Trust and Civic Participation in Korea*

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This paper reviews the relevance of the debate on trust in Korea, with particular focus on the different levels of trust. While familial and interpersonal trust is high, generalized trust, such as for anonymous others, meritocracy, and the rule of law, appears to be low. Institutional and political trust, which is a specific form of generalized trust, is especially low. Younger, better educated, and more affluent Koreans tend to maintain a higher level of generalized trust and a lower level of political trust. In Korea, these individuals become sources for civic activists and community. Statistical analyses also find that Koreans who engage in everyday political affairs, party and campaign activities tend to accept the legitimacy, of political challenge and protest.

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INTRODUCTION

The study of "trust" has become something of a growth industry with the rise of the recent debate on "social capital," and its implications for politics and economics. While being a component of social capital, trust is essentially an individual's state of mind toward other people or institutions.

At the interpersonal level, as Hardin (1998) argued, trust is a form of "encapsulated interest": A trusts B because A presumes that it is in B's interest to act in a way that is consistent with A's interest. This presumption of A is usually based on A's experiences with B. In the rational choice approach, many studies have emphasized the model of cooperation in iterated games of "prisoner's dilemma": "I have an interest in cooperating with you now because I want you to cooperate with me in the future." On the other hand, generalized trust in society implies a large number of anonymous personal interactions. Institutional trust is a specific form of generalized trust, which applies to major institutions in a given society. When one assesses the fairness of social arrangements or the trustworthiness of public authority, the criteria is certainly different from that of the prisoner's dilemma. These two levels of trust, i.e., interpersonal and institutional, are related to each other in complicated but clearly interactive ways.

Trust embedded in a given society has been emphasized as a key factor for democracy since it plays a crucial role in cooperation in conflict-ridden civil society. The literature on social capital has taken interpersonal as well as institutional trust as critical elements, although few studies address this relationship. Raising the question of trust in the Korean society is of particular interest as discussions on Korean democracy have often included the thesis that consolidated democracy has been delayed in Korea due to lack of trust.

This paper examines the current state of trust, the patterns of people's engagement in civic associations, and their attitudes toward political participation in Korea. Due to unavailability of integrated survey data, this paper reviews these issues using a separate, descriptive method.

RELEVANCE OF THE TRUST DEBATE TO KOREAN SOCIETY

Rise of Large Civic Associations as Social Capital

Coleman (1988, 98), who invented the term "social capital," defines it by its functions. He notes that "like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible." This concept of social capital as a social resource for "getting things done" was further elaborated in his later work, *Foundations of Social Theory* (1990). Social capital is not an attribute of individuals, but rather "inheres in the structure of relations between persons and among persons" (Coleman 1990, 302). Coleman identifies types of social capital as "obligations and expectations" among individuals, "information potential," "norms and

sanctions," relations of authority, and social organizations of all kinds.

As Foley and Edwards (1997, 552) rightly point out, social capital for Coleman exists varying scales of social relations of all sorts. It exists only insofar as these relations provide resources for some action; it is not a metaphysical characteristic of society, nor is it explicitly tied to the functioning of democracies. This rather neutral concept of social capital is distinguishable from the use of social capital by neo-Tocquevillians, who tend to view social capital as a civic value that fosters civic engagement and, ultimately, democracy.

Putnam popularized the concept of social capital in this fashion. He defines social capital as "features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefits" (Putnam 1995, 67). As notions of physical capital and human capital imply, social capital is meant to be desirable for democratic politics and economic performance.

For Putnam, not every network of civic engagement can generate social capital. Social connectedness and social trust are created from secondary associations where face-to-face interactions are possible.¹ Despite growing new mass-membership, nonprofit organizations and self-help support groups, Putnam sees a decline of social capital in civic America as membership in regular churchgoers, labor unions, parent-teacher associations, fraternal organizations, volunteering, bowling leagues and other forms of community organizations has shrunk.

The withdrawal of Americans from once active civic engagement, together with data showing a rise in public distrust, is understood by many neo-Tocquevillians to be responsible for the decline in political participation, evidenced by declining voting rates, which are problematic for a healthy American democracy. However, declining civic engagement by contemporary Americans is less worrisome for other scholars, at least at the local level. For example, Skocpol points out that local community organizations and neighborhood groups still involve people, while real change is occurring at the national level. She argues that "the old civic American has been bypassed and shoved to the side by a gaggle of professionally dominated advocacy groups and nonprofit institutions rarely attached to memberships worthy of the name" (Skocpol 1999, 505). The great transformation "from membership to advocacy" in civic America dominated by centralized, staff-driven advocacy associations is seen as eroding bridges between classes and places, and between local and translocal affairs.²

Putnam and Skocpol share the value of civic America to be embedded in local grassroots

¹ The idea of networks of civic engagement is central to Putnam's theory (1995, 67) since they foster norms of reciprocity and encourage the emergence of social trust: they facilitate coordination and communication, and allow dilemmas of collective action to be resolved; they can serve as a cultural template for future collaboration; and they broaden participants' sense of self, developing the "I" into the "we" or enhancing the participants' "taste" for collective benefits. The "tertiary associations," where the vast majority of their members simply write a check for dues or occasionally read a newsletter, cannot generate social trust.

² Skocpol sees the elitism in a civic America to be based on the changes in the American professionals' lifestyles: More numerous and privileged professionals today live less rooted lives, crowded in or near metropolitan centers and see themselves as experts who can best contribute to national well-being by working with other specialists.

civic associations, and thus their contempt for bureaucratized national ones. However, why mass membership national organizations are dismissed as a source of social capital is unclear. Minkoff criticizes the downplaying of social movement organizations dismissed by Putnam as tertiary associations that focus on factionalism and hierarchical bureaucracies as unfair. "Mediated or abstract relations that do not entail face-to-face interaction may also provide a basis for solidarity and collective identity, representing an alternative source of social capital" (Minkoff 1997, 610).

This criticism is certainly valid for many countries where community-based voluntary associations are organized for the sake of mutual help, and thus are not linked to a newly emerging civil society movement. Korea is certainly a case where the civil society movement is being organized from the top down. Korea's civil society movement, led by major nationwide civic associations, has been characterized by the legacy of anti-authoritarian civil society movements and advocacy activities of civic associations after democratization. Therefore, in the Korean setting, the rise of large civic associations signifies the "capitalization," rather than the "decapitalization" of society.

Familial Trust and Generalized Trust

The popular debate on trust in Asian societies was sparked by Fukuyama's thesis. Fukuyama (1995) has maintained that strong ties and high trust within family and small we-group of classmates or friends do not diffuse to high trust of larger groups or society, as seen in many Asian societies. Fukuyama's trust is also functional in terms of economic prosperity and democracy. Societies with a small radius of trust, such as China and Korea, are described to be less suitable for modern industrial capitalism. In his later writing, Fukuyama links his narrow trust argument with poor democratic performance. He maintained that the most distinctive Asian values are attitudes toward social orders, such as family, gender roles, and kinship, rather than political order. Therefore, a small radius of trust is not incompatible with democratic institutions, and the problems created by a small radius of trust have more to do with the quality of governance within democracy (1999, 328). "Strong familistic societies tend to develop a two-tier system of ethical values, with higher standards of behavior reserved for relations within the family or other types of personal relations and lower ones for public life. One consequence is a relatively low level of civic obligation and hence a greater propensity for political corruption" (1999, 328-29). Edward Barfield's concept of "amoral familism" among poor Italians or the Korean concept of "family egoism" shares Fukuyama's criticism of low trust societies within which trust extends only to insiders.

However, this viewpoint is different from the argument made by social capital theorist, who treats family bonds and neighborliness as informal social capital and see their loosening as an indication of "social decapitalization." Social ties and trust in family, school, and workplace, where people spend more time and are involved with more emotional commitment, are recognized to be sources of social capital other than voluntary associations. Coleman (1988, 109-116) stresses the importance of the family

and school in the development of social capital, and Putnam (1995, 73) also emphasized family as the most important form of social capital; Verba et al. (1995, 320) claim that the workplace provides the most opportunities for the practice of civic skills. If the high trust of informal groups such as kinship networks is present with the low trust of formal institutions or society, one has to be cautious in interpreting their relationship. Exclusive family trust can certainly suppress generalized reciprocity and cooperation with other external groups. Nepotistic, regional and school ties tend to produce a segmented society (Lee 1998). But, high trust and dense networks within family or nepotistic ties do not necessarily prevent the development of generalized social trust. Low social trust would be the result of a low level of institutionalization of the rule of law, so that individuals are less willing to participate in collective games for cooperation. As democratic rules are institutionalized, therefore, the small radius of trust is likely to expand into a larger radius of trust.

While this paper so far emphasizes the institutional context of expansion of family trust to generalized trust, Yamagishi rebuts the thesis of high interpersonal trust among the Japanese. He argues that Japanese trust for others is actually lower than that of the Americans, and he also argues that trust, in Japanese society, is not cultural but institutional, operating under the conditions of mutual supervision and sanctions (Yamagishi et al. 1998). Yamagishi contends that stable social and organizational relations in Japan are rather assurance mechanisms against uncertainty, and that the Japanese tend to limit their relations to exclusive ties due to the low level of general trust. In particular, high commitment by the Japanese to exclusive social relations and to the workplace is a result of low trust and high uncertainty (Yamagishi et al. 1998). This theory explains why Japanese economic exchange, as in the *keiretsu* relationship, tends to be internalized within networks and why outsiders must endure high investment costs to enter the relationship.

Kim and Son (1998) also find in their experiment of "trust as an event" that the effect of sanctions in increasing cooperation tends to be greater among Koreans than among Japanese. The fact that cooperation among Koreans requires sanctions, they argue, suggests why the collapse of a sanctioning mechanism leads to great social risk in Korea.

The thesis of the viability of institutional trust under the condition of sanctioning mechanisms in Japan and Korea may well be valid. Trust based on supervisions and sanctions would be fragile and costly. Nevertheless, enduring a long-term assurance mechanism can develop into trust, although Yamagishi (1998) argues that the very lack of trust generates assurance in the first place. If cooperation is maintained with the help of a sanctioning mechanism, institutional trust can be high since one's trust toward organizations or government does not require personal trust in any way.

Trust and Governance

There is little attention in recent literature on social capital or trust concerning the

role of the state in influencing generalized trust. As Levi (1998, 84) points out, "states often reduce the need for citizens to trust each other, or they may facilitate trust by solving the essential information, monitoring, and enforcement problems, or both." She argues, however, that infrastructure and resources are not sufficient conditions for the state to perform its trust-producing role unless citizens recognize the credibility and competence of the state (Levi 1998, 85-86). Citizens are likely to trust government only to the extent that they believe that it will act in their interests, its procedures are fair, and their trust of the state and of others is reciprocated.

The thesis that the trustworthiness of the state influences its capacity to generate interpersonal trust is very important to understanding the institutional or generalized trust of recently democratized societies, where the legacy of institutional distrust developed during past authoritarian regimes still lingers. Since its democratic transition in 1987, Korea has been experiencing more than a decade-long trial and error phase to consolidate democracy. With all the continuous political reforms, the Korean government and politicians have not earned trustworthiness from the populace. As oppressive sanctions were eradicated with political liberalization, voluntary consent became crucial to the democratic governance of the state. However, contemporary Koreans have become increasingly cynical towards politics as they feel that ongoing reforms have not borne any fruit. More seriously, the trustworthiness of the Korean government has been impaired as its policies have been subject to the pressure of interest groups and therefore changed without principles. Not only is the weak trust of the state making democratic governance difficult, but it also hampers the development of institutional trust.

STATUS OF TRUST IN KOREA

This section examines the status of trust in Korea. Three kinds of trust, i.e., familial, generalized, and institutional and political will be reviewed through several recent survey data.

Familial Trust

Korean family ties remain strong despite the "nuclearization" of family structure during Korea's rapid industrialization and urbanization. In 1996, 79.8% of Korean families were in a nuclear family structure, while only 9.1% of them had extended families composed of a married couple with their parent(s) (National Information Office 1998, 119). However, residential separation has not diluted the significance of family in Korean society. Korean family ties have become even stronger with the decline of lineal kinship ties and the rising expectation of emotional bondage to family. Compared to the traditional extended patrilineal kinship networks, the boundary of Korean kinship has been narrowed, often not transcending beyond cousins. Instead, today's Korean family maintains strong ties and frequent interactions within the nuclear boundary of "family."

The concept of family usually covers the parent-child relations of three direct generations and one-generational sibling relations. As the horizontal, direct sibling ties have become more precious with fewer children, sisterhood and maternal family ties have strengthened.

According to a 1996 survey by the National Information Office (NIO), whose sample size was 1,500 drawn nationwide, family is the most important source to rely on for most contemporary Koreans. To the question of "who do you seek when you are in trouble," 41.9% answered "family or relatives" while 31.6% answered "friends or senior confidants (*cunbae*)." When asked to what degree one consults family when one is in trouble, 56.1% answered positively ("very much so" 15.6% and "somewhat" 41.1%), whereas 43.1% answered negatively ("barely" 33.9% and "not at all" 9.1%). General psychological and emotional dependence of Koreans on their family tend to be even greater. Approximately 97.2% of the survey participants answered that they had affection towards their family members, "very strong" (70.3%) or "somewhat" (26.9%), and 68.3% answered that they depended on their family when they face difficulties. The so-called "welfare function" of the Asian family is also great: 90.8% of respondents answered that "they can give support to a family member when he or she is in trouble." This data shows that the commonly held thesis of high familial trust for Koreans is certainly valid.

Generalized Trust

In contrast to high (quasi-) family trust, generalized trust—used interchangeably with social trust in this paper—is relatively low as has often been argued. According to the Sejong Survey carried out in 1995³, about 47% of Koreans think that nobody would help them if they suffered an injustice; people who would help them would be family members, but not strangers. More significantly, approximately 81% of Koreans think they need a network to be successful. This belief that nepotism is a requirement for success belies the myth of an achievement-oriented society based on educational credentialism in Korea. Distrust of the "rule of law" is so substantial that about 68% of Koreans think that they will be a failure if they abide by the rules.

TABLE 1. GENERALIZED TRUST IN KOREA

	(%)			
	Strongly Oppose		Strongly Agree	
(1) Nobody will help me if an injustice happens to me.	4.7	48.6	39.6	7.1
(2) One needs a network to succeed in the society.	3.9	15.1	57.3	24.1
(3) If one lives by the rules, he or she will be a loser.	2.3	29.7	56.0	11.9

Source: The Sejong Institute, 1995 *Kokmin Eonuk Chosa* (1995 National Consciousness Survey), 1995.

³ This 1995 Sejong survey drew 1,800 Koreans randomly from all parts of Korea except Cheju Island. It follows a stratified random sampling method which adjusts each sample size of provinces and major cities according to their population. Other surveys by the Sejong Institute are also based on this method.

As for general interpersonal trust, surprisingly this basic question was not asked continuously. According to a 1988 survey by the Korean Political Association, 67.1% of Koreans agreed that "one has to take care of himself, otherwise one is likely to be exploited by other people" (Lee and Kim 1988). Only half as many respondents disagreed. To the similar question of "do you think that most people can be trusted or that one cannot be too careful about them?" posed by the Japanese Ministry of Education, the Japanese respondents who answered that most people can be trusted has risen from 26% in 1978 to 31% in 1983 and 38% in 1993. If 52% of Japanese in 1993 and 67% of Koreans in 1988 did not trust other people, one can interpret that Koreans trust other people less than the Japanese, although the interpersonal trust level is low in both countries.

If we take question (1) to understand the differences by individual background variables, then age, education, and income factors appear to be significant. In the four scale point (lower score means higher trust), younger people in their 20s score 2.6, which is higher than 2.5 of people aged between 30 and 59 and 2.4 of people aged 60 and over. Also, more educated people demonstrate a higher level of interpersonal trust. Specifically, the average trust score of people with a primary or middle school education is 2.4, while that of high school graduates is 2.5. Those who received a university education and above score 2.6. As the income level drops from upper, middle to lower, the average trust points also decrease from 2.6 to 2.5 and 2.4.

Institutional and Political Trust

The 1995 Sejong survey includes a set of questions related to political trust. As we can see in the following table, 86% of Koreans think that politicians do not keep their election promises, and 80.4% of them also believe that politics is dominated by a minority who do not care about the people.

TABLE 2. POLITICAL TRUST IN KOREA

Political Trust	Strongly Oppose	Some. Oppose	Some. Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean ^a
1) Politicians don't keep their election promises.	6.6%	7.4%	44.2%	41.8%	3.21
2) In our country, a small minority dominates politics without regard for the people.	6.9%	12.7%	48.9%	31.5%	3.05

Source: The Sejong Institute, 1995 *Kaemin East Asia* (1995 National Consciousness Survey), 1995.

When taking the statement of "politicians don't keep their election promises" as an indicator of political trust, age appears to be significant factor. The mean score of trust (here lower score means less trust) for people between 20 and 49 is 1.7, while those of people in their 50s and 60s+ increases to 1.8 and 1.9, respectively. Younger

and middle-aged Koreans tend to distrust their politicians more than older Koreans. This is the opposite tendency of interpersonal distrust, which tends to be stronger with older Koreans.

The level of institutional trust is also low even though it tends to be better than the strong distrust against politicians and politics. Looking at the three branches of the government--the parliament, the administration, and the court--we can find that the parliament is the least trusted among them, with 74% of Koreans distrusting their parliament. This reflects Koreans' disillusionment with their representative democracy. On the other hand, approximately 58% of Koreans distrust their administration. If we consider that the Korean government has been generally viewed as a competent meritocracy, the fact that only four Koreans out of ten trust their government cannot be positively interpreted. Koreans' trust toward their court is relatively stronger, with slightly more than half of the population trusting the court.

TABLE 3. INSTITUTIONAL TRUST IN KOREA

Institutional Trust	Absolute Trust (%)	Trust (%)	Distrust (%)	Absolute Distrust (%)	Mean ^a
Parliament	1.6	24.3	62.3	11.7	2.8
Administration	2.3	39.9	51.8	5.9	2.6
Court	3.4	47.2	43.3	6.2	2.5

Source: The Sejong Institute, 1995 *Kuemin Euisi Chosa* (1995 National Consciousness Survey), 1995.

Age is also related to institutional trust as it is for political trust. For example, the mean trust score of people between the age of 20 and 49 is 2.9 (here, higher score means lower trust), which is higher than a 2.8 score for people in their 50s, and a 2.7 score for people in their 60s and over. The same pattern applies for Koreans' trust toward the administration. Mean trust score decreases as age increases, i.e., 2.7 among 20-30 year olds, 2.6 among 40 year olds, and 2.5 among 50-60 year olds. At the same time, more educated Koreans hold less institutional trust. People who received a middle school education or less distrust their government less (2.5 point) than people who received a high school education (2.6 point) or a university education (2.7 point).

Therefore, one can summarize that younger Koreans tend to hold higher interpersonal trust, but they have lower political and institutional trust than older generations. Also, more educated Koreans tend to have higher interpersonal trust while they demonstrate considerably lower political and institutional trust.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Data on Korean civic life is very limited. In this part, a short review of Korean civic life is based on the 1996 NIO survey.

Koreans' neighborhood attachment also appears to be quite strong with a significant varying with the degree of urbanization. According to the survey, 17.6% and 35.1% of Koreans answered that they participate in neighbors' special occasions such as birthdays, marriages, funerals, and etc. "all the time" and "frequently," respectively. Neighborhood interaction is greater in countryside (66.4% for either "all the time" or "frequently") than in smaller cities (58%) or larger cities (42.3%). Neighborhood mutual help is also greater in less urbanized areas: 83.8% of rural area residents expect their neighbors' help in case of burglary or fire, "a great deal" (26.3%) or "somewhat" (57.6%), whereas only 62.3% of large city dwellers expect such help, "a great deal" (8.8%) or "somewhat" (53.6%).

The maintenance of close neighborhood relationships in the countryside reveals that strong family ties are transferring to the local community where face-to-face interactions are possible. About 80% of Koreans in rural areas said that they knew most people in their community, whereas only 46% of large city dwellers did. In the case of urban areas where one's neighbor is distant and anonymous, workplace provides a communitarian role instead. Koreans expect and maintain informal interpersonal ties with co-workers. Although Korean companies guarantee less job security and provide less corporate welfare than Japanese companies, "work life" is an integral part of Korean workers' interpersonal relationships. The real question would be how close family, neighborhood, or workplace ties are related to the civic life of Koreans.

TABLE 4. KOREANS PARTICIPATING IN CIVIC ASSOCIATION(S)

	Total	29.1	(%)
Gender			
Men		34.1	
Women		24.3	
Age			
20s		26.0	
30s		28.5	
40s		34.1	
50s and over		30.3	
Education			
Middle school and less		23.2	
High school		27.4	
College and more		36.4	
Monthly Income Level			
Low (1.4 million won and less)		23.4	
Middle (1.41 million - 2.5 million won)		29.4	
Upper (2.51 million won and over)		37.5	
Residential Area			
Large city		27.4	
Small-medium sized city		27.8	
Rural area		33.6	

Source: National Information Office, *Hankukin-eui Eusik - Gubukwan Chosa (Survey on Korean's Consciousness and Value)*, 1996

According to the NIO data, three out of ten Koreans participate in some kind of association. Men rather than women, middle-aged rather than younger people, rural residents rather than city dwellers, more educated and affluent tend to engage in civic life in Korea.

Three major associations to which Koreans belong are fraternity groups (58.9%), religious associations (33.9%), and social service associations (17.4%), followed by hobby groups (9.5%) and same occupational groups (8.6%). Civic engagement in other kinds of associations is meager, arts associations (3.6%), political party associations (2.7%), environmental associations (2.5%), and etc. As for an association in which Koreans want to participate in the future, 29.3% showed no interest, while the rest identified a certain category of civic associations. If we consider the fact that only three out of ten Koreans belong to any civic association, but seven out of ten Koreans want to participate in civic associations in the future, potential growth of a civic Korea seems to be significant. In particular, Korean interest in future civic activities tend to be substantial in social service and environmental protection. One analysis states that approximately three quarters of non-religious Korean NGOs related to civic activities were created after the 1987 democratization period (Kim 1997, 107). Since these NGOs are overlapping with social service or environment associations, newly created associations of public interests are likely to house Koreans who want to be more participatory in civic life.

Comparable data suggest that about 40% of Americans and about quarter of Japanese (26% in 1981, 25.2% in 1986, 27.7% in 1991, and 25.3% in 1996, according to the Statistics Bureau of the Management and Coordination Agency, Inoguchi 1998, 6) participate in civic activities. In the Japanese case, civic activities were defined as activities for neighborhood or larger areas and social welfare facilities, as well as volunteer activities helping children, the aged, the disadvantaged, and disaster relief activities. Although this data cannot offer a good comparison since civic activities are defined differently, we can say that Korean civic engagement is not particularly low compared to that of the Japanese, who are known to be more community oriented than other Asians.

However, if we take a more "formal" civic community, Japan has more organizations and members. According to Tsujinaka (2000), the number of registered non-profit organizations (NPOs) per 100,000 persons is 511 in the U.S., 273 in Japan, and 65 in Korea, which is a 1.9 : 1 : 0.2 ratio. One may conclude that Korean local and informal civic associational life is quite active, although its civic world tends to be smaller and limited. On the other hand, grassroots membership in larger and national civic associations representing the newly emerging "civic movement" in Korea is relatively limited.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Korea's democracy is barely fourteen years old since the nation's democratization in

1987, and it is important to understand Korean political participation in the context of this new democracy. The Democratization of Korea demonstrated the contentious nature of civil society through active anti government movements against past authoritarian regimes, and the mass protests that contributed to the democratic transition in 1987. In consolidating democracy, however, the mobilization of Korean civil society in protest against the authoritarian government has been replaced by its participation in national politics and policy-making processes. Patterns of political participation by larger, centralized civic associations have been increasingly focused on their "advocacy role" vis-vis the Korean government. In this way, the Korean civil society has begun to play a significant role for the nation's reform policies.

The political activation of Korean civic associations, however, has been led by civic activists, many of whom are elite professionals. We need instead to know how ordinary Korean citizens engage in political activities. Will they be rather inactive since formal democratization has been achieved? Or on the contrary, will they be more active as they gain more freedom and opportunity to participate in politics. In what follows, the trend of voting rates and patterns of political participation are examined on the basis of the Sejong survey data of 1995, 1996 and 1997.

The analysis of the Sejong data suggests that people who are active in one kind of political participation are likely to be also active in another. Five different forms of political participation and another five forms of protest are drawn from the 1995 and 1996 data sets, but the 1997 survey omitted two forms of participation. Among the participation variables, "voting suggestion" with "participation in political meetings and gatherings" (1995, 1996 and 1997), "discussion of public affairs with public officials and politicians" with "voting suggestion" (1996) and the same variable with "participation in political meetings and gatherings" (1996 and 1997), "discussion of public affairs with public officials and politicians" with "donation of money" (1995 and 1996), and "participation in political meetings and gatherings" with "donation of money" (1996) are closely related to each other. As for the protest variables, "participation in legally sanctioned protests" with "consent to strikes or work stoppage" (1996) and the same variable with "filing of constitutional challenge" (1997), and "consent to strikes or work stoppage" with "seizure of public buildings" (1995 and 1996) are closely related to each other with more than 0.4 correlation coefficient within the 95% confidence level.

As seen in the following table, the most common political participation for Koreans in the past several years has been to "talk about politics with other people." In 1995 and 1996 respectively, 43% and 48% of Koreans talked about politics with other people "occasionally" and 11% and 9% talked "frequently." On the other hand, Koreans engage in other kinds of participatory activities much less frequently. People who answered "not at all" or "suggest to others to vote for a specific person or a party" have increased from 48% in 1995, to 54% in 1996 and 60% in 1997. This disengagement phenomenon seems to be related to the rise of autonomy in voting decisions. One would be restrained from making voting suggestions when people make their choice more solidly as in the presidential election. But, about 15-16% of Koreans

continued to influence the voting decisions of other people. People who engaged in activities such as "participating in political meetings or gatherings" and "discussing community or national affairs with public officials or politicians" have been less than 10% in the past three surveys. Political donation is the least engaged activity.

TABLE 5. PATTERNS OF POSITIVE INPUT POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

(%)

For the past several years, how often have you engaged in each of the following activities?	1995				1996				1997			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Talk about politics with other people.	12	35	43	11	12	31	48	9				
Suggest voting for a specific person or a party to others.	48	37	12	3	54	32	12	3	60	24	13	3
Participate in political meetings or gatherings.	62	27	9	2	71	20	8	1	73	18	8	1
Discuss community or national affairs with public officials or politicians.	66	26	7	1	75	18	6	1	-	-	-	-
Donate to a political party or a politician.	84	13	2	0	88	10	2	0	-	-	-	-

Note 1: 1995 N = 1,800; 1996 N = 1,500; 1997 N = 1,500

Note 2: (1) = Not at all; (2) = Rarely; (3) = Occasionally; (4) = Frequently

Sources: The Sejong Institute, 1995 *Kukmin Euiik Chosa* (1995 National Consciousness Survey), 1995; 1996 *Kukmin Euiik Chosa* (1996 National Consciousness Survey), 1996; 1997 *Kukmin Euiik Chosa* (1997 National Consciousness Survey), 1997.

In contrast to the lukewarm political participation in terms of "positive input," attitudes on political protest, or "negative input," is much more active. More than 80% of Koreans support "petitioning public officials" and more than 60% of them support "participating in legally sanctioned protests" in surveys of the past three years. Also, 61% supported "filing constitutional challenge to high courts" in the 1997 survey. However, opposition to "resisting government policies such as not paying certain taxes" exceed support for it by approximately 10%. Opposition to "consenting to strikes or work stoppage" or "seizing public buildings" is predominant. About 82-85% of Koreans opposed the former idea in the past three year surveys, and more than 90% of them opposed the latter idea in the 1995 and the 1996 surveys. The means of protest tend to be kept within the boundary of law and order.

Age and education factors appear to be significantly related to the level of political participation. In particular, as one is more educated or is younger, he or she tends to view political protests as legitimate. Younger people tend to be less engaged in political behavior. Except citizens aged 60 and over, as one is younger, he or she tends to participate less in political meetings or is less likely to recommend voting for

a specific politician or party. But, the direction of education factor on the positive input type of political participation is not clear. In other words, younger Koreans tend to be liberal in legitimizing various protest behaviors but they are less active in engaging in routine political behavior. Lower voting rates among younger Koreans is a good example. Also, the more educated one is in Korea, the more likely he or she is to accept the legitimacy of political protests.

TABLE 6. PATTERNS OF NEGATIVE INPUT POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

(%)

	1995				1996				1997			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Petition public officials.	3	13	64	20	4	12	64	20	5	14	65	16
Resist government policies (e.g. not pay certain taxes)	8	52	33	6	1	47	30	6	17	43	33	7
Participate in legally sanctioned protests.	9	30	49	13	16	22	48	13	11	27	47	15
Consent to strikes or work stoppage.	22	60	16	2	30	52	16	2	22	53	22	3
(1995-1996 question) Seize public buildings.	41	51	7	1	46	46	7	0	-	-	-	-
(1997 question) File constitutional challenge to the high courts.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	31	49	12

Note 1: 1995 N = 1,800; 1996 N = 1,500; 1997 N = 1,500

Note 2: (1) = Strongly Oppose; (2) = Somewhat Oppose; (3) = Somewhat Support; (4) = Strongly Support

Sources: The Sejong Institute, 1995 *Kuemin Eusik Chosa* (1995 National Consciousness Survey), 1995, 1996 *Kuemin Eusik Chosa* (1996 National Consciousness Survey), 1996; 1997 *Kuemin Eusik Chosa* (1997 National Consciousness Survey), 1997.

Looking at the relationship between participation variables and protest variables, correlation coefficients of ten variables in 1995 and 1996, and those of seven variables in 1997, are all positively related except one within the 95% confidence level. Thus, people with higher degrees of participation in various political activities tend to give greater support to the various means of public protest, and vice versa. This means that Koreans who participate in political activities for everyday normal inputs are likely to be rebellious when they see their protests as being legitimate. One cannot find a significant relationship between a participation variable and a protest variable, however, when one limits its significance to the level of more than a 0.4 correlation coefficient. On the other hand, both relationships among the participation variables and among the protest variables tend to be closer, especially among the former.

On the other hand, Koreans who are more participatory in politics tend to be less

satisfied with the democratic performance of their government. Interestingly, there is no statistically meaningful findings in the 1996 data. Table 7 demonstrates that a meaningful difference in viewing the democratization of the Kim Young Sam era is found only in certain cases. Except for the one item in the 1997 survey, one can find from the 1995 data that people who are frequently engaged in political activities, such as talking politics, suggesting votes, or going to political meetings, tend to give a lower democratization score for the new democracy. Although it is difficult to generalize due to the limited number of meaningful items, the 1995 data illustrates that active participants in certain political input activities tend to see the new democracy as less democratic.

TABLE 7. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND DEMOCRATIZATION PERCEPTIONS

Modes of Political Participation	Scales of Participation	Democratization Mean Score of Young Sam Kim Era	
		1995 (N = 1,800)	1997 (N = 1,500)
Talking Politics	Not at all	6.15 (214)	-
	Rarely	6.04 (621)	-
	Occasionally	6.18 (767)	-
	Frequently	5.57 (198)	-
		F = 6.04 P > F 0.0004	-
Suggesting Votes	Not at all	6.10 (857)	5.98 (933)
	Rarely	6.16 (674)	5.70 (364)
	Occasionally	5.76 (721)	6.19 (194)
	Frequently	5.29 (48)	5.19 (37)
		F = 5.64 P > F 0.0008	F = 4.87 P > F 0.0025
Going to Political Meetings	Not at all	6.14	-
	Rarely	6.07	-
	Occasionally	5.75	-
	Frequently	4.36	-
		F = 10.11 P > F 0.0000	-

Sources: The Sejong Institute, 1995 *Kukmin Eusik Chosa* (1995 *National Consciousness Survey*), 1995; 1997 *Kukmin Eusik Chosa* (1997 *National Consciousness Survey*), 1997.

Attitudes toward political protests are more strongly related to different reactions to a new democracy. People who support political protests "somewhat" or "strongly" in the five specified activities in 1995 and 1997 tend to give lower democratization score than those who oppose such protest activities. Thus, Koreans who see political protests as being legitimate tend to view a new democracy as less democratic than those who view them as illegitimate.

TABLE 8. POLITICAL PROTEST AND DEMOCRATIZATION PERCEPTIONS

Means of Political Protest	Attitude on Protest	Democratization Mean Score of Young Sam Kim Era	
		1995 (N = 1,800)	1997 (N = 1,500)
Petition Public Officials.	Strongly oppose	5.78	6.56
	Somewhat oppose	6.24	5.77
	Somewhat support	6.13	5.94
	Strongly support	5.77	5.17
		$F = 4.73$	$F = 3.66$
		$P > F 0.0027$	$P > F 0.0120$
Resist Government Policies (e.g. not pay certain taxes).	Strongly oppose	6.16	6.38
	Somewhat oppose	6.26	5.99
	Somewhat support	5.85	5.70
	Strongly support	5.42	5.50
		$F = 11.65$	$F = 3.88$
		$P > F 0.0000$	$P > F 0.0000$
Participate in Legally Sanctioned Protests.	Strongly oppose	6.22	6.25
	Somewhat oppose	6.10	5.99
	Somewhat support	6.12	5.77
	Strongly support	5.57	6.05
		$F = 4.27$	$F = 3.24$
		$P > F 0.0052$	$P > F 0.0215$
Consent to Strikes or Work Stoppage.	Strongly oppose	6.29	6.24
	Somewhat oppose	6.10	5.97
	Somewhat support	5.70	5.52
	Strongly support	5.06	5.11
		$F = 2.36$	$F = 3.85$
		$P > F 0.0000$	$P > F 0.0000$
Seize Public Buildings.	Strongly oppose	6.28	-
	Somewhat oppose	5.94	-
	Somewhat support	5.79	-
	Strongly support	5.33	-
		$F = 5.86$	-
		$P > F 0.0001$	-

Sources: The Sejong Institute, 1995 *Kaekmin Eusik Chosa* (1995 National Consciousness Survey), 1995; 1997 *Kaekmin Eusik Chosa* (1997 National Consciousness Survey), 1997.

CONCLUSION

This paper reviewed the status of trust in Korean society. We find that familial trust is high and neighborhood trust is relatively high. At the same time, civic activities in

terms of associational membership is not inactive, even though the majority of associations to which Koreans are affiliated tend to be limited to fraternity and religious activities. Conditions for social connectedness, which can be generated through people's face-to-face interactions in various voluntary associations, seem to be present. As a matter of fact, Koreans like to build social networks and are busy at maintaining them. Trust and cooperation would be high within these networks.

Nevertheless, generalized trust is low in Korea. Although younger, better educated and more affluent Koreans tend to trust other people and social norms such as meritocracy and the rule of law, the overall level of generalized trust is low compared to Western societies. Why familial or quasi-familial trust based on particularistic ties does not transcend to outside society begs a question. Korean interpersonal networks tend to be limited to exclusive relations such as school and occupational ties. The prevalent pattern of Korean associational life is based on common background and private interests rather than universal identity and shared goals. This phenomenon seems to narrow the boundary of social connectedness and cooperation. Such an observation, however, does not necessarily support Fukuyama's conception of a zero-sum game between familial trust and generalized trust. The radius of trust is certainly expandable as more people participate in voluntary associations for public interest and the public good. The growing civic organizations for social services and other advocacy associations for environmental problems and women's equality will provide more opportunities for Koreans to trust and cooperate at the higher levels of society.

Institutional and political trust is also low in Korea. Low generalized trust tends to be related to low institutional and political trust. The impact of governance on people's generalized trust is great under undemocratic rule. When the police state supervises people's activities, and media coverage and court rules are influenced by power, people cannot trust public officials and their institutions, nor can they trust other people easily. Several decade old experiences of authoritarian regimes heightened Koreans' distrust of their government and their society. Although experiencing the on going drive for national reform politics under a democratically empowered government, Koreans have not yet developed confidence in their government's competence and credibility. Distrust towards politicians and the parliament is worse due to corruption and incompetence. In contrast to the case of generalized trust, political distrust tends to be higher among younger and educated Koreans.

Koreans appear to be less participatory in political meetings or party activities. Younger people are even less participatory. However, as one is more educated and younger, they tend to be more open to political protests. These groups also believe that the democratically empowered new government is not sufficiently democratic. They hold higher expectations for democratization, which means a high frustration level for the status quo. The role of these people for Korea's democracy is important since they have more generalized trust and hold the potential for civic and political activity.

This paper could not offer statistical analysis on the relationship among trust, civic engagement, and political participation. Instead, it has shown a rough description of

each element critical for the consolidation of democracy in Korea. A more nuanced survey is needed to offer that kind of analysis in the future.

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