

Title : Trust, social stratification and civic society.

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Abstract : Trust is the most prominent factor of Social Capital, and much controversy exists over how people generate truthfulness on general others. On trust-generating processes, there are two major approaches. One focuses on trust as a result of individuals' rational action to drive for maximizing their benefits, and the other puts much emphasis on associations formed among acquainted people. The former could be called "the libertarian approach" on trust, because of adopting the individualistic approach and assuming individuals as rational ones. On the contrary, the latter discusses the general trust could be reduced to mutual trust within intermediary and secondary associations as voluntary organizations or clubs. In this talk, we will contrastingly discuss on these two approaches and verify the validity of "the libertarian approach".

Among "the libertarian approach", the most persuasive and elegant one is "the emancipation theory of trust" proposed by T. Yamagishi. It argues that the general trust can be generated in just a man with a high level of social intelligence who is adaptive to the market system. We couldn't pass over the findings of this theory in deliberating trust-generating processes, because of its high impact on various fields in social science, especially in Japan and the U.S.

And now, we ask "Can this libertarian powerful theory make out a realistic image of a world and a vision towards sustainable civic society?" The answer would be a negative one. Through the results of our experiments and surveys, we showed that the libertarian approach failed to explain trust-generating processes in general and, as a result, failed to bring forth a new vision towards sustainable civic society. In considering the amount of social resources possessed by actors, trust-generating processes vary between members of the same society, and intermediate associations still play an important role in this globalized age to develop a civic society where people trusting each other.