Western Religion (Seogyo, 西教): Western capitalism and the communitarian view of goods

Going beyond Max Weber's theory, an analysis of the correlation among Western-religious philanthropy, the communitarian view of goods, and capitalism

Western Religion

Capitalism

Communitarianism

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Academic Presentation Materials

Background and Problem Statement

Reinterpretation of Max Weber's Theory

Contrary to what Weber's "Protestantism and the Spirit of Capitalism" argued, it was the communitarian spirit grounded in the philanthropic ethos of Western Religion that contributed to the establishment of capitalism.

Reexamining the Communitarian View of Goods

The view of goods in Western Religion is a philanthropic thought grounded in circulation and distribution, a conception diametrically opposed to the Protestant view of wealth.

The Need to Reinterpret the Modern Economic Structure

An examination of the implications that Western Religion–based communitarianism offers for modern capitalism, which faces the problems of environmental crisis and human alienation.

Core Problem Statement

The success of Western capitalism stems not simply from the Protestant ethic, but from a communitarian view of goods that combines the spirit of philanthropy and circulation in Western Religion.

Philanthropy (Fire)

Saving (Water)

Circulation (Economy)

nlike Weber, who equated Protestantism with Western Religion, the philanthropic thought of Western Religion diametrically opposed to Protestantism.

Historical Reinterpretation

The Difference Between Protestantism and Western Religion

Unlike Weber's account, the philanthropic thought of Western Religion constitutes a system diametrically opposed to the Protestant view of wealth.

Protestantism

Saving-centered; emphasis on worldly labor; a mission to reshape the world

VS

Western Religion (Catholicism, Orthodoxy)

Circulation-centered; emphasis on philanthropy and gift-giving; pursuit of harmony with the world

Western Religious Philanthropy and Fire (火)-like Circulation

"Philanthropy (博愛)," like "Fire (火)," plays the role of consuming accumulated wealth where it is needed and thereby circulating it.

* Western Religion expresses the Holy Spirit as "Fire (火)," symbolizing the circulation of value and the realization of utility.

Taoism - "Water (水)"

The role of drawing in and accumulating water

Confucianism - Innovation

Emphasis on production and value creation

Western Religion - "Fire (火)"

Promoting the distribution and circulation of value

Core Economic Activities and Doctrines

Distribution-Centered Economic Activity

Within the economic cycle of "saving-production-distribution-allocation," it corresponds to distribution, realizing value through a distribution grounded in the communitarian view of goods that is philanthropy.

The Acceptance of Interest and the Trinity

Unlike Islam or Judaism, which worship the same one God, Western Religion contributed to the development of Western capitalism by permitting 'interest (利子).'

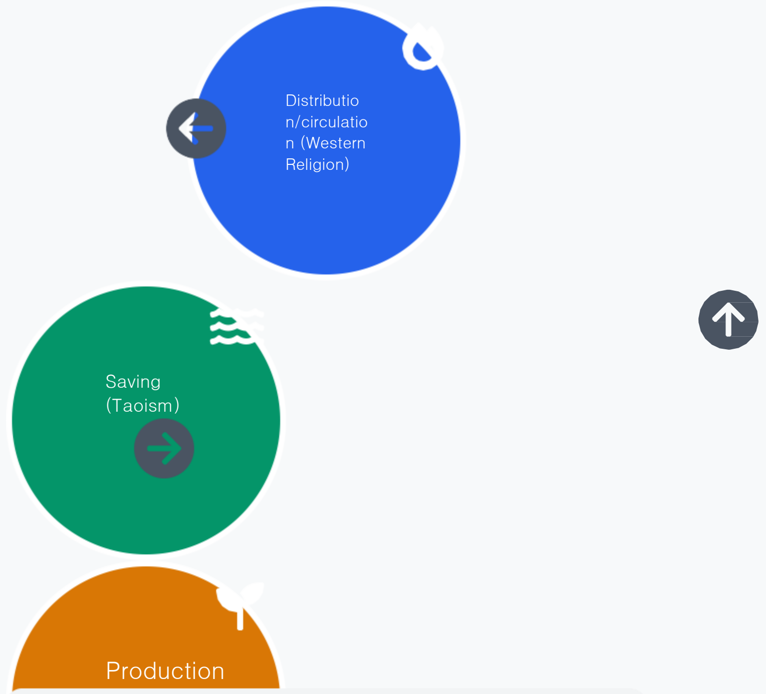
The Symbolism of Philanthropy and Fire (火)

Western Religion expresses the Holy Spirit as "Fire (火)"; unlike Taoism's Water (水), philanthropy, like "Fire (火)," consumes accumulated wealth where it is needed and circulates it.

The Logic of Money and Monotheism

"Money" symbolizes circulation, and the monotheism of Western Religion is a thought that, like money, unifies everything by a single standard.

es not merely concentrate on consumption without producing value; rather, it produces value by realizing lity.



(Confucianism) The Trinity and Economic Circulation

The Son (circulation) – the Holy Spirit (fire/distribution) – the Father (origin)

Western Religion: Western Capitalism and the Communitarian View of Goods. Western Religion expresses the value increased through circulation as the Son.

The View of Society and State

- ## The Communitarian View of Society

Independent individual subjects view the market economy critically and assert the common good, recognizing social solidarity not as self-interested calculation but as a historically formed community of sentiment.

** "All are brothers and sisters" - forming an extended community relationship beyond the family.*

- ## A View of the State Oriented Toward Heaven on Earth

The state is the place where the ideal of the community is actively realized.

Though it is a dual system of the pope and the king, the king is the agent who realizes the communal ideal.

- ## The Balance Between Market and Community

Communitarianism is an ethical foundation that both opposes and complements the market economy, overcoming the limits of the market economy through circulation and distribution by way of community.

Comparison of Communitarianism and Social Contractarianism

Communitarianism: a community of sentiment, priority on the common good

Social contractarianism: self-interested calculation, priority on individual rights

The View of the State in Western Religion: Heaven on Earth

The church community

The institution of kingship

The communal ideal

n ideal economic thought, but its realization requires a firm guarantee of circulation.

The Theory of Value and Philanthropy

The Cultural Theory of Value and the Symbolic Theory of Value

The distribution–based view of goods in Western Religion bears the closest relationship to the cultural theory of value or the symbolic theory of value.

Marginal Utility and the Gift of Philanthropy

The law of marginal utility, which draws out the highest utility by distributing goods where they are most needed, is realized through the practice of gift–giving that is philanthropy.

The Formation of Spiritual Capital

The semiotic transformation of commodities solidifies into symbolic value through distribution and develops into spiritual (靈) capital.

The notion of symbolic value manifests as a covenant with God, which is explained as transcendent spiritual communion operating within the process of the gift economy."

ommunitarianism manifests in Western Religion as a ovenant with God.

The Process of Value Realization

Exchange value

↓

Use value

↓

Sign value

↓

Symbolic value

Gift–giving

Circulation

Philanthropy

- Western Religion: Western Capitalism and the Communitarian View of Goods

Strengths and Problems of Capitalism

Strengths of Capitalism

- **The Gift-Giving Thought of Philanthropy**
  The gift-giving thought of philanthropy, absent in the Eastern Three Teachings (Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism), laid the founda-tion for the development of capitalism.

- **Promoting the Circulation of Capital**
  Goods produced under the wealth-and-power policies of Confucianism and Taoism are widely distributed in accordance with philanthropic thought, thereby promoting the circulation of goods.

- **Ease of Community Formation**
  The non-agrarian character of the people helps maintain equitable relationships and is advantageous for forming community.

Problems of Western Capitalism

- **The Degeneration of the Symbolic Value of Goods**
  With the death of God and the death of ideology, the symbolic value of goods changes: proof of God's mercy → object of use → virtual reality.

- **The Collapse of Circulation**
  Circulation collapses under the boomerang of environmental crisis and human alienation, degenerating into a 'gambling capitalism that sacrifices today for the sake of heaven.'

- **The Loss of Circulatory Ethics**
  The advance of material civilization obstructs the spiritual civilization of the circulatory structure of the Three Teachings, and even the individual's economic view loses its circulatory ethics.

The Direction of Problem-Solving

"Without a sense of purpose, morality is nothing more than taste or preference."
- MacIntyre (a leading thinker of communitarianism)

tive Analysis of Western and Communitarianism

n Religion (西教) and n Capitalism

fluence: non-agrarian munitarianism
otance of interest,

ommunity through the philanthropy

ate:
th

e: covenant

rs: Calvin, Wesley

Communitarianism / Institutionalist Economics

History of influence: modern communitarian theory

Theory: gift economy theory, general economy theory

Core activity: gift-giving, distribution, consumption

View of the state:
communal state

Theory of value:
symbolic value

Leading thinkers: MacIntyre, Michael Sandel

God's brothers and sisters / equality before God

Capacity for collective action / environmental problems

Emphasis on circulation

Promoting dialogue

View of society/equality

Strengths

and

Problems,

Points of

Community of sentiment / equality before the community

An ideal economic system / lack of feasibility

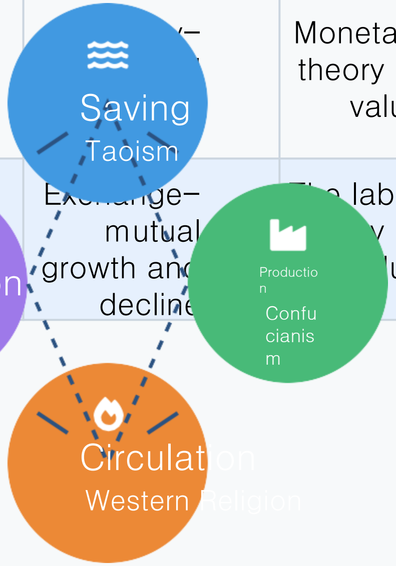
Emphasis on community

Strengthening the sense of purpose

Analysis of the Circulation Structure and Conclusion

istribution-Allocation Circulation tructure (Table 2.8)

Religion	Economic thought	Circulatory relationship	Theory of value	Capitalism
Taoism	Affirmative view of wealth	Opposition–mutual conflict	Utility theory of value	Chinese capitalism
Confucianism	Vocational view of labor	Expectation–mutual dependence	The innovation theory of value	Confucian capitalism
Western Religion	Public view of goods	[illegible]y– [illegible]	Monetary theory of value	Western capitalism
Buddhism	Depend[illegible] orig[illegible] dis[illegible]	Exchange–mutual growth and decline	[illegible] labor [illegible] of [illegible]ue	Bodhisattva capitalism



ment of economic thought can become sustainable through the circulatory structure of

Conclusion and Implications

- **The Essence of Economic Circulation: The circulatory structure running from saving to production to distribution to allocation is the basic flow of the economy, and Western Religion leads the distribution stage within it.**

The Philanthropy and Communitarianism of Western Religion: The success of Western capitalism lies in the promotion of the circulation of goods through philanthropy-based distribution.

- **The Problem of Modern Capitalism: In the course of the advance of material civilization, circulation was lost, and the environmental crisis and human alienation brought about the crisis of capitalism.**
- **Unconscious Symmetry: Owing to unconscious symmetry, human participation in the economy of gift-giving and circulation is inevitable.**

Implications for the Modern Economy

To resolve the problems of environmental crisis and human alienation, a restoration of the Western Religion–based circulatory ethic and a contemporary application of the communitarian view of goods are needed.

Gift-giving and circulation are key elements of sustainable economic development, and dialogue and a strengthened sense of purpose are needed for a sustainable community.

Western Religion: Western Capitalism and the Communitarian View of Goods