NEW THEORETICAL BASIS OF THE POLITICS OF MULTICULTURALISM: VANDANA SHIVA'S CONTRIBUTION

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Abstract- As world politics and global communities experience anomaly-type of political and cultural transformation, especially as consequences of the abrupt wind of change in the past USSR and the mystery of 9/11, we have been encountering crucial responsibility to bring our politics of multiculturalism to the better track. This paper is a preliminary endeavor to reconstruct the new epistemological basis of political science coined by Vandana Shiva, i.e. earth democracy and to highlight potential theory of the politics of multiculturalism.

Key Words: Theory, politics of multiculturalism, Vandana Shiva's earth democracy.

I. INTRODUCTION

This international conference provides great opportunities to have the politics of multiculturalism revisited since we have been facing problems of several practices of multiculturalism. With respect to British-pioneering position in developing the politics of multiculturalisms in advanced nations across Europe and the U.S., we now days find that either theories or practices in this respect to a greater extent have not been satisfactory. This, it seems, is caused by ethno-centric bias of the idea of multiculturalism towards inclination of "superior" White race sociologically and of centric position of dominant groups politically—causing the ideals of co-existence and respect of varied culture distorted. Atke (1079) called our social science has been imperialistic in nature. In the mean time, we have noticed some bad practices of the politics of multiculturalism as by product of both its theoretical concepts and practices.

In terms of democracy, the politics of multiculturalisms has been referred to supremacy of human race over other being especially earth and of secular-libertarian democracy that undermines possible styles or system of democracy that eventually brings about the democracy of "we" who are secular liberal groups and "they" who are not. In addition, as a long-term consequence of tension and subsequent separation of politics and religion, contemporary (secular) idea of tolerance has turned out to be intolerant: secularists are much inclined to being intolerant towards adherents of devout followers of a religion in the West. Thanks to the empathy that has been initiated and developed by varied segments of "Western" communities to the promotion of multiculturalism; however, such credits would be more fruitful if we could improve and modify theoretical concepts related to the politics of multiculturalisms.

One significant contribution to the above point, I think, is the less bias conception of earth democracy developed by well-known environmentalist activist Vandana Shiva. In contrast to non-existence of theoretical basis for diversity of ethnicity and culture in current idea of multiculturalism, Shiva's principle concepts do have its basis of acceptance of diversity cultures and respect their virtues. While Shiva's earth democracy has frequently been associated with the school of thought of Third World eco-feminism—a category that has misled the real discourse, it is in fact not "regionalized" perspective. ED is, I think, of great contribution to providing discourse on social science for reconstructing new theoretical concepts and developing new paradigm that is necessary to bring our current civilization to the right course. It is true that some others of theorists of eco-feminism, environmentalism and green politics in general also promote similar ideas; however, Shiva's basis of bio-diversity would includes accepting diversity in Man and Culture, and more importantly—with Shiva's coining the earth as the family of man—accepting the interconnectedness of human race democracy and democracy for the earth. As a consequence, we are encouraged to adopt real politics of multiculturalism whereby no knowledge is dominating over other forms of knowledge; no democracy is dominating other forms of politics of democracy; and no economy is dominating other modes of economic system.

II. CONTEMPORARY THEORY AND POLITICS OF MULTICULTURALISM: A BRIEF REVIEW

Contemporary theory and politics of multiculturalism can in fact be traced from among others Madood's list of subjects of his course in multiculturalism. As was in the past, the area was multiculturalism and public policy, now days it is the theory and politics of multiculturalism. Madood in his course has covered themes of theory and politics of multiculturalism as follows: (1) multiculturalism as public policy philosophy; (2) liberalism and multiculturalism; (3) critics of liberalism; (4) gender and multiculturalism; (5) the policy-management of immigration and ethnic diversity; (6) politics of representation of ethnic minorities in Europe; (7) education and and ethnic groups; (8) economic diversity and disadvantage; (9) multiculturalism in crises. And of the two levels of paradigm—the epistemic level and the social forces—we can begin the latter one.

In the social facts, Meer should be right in saying that in Britain—as Antonius reviewed Meer's work (2011)—there has been a shift from the category of "race" to the one of "religion" in the social facts of multiculturalism. Antonius in

his review wrote, "…where religion seems to have replaced race and ethnicity as a 'legitimate' category of political mobilization, at least for Muslims". However, we have to consider larger sociological factors contributing to formation of religious consciousness in present day multiculturalism. The evolutionary pace of discourse and practice of the politics of multiculturalism, for example, in Britain, has been well-presented among others by Ben Pitcher. His book *The Politics of Multiculturalism: Race and Racism in Contemporary Britain* was reviewed by Michael Key (2011). In the epistemic level in brief, Kannawitter (2003) from Claremont Institute has traced the past philosophy of multiculturalism and finds some key inherent weaknesses—theoretical concept of multiculturalism comes from "monoculture", i.e. Western philosophy so it is open for question whether the theory is really "multicultural", and observes that "for the past hundred years, Western philosophy has been self-destructive". The philosophy has changed its role by a mere exit strategy for incapability to search for the objective truth as resembled in Darwinism (in biology), Freudianism in psychology and Marxism in economics. Under such circumstances, theoretical conception of multiculturalism is in danger.

III.   EARTH DEMOCRACY'S CONTRIBUTION

In terms of ontology, Earth Democracy (ED) is spiritual-bound in which reality is both what are empirically verifiable and beyond empirical in positivist sense. Its epistemology rests on a holistic perspectives, taking into consideration politics of meaning within a given culture context—in contrast to positivism in social science. This brings with it theoretical conception of politics that is culture-bound—incorporating religious and spiritual "truth" and reality (compared to the idea of separation of religion from politics). *Demos* in its conventional term has the notion of member of society in a given political system; human-race that no clear conception as to how human society relates with nature.   People's sovereignty in the conventional conception gives free room to act upon, say, the earth, whereas in earth democracy, the sovereignty is nature-bound.

In her "The Living Democracy Movement: Alternative to the Bankruptcy of Globalization", Shiva explains that living democracy is a concept aimed at providing alternative to—as Shiva calls—the bankruptcy of globalization, whose main task is "to reclaim our freedoms and the freedoms of our fellow beings….The living democracy movement embodies two indivisibilities and continuum. The first is the continuum of freedom for all life on earth….The second is the continuum between and indivisibility of justice, peace, and sustainability…." Taking back the sovereignty to community as mentioned in earlier paragraph assumes Shiva's idea that state should be reinvented: "Reinvention of sovereignty has to be based on reinvention of state so that the state is made accountable to the people".   In gender-sensitivity, ED is affirmative towards women: scholars such as Brinker is right when elaborating on Shiva's feminist theory—a theory that Shiva calls "political" or "subsistence" eco-feminism, "to differentiate it from the more spiritually focused on eco-feminism popular in the Western countries (although since the WTO protests of 1999 and the events of September 11, 2001, Western eco-feminism has become equally politically aware)" (Brinker, 2009;3)

Shiva's rationality is different from that of Western atomistic rationality. What Shiva conveys is the one once termed by Weber as substantive rationality (Kalberg, 1980; 1151-1155)—borrowing from Max Weber's concepts of rationality, Shiva denies only practical rationality being the paramount drive in one's life or the life a culture; this type of rationality is inclined to practical fulfilling of human needs and wants. What Shiva prefers is in Weber's term, substantive rationality—in which people include non-human needs and wants factors into consideration in reasoning. It is something like value-and-culture-bound rationality.

In the downstream of ED principle, it deals with the politics of development that implies ED's approach to the politics of multiculturalism. New social science is called for whose view includes accepting local living economies—and for the third world nations it implies that nations coming from Africa, or Asia, or Latin America need to demystify their belief that they must catch up on development; this point really reflects ED's respect of diversity and guarantees Man-Earth sustainability—the two areas of multiculturalism in cultural sphere and economy.

In the context of contemporary world politics, Shiva's earth democracy is presenting possible ways to cater for inherent problems within existing world politics that is catastrophic as described by McGrew (in Baylis, 2008, 15). After defining globalization, McGrew wrote, "This process, however, is highly uneven such that far from bringing about a more cooperative world it generates powerful sources of friction, conflict, and fragmentation." Similar worry is also expressed by Russett and Starr (1985, 584-575) whose description of current world change listed such problems as population, food, scarcity of food and unmet demands, depletion of natural resources, pollution, interdependence and equity, conflict and threat of war. Russett and Starr then ended up their book by indicating the relevance of state and more important also the crucial role that individuals can play in the effort to promote liberty and peace. The following recommendation by Russett and Starr does indicate that we need a new philosophy and new beliefs about the way live and interact: "Changes in our conceptions of our interest (including other people in a larger way or long-term way) will make a difference. New social and political structures can be created to channel individual self-interest into collective benefits." As for, environmental and population issues, Kegley, Jr's and Raymond, after listing such categories as (1) the eco-politics of energy, (2) the eco-politics of the atmosphere, (3) the eco-politics of land and water, wrote "Prospects for a New World Order", with a list of seven (7) questions to discuss it. Without any prescription, the two writer made a summary mentioning difficulty forecasting such a prospect given the dynamics of change and of configuration of global trends, also, stating that "social scientist cannot predict the global future with absolute certainty because world politics is a complex mix of chance and human choice" (Kergley & Raymond, 2010; 404).

To sum up, earth democracy has really given light and justification to the emergence of culture-context democracies that have been flourishing, with little burden of adopting or importing other version from other culture. This culture-context is based on the very idea of diversity in culture generated out of ED's fundamental philosophy of bio-diversity in which it is argued that not only are plants

and animals have intrinsic rights of diversity but also man and its cultures.

With regards to various complex problems that include protracted conflicts I feel that one great cause has been the weak basis of the theory of the politics of multiculturalism. Therefore, we require such conception of diversity of culture and new lifestyle that secure the earth—from which we can start improving our contemporary politics of multiculturalism; Shiva's earth democracy can greatly contribute to making the impossible possible. Seen from democratic perspective, Shiva's earth democracy provides a real room for diversified democracy—one thing that seems difficult to take place under many other "conventional" democratic theories. ED more fundamentally provides a real room for "preserving" (while at the same "modernizing") indigenous knowledge that has rights to develop their own diversity in reproduction of knowledge for further development of "living economies"—the thing that is badly needed to humanize present mode of "globalization.

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