How do we construct happiness and social capital? Evidence from community research in Japan.

The concepts of culture and mind have been studied in various fields, including philosophy, sociology, anthropology, and psychology. The Kokoro Research Center (KRC) at Kyoto University) has worked to integrate multiple approaches across these various fields to better understand how culture and mind construct each other. The Culture-KOKORO Network (Culture-KoNet) within KRC represents an international group of cultural psychologists and other social scientists. We conduct cultural psychological empirical research on how cultural settings shape people’s emotions, cognitions, motivations, and relationships. Currently we focus on the topic of happiness and its socio-cultural antecedents and consequences. In a recent study, we collected large sample datasets within Japan, including local agricultural communities and fishery communities. We found that the primary features of happiness and social capital (measured by general trust and community trust) are influenced by the community size and socio-ecological features of the community (local agricultural communities are higher both in general and community trust).

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