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Weberian Bureaucracy in Japanese Civilization : A Revisionist Proposal

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Weberian Bureaucracy in Japanese Civilization —A Revisionist Proposal—

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1. INTRODUCTION

In his keynote address for this Third International Symposium on Japanese Civilization, Umesao Tadao declared the goal of this symposium series to be recasting Max Weber's theory and constructing a theory of civilization in light of the wisdom gained in analyzing Japanese civilization, a civilization which has been generally ignored in the construction of social theory.

This paper, which examines the control system in Japanese bureaucracy, is written precisely with Umesao's goal in mind. Specifically, the Weberian concept of bureaucratic role, which is defined in terms of functional specificity and universalistic criteria, will be questioned in the light of Japanese data. This critical examination of Weber's theory will be done in the framework of a social exchange theory. Thus the paper will begin with a rudimentary introduction to a theory of social exchange to the extent it bears relevance to the subject of exercise of power and control in bureaucratic setting.

2. SOCIAL EXCHANGE—BASIC PREMISES

1) Resources. The theory of social exchange as developed here is predicated on the assumption that every member of a society possesses at least some resource which can be used or exchanged for obtained other resources which he or she needs or wants.¹⁾ Resources for exchange may be instrumental or expressive. Instrumen-

1) This is emphatically not to say that every social action can be explained in terms of exchange of resources. There are certainly many areas of human behavior which cannot be accounted for by exchange theory. This then implies the need to define the domain of social phenomena encompassed by social exchange theory, beyond which exchange theory is not to be applied. This issue, important though it is, is not germane to the specific pro-

tal resources are material things, knowledge, skills, labor and other resources which enhance one's opportunity for achieving a goal or goals. Expressive resources, on the other hand, are affection, respect, love and other expressions of one's feelings and attitudes whose value is immediately expended upon being presented.

2) Resource Values. Exchange resources, whether instrumental or expressive, have certain values attached to them. How the value of a given resource is determined is a complex issue. Only a rudimentary discussion can be entertained here. First of all the value of a resource is generally determined through social consensus. One such consensus is market price of goods. But this is not the only way the value of a resource is determined. A dinner offered at a friend's home or even a seat offered on a train has an exchange value, which again is generally agreed upon in a given society, so that it would not randomly fluctuate from one extreme to another, but rather remain within a narrowly circumscribed range. Within this range, however, it is the individual's personal assessment of the situation which would fix a specific value.

3) Balance. Moving closer to the heart of exchange theory, we assume that exchange of resources can result in a balanced relationship, whereby both parties to exchange are satisfied when what they each gave is by and large equivalent to what they received. This assessment of balance is calculated on the basis of culturally as well as individually determined value of a resource as discussed above.²⁾

4) Balanced versus Generalized Exchange. While exchanges are more or less balanced under normal circumstances, some emphasize instrumental resources with a clear cut assessment of their values while some others emphasize the opposite, namely, expressive resources, which are generally less amenable to precise value assessment. Marshall Sahlins has called the former "balanced exchange," and defined it thus: "The reciprocation is the customary equivalent of the thing received and is without delay.... Balanced reciprocity may be more loosely applied to transactions which stipulate returns of commensurate worth or utility within a finite and narrow period" [SAHLINS 1965: 148]. Above is a characterization of balanced exchange as a social *event*. Looking at this from social *relations* point of view, there are social relationships that are characterized by balanced exchange, one in which only those resources whose values are clearly definable in objective terms are exchanged. Again, market exchange serves as an archetypical example, where a

blem under consideration, namely, bureaucratic control as an exchange phenomenon, and thus will not be elaborated upon here.

- 2) In reality, there is another twist to this process of balance determination. This has to do with actor's perception of how the other party would evaluate the resource given. This perception by the giver of the receiver's evaluation of the resource given would affect what he gives to a particular person. Balance, then, is not a matter of how each side evaluates resources but instead it is a matter of whether or not and the extent to which the giver's subjective assessment of the receiver's evaluation of one resource given matches the same giver's evaluation of the resource received. In this process there is the distinct possibility that one party to an exchange transaction may feel the exchange balanced whereas the other party does not.

buyer obtains merchandise by transferring a sum of money identical to the price indicated on the tag. Such a relationship is short-lived and balance is achieved through one simultaneous transaction of give-and-take. In this sort of exchange, exchange of resources is the primary or even sole objective of entering into social relationship; you approach a salesperson because you want the merchandise: You do not buy the merchandise in order to establish lasting social relationship with the seller.

This "balanced exchange" contrasts with "generalized exchange" in Sahlins' terminology.³⁾ Here the value of the exchange resource is relatively vague and imprecise. To put it another way, resources exchanged in the generalized mode tend not to have values that can be objectively assessed. Even when resources with rather precise market values are exchanged, expressive values, which are necessarily imprecise, are often added to the "objective" value of the resources. This is precisely because the archetypical generalized exchange takes place between persons of close relationship, such as intimate friends or members of the immediate family, where a social relationship is there to begin with, rather than being created through exchange of resources. The exchange of resources serves as a symbolic vehicle to transmit expressive values from one individual to another. There is another reason why in generalized exchange a precise balance is hard to strike. In a relation of generalized exchange many different kinds of resources, instrumental and expressive, move back and forth. This makes even a rough calculation of balance between the "give" and the "take" a rather tricky affair.

In generalized exchange, a subjective sense of balance exists as much as in balanced exchange. The difference, however, is in the greater degree of "play" allowed in striking a balance in generalized exchange. If a dinner for close friends, A and B, paid for by A, cost 10% more than a reciprocal dinner for them paid by B, then the two may still regard the reciprocation to have struck a balance. Also, balancing in a generalized exchange is often struck over an extended period of time, and imbalance over a short period does not result in animosity or restructuring of the relationship.

In short, human relations in generalized exchange are functionally diffuse, long lasting and characterized by expressivity overlaying instrumental exchange. In balanced exchange, in contrast, relationship is functionally specific, short lived, and tends to involve primarily instrumental give-and-take.

3. SOCIAL CONTROL IN EXCHANGE FRAMEWORK

In social exchange, as noted above, it is assumed that parties to a transaction enter into a social relationship because they each have resources that the other party

3) This terminology is a bit unfortunate in that as a contrastive term to "balanced" exchange, it suggests a lack of balance. That no such absence of balance is implied in the concept should be clear from the discussion below, and is evident in Sahlins' own exposition of the concept.

desires or needs. In this situation the resources needed may be given to the other party either with or without the expectation of demand for compliance as part of the condition for receiving the resources. The latter case does not nonetheless imply that the resource was given "free." Customary expectations of return in order to restore balance in the give-and-take still prevail; but in such a case it violates customary and sometime also legal expectations if the giver demands a return of resources. In the other case, the receiver accepts resources provided by the giver in exchange for his or her right to control or constrain the receiver's action. The employer-employee relationship is a typical example. The employer needs workers' labor, skill, knowledge, and other resources. Workers, on the other hand, need wages for sustenance. The worker agrees to give up some of his or her freedom to allow the employer to dictate his action in exchange for the wage he receives.

Parenthetically, control in exchange framework is a two-way process. Since both parties to an exchange need resources from each other, both can stipulate conditions of compliance for obtaining the needed resources. Trade negotiations which take place between Japan and the United States are a good example of mutual control. Both Japan and the United States wish to extract compliance from one another: for example, Japan wishing the United States to lower expectations of Japan's arms build-up and the United States wanting Japan to liberalize beef importation. Each would offer its resources only to the extent that the other would comply with its wish. Each is willing to give its resource only if the other does. Control and compliance in such a case as this are mutual, and not one-sided.

A similar mutual control is seen often between politicians and industry. What politicians want from industrialists most is money, especially for electoral campaigning. What industrialists want from politicians is political favor, e.g., passage of bills favoring the industry, influencing bureaucrats—through politicians—who have administrative control over industry. In these cases, too, providing resources the other needs is contingent upon the other giving return resources. It is a "give-and-take" conditional to "take-and-give."

However, most of ordinary cases of "control" involves one-sided control. For example, the employer controls, or has the right to give commands to, employees, but not vice versa. This situation may be conceptualized as striking a balance in the following way. A combination of the employer's rewards to an employee and his control over him—both in kind and degree—is equivalent to the sum of the employee's time, skills, etc., provided the employer.

This notion of control deviates from Max Weber's, which is defined as a probability of one's will (or command) influencing the action of the controlled despite the resistance of the latter. Weber here is referring to "power (*Macht*)" as control, and control as emanating from "authority." There is no denying that this type of control, operative only with backing of a coercive force, exists in a society, as seen in the use of military or of police force, to extract obedience. However, this is a very expensive means of extracting compliance in terms of amount of time, resources and human power needed to realize a given unit of compliance. It is said,

for example, that it costs \$ 75,000 a year to keep one inmate in a medium security prison in the United States. This amount is equivalent to the salary of an executive in a medium-size corporation in the United States. The only difference is that one—an inmate—is totally non-productive whereas the other—a company executive—is performing productive activities. The United States spends, all told, \$ 26 billion on correctional facilities, presumably to keep the inmates from causing further destruction (i.e., negative productivity) to the society—thus, in effect merely to keep them non-productive. Defense build-up is another example of the costliness of coercive control. Hundreds of billions of dollars are spent each year merely to destroy or to be ready to destroy life and property.

As Etzioni shows [1961: 5] there are two other means of achieving compliance than coercion; normative and utilitarian, or remunerative. The normative means, depending on the actor's inner commitment to action, is the least expensive, of course, since in its purest form the only reward needed is satisfaction derived from following one's normative commitment. The utilitarian, where one receives material reward for compliance, is in an intermediate position with regards "cost" of compliance. It should be obvious by now that in the exchange context we are by and large discussing the "utilitarian" type of compliance except that rewards in exchange terms include expressive rewards in addition to material or instrumental rewards.⁴⁾

4. CONTROL IN GENERALIZED AND BALANCED EXCHANGE

1) Control in Generalized Exchange. If control can be conceptualized in exchange context, then, it certainly should be captured in the framework of generalized and balanced exchange. For generalized exchange, one might think of the main household-branch household relationship in the classic *dōzoku* organization of the sort reported by Aruga Kizaemon [1943] as an empirical case approaching the ideal type. As we all know, in the *dōzoku* system, the main household is morally responsible for the well-being of its branch members. The sense of "well-being" encompasses all aspects of life from ancestral rites and economic welfare to the social sphere. Branches, on the other hand, are morally obligated to provide whatever assistance the main household needs, be it agricultural labor, domestic help, assistance at various rites of passage such as wedding, funeral, memorial services, etc. In this exchange, affective elements, which in English would be termed "benevolence," "appreciation," "grace," etc., make up the expressive side of the coin.

As can be readily understood, while the main and branch households engage in the exchange of goods and services, and while there is a sense of balance in this give-

4) Weber does recognize control arising out of market monopoly, and is thus aware of remunerative "control"; but he does not develop this notion since his primary concern is with power and authority.

and-take, true to the nature of generalized exchange, balance is measured over years and sometimes decades, and affective components of the exchange form crucial ingredients in the relationship.

Although I used the *dōzoku* organization as an archetypical example of control in generalized exchange in Japan, other examples are abundant. The traditional master-disciple relationship (*totei seido*) in arts and crafts, where apprentices live with the master, and also the traditional *oyabun-kobun* relationship in organized underworld gangs (*yakuza*) are examples which though not as close to the ideal type as the classical *dōzoku* system, still retain a great deal of elements of generalized exchange in the master-follower relationship. Moving still farther away from the ideal type and closer to the balanced exchange end of the continuum, though still more generalized than balanced, one finds such examples in Japan as professor-student relationship, master-disciple relationship in the *iemoto* system of the traditional arts and crafts, and also the super-subordinate relationship in modern bureaucratic organization.⁵⁾

It is instructive in this respect that in the national character (*kokuminsei*) surveys conducted for the past twenty years or so, in spite of vicissitudes of rapid economic and social change affecting the attitudes of Japanese during this time, sample populations have consistently adhered to the idea that a superior who is overly demanding at work but is willing to listen to personal problems and is concerned with personal affairs of workers is preferable to one who is not so strict on the job, but leaves the worker alone and does not involve himself with their personal matters. The former type of supervisor is preferred by at least 75% of the sample in all surveys from 1953 to 1978 without showing any sign of decline [TŌKEI SŪRI KENKYŪSHO 1979: 51]. Here, then, one can see Japanese preference for functionally diffuse, particularistic relationship between supervisor and his charges. The extent to which exchange is generalized between the two is certainly more limited than that in a *dōzoku* system between the main household and its branches, but the same general orientation toward generalized exchange among workers in a corporate setting is unmistakably present. While in generalized exchange the authority of the power holder is not clearly specified or certainly not codified, it is by no means limitless. Conventions and expectations define what is regarded as an "appropriate" or "reasonable" exercise of authority, beyond which critical comments are likely to be heard. In English, "exploitation" would be an apt description of such an "arbitrary" exercise of authority.

At the same time, the nature and extent of compliance by the subordinate in generalized exchange are also undefined and uncoded. The subordinate is at the "beck and call" of the superior, but again within conventionally understood limits, voluntary compliance beyond which would attract attention as "exceptionally

5) Eisenstadt and Roniger [1984] have recently developed a generalized model of patron-client relationship, which, defined in terms of generalized exchange, closely matches the social system based on generalized exchange as outlined here. In fact, they use *dōzoku* and *oyabun-kobun* systems as Japanese examples of this model [1984: 145-1150].

praiseworthy," "extremely devoted," "exceedingly loyal," etc.

2) Control in Balanced Exchange. An archetypical case of control in balanced exchange is Weberian bureaucracy in its ideal-typical form. Here, the three elements of authority, reward, and compliance, are all clearly specified in the equation. Rewards of the subordinate in terms of salary and fringe benefits are fixed prior to the employment. The authority of the superior is also predetermined and specified in the position in which the superior exercises authority. That is, the authority is defined, not as his, but as being ascribed to the position and circumscribed by a set of well-defined rules and regulations. The person occupying the position exercises it only because he/she happens to occupy it. And the parameters of authority are defined in terms of the position, and not in terms of the person occupying it. Lastly, the nature and extent of compliance by the subordinate, too, are defined in the contract that a person signs at the time of employment; they are inherent in the position that the person occupies and are often referred to as the "job description."

One important difference between generalized and balanced exchange, in addition to the nature of the definition of authority and compliance, has to do with the source of rewards in relation to the locus of authority. In generalized exchange the two are combined in one person: the authority holder is the person who dispenses rewards to his subordinates. In balanced exchange, as in bureaucracy, these two are separated, although ultimately it is the organization, the corporate body, which both holds authority and is the source of rewards. In reality, however, authority is entrusted by the corporation in an individual in a supervisory position, and is exercised by him or her. Rewards, on the other hand, are dispensed through another channel, such as the payroll office. This arrangement symbolizes the separation of corporate organization and its agent for authority. It also demonstrates the difference between authority in balanced exchange as in bureaucracy and personalistic authority in generalized exchange.

It is worth emphasizing that in generalized exchange, resources for exercising authority, i.e., for securing compliance, are generally obtained by the authority holder through individual effort, and the authority position is achieved in the total sense of the word. On the other hand in bureaucracy, authority position is achieved only in a partial sense since the occupant of the position does not himself accumulate the resource, i.e., funds for subordinate's salary, to be dispensed in exchange for the subordinate's compliance.

3) Balanced *cum* Generalized Exchange. The crucial question to be asked, and this constitutes the heart of this essay, is what happens when these two types of authority—generalized and balanced—are empirically combined. *Prima facie*, combining these two would imply contradiction. Generalized exchange and balanced exchange are polar opposites, as particularism and universalism are, as functional diffuseness and functional specificity also are. How can such contradictory principles be combined in a given empirical system? Weber's answer to this question was clear and unambiguous: They cannot be. Bureaucracy, therefore, at least

as an ideal had to be defined in terms of concepts representing one end of the polar opposites—universalism and functional specificity, or balanced exchange, in our terminology. Intrusion of the other principles—particularism and functional diffuseness, or generalized exchange—is regarded as a danger to bureaucratic system.⁶ The “nepotism rule,” where closely related kinsmen are not allowed employment in the same organization, for example, has been widely adopted by many bureaucracies in the West in order to prevent generalized exchange between individuals related by kinship in the same organization from mitigating against the operation of balanced exchange.

This incompatibility of generalized exchange with balanced exchange was assumed by Weber [GERTH and MILLS 1964; WEBER 1947] to be a universal truth, and has been accepted by generations of Western social scientists [e.g. CROZIER 1964: 107; MERTON 1968: 249, 252]. I submit here that this assumption is wrong, that the assumed incompatibility between generalized and balanced exchange is a culture-bound phenomenon. That is, in Western culture and in many cultures, for that matter, introduction of generalized exchange in bureaucracy does tend to undermine the goal of the bureaucracy while promoting personal interests of those who engage in generalized exchange in the bureaucracy. Thus Eisenstadt and Roniger [1984: 185–200] discuss U.S.S.R., Israel and U.S.A. as examples of societies in which universalistic societal principles serve as “countervailing forces to the development of patron-client relations.” For Weber, however, this incompatibility, which I suggest is culture-specific, was elevated to the level of universal truth.

It is here that Japan enters as a crucial case in point to revise the Weberian model. For the Japanese case demonstrates that generalized and balanced exchange—or generalized exchange in bureaucracy—need not produce a contradictory situation or loss of efficiency.

Before I elaborate on the empirical case of Japan, let us examine conceptually the situation in which generalized exchange is embedded in bureaucracy. Let us assume that a bureaucratic organization has its own goals and also that a group consisting of a superior and subordinates engaged in generalized exchange has its own goals. When such a group is embedded in a bureaucratic organization, two situations may be envisaged. In the first, the two goals do not coincide, but the group in generalized exchange tries to promote its own goals at the expense of the goals of the bureaucracy. In the second, the two goals coincide, in which case the group engaged in generalized exchange identifies its goals with those of the bureaucracy. In this second case there is no incompatibility and no contradiction. And this is quintessentially the Japanese case.

In the West the strong emphasis on the ideology of individualism has led to the

6) To Weber, in evolutionary terms, authority based on generalized exchange is an earlier form than the one based on balanced exchange. But this evolutionary question does not concern us.

conception of each person having to look out for his or her own interests, to the Hobbesian conception of war of each against all other, and to the social Darwinism of cut-throat competition. In such an ideological environment, an individual is tempted or even motivated to use an organization for personal gain, for furthering one's own interest at the expense of the organization's goals. This fact necessitates elaborate safeguards to be instituted in the organization in order to prevent individuals from taking advantage of their bureaucratic position for furthering personal goals. The "nepotism rule," where by a husband and wife are prohibited from employment in a same organization is a manifestation of this concern.

In the second situation, where the individual is able to identify his personal goals with those of the organization for which he works, the aforementioned problem does not arise. In Japanese bureaucracy the tendency is overwhelming for individual goals and bureaucratic goals to coincide, such that the individual is motivated to use his or her personal resources for the good of the organization. How this happens and why this happens in Japan and not in other civilizations, is a question pertinent and germane to this symposium. I am unable to provide an adequate answer, but I will try. One thing that can be said is that Japanese culture lacks the strong ideological emphasis on individualism of the sort that has developed in the West, one in which the interests and rights of the individual are considered foremost and in many (including legal) ways prior to those of an organization. In Japan, one does not find a strong ideological basis which would mitigate against the individual in identifying his or her personal goals and interests with those of the organization. Instead, in Japan one finds an alternative ideology emphasizing value orientation of the individual to the group.⁷⁾

The question of course is: Where does this value orientation come from? While not an adequate answer, a partial answer is found in the nature of interpersonal relations in Japan, which emphasizes and, moreover, values generalized exchange between individuals. In this situation, mutual trust and bonds between individuals in Japan, which may supercede kinship bonds, are the crux of this issue. Hamaguchi [1977] has labeled this *kanjin shugi*, which I translate as "interpersonalism." The basic building block of Japanese society, according to Hamaguchi, is not the individual as is the case in Western civilization, but relationship between individuals. Thus mutual trust based on the generalized exchange of both instrumental and expressive resources is the fundamental substance of the society in Japan, rather than the individual's rights and interests. This is not the context to develop this idea further but I introduce it merely as a suggestion to account for the development of different bureaucratic patterns in Japan and in the West.

Now, the nature of generalized exchange is such that the longer it is maintained and the more often the exchange of services is repeated between parties to the ex-

7) This notion of group orientation has been vastly overemphasized and exaggerated in the literature on Japan, as I have argued in a number of publications [e.g. BEFU 1980a, 1980b]. Nevertheless in contrast to the West, relative emphasis on the group must be acknowledged.

change relationship, the more valuable the resources being exchanged become, and therefore the deeper the level of commitment between the two. In Japanese bureaucracy a superior and his or her subordinates are likely to be bound together in generalized exchange, and a strong commitment develops between them. Given this commitment of a generalized exchange nature between a leader and subordinates in a bureaucratic organization, subordinates are likely to manifest compliance to their leader, whether or not his demands are strictly based on regulations of the organization. As long as the leader is, then, motivated to help the organization achieve its goals, he has ready and willing help in his subordinates. Now, this leader too, is a subordinate in the organization to a higher level supervisor, to whom he is also bound by a trust relationship of a generalized exchange nature. Thus the dynamic obtaining between the lowest level and its immediately higher level is repeated up the hierarchy until the top level is reached. The sort of commitment described here of a subordinate to the superior is often interpreted as a "group orientation" or "loyalty to the organization."

As an epiphenomenon, it does look like a group phenomenon, since the chain of commitment goes level by level from the lowest to the highest, encompassing the whole organization. Operationally, however, this should be seen as a cumulative consequence of binary commitments. This is not to deny that some individuals may espouse and proclaim loyalty to the organization as a separate commitment. To the extent that this is observable, there is genuine "group orientation." What is loosely called "group orientation" in popular parlance, however, should be analytically separated into two parts: cumulative binary commitments and genuine orientation to the group. If this is done, I submit that a good deal of what has been called "group orientation," "group loyalty," etc., would be subsumed under the rubric of "binary commitment," i.e. trust, confidence and loyalty between a supervisor and his or her subordinates which have developed over a period through the generalized exchange which has taken place between them, rather than an individual's commitment to some abstract notion of group.

It is through this binary commitment that a supervisor can make demands which are far in excess of "normal call of duty" for his subordinates, for example, to ask them to work overtime on a rush job. A good illustration of this is the Ministry of Finance at the time of budget formulation. During this time, ministry bureaucrats do not even go home for days because they must literally work around the clock to get the budget proposal in shape. Although this has in part become an established routine for the Finance Ministry bureaucrats, how willingly they do this is very much dependent on the personal leadership that supervisors manifest in generalized exchange. In order for a superior to be able to command the obedience and loyalty of subordinates, the superior must not only be competent in carrying out his or her own assigned tasks, but must also have won the confidence and trust of the subordinates. He or she would do this by engaging in generalized exchange with them, for example, by taking them out for drinks after work, bringing them home for a drink or meal, listening to their children's educational or in-law pro-

blems, serving as a go-between for their marriage, showing concern over illness of their family members, attending the funerals of their close relatives, being extra-generous in contributing to office parties, or attending parties sponsored by subordinates. These activities are over and beyond the call of duty defined strictly in bureaucratic terms. Yet a superior who does none of these is not likely in Japan to win the confidence of subordinates. Nor can he expect maximum efficiency from them or be able to extract their compliance in extraordinary situations.

A person in a supervisory position is expected to be generous in giving out his or her resources in generalized exchange. These resources by and large are his or her personal resources rather than the organization's. Sometimes the organization does have a budgetary resource, such as an expense account, or some other resource over which the supervisor has discretionary control, the use of which for his subordinates is of course an act of generalized exchange. However, more often, he or she must use personal funds and resources to be good to subordinates. Such "giving" in generalized exchange is to be paid back in the subordinates' extra loyalty to the superior.

The fact that in Japan the individual in a bureaucracy tends to identify his goals with the organization's rather than take advantage of his bureaucratic position of authority for personal gain is well illustrated by the fewness of reported cases of corruption. Bribery is an act in which a government official receives unwarranted compensation for, in effect, impeding regular bureaucratic processes. It is an act which counters the goals of the organization. When a supervisor has "trusted lieutenants" formed through generalized exchange, who are willing to carry out his orders whether or not they are strictly in adherence to bureaucratic rules, it is tempting to accept a bribe and exploit the position of authority in order to carry out a briberous act through the use of subordinates. For example, a government tax official may be asked by an executive in a private corporation to "go easy" in checking the company's return in compensation for a sum of money. Now, a lowest echelon clerk in tax office cannot execute this because there are many checks along the way, and his "leniency" is likely to be discovered by his supervisors. But a supervisory official, who makes the last check, is in a better position to do so if subordinates are willing to take his order to "go easy" on a particular case. The subordinates are likely to follow the order, had there been a generalized exchange relationship established between them and the supervisor, as is generally the case in Japan. Thus a supervisory tax official is in an excellent position to amass a fortune if he wishes to do so. Such cases, however, are exceedingly few. The few cases do receive wide publicity in the media. But the fewness of these cases is a dramatic indication of scrupulous honesty of tax bureaucrats in Japan.

According to Japanese government statistics, 431 arrests of government officials were made for bribery in 1983, of which 306 cases actually resulted in prosecution [JAPAN. MINISTRY OF JUSTICE 1984: 39]. Since the total number of central and local government employees in 1983 was a little over four million, 431 cases constitute roughly one percent of one percent of the total bureaucratic population. Of

course, one may argue for the inaccuracy of these figures. For example, the number may well represent the tip of an iceberg, most of the bribery cases not coming to the attention of the authority. The definition of bribery may not be quite adequate or stringent enough. Granting these criticisms, however, the honesty of Japanese officials is remarkable. It is especially remarkable because of the very fact that the social setting in which generalized exchange is inextricably intertwined with balanced exchange is so temptingly conducive, as argued above, to the abuse of bureaucratic authority.

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

One of the major objectives of the comparative symposia on Japanese civilization organized by the National Museum of Ethnology is to revise Max Weber's social theory and to contribute toward the general theory of civilization by examining the Japanese case and coming up with a theory which would account for its peculiarities, rather than dismiss them as exceptions or celebrate Japan's uniqueness. With this goal in mind, we examined Weber's theory of bureaucracy and suggested its possible culture-boundness. The "binding" by culture of the theory comes from the ideology of individualism rooted in Western civilization which tends to motivate members of a bureaucracy to use an organization for their personal gain. To combat this tendency, bureaucracy in the West has had to institute mechanisms to safeguard the bureaucracy's interests from being undermined by its members. Without realizing that this is a peculiarity of Western bureaucracy, Weber and generations of Western social scientists after him have propounded a theory of bureaucracy based on a "legal-rational" principle with universalism and functional specificity at the exclusion of "paternalistic" principle with particularism and functional diffuseness. In our terminology, they have defined bureaucracy in terms of balanced exchange, disallowing incursion of generalized exchange.

Realization that effectiveness of a bureaucracy would not be undermined, but rather can be enhanced with generalized exchange, comes when we become aware of the possibility that culture can motivate its members, by and large, to identify their own goals and interests with those of bureaucracy rather than pitting the individual's goals and interests against the organization's. Japan happens to be such a society.

Thus bureaucratic efficiency can be secured by two different means, only one of which Weber discusses, namely through rigorous elimination of generalized exchange. This means is necessary when the value system of a society is such that individuals tend to view their rights and goals as prior to those of an organization to which they belong, as is the case in the West. The other means of insuring bureaucratic efficiency is to actively incorporate generalized exchange into bureaucracy. But this means is successful only when most members of the society do not regard self interest as being prior to organization interests, but rather are able to consider bureaucratic interest and goals their own, as is the case with Japan.

It may be proposed that the reason why, in many countries around the world such as in Latin America and southeast Asia, bribery and other forms of corruption are rampant [BAYLEY 1966] is that in these countries, for whatever reasons, generalized exchange has not been rigorously eliminated from their bureaucratic structure *and* again for whatever reasons, self interest of members of the organization has remained foremost and taken precedence over organizational goals. The mistake of past theorizing has been to assume the precedence of individual members' interests over bureaucratic goals as self-evident and inevitable. What the Japanese case proves is that this assumption derives from the culture-blindness of basing theory only on the experience of the Western civilization. It also demonstrates that contrary to Weber's claim of the superiority of bureaucratic organization based purely upon impersonal rules over other forms of organization [GERTH and MILLS 1946: 214], a bureaucracy which involves generalized exchange can function effectively in modern industrial society.

A question arises as to which of the two patterns is more efficient. I do not believe there is a ready answer to it. Some might want to argue that the Japanese pattern is the more efficient of the two because it combines the efficiency of the rational-legal system as argued by Weber and the effectiveness of mutual trust and loyalty implied in generalized exchange. Proof of this efficiency is seen, they may argue, in the current economic success of Japan. This argument, however, is premature. First, Japan's economic success is due to numerous factors, and isolating the extent of contribution of Japanese bureaucracy (or "management style" as is often called) out of myriad factors is well-nigh impossible. Secondly, in comparing Japanese bureaucracy with other bureaucracies, we need objective measures which would allow comparison first in terms of efficiency and second in terms of organizational structure. That is, it is not easy to achieve consensus as to what "efficiency" means, whether it refers to output in monetary terms or in product terms, or in some other terms. Also, organizational structure of Japanese and Western bureaucracies, to be compared, must be of a "comparable" nature. But we do not know what "comparable nature" means. In the absence of operational definitions of key concepts, we are not in a position to make a comparative statement as to relative efficiency of bureaucracies in Japan and the West.

What we do know is that a system which combines generalized and balanced exchange, Western social theory notwithstanding, works, and for good reasons. Such a system is not an aberrant anomaly in ethnographical exotica. It instead serves as an important case in point. Japan is not a "unique" exception in the sociological zoo, but is instead a civilization which is capable of making contribution to social theory.

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