

ABSTRACT

A Comparative Study on Social Capital of Marriage

– Network of Wedding Guests and Gift Donation –

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This study positively analyzes marriages focused on the effects of wedding guests' network and its structures on the accumulation of social capital. The customs of marriages have been existing since the old times and the customs of contribution as rituals have now formed everyday's life continuing and growing practice. By giving contributions, wedding guests intend to maintain a relationship and build a more reliable one that will enable them to ask for mutual help when in need. Therefore, a wedding contribution maintains and develops human relationship, and voluntarily or compulsorily transfers the said relationship to others through social norms and so on. From this point of view, a wedding contribution is a kind of gift. The contribution and guest networks in wedding reveal the human relations, that is, the social capital that a certain person is able to mobilize. And this study reappreciates the quantity and quality of social capital by revealing the relations between individuals, and between individuals and groups through the rituals of wedding.

In case of the Korean society, the host of marriage ceremony is usually the father of the contracting parties in marriage. In each case of this research, the networks of wedding guests are composed of persons similar to the wedding host in terms of life backgrounds and social backgrounds. And the fact that some

wedding guests who give contributions are acquaintances of the wedding host or the contracting parties' brothers and sisters is another unique characteristic of the Korean society. In case of congratulations and condolences in the Korean society, the components of guests networks for mutual help mobilize the resources through inherent kinship and territorial relationship, acquired and selective old-boy networks, business relations, and other voluntary associations. It shows that the network plays a critical role in the accumulation of social capital. Besides, the guest networks exist all over the kinship, territorial relationship, old-boy networks, business relations, and other voluntary associations, and, more often than not, they overlap. Meanwhile, the strong ties and weak ties that coexist in kinship, territorial relationship, and old-boy networks of the traditional relationship, business relations and other voluntary associations of modern relationship are proven to be weak ties. Though the guest network of kinship is small in size, the amount of gift donation per person is large. This indicates the important role of kinship networks. And from the correlation between intimacy and contribution comes the result that the larger the amount of gift donation, the more intimate is the human relationship.

In case of Japan, the host of marriage ceremony is the contracting parties in marriage. Most of the wedding guests share old-boy networks or business relations with the contracting parties in marriage, and their networks are small in size but reveal strong ties. The length itself of the actual contact between individuals and members of networks indicates their social capital.

The contribution of individual is formed in effects of not only individual features but also networks of various relations which one has with others surrounding him/her. In the specific situation of marriage, those who maintain more contacts with others confirm their relationships through their children's marriage and the contributions of network members.

In the participation of marriage as guests, the selective and voluntary characteristic following one's interest and personal object and compulsory characteristic coexist. In other words, individuals do not only have the right to

choose but also the obligation. Although trapped by kinship, territorial relationship, and old-boy networks, participation in marriage still remains an individual's decision. Indeed, the relationships between the contracting parties in marriage or their parents and the individual wedding guests explain the features of networks composed of the constituents adhering strictly to norms.

Key Words: Marriage, Social Capital, Network of Wedding Guests, Gift Donation, Host of Marriage Ceremony, Kinship, Territorial Relationship, Old-boy Networks, Business Relations, Voluntary Associations, Intimacy, Strong Ties, Weak Ties