

The Vulnerability and Limitation of Public Deliberation

: The Problem of Misrecognition and Unrecognition

The participation and public deliberation of the people are recognized as valuable both from the point of enhancing the stability of the system and the operation of the representative state. Indeed, it is meaningful, above all, to promote the autonomy of human beings, who have been the basis of the social system since modern times. However, public deliberations may have different effects depending on how they are constructed, and they also embed inherent limitations that cannot be addressed in nature. It is now widely known that an enclosed, or isolated deliberation can result in polarization of communities since the original arguments are repeated and reinforced while only those with similar ideas participate in such processes (Sunstein, 2002). In addition, limitations of public inclusiveness, substantially limited alternatives and dialogue within hegemonic discourses reflecting structural inequality are pointed out as issues of deliberative democracy (Young, 2001).

In a similar vein, this paper focuses on the vulnerability and limitations of public deliberation. In the first part, the problem of misrecognition will be examined based on the arguments of Fraser (1990; 2003; 2007) and Knight (2015). The assimilation of communication style that is required as a precondition for participating in public deliberation results in the exclusion of foreigners or other “speakers of other words” and speech-impaired individuals with autism, or those “who cannot speak.” The depreciation caused by the inability to use the same form of language and the lack of understanding of such subjects, in other words, the stigma, prevents the people who use standardized communication style from seeing them as members and participants of an equal society. The problem of this misrecognition resulting from the limited set of categories of participation can be mitigated by increasing the inclusiveness of public deliberation. However, further improvements in socioeconomic treatment and cognizance must be made in order to ensure that the increase in institutional inclusiveness leads to practical effects.

On the other hand, there are issues that cannot be solved simply by improving the composition or style of public deliberation. In the second half, the problem of unrecognition based on Lancier (1995) will be examined. As the study results in ex-convicts show, those who live together in society but are not recognized as the same human being are not referred to in the process of deciding who will participate in public deliberation. Rather, the social structure that excludes these “unspeakable beings” is strengthened and continually reproduced as public deliberation continues. Internally, the inclusiveness of deliberative democracy should be increased even at the expense of providing socioeconomic measures, so that all those recognized as part of the society can engage in practical activities. Furthermore, it should not be overlooked that subjectivation outside the boundary of the deliberative forum which redefines the *parts* of the society and reconstructs the preexisting system of exclusion, is also required for public deliberation to be of real value.

Key words: public deliberation, deliberative democracy, misrecognition, unrecognition

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