

# Mediating Love of Humanity, Love of Country, and Love of Culture: A Comparison of Normative Debates on Global Citizenship in South Korea and the United States\*

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## Abstract

*This article examines South Korean citizens' perspectives on global citizenship revealed in their public discourse in comparison with the outlooks that emerged in the landmark debate on patriotism and cosmopolitanism in the United States between moral philosopher Martha Nussbaum and her critics. Three key findings emerge: (1) in contrast with American skeptics of global citizenship who emphasize political loyalties and liberal patriotism, South Korean skeptics lean away from political allegiances in favor of traditional culture and identity; (2) themes such as reconciliation and poverty are discussed more prominently in the South Korean discourse than the American one; and (3) global citizenship debates in South Korea are bound up with anxiety about globalization and its accompanying issues and dynamics, such as Americanization, cultural shifts, and the country's economic competitiveness. South Korean global citizenship discourse enriches our broader understanding of patriotism and cosmopolitanism by illustrating how a rising democracy can shift gradually toward globally-minded political thinking while also focusing heavily on the protection and preservation of what is special and distinct within Korean culture.*

**Keywords:** South Korea, global citizenship, cosmopolitanism, nationalism, patriotism, political culture, national identity

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## Introduction

As the twentieth century came to a close and the stalemate of the Cold War gave way to a more visibly integrated and interconnected world, the idea of global citizenship gained a high profile in academic debates in the humanities and social sciences as well as in public discourse across the arenas of government, business, education, and civil society. There is a growing need for comparative empirical research examining how the specific term “global citizenship” has been interpreted in numerous countries and cultural settings, especially considering the ever-increasing need for national governments and international organizations to engage their counterparts around the world in dialogue and cooperation toward resolving a host of global problems and promoting common goals. Comparing how different sets of intellectual debates on global citizenship have unfolded in particular countries helps us gain a more detailed and textured understanding of cosmopolitan ideals related to universal human prosperity and mutual respect across cultural backgrounds, while also yielding new insights into how individuals within specific national political, economic, and cultural contexts have responded and adapted to the current period of globalization.

South Korea provides especially fertile ground for comparative inquiry in this regard, as numerous political, economic, and social actors have advanced the idea of “global citizen” (*segye simin*) within the country’s public debates ever since former president Kim Young-sam launched his globalization (*segye-hwa*) campaign in the early 1990s. The intellectual discussion on global citizenship during this period in South Korea offers many revealing insights into South Korea’s approach to globalization and its efforts to open itself up more completely to the world, to become all the more competitive in the global economy and a more prominent actor in international affairs, and to adjust to a rapidly growing immigrant population while also placing priority on important and distinctive aspects of Korean culture and identity. This study compares how public intellectuals in South Korea and the United States have debated the idea of global citizenship and, by extension, the various tradeoffs regarding cosmopolitanism and patriotism. In particular, the study examines South Korean perspectives on global citizen-

ship in comparison with the landmark debate on global citizenship that took place in the United States between moral philosopher Martha C. Nussbaum and her critics.

The following research questions drive this endeavor: How has intellectual discussion about the interplay and tension between patriotism and cosmopolitanism proceeded in specific countries—in this case South Korea and the United States—in ways that are both similar and different? What elements of convergence as well as discontinuity show up in South Korean and American intellectual perspectives on global citizenship? In addition, how have particular circumstances and trajectories in South Korea and the United States informed and shaped the ways in which intellectual debates about patriotism and cosmopolitanism have unfolded in these two countries? Finally, in more specific terms: can the same main positions articulated in the debate between Martha Nussbaum and her critics in the United States also be discerned in the South Korean intellectual discourse regarding global citizenship, and if so, how is the exact content within each of these main positions the same or different?

This article explores these research questions first by establishing a baseline for comparison, distilling the arguments from Nussbaum and her critics into three main categories, and then by examining how the corresponding South Korean intellectual discourse on global citizenship can also be subdivided within these categories. The Nussbaum-and-critics debate was published in 1996 in a single edited volume titled *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism* (Cohen 1996), while the South Korean discourse is culled from an analysis of more than 1,700 published media references, typically newspaper opinion essays, to the specific term *segye simin* and its cognates covering the entire period from 1990 through 2011. The South Korean intellectual discourse examined in this study represents a segment of these essays and commentaries written by novelists, artists, journalists, and scholars from a wide and eclectic variety of academic disciplines—from philosophy to biotechnology to funology. The resulting comparison casts a new light on how the South Korean public debate on global citizenship often frames cosmopolitanism in tension with traditional Korean culture, rather than in tension with any kind of loyalty to a specific political

tradition, while the American debate instead centers more directly upon political allegiances.

### **Baseline for Comparison: *For Love of Country***

*For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism* is anchored by an essay of Martha Nussbaum (1996) advocating for the next generation of Americans to be educated and encouraged to regard themselves primarily as citizens of the world, rather than as citizens exclusively of the United States. World citizenship, in Nussbaum's view, requires rethinking matters of allegiance, belonging, and loyalty so as to place primary emphasis on the needs and well-being of all humanity rather than giving priority to one's fellow conationals. The idea that world citizenship should take precedence over national citizenship in the hearts and minds of individuals triggered many skeptical replies from the 16 political philosophers and social theorists who responded to Nussbaum. While Nussbaum has recently shifted her position closer to that of her critics, now giving priority to "globally sensitive patriotism" (Nussbaum 2008), the volume still remains the best collection of essays in which a general audience can quickly grasp the rival perspectives at stake in debates about global citizenship. The contributors tend to frame global citizenship mainly in the figurative context of how individuals choose to think about their identities and ethical sensibilities rather than a more literal or legalistic context of a prospective global polity with cohesive global governing institutions.

Most of the essays in the volume fit into one of three competing positions: (1) cosmopolitan identities should take priority over national patriotism, (2) patriotic loyalties should take priority over cosmopolitanism, or (3) both patriotism and cosmopolitanism merit equal priority as the basis for political allegiance, belonging, and loyalty. Within these competing positions, numerous individual propositions emerge within the individual essays that illustrate the specific lines of reasoning that underlie each position. These propositions from the American scholars contributing to the volume are worth outlining briefly here so they can then be brought direct-

ly into comparison with the key propositions that emerge within the South Korean discourse on global citizenship.

For starters, Martha Nussbaum does not negate national citizenship as an important basis for political identity formation, but she downgrades national citizenship in favor of universalism: she views political community as a series of concentric circles—from town to region to nation to world—and argues that the outer circle encompassing all humanity should take priority over the inner circles. This leads Nussbaum (1996, 11-15) to make four key propositions about education that gives priority to world citizenship:

- It helps individuals better understand themselves and their country in comparative perspective.
- It encourages citizens to deliberate more effectively in ways that will solve problems requiring international cooperation.
- It prompts citizens enjoying high living standards to “recognize moral obligations to the rest of the world that are real and otherwise would go unrecognized” (Nussbaum 1996, 12).
- Important shared values that “instruct us to join hands across boundaries of ethnicity, class, gender and race” logically extend beyond national borders (Nussbaum 1996, 14).

The respondents to Nussbaum who argue that patriotism should take priority over cosmopolitanism often qualify their statements by noting that they favor not just any approach to patriotism—and certainly not the “blood-red” kind (Barber 1996, 36)—but an open-minded, outward-embracing patriotism that upholds liberal principles such as equal rights and mutual respect. They dismiss cosmopolitanism as too remote and abstract to form a meaningful basis for political community. Among the key propositions from this group and the authors who advance them most forcefully:

- Cosmopolitanism is “too bloodless to capture the moral imagination” (McConnell 1996, 79).
- American liberal patriotism is compatible with cosmopolitan values and diminishes the need for a separate cosmopolitan identity (Barber 1996).
- Free and democratic societies “require strong identification on the part of

their citizens,” and political and social mobilization “occurs around common identities” (Taylor 1996, 120).

- The emergence of multiple allegiances later in life depends on having “culturally rooted education” earlier in life (Bok 1996, 43).
- Patriotism should be the primary identity for everyday citizens; cosmopolitanism can emerge only as a secondary or supporting identity (Glazer 1996).
- Patriotism is an important precondition for allegiances that open up to universal solidarities (Barber 1996; Walzer 1996).
- Patriotism is important because international agreements that advance cosmopolitan values depend on sovereign states (Glazer 1996).
- Accidents of birth should not be dismissed as morally arbitrary—they are the “givens of life” (Gutmann 1996, 77).

Fewer in number in the volume are scholars who argue that multiple circles of community should be equally valued and mediated, and the contribution by one of these scholars, Kwame Anthony Appiah, became widely recognized as the most compelling response to Nussbaum’s liberal universalism. Appiah (1996) presented an alternative definition of cosmopolitanism situated between liberal universalism and cultural relativism. In Appiah’s view, the most fulfilling kind of political community emerges through a bottom-up, culturally-rooted version of cosmopolitanism that coexists with an open-minded version of patriotism. In his words: “The cosmopolitan patriot can entertain the possibility of a world in which everyone is a rooted cosmopolitan, attached to a home of his or her own cultural particularities, but taking pleasure from the presence of other, different, places that are home to other, different people” (Appiah 1996, 22). The key propositions advanced from this line of reasoning:

- There will be little, if any, diversity in a world of only cosmopolitanism; we need “cosmopolitan patriots” and “rooted cosmopolitans” (Appiah 1996).
- Both patriotism and universal reason are important and share common standing (Putnam 1996).
- Universal allegiances, obligations, and solidarities can coexist on equal,

interactive terms with particular identities (Appiah 1996; Putnam 1996).

- Universal values are not so universal; upon closer examination, they are culturally specific (Butler 1996; Gutmann 1996).

For all the nuances within this sampling of academic discourse on global citizenship, two key propositions unite all the authors in the volume. One unifying theme, resonant across the varying outlooks on patriotism and cosmopolitanism, is that liberalism is fundamentally important—a primary good, even among writers with *communitarian* leanings that prioritize local ties. The critics of universalism in the volume are all basically in favor of fundamental liberal values such as individual rights, the rule of law, and mutual respect across myriad lines of difference. It is not just any kind of patriotism that many of Nussbaum's critics endorse, but a liberal model of patriotism. A second unifying theme is that fundamental allegiances need not be exclusive allegiances—this is a point shared by Nussbaum and several of her critics, all of whom make the case for thinking about political identities and allegiances as a series of concentric circles. While South Korean public intellectuals who think about global citizenship often correspond with the concentric-circles approach to political identity formation, they do not share the same overarching emphasis on liberal patriotism.

### **The Contours of the South Korean Debate on Global Citizenship**

South Korean public intellectuals who have been thinking and talking about global citizenship are an elite group, and they do not necessarily mirror the balance of public opinion even within their respective fields or sectors, let alone South Korean society more widely. Nevertheless, similar to their counterparts in the debate between Martha Nussbaum and her critics, they give us a good representation of how competing perspectives on global citizenship have been carried forth in contemporary public debate. The competing points of view can be situated within three categories that parallel the main dividing lines in the Nussbaum-and-critics debate: (1) priority for global identities over local identities, (2) priority for local identities over

global identities, and (3) equal priority for both local and global identities.

### *Priority for Global Identities over Local Identities*

Martha Nussbaum's call for a global identity to take priority over local identities receives considerable reinforcement in the South Korean discourse on global citizenship. While many commentators have argued for global citizenship mainly as a means toward greater national competitiveness and heightened national stature, there are also numerous advocates of global citizenship, especially within the academic realm, who have made normative appeals for South Koreans to move beyond nationalism and begin giving priority to educational initiatives that instill senses of allegiance and accompanying moral obligations toward all humanity. As economics professor Park Ju-Eung noted during the 1997 Asian financial crisis that caused much turmoil and anxiety in South Korea: "The world is now facing a new era in which we will create a new history of mutual prosperity and coexistence. The twentieth-century international order is breaking down, and governments of each nation-state are seeking and networking with partners outside borders. . . . It is important to nurture global citizens who value a love for humanity more than patriotism."<sup>1</sup> This kind of pragmatic argument with a clear normative prescription about global citizenship is common in the South Korean intellectual discourse. More recently, biotechnology and engineering professor Jeong Jae-Seung has argued that South Korea's approach to teaching history needs to change so that South Korean students can interpret historical facts through a variety of perspectives and address the meaning of Korean history in the context of world history: "Once we study a history textbook based on nationalism, then we all become loyal nationalists who are preoccupied with victory in every [sports] competition with Japan. I do not expect the next generation to become global leaders but at least hope for them to become global citi-

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1. Park Ju-Eung, "Geullobeol gyoyuk'-eul sijak-hada" (Initiating "Global Education"), *Munhwa Ilbo*, October 28, 1997. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from the Korean language are provided by the author.



zens with a love for humanity.”<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, representatives from the Korean Teachers and Education Workers Union have raised concerns that the national school curriculum conveys a narrow-minded view of Korean identity. This issue came to the forefront of public debate in 2011, when the conservative national government’s Ministry of Education and Science Technology revamped the “national ethics” component to the middle school curriculum and linked Korean identity with qualities such as filial piety, love of peace and nature, and the spirit to overcome national crises. The teachers’ union critiqued the linkage between these kinds of values and a distinctively Korean identity: “In today’s global era, multiculturalism and a global citizen mindset based on the values of coexistence and world peace must be taught to the students. However, the Education Board has set ambiguous and outdated concepts of ‘Korean identity’ and is trying to provide anachronistic education.”<sup>3</sup> It is not only progressively minded educators that raised these concerns, which have been simmering for a longer period of time and among a wide range of voices. For example, the chair of the Office of Foreign Investment Ombudsman wrote in 2003: “Shouldn’t our education break away from narrow-minded nationalism that dominated the twentieth century and was based on a false pride, and change its focus to cultivating global citizens who will live the open era of the twenty-first century?”<sup>4</sup> These kinds of passages illustrate how many South Korean intellectuals refer to patriotism or nationalism mainly in the negative, often conflating the two concepts, and hope for some form of global citizenship to gain ground and eventually trump more particular sources of identity formation for South Koreans.

Just as Martha Nussbaum’s cosmopolitan argument also includes a

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2. Jeong Jae-Seung, “Pilsu-wa seontaek gwamok sai” (Between a Prerequisite and an Elective Course), *Dong-A Ilbo*, August 10, 2010.

3. Shin Sung-ho, quoted in: Yi Jae-hun and Kim Min-gyeon, “Damunhwa sidae, sae gyowaseo-en ‘hangugin jeongcheseong’” (Section on “Korean Identity” Added to the New Textbook), *Hankyoreh*, August 10, 2011.

4. Kim Wan-sun, “Gochyeoya hal 3 dae hanguk byeong” (Three Korean Diseases that Need to be Cured), *Seoul Economic Times*, January 26, 2003.

subtle nationalist justification—that the United States will be a more self-aware and respectable country if more Americans choose to think and live as global citizens—several figures in the South Korean discourse whose arguments match up with Nussbaum’s thinking also argue that Korea will be a better country if the idea of global citizenship gains ground. Some of these individuals worry that the prevalent ethnic nationalism in South Korea poses a major hurdle for global citizenship as well as a liability for the country’s competitiveness. The words of Hong Soon-young, the former foreign minister of South Korea, on the eve of the new century have illustrated this point: “Exclusive nationalism is already being considered an anachronistic ideology. In the twenty-first century where global society will be even more integrated, a Korea that returns to nationalism will never be able to succeed. . . . We must refine our qualities of tolerance, perseverance, and the wisdom of respecting and co-existing with others as global citizens, and educate the new generations on these things.”<sup>5</sup> Philosopher Kim Sang Bong, meanwhile, made this positive case for global citizenship, arguing that countries need to create an interdependent global community, along with a grim assessment regarding South Korea’s collective capacity for global citizenship:

It is only possible to become an independent body in the world as a global citizen when I feel the pain of the whole world and humanity as my own. . . . The cosmopolitan identity is generated only when each person demands what is good for everyone as the good for oneself, and actively seeks to expand one’s community. Despite the fact that cosmopolitan identity is a desperate and real issue of our age for a peaceful future for humanity, the reason why it is difficult to achieve it is that we are still entrapped in the shells of statism and [South Korean] nationalism.<sup>6</sup>

The above passage aligns closely with Martha Nussbaum’s moral vision as

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5. Hong Soon-young, “2020 nyeon hanguk-ui wisang-eun?” (What Will the Status of Korea Be in 2020?), *Segye Times*, October 26, 1999.

6. Kim Sang-bong, “Segye siminseong-gwa jucheseong” (Global Citizenship and Subjectivity), *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, July 26, 2009.

well as Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative. What more thoroughgoing way to show love for humanity is there than to "feel the pain of the whole world and humanity" as one's own?

This segment of South Korean public intellectuals, then, views global citizenship as a much-needed corrective to nationalism and patriotism, and these individuals also link global citizenship with efforts to spur reconciliation both within the divided Korean peninsula and across East Asia. As noted by the secretary-general of the Asia Peace and History Education Network, while speaking at the 2004 East Asia Peace Forum in Seoul regarding the pivotal role of civil society organizations in facilitating reconciliation initiatives: "Historical sharing on the civilian level enables it to be free of the so-called national interest, and at times the area of mutual interaction and communication to be broader, since the countries boldly expose their weaknesses from a 'cosmopolitan' perspective."<sup>7</sup> Although the South Korean political climate is full of demands for Japan to apologize for the sins of its colonial past, particularly the sexual enslavement of tens of thousands of Korean women during the Second World War, engineering professor Park Chi Eum called for Koreans to apologize, in turn, for the South Korean army's complicity in a massacre of civilians during the Vietnam War: "Apologizing about Vietnam is for ourselves. We cannot face an era of reunification if we, as a perpetrator, have a civic consciousness that cannot apologize for our own wrongdoings. We certainly would not even have the right to speak as global citizens. I believe that it is now time to break away from the yoke of history through genuine apology."<sup>8</sup> Note how Park, similar to Nussbaum, fuses cosmopolitan moral reasoning with the justification that making a suitable apology will reach out constructively to the Vietnamese and also render South Korea more credible as a country. Still others link global

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7. Eun-Jung Chung, quoted in: An Su-chan, "Han-jung-il 'yeoksa nun matchugi' cheotbal" (Korea-China-Japan: First Step to "Eye Contact with History"), *Hankyoreh*, August 12, 2004.

8. Park Chi Eum, quoted in: Kwon Bok-gi, "Beteunam heonjeong norae jakgok Park Chi-eum gyosu" (Professor Bak Chi-eum, Composer of a Song Dedicated to Vietnam), *Hankyoreh*, July 6, 2000.

citizenship with the need for South Koreans to reconcile among themselves and overcome rivalries and feuds based on domestic regional dividing lines. As Kim Il-Su, a law professor and representative of the Christian Ethics Movement of Korea, wrote shortly before the 2002 presidential election: “How can we proceed with North and South Korean reconciliation and become global citizens if we hold onto the idolization of regional sentiment that is repeated every election?”<sup>9</sup>

All in all, public intellectuals in South Korea who give priority to global identities tend to pay more attention than their American counterparts to their country’s competitive position as well as the potential to harness a cosmopolitan outlook as a means toward international peace and reconciliation. They believe that patriotism is out of touch with the reality of a globally interconnected world, that economic globalization and borderless networks now require Koreans to break away from exclusive nationalism and cultivate global citizenship with a love for humanity, that history teachers must instill a global citizenship consciousness in their students, and that a cosmopolitan perspective in which individual nations are willing to reckon with their individual weaknesses and, at times, “lose face,” can bring about international reconciliation and help South Korea move beyond past historical conflicts and traumas.

### *Priority for Local Identities over Global Identities*

Those who argue that a domestic Korean identity should either precede or trump a global identity simultaneously resemble and differ from their American counterparts. Just as many of Martha Nussbaum’s critics support the advancement of a cosmopolitan identity as long as it remains complementary and subordinated to a carefully constructed, open-minded version of patriotism in harmony with liberal principles, South Korean skeptics of global citizenship also support cosmopolitanism as long as it defers to traditional sources of Korean culture. American skeptics champion

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9. Kim Il-su, “Daeseon bareugo dangdang-hage” (Presidential Election, Properly and Confidently), *Kookmin Ilbo*, December 1, 2002.

political liberalism and patriotism “rightly understood,” while South Korean skeptics tend to set aside liberalism, shun the specific term “patriotism,” steer clear of politics altogether when framing citizen identity formation, and instead emphasize cultural attachments. These writers are not necessarily anti-cosmopolitan, but they worry about the potential for cosmopolitanism to marginalize what they value as important aspects of Korean culture and identity.

The few South Korean scholars who mention the specific word “patriotism” favorably in relation to cosmopolitanism closely resemble their American counterparts in the Nussbaum-and-critics debate by cautioning that the right kind of patriotism needs to be put forward. Political scientist Kim Myongsob, for example, has argued for a “good patriotism” that reins in the overly centralizing aspects of globalization: “It is important that we transform bad patriotism—idolization of states, identification of a state with a specific ethnic group, chauvinism, and so on—into good patriotism that is checked by democracy and cosmopolitanism.”<sup>10</sup> Similarly, the vice president of the Korean Association for Multicultural Education argued that “nationalism should be developed into global citizen consciousness, and we should think about how traditional values can become our strength in that process.”<sup>11</sup> Note that both individuals here make room for cosmopolitanism, but they frame it as deriving from the right kind of patriotism or nationalism and the appropriate deployment of Korean traditional values.

Others in the South Korean discourse have focused mainly on duties when approaching the question of local *versus* global. Similar to several of Nussbaum’s critics, some scholars and commentators in the South Korean discourse have argued that duties to fellow Koreans should take priority

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10. Yi Wang-gu, “Minjok-gukgajuui ‘pyegi vs. byeonhwa’ tteugeoun nonjaeng pyeolchinda” (Korean Critical Sociological Association: “Supra-Nationalistic Imagination in the Globalized Era” Symposium), *Hankook Ilbo*, January 8, 2008.

11. Cha Yun-gyeong, “Damunhwa jonjung-haneun gyoyuk-euro geullobeol simin uisik baeyang piryo” (The Need to Nurture Global Citizen Consciousness through Multiculturalism-Respecting Education), *Munhwa Ilbo*, October 2, 2008.

over duties to people abroad, even people in more desperate conditions. Here is a statement from television announcer Park Na-rim, an honorary ambassador to World Vision who had done volunteer work in Africa, that also serves as a classic rebuttal to Nussbaum in this regard: “Please do not ask why [it’s necessary to] go all the way to Africa to help those in need when there are already so many here in this country. In order to become a responsible global citizen, shouldn’t you be sharing the hardship of our neighbors?”<sup>12</sup> Note that Park’s emphasis on sharing the pain of more immediate neighbors within Korea contrasts directly with Kim Sang Bong’s statement (above) about feeling “the pain of the whole world and humanity as my own.” Both writers are encouraging their fellow Koreans to build up empathy and respond positively to the hardships faced by their fellow human beings, but one writer places top priority on the adversity of fellow Koreans while another writer calls for extending this sentiment and the corresponding response toward all humanity. The fact that many people within South Korea still need help does not necessarily foreclose global citizenship for Park Na-rim, but it relegates global citizenship to a lower moral priority than helping distressed people in South Korea. Likewise, another South Korean skeptic of global citizenship, funologist Choe Ik-hwan, made the case that conationals warrant more emphasis from Koreans and even cited Johann Gottfried von Herder’s famous debunking of cosmopolitanism. In contrast with Park’s focus on South Korea, Choe means all of Korea when he talks about “nation”:

It is natural that the lives of everyone in the world should be of our ordinary moral concern. But being indifferent to my suffering brother and worrying for the problems of strangers, and ignoring my nation in trouble and caring for the issues of humanity as befitting the globalized age is meaningless. Herder mocked people with this very attitude by saying, “That refined global citizen, that shadow of human beings. No

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12. Park Na-rim, “Woldeu bijeon hongbodaesa Park Na-rim ‘waenyago mutji maseyo” (World Vision Honorary Ambassador Park Na-rim: “Don’t Ask Me Why”), *Kookmin Ilbo*, December 17, 2007.

matter how much a shadow is full of love toward a shadow, it is only the illusion of love.”<sup>13</sup>

Note that Choe, similar to some of his counterparts in this discourse, tacitly acknowledges that Koreans should be concerned about the problems of people suffering around the world but holds that duties to fellow Koreans should take priority.

Still others worry—once again in a manner reminiscent of Martha Nussbaum’s critics—that fostering global citizenship without first cultivating strong ties to Korea will be counterproductive. They worry that cultivating a global citizen identity within South Korea without first nurturing a strong, confident Korean identity will leave the country feeling inferior to the world’s wealthiest and most powerful countries. Professor of pedagogy Kim Eun-San, for example, stated at a public forum on elementary education that schoolchildren “should grow into global citizens after (their) ethnic loyalty is first fostered. If not, it will be easy [for them] to fall into self-deprecation and a sense of inferiority.”<sup>14</sup> Although Kim Eun-San in some respects mirrors the outlook of Benjamin Barber in his response to Nussbaum, Barber speaks far more assuredly about American patriotism and the American political tradition than Kim speaks about Korean political culture—and in direct contrast with Barber, Kim emphasizes “ethnic loyalty” rather than civic patriotism. As sociologist Shin Jin-Wook noted in a similar critique, downgrading global citizenship relative to more particular sources of political identity:

Normatively the universality of global citizenship must become the base for all special identities, but realistically, special identities become the base for forming and realizing universal values. This is because “a house” to give specific meaning to those values and practice them is necessary for abstract values to turn into a practical motivation in “my

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13. Choe Ik-hwan, “Chamdoen sarang-eul haryeomyeon” (To Have True Love), *Hankyoreh*, September 27, 1997.

14. Shin Hyeong-jun, “Gukgyo-e jeontong munhwa gyoyuk ganghwa-reul” (Strengthening Traditional Culture Education), *Chosun Ilbo*, July 24, 1994.

life.” A global citizen without a house would just be floating in outer space, merely observing the world.<sup>15</sup>

These sentiments have been articulated extensively beyond the South Korean academy, as well. A newspaper editorial published in 1991, very early in South Korea’s trajectory of global citizenship discourse, framed knowledge of Korean culture as well as love of Korean local culture as prerequisites for global citizenship: “We must not create foolish world citizens who cannot speak one’s own language or do not know one’s national history properly while rashly aiming to bring up global citizens. True world citizens, global citizens must understand one’s own language and history properly and have a love and pride for the culture of one’s own country before stepping forth in the global society.”<sup>16</sup> Note how this commentary champions love of culture and also implies that Koreans have a higher obligation to their co-ethnics, while it makes no mention about love of the country’s political tradition. Similarly, culture rather than politics provided the frame of reference when theater director Lee Youn-taek took a negative view of global citizenship while making an argument for South Korea to accentuate its traditional culture in the arts: “Some say, ‘No artistic success has been achieved by presenting Korean work. We must now stop presenting in such a way. Isn’t something closer to the future and related to the world more important?’ I fear that such thinking may make us into global citizens who resemble international stray children. Thus, I consciously try to ask the question—what is *Korean*?” (author’s emphasis)<sup>17</sup> Once again, this author parallels objections to Martha Nussbaum that frame her cosmopolitanism as overly abstract and rootless, while diverging from Nussbaum’s critics by championing Korean culture rather than Korean politics.

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15. Shin Jin-Wook, “‘Urideul-ui daehan minguk’ jinbo jeongchi toyang doel geot” (“Our Republic of Korea” Will Provide Fertile Soil for Progressive Politics), *Hankyoreh*, August 27, 2009.

16. “Guksa gyoyuk-e deouk him sseuja” (Let’s Focus More on the Education of National History), *Dong-A Ilbo*, October 4, 1991.

17. Yi Yun-taek, “Mueot-i hangukjeok-inga” (What is Korean?), *Hankook Ilbo*, January 27, 1997.



Concerns are not merely hypothetical that the next generation of Koreans—or at least Koreans most heavily immersed in the English-speaking world—will suffer from displacement at home as well as abroad. One Korean teenage girl, Kim Ye-hyeon, wrote a book, at age eighteen, titled *Mi myeongmungo gut bai, na-neun hanguk-euro doraganda* (Goodbye, Prestigious American High Schools, I'm Going Back to Korea), about her experiences attending Princeton High School in New Jersey and her decision to return home to Daejeon earlier than expected. As one journalist summarized Kim's dilemma:

Why did she return? She says that it was because of an identity crisis. . . . Every morning in class she saluted the American flag and learned American history from a five-centimeter-thick book which caused her to ask whether she was receiving education as a global citizen or as an American citizen, and to question what she could gain or become by not knowing Korean history well but knowing American history well. The discovery of the fact that if she continued her education in the U.S., she would think like an American and look at herself and the world surrounding her through the frame of America, made her turn back.<sup>18</sup>

Ms. Kim hoped to become a global citizen while keeping her Korean identity, but instead, she began to feel she was compromising her Korean identity and shifting in the direction of becoming an American. Seeing her Korean identity as essential, her solution was simple: head home.

In sum, South Korean intellectuals who give priority to local identities often mirror their American counterparts in viewing particular identities as building blocks for a more universal identity, but they focus more on cultural identity formation than liberal patriotism. They argue that cosmopolitanism runs the risk of marginalizing important aspects of Korean culture and identity, that traditional Korean values can strengthen the development of global citizen consciousness, and that global citizenship shorn of ethnic loyalty and knowledge of the Korean language, culture, and his-

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18. Choe Byeong-gwon, "Gungmin-eun mandeureojineun geot" (The Nation is Made), *Money Today*, April 25, 2007.

tory will be counterproductive.

### *Dual Priorities for Local and Global Identities*

The alternative view seeking out synergy between the two previous positions—that local and global sources of allegiance, belonging, and loyalty are equally important and mutually reinforcing—emerges consistently within a meaningful segment of the South Korean discourse on global citizenship. Many South Korean intellectuals thinking about global citizenship believe that one can simultaneously be a *segye simin* and maintain one's Korean cultural identity, while giving equal weight to both: they see no unhappy tradeoff between the two identities. While this line of thinking corresponds with Kwame Anthony Appiah's "rooted cosmopolitanism," two key points of contrast can be identified between Appiah's position and this segment of South Korean perspectives. First, like many of his counterparts in the Nussbaum volume, Appiah champions patriotism much more openly and directly than the South Korean discussants. Second, Appiah's cosmopolitanism is heavily fixated upon redefinitions of cultural boundaries and multidirectional conversations, while the South Korean discourse is more fixated upon projecting to the rest of the world a predefined, distinct, and largely homogeneous national "*minjok* culture" (*minjok munhwa*), and preserving this culture at home in the face of threats and disruptive dynamics from within (such as relentless urbanization and development) as well as from beyond. The South Korean discourse within this strain of thinking emphasizes the mediation of local and global identity on equal terms, but it operates at times on a different wavelength from Appiah's exaltation of "cosmopolitan patriots." Three themes are highly visible here: (1) the advancement of "*minjok* culture" alongside global citizenship, with "*minjok* culture" understood as the embodiment of a people's experience and knowledge accumulated by living together as a whole for a long period of time, (2) the protection of distinctive local communities everywhere, and (3) placing the needs of Koreans and outsiders on basically equal pedestals when taking into consideration moral obligations and duties.

These themes combining global competitiveness with a pronounced Korean identity have been visible in South Korea's global citizenship discourse for the past two decades. A newspaper editorial published in 1995, for example, called for the country to strengthen English-language education as well as education in traditional Korean culture: "Now the world is changing into a single time zone and economically speaking, borders have disappeared. Our education should shift to cultivating [students with] the qualities and leadership of global citizens who can adapt to the globalized age . . . . However, to not lose our unique identity in the globalization wave, we should reinforce the educational attention and concern towards our traditional culture."<sup>19</sup> Since then, many schools, colleges, and universities have followed suit; for instance, Seoul Global High School, the city's first public high school with all classes taught in English, with the exception of Korean language and Korean history, "encourages extracurricular activities where students can learn our traditional culture such as *haegeum* (a Korean traditional string instrument) and *samul nori* (Korean traditional percussion quartet)" so that its students will "cultivate their identity as Koreans as well as their qualifications as global citizens."<sup>20</sup> Seoul Global High School fits within a larger contemporary trend casting traditional Korean culture as one of the essential educational components in shaping global citizens.

Numerous individuals in the South Korean discourse are quite specific in advocating for this emphasis on balancing Korean political loyalties and cultural affinities with the formation of a global identity. Consider this statement from political scientist Im Hyug Baeg that elevates both "*minjok* culture" and cosmopolitanism:

The twenty-first century will be an age of cultural complex identity.  
The double task of accepting the new and simultaneously maintaining

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19. "Gyoyuk/inseong gyoyuk ganghwa sigeup-hada (ijen tongillo ttwija)" (Education/Personality Education Reinforcement Urgent [Let's Jump to Unification Now]), *Segye Times*, August 15, 1999.

20. U Jeong-yeol, "Yeonge-ro sueop yeolgi hukkeun, 'Amazing Students!'" (Classes in English Heating Up, "Amazing Students!"), *Dong-A Ilbo*, April 1, 2008.

one's cultural identity will come to the fore. It is because in order to participate in various networks, one needs to have a variety of identities. One should possess the identity of a global citizen and simultaneously, the identity of a Korean. One should have an identity as a citizen and a vocational identity as well. Efforts are needed to raise the national [*min-jok*] culture up to the international standard and to embrace the world culture to make it ours.<sup>21</sup>

The above emphasis on balancing local and global identities and facilitating synergistic interaction between local and global culture matches Appiah's perspective, and many participants in the South Korean discourse on global citizenship have tailored their writing to readers in a postcolonial country recovering from a troubled past and striving for a brighter future. Consider, for example, this statement in 2009 by then president of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), the government's main outlet for international aid, which illustrates a historically "rooted" approach to contemporary Korean cosmopolitanism:

If we can disseminate the image within the world that we, as a country that uniquely escaped poverty and joined the OECD, are now sharing our experiences and helping developing countries, the value of South Korea's national brand will rise automatically and the tendency to undervalue Korean goods will eventually disappear. In living as global citizens today, we need our ancestors' warmth and wisdom to share and help one another and overcome difficult times.<sup>22</sup>

Linking the "warmth and wisdom" of Korean generations past to the desired qualities of Korean global citizens in the present is very much in sync with Appiah's approach to cosmopolitanism.

Likewise, many individuals in South Korea who choose to think of themselves as global citizens find it impossible to uncouple the emerging

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21. Im Hyug Baeg, "Jeongbo gangguk ganeun gil" (The Way to an "Information Power State"), *Hankook Ilbo*, January 1, 2000.

22. Park Dae-won, "Raoseu hakgyo-ui 'taegeukgi gyogwaseo'" (The "Taegeukgi Textbook" in the Schools of Laos), *Maeil Business Newspaper*, April 15, 2009.

identity of a global citizen from their more deeply rooted identities as Koreans. Some of these insights also correspond with points made by Judith Butler and Amy Gutmann (in response to Martha Nussbaum) that universal values, once held to closer scrutiny, gain meaning through culturally specific conditions. As novelist Hwang Sok-yong wrote after visiting the North Korean capital of Pyongyang in 2005: “Recently, I have often been saying that I want to be a global citizen. However, universalism can only be found in the traces of our land and traditions.”<sup>23</sup> Especially, Koreans from the literary world have been calling upon their conationals to move beyond any lingering sense of inferiority and take Korean culture confidently abroad. As Hwang noted in a subsequent newspaper interview: “Sharing the present life of oneself and Korea with the people around the world is the path for writers to become ‘global citizens’ free of borders and nationality. This is what the international literary world wants from Korean literature.”<sup>24</sup> Consider also this poetic take on global citizenship, from novelist Hyeon Gi-yeong, that contains affinities, once again, with Appiah’s “rooted” cosmopolitanism:

Our goal is to become global citizens, which means grooming a distinct Korean flower in the “global garden.” Excessive displays of nationalism and selfish economic activity breed conflict, so those are not fitting for a global citizen. Values such as understanding, tolerance and peaceful coexistence should be foremost. We need to see the foreign diaspora within our country from a perspective as global citizens and embrace them.<sup>25</sup>

Note that Hyun wants a Korean flower in the global garden but specifically

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23. Hwang Sok-yong, “Uri minjok munhak umul-anseo beoseo-naya” (Korean National Literature Needs to Get Out of the Small Pond), *Segye Times*, July 26, 2005.

24. Choe Jae-bong, “Yeonjae kkeunnan baridegi jakka Hwang Sok-yong imeil inteobyu” (Ending a Serial Story: An E-mail Interview with Hwang Sok-yong, the Author of *Baridegi*), *Hankyoreh*, June 21, 2007.

25. “Soseolga Hyun Ki-young-ssi ‘yeongeoman yuchang-hadago segye simin anida” (Novelist Hyun Ki-young: “Fluency in English is Not a Sufficient Condition to Be a Global Citizen”), *Segye Times*, August 13, 2007.

does not want a nationalistic Korean flower—and plenty more individuals in South Korea make similar points. As noted in a commentary by Yeo Eun-sun, who led a weekly discussion group in Seoul back in the year 2000 that included native Koreans along with international residents: “Being a global citizen does not require us to belittle our own culture and unquestioningly adopt foreign ideas. In the age of the global village, as cultures in all parts of the world coexist, being a global citizen means we effectively accommodate world culture while harmonizing our traditional culture with it.”<sup>26</sup>

While some advocates of global citizenship in South Korea think about the concept in terms of sharing Korean culture with the world, others emphasize preserving traditional culture at home for posterity. For example, novelist Cho Myung-Ae, who holds a doctorate in French literature, argued in a newspaper commentary that preserving Korean cultural artifacts serves as an important element of global citizenship; she made the argument shortly after the loss of many cultural artifacts in Iraq following the United States-led conquest of Baghdad in 2003. As Cho wrote: “It is our obligation and responsibility not only as citizens of our country, but also as global citizens, to properly preserve existing Korean cultural assets and pass them on to our descendants. This is because the cultural assets are not only our cultural property but also the cultural heritage of humanity.”<sup>27</sup> In her column, Cho also called upon the South Korean government to join an international convention protecting cultural artifacts, namely the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. The sense of obligation articulated by Cho is striking—a duty not only to future generations of Koreans, but to all humanity, to preserve what is special about local communities—and her point here would likely strike a chord with both Kwame Anthony Appiah and Martha Nussbaum.

Several individuals within the South Korean global citizenship dis-

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26. Kim Sin-seong, “Segye simin-ui gil yeoleoganeun saram-deul/keulleob ‘pauntin’ hoewondeul” (People Who Light the Way to Global Citizens), *Segye Times*, April 3, 2000.

27. Cho Myung-Ae, “Gunsu gyeongjeryeok-i munhwa jikinda” (Military and Economic Power Protects Culture), *Financial News*, May 13, 2003.

course who strive to balance local and global considerations on equal terms also emerge as more inclined than their Korean peers in the other categories—as well as their American counterparts within the Nussbaum-and-critics debate—to place crucial emphasis on resolving, in tandem, the problems of domestic poverty and world poverty. For example, Dharma Song Wol-ju, the former leader of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism and chief executive of the Korean global development aid organization Good Hands, appealed to Koreans to respond with close personal empathy to both domestic poverty and world poverty. As he explained his position: “All humanity and life exist together within the relationship of infinite diversity. Therefore, it is now time for Koreans to possess a global citizen consciousness and widen their perspectives, and perceive domestic as well as global issues as one’s personal issues.”<sup>28</sup> In comparison with speakers cited in previous sections of this article calling for Koreans to respond personally to either the suffering of humanity or the suffering of fellow nationals, Song is calling upon Koreans to respond in multiple ways to suffering across these dividing lines.

South Korean public intellectuals who prefer to elevate local identities and global identities simultaneously go much further than their American counterparts in emphasizing the need to sustain and advance the local traditional culture. The key propositions from this segment of the country’s global citizenship discourse strive to bring the emerging manifestations of global culture into South Korea while also outwardly projecting Korean culture worldwide. In other words, South Korea needs to “embrace the world culture to make it ours”<sup>29</sup> and “effectively accommodate world culture while harmonizing our traditional culture”;<sup>30</sup> the warmth and wisdom

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28. Seo Hwa-dong, “Bungnyeok dongpo apeum seoro aureul ttae baro dongche daebi,” Song Wol-ju seunim” (Monk Song Wol-ju: “Embracing Northern Brothers’ Grief is Mercy”), *Korea Economic Daily*, June 6, 2004.

29. Im Hyug Baeg, “Jeongbo gangguk ganeun gil” (The Way to an “Information Power State”), *Hankook Ilbo*, January 1, 2000.

30. Yeo Eun-sun, quoted in: Kim Sin-seong, “Segye simin-ui gil yeoreoganeun saramdeul” (People Who Light the Way to Global Citizens), *Segye Times*, April 3, 2000.

“found in the traces of our land and traditions”<sup>31</sup> can help Koreans live as better global citizens in the present, placing the suffering of conationals as well as distant “others” on equally high but distinctive pedestals; and Koreans share a duty to humanity to preserve the country’s valuable cultural possessions and artifacts.

## Conclusion

Taken together, the key propositions emerging from South Korean global citizenship discourse and the landmark debate between Martha Nussbaum and her critics show how intellectual debates unfolding within particular countries on global citizenship are relevant to each other while also quite distinct from each other. In South Korea as well as in the United States, lively and diverse collections of thinkers view citizenship as expansive and not exclusively tied to nation-states, even as disagreement persists over which spheres of citizen attachments ought to take priority. Martha Nussbaum’s position on world citizenship gains substantial reinforcement in the South Korean discourse, while scholars and writers in both countries who emphasize more immediate and particular sources of identity, belonging, and obligation share the perspective that the right kind of local identity formation can lead to more universal senses of responsibility and obligation. We can also see how perspectives on global citizenship in South Korea are often bound up with anxiety about globalization and its consequences, such as Americanization, cultural homogenization, and the country’s economic competitiveness. The South Korean debate on global citizenship enriches our broader understanding of patriotism and cosmopolitanism by illustrating how a rising democracy—beyond the “West” though profoundly influenced by the “West”—can shift gradually toward globally-minded political thinking while also focusing heavily on the protection and preservation of what is special and distinct about South Korean traditional culture.

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31. Hwang Sok-yong, “Uri minjok munhak umul-anseo beoseo-naya” (Korean National Literature Needs to Get Out of the Small Pond), *Segye Times*, July 26, 2005.



The three main competing perspectives in South Korean intellectual discourse related to global citizenship—(1) priority for global identities over local identities, (2) priority for local identities over global identities, and (3) equal priority for both local and global identities—have been articulated repeatedly by Korean scholars and commentators throughout the past two decades. The country's intellectual discussion on cosmopolitanism and patriotism has not shifted its center of gravity from one of the perspectives to another; rather, individual scholars have been voicing all three positions concurrently in ways that underscore how the essence of *global citizenship* has been contested for many years in South Korea. Across the three positions, the scholars and writers who have emphasized the importance for South Koreans to gain confidence in the country's distinctive identity and culture and also for the national government to carry out good *global citizenship* through humanitarian commitments overseas have pre-figured trends in these directions within South Korea more widely. While references to *segye simin* in the 1990s often accompanied statements by the country's elites urging the general public to become more competitive and open-minded, today global citizenship discourse in South Korea is much more about how the country can respond positively to internal shifts, such as the growing immigrant population and the dramatic increase in marriages between Koreans and non-Koreans, as well as responding to global imperatives such as curbing global poverty and promoting more sustainable economic development. Then and now, approaches to global citizenship in South Korea have been tailored to the country's particular circumstances, illustrating how cosmopolitan moral visions often diverge across countries and cultural settings in ways that should give pause to those who believe that a singularly defined notion of global citizenship is universally translatable or applicable.

Instead, as South Korean intellectual discourse shows us, global citizenship is a highly plural concept, deployed in specific and distinctive ways in individual countries in ways reflecting and responding to their contexts, needs, values, and aspirations, and then shift as national trajectories and objectives change over time. Looking broadly at the South Korean and American discourses under comparison in this article, the most fundamen-

tal contrast is: while the American discourse includes many specific appeals to patriotic loyalty in tune with liberal principles of mutual respect, equal rights, and broad social inclusion, these normative values remain closer to the margins of the South Korean discourse. Love of country in South Korea is often expressed through love of culture. It is not surprising that American patriotism draws far more elite intellectual adherents than any formative South Korean version of patriotism, given that contemporary Korean identity on the divided peninsula is often tied more to ethnicity than to any kind of political tradition. What counts as patriotic in South Korea is itself highly contested, given the heated domestic ideological polarization that cuts across all economic and social policy issues, especially when it comes to the North Korean question. The vigorous and often heartfelt advocacy of Korean traditional culture is also not surprising, given the painful memories of Japan's efforts to exterminate Korean culture during the colonial period and South Korea's ongoing rediscovery and reinvention of its cultural traditions for the contemporary era—an endeavor that encompasses the preservation of traditional venues (the continuing restoration of Gyeongbokgung palace, for instance) and the repackaging and hybridization of Korean culture as it adapts to contemporary tastes and outside influences (for instance, Korean-Mexican cuisine and traditional Korean musical instruments embedded in “Western”-style orchestras).

The absence of direct appeals to liberal values in the South Korean discourse is also not surprising. Skeptics of global citizenship and advocates of patriotism within the Nussbaum-and-critics debate make an effort to situate American patriotism within liberalism in order to distinguish it from more raw, exclusionary, or outright xenophobic examples of patriotism or nationalism. Without a salient political model of patriotism to hold up in contrast with global citizenship, South Korean skeptics of global citizenship have no need to enlist liberalism in order to render (a largely absent model of) patriotism morally legitimate. Instead, South Korean skeptics of global citizenship have often sidestepped politics altogether by focusing on the cultural realm. While scholars critical of both patriotism and cosmopolitanism as formative influences for political community might view this development favorably, the current state of affairs in South Korea carries

the danger that more virulent forms of nationalism might dominate the country's political landscape all the more resolutely without a compelling model of liberal patriotism as a visible and viable alternative. The near-absence of political liberalism in South Korean global citizenship discourse serves as yet another reminder that liberal democratic citizenship is still nascent in South Korea compared with many other constitutional democracies. One key question for further research is whether South Korean perspectives on global citizenship will shift closer to political liberalism—and also a politically grounded version of liberal patriotism—as the country's young democracy continues to move forward.

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