

DEMOCRACY FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE:

Democratic Ideas and Institutional Frameworks

That Support Environmental Governance

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1. Multi-level Environmental Governance Aimed at Sustainable Development

Against the backdrop of a global economy, that fuels the unsustainable use of natural resources and exacerbates the growing disparity between the global north and the global south, ‘sustainable development’ has come to be touted as one of the most important standards around the world for guiding public policy design, and has also come to enjoy far reaching public acceptance. As is usually the case with public values such as freedom, equality, justice, and public interest, however, there seems to exist a wide gap in understanding among commentators as to how to define the connotation of sustainable development. Despite the often heated debates that have unfolded regarding whether certain policies and measures contribute to sustainable development, or possibly due to the heated nature of these debates, the concept of sustainable development has slowly gained acceptance as a guiding principle for public policy. A practical consequence of this is that all actors that do not want to be branded as ‘acting against the public good’ –not only the government, industry, and trade unions but also political parties, special interest groups, and NGOs and NPOs — have been forced to demonstrate that their actions are justifiable under the banner of sustainable development or, at the very least, that their activities do not hinder sustainable development.

If we subscribe to the idea that we need to achieve sustainable development, then it becomes important to examine with surgical precision the problems brought about by the economic mechanisms standing in the way of this goal — in particular globalization — and to draw up plans to counteract these influences. In the meantime, it is also important to foster strong ‘environmental governance’ (systems and frameworks for managing a number of specific environmental problems) and it goes without saying that this must be implemented in a manner compatible with the special requirements of environmental problems. To begin with, environmental governance must be designed in a multi-level

fashion, correspondent to the multi-leveled reality of environmental problems. As a rule, this “multi-leveled” aspect refers mainly to the unique features that various environmental problems exhibit at the global, regional, national, and local levels of governance; but at the same time, it also refers to the way in which these levels are mutually-related to each other and constitute an overarching system when considered in the aggregate. Let’s take, for example, the pressing problem of global warming, which is without doubt a global environmental problem today in the sense that the sum total of humanity cannot escape its effects. Having said this however, the effects that each person feels as a consequence of global warming are by no means uniform or one-dimensional. Even though we may agree that all of humanity is implicated, and that action cannot be delayed for even a moment longer, estimations regarding the nature and severity of the problem will vary from country to country and from region to region.

It’s worth noting that while global warming seems like a serious problem to be reckoned with for a number of south pacific island countries facing rising sea levels threatening to submerge them, for countries like Russia, whose cold north will enjoy a longer growing season, it is not without some advantages. In fact, in the short run, it is likely that some will even see it as a blessing. What we can glean from this is that for any given problem, it is necessary for each area to pursue and implement solutions appropriate to the concerns and difficulties of the local citizenry. In concert with this, various solutions specific to various regions need to be integrated and fine-tuned to achieve a synergistic effect. If, for example, we are to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide, the central cause of global warming, we need a variety of counter-measures implemented at various levels in order to achieve this significant mutually-beneficial goal. Regional environmental problems such as acid rain and desertification both illustrate this point. It is also true with national, even with very specific and localized environmental problems. It seems extremely unlikely today, when local economies have become integrally linked to national and global economies due to the quasi-borderless quality that people, products, and capital display, that local societies will be able to effectively tackle with such localized environmental problems through hard work and creativity alone. This then, is the reason why we urgently await the establishment of multi-level environmental governance.

A second necessary feature of environmental governance that can contribute to sustainable development is the ability to deal with the complexity of environmental problems. This complexity stems from the fact that various environmental problems have tightly interwoven and often reciprocating effects that, if taken on the whole, form a clearly discernible problem area. And in actuality, there are few people who would claim that the great diversity of environmental problems such as global warming, depletion of the ozone layer, desertification, extinction of endangered species, rising sea temperatures, environmental hormones, soil pollution, and pollution of waterways, etc. are

completely separate and unrelated. Thus, for researchers and others working closely with specific environmental problems, apart from a highly specialized knowledge regarding the problems they themselves are working on, it is also necessary for them to have a high degree of literacy regarding a number of other problems that are cross-linked by a network of relationships. They require penetrating insight to be able to view all of these apparently separate environmental problems as one overarching problem area; what we commonly refer to as having a ‘holistic perspective’. Along with this is needed a mechanism for facilitating collaboration between experts from various fields and a method to promote collectives of their shared knowledge and experience. This is because we can anticipate that the response taken to deal with a given problem will have some effect — perhaps negative, perhaps positive, but nonetheless impossible to ignore — on the efficacy of the approaches being taken to deal with a host of other problems.

A third requirement for establishing good environmental governance is recognizing that environmental protection is not always the ultimate societal value. It must sometimes be sacrificed when it collides with other equally vital public values. And therefore, the resulting calculation about “how much to sacrifice” constitutes an indispensable component of systemic thinking regarding environmental problems. Environmental governance is expected to exert an influence on other types of governance that don’t necessarily hold environmental protection as their primary goal but instead may aim to promoting a great diversity of other public values such as maintaining economic growth, ensuring minimum standards for health and access to culture, protection of public safety and peace, alleviating economic disparities, and ensuring civil and political freedom. At the same time however, this effect is reciprocal, and environmental governance can expect to be influenced to varying degrees and from different directions by these other types of governance. In other words, it’s expected that this approach will have the greatest practical chance for improving the efficacy of environmental protection efforts in relation to various other types of governing principles that aim for the implementation or promotion of a number of equally important public values. There is not much hope for environmental governance that is immune to systemic thinking, and completely indifferent to the opportunity costs of environmental protection. And, as the old saying goes, haste makes waste. Therefore, for the majority of cases, in order to achieve sustainable development in the long run it may be preferable to steadily stockpile relatively modest environmental projects that tend to integrate more easily with other types of governance — and thus have a greater probability of being successful — rather than attempting to push through radical but technically possible grand environmental projects.

It is sometimes asserted that there exists an undeniable affinity or correlation between democracy and prosperity. Similarly, it is claimed that we can draw a relationship between sustainable development as a norm for public policy, and democracy as a political philosophy and political system.

The correlation to be found between sustainable development and democracy, however, is by no means strong or direct. There exists a gap between them that cannot be ignored. Democracy doesn't necessarily guarantee sustainable development, likewise, nor is it an indispensable precondition of sustainable development. On the contrary, in some cases these two concepts may actually be at odds with one another. So what kind of democracy is compatible with the goal of sustainable development? How is it possible to overcome the apparent democratic 'pathology' of myopic public policy decisions that ultimately hamper sustainable development being made one after another under a system of democracy? In this paper, I hope to flesh out these concerns by examining the question, "from what angle should we approach a number of interrelated and relevant problems at the core of the concepts of sustainable, multi-level environmental governance?"

2. Democracy and Moral Responsibility for Future Generations

Due to the rapid development of science and technology in the 20th century, particularly since the end of World War II, humanity now wields extraordinary power. Indeed, since the birth of mankind — or more strictly speaking, since the rise of agricultural societies — man has grappled with nature; and through his persistent toil (*techne*), managed to construct an advanced civilization. However, these actions merely brought about a temporary disturbance at the periphery of nature. They did not subject the environment to lethal and irreversible damage. At least, that is how it had been up until the realization of the era of modernization, urbanization, and industrialization. But now, the situation has changed. Nature is no longer an object of fear and reverence. Rather, it has fallen to the sad state of being looked upon as something to be tamed, exploited, made the most use of, and transformed at our will. Even human nature itself has come to be considered as an object for re-engineering. In fact, we, all of mankind, have procured for ourselves the destructive power to transform earth into a cold ruins, a place where life cannot persist²⁾.

Thus, our current generation holds in their hands the reigns of power over life and death for future generations; and, as things stand now, it is no exaggeration to say that the well-being of future generations rests solely on our good faith towards them. No matter how future generations may suffer at our hands, they have no means by which to raise an outcry against it. This is because they are powerless in any way, other than in a rhetorical sense, to influence neither our choices nor decisions of our actions. Thus the current generation and future generations are in an extremely unfair relationship; wherein lies the ultimate rationale for an ethics of responsibility for future generations.

In recent years, the phrase "responsibility to future generations" has become firmly established in our vocabulary. It is no longer used exclusively by philosophers, ethicists, and public policy

researchers; on the contrary, even practitioners of politics, managers of companies, and labor union representatives appear to be voluntarily taking up the cause. As a matter of fact, in recent years such bold claims as follows that used to be very popular just a few decades ago became rarely heard:

While it may be true that a number of resources are being exhausted, species are being driven to extinction, and the quality of the environment is in decline, these negative aspects are more than compensated for by the wealth of knowledge and material comforts that we have cultivated and accumulated. In the sense that the wealth and wisdom of the previous generations are passed down, future generations are, relatively speaking, in a remarkably favorable position. And if then, they are free to apply this advantage, future generations should be able to deal more effectively with a number of difficult problems that they are faced with, and, as a result, enjoy a richer, more pleasant, and more culturally fulfilling existence. If there is in fact a responsibility for future generations, it is mainly to attempt to further advance science and technology.

While the phrase ‘responsibility for future generations’ has thus become firmly established in our vocabulary, by no means can we say that we have yet faithfully translated this into a ‘viable ethic’ that amounts to more than mere words. Frankly speaking, it is extremely unclear to what degree an ethics of responsibility for future generations has thus far been achieved. Nor is it clear to what degree it has been embodied in government policy that is adopted in parliament and enforced and managed by the government either directly through government agencies or possibly indirectly through private industry and NPOs/NGOs.

As is commonly known, there is a great diversity of interests that political actors attempt to push forward in the political arena. Under democracy however, organization and politicization of interests tend to plague the process, resulting in an escalation in political maneuverings and in more intense checks and balances among organizations. As a result, when organizations find themselves engaged in not a one-shot game but rather an iterated game, they will eventually come to learn that, in the long run, their best interests are served by keeping their selfish demands reasonably in check. This is the process that Charles E. Lindblom terms ‘partisan mutual adjustment’; and the more smoothly this process works, the more certain it is that attempts at domination and flagrant abuses by privileged interests (pressure groups) will come to see significant decreases.

When more and more citizens become aware of and informed about political initiatives, and the more they come to participate actively in the political process through various political associations — that is, the more democracy matures — , the more politicians endowed with the formal authority to make policy will come to fear accusations of being ‘unfair’. They hope to avoid to the best of their

ability being labeled as a politician in the pocket of special interests. Inevitably then, they will try to strike some kind of compromise to meet the demands of mutually-conflicting parties. Of course, while this in itself is not problematic, careful attention must be paid to the way in which this balance is achieved. By far, the easiest way for politicians to accomplish this is to secure maximum returns for their client groups whom they rely on for financial backing and votes on the one hand, and to give the ‘leftovers’ to non-client groups, all while at the same time charming as many ‘mass’ voters as possible with excessive lip-service on the other. Political actors in democratic states can hardly ignore the fact that support from the electorate, or rather, ‘popularity’ is the ultimate basis for legitimizing their power, and when they deem it feasible, the vast majority of politicians will regularly resort to exploiting this tactic.

However, a direct consequence of this is that public expenditures tend to be grossly inflated. Its harm will not be so desperately overwhelming, as long as voters and politicians cling to the overarching principle of ‘making the main beneficiaries of public policy pay the lions-share of the cost’ (making the present generation deriving the most benefit pick up the bill for the policies and not shifting the cost to future generations). Nevertheless, if this constraint should be reduced to the status of a false pledge, democracy unceremoniously lapses into ‘interest group liberalism’ (Theodor Lowi) or ‘bargaining democracy’ (F.A. Hayek), resulting in ‘myopic’ tendencies that may lead us down a path to self-destruction. Democracy is not necessarily in agreement with sustainable development and it is unclear whether democracy can overcome its myopic tendencies. To begin with, is it even possible for democratic philosophies and institutions to come to terms with an ethics of responsibility for future generations, and if so, how can this be accomplished?

German philosopher Hans Jonas (1903-1993), whose ideas even now continue to be a beacon of inspiration for environmental theorists and practitioners, was of an opinion that while no other system of government compares to democracy, it is difficult to rest our hopes on the outcomes of democratic politics. He was skeptical about the compatibility of the politics of democracy with the ethics of responsibility to future generations:

According to those principles and procedures [of representative government], only *present* interests make themselves heard and felt, and enforce their consideration. It is to them that public agencies are accountable, and this is the way in which concretely the respecting of rights comes about (as distinct from their abstract acknowledgement). But the *future* is not represented; it is not a force that can throw its weight into the scales. The nonexistence has no lobby, and the unborn are powerless. Thus accountability to them has no political reality behind it in present decision-makings, and when they can make their complaint, then we, the culprits, will no longer be there.

This raises to an ultimate pitch the old question of the power of the wise, or the force of ideas not allied to self-interest, in the body of politic. What force shall represent the future in the present? ³⁾

In the similar vein, an American philosopher Thomas H. Thompson argued, referring to a well-known economist Robert L. Heilbroner, that:

If God is not there to instruct me, to reward me, or to punish me, why should I regard those faceless, potential beings as my ‘neighbors’? ... But if they [futurist preachers] cannot command the righteous wrath of God, what have the futurist preachers to offer in its place? What avenging Furies will pursue me or mine if I continue to follow my present policy of short-term personal prudence? Surely their offerings are stones instead of bread. ... Jesus could at least offer the lawyer the prospect of eternal life if he changed his ways and became a new man. If I were to change mine, the futurist preacher cannot promise me that my future “neighbors” will survive eternally. Much less can he promise me that *I* will. So, why should I be moral? ... Only an authoritarian government enforcing a monastic community will stem the tide. For he [Heilbroner] argues (in a Hobbesian vein) that we are all so short-sighted and so selfish that we must trade off freedom for survival. Not our own survival but the survival of our kind in the future.Neither traditional religion, capitalism, not socialism can save us.⁴⁾

On a side note, one consequence of the great leaps in science and technology that have granted extraordinary power to humanity since world war II, in the last several decades in particular, is that life and society as we know it are undergoing momentous change. What’s more, the speed of these transformations is steadily increasing and, as a consequence, inter-generational communication has been thrown into a desperate state of confusion. We can understand this point intuitively if we think back to ten odd years earlier in Japan when the terms ‘shin-jinrui’ (which roughly translates as ‘the new breed’ in English) and ‘kaseki’ (or simply, ‘the fossils’) became buzzwords to describe the growing gap in consciousness between generations. Thus, while the more and more remote we feel about the past, the less and less certain we are able to feel about the future. People in such a situation — not just those approaching the end of life but also those with many years remaining — tend to reach the point where they live for what they feel to be the only certain moment, that is, for the ‘present’. It has become extremely difficult not only for the young but for almost all of us to carry on life in accordance with a solid long range life plan. In *The Uncommitted: The Alienated Youth in American Society* (Harcourt Brace & World, 1960), Kenneth Keniston refers to the idea of ‘present worship’ — or rather, the philosophy of living a more enjoyable and fulfilling life by focusing every

fiber of your being on the ‘present moment’ — which he claims has taken hold of present day youth.

However, just because you can achieve more enjoyment and fulfillment in the ‘present moment’, does not necessarily mean that your enjoyment is ‘real’. Although we may pursue our pleasures with un-tempered zeal, in the present separated from both the past and future, the majority of modern people are left flat, never being able to truly enjoy all of their passions. In the depths of their hearts, they are tormented by inexpressible feelings of emptiness and fatigue. Modern day people, and urban dwellers in particular, tend to show surprising interest in circumstances surrounding them, or at the very least, tend to poke their nose into matters to see what’s going on from time to time. Nevertheless, their apparent concern is nothing more than an elaborate facade. Once this skin-deep concern is stripped away, there in the depths lurks a cold-hearted soul; indifferent, emotionless, and lacking passion for almost everything. They have fallen into a state that can only be described as apathy (a-pathos), and are unable to make a move. For this type of modern day people, although they may outwardly express concern for politics, in the majority of cases this is just a way to temporarily escape their inner feelings of emptiness and boredom, and reflects merely the desire to find something interesting with which to pass the time. For a social-psychological standpoint then, politics in contemporary democratic society must, to one degree or another, succumb to what is commonly referred to as ‘theater politics’.

As neither Ruth Benedict, the author of *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, nor Hasting Center bioethicist Daniel Callahan hesitate to point out, traditionally the Japanese have placed importance on the ethics of *on* (恩), which is a concept akin to, but not identical with, the Western notion of obligation. This ethics implies that from our obligation to the past stems our obligation to the future. According to Benedict, “devoted care of one’s children is a return on one’s parents when one was oneself helpless. One makes past payment on *on* to one’s parents by giving equally good or better rearing to one’s children. The obligations one has to one’s children are merely subsumed under *on* to one’s parents”⁵⁾. Additionally, people were taught that it was important to avoid acts that result in “eternal shame” at any cost; and it is this teaching that acted as a guide for daily life and from time to time was used to adjudicate important decisions. The pace of change was slow and due mainly to the fact that society was “stagnant”, it is likely that they simply accepted on faith that the ancestors and descendants were “there among them”. And, always feeling the “watchful eyes” of their forebears upon them, people were able to moderate their actions. For the transitory (present-worshipping) modern day person, who suffers in the grips of apathy, this situation must seem quaint. Today, people can no longer count on an either ethics of *on* or ethics of eternal shame.

Under democracy, the political awareness (political preference) of the average citizen ultimately determines in what direction political society should move. Therefore, if we imagine that the majority

of citizens take on a present-orientated cult mentality in their role as voters, it follows that, realistically speaking, they are sure to support measures that attempt to improve present conditions (the assurance of a richer and more pleasant life) at a cost to future generations. What can be done to avoid arriving at this rather grave state of affairs?

3. Democratic Myopia and the Public Mind

As I have shown in the preceding arguments, it is no simple task to embed an ethical responsibility for future generations in real public policy by way of the democratic political system and the political process because democracy does not intrinsically hold the promise of sustainable development. Under democracy, the loudest tend to profit and those who do not fight for their rights or (as is the case with future generations) those who have no means to fight, are liable to be mistreated. Even with such apparent defects of democracy, does it follow that democracy is unnecessary for sustainable development, or undemocratic (authoritarian) political systems may become preferable to a democratic political system for achieving sustainable development?

Well known biologist Garret Hardin, who coined and promoted the phrase ‘tragedy of commons’, publicly expresses his sympathy for authoritarian political systems. In a prosperous society, it is possible that the economic interests of future generations may be protected by the altruistic acts of citizens. Because they can afford to do so, a great number of citizens would likely to focus on the circumstances of generations to come and wish for them the same standard of living that they themselves enjoy. However, we cannot expect this kind of altruism in desperately poor societies. In desperately poor societies, people can’t be said to undertake altruistic acts ‘voluntarily’, and even when they undertake them ‘willingly’, in almost every case, it is the result of some type of institutional incentives. There is then, a legitimate concern that if we attempt to enforce democratic ideals (the curtailment of privilege and status) in this type of society, it may actually harm future generations. Therefore, to assure the well-being of future generations, it may be necessary to recognize a small circle of privileged actors. Surely the existence of a privileged post, one that could derive personal gain by protecting the wealth of future generations from the impoverished of today would make it possible to allow for the consideration of the interest of future generations⁶⁾.

Generally speaking, for developed countries that have already achieved a series of mutually-related processes of industrialization, urbanization, and democratization like America, Japan, and a number of European countries, it makes no sense to construct a frame that tries to make across-the-board comparisons between democratic political systems and authoritarian political systems. At the very least all of these countries have established a series of basic democratic philosophies and mechanisms such

as constitutionalism, multi-party systems, fair and regular elections, freedom of the press, freedom of association, and freedom of expression and speech. The hands of the clock cannot be turned back, nor should we attempt to do so. What these countries should question, and what makes more sense in the first place is not which of the two mutually-conflicting political systems, a democratic system and an authoritarian system, should be adopted; but rather, how we can monitor for and correct for the myopia of democracy; in other words, how we can decrease the possibilities of such decisions that conflict with the long-term interest of society being adopted and implemented through legitimate democratic channels.

This leads us to the question, should something be done to remedy to some extent the myopia of democracy? And, is it even possible to do so? It may sound somewhat paradoxical but the first thing that must be done is to fully explore the possibility of making democracy more substantive and engaging. Specifically, attempts need to be made to remove to the greatest extent possible factors that may inhibit the proper functioning of the mechanisms of partisan mutual adjustment; and the number of opportunities for citizen participation in the policy process needs to be expanded. To this end, there is a need to promote a chain of systemic reforms that will result in more checks on the myopia of democracy such as:

- (1) more transparency in policy-making and implementation processes
- (2) better disclosure of information
- (3) strengthening of democratic control (accountability) over government institutions
- (4) a need to promote involvement (participation) in the policy process
- (5) a need to review the rules of deliberative proceedings (in order to stimulate policy deliberation in the parliament, and improve overall quality)
- (6) stressing the significance of promoting citizenship education in the form of teaching people the ABC's, so to speak, of democracy
- (7) promoting the decentralization of authority based on the 'subsidiary principle'
- (8) a need to correct for situations where economic disparity leads to disparities in political power

From the outset we need to set in motion a process for partisan mutual adjustment; just because we have expanded citizen involvement in the process of evaluating or enforcing policy, and in making decisions critical to political society, does not necessarily mean that we have expanded the possibility for the adoption and implementation of public policy that is far-sighted (that would contribute to sustainable development). On the contrary, we are likely to only see the negative consequences in the short-term. Nevertheless, to the degree that we don't actively participate in that process, its true nature

will remain unknown to us, making it impossible to impact that process in any way. Nor will we be able to reflect individual preferences in policy choices and decisions. Under a democratic political system, only through active participation in democratic politics and the policy process can we acquire the know-how — or rather, the knowledge, ability and virtue expected of citizens in a democratic society — to reform the circumstances of political society in accordance with democratic rule. In addition, through participation we will come to sense the importance of the concept of mutual coexistence and integration with ‘others’ who may have different interests and values than ourselves, and gradually come to accept all people as members of society.

If we feel we should subdue the myopic tendencies inherent in democracy then; secondly, we need to pursue every opportunity to ‘condition’ the political preferences of citizens to make people more public-minded. To the degree that we combine a number of policies with that aim, we can expect the previously mentioned “chain of systemic reforms aimed at making democracy more substantive and engaging” to play a more hopeful role. People’s political preferences are not fixed; they do and can be changed. If the preferences of the average citizen become the embodiment of an ethics of responsibility for future generations, and accordingly if central political ‘agents’ such as journalists, bureaucrats, and politicians opt to, or are forced, to change their political preferences, then, under a system of democracy grounded in the democratic political processes, we will rapidly increase the potential for the adoption and implementation of public policy that contributes to sustainable development.

Of course, given that there is probably no stronger incentive than self-interest, it is no simple matter to change people’s preferences in the direction of altruism and public-mindedness. And while it is true that simply one act or incident may greatly impact people’s preferences, leading to a dramatic change in public opinion, such is rarely the case. And with this in mind, the most important thing designers need to bear in mind when designing institutions and policies is that, for the time being, people’s current sense of self-interest is fixed, or more precisely, its change is in general decisively slow. In other words, a system needs to be designed that will make the best use of the result of each person acting based on their current self-interest to bring about the desired social outcome.

Nonetheless, there is also a problem with such a design strategy that attempts to make the ‘public use of private interests’ (Charles Schultz). To begin with, the calculation regarding what level of citizens’ ‘self-centeredness’ (egoism) to assume when designing a policy or an institution is by no means a simple one. Even when applying the familiar political measures of taxation and subsidy, if you miscalculate the degree of citizens’ self-centeredness when you decide these amounts (if the average citizen is more self-centered than would be expected) there is the danger that the original intent of the policy will not be realized because there are a considerable number of citizens who don’t react in the

way that the government expected. Inversely, if you try to avoid that situation, you may end up sweetening the pot too much (with excessively generous tax deductions and subsidies) and, despite accomplishing the immediate task at hand, in the long run, far from bolstering citizens' sense of civic duty, it would likely lead to the fostering of self-centeredness and state-dependence mentality. If we give in to our sweet-tooth, our sense of sweetness will gradually be dulled, resulting in the need for more and more sugar. Eventually we will come to the point where only a sickeningly sweet candy will satisfy our craving.

In line with the (somewhat stereotypical) slogan 'from government to governance' which expresses the idea of a 'co-operative society', the ranks of people engaged in systems and policy design have begun to swell. Now, not only politicians and bureaucrats, but also a number of other actors have come to be involved in the process of 'public governance' for co-operatively managing public affairs; and while those who hope to be an effective institutional and policy designer are advised to make the full use of the tactic of appealing to the self-interest of citizens and voters, at the same time, they also need to research how to refine people's sense of self-interest and discover to what degree different incentives are effective in achieving that goal. As long as people hang on to their current preferences, we can anticipate that a number of serious problems that Japan and the world now face — starting with the problem of global warming — are unlikely to be even mitigated. The existence of a great number of citizens who will, willingly or grudgingly, accept the kind of policy that is undoubtedly desirable for the society as a whole in the long-run, but is unlikely to lend to their own well-being, often causing drawbacks, inconveniences, and unfavorable circumstances — this is an indispensable precondition to establish the multi-level environmental governance for achieving sustainable development.

In correcting the myopia of democracy, the role of public interest groups that find their mission in realizing or expanding the kind of interests to be differentiated from sheer private/special interests is decisively large. The same thing can also be said about lobbyists for public interest groups and for minority groups with relatively small voices, who naturally try to break into political careers as a 'political entrepreneur'. It also goes without saying that it is necessary to stimulate policy debate among citizens. As we actively participate in public forums that do not allow us to justify policy measures from the point of view of sheer self-interest, we will be better able to put our self-interest in perspective; any policy assertion needs to be justifiable from a societal or public point of view in public forums, whatever its main motivating factor might be for each person. Hence the vital need to foster and strengthen the 'public mind', roughly a disposition to willingly participate in co-operative societal endeavors to resolve public affairs; and we must always pursue this as one of the most important guiding principles for institutional and policy design.

Thus far, I have argued that correcting the myopia of democracy is an indispensable prerequisite for establishing multi-level governance and sustainable development; and, to this end, that we should press forward in accordance with the internal logic of democracy itself — namely, by making democracy more substantial and engaging. In addition, I have also argued that we should do so by endeavoring to foster and strengthen the public-mind of central political actors and of the average citizen — in this context, through an ethics of responsibility for future generations. However, even this still is not enough. Beyond correcting for the myopic tendencies of democracy by making democracy more substantive and engaging, and beyond establishing sustainable multi-level environmental governance, what is further required is self-restraint mechanism built in to democracy itself, which is likely to decrease the possibility of democracy degenerating into ‘tyranny of the majority’. To accomplish this, presumably, there are two closely related measures that we need to examine.

The first is to reserve untouchable ‘holy ground’ immune to the process of partisan mutual adjustment. There are many things in the world that are too precious (priceless) to be easily changed by a simple majority rule, among which are, to mention just a few, the constitutional guarantee of human rights, budget balance as a constitutional principle (put out by Buchanan and et al.), and independent judiciary. As Professor Yehezkel Dror of Hebrew University of Jerusalem emphasized in his keynote speech for the *International Symposium on Democracy for a Sustainable Future* (held at Kyoto University, 18~20 May, 2007), for democracy to work it requires non-democratic elements:

Some main assumptions and ideas of contemporary democracy have to be revised, including the distrust of unelected elitist bodies and the delusion that being elected is enough to qualify a person to take part in making critical future-shaping choices. Let me start with the need to set up a ‘quality’, and therefore non-representative, second chamber with significant but secondary powers. This proposal is based on the principle that for democracy to work it requires strong non-democratic elements, as illustrated by independent courts and career civil servants. To strengthen the political weight of long-term perspectives and the quality of political discourse, a non-elected second “high-quality” chamber is needed. This chamber should have the power to discuss all political issues, initiate legislation and policy proposals, and delay action by the elected chamber.

Another self-restraint mechanism that democracy presently requires is related to the fact that, although modern western society has incorporated some elements of direct democracy characteristic of ancient Athenian ‘*democratia*’, it has been wise enough to adopt indirect or representative democracy. Democracy is by no means a vehicle for negating power and leadership. No, on the contrary, we must

ask ourselves the following questions: How many [highly talented public figures acting in the spheres of politics, bureaucracy, business, academia, and journalism, as well as in a number of other groups in the civic sector such as NPOs/NGOs/think-tanks; or possibly moving between these sectors with the aim of demonstrating leadership in public affairs] have we fostered in society? To what degree is their expertise as a policy professional superior to other political actors? To what degree are they respected in society and how much authority are they granted as a policy professional? And, what kind of leadership do they demonstrate in the public forum? The success or failure of both democracy and environmental governance aimed at sustainable development depends on the answer to these questions. In this sense, what I cannot stress enough is the urgent need to develop and enhance graduate programs in public policy that aim to foster such highly talented policy professionals as public figures, thereby servicing 'policy market'.

Notes

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- 2) cf. Hans Jonas, *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age*, The University of California Press, 1984, p. ix.
- 3) Jonas, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
- 4) Thomas H. Thompson, 'Are We Obligated to Future Others?' in Ernest Patridge (ed.), *Responsibilities to Future Generations: Environmental Ethics*, Prometheus Books, 1981. p.200.
- 5) Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, Charles E. Tuttle, 1946, p.102.
- 6) cf. Garrett Hardin, "Who cares for Posterity?" in Ernest Patridge (ed.), *Responsibilities to Future Generations*, Prometheus Books, 1981.