

Abstract

Organizational Characteristics of Nonprofit Sector in East Asia - Japan and Korea

Kim, Hyung-tae
Department of Sociology
The Graduate School
Yonsei University

The main purpose of this dissertation is to study state-society relations and ways that social interest is organized in East Asian Confucian countries. Also, this study argues that forms of civil society and social capital in Confucian East Asia are different from that of western countries and attempts to examine this empirically. This study adopts an alternative term of 'Nonprofit sector' in order to indicate the overlapping sphere between state and society, which western civil society theory often fails to illuminate. The assuming assertion is that 'state-supervised harmony' and 'role-based hierarchy' are more distinctive in Confucian East Asia. To achieve this goal, cases of Japan and Korea are empirically compared and then historically analyzed.

Through this comparison and analysis, what is found in this study is as follows.

First, Confucian values represented by 'role-based hierarchy' continue to exist in private and public realm and are the main principles in organizing social relations in Korea as well as in Japan. That is, hierarchical relationship is found in the relationship within families (as a form of filial piety), among neighbors (respect for elders) and even between state and society (respect for the interest of state beforehand). This means that although Confucian values are considered as diminished or disappeared in the level of politics, they are

still influential and embedded as a social culture in the level of everyday life.

Second, important civil organizations such as civic associations, political associations and labor unions in western civil society are not so popular in Japan and Korea. In terms of participation, neighborhood associations (Cho-nai-kai in Japanese), cooperative societies and hobby clubs in workplace are popular in Japan while neighborhood associations (Ban-sang-hoei in Korean) and affective linkage groups are developed in Korea. That is, new and different form of nonprofit sector is constructed in East Asian Confucian.

Third, institutional supports of government have played a critical role in the historical development of nonprofit organizations. Government has supported some specific associations through coercive participation policy, financial support and mobilization for the economic and political purposes, and both of the Japanese and the Korean government accept 'state-supervised' role. As paternalistic role of state is well respected, nonprofit sector can be constructed with 'state-society harmony' in Confucian East Asia.

Organizational characteristics of nonprofit sector in Japan and Korea expose the possibility of different form of civil society and social capital, which do not follow western one. It is taken for granted that civil society is autonomous and free from state power in western situation. In Japan and Korea, however, state and society do not need to be collisional to each other in organizing social interest. Instead, state tries to maintain 'state-supervised harmony' and intervene in constructing civil society in East Asia. This logic holds good in creating social capital. Horizontal networks and spontaneous sociability are regarded as indispensable factors for '*making democracy work*' and helping economic development. Japanese and Korean cases show an alternative way of creating social capital in hierarchical social culture. That is, state intervention can make people associate and trust while people respect superior role of state. Vertical networks and coercive sociability with paternalistic intervention of state is the distinctive characteristics of producing social capital in Confucian East Asia.

The debates over 'Asian Values' have been taken on a highly polemical

tone of searching for real 'Asian Values'. The debates, however, cannot deal with more urgent questions of how those values are socialized and what are their effects on society. This study attempts to answer to these questions by examining 'invented tradition' and expects to shift the debates into more productive and more sociological terms.

Key Words: Nonprofit Sector, Civil Society, Social Capital, Role-based hierarchy, State-supervised state-society relations, State Intervention, Confucian Tradition, Invented Tradition, Asian Values