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Social Capital and Social Communication in Japan: Political Participation and Tolerance

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One of the major acts of citizenship is to go to vote.<sup>1</sup> There is a trend in studies on Japanese political participation to analyze the population's voting behavior as a result of mobilization. Voters are often cynically described as passively mobilized to go to elections in traditional contexts (for the 1976 Japanese National Election study, see Flanagan 1991 and Richardson 1991; for the 1983 study, see Watanuki et al. 1986). Richardson (1991) points out that in Japanese elections in the 1970s, "people's voting support is sought via mobilization of social networks and group affiliations. These electoral mobilization efforts are labeled *influence communications*" (p.339). "[These] communications are interpersonal and organizational communications designed to directly mobilize and manipulate voting support through activation of personal obligations, feelings of deference, or other kinds of sentiment pertaining to specific ongoing social relationships that extend well beyond any given election campaign" (p.339).

The Japanese voters depicted here are far from being active participants of debates in the public domain. The Tocquevillian image of citizens who are the core of grassroots democracy is absent. Japanese voters are thought to be passively mobilized through the web of social relationships, and candidates often count on their sheer numbers. It is not surprising that this type of passive political participation is not regarded highly, and political analysts would welcome the diminishing of such propensity.

The evidence, however, tells us that such passive participation is declining. This change is directly related to several factors, and an existing pressure for realignment of the party system is obviously one of them. The connection between the party and its support groups has now become unstable, and hard blows against influential Diet members who represent particular interest groups have become quite common. Under such circumstances, the traditional mobilization system no longer functions efficiently. At the same time, the devitalization of local communities results in the weakening of conformity pressure from affiliated groups, which used to lead people to feel obliged and to value obedience. As for industry, trade unions have lost their spirits and the lifetime employment system has become

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unsustainable, both of which mitigate the mobilization pressure from the workplace. Reflecting these social shifts, the 1980-2000 trends in Meisui-kyo national data show that indicators of group/organizational mobilization for voting are on a constant decline. With regard to questions on what the respondent “saw, heard, and was recommended” during elections, items such as “recommended by superior/influential\*,” “recommended by union\*,” “recommended by other organization\*,” “talk in the workplace,” “persuaded by some election enthusiast,” “heard reputation in the neighborhood,” and “recommended by friend/relative” are all in the direction of decrease (asterisks indicate statistically significant changes). Furthermore, voter turnout in national and local elections show the same pattern.

### **Two Anomalies of Japanese Voters and an Approach to Studying Them**

Strangely enough, however, despite the de-mobilization above, voluntary organizations in general have flourished and increased in their numbers between 1960-1996 (Tsujinaka 1999). According to Tsujinaka, the number of nonprofit organizations per million population was 11.1 in 1960, and rose to 30.3 in 1996 [The comparable statistics in the U.S. are 34.6 in 1960 and 35.6 in 1995; Organizations referred to here include business, labor and political groups as well as civic NPOs.] Organizational or group mobilization decreased whereas voluntary organizations increased--these seemingly incompatible crosscurrents are an anomaly that cannot be handled effectively by traditional explanations of Japanese mobilization.

The perspective that Japanese voting turnout is mobilized dutifully or conformingly came about in order to explain political behavior that is apparently peculiar to Japanese citizens. Thus, it has been made difficult for the students of political science to analyze Japanese data in the same stream of theory with other national election or political behavioral studies. To take advantage of the diminishing passive voting behavior, it is necessary to examine Japanese political participation from a more universalistic viewpoint, which allows us to discuss how and in what sense the Japanese differ from citizens of other nations and to decipher the above anomaly. Needless to say, the concept of “mobilization” is not particular to the political situation in Japan. As Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) show, for instance, political mobilization can be woven into a universal rational model of political participation. Thus, the problem lies not with the concept itself but with the tendency to emphasize a particularistic explanation.

The “universal viewpoint” discussed here employs the notion of social capital. Rosenstone and Hansen also stressed the importance of social networks as an explanatory variable. In this paper, I wish to emphasize it even more strongly. In the following analyses, instead of focusing on election processes, I pay attention to more general forms of political participation, for the application of social capital theory has been amplified to a wide variety of fields. And this endeavor will resonate with other social capital studies on Japan, such as the one by Pharr (2000) on public trust.

I will also focus on the “dark side” of social capital, which is closely related with political intolerance, and which is not thoughtfully investigated in the context of social capital. This focus leads us to find another anomaly of Japanese voters.

In spite of Putnam’s claim that the relation between political participation and political tolerance is never negative (Putnam 2000), it turns out that in Japan they are slightly negative and statistically significant relationships. The JEDS 2000 data (which will be used in this study) shows that tolerance for a socializing agent (such as a school teacher or the media) and participation in intermediated organization/groups are correlated  $-.085$  ( $p < .001$ ), and the

correlation between tolerance and political participation is  $-.056$  ( $p < .05$ ). Moreover, it is worth noticing that the less tolerant that one is, the more political efficacy he/she has ( $-.067$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and the more political trust he/she shows ( $-.091$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

In this paper, I will not deal with these anomalies directly, but with elements that are relevant to it, such as the political participation and tolerance of the Japanese. These related factors need to be examined in order to efficiently explain anomalies that are often observed in Japanese data, and I strongly suggest that it is necessary to examine them from more universalistic perspective, which will surely contribute to the clarification of the notion of social capital.

## Social Capital

Triggered by Coleman (1988) and, above all, Putnam (1993, 1995, 2000), social capital became a new focus of political participation study in the last ten years. The concept à la Putnam connotes, as indicators of its abundance, well organized and active voluntary associations, a diverse web of interpersonal networks, high trust in institutions and in people in general, and a strong sense of political efficacy. These indicators are positively correlated, both conceptually and empirically. Such inter-relationship creates the soil for “mutual benefits” to all those involved, and functions to “make democracy work.”

“Mutual benefits” refers to positive outcomes attained through collective problem solving: establishing and maintaining fair and active formal organizations, forming deliberated public opinions, and eliciting extensive and active political participation for collective problem solving. Let us take a look at this claim more closely.

First of all, active voluntary organizations function as agents that summarize, condense and represent diverse opinions of members. They are called “intermediary organizations” (Kornhauser 1959), and they operate as linking pins that connect those who are governed to those who govern. Experiences of reaching decisions after laborious discussions in horizontal relationship in such organizations become the “school of democracy.” It facilitates citizens’ active social participation, creating at the same time capable human resources for the management of society. Furthermore, as by-products of such social activities, citizens develop general expectations that the others are trustworthy, institutions deserve their confidence, politics is responsive to their needs and worth their effort to take a part in. These expectations, in turn, have their own positive consequences.

High levels of general trust leads people to expect that others are cooperative and not opportunistic in social exchanges, even without a system of surveillance or carrot-and-stick maneuvering. Trust therefore reduces the cost of supervision and/ social control (cf. Yamagishi 1990: ch. 4). The high level of confidence in social institutions also reduces the cost of supervision, this time on the institutions themselves. This produces a spiral of positive feedback; a high evaluation of a given institution invites citizens’ confidence, which in turn makes its workers proud and responsible, thus motivating them for a still higher evaluation. The perceived responsiveness of politics amplifies the perception that political participation is beneficial; external political efficacy is solidified when politicians respond to citizens who make their voices on social problems heard, and internal political efficacy is also enhanced when their voices make an actual difference in real political consequences.

An overview of Putnam's social capital research gives us an insight that the theory is (1) heavily focused on voluntary associations, and (2) stressing almost exclusively the positive aspects of civic participation. Our societies, however, do not consist merely of voluntary

organizations and preclude negative aspects of civic activities themselves. In order to elaborate on the social capital theory, these two points must be considered thoroughly. In the following argument, I wish to emphasize two main points:

- (1) Politics is essentially a series of collisions between different worldviews that often bring about negative consequences. Close examination of this point is attempted in terms of the dark side of social capital.
- (2) Our daily communication takes place in interpersonal informal situations, more often than in intermediate organizations. Thus, the focus is on the role of daily interpersonal situations in terms of network capital.

### **The Dark Side of Social Capital**

Politics is the art of carving out mutually beneficial compromises in an arena of struggle among heterogeneous ideas; it is never without discussion, confrontation, and consensus building among heterogeneous partisans. These inevitable elements can possibly create “cracks” in the positive build-up of social capital. Unless citizens participate in collective deliberation despite heterogeneous cross-pressures, politics will lose its chance of creating new ideas for managing the society and result in mere confrontations among antagonistic partisans. The hidden presumption here is that democracy will not function well without trusting relationships that allow open debates even if different worldviews bang against each other.

Huckfeldt et al. (2001) conclude, through an analysis of the 2000 American National Election Study, that citizens indeed encounter heterogeneous political information. According to their findings, however, this heterogeneity does not interfere with citizens’ political participation, and it is thus fair to say that the hidden presumption has its empirical evidence in the context of American political culture.

In contrast, if a severe partisan cleavage brings about a strong “politicized collective identity” (Simon and Klandermans 2001), confrontation will be accelerated, pressure for conformity toward in-group members will be heightened, and differentiation will evolve among out-groups. In a situation like this, quite naturally, the assumption of mutual trust is difficult to maintain among opposing groups. Although it is contrary to Huckfeldt’s finding, in reality, examples of such circumstances are not hard to find: Anpo-Tousou (the movement against the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty) in 1960s Japan; unstable political situations in developing countries; altercations over racial, environmental, or military issues in post-modern societies.

When examining these opposing possibilities, it is important to draw our attention to a new variable; that is, tolerance, the notion that original social capital theory by Putnam (1993) failed to point out. In order to continue being democratic “joiners” in the public arena where heterogeneous worldviews, antagonistic partisans, and/or incompatible policy supporters are all existent, citizens must be tolerant of different ideas and ideologies. Tolerance is not unrelated to trustfulness, a well discussed element of social capital, of course; however, it is more directly relevant to citizens’ attitudes toward social control (permissiveness) of others’ deeds than trust. What does this mean?

According to Sullivan et al. (1982), tolerance is defined as the willingness to extend liberties and protection to disliked or even hated groups. We should regard this as the strong version of tolerance (see Sullivan and Transue 1999 for an overview.) The premise here is that tolerant citizens believe the given democratic social system can never be disrupted, even by extremists or fanatics. In other words, citizens have enough faith in the power of majority control and in the judgment of others that no one dares to go as far as to disrupt or let someone

else disrupt the existing social system. Perhaps citizens are confident in social institutions to be tenacious enough against challenges by extremists and the like.

When intolerance prevails, the social system is running the risk of turning the sunny side of social capital into the dark side. Under such circumstances, social capital cannot work well; surveillance is needed at all times, antagonisms are everywhere, despite the existence of active voluntary associations. As a matter of fact, this dark side of social capital had been pointed out in the early argument (Portes and Landolt 1996), and Putnam (2000: ch. 22) himself also discussed this perspective directly, mainly in terms of tolerance, although in a quite optimistic tone.

While societies do not often go to extremes as to exclude or reject all radical citizens, situations where milder intolerance is prevalent, suppressing open expression of one's viewpoint, could be present. Such a condition, too, would be enough to interfere with the frank confrontation of heterogeneous ideas and to nip the bud of positive social capital in advance. We should call this the weak version of tolerance; intolerance is recognized when open communication is disturbed by conformity pressure and/or by other suppressing forces (see Portes 1998 for his conceptualization of negative social capital, which includes notions of both the weak and the strong versions discussed here.)

The absence of the strong version of tolerance is often recognized in people's attitudes, but is rarely manifested in behaviors, simply because of infrequent opportunities. On the other hand, the absence of the weak version of tolerance is habitually observed. For instance, informal personal relationships are often the soil of group identity, as well as a factor that suppresses heterogeneous ideas, which may result in the demolition of spontaneous and frank political communication. In Japan, revealing one's political orientation in the workplace can be a risky thing to do, for it may invite negative sanctions and/or alienations. At the same time, however, political mobilization by the pressure from organizations and unions is, as I mentioned earlier, no longer effective and thus now uncommonly practiced. Such elements tend to make the workplace irrelevant to political talk. Ikeda (1997) shows that the work-centered social networks have smaller effects on the determination of voting preferences, compared to other types of networks such as family- or friend-centered. This finding suggests that political communication is suppressed in the workplace.

The meaningfulness of tolerance/intolerance should be emphasized, especially in the context of recent Japanese history, where people experienced acute political confrontations in the cold war era and had a homogeneous community life (or company life) with strong enforcing power for conformation. As mentioned above, however, such conditions are no longer as prevalent in Japan.

### **Social Capital and Network Capital**

The second point of this paper is that social capital is not exclusively developed by voluntary organizations. In daily conversations, we have a variety of chances to speak about political topics. Talking politics enables people to get political information at a relatively low cost. It allows them to cut down on otherwise necessary investments, for example, reading newspaper articles, and, when interacting with close others, the risk of exposing ignorance and losing face would be less consequential (Huckfeldt, Ikeda, and Pappi 2000; Ikeda and Huckfeldt 2001). This kind of daily conversation is very different from formal discussion in public; nevertheless, it still cultivates political sense and knowledge for ordinary citizens and forms one of the essential starting points for civic life. As discussed earlier, Huckfeldt et al. (2001) claim that

daily conversation does not exclude the potential of encountering inconsistent/ antagonistic information. Their argument effectively and empirically counter-attacks Schudson's contention that daily conversation is essentially sociable and is without the discomfort of democratic talk (Schudson 1997).

Daily conversations also facilitate political participation. La Du Lake and Huckfeldt (1998) focus on political participation in the 1992 U.S. Presidential Election using CNEP (Cross National Election Study) data and find that one's repertoire of participation is enlarged by available political expertise within his/her interpersonal environment; the more political knowledge people surrounding the respondents have (in their ego-centric network), the larger the variety of political participation they can acquire.

The political repertoire is also widened by the amount of political discussion in respondents' interpersonal networks, the size of such networks, the number of voluntary associations to which they are affiliated, their level of education and their age. Thus, "politically relevant [social capital] is indeed generated in personal networks; that it is a by-product of the social interactions with a citizen's discussants; and that increasing levels of politically relevant social capital enhance the likelihood that a citizen will be engaged in politics." (La Du Lake and Huckfeldt 1998: 581).

Scheufele et al. (2001) also draws the conclusion, from the analysis of 1996 American National Election Study data, that the frequency of interpersonal discussion is linked positively with public/non-public forms of election-process participation, on both local and national levels. Other studies such as Kim et al. (1999), Wyatt et al. (2000), or Scheufele (1999) also illustrate clearly an association between political talk and participation. In Japan, too, the effect of such networks on political behavior is quite evident (Huckfeldt, Ikeda, and Pappi 2000; Ikeda and Huckfeldt 2001; Ikeda 1997). In this sense, social interaction is another valuable source of social capital. Wellman went on further and named the interpersonal-network-based social capital as network capital (Wellman 2001). In this paper, I wish to ascertain its effect in a Japanese national sample as well as a snowball sample.

### Hypotheses

Given that the basic unit of analysis is on individual data, this paper offers the following hypotheses:

- 1a. The more social capital citizens have, the more they will participate in politics (1a-1: Putnam's hypothesis). As social capital is accumulated through daily social interactions/conversations, daily social interactions or daily social networks also enhance political participation (1a-2: Network hypothesis).
- 1b. The effect of networks (daily social interaction) is enhanced when the "network others" are joiners (i.e., joiners attract joiners) (Collective effect hypothesis).
2. As social capital is supposedly a product of interaction among equals, the effect of hypothesis 1a-1 will not be observable in organizations where members are held together by vertical relationships (Hypothesis 2a). Also, in daily social communication, hypothesis 1a-2 will be supported more strongly among equals than among superior-inferior pairs (Hypothesis 2b).
3. The more open the organization to which one is affiliated, the more politically active he/she will be (Hypothesis 3a). Also, the more open the interpersonal

networks into which one is embedded, the more politically active he/she will be (Hypothesis 3b). Open networks, in both the organizational and interpersonal web, make citizens more socially visible, which in turn increases the possibility for them to be socially activated from the outer world.

Furthermore, our research asks: Are hypotheses 1 through 3 also applicable to political tolerance? As tolerance/intolerance is an index of the dark side of social capital, the logic of hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 can also be applied to predicting tolerance levels. I call these RQs Hypothesis 4-1a-1, 4-1a-2, 4-1b, 4-2a, 4-2b, 4-3a, and 4-3b, respectively.

### The Data

The data used here is from a Japanese national-sample panel survey with snowball-sampled data (JEDS 2000). The first wave was conducted as face-to-face interviews in April 2000 during non-election time (response rate was 64.7%, N=1,618), and the second was mail-surveyed in November 2000 after the General Election in October (37.8% of the first wave). The N for the snowball sample is 794. In this analysis, both the first wave data and the snowball data are used, and the former is called “main dataset.”

The procedure of collecting snowball data was: 1) Ask the main respondent about his/her spouse/the most- /the second most-frequent contact other (“Please recall the person with whom you talk most (second most) frequently”), and define these persons as “snowball targets”, 2) ask the main respondent to bring to mind two targets and answer more than 10 questions regarding each of them (how close the each target is to the respondent, which party the respondent thinks the target supports, etc.), and 3) request the main respondent to mail survey questionnaires to the target persons.

For the analysis of the snowball data, I constructed a dataset by pairing the data of the main respondents with their snowball partners (henceforth “network other”). That is, the main respondent and his/her spouse, the main respondent and his/her most frequent contact other, and the main respondent and his/her second most frequent contact other. The problem of this pairing is adjusted by using the robust estimation method (Rogers 1993). In this paper, this dataset is referred to as the “snowball dataset.”

### Independent Variables

*Voluntary associations:* One of the indices of social capital is participation in intermediate groups (voluntary organizations/groups). Seeing a list of voluntary associations, the respondent is asked to name the ones to which he/she is affiliated, and to answer questions on those affiliations. In this analysis, the data on affiliation is used, as well as the level of involvement, and horizontality/verticality or openness of these associations. The most frequent response is “resident association” (71%), then “alumni association” (35%), “parent-teacher association” (18%), “farmers’ cooperative” (16%), “trade association” (15%), and “Koenkai” (supporters association of a particular politician; 14%).

*Informal groups* (less-organized intermediate groups): Twenty six percent of the total respondents are affiliated with out-of-hours co-worker groups. The rate for study/ training groups is 17%, and for hobby circles 46%. Voluntary associations and informal groups are added weighted by involvement to create an index. Vertically-structured groups are excluded from the index, which means that there are two measurements on horizontal voluntary associations and informal groups (scale reliability (alpha) was .61 and .55 respectively.) The



reason for this exclusion is that, in social capital analyses, horizontal and vertical associations are dealt with separately, for only the former nurtures the resources for social capital (Putnam 1993). A separate index for vertical associations/groups was created; around 30% of the respondents are affiliated to vertical associations, and 20% to vertical informal groups. For the sake of analytic simplicity, an index of vertical association/group participation combined both vertical voluntary association and vertical informal groups.

Openness of associations/informal groups is measured by asking the respondents whether the associations/groups to which they are affiliated actively interact with the outer world. One third of respondents said that they were affiliated to one or more open associations/groups.

*Political conversation in the intermediary:* If we regard intermediate affiliation as stock-based social capital, we can include political conversation into the analysis of intermediary flow-based social capital. Around 20% of the respondents have political communication in their associations/groups.

*Weak tie/strong tie:* The well-known concept of weak tie/strong tie (Granovetter 1983) can be another index of social capital in daily life. Social ties are easily transformed into personal networks which bring social support and and/or important information. The larger the network (with social ties) into which one is embedded, the more social capital he/she is expected to have. On the other hand, as contended by Lin (2001), having social ties is just the same as owning a resource that works as social credit. This credit makes the owner's participation socially valuable and desirable from the society's perspective. Thus, it facilitates him/her to participate even more actively.

Strong ties form a network of important/intimate others, providing us with social support, benevolence, and mutual assurance due to its inner group nature. In contrast, weak ties form a network of acquaintances that extends out of one's inner group and brings information from the outer world. It works as a pool of heterogeneous information, which can sometimes be useful and/or influential in decision-making, job-changing, and voting behavior, etc. (Granovetter 1983; Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995).

*Social networks:* Variables from the snowball data are also examined. Social networks can work as booster rockets to facilitate social participation, although they constrain our information environment (network others have their own preferences which bias political information like a filter to the respondent). These analyses use the following variables: an average amount of political conversation in one's networks; network others' political participation and tolerance; party identification agreement with the main respondent; social identification agreement; relational characteristics with network others such as spouse/friend and superior/equal.

*Trust:* Generalized trust, a belief that people in general can be relied upon, is strongly emphasized by Yamagishi and Yamagishi (1994) in the comparison of society's openness between Japan and the United States. Putnam (2000: ch. 8) also stresses the importance of trust, having distinguished "thick trust" (which derives from personal experience) from "thin trust" (built by generalized mutual reciprocity). He then emphasizes that "thin trust" is the core of social capital, because it nurtures newly formed networks and chances of new associations beyond daily friendship. This point corresponds with Yamagishi's arguments. Although generalized trust often fails to demonstrate its own function in the data of social capital (Newton 1999; Brehm and Rahn, 1997), I use the variable to follow the argument above in the context of the Japanese national survey.

## Dependent Variables

*Political participation:* I examined fourteen forms of political participation asking the respondent to rate each one with three degrees: “often participated,” “once or twice” and “never”. The most frequent participatory behavior is, of course, voting. Then several categories within 10-20% “often participated” followed: involvement in resident association activities; signing a petition; becoming a member of Koenkai; requesting friends to vote for a candidate/party; and taking part in volunteer activities/ neighborhood activism. I constructed a political participation scale by adding all the categories with weight of participation frequencies, excluding the ones overlapping the independent variable (social participation); that is, Koenkai, volunteer activities and resident association activities. The reliability of the scale (alpha) is .77.

*Tolerance:* Six questions consisting of a pair of choices between tolerant and intolerant attitudes were used to measure tolerance: whether high school teachers were able to express their opinions on issues of religion, ethics, and politics in class even if they were very much different from that of society in general [A33D]; whether newspapers were able to print the publisher's opinions no matter how biased they were [A33E]; whether use of public halls/facilities was permitted when anti-democratic organizations requested the use of it, as long as they met the other requirements set by the rules [A33F]; whether political parties must report to the public its internal management because political parties have the characteristics of public entities [A33G]; whether fundamental rights should be fully assured, even if the person is suspected of a brutal crime [A33H]; whether it is acceptable for the police to spy on or tap an organization that could become a threat to the safety of society [A33I].

I put these six items into a principal component analysis, and obtained three principal components as shown below. The result shows that the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> components correspond to our strong version of tolerance; the 1<sup>st</sup> is named “Tolerance for socializing agents” and the 3<sup>rd</sup> “Tolerance for political extremists.” The second component is tolerance for human rights; however, it is not significantly relevant to our analytic purposes here. Thus, I used the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> in the analysis below. As we asked the same questions directly to network others, collective effect by network others is also testable for tolerance.

component	1	2	3
A33D	0.75	0.06	-0.01
A33E	0.76	-0.01	-0.02
A33F	-0.04	0.01	0.97
A33G	0.16	0.49	0.21
A33H	0.37	-0.63	0.12
A33I	0.08	0.74	-0.06
Eigenvalue	1.34	1.17	1.00

## Control Variables

*Human (individual) capital:* Basic political knowledge (cf. Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996), political socialization experience (Neuman 1986), and interest in politics (van Deth 1998) are among the well known human capital variables for political participation. These variables are used as control variables to test the hypotheses.

*TV exposure:* Putnam (1995) gave rise to a heated debate on the role of TV exposure,

by accusing TV as being the major culprit for the decrease of social capital in the United States. His argument was widely countered (Bennett et al. 2000; Norris 1996; Pharr 2000), and Putnam himself changed his points somewhat in his recent publication (Putnam 2000: ch.13). He now claims that, although the amount of TV exposure itself correlates positively with participation, customary TV exposure as a whole deprives individuals of time for social participation. He also marks TV as an amusement that keeps down other leisure activities including various forms of social participation. Based on this line of argument, then, TV exposure deserves attention in the Japanese context (although it will not be a main focus of this analysis).

*Distance to workplace:* The time spent on commuting seems to play a similar role to TV exposure. Putnam (2000: ch. 12) points out the effect of suburbanization; “each additional 10 minutes in daily commuting time cuts involvement in community affairs by ten percent.” In Japan, the average time spent on commuting is 80 minutes a day (in 1995) and this data raises the question of whether or not commuting cuts by 80% the possible social participation of Japanese citizens.

*Ideology and demographic variables:* The standard Left/right ideology variable as well as gender, age, years of residency, education, family income, and city-size variables are used as control variables.

## **Results: Determinants of Social Capital**

### **Base Analysis**

A regression analysis on social capital was performed, having set the independent variables as follows: three types of social capital variables, human capital variables, ideology, inhibitive factors to social capital, and demographic variables[1]. The result in the first column of Table 1 clearly shows the effects of intermediary groups (Hypothesis 1a) as well as the effects of social networks (Hypothesis 1b).

Regarding intermediary group variables, the more affiliated/involved the respondent is to these associations/groups, the more he/she becomes “joiner” (de Tocqueville) in political activities. Political discussion in these intermediaries also promotes participation. Strong tie/weak tie network variables lose their predictive power when network political conversation is controlled. The variable of conversation with network others has a clear effect on political participation, which supports our revision of Putnamian social capital variables. An additional analysis shows (in the second column of Table 1) that, contrary to Putnam's expectation, affiliation to vertical associations also has a predictive power (negation of Hypothesis 2a). This phenomenon motivates us to investigate further to determine whether a horizontal intermediary is a necessary condition for activating participation or whether Japan is a special case in the sense that the old paternalistic culture is still alive.

**Table 1. Basic Analysis of Social Capital as a Determinant of Political Participation**

		H 1a1&2		Hypo. 2a		Hypo. 3a				
Intermediary Groups	a: Horizontal voluntary assoc.	0.22	***					0.22	***	
	b: Horizontal informal groups	0.05	*					0.10	***	
	c: Vertical intermediary			0.10	***					0.09 *
	a*d interaction							0.00		
	b*d interaction							-0.11	*	
	c*d interaction									-0.02
	d: Openness						0.08	***	0.05	0.06 *
Social Networks	Political conversation	0.15	***	0.18	***	0.18	***	0.15	***	0.17 ***
	Size of strong ties	-0.01		0.03		0.02		-0.01		0.02
	Size of weak ties	0.04		0.07	**	0.07	**	0.04		0.07 **
Trust	Political conversation	0.14	***	0.14	***	0.14	***	0.14	***	0.14 ***
	Generalized trust	-0.01		-0.01		-0.01		-0.01		-0.01
	Institutional trust	0.02		0.02		0.02		0.02		0.02
Human capital	Political interest	0.09	***	0.09	***	0.09	***	0.08	***	0.09 ***
	Socialization	0.04		0.07	**	0.06	*	0.04		0.06 *
Ideology	Knowledge	0.09	***	0.11	***	0.11	***	0.09	***	0.11 ***
	Ideology	-0.02		-0.02		-0.02		-0.02		-0.02
Inhibitive factors	TV exposure	-0.01		-0.02		-0.02		-0.00		-0.02
	Distance to workplace	-0.07	***	-0.08	***	-0.08	***	-0.07	**	-0.08 **
Demographics	Gender	-0.11	***	-0.08	***	-0.09	***	-0.11	***	-0.08 ***
	Age	0.15	***	0.17	***	0.17	***	0.16	***	0.17 ***
	Year of residence	0.00		0.01		0.01		0.00		0.01
	Education	0.03		0.05	+	0.05		0.03		0.05 +
	Family Income	0.03		0.05	*	0.05	*	0.03		0.05 *
	Citysize (reverse)	0.08	***	0.12	***	0.12	***	0.08	***	0.12 ***
	R-squared	0.3238	***	0.2933	***	0.2901	***	0.3267	***	0.2953 ***
Adj_R-squared	0.3146		0.2842		0.2809		0.3162		0.2852	
	N	1497		1497		1497		1497		1497

As for Hypothesis 3a, the effect of openness of the affiliated organization/group is found. An interaction effect for horizontal intermediaries is also detected as shown in the two columns on the right side of the table. This interaction indicates that, among the infrequent horizontal-intermediary participants, the effect of the group/association's openness is more apparent than among the more active joiners. In contrast, for vertical-intermediary participants, such interaction cannot be identified. Openness is effective in facilitating more political participation for this group, independently of the activeness of participation.

Leaving these hypotheses aside for a moment, let us look at the other variables in the model. Contrary to Putnam's ideas, the effect of both trust variables is lacking. This is in line with recent research that demonstrates similar results (especially for generalized trust)[2].

Some forms of human capital (political knowledge and political interest) work to promote participation. Ideology is not related to participation; this signifies that participation is relatively exempt of political bias in Japan. An inhibitive factor such as TV exposure does not seem to have an influence, but distance to workplace is negatively related to participation, as predicted.

### **Analysis Using the Snowball Dataset**

Taking advantage of the snowball dataset, I conducted an analysis on a more micro social level, where the unit of analysis was a dyad. Every respondent is embedded into "network others," and through the snowball technique, we can collect "objective" data on these "network others," not by asking the main respondent but by having the chosen network partner complete a separate questionnaire.

The analysis concerns the political participation of network others as put forward in Hypothesis 1b. The prediction was that the more joiners there are in the network into which the respondent is embedded, the more likely he/she will also become a joiner.

The other type of variables that were of interest were the nature of relationship between the main respondent and the network other; 1) whether the network other was superior or equal, 2) spouse or friend, or 3) whether there were objective agreements on party identification and/or social identification in the pair. Focusing on how the superior/equal relationship corresponded to the vertical/horizontal organization distinction, the prediction was that in the vertical relationship the social capital effect would disappear (Hypothesis 2b). The results on Hypothesis 2a, however, showed the possibility that vertical relationship still facilitates participation in Japan.

The general expectation when comparing spousal and friend relationships is that the former will be less heterogeneous and less open to outer networks. People share a large part of their information environment (resource) with their spouses: watching TV in the same living room, reading the same newspapers and magazines, etc. The social networks friends have are expected to be more heterogeneous than that of spouses in terms of information flow with others. Given this, political participation is a function of the types of relationship because of this openness (Hypothesis 3b) [3].

**Table 2. Social Capital Analysis of Participation using Snowball Data**

		Hypo. 1b	Hypo. 2b	Hypo. 2b	Hypo. 3b	Hypo. 3b
		Total	other=superior	net other=equal	Spouse pair	Friend pair
Intermediary Groups	Horizontal voluntary associations	0.27 ***	0.34 ***	0.25 ***	0.26 ***	0.23 **
	Horizontal informal groups	0.05	-0.09	0.10 *	0.09 +	0.09
Social Network Others	Political conversation	0.12 **	0.08	0.14 *	0.14 **	0.10
	Political participation of network other	0.13 ***	0.16 *	0.19 ***	0.20 ***	-0.03
	Political conversation	0.06	0.07	-0.01	0.08	0.01
Demographics	Gender	-0.24 ***	-0.38 ***	-0.21 ***	-0.25 ***	-0.29 ***
	Age	0.22 ***	0.04	0.24 ***	0.10 *	0.47 ***
	Year of residence	-0.03	0.01	-0.03	-0.01	-0.06
	Education	0.06	0.01	0.05	0.00	0.18
	Family Income	0.05	0.00	0.06	0.03	0.16 +
	Citysize (reverse)	-0.02	-0.06	-0.04	0.03	-0.13
	R-squared	0.2934 ***	0.3283 ***	0.3225 ***	0.2986	0.3658
	N	779	134	479	424	171
		Total	Hypo. 3b Non-agreement of Party ID	Hypo. 3b Agreement of Party ID	Hypo. 3b No social identification	Hypo. 3b Social identification
Intermediary Groups	Horizontal voluntary associations	0.27 ***	0.23 ***	0.35 ***	0.29 ***	0.27 ***
	Horizontal informal groups	0.05	0.10 +	-0.04	0.07	0.02
Social Network Others	Political conversation	0.12 **	0.14 **	0.08	0.10 +	0.14 *
	Political participation of network other	0.13 ***	0.11 **	0.21 ***	0.10 **	0.21 ***
	Political conversation	0.06	0.06	0.02	0.06	0.03
Demographics	Gender	-0.24 ***	-0.22 ***	-0.27 ***	-0.27 ***	-0.20 ***
	Age	0.22 ***	0.26 ***	0.12 +	0.19 ***	0.24 ***
	Year of residence	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03	-0.04	-0.02
	Education	0.06	0.13 *	-0.04	0.04	0.08
	Family Income	0.05	0.03	0.07	0.09	-0.01
	Citysize (reverse)	-0.02	0.00	-0.06	-0.01	-0.05
	R-squared	0.2934 ***	0.312 ***	0.301 ***	0.2999 ***	0.3108 ***
	N	779	526	253	468	311

\* p&lt;.05, \*\* p&lt;.01, \*\*\* p&lt;.001

Objective agreement and/or social identification in pairs are also important, because they are relevant in forming a homogeneous information environment and in having an assumption of homogeneity. The question is in which of these cases is political participation more activated: a) an environment where objective agreement (homogeneity) of party identification in the pairs exists, or b) where heterogeneity exists. This is an important issue noted by Ikeda and Huckfeldt (2001): “the persistence of political heterogeneity and disagreement enhances the opportunity for ongoing, collective processes of political deliberation.” The other question is whether political participation is promoted if the pair considers that they share the same social identity. In other words, does sharing identity increase fellow feelings, which in turn facilitates participation if the network other is a joiner?

The results are shown in Table 2 (Hypotheses 1b, 2b, and 3b). The findings lead to the following generalizations: First, political participation by network others encourages respondents to be joiners. Hypothesis 1b is generally supported. The association is true for both vertical and horizontal interpersonal relationships, which is not consistent with Hypothesis 2b (but in line with the result in Hypothesis 2a). Another important fact that should be noted is that this finding only applies to the spousal relationship. In the friend relationship, there is no effect. This is contrary to the Hypothesis 3b.

In order to investigate these results further, the sample was divided according to the following categories: if the network others are 1) superior and spouse [n=50]; 2) superior and non-spouse [n=84]; 3) equal and spouse [n=304]; and, 4) equal and non-spouse [n=175].

The beta values for network others’ participation effect are shown in Table 3. This suggests that the effect of non-spouse superior other is limited (comparison 1 and 2), and that equal pair has the same amount of collective effect, regardless of whether the pair is spousal or not (comparison 3 and 4). Thus openness hypothesis (Hypothesis 3b) is not supported. Vertical relationship hypothesis (Hypothesis 2b) is in the direction of support in non-spousal pair (comparison 2 and 4) which indicates that the result is inconsistent with Hypothesis 2b in Table 2. This seems to be due to the effect of spousal pair.

**Table 3. Effect of Network others on Political Participation: Further Analysis**

Beta values	Openness	
	Spouse pair	Non-spouse pair
Vertical	(1) .27	(2) .06
Horizontal	(3) .18**	(4) .20**
	** denotes $p < .01$	

Political participation is proved to be collective by nature as expected, but the effect is surprisingly strong with spouse, which caused the unanticipated effect on Hypotheses 2b and 3b.

A second finding concerns the effect of agreement and identification as shown in the lower half of the Table 2. Agreements on political viewpoints and social identification both functionally strengthen the effect of network other, compared to disagreed or non-identified cases. The important point is that in the non-homogeneous pairs (in terms of party identification or social identity) there is still a positive effect of the network other; in this sense, participation in the “school of democracy” is still facilitated when encountering heterogeneous elements. The results reveal that Hypothesis 3b is not well supported, although open network is positively associated with participation.

## Analysis of Tolerance

We analyze tolerance in order to determine whether the same logic as political participation effects applies to the dark side of social capital. That is, we want to see if the *intolerance* is associated negatively with horizontal intermediary group affiliation and/or political conversation, but positively with vertical group affiliation, and so forth.

Table 4 shows the results of a basic analysis. The R-squares are very small, indicating that the results are far less than satisfactory. Affiliation to horizontal voluntary association is slightly negatively associated with tolerance for socialization agent, meaning that the affiliation goes with intolerance, whereas it is slightly positively related with tolerance for political extremists (uncertain on Hypothesis 4-1a-1). Political conversation, both in the intermediary and interpersonal networks, is relevant to neither indicators of tolerance (failure to support Hypothesis 4-1a-2).

As for vertical intermediary effect and openness effect, both were not found (no support for Hypotheses 4-2a (column (2) and (5) of the Table 4) and 4-3a (column (3) and (6))).

Tolerance for socialization agent is associated negatively with institutional trust and ideology; intolerance goes with institutional trust as well as conservatism, although the former result is quite unexpected. The expectation was that socialization experience would be a positive function of tolerance. All these effects are not found in tolerance for political extremists.

These results reveal that the strong version of tolerance in Japan is somewhat different, in the sense that, theoretically, trust is the basis for a tolerant attitude. It seems to be the probable cause of a negative association between tolerance and participation reported earlier.

Table 5 indicates the results from analysis of snowball data on tolerance. Tolerance of network others is an effective determinant on the main respondents' tolerance, both for socializing agent and for political extremists. It is especially true for equal status others in both indicators of tolerance. Hypothesis 4-1b is supported well. Hypothesis 4-2b is also supported, i.e., a horizontal network facilitates tolerance more than a vertical network would.

The Hypothesis 4-3b (Openness Hypothesis) is not supported because, comparing between spousal and friend pair, the former was only significant in the tolerance for socializing agent. Interesting enough, however, is that regarding the tolerance for socializing agent, political conversation within the network is positively related for the friend pair, suggesting that openness hypothesis (4-3b) is partially supported.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Starting from the contention that studies on Japanese political participation should employ a universal viewpoint, the author has tried to elucidate the structure of political participation of Japanese citizens, as well as their political tolerance.

In the light of Putnamian social capital, the obtained findings are persuasive enough to support the facilitative role of intermediary civic engagement and daily interpersonal interactions, which is consistent with claims by Putnam, Lin and Huckfeldt.

On the other hand, unexpected evidence is found that a vertical association also has a promotive power on political participation, although its effect is smaller than that of horizontal association (the first anomaly we found was probably rooted in the finding that horizontal as well as vertical organizations were effective in political participation). It has been said that Japanese vertical intermediaries mobilize people to political activities tinted with some particular party/candidate (Richardson, 1991), and it is tempting to interpret that this mobilization legacy is





**Table 5. Analysis of Tolerance using Snowball Pair Data**

		<b>Tolerance of socialization agent (tolerance1)</b>					<b>Tolerance of political extremists</b>				
		Hypo.4-1b	Hypo.4-2b	Hypo.4-2b	Hypo.4-3b	Hypo.4-3b	Hyp.4-1b	Hypo.4-2b	Hypo.4-2b	Hypo.4-3b	Hypo.4-3b
		Total	net other= superior	net other= equal	Spouse pair	Friend pair	Total	net other= superior	net other= equal	Spouse pair	Friend pair
<b>Intermediary</b>	Horizontal voluntary associations	0.00	0.02	-0.01	0.01	0.18	0.02	0.11	0.00	0.01	-0.07
	Horizontal informal groups	-0.09	-0.06	-0.06	-0.10 +	0.04	-0.03	0.12	-0.07	-0.03	-0.18 +
<b>Network Others</b>	Political conversation	-0.01	-0.06	-0.01	-0.01	-0.16	0.03	-0.06	0.07	0.07	0.13
	Political conversation	0.00	0.02	0.00	-0.03	0.26 **	0.00	-0.12	0.00	-0.04	-0.06
	Tolerance to socialization agent by network other	0.12 ***	0.11	0.15 **	0.18 ***	0.02					
	Tolerance to political extremists by network other						0.10 *	0.16	0.09 +	0.07	0.07
<b>Demo-graphics</b>	Gender	-0.04	0.12	-0.04	-0.05	0.00	-0.05	-0.18	-0.05	-0.04	-0.05
	Age	-0.07	-0.15	-0.04	-0.05	-0.03	-0.08	-0.02	-0.07	-0.08	-0.15
	Year of residence	0.06	0.12	0.07	-0.01	0.12	0.00	0.06	0.02	-0.01	0.11
	Education	0.11 *	0.18	0.13 *	0.08	0.09	-0.05	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04	0.05
	Family Income	0.01	0.05	0.03	-0.03	0.13	0.05	0.01	0.07	0.05	0.20
	Citysize (reverse)	-0.03	-0.02	-0.04	-0.01	-0.08	0.06	0.06	0.09	0.00	0.18 +
	R-squared	0.0471 *	0.1080	0.0522 *	0.0575 *	0.1406 *	0.0256	0.0862	0.038	0.0234	0.1205
N	685	127	463	403	129	690	125	466	404	131	

• p<. 05, \*\* p<. 01, \*\*\* p<. 001

still alive in these findings. However, this interpretation has not been supported well empirically, even since the 1960s (Miyake, Kinoshita, and Aiba 1967), and also been challenged by the fact that in the House of Councilors Election in 2001, many vertical organizations for mobilization no longer seemed to work efficiently. Another possible explanation is that even the vertical associations have influences in fermenting civic mindedness, although both hypotheses require further investigation.

Moreover, it can be said that daily ordinary communications contribute to the affluence of social capital. This aspect has not been investigated thoroughly in the Putnam context. It is clear, however, that we should pay more attention to the nature of daily interpersonal communication. With the advantage of snowball-sampled data, this study was able to focus on this point. The results indicate that the homogeneous social networks (spousal pair/agreement pair) play a greater role as a facilitator of participation. Relatively heterogeneous resources such as friend-based networks do not seem to work, although disagreement pair is still effective.

Possible questions for future study are raised here: Do these peculiar findings represent the potential dark side of social capital in general (whether they are connected to a weak/strong version of intolerance)? In another words, can they also be disturbing factors in the open and equal political deliberation for the functioning of “good democracy” in other cultures, too?

As for the strong version of tolerance, two attitudinal scales were used for the analysis, although unfortunately they did not work well for the social capital analyses, that is, the second anomaly was not given any effective clue to solve. Its implication could be enormous, however. If tolerance is not related with the sunny side of the social capital, how can we control intolerance socially, which can have truly negative consequences for democracy? Is it a problem peculiar to Japan or more of a general one? Regardless of the answer, we should still ask what kind of psycho-logic exists behind the finding. One possible explanation is that the strong version of intolerance is related to the existent political system support (Dalton 2002, Weisberg and Tanaka 2001), that is, intolerance for political extremists goes beyond the tolerable bound of democracy. Another possible focus for further study is to analyze the weak version of tolerance (the scale for this tolerance is unavailable in the JEDS 2000) and challenge the hypotheses again.

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## Endnotes

- [1] Problem of the level of analysis: It has been said that using survey data in order to measure and analyze social capital is not appropriate (Newton 2001). The argument is that because social capital is a resource inherently attached to groups, organizations or communities, an analysis on the individual level can be misleading. For instance, even if an individual's level of "general trust" is low, he/she is able to enjoy the fruits of social capital when general trust is high on average in his/her community; this in turn allows him/her to be a free rider by taking advantage of trust of others. Despite such remarks, I have analyzed the data on the individual level first in this paper, proposing two types of solution to the abovementioned problem. One is to introduce the aggregate data into the individual level of analysis (cf. Johnston et al., 2000), and the other is to maximize the advantage of dyadic data collected by the snowball technique, which enables microanalysis of group-level influence in terms of social networks (La Due Lake, 1999 for instance). In this paper, the latter analytic method is employed, whereas the former was used in the other paper (Ikeda, 2001).
- [2] An aggregate analysis shows that institutional trust is positively correlated with political participation in the local level (Ikeda, 2001).
- [3] Relationship with colleagues is not analyzed here due to an insufficient number of cases.

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