

Reflections on 2008 Candlelight Vigil in Republic of Korea:
Nationalist Movement, Identity of Sovereign Nation and Essence of National Sovereignty

Yonsei University
Department of Political Science
Kim Hyun

1. Introduction

On June 10, 2008, nearly 500,000 citizens gathered around Seoul City Hall and marched toward the Blue House, President Lee Myung-bak's office. When including those people who joined the demonstration through cyberspace, the number of participants was presumed to reach more than 1 million. This was the time a candlelight vigil turned into a national movement that attracted the attention of global society. Even though the government tried to persuade people to identify the candlelight vigil with "leftist and anti-U.S. demonstrations," at this moment the government could not help but acknowledge it was a nationalist movement par excellence.

This paper aims to describe how the candlelight vigil evolved into such a nationalist movement. The government and "conservative" mass media tried to quell the protest, coloring the candlelight vigil as an "ideological" movement. Against this characterization, the candlelight protest proved to be a nationalist movement. This article shows how the candlelight vigil coped with the Korean version of McCarthyism.

Also, it deals with the peculiar characteristics of the sovereign nation in the candlelight protest. As the candlelight vigil appeared as a nationalist movement, the situation of double sovereignty (Tilly, 1978) occurred. What was unique was that there was no political representative of the sovereign nation in the movement, which invoked controversy between participants and opponents. I argue that contrary to both parties' contentions, the national sovereignty of the candlelight vigil was not power but *authority* and the sovereign nation was *the nation in accusative* who had the *authority over the nation as the first person*.

2. The Vicissitude of Nationalist Movement: From Candlelight Gathering to Demonstration¹

1) "The Candlelight Festival" as Substitute for Outdoor Gathering and Student Participation

On June 10, 2008, the nationalist movement originated in a somewhat unexpected event, "the Candlelight Festival against the Import of the Mad Cow," which was held against the government's decision over trade with the U.S. Right before the summit meeting with the U.S. President, Lee's government quickly reached an agreement over the reopening of the Korean market to the U.S. beef industry, which drastically eased the sanctions on the import of American beef. While opposition against the resumption of the import sprang up from the civil society, MBC's (Munhwa Broadcasting Corp) PD Sucheop (producer's note) broadcasted a program on April 30 that examined U.S. beef's susceptibility to the Mad Cow disease.

After the broadcast, concerns over the safety of U.S. beef rapidly spread across the Internet. In the meanwhile, the Internet club, Headquarters of the Movement for an Impeachment of President Lee Myung-Bak (anti2mb), held a candlelight vigil named the Candlelight Festival at the Cheonggye Square on May 2. Although this club had been holding the gathering since the presidential election in 2007, the number of participants stayed at an average of 50 people, but on May 2 approximately 10,000 people unexpectedly gathered together with numbers of middle and high school students, and these participations continued the following days.

As the protest seemed to maintain a sizable number of participants, the government took measures to crack down on the Candlelight Festival by pronouncing that authorities would treat it as an illegal gathering. The law on gatherings and demonstrations, prohibits out-of-door gathering at night, and under such a restriction Korean civil society has organized gatherings by substituting "candlelight festivals" for "outdoor gathering at night." Therefore, since 2000, the candlelight festival had been an

¹ The following description of the history of candlelight protests is based on five daily newspapers, Chosun Ilbo, Donga Ilbo (conservative), Hankyoreh Newspaper, Kyunghyang Newspaper (progressive), and a news agency, Yonhapnews.

alternative means for citizens to express their opinions.² Knowing the potency of the candlelight festival, Lee's government tried to silence the festival preemptively. Only two days after the festival began, the government promptly pronounced it was an illegal gathering.³

Parallel with the government's preemptive action over the festival, conservative newspapers such as Chosun Ilbo, JoongAng Ilbo, and DongA Ilbo also tried to help put down the gathering. They insinuated that there might be political left-wings behind the candlelight festival who wanted to agitate people to satisfy their own political interests, quoting the public comments of several conservative organizations. The government's identification of the festival as a politically manipulated gathering became a rationale for the government to treat the festival as illegal.

Progressive organizations and mass media refuted this characterization of the festival, arguing that the gathering was pure and innocent. Korea Alliance against KorUS FTA (KoA) said, "On-going Candlelight gathering is nothing more or less than people's voluntary festival" and one of Korea's leading Internet news also disagreed with the theory of political plot, saying that "the May 2 Candlelight Festival was neither an anti-American assembly nor a gathering for impeachment. It was nothing but a movement in which 'public rage' erupted against Lee's government and old mass media which ignored the will of the people, not considering the people's concern".

These progressive organizations refuted the contention of their opponents and advocated for the pure intention of the gathering on the grounds that the candlelight gathering consisted of the voluntary participation of unaffiliated people, most of whom were school-age boys and girls. Evidence of this is a daily newspaper's report on the constituency of the gathering on May 6. According to the newspaper, on May 6, approximately 12,000 people participated in the gathering and students accounted for more than 50 percent of the participants. This shows that most of the unaffiliated people were middle and high school students.

No organization expected such large participation from the students and this unpredicted result gave the progressive organizations the chance to form solidarity against the government's policy decision. On May 6, the National Meeting Against the Import of Mad Cow Disease Beef (NMIM) was organized with the participation of nearly 1,000 groups, including civic organizations and Internet clubs.

In response to the student participation, the government devised follow-up measures to deal with it. Since the candlelight gathering had occurred, the government shared the perception with conservative newspapers that a political wirepuller stood behind the gathering, inciting immature students to join it. Therefore, the government brought out the measure to crack down on the student participation, resulting in the directive of the Ministry of Education that each school teacher should supervise their students' participation in the gathering.

Applying new tactics to the gathering, the government tried to break through the resistance from the civil society directly by declaring it would not delay the import of the U.S. beef. On May 8, the prime minister mentioned that on May 15 the agriculture minister would give the public notice of the new sanitary terms for importing U.S. beef, which meant the government would lift the ban on U.S. beef regardless of the candlelight vigil in the square.

2) Repressive Measures on Participating Students, their Appeal for Innocence, and President Lee's Apology to the Nation

As the government started to crack down on the students, the size of the candlelight gathering was decreasing. On May 9, approximately 30,000 people gathered in Seoul, and students accounted for approximately 60 Percent of the group. Small numbers of people joined the gathering on May 10 and May 13. On May 14, only 7,000 people flocked together. The decrease in the number of participants shows that the government's measures worked, in part.

However, a series of accidents allowed participating students to claim their innocence, and the repressive measures began to backfire. On May 13, the police declared they would take stringent legal action against the participants of the candlelight vigil. Among the participants was a high school student that went by the pen name of Andante, who initiated for the movement to get signatures to impeach the president. On May 15, it was reported that on May 6, police went into the high school to

² The candlelight festival began to attract the attention of people in 2002 when two schoolgirls were accidentally crushed to death by a U.S. military truck on June 13, 2002. In 2004, the impeachment of President Rho Moo-hyun also gave a chance for supporters of President Rho to hold a candlelight festival. Likewise, candlelight festivals were a tool for Korean civil society to mobilize people in critical situations.

³ In the case of Miseon · Hyosun's accident in 2002, it took three months for authorities to declare the festival illegal, and for the impeachment of President Rho, the pronouncement was made a week after the festival began.

investigate a student who had been at the gathering. These series of accidents gave rise to the participating students' appeal for their innocence, which strengthened the image of the festival as a pure and innocent gathering. Such an image was contrary to the one that the government wanted non-participants to believe. In short, the government's measure to put down the students' participation brought out the opposite image of the gathering it intended.

The following survey result shows how non-participant people perceive the candlelight gathering. According to the regular survey done by Hangil Research, 84.2 percent of respondents said "the negotiation on U.S. beef was wrong". When asked if they agreed with the government's argument that U.S. beef is safe from the Mad Cow disease, 75.2 percent said no. And 69.9 percent said they did not agree that the candlelight assembly was manipulated by a groundless rumor and was a left-wing plot. This survey reveals how non-participants perceived the candlelight gathering and the government's measures against it. While they were explicitly against the fruit of the agreement, non-participants trusted the pure intention of participants in the gathering.

Reflecting the growing support for the candlelight gathering, the scale of the candlelight gathering grew bigger. On Sat., May 17, the largest number of people gathered at Seoul City Hall Square since the beginning of the assembly. At this gathering, co-hosted by the NMIM and April 15 Joint Meeting against the Public Education Left Behind Policy, approximately 60,000 people joined with participants, of whom the biggest number was school boys and girls.

Therefore, the government had to withdraw the repressive measures on students' participation, failing to implant the image of the candlelight festival as illegal and political gathering. Rather, President Lee had to apologize to the nation for these measures, which meant he unwillingly acknowledged that the candlelight festival was pure and innocent, not an illegal political gathering. Then, in order to recover the public's trust in the government, it postponed the public notification set for May 15, starting supplementary talks with the U.S.

On May 20, Lee's government made an agreement with U.S., claiming it included a clause that guaranteed Korea's sovereignty over inspection. The government's announcement said, "It will wield the sovereignty by taking measures to halt the import if Mad Cow disease happens in the U.S." The government was certain that sovereignty over inspection of the U.S. beef was not impaired anymore.

However, the host organization of the candlelight gathering, the NMIM, criticized the government's claim, saying that it was no more than hypocrisy. It argued the sovereign nation's will only lay in the complete revision of the import terms, but since the largest assembly on May 17, the gathering was getting smaller. The voice to demand the renegotiation was decreasing, confronting the government's supplementary negotiation and President Lee's apology. On May 17, small numbers of people held the gathering and the main participants were members of the Special Agriculture and Fisheries Committee against KorUS FTA and farmer's organizations, namely affiliated people.

3) From the Candlelight Gathering to the Candlelight Demonstration

The participants of the assembly advocated that the will of the nation existed in the complete revision of the import terms, while the government thought the newly reached agreement reflected the will of the nation in a large measure. The government's action seemed to influence the people in a way that improved support for President Lee. According to a survey reported by CBS on May 24, the approval rating for President Lee's political performance was 6 percent higher than one week before; this showed that his action affected the people. With rising support for him and the Blue House, the government announced that the minister would give public notice on May 27. Contrastingly, the largest candlelight assembly had taken place on May 17. Therefore, the moment when participants could entertain suspicion about the capacity of the candlelight gathering had been reached. The candlelight gathering on May 24 was held in this moment, the watershed of the movement.

On May 24, approximately 30,000 people participated in the candlelight gathering; however, nearly 70 percent were members of the Korean Teachers and Education Workers' Union and Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, who held their own gathering at Yeouido that afternoon. That evening, they moved to Cheonggye Square to join the candlelight gathering. Likewise, the participation of unaffiliated people had decreased, but the movements' transition happened haphazardly. At the end of the gathering, some participants began to demonstrate toward the Blue House and the rest of them joined the demonstration, which was an action to "violate" the positive law. Such action accelerated the movement that was on the verge of decay after the president's special statement on May 22.⁴

⁴ The host organization had no intention to demonstrate into the Blue House. The march began from the small group who was holding a gathering separate from the official one. Once they began to demonstrate, participants

As the candlelight gathering turned into a demonstration, the controversy over the identity of the candlelight vigil was brought up again. The first controversy over student participation was settled as the government reluctantly recognized the candlelight festival as a pure and innocent gathering. When the candlelight assembly turned into a demonstration, the controversy over whether the candlelight vigil was pure or political arose again.

The government argued that it degenerated into a political, ideological movement and lost its purity. On May 25, the chief of the Seoul Police Agency said, "There might be maneuver in the background" and the next day, the chief of the National Police Agency stated publicly "Organizations which prepare plans to organize the demonstration might exist." In addition, the prosecutory authorities announced that the Korea Alliance for Progressive Movement (KAPM) might be a "wirepuller."⁵ While the authorities regarded the progressive organizations as the ringleaders of the demonstration, they designated Daum Agora⁶ as the action group that led the demonstration.

On the other hand, the NMIM officially denied the argument that it was leading the demonstration. Announcing the NMIM was not the command center, it argued that participants who were marching toward the Blue House were no more than an epiphany of a sovereign nation demanding the withdrawal of the president's decision. The progressive newspapers also attributed the cause of the demonstration to the government's unsatisfactory apology, adducing from the evidence that the participants of the demonstration were not members of certain movements or organizations but unaffiliated people. In short, progressive organizations refuted the government's contention, saying that the demonstration was not politically manipulated and instead was the pure epiphany of a sovereign nation. Therefore, the two interpretations collided with each other again. At this moment this discursive struggle led to the clash between the demonstration and the authorities.

4) The Confrontation between the Candlelight Protest and the Government

The candlelight demonstration took place over several days. The demonstration on May 24 lasted until dawn and through May 25 and 26. The authorities arrested many people, trying to put down the demonstration. The helmeted police exerted physical force against the demonstrators, injuring many of them. In the meantime, the collision between the candlelight demonstration and the helmeted police was broadcasted on live on the Internet. After May 24, Internet newspapers carried the demonstration live and AFRICA⁷ gave individuals a chance to cover the event live. As the movement was reported live, plenty of people became involved in the demonstration. In accordance with the increase of involvement, live broadcasts grew rapidly and many spectators got to express their support for and participate in it.⁸ With the aid of the Internet, the demonstration spread over various living spaces, overcoming the physical distance between them. That is to say, there also was a cyberspace movement that complemented the sphere of candlelight vigil.

While the scale of the movement was getting bigger, the destination of the march, primarily the Blue House, changed into Jong-ro, Eulji-ro, Namdaemun, and Sinchon. The police wielded physical force to quell the demonstration until May 27. However, that day the participants bravely resisted the arrest on the principle of non-violence when hundreds of them decided to ride in the patrol wagon voluntarily. Their actions proved that the state power was nothing but sheer violence and their actions were seen to be morally superior. On May 28, the police decided to step back, considering growing support for the demonstration. It adopted the countermeasures and set up a barricade around City Hall Square. This measure, against expectations, caused even non-participants to complain about the authorities. Therefore, the police had no choice but to acquiesce in the sphere of the demonstration as long as it did not trespass the sphere of the Blue House.

in the official assembly got to follow their demonstration, and the emcee of the festival urged them to join the demonstration. The police were not prepared for the demonstration and the helmeted police did not know how to respond to the sudden accident.

⁵ KAPM was one of the constituent member organizations of the NMIM and the representative of KAPM, Oh Jong-Yeol, assumed the chief of the running committee of the NMIM.

⁶ Daum Agora is the cyberspace where netizens can ventilate any agendas they want to discuss. Throughout all the phases of the movement, Daum Agora played a key role in encouraging non-participants to be involved in the candlelight vigil.

⁷ AFRICA is the Web site that provides the channels to the individual netizen. Using this channel, netizens can do the live broadcasting by themselves.

⁸ Spectators watching the scene of quelling the participants joined the demonstration, called the police station against the violent suppression, initiated a campaign for fundraising to support the demonstration, and boycotted Jo Jung Dong newspapers' advertisers.

As the authorities fell into the situation where they could not exercise the use of physical force legitimately against the demonstration, the street became the liberated area ipso facto and the people held the festival in it. It did not mean that the government withdrew the policy decision. Rather, the Agriculture Minister announced the public notice of the New Sanitary Terms on May 29 and it was expected that the U.S. beef would be imported after the notice was posted on the official gazette on June 3. Although the government tolerated the space the movement occupied, it did not give up their power over the decision about resuming the import.

Therefore, the movement acquired the capacity to transform the street into a liberated area, but could not change the will of the Blue House. On the other hand, the government could not help but give in to the sphere of the movement; he did not yield to the demands of the movement to re-start negotiations. The government and the movement stood against each other with each preserving its own spheres, but the short stalemate broke off as the candlelight vigil started to demonstrate toward the Blue House on May 31. The collision between the demonstrators and the helmeted police occurred again, but this time the latter used water cannons to suppress the demonstration, which aroused public rage.

5) The Appearance of the Candlelight Protest as the Nationalist Movement

The scale of the demonstration that marched toward the Blue House on May 31 was the biggest since its beginning and lasted until the next day. At 7 p.m. on June 1, approximately 30,000 people gathered again and marched toward the Blue House. The measure to put down the demonstration with the use of physical force once again exposed the violence to the non-participants. Diverse mass media, including the Internet, delivered the news, dramatizing the conflict. As participation in and support for the demonstration grew bigger, the government decided to yield to the movement again. At this moment it became evident to the government that it was no longer possible to extinguish "candles" by suppressing the movement.

They could only accept that the movement was the will of the sovereign nation, which meant a de facto recognition of the candlelight protest as a nationalist movement. In other words, the government who argued the candlelight protest was a politically manipulated disturbance unwillingly accepted that it was a non-political nationalist movement. With the government's acknowledgment, the controversy over the identity of the movement ended, which resulted in the government's decision to hold supplementary negotiations with the U.S. regarding the import of the beef above 30 months old.⁹

In spite of the government's announcement of the supplementary negotiations, the nationalist movement got bigger closer to June 10. The government's use of physical force from May 31 to June 1 gave the candlelight protest the vintage point. Making the best use of the moral supremacy over the government, participant organizations held a relay candlelight vigil June 5-9.

On June 3 when the government declared its supplementary discussions with the U.S., the assembly took place with 20,000 participants. The participants did not march to the Blue House. Instead, they went to the National Police Agency, protesting against "the violent suppression" on May 31 and June 1. On the day when the candlelight gathering named "72 Hours Lasting Relay National Action" occurred, more than 100,000 people joined the gathering. Many university students showed up, deciding to close the class as an expression of protest against the government's attitude. They marched to the Blue House and when the barricade of shipping containers obstructed their march, they occupied the street holding the festival. Concerts were held and people met in small groups, drinking beers. On June 6, a national holiday, the number of participants increased, reaching nearly 150,000 people and in the last day of "72 Hours Lasting Relay National Action" approximately 100,000 people joined.

On June 10, "One Million's Candlelight March" started with a commemorative national funeral ceremony for a patriot, Lee Han-yeol. Authorities set up the container barricade across Gwanghwamun-ro to hold back the demonstration toward the Blue House. Nearly 500,000 people marched peacefully, and right before the demonstration all the cabinet members offered to resign from their posts.

After the candlelight march on May 10, the host organization of the gathering and other action groups interpreted this nationalist movement as the epiphany of the sovereign nation who commanded the government to restart negotiations. Therefore, they argued that unless the government commenced negotiations for revising the terms, another nationalist movement would

⁹ The public notice of the New Sanitary Terms was supposed to be posted on the official gazette on June 3. On June 2, the government decided to delay inserting the notice into the gazette and Lee's government asked the U.S. to hold the supplementary negotiation on June 3.

reappear to demand the resignation of the president. On the contrary, although Lee's government admitted that the candlelight protest was a nationalist movement, it believed the supplementary negotiations appropriately reflected the will of the sovereign nation. The discrepancy in the perception of the nationalist movement between both sides was conspicuous, but the rift could not be filled, resulting in another physical clash between them in late June.

3. The Identity of the Sovereign Nation and the Essence of the National Sovereignty: *Face of the Other, the Nation in Accusative and Authority*

Looking at this nationalist movement, what takes a high profile is that during the transitional moment, the situation of dual sovereignty was found. When the candlelight gathering turned into a demonstration, the movement justified itself in the name of the sovereign nation. With its claim to be the sovereign nation, the candlelight protest could transcend the binding force of the positive law, working out concessions from the government. In other words, the legitimate political power could not help but to acquiesce to the "illegal," "ideological" demonstration which claimed to be sovereign as a nationalist movement. Considering this exceptional situation, in hindsight we can recognize that the situation of double sovereignty arose, i.e., a revolutionary moment.

What strikes us in this phenomenon is the identity of a contending sovereign nation. Tilly argues that a revolutionary situation breaks out when a rival political block aiming for the acquisition of state power gains a certain amount of consent from the people, and it ends with one's complete victory over the other. Therefore, in the case of double sovereignty, there must be an ideological force that aims to grasp state power. However, the distinct feature in this case is that the contending sovereign nation appeared without such a political agent. Rather, the candlelight vigil tried to avoid being identified with the political agent, claiming to be non-ideological.

This unique situation sparked controversy over the identity of the nationalist movement, i.e., who was this non-political sovereign nation? Since the movement, right-wings and economic developmentalists have been arguing an alleged sovereign nation without a political agent is nothing less than a cover-up to hide the existence of a political wirepuller. They think that the discourse of non-politicalness and purity were mere camouflage for leftist organizations to hide their sinister designs, inciting credulous people to participate in candlelight disturbances.¹⁰ Against such an argument, organizations participating in the candlelight vigil have set the counterargument, saying that the candlelight protest was the pure epiphany of sovereign nation. However, participant organizations have not responded properly to the challenge from right-wings because their defense for the identity of the movement had a contradiction with itself.

In fact, they shared the presupposed assumption of their opponents that the essence of the sovereign nation was power.¹¹ Such a presupposition can be found in the statement of the NMIM on June 10. This statement said "the nation is running out of patience. President Lee and the government are losing the chance gradually. Now, the sovereign nation solemnly commands them to nullify the agreement over the negotiation by June 20 and set to restart the negotiation from the scratch." In this statement, national sovereignty was considered the commanding power to order the government. Such a concept of sovereignty succinctly fits the definition of the sovereignty Jean Bodin suggested, that is, "the absolute commanding power" (Bodin 1576/1992, p. 1). Therefore, they believed that the sovereign nation was the agent with power.

But, at the same time, they justified the movement in terms of "purity", "innocence" and "non-political" which denoted the irrelevance with power. Therefore, their stance over the identity was contradictory with itself, which gave right-wings an excuse to keep insisting on the existence of a hidden political agent behind the movement. However, participant organizations could not extricate themselves from the contradiction, making them unable to understand the nature of sovereignty the imagined nation owned. As a result, the candlelight protest gradually lost its status as a nationalist movement, since it came to resist the government with the use of violence. In particular, when the confrontation between the candlelight vigil and the political power turned into a violent clash, the justifiability of the candlelight protest withered. Only the intervention of religious groups saved the candlelight vigil from

¹⁰ In fact, Lee's government also had a similar perception of the identity of the candlelight vigil. As was explained in Chapter 2, the government acknowledged that the candlelight vigil was a nationalist movement, not an illegal political movement. After the candlelight protest withered, it reverted to the former stance. Therefore, the government insisted that it was a "disturbance" caused by political conspiracy.

¹¹ The concept of the power used here is defined as the "ability to force one's will to the other regardless of other's will" (Weber 1978).

death.

Such a denouement hints that power is not the proper concept to understand the essence of the national sovereignty in a nationalist movement. What was the essence of the sovereignty that enabled the candlelight protest to *transcend* the positive law? And what was the identity of the nation that had such sovereignty? The nature of the contending national sovereignty was the *authority* lost with the secularization of modern society, but was reinvigorated through *face of the other*, and the sovereign nation was *the self in accusative* with *authority*, not with power.

In modern social science, the concepts of power and authority have been used indiscriminately. As Hannah Arendt (1958, 1968) cogently pointed out before, it was mainly because in Western society the experience of authority vanished in public and private spaces. According to Arendt, power and authority could be differentiated to the extent that neither one could be reduced to the other. In other words, authority was able to exist independently of power. Arendt defined the essence of this entity in terms of its distinct function as "more than advice and less than a command, an advice which one may not safely ignore," quoting Mommsen's definition (Arendt 1958, p. 100).

Then, what was the nature of authority that endowed itself with the distinctness irreducible to power? She argues that authority originated in the hierarchy itself, using the lost tradition of Rome as a precedent. According to Roman tradition, authority had nothing to do with coercion by force or persuasion. Where arguments for persuasion were used, authority was left in abeyance. Against the egalitarian order of persuasion stood authoritarian order, which was always hierarchical (Arendt 1958, p. 82).

The reason the distinct nature of authority lay in the hierarchical relation was related to the sense of responsibility to preserve the foundation of community. To put it another way, the legitimacy of hierarchy depended on the fact that the one was supposed to assume the responsibility to augment the foundation of the community.¹² The one who was destined to take the duty of becoming an augments of the community was put in a higher position than everyone who came after the foundation. This dimension of height made the hierarchical relation possible. In short, the distinct nature of authority was the asymmetrical relationship based on the assumption of the responsibility to transmit the foundation for all things to come (Arendt 1958, p. 100). The man of authority stood in the high place, looking over the descendants who would follow the path put down in advance; this was why his or her word became "the advice which one may not safely ignore."

However, the modern society lost authority because it was deprived of the sacred foundation. As society became secularized, the sacred was expelled from society. Therefore, no hierarchical relationship was left in the public realm. However, Emmanuel Levinas's moral philosophy opens up new vistas of authority because his concepts of *face of the other* (*Autrui*) and *the self in accusative* reveal how to recreate a hierarchical relationship in modern era and show the possibility of reinvigorating *authority*.

According to Levinas, *the I* (the self as the first person) is the one who is experiencing separation and enjoying the economy, and *the other* is a person who has been excluded from the cognition of *the I*. *The other* is unseen by *the I* and Levinas likened *the other* to "the stranger, the poor, the widow, and the orphan" who were alienated from society. The time comes when *the face of the other* appears and this moment is when *the I* comes to hear his or her destitution. At this juncture, *the face of the other* summons *me* i.e., *self in accusative*, asking for the responsibility from *me*. In other words, *the face of the other* orders *me* to say the origin or pre-origin (Levinas 1969, pp. 212-216; 1998, pp. 5-11).

The relationship between *the me* who is confronting *the face of the other* and *the I* who has been separated from *the other* reveals the possibility of reinvigorating *authority*. Once *the I* realize the occurrence of *the me* who confronts *the face of the other*, there arises a hierarchical relationship between *the me* and *the I*. As the self in accusative (*the me*) is the one who takes the responsibility for *the other*, i.e., origin or pre-origin, such an assumption of responsibility for the origin puts *the me* on the higher stance than *the I* who excluded *the other* from society. Therefore, an asymmetrical relationship between *the me* and *the I* appears, which enables *the me* to exert *authority* over *the I*. In this way, ethical situations where the *face of the other* evokes *the self in accusative* reveal an opportunity for lost authority to be reinvigorated.

However, in this process of reinvigoration, the essential transformation in the essence of *authority* occurs. In Roman tradition, hierarchical relation consists of two different agents, man of authority (*auctoritas*) and man of power (*potestas*), and the former wields authority over the latter. Furthermore, there was room for authority to absorb power. Even though authority was differentiated from power, at

¹² The authority receives its own *raison d'être* from the faith that it knows where the constituent human being of the community comes from and also where they should proceed.

the exigent moment authority could appropriate power to preserve the polis. Contrastingly, retrieved *authority* was not allowed to own power even in exceptional moments. If the authority of the self in accusative is to appropriate power, *the me* has to grasp *the other*. However, such an effort could not be successful because of the third party. In other words, as long as the chance for the third party to appear remains, the self with *authority* is not allowed to own power.

I argue that the essence of the national sovereignty in the candlelight vigil was the *authority* of the nation in accusative, not power of the nation as the first person. To prove my argument, I will briefly re-examine exceptional situations during the phases of the movement. According to Carl Schmitt (2006), the most efficient way to comprehend the essence of sovereignty is to explore the exceptional situation. In the candlelight movement, such exceptional situations happened when they transcended the binding force of the positive law.

The first exceptional situation occurred when the candlelight gathering transcended the law on gatherings and demonstrations. The “candlelight festival” was declared an illegal gathering earlier than usual by the government. The government identified the participant students as mere children incited by a political agitator, taking measures to crack down on their participation. Consonant with the repression, conservative newspapers colored the identity of the festival as a politically manipulated gathering. On May 22, the government apologized to the nation for its poor measures to deal with the participating students, accepting the trans-legal status of the candlelight vigil.

Why did the government change its attitude and recognize the trans-legal status of the gathering? How could the gathering transcend the binding force of positive law? First, there was the heavy resistance from the students against the government's repression. However, what was really important was not just their increasing participation but also the non-participants' response to those students. The more student participation was regarded by the government as politically manipulated, the more they claimed their motives to be pure and innocent. When non-participants heard students cry for their innocence, they were to be aware of the responsibility for their voice, which meant to confront *the face of the other*. Hearing the cries of the students who claimed to be innocent put the non-participants in their faces and they became accountable to the cry.

However, *people's confronting the face of the other* depended on their capacity to imagine the community that could speak to *the face of the other* and they found “the nation” to be the one. In the April 19 Revolution in 1960, students protested against the unjust regime and their cry for justice invoked the imagined community, the nation. This tradition enabled people to imagine the community that could take responsibility for the students. In other words, the students' appeal for innocence toward the nation appeared as *the face of the other* and the non-participants were put into the position to assume the historical responsibility of the nation for the *face of the other*.

Therefore, the nation invoked with the students' cry was the self in accusative and this explains why Lee's government had no choice but to listen to the candlelight vigil, apologizing to the imagined nation for his treatment of the students. In his statement on May 22, he announced “I know the nation is worried about the political performance of new government. To be frank with you, the government which hurried to prepare the measures to support livestock raisers was embarrassed with the spread of so-called ‘Mad Cow disease ghost stories.’ And above all, in the Cheonggye Square which I had restored with my heart's blood, I saw young students come out to participate in the candlelight gathering, which gave me heartbreaking pain. · The government was poor at reflecting the opinion of the nation. I admitted of the criticism that I did not pay enough attention to the mind of the nation”.

In his statement, President Lee apologized for “not carefully listening to the opinion of the nation,” alluding to the characteristics of the sovereignty that the imagined nation had. Legally speaking, the president represented the nation and, therefore, he was the nation as the first person in charge of the nation's economy. On the contrary, the candlelight vigil was the *face of the other* who summoned *the imagined nation in accusative*. Therefore, the nation invoked by the candlelight vigil had authority over the first person nation, the president. That is why President Lee had to apologize to the nation for his hasty judgment.

The second exceptional situation occurred when the candlelight demonstration transcended “the law on gatherings and demonstrations” and “the road traffic law”. The candlelight vigil did not stop when President Lee made a special statement on May 22. The gathering changed into the demonstration, “breaking” the laws, and this collective action caused controversy over the identity of the movement. The government resolutely regarded the candlelight vigil as an illegal political demonstration elaborately planned by hidden political forces who wanted to incapacitate the public. Accordingly, the government set to use physical force to crack down on the demonstration, persuading non-participants to believe that the candlelight protest degenerated into an illegal ideological demonstration. However, it did not work. What made the candlelight vigil transcendental over the

legality?

Organizations and individuals participating in the demonstration justified their action in the name of the sovereign nation. They argued the candlelight demonstration was justifiable because it originated from the will of the sovereign nation. However, the participant organizations claimed not to be the agent to be responsible for the “illegal” demonstration, which meant no participant organizations voluntarily assumed the responsibility of the imagined nation for crossing the limits of the positive laws. In other words, nobody was to be the representative of the alleged sovereign nation who was in charge of “violating” the laws. Instead, participants passed the responsibility to the spectators, saying that the candlelight vigil was the epiphany of the sovereign nation. Accordingly, the responsibility of the sovereign nation for *the transcendence* depended on the judgment of non-participants who had been watching the movement’s development.

The judgment on the identity of the movement was made at the moment when the government used physical force on the demonstration on the spot, delivered to living spaces through cyberspace. The sphere of demonstration was publicly delivered to various living spaces and when the spectators faced participants who were appealing to the nation, they confronted mere young students, white-collar workers, housewives with babies inside the carriage, and aged persons, i.e., *the face of the other*, not volatile and avaricious demos. As they saw the violence imposed on each person, their face put spectators in the position of responsibility. By deciding to participate in the movement, spectators involuntarily took the responsibility of the imagined nation for *the transcendence*. Each new participant had a different rationale to partake in the movement, but all of them played a role of sovereign nation in the moment when he chose to participate.

Each time spectators participated in the candlelight protest, the nation responsible for *the transcendence* also appeared. As long as new participants appeared, the candlelight vigil put on the clothes of the nationalist movement with *authority* over the government.¹³ This was why the government gave up using physical force temporarily and yielded the street to the candlelight vigil. The space of freedom the nationalist movement acquired was what the *authority of the nation in accusative* preserved. On May 29, the demonstrators tried to march to the Blue House for the second time and the government could not exert physical force because the *authority* preserved the sphere of the movement. While *the nation in accusative* wielded *authority over the nation as the first person*, the physical force of the government became brutal violence. Therefore, the government could not help but acknowledge national sovereignty of the candlelight vigil, which was nothing but the *authority of the nation in accusative* over power of *the nation as the first person*.

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¹³ Ironically the agent with authority did not exist in the nationalist movement. As soon as the spectator participated in the movement, he or she became the other, not the nation in the accusative.

Keywords

Candlelight Vigil, Nationalist Movement, Situation of Double Sovereignty, Face of the Other, the Nation in Accusative, Authority

Abstract

This paper aims to describe how the candlelight vigil evolved into such a nationalist movement. The government and “conservative” mass media tried to quell the protest, coloring the candlelight vigil as an “ideological” movement. Against this characterization, the candlelight protest proved to be a nationalist movement. This article shows how the candlelight vigil coped with the Korean version of McCarthyism. Also, it deals with the peculiar characteristics of the sovereign nation in the candlelight protest. As the candlelight vigil appeared as a nationalist movement, the situation of double sovereignty occurred. What was unique was that there was no political representative of the sovereign nation in the movement, which invoked controversy between participants and opponents. I argue that contrary to both parties’ contentions, the national sovereignty of the candlelight vigil was not power but *authority* and the sovereign nation was *the nation in accusative* who had the *authority over the nation as the first person*.