

## Trust, relationship, and civil society in Scandinavia and East Asia: Psychological, social, and cultural analysis

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The present paper examines trust, interpersonal relationship, and civil society in Scandinavia and East Asia. In the first section, the concepts of trust and democracy are defined. In the second section, the cultural transformations that paved the way for the development of democracy in the West and Scandinavia are reviewed. In the third section, the basis of trust and democracy in East Asia, focusing on Confucianism, is reviewed. In the fourth section, a review of an empirical study conducted with a national sample in Denmark, Sweden, Japan, and Korea is presented. The results indicate that both the Scandinavian and East Asian respondents support the basic ideas of liberal democracy and trust close ingroup members. East Asian respondents are less likely than Scandinavian respondents to trust their colleagues and outgroup members and much less likely to trust political and government institutions. Scandinavian respondents prefer tolerant leaders who lead by ideas, while Koreans prefer strong paternalistic and moral leaders. Japanese respondents are less supportive of paternalistic leaders. Overall, results indicate that in Scandinavia and East Asia, although the basic ideas about democracy and human rights are similar, the methods of implementing these ideas are different. When compared with Scandinavia, there is much lower transparency and accountability in East Asia. In the final section, the challenges that the modern democracies face are discussed.

*key words* : Trust, relationship, democracy, political culture, Denmark, Sweden, Korea, Japan

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The trend toward globalization has been with us for a long time. Two types of globalization can be identified: Unilateral and enlightened globalization. The unilateral globalization is based on the belief in the superiority of its own culture and the imposition of its system of beliefs, values, and standards in other countries (Kim, Helgesen, & Ahn, 2002). The enlightened globalization is based on dialogue, understanding, and integrating cultural diversity (Kim, Aasen, & Ebadi, 2003). The unilateral globalization has been the typical mode, with one culture dominating and subjugating other cultures. It has resulted in oppression, war, terrorism, and destruction (Kim, Aasen, & Ebadi, 2003).

The enlightened globalization recognizes that cultures have different set of values, skills, and resources and through cultural contact and exchange societies and cultures are transformed. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the enlightened globalization freed Europeans from grips of superstition, fear, and famines that plagued the medieval period. Civilization in other parts of the world flourished and Europeans were able to learn and integrate this information to open a new era known as the renaissance.

With Marco Polo's travel to Asia, Europeans awoke to new possibilities of wealth, knowledge, science, and technology. The desire to find a shorter route to the East led to the discovery of the Americas. Europeans learned about Greek philosophy, democracy, mathematics, and science

through Muslim scholars. The knowledge, technology and resources obtained from the Middle East, Far East, Africa, and the New World made the Enlightenment, modernization, and democracy possible. Europeans were able to transform this knowledge into new cultural forms and emerged as brutal colonialists from 17<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup> century (an example of unilateral globalization) and as champions of democracy and human rights in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (an example of the enlightened globalization).

The purpose of this paper is to examine the concept of trust, interpersonal relationship, and the development of civil society in Scandinavia and East Asia. A cross-cultural study conducted with a national sample in Denmark, Sweden, Japan and Korea is reviewed to compare and contrast trust, relationship, and civil society in these countries. Finally, the challenges that the modern democracies face will be discussed.

### Trust, democracy and civil society

Trust has become an important topic in modern life. Trust is considered to be the cornerstone of modern democracy and civil society. Hardin (1998) cites an anonymous Greek philosopher who states: "The first result of lawfulness is trust, which greatly benefits all people and is among the greatest goods" and "the result of trust is that property has common

benefits, so that even just a little property suffices, since it is circulated, whereas without this even a great amount does not suffice” (p. 9). John Locke pointed out that the relationship of citizens to government is one of trust, not one of contract (Hardin, 1998, p. 9).

Putnam (1993) considers trust as an important element in civil society and views it as a social capital. He outlines the importance of trust as a key ingredient for economic development, organizational effectiveness, and national competitiveness. Societies that emphasize traditional family ties, strong interpersonal relationship, and ingroup identity have difficulties developing trust at a societal level, which impedes the development of a truly democratic and civic culture (Fukuyama, 1995; Yamagishi, 1998). Gamson (1968) defines political trust as the feeling that the government is acting in the individual's or public's interest.

The word democracy comes from the Greek word *demokratia*, which means, “rule by the people.” According to Diamond, Juan and Lipset (1990), democracy denotes a system of government that meets three essential conditions: “Meaningful and extensive *competition* among individuals and organized groups (especially political parties) for all effective positions of government power, at regular intervals and excluding the use of force; a ‘highly inclusive’ level of *political participation* in the selection of leaders and policies, at least through regular and fair elections, such that no

major (adult) social group is excluded; and a level of *civil and political liberties* - freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom to form and join organizations - sufficient to ensure the integrity of political competition and participation” (p. 6-7). This definition is an example of a Western conception of democracy that emphasizes competition, political parties, and liberal philosophy.

People around the world generally agree with the basic idea that people should rule themselves or have representatives speak and act on their behalf. The question is how should this be done? Should it be individuals, communities, civic groups, or political parties? This has been the point of contention and the focus of historical and cross-cultural debate. Although the basic ideas of democracy such as political participation, representation, freedom, and decision-making are widely accepted, these ideas are constituted and implemented differently depending on the cultural context. The ideas of democracy are neither uniquely Western nor Eastern, but they are an integration of ideas from many cultures and civilizations. Although the West is currently championing these ideals, these ideas were developed and implemented in many parts of the world for many centuries.

The greatest strength of democracy is that it allows the greatest number of people to participate in the decision-making process. It is the role of political leaders to allow diverse

opinions to emerge and integrate this information into concrete policies and programs. Democracy is a collective process in which citizens participate in the creative process. It provides people with a sense of ownership and control. Political discussion and participants are essential ingredients. In Korea, many people feel excluded from the political process and influence. They feel that politicians and bureaucrats protect their own interests and the interests of business at the expense of the larger public (Kim, 2001). In contrast, Scandinavians are generally satisfied with the political system since they participate in the process of developing, maintaining, and creating a peaceful, democratic state and work with strangers as equals and within the rule of law (Helgesen & Kim, 2002). The challenge that rests before Korea is how to implement the ideals of democracy with transparency, integrity and accountability.

In the West, ideas about the nature of human beings, social relationship, and governance came from three major sources: Christianity, social Darwinism, and liberal philosophy. Philosophers, such as John Locke and Emmanuel Kant, accept the Divine creation as the starting point and use rationality as the basis of developing a civil society. Social Darwinism, in contrast, denies the special status of human beings and extends Darwin's theory of evolution to claim that there is a struggle among individuals, classes, and races for survival and

those who are most fit to survive will dominate others. Modern liberalism claims that the individual is the ultimate reality and only the individual can decide what is right, good, and just. These three political approaches have dominated discussion in social sciences and in public debates. These ideas and institutions did not evolve in a linear, rational or logical manner but through clash between cultural, religious, philosophical, and scientific ideas.

#### First transformation: Understanding nature

Many social scientists use Darwinian theory to explain cultural diversity and change. Although Darwinian theory is useful in explaining biological diversity and evolution, it is limited in explaining cultural diversity and transformation (Kim et al., 2002, 2003). Darwinian theory is partially right in pointing out that human beings were able to survive because they have adapted to their ecology. However, they were able to adapt because they were able to *overcome* their natural instinct and not because of it. Human beings possess intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness that allow them to understand and control their environment (Bandura, 1999).

Like all animals, it is our natural instinct to be afraid of fire. However, we were able to go beyond our natural fears and we used fire to protect us from predators, cook food over the

fire, and to transform formless clay and iron into tools (e.g., weapons, utensils, boats, and houses). We learned to domesticate wild animals like cows, pigs, and chickens and cultivate wild rice, wheat, or vegetables as a mean of producing and storing food. We managed to transform our natural enemies as our allies (e.g., dogs and cats). With increased agricultural efficiency and storage, people could depend on the food produced from the land and from livestock. With technological advancements enough food could be produced from the land to support a large number of people. With the increase in population, social, political, and religious institutions were created and institutionalized. The reflective and causal understanding that human beings possess differentiates human beings from animals.

#### Second transformation: Metaphysical certainty

Religions provide certainty in an uncertain world and answers to the mysterious and wondrous world around us. Although tribal communities developed animistic religions, major religions (e.g., Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism) emerged to subjugate tribal religions. In Europe, Christianity became the dominant religion. The main tenet of Christianity is the Divine creation of heaven, earth, and all living forms. Christianity was liberating to many, especially to the slaves, since

it taught that all humans are equal in the eyes of God. At the same time, Christianity affirmed a single grand order and hierarchy, from God to angels to humans to animals (Leahey, 1987). God represented the Truth and occupied the center, while humans, born with original sin, occupied the periphery. Access to knowledge was limited to only a select few and the translation of the Bible into vernacular language was forbidden.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the absolute teachings of the Church were directly challenged when explorers discovered the New World that was not mentioned in the Bible. Copernicus distributed his view that put the sun at the center and earth in the periphery. Similarly, Galileo published his findings in 1632 validating Copernicus theory.

#### Third transformation: Renaissance and humanism

The Renaissance in Europe represents a cultural revolution: a different way of perceiving and understanding the world. People realized that individuals have the potential to discover the Truth first-hand and many of the teaching of the Church were dogmatic, arbitrary, and erroneous. Ren é Descartes, for example, was in turmoil since the Christian teachings were in conflict with the new scientific discoveries. He adopted a method of critical doubt in which he rejected all ideas, doctrines, and beliefs, unless

the truth was self-evident. He found that he could doubt virtually everything, except one undeniable fact - his own existence. The fundamental question was "How do I know I exist?" He concluded that it is through rationality and reason that he could know his existence with certainty (Kim, 2000). Descartes concluded, "*Cogito, ergo sum*" (I think, therefore I am).

Our body, like those of other animals, is controlled by natural instincts. Human beings are different from animals because we possess rationality and reason. This is a special gift from God that allows us to know God and the mathematical and scientific truth. Descartes' dualism allowed the separation of mind from body, and science from religion. Science studied the physical world and mechanical cause-effect, while Christianity dealt with the spiritual world. His view created a duality of thought, a dichotomy between mind and body and right and wrong. With these discoveries, "the Enlightenment brought the belief of naturalism, with eternal optimism, and hopes of perpetual progress, of the perfectibility of humanity, of useful and profound knowledge of the universe" (Leahey, 1987, p. 171).

John Locke (1632-1704) integrated Christian faith with rationalism and claimed that human beings are the workmanship of God and that they are born free and rational. Locke (1963) extended his ideas to social and political spheres

and outlined a liberal basis for justice, law, politics, and society.

#### Fourth transformation: Controlling nature

Drastic alteration in the ecology began around the early 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe in which human beings exerted greater control over the environment. Numerous factors contributed to the change: The rise of international trade and commerce, urbanization, developments in science and technology, and industrialization. Roads and shipping lanes were created to move commodities efficiently. Machines were created to produce goods in mass quantity. Coal and oil were used to generate energy and to operate these machines.

These changes resulted in a movement away from subsistence economies to market economies. With greater agricultural efficiency and the consolidation of land by the ruling class, many peasants were dislocated from their agricultural communities. They congregated in the newly formed cities. In traditional agricultural communities, collective trust, cooperation, and sharing were important aspects of daily life (Toennies, 1957). In the newly formed urban communities, people worked with strangers, regulated by machines, and worked for wage. The relationship was contractual and the law of supply and demand determined their wage. In many instances, workers were viewed as an

extension of machines or as commodities and they were exploited (e.g., the slaves trade). In this dehumanizing context, there was no one to protect the rights of these unrelated individuals.

The growth in science and technology allowed people to control the environment, and at the same time dehumanized human life by striping individuals of freedom and dignity and "reducing the individual to a collection of chemicals laboring in a vast industrial machine" (Leahey, 1987 p. 171). Collective action began to appear to protest the working conditions and relationships. New forms of collectives emerged in Europe defined by class (e.g., ruling class, merchant class, and working class) or by common interest (e.g., unions). Members of the working class began to organize and lobby their interests through protest, strikes, and revolutions.

#### Fifth transformation: Controlling people

The Cartesian duality, which separated the natural world from the spiritual world, the rational soul from the body, allowed science to proceed without the interference from the church. From 1859, with Charles Darwin's publication of the *Origin of species*, science occupied the center stage and religions were pushed to the periphery. Darwinian theory provided a mechanical explanation of the natural world and eliminated the necessity of a separate human and spiritual world. Human beings were part of nature and

not part of God's divine creation. Darwinian theory created a new breed of ideologues, such as Frederick Nietzsche, Karl Marx, and Sigmund Freud, who filled the epistemological void left by the displacement of Christianity.

Burke (1985) points out that Darwinian theory created a moral, social, and political vacuum and paved the way for the emergence of three political ideologies: German Nazism, American free-enterprise capitalism, and Russian communism. Ernest Haeckel fused Darwin's law of competition, struggle, and the survival of the fittest with the idea of superior German culture. He called for the creation of a superior German culture based on Aryan racial superiority. This superiority can be advanced by conducting systematic racial purification. Ammon stated, "Darwin must become the new religion of Germany the racial struggle is necessary for mankind" (Burke, 1985, p. 266). German scientists and politicians used social Darwinism to support and justify German Nazism.

Advocates of communism, such as Karl Marx, criticized the capitalistic exploitation of workers, the dehumanizing aspects of the uncontrolled market economy, and the excessive individualism. Marx called for creating a new society based on communal ownership rather than individual ownership, and a centralized planning and distribution system rather than a system based on the law of supply and demand. Darwinian theory provided the necessary scientific support

for his dialectical materialism. The struggle for survival in nature is reflected in the struggle between classes. He wrote to Frederick Engels: "*Origin [of the species]* is the natural history foundation for our views" (Burke, 1985, p. 273). Revolution would be the basis for progress and development of an Utopian society.

In the United States, Darwinian theory took on a different form. Herbert Spencer argued that natural selection should be allowed to take its course and the government should not interfere by helping the poor, frail, and helpless (Chorover, 1980). American industrialist John D. Rockefeller pointed out that "the growth of a large business is merely the survival of the fittest" and "this is not an evil tendency in business, but it is merely the working out of a law of nature and a law of God" (Burke, 1985, p. 271). Lewis Terman developed the Stanford-Binet IQ test to measure innate intelligence and he and his colleagues used the test to support the forced sterilization of deviants, segregation of blacks, and restriction of immigrants from Asia. By 1928, 21 states enacted laws to forcefully sterilize individuals (Chorover, 1980). In 1924, the National Origins Act was passed to exclude Asians from immigrating to the United States. Social Darwinism was used to justify social inequality as being natural and hence inevitable and it was used as a means for social control (Chorover, 1980).

#### Sixth transformation: Affirming human rights

During World War II, the Allied nations had to fight against the fascist Germany, Italy, and Japan. This situation created a need for individuals of diverse cultural background to unite and fight against a common enemy, which killed more than six million people based on eugenics ideals. On a broader scale, people realized justifying inequalities and injustices in the name of social Darwinism created irrevocable harm to victims and to society. Hatred, torture, and mass murder were justified in the name of science, and immigration restriction, forced sterilization, and genocide became reified in the name of progress and of greater good (Chorover, 1980).

After World War II, the West had to deal with the destruction of morality and humanity caused by equating and treating human beings as animals. On December 10, 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that supports the universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion. At the societal level, the conclusion of World War II signaled a move towards international cooperation and nation-building. In the United States, the Supreme Court ruled against the segregation policy and the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968 banned discrimination based on



race, sex, color, national origin, or religion. The Immigration Act of 1965 lifted restrictive racial quotas. Moreover, civil society became consolidated and the basic ideals of liberal democracy became firmly institutionalized.

### Liberal democracy

In the West, the liberal tradition focuses on a rational individual's rights to freely choose, define, and search for self-fulfillment (Kim, 1995). The content of self-fulfillment depends on the goals that individuals freely choose. The nature of the goal can vary from one individual to another and can range from hedonistic self-fulfillment to altruism. This freedom of choice is collectively guaranteed by individual human rights.

From a societal point of view, an individual's status or role is not ascribed or predetermined but attained through educational, occupational, and economic achievements. Individuals interact with others using mutually accepted principles (e.g., equality, equity, non-interference, and detachability), or through mutually established rules, contracts, and laws. Individuals with similar goals are brought together into a group and they remain in the group as long as it satisfies their needs. Laws and regulations are institutionalized to protect individual rights and articulate their duties. Everyone is able to assert these rights through the legal system. The state

is governed by elected officials, whose role is to protect individual rights and the viability of public institutions.

Liberal education provides the necessary training for children to discover and cultivate their rationality. Only those individuals who are considered rational are allowed to participate in political decision-making. For example, children, mentally insane, and criminals are not given the basic right to vote.

### Scandinavian model

In Scandinavia, free enterprise, capitalism, and excessive individualism were in conflict with the values that support relational and communal welfare. Denmark, Norway, and Sweden did not accept the inevitability of clash between classes and they did not adopt social Darwinism. Instead, they stressed a balance among individual freedom, interpersonal relationship, and community welfare and between individual rights and social duties.

In Denmark, a controversial intellectual figure and leader was N. F. S. Grundtvig (1782-1873). He led the movement for universal education, social welfare, and community development. He wanted to empower people, to make them masters of their own destiny, and to educate them for life. He argued that abstract theories had to be supplemented with concrete practice and experience. Unlike the Enlightenment in

England, France and Italy, in which knowledge was limited to the elites, he wanted the common people to be educated and to realize their own abilities and potentials. At the same time, he wanted the elites to learn from the farmers and craftsmen and to create a dialogue between classes. He launched *folkebojskoler* (people's high school) in 1844 and such schools spread all over Denmark.

Grundtvig accepted the views of the common people and their ways of life as the basis of building a society. He argued that popular values and norms must be taken seriously. Scholars can educate people and politicians can guide people, but they must work with what is already known by the people. He helped the common people gain confidence in themselves as masters of their destiny and society. He argued that these shared beliefs should manifest in actions and promote common good and collective welfare. These ideas became shared in Scandinavia and provided the basis for the modern welfare state.

### East Asian perspective

Rather than individual rights and rationality, the East Asian worldview focuses on relationships and emotions that bind individuals together. The Chinese, Japanese and Korean word for human being is *ingan* 人間. Literally translated, it

means "human between." The human essence can be defined in terms of what happens between individuals and not within an individual. Relational emotions that links individuals together, not the private emotions, are emphasized. Relationship, not the individual, was the basic unit and sharing became the basis of harmony and collective welfare. Although Western science and technology have been adopted, traditional values and beliefs that emphasize human-relatedness coexist with, and have not been replaced by, individualistic Western values.

In East Asia, relationship and emotional attachments are considered stable, while rationality and individuality are considered relatively unstable. This is not to say individualism and rationality do not exist, but they play a secondary role to relationships and emotions. The goal in life is to cultivate the self to achieve harmony with the human, natural, and spiritual worlds. Unlike Christianity, East Asian philosophies and religions assume that human beings are basically good and this goodness is realizable in one's lifetime.

East Asian philosophy acknowledges the existence of conflict between opposing forces, such as *yin* (陰) and *yang* (陽). Unlike the West, East Asian philosophy focuses on the balance or harmony between opposing forces. The focus is not on the dichotomous contrast between the black and white, right and wrong, but in the shades of grey that occupy the two

extreme poles. In East Asia, extremes should be avoided and the middle path should be taken.

## Confucianism

Confucius (551-479 BC) saw the universe and all living things in it as a manifestation of a unifying force called the *Dao* (道, Truth, Unity, or the Way). *Dao* constitutes the very essence, basis, and unit of life that perpetuates order, goodness, and Rightness. *Dao* manifests itself in humans through *te* (德, virtue). Virtue is a gift received from Heaven and it is the “locus of where Heaven and I meet” (Lew, 1977). Virtue can be realized through self-cultivation and it provides the fundamental source of insight and strength to rule peacefully and harmoniously within oneself, one's family, one's nation, and the world.

### Morality

The core aspect of virtue is *ren* (仁, human-heartedness). Confucius pointed out three related aspects of human-heartedness. First, it “consists of loving others” (愛人, Analects, XII, 22). Second, “the man of *ren* is one who, desiring to sustain himself, sustains others, and desiring to develop himself, develops others” (己欲立而立人 己欲達而達人, Analects, VI, 28). Third, one should not do to others “what you do not wish done to yourself” (己所不欲 勿施於人, Analects XII, 2). Mencius noted that

without human-heartedness, a person couldn't be considered a human being: “When you see a child drowning in a well, if you do not feel compassion, you are not human” (今人乍見孺子將入於井 皆有 惻隱之心, Mencius, II/A/6). Individuals experience human-heartedness through the love and sacrifice of their parents.

The second concept is *yi* (義, Rightness). Rightness articulates that individuals must perform and fulfil their duties as defined by their particular status and role. Confucius considered society to be hierarchically ordered, necessitating that people fulfil their duties. Fulfilling one's given role as father, mother, elder brother, teacher, or ruler is considered a moral imperative.

Society is hierarchically ordered and each person has *fen* (分, portion or place) in life. Each *fen* had attached roles and each person must fulfil these roles. Duties and obligations of each *fen* are prescribed by *li* (禮, propriety). Propriety articulates expectations and duties of each individual according to status and role. Social order and harmony are preserved when people observe their place in society and fulfil required obligations and duties.

The fourth concept is *zhi* (智, knowledge). Knowledge allows us to understand the virtues and to follow these virtues. The four concepts of human-heartedness, rightness, propriety, and knowledge are the basis of Confucian morality. Like the two arms and two legs that we are

born with, they need to be used and cultivated. Knowledge is further refined and extended in school. In school, teachers affirm morality as the basis for all thoughts, emotions, and behavior. Teachers are seen as extensions of the parents.

As children mature they need to interact with a wider range of people, including strangers in society and as such, they need to develop *xin* (信, trust). Trust in society is based on morality learned in the family and knowledge learned in school. Confucius pointed out cultivated morality is the basis of peace in oneself, the family, the nation, and the world:

*If there be Righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in character,*

*If there be beauty in character, there will be harmony in the home.*

*If there be harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation.*

*If there be order in the nation, there will be peace in the world.*

(義誠而后心正 心正而后身修 身修而后家齊 家齊而后國治 國治而后天下平: 大學 章句 經文 1章)

### Governance

In Confucianism following the Way or the *Dao* is the basis of governance. A leader must follow the way of the *Dao* by developing the virtues of human-heartedness, rightness, and propriety, cultivate knowledge, and earn the trust

of the people. Morality and virtue are the basis of Confucian governance: "Guide them by edicts, keep them in line with punishments, and the common people will stay out of trouble but will have no sense of shame. Guide them by virtue, keep them in line with the rites, and they will, besides having a sense of shame, reform themselves."

Confucius believed that only by setting a moral example a leader could rule the people. When he was asked about government, he answered as follows: "To govern is to correct. If you set an example by being correct, who would dare to remain incorrect?" Only by setting a moral example, a leader can rule the people: "If a man is correct in his own person, then there will be obedience without orders being given; but if he is not correct in his own person, there will not be obedience even though orders are given." For a ruler earning the trust of the people is considered essential. When Tzu-kung asked Confucius about government, he answered as follows:

Confucius: *Give them enough food, give them enough arms, and the common people will have trust in you.*

Tzu-kung: *If one had to give up one of these three, which should one give up first?*

Confucius: *Give up arms.*

Tzu-kung: *If one had to give up one of the remaining two, which should one give up first?*

Confucius: *Give up food. Death has always been*

*with us since the beginning of time, but when there is no trust, the common people will have nothing to stand on.*

The state is considered to be an extension of family and an ideal ruler is like a benevolent father who takes care of his family members. Confucius advocated morality, benevolence, and paternalism in government and these basic principles have not changed throughout the history of Confucianism.

### Modernization in East Asia

With modernization, urbanization, and industrialization, the traditional extended families have virtually disappeared. In modern Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, the nuclear family structure has replaced the traditional extended family. Although grandparents no longer play a significant role in family life, the core family structure has remained the same. The father is still the head of the household representing the family. A mother is responsible for raising and educating children. In the modern nuclear family, the role of educating children has transferred from the father to the mother.

With modernization, the focus has changed from status quo, conservatism, and harmony with nature to change, progress, and control of the environment. Traditionally, learning has been linked to Confucian Classics and literature. Currently, success is defined not in terms of

accumulation of wisdom, but acquiring scientific and technological knowledge. The primary role of the parents is to educate their children in a highly competitive world. Traditionally, women did not receive a formal education, but currently both men and women have to be educated to succeed and to raise their children. Although sex-role discrimination has diminished significantly in the family and schools, it is still prevalent in the workplace. Many competent women are not hired or retained since the corporate culture in East Asia is highly paternalistic and hierarchical (Kim, 1995, 1998).

### Organizations

Contrary to the Western emphasis of individual rights and contractual relationship between employees and employers, organizations in East Asia are managed as an extension of a family. In these societies, companies and governments encourage hierarchy, paternalism, and collectivism (Kim, 1995, 1998). Employees in a company are looked after like parents look after their children and in turn employees are expected to be loyal, committed, and hard-working. In a national survey of personnel managers from mining and manufacturing firms in Korea, the vast majority (over 80%) of managers strongly endorsed the ideas of paternalism and collectivism (Kim, 1995). These companies provide occupational and welfare

services to their employees to foster paternalism, ingroup solidarity, and collectivism, which are found to increase production, efficiency, solidarity, loyalty, job satisfaction, and social control.

In comparative studies of American and Japanese managers, the nature and role of a group are viewed very differently (Sullivan, Suzuki & Kondo, 1986). They found that American managers gave reward based on individual performance and they provided greater rewards to individuals when an employee worked alone. In the mind of American managers, the successful person working alone can expect the greatest amount of reward. The Japanese managers, in contrast, gave rewards equally to employees and they gave greater rewards to employees who worked in a group. Japanese managers see groups as a facilitating factor, as *productivity enhancers*. Consistent with this belief, Japanese managers gave greater rewards individuals who worked with their group members in a highly interdependent manner and who were highly influenced by the group's advice. The nature and function of the group are different: in the West, they are based on contractual relationship, but in East Asia they are based on emotional and relational bonds (Kim, 1998).

Researchers assumed, along with company executives and government officials, that the *authoritarian* paternalism would be the most effective leadership strategy. It was taken for granted that supervisors would give orders and

employees would passively obey them. In reality, this type of leader was the least effective (Kim, 1995, 1998; Misumi, 1985). In contrast, those leaders who emphasized *benevolent* paternalism were the most effective. Those leaders who took care of their employees and looked after their welfare had the highest productivity. Leaders who demanded high productivity were effective only when they were able to develop a strong sense of group solidarity and provide the necessary emotional and relational support.

#### Justice and organizational effectiveness

In decision-making and negotiation theories developed in the West, a tit-for-tat strategy is considered to be the most effective. In other words, if your partner cooperates, then you cooperate with the partner. If your partner does not cooperate, then you would not cooperate (*i.e., lex talionis*, “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and a life for a life”). Systematic researches suggest that this is the most effective strategy in inducing cooperation and positive outcome in the West and this model has been widely used in economic, political, and diplomatic arenas.

In distributive justice, equitable distribution of reward is considered to be fair, just, and effective. In equity, an individual's reward is based on a person's performance. When Person A has contributed 70% to the overall outcome

and Person B has contributed 30%, then the equitable distribution would be to give \$70 to the Person A and \$30 to Person B. In the West, this type of distribution is considered fair and just and it is used widely in families, schools, companies, and governments (Kim, 1995). At the interpersonal level, if your friend has given you a present for your birthday, then equity is maintained when you give her a present of approximately equal value for her birthday. At the organizational level, the pay that an employee receives from a company should be linked to his or her contribution to the company. (See Figure 1).

The tit-for-tat strategy and equity theory are effective in individualistic cultures. In East Asia, the seniority norm is prevalent. In the seniority norm, reward is not based on individual

performance, but on how long a person has been with the group. In a typical university in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, senior professors are paid much more than junior professors. They have the largest office and have access to the greatest amount of resources, even though the junior professor may be much more productive than the senior professors. Moreover, the junior professor is expected to show respect, serve the senior professors, and handle much of the administrative burden. It creates a temporary imbalance with the senior professors receiving much more benefit than the junior professors. Equity is achieved when the junior professors become senior professors, since they will receive all the benefits and they will also have junior professors serving them. (See Figure 2). In the long-term relational perspective, justice and

Figure 1. Distributive justice

equity have been maintained. Yuki and Yamaguchi (1996) called this phenomena long-term equity within a group.

In the long-term relational perspectives, individuals are motivated to maintain the group. Since senior professors are obtaining benefits beyond their contribution, they are motivated to remain in the group and maintain the group. The junior professors will only receive the subsequent benefits as long as they remain in the group. As a result, they are motivated to maintain the group. The seniority norm enhances group solidarity, commitment, and loyalty and it has been widely adopted in East Asia (Yuki & Yamaguchi, 1996; Kim, 1998). However, since

the reward is not directly linked to performance, it has also contributed to incompetence, corruption, and nepotism (Kim, 1998, 2001).

In addition to the seniority norm, East Asians interact differently depending on the nature of the partner. If Person A contributed 70% and Person B contributed 30%, then the reward is distributed equitably if the partner is a stranger. If, however, the partner is a friend, then the high-performer will divide reward equally (i.e., 50/50). In other words, the high-performer will sacrifice one's reward and give it to the friend. The sacrificial behavior of the high-performer promotes a sense of gratitude, loyalty, and harmony in the low-performer. Although there is



Figure 2. Long-term relational model



a temporary imbalance, the high-performer expects future benefits from the friend or from the group. This type of distribution is based on the indigenous parent-child model, where it is the role of parents to sacrifice for their children and children feel indebted to the parents (Park & Kim, 2004).

In families, East Asian parents willingly sacrifice for their children since their own parents took care of them unconditionally when they were young (Park & Kim, 2004). They are expected to return their sense of gratitude to the parents, but not the favor. They are expected to raise their own children with the same degree of sacrifice, devotion, and love as their parents did. This flow of sacrifice, devotion, and love is what binds family members together through generations and keep them strong. It is the flow of emotions from one generation to another, not the tit-for-tat exchange, that is valued in East Asia.

This long-term relational perspective among ingroup members, rather than the short-term tit-for-tat strategy, is accepted as being just, fair and effective in East Asia since it promotes group solidarity, loyalty, and harmony. The long-term relational perspective is a cultural norm and it has widely adopted and implemented East Asian schools, organizations, and companies. Also, this principle is behind the Sunshine Policy that president Kim Dae-jung has been pursuing with North Korea (Kim, 2001). It is, however, not

without its problems.

There are two possible outcomes for organizations adopting the long-term relational perspective. The low-performing employee will receive the same benefits as the high-performing employee. In the ideal situation, the low-performing employee should feel a sense of shame, indebtedness, and gratitude and work harder to contribute to the group. (See Figure 3). This will create synergy and organizational dynamism and it is responsible for the high level of productivity in East Asia. If, however, the low-performing employee simply accepts the reward without the intention or motivation to contribute to the group (known as the free-rider), then it will lead to organizational ineffectiveness and discontent.

The high-performing employees expect to be rewarded in the long term. If they are not rewarded, then they will leave the organization (Kim, 1998). Thus, if the situation is not addressed, most of the high-performing employees will leave the company and the fate of the company is left to low-performing free riders who do not contribute to the company. As a result, the company will face financial and moral bankruptcy. This is the basis of Asian economic crisis that has plagued Japan, Korea, and Taiwan.

The long-term relational perspective has contributed to the phenomenal educational and economic progress in East Asia. It has, however,

contributed to incompetence, nepotism, and corruption. Similarly, strong leaders, such as Park Chung-hee, Lee Kwan Yew, and Muhammad Mahathir, used the long-term relational perspective to justify their policies. However, in order for the long-term relational perspective to be effective in companies, organizations, and society and the system must be trusted by the people. It has to be implemented with transparency, integrity, and accountability (Kim, 1998, 2001).

The problem can be resolved when the system is transparent and everyone knows who the high and low performers are (Kim, 1998). The low-performer will be compelled to work harder or

leave the group. The high-performer will be rewarded equitably in the long run. Transparency is also necessary to ensure that every member of the group will behave with integrity. Finally, individuals need be held accountable for their behavior. Without transparency, integrity, and accountability, individuals and groups will not be motivated to work hard and contribute to the group and ultimately corruption and conflicts could emerge.

### Empirical review

An international study was conducted in



Figure 3. Harmony within ingroup

Korea, Japan, Denmark, and Sweden as a part of the collaborative Eurasia Political Culture Research Network (Helgesen & Kim, 2002; Kim et al., 2002). The survey questionnaire covered various topics in political culture, but this paper will focus on the results of trust, leadership, and political functioning.

In Korea (n=1,000), Sweden (n=769), and Denmark (n=1,236) a representative stratified national sample over the age of 18 were obtained. In Japan (n=941), the sample was drawn from Tokyo and Osaka. The respondents were asked to rate how much they trusted various target persons (i.e., family, friends, neighbors, alumni, colleague, superior, strangers, and foreigners) and institutions (i.e., parliament, political parties, major companies, trade union,

media, legal system, police, armed forces, public offices, and educational system) on a four-point scale. In addition, their views of rights, leadership, political candidates, political functioning, and life-satisfaction were obtained.

Figure 4 provides the results of trust of people. The results are strikingly similar. People trust their family and close friends, are less likely to trust neighbors, alumni, and colleagues, and least likely to trust strangers and foreigners. Japanese and Koreans are slightly less likely than the Danish and Swedish respondents to trust strangers, foreigners, colleagues, and superiors. The results indicate that we trust those who we know and with whom we have emotional ties (i.e., ingroup members) and do not trust those people who we do not know (i.e., outgroup

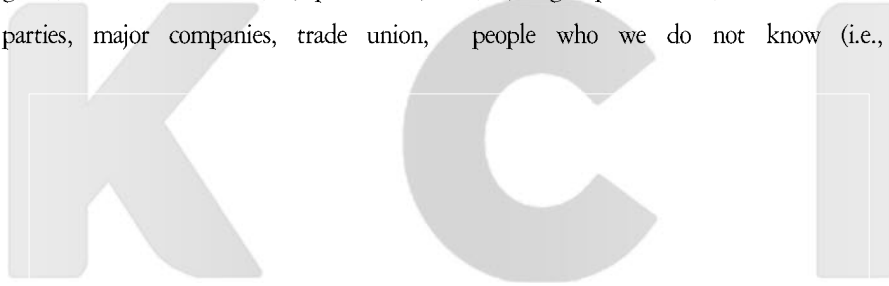


Figure 4. Trust of people

members). However, but the distinction between ingroup and outgroup members is greater in Japan and Korea than in Scandinavia.

Figure 5 provides the results of the degree to which the respondents trust the various institutions. First, there is a higher level of trust in Denmark and Sweden than in Korea and Japan. Second, there is a lower level of trust for the parliament and political parties. Third, the level of trust for non-governmental organizations, such as major companies, trade unions and the media is low. In Denmark and Sweden, there is a higher level of trust than in East Asia for institutions that maintain law and order (i.e., legal system, police, and armed forces). Trust of institutions that are influenced by business and labor is also low (e.g., major companies, the

media and trade union). Trust is higher for institutions that are not influenced by business (i.e., educational systems and public offices). When governmental and non-governmental organizations have a conflict of interest, they are trusted less. In Japan and Korea, there is a general distrust of all institutions, especially the parliament and political parties. It appears that Japanese and Koreans respondents are alienated from political system and governmental institutions.

The emphasis on individual rights varies across countries. Respondents are asked to rate the importance of the following six rights: the right to vote, to participate in any kind of organization, to gather and demonstrate, to be fully informed on the work and function of the

Figure 5. Trust of institutions

government, to criticize the government, and to have freedom of speech. Figure 6 provides the results of the number of respondents who felt these rights were *very important*. Although the overall pattern is the same, the average scores of Scandinavian countries are much higher than

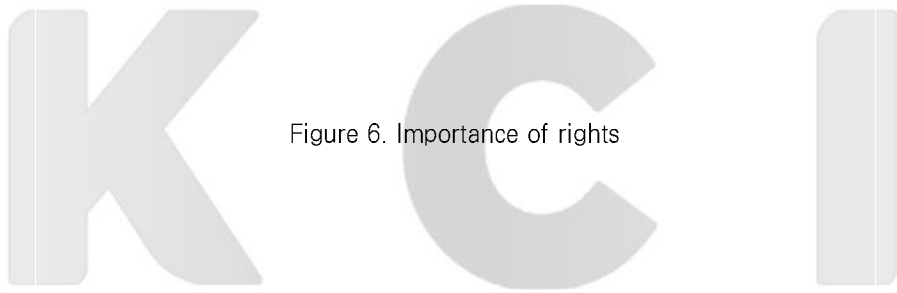


Figure 6. Importance of rights

Figure 7. Satisfaction with rights

East Asian countries. The vast majority of respondents from Denmark and Sweden believes that these rights are very important. A significantly less number of people from Japan and Korea felt that they are very important.

Figure 7 provides the degree of satisfaction with the above six rights. (See Figure 7). Danish and Swedish respondents are basically satisfied with their rights, but the level of satisfaction of rights in Korea and Japan is low.

The Danish and Swedish respondents felt that having the six rights was very important and they were generally satisfied with their rights. In Japan and Korea, people did not feel having these rights was very important and they were not satisfied with their rights. Since asserting individual rights is considered confrontational and

negative in Korea and Japan, they tend not to assert their rights. Since it is difficult to assert their rights using the current legal or political system, they are not satisfied with their rights.

Figure 8 provides results of six questions concerning leadership: (1) good political leaders should maintain harmony in society (Maintain harmony), (2) a good political leader should follow public opinion rather than his own conviction (Public opinion), (3) a leader should care for the people as parents care for their children (Paternalism), (4) a group of people without a strong leader means chaos (Strong leader), (5) it is more important to have an outstanding political leader than a political democracy (Outstanding leader), and (6) most leaders would abuse their power if they were not

Figure 8. Qualities of a leader

constrained by popular control (Popular control). Respondents in all four countries agree that leaders should maintain harmony in society and that most leaders would abuse their power if they are not constrained by popular control. Korean respondents are most likely to support strong paternalistic leaders, while Japanese respondents are least likely to support them.

Figure 9 provides the results of the importance of political candidate's qualities: Party affiliation (Party), political ideas (Ideas), moral character (Morality), whether the candidate appears to be a strong leader (Strength), and whether the candidate is independent of economic interests (Independence). In Denmark and Sweden, these qualities are considered to be rather important, with candidate's Ideas and

Party being slightly more important than the other three qualities. For Japan, except for Party, the four aspects are considered equally important. For Korea, candidate's Morality and Strength are considered to be the most important, followed by Ideas, Independence, and Party. In East Asia, candidate's Party is not considered as important as they are in Scandinavia. These results question whether political parties and ideology that are defining features of Western democracy also applies to East Asia. In East Asia, they appear to be relatively unimportant when compared to the candidate's morality.

Two questions assessed how well respondents felt the current political system is working and the degree to which they are satisfied with their life. Results in Figure 10 indicate that

Figure 9. Qualities of political candidates

Figure 10. Overall assessment

respondents in all countries felt that the political system is not working very well. This is especially the case for Korea and Japan. Danish respondents felt that it is working slightly better than average. As for satisfaction with life, Danish and Swedish respondents are mostly happy with their life. Respondents from Korea and Japan are moderately satisfied with their life. Correlational analyses indicate that those respondents who felt that the political system is functioning well had higher life-satisfaction (Helgesen & Kim, 2002). Thus, a well-functioning political system contributes to the overall quality of life.

## Discussion

Although the Scandinavian and East Asian respondents value the basic ideas of democracy, the pattern of relationship to other variables differ. Korean respondents want strong, moral and paternalistic leaders, while Japanese respondents do not want such leaders. Danish and Swedish respondents want egalitarian leaders who lead by ideas. The greatest difference appeared in the outcome of political system - political trust. In Korea and Japan, there was a virtual distrust of political parties and national assembly and a very low trust of other institutions. They also felt that the political



system was not functioning well and they were not satisfied with their rights. In contrast, there was a moderate degree of trust of political institutions in Scandinavia and respondents felt that the political system was functioning fairly well and they were satisfied with their rights.

The results of this study parallel results found in the Transparency Index, in which Korea has one of the lowest scores in industrialized societies (4.2 in the 10 point scale, ranked 42<sup>nd</sup>), Japan has a moderate score (7.1, ranked 21<sup>st</sup>), and Denmark (9.5, ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>) and Sweden (9.0, ranked 6<sup>th</sup>) have two of the highest scores.<sup>1</sup> Since the Korean and Japanese government has not implemented transparency, integrity, and accountability in their policies and programs, there has been growing distrust of the government and the feeling of alienation by people. The challenge that rests before Korea and Japan is to implement the ideals of democracy with transparency, integrity and accountability.

In modern East Asia, leaders have used Confucianism to justify their government policies and program and even their authoritarian rule. President Park Chung-hee was the first Asian leader who used Korean culture to justify his authoritarian rule. Other leaders such as Lee Kwan Yew in Singapore and Mahathir bin Mohammad in Malaysia reject the universality of

Western democracy and argue for Asian values. Scholars, such as Tu Wei-Ming, joined forces with the politicians and used Confucianism to defend Asian values. This debate became known as the Asian values debate.

In this debate, Confucianism is often used to justify strong paternalistic leadership. In Singapore, individuals with merit are promoted to high position and corruption has been limited. In the other East Asian countries, however, corruption and nepotism are widespread problems. Contrary to the Asian values debate, Confucius was a forceful advocate of selecting government officials based on merit and rejected nepotism, ingroup favoritism, and dictatorship. Confucius felt that a person who has cultivated morality and virtue should become a government official and should serve the larger public. The problem with the East Asian political systems is that they are not based on the core values of Confucianism and they lack transparency, integrity, and accountability.

In Confucianism, although the basis of the self and interpersonal relationship is morality, the goal is to expand the boundary of morality beyond the family to include the nation and the world. Confucian philosophy separates personal private life (公) from public life (私) and Confucius advocated a different set of principles and rules. In private life, such as the family setting, Confucian morality focuses on human-heartedness and rightness. In the public life,

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1) [www.transparency.org](http://www.transparency.org)

propriety, knowledge and trust must also be included. Obtaining trust from the people was a fundamental requirement for a leader. For this reason, morality, integrity, and education were essential for all people who held public offices.

In East Asia, an individual has to navigate between the personal and public spheres and to balance the demands of the two. It is achieving a balance and harmony between the individual and collective needs and not the affirmation of one or the other. The key to achieving this balance and harmony is morality and self-cultivation and they are considered to be the basis foundation for one's legitimacy, credibility, and effectiveness, whether one is a father, mother, teacher, or a politician. According to Confucius, individuals with morality and merit should become public servants and he harshly criticized formalism, incompetence, corruption, and nepotism.

Confucius advocated his ideas more than 2,500 years ago and we must interpret his teachings in the appropriate historical and cultural context. Although he is considered as the leading philosopher and political theorist in East Asia, during his lifetime he managed to obtain a minor position, as a small town mayor since his ideas were considered revolutionary. Similarly, when democracy was developed in Greece 2,000 years ago, they accepted slavery as part of the system and women were excluded from political participation. Although modern democracies accept

the basic ideas developed by Greek philosophers, very few people would advocate adopting the same system of government. Similarly, Confucian ideas need to be updated to fit the current conditions.

The difference found between Scandinavia and East Asia does not represent a basic cultural divide, but how democratic ideals are implemented. The problem in Korea and Japan exists in integrating democratic ideals with Confucian values and implementing them with transparency and accountability. Scandinavian countries has accomplished this task by taking their traditional Viking and Christian values and moulding them into a modern socialist democratic state (Kim et al., 2002). Scandinavian and East Asian societies experience different sets of social problems. In East Asia, the lack of transparency and trust, coupled with corruption and nepotism, has been the most serious problem. In Scandinavia, with the emphasis on individualism and rationalism, many people suffer from emotional disorders, such as depression, anxiety, and loneliness.

Although Fukuyama (1995) heralds the triumphs of modern liberal democracy, democracy itself is facing significant challenges. It is not because the enemies of liberal democracy, the authoritarian right and communist left, have fallen by the wayside. The current challenge is from within, with bureaucracy replacing democracy. The growth of unilateral globalization and the

development of the European Union and World Trade Organization removes the decision-making process and power from its citizens and places them in the hands of specialized bureaucrats who are out of touch with the people and culture. Centralized planning and bureaucratic decision-making are replacing the core elements of democracy (i.e., citizen's participation and decision-making). In other words, many modern democratic states are becoming more like a socialist state, with its central planning and decision-making. Many people feel alienated by the current political system and unilateral globalization since they lack transparency, integrity and accountability. The challenge is to create a system, an enlightened globalization, that allows people to participate and shape their reality in the local and global community.

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## 북유럽과 동아시아에서의 신뢰, 관계와 시민 사회: 심리, 사회, 문화적 분석

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이 연구에서는 북유럽과 동아시아에서의 신뢰와 인간관계 및 시민 사회와 관련된 문제를 분석하고자 하였다. 이를 위해 첫째, 신뢰와 민주주의의 개념에 대해 정의를 내렸다. 둘째, 서양과 북유럽에서 민주주의의 발달을 가능하게 한 문화적인 측면들에 대해 검토하였다. 셋째, 동아시아에서 신뢰와 민주주의에 기반이 된 유교 철학에 대해 개관하였다. 넷째, 덴마크, 스웨덴, 일본, 한국에서 실시된 경험과학적 연구의 결과들을 제시하였다. 분석 결과 북유럽과 동아시아의 응답자들 모두, 자유 민주주의의 기본적인 이념들을 지지하였고, 가족이나 친구와 같은 가까운 내집단 구성원을 신뢰하였다. 그러나 북유럽 응답자들과는 대조적으로 동아시아 응답자들은 동료나 외집단 구성원에 대한 신뢰 정도가 낮았으며, 정치 조직이나 정부 기관에 대한 신뢰 정도가 낮았다. 북유럽의 응답자들은 민주적이고 관용적인 지도자를 더욱 선호하였으나, 한국의 응답자들은 아버지와 같이 온정적이면서도 강한 지도자를 선호하였다. 반면에 일본 응답자들은 한국보다 아버지와 같이 온정적인 지도자를 선호하는 정도가 낮았다. 전반적으로 볼 때 북유럽과 동아시아에서 민주주의와 인권에 대한 기본적인 이념은 유사하지만, 이러한 이념을 수행하는 방법에서는 차이가 있는 것으로 나타났다. 다섯째, 현재의 민주주의가 직면하고 있는 도전적인 과제들이 논의되었다.

주요어 : 신뢰, 관계, 민주주의, 정치 문화, 덴마크, 스웨덴, 한국, 일본