation questions how reality is accepted and reconstituted by senses like perception. The image created through representation exerts a stronger power in

human perception than reality, and this nature is more prominent in modern times when the media is growing exponentially. Language, in particular, is not only a medium of communication, but is an important tool for representation. Therefore, in our research on the representation of locality, we aim to shed light on how representation was realized through various media, including language, as the main pillar of locality during the process of migration from modern times to postmodern times and what characteristics it possesses.

The aforementioned five categories do not have the same scope or status, and their ideas may overlap with one another. Notwithstanding this, the study went ahead with the categorization because it is meaningful to have a new categorization beyond the existing disciplinary boundaries that can be used to better interpret the multilayered, relational, and fluid characteristics of locality while facilitating interdisciplinary and comprehensive research on locality. The extraction or classification of the locality's components, regardless of its result, cannot be free from criticism for being too arbitrary. However, such categorization is sufficiently significant as long as it is inclusive of every single element that affects locality and is helpful in deciphering multilayered and fluid localities.

Thesis 4. The agenda (L&H) seeks postmodern values and an alternative possibility of locality

Locality that is multilayered, relational, and fluid takes different aspects depending on internal and external power dynamics working at a specific period in a specific situation. That is, among the locality's attributes, proactively manifested values may differ from potential values. At the risk of oversimplification, modern locality, seized by the nation's center-oriented principles of modernity, has been mostly represented as a top-down process of localization characterized by suppression, uniformity, and periphery, whereas exploring alternative locality as resistance to modern locality, which reveals the values of diversity, minorities, and everyday life in a bottom-up process of localization, can become another purpose of the research on locality. This is where the agenda research is greatly indebted to so-called postmodern discourses involving deconstructionism, critical theory, and decolonization theory, among others.

The postmodern discourses serve as an important interface for research on locality as they attempt to critically break up the centralism of modern times in various aspects. Based on the fact that local is a "*füranderes*" concept against global or national, the research on locality extends to the dissolution of centrality based on postmodern centrifugal forces. On the other hand, given that postmodern discourses are spontaneous discourses of criticism of the West, they are different from the research on locality that takes place in the nonwestern world, and even within local circumstances. Such differences hold productive significance in that they seek nonwestern exactness of postmodern discourses

and further serve as an opportunity for solidarity with postmodern discourses and the research on locality.

Like this, the agenda sharesa substantial part of the postmodern discourses originating from introspection on modernity. This is because locality takes an important position in the postmodern discourses that refuse the master narrative of totality that absorbs and consolidates every difference, every heterogeneous element among others, and every center-oriented logic of modernity based on that narrative, while arguing for the restoration of values suppressed therein (such as difference, alterity, minority, placeness). However, postmodern discourses cannot substitute for the research on locality, and the research on locality does not deal with all concerns of the postmodern discourses either. Therefore, we must be cautious about connecting locality or local values directly with postmodern values or placing values on locality indiscriminately just because it is in opposition with modernity. Furthermore, for the agenda research to be evaluated not as a side branch related to postmodern discourses but as a viable, alternative paradigm, investigation into new research perspectives, purposes, research approaches, and interpretations must continue.

When we look at postmodern spatial transformation represented by the simultaneous progression of globalization and localization from the perspective of local space, what kind of interpretation and predictions can be made? This is to sound out the possibility

of local space as an alternative.[13] If we are to pay attention to local space as an alternative to modern space symbolized by national space, we can find a few possibilities: 1) space of decentralization and participation in contrast to space of centralism and representative systems; 2) space of everyday life and governance as opposed to institutions and government; 3) space of placeness and resistance identity in contrast to space of inclusion and exclusion.[14] More specifically, as nation-centric representative democracy is facing a crisis in terms of its legitimacy and functionality, alternative forms of democracy (such as participatory democracy, associative democracy, and deliberative democracy) are being proposed to overcome this challenge. These proposed forms are closely related to local space in the aspect of spatial scale. In addition, an alternative potential of local space can be further identified from the fact that it also serves as a primary foundation for life politics as a postmodern political principle or governance as an integrated control system across nation-market-civil society. Furthermore, local space's potential as a postmodern space seeking decentralization and deconstruction can be confirmed from the fact that it is characterized by openness, hybridity, and place identity, as opposed to national space, which

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13) With regards to this, A. Scott emphasizes that local serves as a basic framework for a new kind of a social community, as well as a new approach towards practical issues involving civil rights and democracy. A. Scott, 1998. *Regions and the World Economy: The Coming Shape of Global Production, Competition and Political Order*, Oxford, U. P., p. 11.

14) For more on this, see Sang-bong Lee, 2010. A Study on the Possibility of the Local Space as a Alternative Public Space, *The Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences 26*, pp.16-38.

is characterized by internal identity and external exclusiveness, as well as by imagined identity through a mechanism of inclusion and exclusion.

For local space to become an alternative, it must be based on introspection of modernity. Considering this, local space not only has a difference in terms of scale, but it also has some other principle at work that is different from that of national space. For instance, local space is a living space where sensitivity is at work, in contrast to national space, which is a space of rationality. Here, communication based on "empathy" takes place rather than communication based on rational discussions, as argued for by J. Habermas. Local is a concrete place of living, and living requires various forms of collaboration. In other words, the essence of a living space is not the scale or proximity of that space, but the kind of interactions that take place therein, and the kind of relationships and meanings that are formed through such interactions.

However, the living space in reality is also a multilayered space. This is a space where everyday activities centering on residence are taking place and is also an end unit where systems of rules and markets of a national scale are at work. Therefore, a living space is the only place where all problems ranging from those related to residence to those involving social systems exist in a multilayered manner, and it is also the place where a social issue becomes public for the first time. However, if we focus on its aspect as a living space, we can discover "interval" spaces such as an alley, a vacant lot, and *sarangbangmoim* (gatherings among

people with shared interests) that could not have been found in a national publicness before. Unlike a national space where a public space is in confrontation with a private space, local space hints at a possibility to serve as a third space that mediates the public and private spaces.

The recent interest in local, which is commonly expressed as "localization," has two implications. The first implication is an interest in local as a distribution of national power. It means a discussion on decentralization, which has been raised as the principle of modern national centralism revealed its limitations. This discussion on decentralization is linked to postmodern discourses, and does not stop at merely supplementing nation centralism, but goes on to seek a new political principle or alternative order. Here, the statement that local space can become a possible alternative means it can offer a new perspective and paradigm. The second implication is about localization associated with the flow of neoliberal globalization. Here, local faces two aspects – one is a crisis and the other is a possibility – at once. Local, which has come out of a fence that is a nation, and is now directly facing the tension of globalization, is quite likely to be reterritorialized to suit the capital's taste by being newly won over by a much stronger logic of global capitalism. On the other hand, local space may become a basis for resistance identity because it entails space identity, autonomy, and uniqueness, which are in competition with the fluidity and homogeneity pursued by globalization. This is because localization will gain support from civil societal

realms and will continue to solidify the civil societal realms based on democracy, provided that the driving force behind globalization is capital and if that driving force works to further strengthen market functions.[15]

Thesis 5. The agenda(H&L) pays attention to restructuring of modern space and boundaries based on local or trans-locality

Postmodernistic reterritorialization of space, commonly expressed as "glocalization," brought about a huge transformation in the modernistic perception of space that centered on nation states. Globalization is nothing new, but the so-called neoliberal globalization since the 1990s was notably different from the one before in terms of the volume of capital and information exchange and its speed. This proliferation of supranational flows and expansion of neoliberal market areas drastically reduced the roles played by a nation, while serving as an opportunity to seek a new spatial unit that would replace the national space. In particular, as localization, in which decisions or actions to address everyday problems are made in a living space, is taking place at the same time as globalization, a nation state is no longer recognized as an exclusive unit of space. In other words, the unit of space is becoming increasingly

15) Lee Sang-bong, op. cit, p. 40.

multilayered and networked.[16]

As reterritorialization continues, the existing boundary that separated the public space from the private space is becoming increasingly blurry as well. On the one hand, public power intervenes in a private space like a household and includes it as a part of public space, while on the other hand, inexorable infiltration by the private space into what was considered as a typical public space, such as roads, parks, health, and welfare, is taking place at the same time. In addition, in terms of scale, weakening of the existing nation space may lead to anticipation for a global space surpassing a nation or a local space as a substructure of a nation. Here, as opposed to a global space that requires a response at a supranational level to an issue like environmental crisis, a local space can be created at a much smaller and closer unit, or through practice in a living space.

One of the main characteristics of postmodernistic reterritorialization of space is translocality, which represents an important change in meaning in two aspects – the border and unit. While "trans" here means a new way of "reflecting on the border" or "crossing the border," locality as a unit refers to a multilayered restructuring of space scale in accordance with the relativization of a nation state.

First, in the aspect of the border, the modern nation state system was founded on the border that demarcated a nation's domain. A border revealed its meaning as a kind of a "barrier"

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16) For more details, see Sang-Bong Lee, 2008. A Study on the Postmodernistic Reterritorialization of Space and Local Locality, *Han'gukMinjokMunhwa*, No.40, Korean Studies Institute of Pusan National University, pp.18-20.

rather strongly in that it could not be crossed over easily, and as a line that was drawn between homogeneity (the subject) and exclusivity (the other). Also, when something was closer to a border or farther away from the center, it was considered marginal. Therefore, a border was the periphery. However, globalization has made the movements of commodities and people crossing over this border increase and expand, thereby giving an opportunity to perceive it in a new light and assign a new meaning to it. In other words, border was now considered a "pathway," rather than a "barrier," and the border area was considered as an "exchange zone," rather than the "periphery," and this has led to various new interpretations and ways of rethinking about it.

The prefix "trans,"[17] which is used to interpret new phenomena such as cross-border and hybridization that cannot be properly explained with modernity's dichotomous division of boundary alone, reveals the meaning of restructuring postmodern borders very well. That is, aggressive investigation and appropriation call for a reconsideration of the roles and meanings of borders. In space composition based on territoriality such as a nation state, the border that divides a territory's inside and outside is an element of great importance. That said, considering that "trans" is a term used to capture the flow of commodities and human

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17) The prefix "trans" means "the takeoff point from modernity's exteriority, that is, from what modernity excluded, denied, ignored as 'insignificant,' 'senseless,' 'barbarous,' as a 'nonculture,' an 'unknown opaque alt-reality', but at the same time evaluated as 'savage', 'uncivilized', 'underdeveloped', 'inferior', and so on." E. Dussel, 2002. World System and 'Trans'-Modernity, *Nepantla: Views from South* 3(2), p. 234.

beings over the border of a nation state and to assign a meaning to it, the diffusion of "trans" situations can be interpreted as leading to the incapacitation of the border. Then, does "trans" pursue a breakup of the border in the end? Not necessarily so. The answer can be found by imagining how space will be composed anew once a border is broken down. This is because a breakup without an alternative is bound to result in disorder and irresponsibility. Therefore, the issues involving the border, including the positive meaning of it, must be dealt with more caution. Strictly speaking, what "trans" situations aim to weaken or remove is an exclusive border built by a nation state, not the border itself. What needs to be broken down is the exclusive, dichotomous border of a nation state, and this border must be restructured to allow for the crossing, negotiation, and advent of new hybridism. In other words, the border is something that can be restructured rather than broken down.

Then, what is the restructuring of border implied in the term "trans"? The restructuring of border can be interpreted as something that brings about "quality" changes and "scale" changes of the border at once. First, quality change of the border means weakening or removal of the border's characteristic as "an obstacle," or its exclusivity. In other words, while a border exists as a territorial section divided by various differences, it should be a border in a so-called "network" that allows different territories to cross over one another. Network is a concept that emphasizes connectivity and relationality. An exclusive border plays the role

of a "filter" that homogenizes or rules out differences that go across the border, but the border in a network allows for possible hybridity to be created when such differences cross over each other. In addition, a network serves to bind actors with a territory based on the new territory and its boundary.

From the aspect of a unit, "glocalization" is a basic unit constituting the world and serves as an opportunity to relativize the exclusiveness of a nation state as a self-contained political community. Globalization and localization entail the so-called deterritorialization, either by going over the boundary of a nation state or by creating a new space inside a nation state. The national space, which used to be a sole unit of space composition, has become a mere element constituting a plural and multilayered space along with a global space and a local space. Furthermore, relativization of this nation state accompanies an important change not only in the aspect of space composition, but also in terms of research methodology. In other words, this offers an opportunity to depart from the quagmire of "methodological nationalism", which has been the main focus of research in humanities and social sciences since modern times.

The significance of space restructuring based on "glocalization" can be better understood not only in the plural and multilayered compositions of various units, but also in the relationship of such units, or their way of building new relationships. The multilayer scales described in a new space composition is established based on the premise of relative autonomy between scales and

acknowledgement of irreconcilable, unique differences. In other words, each scale must possess their own respective characteristics and meanings without one scale absorbing or forcing itself on another scale. That is, the modern space composition was formed based on the uniqueness and autonomy of a national space, whereas in the new space composition, global and local spaces possess a scale-related value and meaning that cannot be replaced by a national space. Indeed, the global scale and national scale both offer a relatively useful analytical framework in the territories of economy and environment for the former, and in the territories of politics and military security, whereas for the local scale, its territories are culture or everyday practices. As excellently pointed out by P.J. Taylor, this is because global, nation state, and local scales have affinity towards real, ideological, and experienced values, respectively.[18]

Along with the autonomy and originality of each scale, another element that revealed relational characteristics of the new space composition is the network. Network is a term denoting that each territory (or actor) is connected in a flexible and open relationship with one another, rather than in a mutually hierarchical or fixed relationship. There is no center in a network but only nodes. Therefore, a network system does not require any central authority. Here, in a local-centric network system where the basic unit of node is comprised of a local, the "*ansich*"

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18) P. J. Taylor, 1982. A Materialist Framework for Political Geography, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 7, pp.15-34.

relationship is formed between a single local and other globally ubiquitous locals. In other words, the nation state as a medium to connect local to global is no longer important. This is because all locals on a network are directly connected to a global network through nodes and can also contribute to achieving the goal of the network. What is notable here is that, while modern space composition was formed based on the nation state as a major unit, the new space composition consisting of networks has a local space as a important unit of nodes. This is because the local space has characteristics required by nodes in the network. Since the 1990s, research on a network using local as a unit has appeared, and one representative research involved a new interest in the actor-network theory. Now, a local space is no longer a closed and fixated space, but is newly constituted within a network where spaces of varying scales are in relationships with one another in a multilayered manner.[19]

In network space composition, each node unit is characterized by being open and relational. In other words, a unit space as a major active space for actors in the era of globalization hovers between the global scale and the local scale, and connectivity and relational topology have greater significance than the geographical proximity of space. Moreover, the node unit should be sufficiently autonomous so that it is distinguished from other units, but neither included nor excluded by them. Such a unit space is deeply

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19) J. Murdoch, 1996. The Spatialization of Politics: Local and National Actor-Spaces in Environmental Conflict, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 20(3).

related to placeness or place identity. Local space is suitable as the unit space of a network, since it is an empirical and practical space where social relationships are formed through everyday life of people, where production relationships become concrete, and where the production, distribution, and consumption of identity are taking place. In the era of globalization, the formation of place identity, to counter the space of flow in which homogeneity is being diffused, is increasingly leaning toward a local space where everyday life is taking place. Here, local space has a meaning of "a space where the subject is being called." In other words, in a new network-based space composition, a local space is no longer an administrative substructure or a terminal territory to which public services are supplied. Rather, it should be recognized as a relatively autonomous and completed unit space where subjective lives are being formed. Amidst the flow of globalization, one attempt at reshuffling our lives by centering on our space of everyday life is none other than "localization from below." Local is also a node unit and the actual field where such global network relationships are being formed.

Globalization is often mentioned as two possibilities with respect to changes in space composition. One possibility is where homogenization of space resulting from globalization spreads over the border of a nation state, while the other possibility is that the force behind the diffusion of space homogenization intensely adheres to varying local spaces, leading to a new perception about diversity and differences, or to an interest in

the space of difference or its multilayered nature. Like this, changes in the space composition resulting from globalization leads to a new perception about space, that is "spatial turn." Now, space exists not as a simple, homogenous space, but as a "relational space" (J. Urry). Perceiving a space as relational means that emphasis is placed on both the materiality and hybridity of that space, and that it is gazed upon not as something given, but as a performative process that is generated.[20] Another significance represented by the spatial turn is that such a perspective enables richer and more accurate interpretation of various postmodern aspects. This is the same reason why we must pay attention to "trans" and "locality", that is, reconsideration of the border and changes of the unit.

Thesis 6. The agenda(L&H) aims to open a new horizon for research on humanities by pursuing interdisciplinary research and praxis

The agenda's diagnosis of humanities and humanists in Korea is that they are facing a crisis. The space in humanist-led discourses thus far has failed to gain empathy from ordinary people, and merely stopped at being discourse for discourses' sake. Moreover, excessive segmentation resulting from the modern

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20) J. Urry, 2007. *Mobilities*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

academic system has made interdisciplinary communication rigid, and adherence to purism or contemplation has worked against humanities' contribution to the society or creation of demands. As such, the agenda criticizes the reality in which the humanities, originating from the introspection of human beings and their lives, has failed to address the realities of local as a space of living for human beings or to answer questions about local people, and seeks an alternative. One such alternative is to share awareness about problems facing the local space with local people who live in the same time and space, as well as to perform humanistic prescription and to put it into practice. In other words, agenda research pays attention to the reality of the "here and now," and advocates praxis which turns humanistic spirits into social objects.

   Locality is a product of a complex relationship among a variety of components. Therefore, research on locality should be performed in a multidisciplinary and comprehensive manner across various academic disciplines. It is also a reflection on and differentiation from existing research in the humanities or regional studies that had been carried out in a sporadic and piecemeal way within a framework of academic disciplines. In particular, the agenda stresses introspection on humanities research which has so far neglected intervention in pressing issues of locality or practice, while also emphasizing interdisciplinary research in a broad range of academic fields, including not only several disciplines within the humanities, but also social sciences

and engineering, among others. This is because a proper diagnosis of the human life and a prescription to remedy any problem will be possible when the pursuit of value or rich imagination inherent in the humanities are combined with the practical strategies and analytical capabilities of social sciences, as well as the practicality of engineering.

We intend to develop the agenda into a paradigm and eventually into an academic system, known as localitology. However, that does not mean that research on locality is something completely new. Rather, it is an attempt at building on the outcomes of prior research on regions or provinces to form a new, autonomous and differentiated system of meaning. Here, to realize the new system of meaning, or to find the meaning of locality as a space of autonomous and dynamic living, a new perspective on local or the world is required. In this regard, locality is a new unit of analysis and a critical position, and it further denotes a new perspective that starts from that position. It is a critical and alternative discourse that starts from recognizing the problems faced by local realities full of contradictions and aims to change such realities. In particular, a humanistic approach towards locality should go beyond simply explaining actual relationship (*de facto*) surrounding the local realities and should pay attention to a fundamental human life and rights (*de jure*) involved. Locality originates from the right to live humanly, and this means that an autonomous life is led within local as a place of living.

In order to establish localitology as an academic system, a

theoretical system should be built first to put together various yet sporadic studies on locality and to formalize such research based on it. In this sense, localitology must include a metatheory about locality. In other words, in addition to our contemplation on the ultimate meaning of locality research, research direction and new research methodologies, which are relevant concepts that are being used in various disciplines to mean several different things, must be consolidated and redefined to allow such concepts to be shared. For instance, such reorganization should start from redefining concepts like placeness, spatiality, and diversity, to include various other concepts that are being used in each academic discipline in association with local research such as local culture, local literature, and local politics for conceptual consolidation.

At the same time, localitology should play a role as praxis that proposes an alternative to various realistic issues involving local by performing a diagnosis and socializing the spirit of the humanities. Local in reality faces several different problems such as backwardness, lethargy, an inferiority complex, cultural disparity, and inequality of opportunity, which is the result from the center-oriented thinking of modernity. It also faces confusion of identity as a result of an overlap of globalization and multi-cultural clashes when one's identity (localness) is nowhere to be found. When many of these pressing issues are caused by modernity's centralistic (nation-centric) way of thinking, any remedy for and any alternative to such problems should be related

to postmodern values such as the peripherallity, diversity, everyday life, depowering, and hybridity. These values can be seen as inherent values of locality in contrast to nationality. In this regard, a humanistic solution to the issues faced by local can be obtained from discovering inherent values of local and by accumulating such values. Having said that, one must take caution not to automatically regard values of periphery in the same light as progressive and humane values. Local capital cannot be evaluated as progressive just because it stands against the capital of the center or the capital of the globe. Like this, a critical view for distinguishing and manifesting progressive and humane values inherent in locality and its peripheral nature should be maintained at all times. This is because locality in reality not only presents the possibility of progress and communication, but it is also bound by peripheral and conflicting elements that originated all the way from modern or, in fact, from pre-modern times.

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