Reform vs. Public Choice framework has long been a primary pattern for the debate on Organization of Government in Metropolitan Areas (OGMA). As one of the significant theoretical issues in contemporary Public Administration, the framework has reached at the state of intellectual impasse in that there seemed no decisive winner between the two camps[1]. In order to break this unenterprising balance, the article tries to reconstruct a theoretical conflation, a conceptual logic embedded in the conventional dichotomy. Moreover the result can help us start to imagine a system-like functioning of polycentric arrangement of local polities within a metropolitan region.

I. Problem of Conflation in the Theoretical Framework


\[ C = S \] (1)

However, this implication is difficult to hold if there exists a kind of cost born by citizens but never easily accounted as a production cost. In order to distinguish this particular type of cost from all others, Tiebout replaces citizen with ‘consumer–voter’[5]. If it is almost impossible, even arbitrarily, to include this specific kind of cost born by consumer–voters in the list of production costs, but at the same time, if it is more or less possible to conceive a certain type of cost as a central point of his notion of ‘voting–with–your–feet’, we are confronted with a formidable challenge as long as we want to derive scale implication of cost. This is so because, in Tiebout, there is no contiguity between unit of production and unit of consumption, which play a major role in buttressing the notion of scale pushed by polycentric counterpart. When we have to maintain the central notion of cost approach, production scale of public good determined by cost of citizenship, we are prone to say that:

\[ C_i = S_i \] (2)

Since it is a priori that:

\[ C \neq C_i \] (3-1)

it is necessary to reach at the judgement of:

\[ S \neq S_i \] (3-2)
If we experience any difficulty in holding that changes of production scale of public good is effectuated by changing cost of citizenship, it is so, not because of separate function of (3-1) and (3-2) on relationship between (1) and (2), but because there seem to be cognitive, institutional and normative antagonisms to the implications that:

\[ C_i = S \]  

(4-1)

and that:

\[ C = S_i \]  

(4-2)

Without denying (3-1), and hence, (3-2), can we bear excessive burden of cognizing (4-1) and (4-2)? Reformers of OGMA believe that (4)s are problematic, that (1) and (2) are conflatable, and that problem of (4)s will be disappeared if we institutionally adopt monocentric OGMA through consolidation. On the other hand, polycentrist(s) have tried, from the beginning, to solve (4-1) and (4-2) by conflating (1) and (2) through transforming (3-1) into:

\[ C = C_i \]  

(5)

II. Polycentric Theory as a Meaningful Conflation

If (5) is ‘theoretically’ possible to hold, (1) and (2) are ‘not’ unconfatable. This means that (4-1) and (4-2) are ‘not’ impossibilities unless the transformation is meaningless. Original work done by Ostrom, Tiebout and Warren in 1961 is the case in point. Their inquiry has resulted in nothing but a statement on scale of production and consumption of public services. It was predicated on a firm premise that there is no contiguity problem between scales of basic unit of consumption and production of public services in a polycentric organization of metropolitan level of governance. If scale of choice is to be implied by cost of choice by definition, cost of choice must entail its own scale of consumption unit. For them, this means that it must also show a contiguity with unit scale of production. If cost of citizenship basically means production cost for the public goods and services paid by the members of a local polity, it is cognitively, institutionally, and normatively impossible to predicate the basic unit scale of production on cost of choice without giving equal weight to the basic unit scale of consumption, at least to Ostrom, Tiebout and Warren.

Deriving implication (4-1) was, in some sense, a fundamental task of polycentrists. Failure of public economy, or failure of internalization of specific costs incurred to the citizens living in metropolitan areas may result in sporadic criticisms to advocates of polycentric OGMA by consolidationists. (3-1) and (3-2) are a priori and judgemental. Reformers of existing OGMA will do anything to keep these two propositions in their belief system.

Implication (4-2) has long been a favorite issue to be solved by analysts and practitioners of national urban policy. Finding out a political order in fiscal federalism has been one example of their focuses. Whether policy programs have been effective or not have frequently been translated into whether such programs could have been facilitating the internalization process operated by polycentric OGMA. This issue must be in the list of agenda because there is no theoretical ground for inequal distribution of national and state revenues into local level consisted of multiple recipients. Is there correspondence between distribution of Tiebout cost born by local governments and revenue-sharing formula used for national and state fiscal decisions? Is targeting central cities congruent with (4-2)? Are central cities major bearer of Tiebout cost?

On the other hand, existing framework for the debate on polycentric OGMA do not easily accommodate following three sets of questions, conditions and concepts, respectively. They may function as significant empirical reference to the conceptual logic of conflation.

1. Is OGMA compatible to federal system of government?
2. Are multisectoral and other modes of production of public goods enhanced by polycentric OGMA?
3. Is urban citizenship facilitated by polycentric political form of OGMA?
1. Relativity condition of autonomy
2. Compatibility condition of local government
3. Operationality condition of citizenship

1. Cognitive Relativity: OGMA makes autonomous localities recognize that they are related to federal system.
2. Institutional Compatibility: OGMA makes the private and the third sectors institutionalize themselves as ones compatible to the formal public sector by co-producing public goods.
3. Normative Operationality: OGMA makes citizens build set of norms through operationalizing their legal status in providing consumption and production decisions for public goods.

III. Reconstruction

If system-like functioning of polycentric OGMA is capable of being an entity in which these three conditions are satisfied, then, they might help us overcome epistemic effects of a priori judgment of (3-1) and (3-2) on systematic internalization of choice cost in metropolitan regions, or on (4-1). In other words, polycentric OGMA makes these conditions positive to political possibility of (5).

Because:
\[ C = C_a \] (6-1)
and, because:
\[ C_a = S_t \] (6-2)
we derive:
\[ C_a = C_t \] (6-3)

Because:
\[ C = C_a \] (6-1)
and, because:
\[ C_a = C_t \] (6-3)
we derive:
\[ C = C_t \] (6-4)

This makes it possible that:
\[ S = S_t \]

Therefore, we conflate that:
\[ C = C_t = S = S_t \] (7)

By (7), we know that (4-1) and (4-2) are possible.

References