

PACIFIC DIVIDE: AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM—JAPANESE UNIQUENESS*

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ABSTRACT

This paper, part of a larger effort to explicate the nature of American exceptionalism, is based on an assumption recently enunciated by Kazuo Ogura: 'To define the "other" is to know one's nation' (Lokker, 1992, p. 2). A person who knows only one country basically knows no country well. Comparing the United States or Japan with other nations is the best way to learn about each. In a previous work, I dealt with Canada, and argued that 'it is precisely because the two North American democracies have so much in common that they permit students of each to gain insights into the factors that cause variations' (Lipset, 1990). Here, I shift to looking at the two outliers, the two developed nations which are most different from each other. They clearly have distinct organizing principles. And their values, institutions and behaviors fit into sharply different functional wholes. These variations, of course, have been written about in myriad comparative scholarly, business and journalistic works. Given my limited contact with Japan (five visits covering a total of six months over 30 years), I cannot add to them observationally. This article, however, seeks to elaborate and test the validity of the qualitative analyses by a comprehensive examination of the comparative data on opinions, values and behavior, collected by public opinion agencies (Glazer, 1976). As will be evident, there are astonishingly large differences between them.

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Japan and the United States are two of the foremost examples of industrial success in the contemporary world, and they took very different paths to reach that position (Hamilton and Sanders, 1992). Efforts to account for America's past success have emphasized that it had fewer encrusted pre-industrial traditions to overcome, in particular, that it had never been a feudal or hierarchically state church dominated society. All of Europe and, of course, Japan were once feudal, organized in terms of monarchy, aristocracy, and fixed hierarchy, with a value system embedded in religious institutions which both emphasized the virtues inherent in agrarian society and deprecated commercial activities. Japan's feudal period, however, did not end until the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Analysts of the social prerequisites for industrialization have suggested that such conditions existed optimally in America. An efficient market economy is seemingly best served by an emphasis on individualism, on achievement, on meritocratic competition, by a value system which regards the individual as the equivalent of a commodity within the market. Ideally, under capitalism, people seek to maximize their own positions and deal with others without being concerned with inherited or ascribed qualities. Academic economic historians are not the only ones who believed that America has had the optimum conditions for development (Weber, 1935; Weber, 1946). Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Marxists, analyzing the expansion of capitalism, also pointed to the United States as the purest of bourgeois societies, the least feudal one, and therefore the most successful (Engels, 1935; Lipset, 1977). In the 1920s, Antonio Gramsci (1971), the justly celebrated Italian Communist theoretician, noted that his country had to Americanize socially as well as economically in order to develop the advanced capitalist industrial structure that, in his judgment, was a prerequisite for socialism.

EXCEPTIONALISM AND UNIQUENESS

The United States is exceptional in starting from a revolutionary event. It has defined its *raison d'être* ideologically. As historian Richard Hofstadter has commented, 'It has been our fate as a nation not to have ideologies, but to be one' (Kazin, 1989, p. 242). The American Creed can be subsumed in five terms: liberty, egalitarianism, individualism, populism (the rule of the people), and *laissez-faire*. As Alexis de Tocqueville (1948) noted, egalitarianism in its American meaning has emphasized equality of opportunity and of respect, not of result or condition.

These values reflect the absence of feudal structures and monarchies and aristocracies. As a new society, the country lacked the emphasis on social hierarchy and deference characteristic of post-feudal cultures. These aspects, as

Tocqueville (1948) and Max Weber (1935; 1946) stressed, were reinforced by the country's religious commitment to the 'nonconformist', largely congregationally organized, Protestant sects which emphasized voluntarism with respect to the state, and a personal or individual relationship to God, one not mediated by hierarchically organized churches, which have predominated in Europe, Canada, and Latin America. In Japan and much of Europe, on the other hand, the historic national values are derivative from monarchical and mercantilist pasts, feudal class, and hierarchical religious structures and traditions, which have favored an emphasis on hereditary status and family origins. These nations identify with their history, not with an ideology.

The focus of the American value system, of the American Creed, has been on the individual. Individuals have been expected to demand and protect their rights on a personal basis. The exceptional emphasis on law in the United States, derivative from the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, has stressed individual rights against those of the state and other powers and persons. America began and continues as the most anti-statist nation.

Japan, on the other hand, as many commentators have noted, is the world's exemplar of a group-oriented society and 'non-socialist' state-influenced economy. As Naohiro Amaya has stated:

The fundamental ethic which supports a group has been 'harmony'. Such American values as individual freedom, equality, equal opportunity, and an open-door policy can be considered 'foreign proteins' introduced into the traditional body of Japanese society (Upham, 1987, p. 206).

The interpretation which identifies post-feudal structures and values as antithetical to the development of modern industrial society is in many ways challenged by the history of Japan, which boasts the most successful economy of the post-war era. Rising from a terrible military defeat and the almost total destruction of its economy, Japan experienced a level of sustained economic growth which enabled it to become, in per capita terms, one of the wealthiest countries in the world and also to compete successfully with the United States. But this post-war 'miracle' continues a successful development pattern which began in the latter part of the nineteenth century long after Northern Europe and North America began their industrial revolutions. Self-starting industrialization and modernization took place almost entirely in a few European countries and the English-speaking overseas settler societies. Japan is the earliest non-Western country which became wealthy and industrially developed. Its record, compared to that of the United States or, to some degree, of Western Europe, seems to contradict much of what economic historians and comparative social scientists generally had thought they learned from the American experience. The question which now interests the West is: what is it about Japan that

enabled this to happen? The Japanese themselves are fascinated with discussion of Japanese uniqueness, *Nihonron*, their counterpart to American exceptionalism. The 'reiterated refrain underlying the literature on Japanese identity is that of uniqueness' (Dale, 1986, p. 25). One literature survey estimates that over 2,000 works dealing with Japanese uniqueness have been published since World War II (Aoki, 1990, p. 24).

REVOLUTION FROM ABOVE

Japan has modernized economically while retaining many aspects of its pre-industrial feudal culture. Until the mid-nineteenth century, the social structure under the Tokugawa Shogunate was still feudal; its culture still resembled that of Renaissance Europe. Japan was an extremely hierarchical society which placed a tremendous emphasis on obligation to those higher up as well as to those down below. Inferiors were expected to show deference and give loyalty while superiors were obliged to protect and support them.

By the mid-nineteenth century, Japan had avoided a prolonged breakdown of feudalism, but the Japanese aristocratic élite decided that the country had to industrialize if it was to escape being conquered by the imperialist West. Determined to avoid dependence on or take-over by Western powers, this élite sought to remake the country economically along Western lines. To do so, they recognized the need to consciously remold the social structure so as to create the conditions for economic development, a dauntingly gargantuan task. If individualism, egalitarianism, and liberalism (a weak state) are highly conducive to economic development, Japan has been more disadvantaged than most nations. Comparatively, it is still status conscious (the vernacular language and social relations are particularly hierarchical), politically centralized, and above all, by Western standards, collectivity oriented and particularistic (group centered).

Few Westerners, other than scholars, are knowledgeable about the reorganization of Japan. The record of the country's mid-nineteenth century barons, that brilliant group of oligarchs who took over the country determined to modernize it, makes that of any group of communist rulers seem like indifferent bumbler. The changes which occurred in Japan from the 1860s on were among the most remarkable societal transformations that have ever occurred. The barons planned a sociological transformation using Emperor Meiji to legitimate it.

The Meiji planners were faced with the need to reorganize the status system. In a feudal agrarian society, banking and other commercial activities were held in low repute. This had been true in Europe where merchants, even when wealthy, were looked down upon by the feudal rulers. They were necessary, but they were not considered equals by the aristocracy. The Meiji élite realized that Japan had to encourage commerce and industry, the pursuit of profits. The

populace, and the élite as well, had to regard business pursuits as important and worthy occupations. The solution was to foster the merger of aristocratic and business statuses by encouraging the lowest aristocratic stratum, the *samurai*, to become businessmen. This was possible since the samurai had been functionless even before the end of feudalism.

The Meiji transformation highlights the widely discrepant roles of the state in developed societies. The ideological heritage of Japan, derivative from a post-feudal alliance of throne and altar, engenders a positive sense of the role of government, the same as a somewhat similar background has produced in much of Europe. Industrialism in Japan, as in Imperial Germany, was planned for by the government, indicating Japan has been less unique in this respect than many now believe (Landes, 1965; Veblen, 1934).

The Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) has continued the tradition of guidance set by the Meiji economic planners. MITI's contemporary 'approach is anticipatory, preventive, and aimed at positively structuring the market in ways that improve the likelihood that industry-specific goals will be achieved.' The Ministry views the operations of a 'pure' market economy as flawed, in part because *laissez-faire* ideology entails the pursuit of narrow interests, and thus a lack of attention to 'collective interests . . . and . . . national goals' (Okimoto, 1989, pp. 11–12). Conversely, the classically liberal, *laissez-faire*, anti-statist ideology is the political tradition of the United States (Hartz, 1955). In contrast to the Japanese experience, the government 'tends to deal primarily with failures after they have occurred. . . . [It] suggests a preference for leaving the market alone unless there is tangible evidence of a breakdown. . . . Whereas Americans are content to let the chips fall where they may, the Japanese prefer to remove as much of the element of uncertainty from the market processes' as possible (Okimoto, 1989). In an exaggerated sense, the Japanese economy may be described as a form of market socialism, or, as Shin-ichi Nakazawa, a popular social critic, comments: 'It's as if Japan has a kind of Communistic capitalism, or state socialism without the socialism' (Weisman, 1992, p. 27). Chalmers Johnson (1990b, p. 44) describes the system as a 'different kind of capitalism', one which operates in 'ways that neither Adam Smith nor Marx would recognize or understand', one which is fundamentally different from the American.

The culturist group or consensus model of Japanese society and the individualist and conflict model of American society which are followed by much of the literature and are employed in this paper have been criticized by some scholars. They suggest that other ones, including the structuralist, stratification, social exchange (focusing on the emphasis on reciprocity and gifts) models provide alternate ways to conceptualize the two nations. But these are not mutually exclusive approaches (Befu, 1990). Nations develop new institutions, patterns of

acting, which fit into their organizing principles. Receptivity to particular modes of behavior is a function of the larger value system. Quality circles invented in the United States, premised on group co-operation, took hold in Japan, not in America. Clearly, while it is possible to organize the analysis of any society along a variety of lines, it is necessary for comparative societal analysis to focus on organizing principles or values which encourage insight into sources of variation with other systems.

Harumi Befu (1980) has suggested an alternative model for Japan, a social exchange one. He notes correctly that the Japanese stress the need to repay all obligations, indebtedness to others who may have helped out or given favors of any kind; while Americans feel less impelled to act in such ways, especially when to do so may create the impression of cronyism, of special favors in return for 'bribes'.

Societies are characterized by both ends of analytical polarities. A society is not either group oriented or individualistic or ascriptive or egalitarian or consensual or not (Lipset, 1979). All societies are marked by stratification, conflict, and consensus. There is considerable individualism in Japan as well as particularism (group orientation) in the United States. Such concepts must be treated in a comparative context, as measured by relative rankings, that is, as more or less. And viewed in such a fashion, Japan, as noted above, appears to be the most group-oriented culture among developed societies; the United States is the most individualistic. Although this paper deals almost exclusively with comparisons between the United States and Japan, it should be noted that most European countries fall in between, so they are more like Japan than the United States is, but more like America than Japan is.

DUTY AND OBLIGATION

A fundamental difference between Japan and the United States lies in the fact that the Japanese governing élite made a conscious effort to merge the traditional with the modern. The Japanese have continued to uphold values and institutions which, from the perspective of Western market economics analysis, make little sense. They maintain a society in which deference and hierarchy are important, in which there is a 'continuing ethos of patrimonial relations [derivative] from Japan's feudal past' (Johnson, 1990a, p. 78). In theory, the person does not exist as an individual, but only as a member of certain larger groups: family, school, community, company, nation (Reischauer, 1977). A 1990 Japanese government study of American and Japanese high school students concludes that, unlike the situation in the United States,

child rearing in Japan, the educational system, the style of education plays against individualism. Rote learning is favored over a creative approach to study. In addition,

the Japanese do not want to STAND OUT as individuals. The proverb about the nail sticking up which must be pounded down implies that the individual who behaves in an individualistic way, is significantly different from the group will be punished and not rewarded (Japan Youth Institute, 1990, p. 91).

The continuity in the American emphasis on individuality and the Japanese on conformity to the group may be seen in the cross-national variation in polls taken in 1989 which asked respondents to react to the statement: 'It is boring to live like other people.' Over two-thirds, 69 percent, of the Americans agreed conforming is tedious, compared to 25 percent of the Japanese (*Nanakakoku Hikaku*, 1989, p. 47).

The Japanese, whenever possible, seek to avoid individual responsibility. Notions of duty and obligation constantly come through in conversations with Japanese (Smith, 1983). They have an obligation to each other and to the institutions of which they are a part. Individuals are indebted to their parents, teachers, employer, state. They must repay all favors, even casual ones. Gifts are exchanged frequently as a way of maintaining social relationships, of meeting and developing obligations.

Psychologist Janet Spence (1985, pp. 1287–8), in explaining how 'the Japanese character differs profoundly from the American one', notes that contrasting socialization processes result in sharp variations in ego, with individualism here leading 'to a sense of self with a sharp boundary that stops at one's skin and clearly demarks self from non-self'. For the Japanese, the '*me* becomes merged with the *we*, and the reactions of others to one's behaviors gain priority over one's own evaluations'. These differences are related to the varying values and institutions of the two nations.

These contrasting senses of self in the two societies are produced by and lead to differing emphases on rights versus obligations, on autonomy versus personal sacrifice, and on the priority of the individual versus that of the group—differences that have broad ramifications for the structure of political, economic, and social institutions.

A report on comparative surveys of children aged seven to eleven indicates that when questioned 'whether their mothers treated them "more like a grown-up or a baby"', 65 percent of the American children answered "more like a grown-up", compared to only 10 percent of the Japanese children' (Caudill and Schooler, 1988, p. 19). A similar cross-national view of the parent-child relationship is found in the answers samples of fathers gave in 1986 to the question: 'Do you try to treat your child like an adult as much as possible?' An overwhelming majority of American fathers, 79 percent, replied 'Yes', compared to less than half, 43 percent, of Japanese. The same survey inquired of children aged 10 to 15 years: 'When you and your father disagree, does he listen to your opinion?' In tandem with the responses of the fathers, the majority of American

offspring, 72.5 percent, said, 'Yes, he does', compared to 45 percent of the Japanese. And when asked: 'What does your father usually do when you do something bad?' twice the proportion, 37 percent, of the Americans chose the response, 'He doesn't get upset but tries to talk to me', contrasted to 18 percent of the Japanese young people. The latter were more likely than Americans aged 10 to 15 years to continue the pattern when dealing with younger siblings. Only 36 percent of the Japanese, against 56 percent of the Americans, said they would allow 'a younger child [who] wanted to watch some other [TV] program' to do so even when the older one would like to see another one (*Japanese Children*, 1988, pp. 31-8).

Ironically, the Japanese emphasis on obligation and loyalty to membership groups appears to result in a lower level of civic consciousness, a lesser willingness to help individuals or institutions to whom no obligation exists, than in the more individualistic America. I have been told by Japanese that they are not supposed to assist strangers unless they are in very serious difficulty, since the person assisted will then have a new obligation which s/he does not want. Such reports are congruent with opinion poll findings. Youth surveys (ages 18-24) have been conducted in different countries by the Japanese Youth Development Office of the Department of Public Affairs. In 1977, 1983 and 1988, the Office asked 'Suppose you meet a man lost and trying to find his way. What would you do?' Over half, from 51 to 60 percent, of the Americans chose the answer 'ask him if he needs help', while less than a third, 32 to 26 percent, of the Japanese gave the same response (*Summary Report*, 1989, p. 74).¹ Similar cross-national differences were reported in the study of 10 to 15 year-olds in 1986. They were asked: 'If you saw a person with more luggage or packages than he or she could comfortably handle, would you offer to help him or her even if you didn't know him or her?' Over three-fifths, 63 percent, of the American young people said they would, while only a quarter, 26 percent, of the Japanese would do the same (*Japanese Children*, 1988, p. 38).

American parents are much more likely than Japanese ones to report that they try to teach their children to help those in need and to follow civic rules. A 1981 comparative survey conducted for the Prime Minister's Office (1982, p. 3) in Japan, based on interviews with parents of children under 15 years old, reports that over two-thirds, 70 percent, of Americans were instructed to 'care for the elderly and the handicapped', compared to one-third, 33.5 percent, of the Japanese. The corresponding figures for 'not to litter in parks and on roads' were 66 percent for Americans and 33 percent for Japanese; for 'to wait one's turn in line', the percentages were 44 for Americans and 19 for Japanese.

¹ Results from youth survey and some others reported here are also given in Hastings and Hastings (eds.), (1990) and Nisihira and Condominas (1991).

CHANGE AND STABILITY

A detailed review of the literature on Japanese uniqueness, inherently comparative like that on American exceptionalism, suggests major differences in structures, cultural styles and values, variations which 'are more or less identical with differences between industrial and preindustrial (feudal) civilization in the West' (Dale, 1986, p. 44). Japanese social scientists have been monitoring their values and 'national character' through survey research since the 1950s. Their findings indicate 'that no change in basic values has occurred in Japan. This evidence challenges the evolutionary view which posits the Western pattern as the end point, the culmination of societal development. Alternative patterns of family and human relations appear to be enduring rather than transitional' (Kağıtçıbas, 1990, p. 161; Hayashi and Suzuki, 1984). The studies stress that the 'central Confucian and Samurai values such as seniority, loyalty or priority of the group are still dominant' (Trommsdorf, 1985, p. 232). Tatsuko Suzuki (1984) concludes from reviewing the Japanese experience that in spite of 'institutional changes . . . in the areas of economics and politics, . . . the systems of belief in Japan owe their relative stability to the stability in the structure both of family relations and of supplementary, informal social relations'. These findings seemingly reiterate Veblen's (1934, p. 251), reached in 1915, that it is 'only in respect of its material ways and means, its technological equipment and information, that the "New Japan" differs from the old'.

Various reports on Japanese values indicate, however, that while many attitudes and values appear stable, a number have changed considerably between the 1950s and the 1980s. Some of these changes seem to involve an acceptance of Western values. For example, the proportion of Japanese who would 'adopt a child to continue the family line' (traditional behavior for those without children) declined steadily over eight National Character surveys taken between 1953 and 1988, from 73 to 28 percent. Those who say the prime minister should visit the Imperial Shrine annually moved down from 50 percent in 1953 to 16 in 1988 (Mizuno *et al.*, 1992, pp. 523, 525, 529). Asked repeatedly what sex they would choose to be if born again, the percentage of women who would prefer to be men fell off in linear fashion from 64 in 1958 to 34 in 1988. The proportion of men, however, who opt for a masculine rebirth has been constant at 90 percent from 1958 on. In three American polls taken between 1946 and 1977, the same and unchanging percentage, also around 90, of American males prefer to be born in the same sex. American women, however, have consistently shown a much greater desire to retain their gender than Japanese, with the percentage wanting to be of the opposite one going down from 26 in 1946 to 17 in 1958 and 9 in 1977.²

² *Fortune* and Gallup Poll results from the files of the Roper Data Library.

Conversely, respondents to the National Character surveys, as well as to the youth studies, have become more traditional and less Western in their answers to many other questions. The varying patterns have been brought out in a review of the National Character studies by Scott Flanagan (1991, pp. 97–9) of the six surveys taken between 1963 and 1988. Flanagan summarized the patterns of change for seven items, classifying responses as being traditional, modern, or unclassifiable. I have not used one of the items due to disagreements I have with Flanagan's coding of which response is modern and which is traditional. The unit of measurement is the percentage difference between modern and traditional responses. In four of the six items, the change from 1963 to 1988 favored the traditional response, while the remaining two items changed in the modern direction. Five of these six changes were relatively small, from 6 to 12 percent.

Flanagan's results also indicate that the few early post-war shifts toward modernity began 'to halt or reverse in the 1970s, as a result of several factors'.

The 1973 Arab oil boycott sent shock waves through the Japanese economy; the oil crisis diverted attention from the environmental, quality-of-life, and participation issues that had come to the forefront in the 1960s and refocused national attention on economic issues, leading to a resurgence in conservatism. This period also coincided with a renewed interest in *Nihonjinron* (essays on what it means to be Japanese) as the Japanese began to reassess the enduring aspects of their culture in light of the previous three decades of massive importation of goods, ideas, and practices from the West. Toward the end of the 1970s this renewed interest in the enduring traditions of Japanese culture was reinforced by a growing nationalism and cultural self-satisfaction with Japan's new international standing and dramatic economic success (1991, p. 101).

In Flanagan's analysis, as well as in results from other studies, we find further evidence for the continued strength of traditional values. An increasing lack of confidence in science, certainly a modern institution, appears to characterize the Japanese, while Americans retain it. The belief that there is a loss in 'the richness of human feelings as a result of the development of science' increased from 30 percent in 1953 to 47 in the National Character studies of 1988. These results are supported by the findings of the 1980–81 World Values study, which asked: 'In the long run, do you think that scientific advances we are making will help or harm mankind?' It found the majority of Japanese critical or fearful of science, while most Americans reacted positively. The latter were distributed 56 percent help to 22 harm, while only 22 percent of the former replied help to 59 harm.³ Similar cross-national results with comparable magnitudes of difference in response rates were obtained to a number of questions seeking evaluation of the benefits or damages derivative from the development of science and technology in surveys conducted in 1991 by the Japanese Science and Technology Agency.

³ From analysis by the Roper Data Center.

For example, five-sixths of Americans, 85 percent, compared to 54 percent of Japanese agreed that 'Scientific development makes my daily life healthier, more safe and comfortable'. The Agency also reported much higher interest in 'News and Topics on Science and Technologies' in the United States in 1990 than in Japan in 1991 (Nagahama, 1992, pp. 16-17). Interest by Japanese young people in science and technology is declining. It fell from 67 to 41 percent between 1977 and 1991. Studies of the occupational aspirations of Japanese high school students found that in spite of the fact that 'the employment rate for science and engineering [university] graduates is very high, . . . High school students are steering away from the science and engineering disciplines' (Kobayashi, 1991, pp. 4-5).

Other responses in the National Character research also suggest a revival of traditionalism. Thus when asked to choose the 'two most important values', those answering 'respect individual rights' fell off from 49 percent in 1958 to 36 in 1988. Those listing 'filial piety', being dutiful to one's parents, increased from 60 percent to 71 over the same period, while 'respect freedom' declined slightly from 46 percent in 1963 to 42 in 1983. And 'on the rather delicate question of whether or not the Japanese feel they are superior to the Westerners, . . . those who believe they are superior increased from 20% in 1953 to a massive 47% in 1968 . . . [and to an even higher 55 percent in 1983]. The pattern observed here indicates the renewed self-confidence of the Japanese' (Mizuno *et al.*, 1992, pp. 528, 530).

Perhaps the best example of the strength of traditional practices even when they appear dysfunctional for an economically developed society is the nation's refusal to adopt the system of street names and consecutive numbers on buildings that exists in the West. Japanese streets are not named or numbered in the same systematic way, and house numbers refer to the order of construction in a given district. Strangers are expected to find their way through use of local maps or directions from a nearby landmark, such as a train station. The Japanese had an opportunity to change after the war when the American occupation forces assigned alphabetical or numerical names to streets. But this system, seemingly so much more functional for commerce in a large city like Tokyo, was largely discarded as soon as the occupation ended.

Many Japanese tend to agree with the stereotype that they are a less universalistic and more particularistic society than America. Thus, when asked by the Nippon Research organization in 1990 whether Japanese are more 'intolerant of other races', 40 percent said they were, while only 13 percent thought Americans were more intolerant than Japanese. A plurality of Japanese (35.5 percent) replied their countrymen are more disposed to 'put priority on [matters concerning] one's own country' (nationalistically self-centered), compared to 22.5 percent who believe the Americans are more nationally oriented.

More Japanese, 33 percent, see themselves as 'selfish', while only 12 percent identify Americans this way. In each case, Americans, answering the same questions for the NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll, are more likely to give the converse response, to think themselves more tolerant of other races than the Japanese (by 46 to 40 percent), less nationalistic (by 64 to 24 percent), and less selfish (by 44 to 33 percent).

CONFLICT AND CONSENSUS

The United States is a much more discordant society than Japan and, to a lesser extent, much of Western Europe. The combination of capitalist and Protestant sectarian values, to be found only in America, encourages conflict and moralism. As the purest example of a bourgeois nation, America follows the competitive norms of the marketplace in union-management and other relationships. Actors seek to win as much as they can and will ride roughshod over opponents if possible. As noted, American unions have been reluctant to cooperate with executives on management problems or to take responsibility for corporate welfare. They are described in the comparative labor literature as 'adversarial', as distinct from the behavior of unions in post-feudal more social democratic corporatist nations (Bamber and Landsbury, 1987). The former have pressed to secure as much from management as their strength permits. (In recent years, of course, their loss of membership, from one-third of the employed labor force in the mid-1950s to less than one-sixth in the early 1990s, has hampered their ability to gain concessions.) Unionists among the Japanese belong to company-wide labor organizations which show concern for the company's needs, not nationwide ones which include all in the same trade or industry, as in America. American unions historically have not been concerned about the welfare of specific companies. Japanese workers have been much less prone to strike than American unionists, although the emphasis on hierarchy has fostered Marxist and socialist beliefs among the former, as it has among Europeans (Reischauer, 1977). A 'de facto incomes policy has grown organically out of a routinized set of norms, procedures, and institutions developed over years of interaction between labor and management.' The cooperative and 'self-regulating nature of labor-management relations has spared the Japanese government from being engulfed by the consuming task of binding up economic and social wounds following outbursts of labor unrest' (Okimoto, 1989, pp. 121-2).

Related to the emphasis on obligation (exchange relations) is the ideal of a consensual society. 'The ideal solution of a conflict . . . [is] not a total victory for one side and a humiliating defeat for the other, but an accommodation by which winner and loser could co-exist without too much loss of face' (Shillony, 1990, p. 127). Labor relations reflect the more general patterns. 'Japanese dispute

processing structures tend to minimize adversarialness. . . . They parallel Japanese social structure in the sense that they tend to treat people as connected rather than separated, and to encourage solutions that minimize conflict and reduce the probability that relations between disputants will be permanently severed by the dispute' (Hamilton and Sanders, 1992, p. 37). When conflict occurs, persons and groups linked by institutional relationships seek agreement. Majorities do not simply outvote minorities in parliament. Those who can win the vote (pretend to) allow their opponents to influence the final outcome. Japanese politicians, as one once told me, deliberately introduce sections of legislation which they do not want so they can yield them in the final negotiations with the minority opposition. The American electoral system invariably produces a recognizable winner and loser even when the difference in votes between them is small. The Japanese method, on the other hand, encourages minority representation by a number of parties via the election of members of parliament representing disparate groups in the same multi-member constituency. But the myth of consensus, the rituals of agreement, remains dominant.

In America, Protestant sectarian moralism helps to produce adversarialness, since political and social controversies are more likely to be perceived as non-negotiable moral issues than as conflicts of material interests which can be compromised. The United States always goes to war against Satan, and as a result demands unconditional surrender from the enemy (Lipset, 1990, pp. 78–9). Japanese religious traditions reinforce the need for consensus and compromise. They are synchronistic rather than sectarian. Many Japanese are Buddhists and Shintoists, pray at the temples of the former and the shrines of the latter. America, however, has been the most 'religiously fecund nation in the world', as the sects have divided. Unlike America, 'Japan never possessed a dogmatic religion which makes a sharp distinction between right and wrong. . . . None of . . . [Japan's] religions had a stern, omnipotent God. . . . In a situation where no one fought for God or against Satan, it was easy to reach an accommodation once the fighting was over' (Shillony, 1990, p. 127).

The varying consequences of a society which stresses obligation to groups as a major virtue and one which emphasizes individual success and rights are also reflected in the sharply different rates of crime. In America, the emphasis is on winning, 'by fair means if possible, and by foul means if necessary' (Merton, 1957, p. 169). The Japanese crime rate is much lower than the American on a per capita basis. As a result, while Americans worry about walking the streets of their cities, 'Japan is one of the few major nations—perhaps the only one—where one can walk the streets of its large cities late at night and feel in no danger' (Ames, 1981, p. 1). The serious crime rate in the United States is over four times the total crime rate of Japan. Only 1.1 per 100,000 of the Japanese population were victims of murder in 1989, compared with 8.7 Americans; for

rape the variations were 1.3 and 38.1. The 1989 data were even more striking for robbery: 1.3 cases per 100,000 population in Japan, contrasted with 233.0 in the United States, while for larceny they were 1,203 and 5,077. As with other measures, European rates fall in between, closer to the Japanese than the American (*Japan 1992*, 1992, p. 93). As Hamilton and Sanders (1992, pp. 158–9) note: ‘Japan and the United States occupy the opposite poles in the distribution of violent and property crimes among the major capitalist countries.’

The trans-Pacific rates are diverging. Between 1960 and 1987, they increased in the United States for homicide (from 5.1) and larceny (from 1,726), while in Japan they fell for murder (from 3.0) and remained constant for larceny. As of 1986, 42 Japanese out of every 100,000 were in prison, as compared with 158 Americans. Japan has a much smaller police force, about 60 percent the size of America’s in per capita terms, and many fewer lawyers.

There is frequent much exaggerated reference to the enormous difference between the number of lawyers in the two countries, 13,000 in Japan and around 800,000 in the United States. The second figure is correct, America has one-third of the world’s practicing attorneys; but the first figure refers only to *bengoshi* who, however, are the licensed litigators (barristers) handling ‘only a small part of Japan’s lawyering’. In fact, the country has about ‘125,000 suppliers of legal services’, including all sorts of specialized persons dealing with particular aspects of law, and ‘in-house corporate legal staffs filled with law graduates who never bothered to pass the bar exam’. Adjusting for these results shows a difference of three to one, 312 lawyers per 100,000 for the United States and 102 for Japan (*Economist*, 1992, p. 12). There are also far fewer tort cases in Japan.

The vast differences have been explained by variations in structures, rules and culture, though the first two are in large part an outgrowth of the third. As a post-revolutionary new society, the United States has lacked the traditional mechanisms of social control and respect for authority that mark cultures ‘based on traditional obligations which were, or had been, to some extent mutual’ (Ward, 1959, p. 27). The American emphasis on individualism is therefore associated with the universalistic cash nexus and legally enforceable contractual agreements, a pattern which in comparative terms has continued to the present. Agreements among business firms are spelled out in much less detail in Japan than in America. Contracts are not written in anticipation of possible future litigation. It is assumed that if conditions change so as to benefit one party against the other, the two will modify the agreement, including adjustments in price. The Japanese ‘prefer mediation. Even when suits are brought before a court, the judges prefer to use conciliation in order to avoid humiliating the loser’ (Shillony, 1990, p. 135). Legal informality, rather than litigiousness characterizes the Japanese approach to law. On the other hand, the United

States has, in Weberian terms, a legal-rational culture in which highly contractual, rather than traditional, mechanisms are emphasized, resulting in a very much higher rate of litigation. Tocqueville noted the contractual and litigious character of Americans in the 1830s. And writing in the 1990s, John Haley (1991, p. 14) notes: 'In no other industrial society is legal regulation as extensive or coercive as in the United States or as confined and as weak as in Japan'.

Japan has relied much more than the United States on informal mechanisms of social control, i.e., the sense of shame or loss of face, not only for individuals but for their families and other groups with which they are closely identified, including business. An Australian criminologist John Braithwaite (1989, p. 61) explains the unique low rate of crime in Japan as a product of the 'cultural traditions of shaming wrongdoers, including an effective coupling of shame and punishment'. A 1983 survey of the opinions of national samples of 10–15 year olds, which inquired as to their having engaged in various socially disapproved activities, found only 28 percent of the Japanese children admitting to such behavior in contrast to 80 percent of the Americans.

Behavioral as well as attitudinal data show that Japanese have been much less prone to violate traditional norms with respect to marital continuity than Americans, even though the proportions voicing discontent with the relationship are similar. Opinion poll data from the 1980s show Japanese much more opposed to divorce than Americans. The cross-sections of mothers of teenagers were asked whether they believed 'that a man and a wife, even if they want a divorce, should consider their children's future and remain married'. The question yielded overwhelming majority responses in both countries, but in opposite directions. Almost three-quarters of those in Japan said they should stay married, while three-fifths, 61 percent, in the United States replied, get divorced (*Chugakusei no Hahaoya*, 1991). The divorce rate, as of 1988, was much lower in Japan, 1.25 per 1,000, than in the United States, 4.80 per 1,000 (1989 *Demographic Yearbook*, 1989, p. 513–14).

Comparative surveys indicate that the Japanese are much more consciously committed to following the rules or customs than innovating, while Americans take the opposite tack. In 1978, cross-sections interviewed for the Japanese National Character studies in both countries were asked to respond to the following question:

If you think a thing is right, do you think you should go ahead and do it even if it is contrary to usual custom, or do you think you are less apt to make a mistake if you follow custom?

Fully three-quarters, 76 percent, of the Americans replied 'Go ahead even if contrary', as compared to less than one-third, 30 percent, of the Japanese. Even when the issue does not involve illegitimate or socially disapproved activities,

Japanese prefer to adhere to the rules, while Americans will innovate (Suzuki, 1984, p. 89).

Americans are much more likely than Japanese to say they will do anything necessary to get ahead individually. A majority of the former, 52 percent, agreed in 1989 that 'I will do whatever I can in order to succeed', compared to only 14 percent of the latter. Comparable differences were reported for the responses to the statement: 'I want to be successful no matter how much pain might be involved in doing so.' Over three-fifths, 63 percent, of the Americans and 36.5 percent of the Japanese agreed (*Nanakakoku Hikaku*, 1989, p. 48).

WORK AND THE ECONOMY

COMPANY LOYALTY

Although a highly urbanized industrial nation, Japan retains many of the informal practices, norms, and clientelistic relations of manorial societies. Companies, particularly large ones, are obligated to their employees, e.g., to keep them employed, to establish pension funds, and are quite paternalistic in ways which range from arranging marriages to school placement for employee offspring. Ideally, boards of directors are not supposed to emphasize the maximization of profits. 'Many senior Japanese managers ... feel at least as obligated to the workers as to the owners of the corporation' (Anderson, 1984, p. 30). Job supervisors even arrange marriages.

For their part, employees are expected to be loyal to their companies, and survey evidence confirms the generalization that employees in Japan are much less prone to shift jobs than in America. According to the OECD (1984, p. 63), the ratio of the number of jobs held by males over their lifetime in the U.S. to those held in Japan rises in a linear fashion from 1.98 for the 16-19 age group to 3.05 for the 50-54 cohort, then dips slightly for the 55-64 group. The same ratio, as computed from Hashimoto and Raisian (1985, p. 724), begins at 2.77 for the 16-19 group, drops to 2.13 for the 20-24 group then rises linearly to 2.60 for the 45-49 group. Each set of evidence is slightly different but substantiates the same conclusion: Japanese have fewer jobs throughout their lifetime than Americans.

These cross-national variations have also held up among the three samples of youth, with no change occurring between 1977 and 1988. Close to three-quarters, 72 percent, of the Japanese said they were still on their first job, a reply given by only one quarter, 24 percent, of the Americans. Almost a third of the latter reported having held four or more positions; only one percent of the Japanese did the same (*Summary Report*, 1989, p. 60).

Some challenge the notion that prolonged employment and low separation rates in Japan have cultural components by the contention 'that life-time

employment is only a large-firm phenomenon'. In fact, however, research by Masanori Hashimoto and John Raisian (1985, pp. 726–7) and also by Robert Cole (1979, pp. 87–90) indicate that although 'job tenure is longer in large Japanese firms, it is quite long even in the tiny and small firms', much longer in all size groups than in American ones.

Japanese clearly exhibit much stronger ties to their employers than Americans do. Cross-national interviews with samples of male workers in 1960 and 1976 found that the proportions who said that they think of their company as 'the central concern in my life and of greater importance than my personal life', or as 'a part of my life at least equal in importance to my personal life' were very much greater in Japan than in the United States in both years and increased in absolute terms in the former. The combined percentages for the two company commitment responses, in surveys taken 16 years apart, were 65 moving up to 73 for Japanese workers, compared to 29 declining to 21 for the Americans. The Americans were much more likely to choose other categories defining their relations to their employers in instrumental terms, i.e., less important than their personal lives. Seemingly, the Japanese changed toward favoring a deeper involvement with their company, while the Americans became even less enamored of such a stance over the decade and a half between the two surveys (Takazawa and Whitehill, 1983, pp. 58–61).

Varying emphases toward particularism in economic life are evident in the responses to 1978 surveys in both countries, which indicated that Japanese were much more likely than Americans to prefer a work supervisor who 'looks after you personally in matters not connected with work' by 87 to 50 percent. The alternative formulation favoring someone who 'never does anything for you personally in matters not connected with work' was endorsed by 10 percent of the Japanese and 47 percent of the Americans (Suzuki, 1984, pp. 88–9). The difference in particularistic expectations about the role of supervisors is brought out most strongly in the responses by samples of male workers in 1960 and 1976 to the statement, 'When a worker wishes to marry, I think his (her) supervisor should [pick from four alternatives]'. Close to three quarters, 71–4 percent, of the Americans chose the category, 'Not to be involved in such a personal matter', as contrasted to seven going down to five percent of the Japanese. The dominant answer of the latter, 66 percent moving up to 80, was 'Offer personal advice to the worker if requested', an answer given by 20 percent descending to 15 of the Americans (Takazawa and Whitehall, 1983, pp. 118–20). Similar cross-national differences are reported by the World Youth Surveys when they inquired in 1972, 1983 and 1988: 'Suppose you work under a superior, do you think it is a good idea to have social contact with him after hours?' The percentage replying 'No' changed slightly from 25.5 to 28 among the Japanese, a response given by a much larger segment of Americans, 42 to 46 percent (*Summary Report*, 1989,

p. 62). And Japanese workers are in fact much more likely to socialize 'outside of work' with their supervisors and managers, as well as with co-workers (Lincoln and Kalleberg, 1990, p. 88).

The continued Japanese preference for particularistic relations is also exhibited in the reactions to a question posed in 1973 and 1978 asking them to choose between working for a firm which 'paid good wages, but where they did nothing like organizing outings and sports days for the employees' recreation' and a 'firm with a family-like atmosphere which organized outings and sports days, even if the wages were a little bit less'. The Japanese respondents to both surveys overwhelmingly chose the particularistic alternative even if it involved less pay, by 74 percent in 1973 and 78 in 1978 (Hayashi, 1987, pp. 74-5).

WORK AND LEISURE

Studies of leisure and family involvements, both attitudinal and behavioral, agree that Japanese devote less time than Americans to leisure pursuits and are more disposed to emphasize work over leisure or home life generally. Thus Lincoln and Kalleberg (1990, p. 63) found 'only 35 percent of our Japanese sample (vs. 70 percent of the Americans) rate family life as more important than work responsibilities'. The Japanese (49 percent) were also more likely than Americans (28 percent) to agree with the statement: 'Employees shouldn't take time off when things are busy, even though they have a right to take time off.' A 1980 NHK (the public broadcasting system) survey found more than a quarter, 27 percent, of Americans gave the highest priority to leisure activities, while 18 percent of Japanese did. The World Youth Study reported that when asked in 1977, 1983 and 1988, 'Which do you find more worthwhile, work or something else?', two-thirds, 67-71 percent, in the United States replied something other than work, as compared to around half, 49-57 percent, of those in Japan (*Summary Report*, 1989).

Behavior corresponds to opinions. A survey-based comparison by the Leisure Development Center of Japan in 1989 of work and leisure in seven developed nations notes that the Japanese work the most and have the least time off. Two out of three Japanese employees work more than 45 hours a week. In every other country surveyed, the majority of workers spend less than 45 hours per week at their jobs. 'The American figure [for more] is 42.5 percent. As for weekend holidays, the most common pattern in Japan is one day off, and less than 20% of workers have two-day weekends every week. On the other hand, . . . 68% of Americans are assured two-day weekends every week'. Not surprisingly, 'leisure participation is comparatively low in Japan. Japan was last in 23—or more than half—of the [42 leisure activity] categories' (*Leisure and Recreational*, 1991, pp. 19-20).

Although Japanese groups and firms are intensely competitive, individuals within them are not expected to be—nor do they want to be—in overt competition with colleagues in seeking to get ahead. Promotion and salary increases within Japanese firms tend to be a function of seniority much more than in American ones, including among white-collar employees and executives, although judgments of ability do play an important role (Dore, 1973, pp. 67–70). Seniority is even more important and strictly respected within the civil service, where political appointees do not intervene in personnel matters (Yawata, 1981, p. 5). When national cross-sections of employed young adults (18 to 24 years of age) were asked in 1977, 1983 and 1988 for their preferred basis for promotions and pay increases, an average of 80 percent of the Americans favored giving more weight to performance than seniority, compared to 36 percent of the Japanese. Preference for seniority basically stayed constant from 1977 to 1988 at 46 to 44 percent among the Japanese and 16 to 15 percent for the American youth (*Summary Report*, 1989, p. 62).

The two World Values studies conducted in 1981–82 and 1990–91 also found that Americans are much more likely than Japanese to believe in merit pay; more of the latter are inclined to pay the same to all in a given type of work. Thus in the first survey, when asked whether a secretary who 'is quicker, more efficient and more reliable at her job' should be paid more than one of the same age who does less, over three-quarters of the Americans, 79 percent, said pay the more useful one more, compared to 54 percent of the Japanese. The second survey asked respondents whether 'there should be greater incentives for individual effort', or should 'incomes be made more equal'. As in the response to the earlier question, the Americans favor greater emphasis on 'incentives' by 68 percent to 47 for the Japanese (Inglehart, 1991).

CULTURAL BIASES IN WORK ATTITUDES

Surprisingly, however, much, though not all, of the comparative survey results dealing with work-related attitudes appear contradictory. On a subjective verbal level, different surveys have found Japanese are less work-oriented, less satisfied with their jobs, and less positive in feelings about their companies than Americans. James Lincoln and Arne Kalleberg (1990, pp. 57–61), who have reported these inconsistencies between behavioral and survey findings, note, correctly I believe, that there are 'cultural biases operating to generate overly positive assessments of work life on the part of American employees and understatements by the Japanese'.

These cultural biases are in part an 'apparent manifestation of Japanese collectivism and Western individualism . . . [as in] the tendency for Japanese respondents to give average or non-committal answers, while Anglo-American

respondents are somewhat more prone to take strong, even extreme stands on issues'. Ronald Dore (1973, p. 218) suggests that variations in 'average personality' also affect cross-national attitudes, such as 'a difference on a dimension which has cheerfulness and good-humored complacency at one pole and a worried earnestness and anxious questing for self-improvement on the other'. He believes this affects varying propensities to express job satisfaction. Answers to questions about job satisfaction or working hard or ratings of employers are also relative, are affected by conceptions of what hard work means, of expectations about a job or organization, by perceptions about fellow workers or supervisors. It has been argued that 'precisely because the Japanese subscribe to a strong work ethic that they are less likely to feel that their expectations have been met' (Lincoln and Kalleberg, 1990, p. 61).

I can suggest other cultural dispositions which may affect differences in verbal responses. Japanese are not inclined to boast, to express positive judgments about themselves, a trait which extends to groups of which they are part, such as pride in country, on which they rank close to the bottom in international comparisons. Americans, conversely, are almost uninhibited in such terms. They show up as among the most optimistic people in Gallup Polls conducted in 30 countries while the Japanese are among the least. The polls, taken annually near the end of each year from 1976 to 1987 and again in 1990, posed the following question: 'So far as you are concerned, do you think [next year] will be better or worse than [last year]?'⁴ (Michalos, 1988, pp. 178–9). Even in December 1990 after the recession began, the United States still led as 48 percent of Americans, compared to only 23 percent of the Japanese, who had not yet entered a recession, replied next year will be better.

Individualism may also press Americans to give positive responses about satisfaction with job and company, while embeddedness in strong group allegiances reduces the propensity of the Japanese to answer in comparable terms. Since Americans believe in personal choice of jobs, schools and mates, a response that one does not like his/her situation raises the question: What is wrong with the individual? Why does he/she not quit? Japanese, in contrast, do not have the option to break from a group relationship. If he/she says that he/she does not like his/her spouse or company, there is no implication that there is something wrong with the respondent. Hence, Japanese will be much more outspoken about voicing negative feelings than Americans. In this case, individualism constrains speech, group allegiances liberate.

Group-oriented commitments are weak in the United States where the religious tradition, linked to its Puritan origins, emphasizes individualism and personal rights. Bourgeois norms enjoin the same behavior. Americans do not

⁴ The data for 1990 are from a Gallup Poll release. The Poll did not ask the question from 1986 to 1989 or in 1991.

feel obligations, other than familial, if these conflict with the requirements of efficiency or income. They expect people to do their best for themselves, not for others.

STATUS PATTERNS

The dominant stratification orientations of the two societies are also quite different. America stresses equality: equality of opportunity, equality of respect, but not of income. As previously noted, Tocqueville suggested that Americans believe that individuals should give and receive respect because they are human beings. Everyone recognizes that inequality exists, but it is impolite to emphasize it in social relations. Tocqueville and others have even argued that personal service is un-American; though of course there are exceptions, Americans generally do not like to be servants or to use them.

In Japan, hierarchy remains important in defining social relations. However, as will be noted in a subsequent section, there is much greater stress on reducing income inequality. Reischauer (1977, pp. 162–5) has written that no other people place a greater emphasis on status differentiation in social relationships than the Japanese. Each person and institution has a place in the prestige order. The comparative surveys of youth aged 18–24 conducted in 1977, 1983 and 1988 found, in response to the questions concerning the factors valued about a college education, that the Japanese were much more likely than their trans-Pacific counterparts to say ‘having gone to a top ranking college’ is to be valued by an average margin of 25 to 16 percent, while Americans put much more emphasis than Japanese on ‘school performance and school record’ by 39 to 10 percent. The proportion of Japanese who mentioned performance fell from 11 to seven percent over a decade, while it increased among Americans from 36 to 43 percent (*Summary Report*, 1989, p. 58). The results of a detailed study of the relationship of college status and occupational attainment in Japan and the United States on a mass level challenges the thesis that educational credentialism is greater in Japan than in the United States. However, ‘when we focus on the process of elite formation, a different picture emerges. *The linkage between the summit of educational stratification and top of the corporate managerial [and civil service] hierarchy appears to be much stronger in Japan than in the United States*’ (emphasis in original) (Ishida, 1986, p. 176).

Hierarchy is particularly evident in the Japanese use of words, many of which are laden with social status connotations. Japanese employ different terms in conversations with superiors, equals, and inferiors. In this way, their language is one in which status determines how people talk to each other. Chie Nakane (1988, p. 11) has observed: ‘In everyday affairs a man who is not aware of relative ranking is not able to speak or even to sit or eat. When speaking, he is always

expected to be ready with differentiated, delicate degrees of honorific expressions appropriate to the rank order between himself and the person he is addressing. The English language is inadequate to supply appropriate equivalents in such contexts.'

Although both countries are political democracies, the Japanese are more respectful of political leaders, of persons in positions of authority, and less likely to favor protest activities. Americans, on the other hand, tend to be more anti-*élite*, suspicious of those in power. George DeVos (1990) notes that in Japan '[a]uthority figures—political, administrative, and familial—are for the most part, granted a degree of respect rare in the United States'. These generalizations are borne out by comparative survey research which indicate that Japanese are more likely than Americans to agree with the statement: 'If we get outstanding political leaders, the best way to improve the country is for people to leave everything to them, rather than for the people to discuss things among themselves.' Both, however, express a low level of 'confidence' in their current crop of politicians. Japanese respect for authority is also evident in the finding that a much greater percentage of them than of Americans feel that parents should support teachers by denying to their child a story 'that his teacher had done something to get himself in trouble', even if the rumor is true (Suzuki, 1984, pp. 88–9).

The Japanese are also less disposed to give verbal support to extraparliamentary activism, although the behavior of students during the sixties contradicted such statements. The youth surveys conducted in 1972, 1977, 1983 and 1988 found that the Japanese were the least likely among persons aged 18 to 24 in six countries (France, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States, and West Germany) to say that if they 'are not satisfied with the society', they would 'engage in active actions as far as they are legal' to change things, 21 percent in 1988, down from 37 in 1972, while the Americans were the most disposed among the six to favor activism, 55 percent falling off from 62. The modal response (39 to 41 percent) for the Japanese was 'I will use my voting rights but nothing more' (1987 *New Social*, 1987, p. 91; *Summary Report*, 1989, p. 86). Here is further evidence of the different attitudes of Americans and Japanese (as well as Europeans) to conformity.

GENDER RELATIONS

Gender presents a major anomaly in any effort to evaluate the extent to which the United States and Japan continue to vary along the modern-traditional axis and of the ability of Japan to maintain its historic values and behavior. Structural changes in the economy have forced the Japanese to choose between admitting large numbers of foreign workers, thereby upsetting their traditional aversion to

accepting outsiders, or to allow a sizeable increase in employed married female labor, thereby undermining the norms defining the relations between the sexes. The Japanese have chosen to do the latter, although they lag the United States and almost all other industrialized nations in participation by women in the employed labor force (Roos, 1985, pp. 15–16, 131; Sorrentino, 1990, p. 53).

Japan remains, however, 'a persistent outlier among industrial societies, demonstrating a greater male–female wage differential and more pronounced sex segregation across a range of indicators, including employment status and occupation . . .' (Brinton, 1988, p. 308). The United States differs from Japan on all of these variables.

The almost 40 percent decline in the marriage rate in Japan over the past two decades and the increase in the average age of newlyweds have been greater than in any other society, while fertility rates there are among the lowest anywhere. They have fallen from 5.3 and 3.3 in Japan and the United States in 1921 to 3.2 in both countries in 1951 then down to 1.6 and 1.9 in 1988.⁵ Marriage rates have changed little in America in recent years, hovering around 15 per 1,000 population, aged 15 to 64, between 1960 and 1986, while dropping from 14.5 to 8.6 in Japan in the same period (Sorrentino, 1990, p. 42). The age of marriage in Japan was the highest in the world in 1985. And not surprisingly, the changes in behavior have been paralleled by shifts in attitude. The proportion of Japanese females agreeing with the statement: 'Women had better marry because women's happiness lies in marriage', declined from 40 percent in 1972 to 14 in 1990 (Smith, 1992).

Despite these changes gender relations remain much more traditionally hierarchical, more asymmetrical in Japan than in western nations, particularly the United States (Reischauer, 1977). The traditional male dominant family is much more characteristic of the former. Comparative survey data gathered by NHK in 1980 indicate that three-fifths of the Japanese think males 'have higher analytical ability' than women; most Americans, 72 percent, believe that 'by nature there are no differences between men and women'. The same NHK study reports that 80 percent of Japanese men and 74 percent of the women say the 'husband should have the final deciding voice' in the family, compared to 40 percent of American men and 34 percent of women. When asked how the household chores should be divided when the husband and wife both work, 90 percent of the Americans said equally between the spouses, a position taken by only slightly over half of the Japanese, including 54 percent of the women (Suzuki, 1989, p. 368). That these cross-national variations in opinions correspond to behavioral differences is evident from data in a paper by Noriko Tsuya

⁵ 'The total fertility rate is defined as the average number of children that would be born per woman if all women lived to the end of their childbearing years, and at each year of age they experienced the birth rates occurring in the specified year' (Sorrentino, 1990).

(1992, Table 4). In Japan, between 1965 and 1990 an unchanging nine-tenths or more of the time spent on household chores was by women, compared to 79 percent declining to 64 percent in the United States.

Given these cross-national differences, it is not surprising that the Prime Minister's Office (1982, p. 5) multi-national study of parents, which inquired in 1981 whether women should have jobs after marriage or 'after childbirth', found that a majority of Americans, 52.5 percent, replied, 'Yes, at any time', in contrast to 30 percent of the Japanese. The Japanese-conducted international youth surveys reported cross-national differences running in the same direction when they asked respondents to react to the more general statement: 'Men should go out to work while women stay home and take care of the house.' In each year (1977, 1983 and 1988), the large majority of Americans disagreed by 71, 81 and 81 percent, compared to minorities, albeit increasing ones, of Japanese, 32, 35 and 44 percent, who felt the same way (*Summary Report*, 1989, p. 86). The Prime Minister's Office (1982, p. 8) also reported that American spouses are much more likely to socialize together than Japanese. The percentages for 'eating out' are 48 American, 17 Japanese; for 'films and theatres', 40 percent and seven; for 'social parties', 37 and five; for 'travel', 33 and five.

Polls conducted in 1990 by the Roper Organization and the Dentsu Institute for the Virginia Slims Company in both nations supply more recent evidence of continued Japanese traditionalism in gender relations (*Virginia Slims Report*, 1990). Working females were asked whether 'the men you work with really look on you as an equal or not?' American women replied by 59 to 29 percent that they are viewed as equals. The Japanese response pattern was diametrically opposite with 55 percent of the women saying they are not looked upon as equals and only 31 percent thinking they are. Asked whether women's opportunities are the same as those of men in various job-related areas, American females are much more likely than Japanese to perceive equality for salaries—65 to 24 percent, for responsibility—74 to 37 percent, for promotion—60 to 18 percent, and for becoming an executive—49 to 15 percent. These attitudinal differences correspond to variations in national behavioral patterns. As of 1990, two-fifths, 40 percent, of administrative and managerial positions in the United States were filled by women, up from 27.5 in 1981, compared to only 7.9 percent in Japan, up from 5.3 in 1981 (*Yearbook of Labour Statistics*, 1991, pp. 108, 409, 418). Clearly women are gaining more rapidly in America than across the Pacific in the attainment of executive positions.

A 1991 survey of mothers of junior high school students in Japan and America found again that women in the former are much more traditional than their trans-Pacific peers with respect to gender roles of adults and their treatment and expectations for their offspring. Thus over half, 53 percent, of the Japanese mothers agree that 'Husbands should work outside and wives should take care of

the family', in contrast to 39 percent of the Americans. Similarly, over three-fifths, 61 percent, of the latter reject the statement: 'Men are supposed to play a central role and women are supposed to support them', a point of view held by less than half, 44 percent, of the Japanese mothers.

Japanese mothers are more disposed than Americans to vary their treatment of children according to gender. Just over half the former, in contrast to 38 percent of the latter, say 'boys and girls should be raised differently'. More specifically, when asked: 'What education level do you want your child to achieve?' Americans do not differentiate their expectations for sons and daughters; 83 percent want both to graduate from a university. Japanese mothers, on the other hand, vary anticipations according to the sex of their children. Sixty-seven percent want their male offspring to go to a university, while only 35 percent wish the same for females (*Chugakusei no Hahaoya*, 1991, pp. 1, 14-15, 34).

Cross-national attitudinal and behavioral differences are linked closely. Of the 38 percent of Japanese males who continue their education beyond high school, fully 95 percent attend four-year universities; among the one-third of females who are in post-high school studies, 'nearly two-thirds . . . go on to junior colleges and the rest enroll in four-year universities' (Brinton, 1989, p. 554). The situation is reversed in the United States, where a larger proportion of college age women (64 percent) than of men (55 percent) are enrolled in tertiary institutions, more or less proportionally distributed by gender in different types of higher education (*Japan Statistical Yearbook*, 1989, p. 782).

The distinctive gender-linked attitudes and behaviors in Japan and America appear to be supported by friendship patterns. Both younger (18-24) and older (65 plus) Japanese are much more likely than comparably aged Americans to say that all of their close friends are of their sex. Among the youth, the ratio of Japanese to Americans to so report is 51 to 10 percent; among the aged, it is 57 to 32 percent. The drop-off between the generations in traditional behavior is clearly much greater in the United States. Over four-fifths of American youth report having friends of both genders in 1977, 1983 and 1988; less than half of the Japanese do so, although the percentage has been increasing from 32 percent in 1977 to 49 percent in 1988 (*Summary Report*, 1989, p. 64).

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

The family has been an area of considerable change as societies have moved from predominantly rural and small town environments to industrial and metropolitan ones. There has been a shift everywhere from single-household multi-generational stem families to nuclear ones, fertility rates have declined greatly, and the role of parents in arranging marriages has been replaced by an emphasis

on love. The United States has been in the forefront of such developments; Japan has been a laggard among industrialized nations, although it too has moved considerably.

Familial relations seemingly reflect the continuity of traditional elements in Japan. In spite of the strains of adjusting to the rapid social change encompassed in the pace of industrialization and urbanization in post-war Japan, the family is more secure there than in the United States. As Nathan Glazer (1976, p. 861) emphasizes: 'The Japanese family is undoubtedly changing; but for a developed country it still maintains a remarkable stability, which underlies the stability of the value patterns.' Divorce rates, as noted earlier, are much lower in Japan. Aged parents are more likely to live with or near their offspring and to receive deference and assistance from them. A 1980 international study of 'human values' found 89 percent of a national cross-section of Japanese in favor of adult children living with their parents and older parents residing with a married son or daughter, a position taken by only 25 percent of a comparable sample of Americans. Surveys of the elderly, 65 and older, taken in 1981, 1986, and 1991 found that the majority of the Japanese in each year (59, 58, and 54 percent) said they wished to always 'live together' with their children and grandchildren compared to very few Americans (6.5, 2.7 and 3.4 percent) (Management and Coordination Agency, 1991, p. 5). Cross-sections of mothers of teenagers in the two societies, when interviewed in 1983, also varied in their responses to a question concerning their desired relationship with their children in old age. The overwhelming majority of Americans, 87 percent, said they would like to dwell apart from their offspring; 56 percent of the Japanese preferred to be with them. These attitudes correspond to behavior. In the 1980s, three-fifths of Japanese 65 years or older were living with relatives, compared to one-seventh of similarly aged Americans. The 1981, 1986, and 1991 studies of people aged 65 and over found that in the United States, about four-fifths of the 'elderly were either living alone or were living alone as couples. In Japan, about 50 percent of the elderly interviewed were living with children'. Even more strikingly, the data showed that 'roughly 35 percent of the Japanese are living in three [adult] generation households against [almost] no Americans⁶ (Usui, 1991, pp. 79–80). Conversely, during the 1980s, 30.4 percent of Americans 65 years of age or older were living by themselves, as contrasted to 8.6 percent of elderly Japanese. Comparative research finds that 'except in Japan, the one-person household has shown the most rapid growth of all household types since 1960' (Sorrentino, 1990, p. 52).

⁶ For the same data see Management and Coordination Agency (1986) and for 1991 see *Rojin-no Seikatsu* (1991).

These findings reinforce the conclusion put forth in 1992 by Junko Matsubara (1992, p. 2), that Japanese society basically 'recognizes families as basic social units and disregards individualists who desire to live alone'. An unmarried freelance writer in her mid-forties, Matsubara was told by landlords she was unqualified to rent an apartment by herself. Grown children among the Japanese are more disposed to remain with their parents in the (physically small) family households than Americans, who generally live in much larger dwelling units. Surveys of 18 to 24 year old Japanese youth report that from 79 percent in 1977 to 83 percent in 1988 were residing with parents, compared to 59 percent to 62 percent of the same age group of Americans (*Summary Report*, 1989, p. 48).

THE PERPETUATION OF TRADITION

The argument has frequently been made that to develop economically, Less Developed Countries (LDCs) must become modern, individualistic, and meritocratic. In other words, they must come to resemble America. As noted above, even Marxists, writing in a period when the United States was perceived as the great capitalist success (not yet the great capitalist villain), saw America as the equivalent of modernity.

The Japanese élites were able to employ the country's traditions in ways which made industrialization possible. They could use religion since pre-Meiji beliefs contained elements that encouraged rationally oriented work and economic behavior. Robert Bellah (1970, pp. 116-18) concludes that Japanese economic development was causally linked to its Buddhist and Confucian heritages. Shinto, one of the country's two major faiths, is older than most Western religions and helped to legitimate the Meiji transformation. Traveling around Japan one can see business people enter Shinto shrines and clap to get the attention of the local god, the god of a river, of aviation, of a district. They are practicing a form of the same animist or shamanist religion that existed in the pagan Western past and persists today in tribal societies (Masatsugu, 1982, p. 18).

Religion everywhere tends to institutionalize values and practices from previous eras. As Weber emphasized, traditionalism in the form of religion helped to modernize America and facilitated the development of a competitive capitalist society. The same Protestant sects which fostered individualism and rational market behavior, also sustained many values and beliefs derivative from the pre-industrial history of Western societies. Tocqueville noted a century and a half ago that Americans formed the most devout population in the West. They still do. Business executives and members of Congress attend prayer breakfasts. When Americans are asked whether they believe in the Devil, close to half say yes; in most other Christian countries, the percentage is around 5-10 percent.

Most Americans believe in Hell and the afterlife, most Europeans do not. Americans accept far more fundamentalist Biblical teachings than do Europeans (*Gallup Report*, 1985, pp. 29, 38, 47–8).

The Japanese, of course, not being Christians, cannot be expected to accept Biblical teachings, but in any case they are much less religious than Americans. The three youth surveys report that, over an eleven year period, more than 90 percent of Americans said they believe religion should be important in their life (41–7 percent 'very', 45–6 'somewhat'), contrasted to around two-fifths of Japanese (6–10 percent 'very', 31–5 'somewhat') (*Summary Report*, 1989). The 1990 World Values study found 79 percent of Americans and only 17 percent of Japanese reporting religion as an important value. It is interesting to note that similar differences showed up when the responses of a national cross-section of Japanese were compared with those of a sample of Japanese Americans in Hawaii, both taken at the beginning of the 1970s. For example, only 31 percent of the Japanese said they had a personal religious faith compared to 71 percent of the Hawaiian Japanese (Suzuki *et al.*, 1972, p. 29).

The lesser religiosity of the Japanese may explain the findings in the Roper-Virginia Slims polls that Japanese are more permissive or liberal with respect to sexually-related issues. Thus, they are 10 percent less likely than Americans to believe that 'pre-marital sexual intercourse is immoral', and 14 percent more disposed to agree that 'legal abortions should be available to women who choose to have them'.

Various observers of American values have indicated that there has been little change over time in the key characteristics which have defined American culture when viewed comparatively, e.g., with Europe or Canada. However, the European post-feudal societies, with their earlier stress on hierarchy, particularism, and ascription (hereditary status), while remaining different from America, changed greatly to meet the functional requirements of industrial society. But Japan, as we have seen, has modernized economically while retaining many traditional ways which were discarded in most of post-feudal Europe.

The United States, however, like Japan, contradicts the assumption that the emergence of a developed urban economy necessarily undermines tradition. As noted, most Americans still adhere to pre-modern religious beliefs. In some ways, therefore, America is a more traditional society than Western Europe, or even Japan. Public opinion studies conducted since World War II in the United States attest to the strength of ancient sacred traditions, which are much stronger than in almost all other Christian countries. One of the foremost sociologists of American religion, Andrew Greeley (1991, pp. 98–100), has documented the basic continuity of practice and belief. He concludes that those who believe in 'the ever-increasing power of secularization' or in 'a "surge" of religious fundamentalism' are both wrong. 'When George Gallup . . . asked the

first question about whether you “happened” to attend church or synagogue last week in the early 1940s, the proportion that had “happened” to attend church was 40 percent. It’s still 40 percent almost a half-century later.’ Summing up the findings of survey research—‘twenty-five years for most items, almost fifty for some’—he concludes:

Most of the lines one would draw on a graph of American religious behavior through the years are straight lines: more than 95 percent believe in God; 77 percent believe in the divinity of Jesus; 72 percent believe in life after death with certainty, while another 20 percent are unsure; 70 percent believe in hell, 67 percent in angels, 50 percent in the devil; 34 percent belong to a church-related organization; a third have had some kind of intense religious experience; half pray at least once a day and a quarter pray more than once a day; a third have a great deal of confidence in religious leadership; more than half think of themselves as very religious. Defection rates have not increased since 1960 and intermarriage rates have not changed significantly across Protestant and Catholic lines in the same period.

Only three indicators show a decline—church attendance, financial contributions, and belief in the literal interpretation of the scripture. All three declines are limited to Catholics. . . . [I]t is a decline accounted for by a change to a position which is quite properly orthodox for Catholics—acceptance of the general message of the scripture as inspired without believing the literal interpretation of each word.

The supposedly greater commitment of the Japanese than Americans to traditional ways of life, such as living in small towns, also did not appear when samples in both countries were asked in the late 1970s by Gallup International about preferences for community of residence. The Americans turned out to be more wedded to older models. Close to three-fifths (56 percent) of those interviewed in the United States stated they would like to live in rural areas or in a small town of up to 10,000 persons, as compared to only a quarter (27 percent) of the Japanese. Although the latter are closer in time (generations) to residence in small communities, with many now living in highly congested urban conditions, 36 percent said they would prefer to live in a large city, while only 13 percent of the Americans expressed the same choice.

Antagonism to big cities in America has been linked for many decades to an image of these communities as centers of moral corruption, sin, and irreligion, an image held by fundamentalists and evangelical Protestants. As Earl Raab and I documented (1978), such views have given rise to anti-modernist and anti-urban movements from the Anti-Masonic Party of the 1820s and 1830s through the Know-Nothing-American Party movement of the 1850s the Ku Klux Klan of 1920s, and the right-wing religious linked groups, of whom the most publicized has been The Moral Majority of the 1970s and 80s.

On a completely secular level, the refusal by Americans to give up the ancient systems of pounds and ounces, miles and inches, and Fahrenheit temperature

scale in favor of metric measurements, while Canadians went along with the proposal of the two governments that the North American nations join most of the world in using more logical and economically more functional methods is another illustration of an American attachment to tradition. By the criterion of measurement, America (and Britain) are more traditional than Japan. But the latter, as noted earlier, insists on retaining an equally dysfunctional approach to street names and numbers.

Another major pattern in the United States involves the perpetuation, even the extension, of traditional behavior is race and ethnicity. Until recently, most scholars of this topic agreed that ethnicity reflected the conditions of traditional society, in which people lived in small communities isolated from one another and mass communications and transportation were limited or non-existent. They expected that industrialization, urbanization, and the spread of education would reduce ethnic consciousness, that universalism would replace particularism. Sociologists in Western countries assumed that modernization would mean the end of ethnic tension and consciousness. Assimilation of minorities into a larger integrated whole was viewed as the inevitable future.

But as we know, this has not happened in the United States, or in a number of other European countries. The image of the universalistic 'melting pot' into which all American groups would blend has been de-emphasized in favor of an ethnically pluralist society that legally and otherwise accepts the rights of national origin groups, e.g. Blacks, Asian Americans, Hispanics, Jews, etc. Affirmative action policies are a part of this phenomenon whereby the modernist and market economy emphasis on universalism has declined, while particularism has become more important. Japan, of course, remains highly particularistic and race conscious, a point to be elaborated below.

MODERNITY AND CONSERVATISM

THE MEANING OF CONSERVATISM

The assumption that Japan is an exception to the theory that economic development necessitates a shift from tradition to modernity, because it retains major aspects of the value systems associated with feudalism, is clearly invalid. Every industrial country is a combination of tradition and modernity. As Weber (1935), Reischauer (1977), and Bellah (1970) have suggested, development in the Western sense is an outgrowth of certain traditions which fostered rational economic behavior, elements present more strongly in Northern Europe, North America, Japan, and Confucian East Asia than in other parts of the world. The new is introduced as an outgrowth of the right combination of the old. And the strains of social change, of adjusting to new forms of behavior, of rejecting the old, can only be moderated if societies are able to link the new with the old, if

they maintain considerable elements from previous stages of development. Not all cultures have equally usable cultural elements.

Tatsuko Suzuki (1984, p. 100) draws conclusions from examining the responses to five Japanese National Character surveys conducted over a quarter of a century which apply to some degree to the United States and other developed countries.

First, the processes of social change did not bring about a total disappearance of a 'traditional' outlook, to be replaced by a 'modern' outlook. Despite all the changes in the postwar era, the systems of values in Japan have continued to provide culturally legitimate and meaningful outlets for different ideas.

Second, large-scale institutional changes may occur without drastic shifts in the systems of attitudes. In fact, in view of the Japanese experience, we are inclined to argue that it is precisely the relative stability in the systems of beliefs which allows institutional changes to take place, for example in the areas of economics and politics, without major social dislocations.

The Japanese differ from Americans and some Western Europeans in having done much more to plan their economic development. One of the reasons they were able to do this was that they were latecomers on the industrial scene and, as noted earlier, were pushed into modernizing by the desire to prevent being colonized. The Meiji élite sought to maintain what was truly Japanese, to restore the status of the Emperor, and at the same time to become an industrial power. The United States was fortunate in having the right combination of traditional values to make use of its economic resources. It is important to note that the great Japanese post-war reforms (e.g., land reform, democratization, demilitarization, the elimination of the peerage) were legitimated by the same mechanism as in the Meiji Restoration, the Emperor's approval. Those most upset by the changes were the most bound to the Emperor. General MacArthur played out the classic role of a controlling Shogun standing behind the Emperor, but by doing so he helped preserve much of the older traditions. More than a quarter of a century earlier Winston Churchill had urged a similar role for the German Kaiser, arguing that by retaining him the Allies would avoid the alienation of the right-wing and the military from the new German democracy.

From a perspective of the diverse indicators of 'traditionalism' discussed here, Japan and America appear more traditional than most west European and Australasian cultures, while being as or more modern or developed technologically. If the ability to maintain traditionalism is linked to or identified with conservatism, then both are also conservative cultures.

Conservatism tends to be a political term, and from a political perspective both are conservative societies. America is exceptional in its lack of an important labor or socialist party. And while Japan does have a major socialist party, as well as a moderately strong communist one, unlike those of industrial Europe and

Australasia, it has never been the ruling party, except for a brief period in an early stage of the occupation. In 1985, the socialists explicitly gave up adherence to Marxism and the doctrine of class struggle, a change typical of many of the world's left parties. Class solidarity, as reflected in trade union strength as of 1990, is also weaker in both countries than elsewhere, albeit with a much smaller percentage of the non-agricultural labor force organized in the United States, 16, than in Japan, 25 (*Japan 1992*, 1992, p. 72; *Labour-Management Relations*, 1992, p. 10). Membership is declining in both. In recent years, commentators have been wont to emphasize the fact that 90 percent of the Japanese identify themselves as 'middle class', rather than 'upper' or 'lower' as evidence that their country has become classless. The interpretation is wrong. Americans and Europeans distribute themselves similarly when responding to this question. All these answers mean is that few people will choose to say they are sufficiently privileged to be in the upper class, or that they belong to the invidiously labeled lower class. When faced with further choices which include 'working class' or 'lower middle class', 40 to 50 percent choose such options in America and Europe.

ROLE OF THE STATE

The meaning of conservatism, of course, is quite different in the two societies. In America, it involves support of *laissez-faire* anti-statist doctrines, which correspond to bourgeois linked classical liberalism. In Jefferson's words, 'that government governs best which governs least'. In Japan, as in post-feudal Europe, conservatives have been associated with the defense of the alliance between state and religion (i.e., throne and altar), the maintenance of élitist values, and the use of the state for national purposes. Aristocratic monarchical conservatives have favored a strong state. From Meiji onwards, this meant a state bureaucracy and politicians who consciously planned the use of national resources to enhance economic growth and, in pre-war times, military power. The business community, in so far as it took independent stances, was more liberal, more supportive of *laissez-faire*, and less militaristic than the aristocracy, but it was weak politically.

In Europe, aristocratic agrarian-based conservatism, which favored a strong state, fostered the *noblesse oblige* communitarian values of the nobility, disliked the competitive, materialistic values and behavior of the capitalists, and introduced the welfare state into Germany and Britain. The socialists, when they emerged, also favored a powerful state and extensive welfare programs, as well as democratization of the polity. In Japan, the conservative post-feudal impulse led, as we have seen, to state guidance of the economy, but, unlike Europe, the emphasis on *noblesse oblige* and communitarianism has been expressed more

within the confines of private institutions, in the obligations of firms for their employees (lifetime employment, company provided annuity payments), what Ronald Dore (1973, pp. 105–7) calls ‘welfare corporatism’, than in state institutions. Hence, direct state payments for welfare have been lower in Japan than anywhere else in the developed world.

America and Japan have made important moves in the extension of the welfare state, but they remain at the bottom on the international list of OECD nations with respect to levels of taxation generally and spending for welfare purposes particularly. In 1980, Japan was last among these countries with 7.5 percent of its GDP spent on social benefits, while the United States was third last with 9.6 percent (Mahler and Katz, 1988, p. 40). Still, when presented in 1990 by the World Values study with a choice between the classical liberal or Tory–socialist positions in the form of a ten-point scale running from ‘Individuals should take more responsibility for providing for themselves’ to ‘The state should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for’, 53 percent of the Japanese placed themselves on the Tory–statist side of the scale while only 26 percent chose individual responsibility. Conversely, fully four-fifths of the Americans, inheritors of an anti–statist individualistic value system, favored individualism, while less than a fifth, 17 percent, answered that the state should be responsible. Although, as noted, both countries have private insurance, rather than state coverage for health care, their employee benefit systems differ greatly reflecting these differences in national values. As Tomoni Kodama (1992, p. 1) of the Japanese Ministry of Health notes:

The U.S. structure of employee benefits seems to be based on diversity and individualism. Companies have a real choice in selecting and planning their employee benefit system. . . .

[T]he structure of Japanese employee benefits is equity and uniformity for everyone. The Japanese priority has been to assure equal access to benefits for everyone. . . . [I]n order to provide equal access to all employees, health insurance is strictly regulated across the board by Japanese government. In other words, employees of a small company on the verge of bankruptcy are provided basically the same coverage as employees of a well-known big company such as Honda or Toyota. . . . The same type of equity and uniformity is more or less a common feature among other Japanese employee benefits such as pension plans and health care.

As a result, . . . it is not the companies but the central government that has consistently taken the key role in planning and implementing the employee benefit system.

Japan, throughout its post-war decades of economic growth and prosperity, has had a conservative government, one, however, whose business related Liberal Democratic administration has responded quite differently to the

recession of the early 1990s than the American Republican one. The former would improve the economy by Keynesian pump-priming policies, including 'more public investments to boost the economy . . . public works and housing. . . . [A]n additional ¥1.12 trillion will be allocated to public funds for investment in stocks. This is separated from the ¥10.7 trillion stimulus . . . [most of which] will be spent on public works and housing. . . . Economic Planning Agency officials [announced] . . . "the package will fill the gap between demand and supply in the economy"' (Isomo, 1992, p. 4; Reid, 1992, pp. A1, A13). Most recent American administrations, even to some extent Clinton's, would reject comparable policies for the United States as too leftist. The Japanese government remains centralized; its bureaucracy and politicians continue, as under Meiji, to strongly influence general economic policies. The American rejects proposals for a state coordinated 'industrial policy', although the Clinton Democrats use the term in suggesting a version much more moderate than the Japanese one. The dominant business sector adheres to a *noblesse-oblige* sense of obligation to employees in Japan, one almost totally lacking in America. Feudal or post-feudal values penetrate Japanese life and economy in ways which are largely absent from the American.

Japan, as noted, also has a relatively strong Marxist Socialist party, a much weaker more moderate (social democratic) Democratic Socialist party, and a fairly radical Communist party. Their combined vote has ranged up and down between 36 percent in 1958 and 32 in 1990, while such tendencies have almost no electoral support in the United States. The disparity between America and the rest of the industrialized world has given rise to an extensive literature seeking to explain 'Why No Socialism in the United States?' (Lipset, 1977). Many analysts, following Louis Hartz (1955), have suggested that the group oriented, corporatist, *noblesse oblige*, statist norms dominant in monarchically rooted Tory conservatism have legitimized support for social democratic statist policies. Further evidence that the variations in political orientation and social policies between Japan and America are linked to basic differences in orientation toward individualism and equality may be found in the first 1981-2 World Values survey, which asked respondents to choose between two statements:

- A There is too much emphasis upon the principle of equality. People should be given the opportunity to choose their own economic and social life according to their individual abilities.
- B Too much liberalism has been producing increasingly wide differences in people's economic and social life. People should live more equally.

As indicated earlier, and reiterated by the data reported in Table 1, the Japanese have been very much more disposed to favor equality than individual competition. Although support for meritocracy increases with social class, a

TABLE 1 Attitudes to individualism and equality

Social Class	Japan		America	
	individualism	equality	individualism	equality
			percent	
Total	25	71	56	32
High	47	53	62	33
Upper Middle	38	59	61	26
Middle	25	72	58	31
Lower Middle	22	75	49	43
Low	13	80	56	20

Source: Hastings, Elizabeth Hann and Hastings, Philip K. (eds.) (1982) 'Survey in Thirteen Countries of Human Values' (1980).

TABLE 2 Attitudes to freedom and equality

	Japan		America	
	1980-81	1990-91	1980-81	1990-91
			percent	
Agree with freedom	37	39	72	66
Agree with equality	32	32	20	22

Source: (1981): News release by CARA (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate); International Study of Values Interim Report (1991): Tokyo, Dentsu Institute for Human Studies.

majority of the 'high' class opt for equality. Conversely, most Americans, including a majority of the 'low' stratum, prefer a competitive race for position.

The second World Values Study did not include the Individualism-Equality question, but it repeated one requesting respondents to choose between statements emphasizing freedom or equality. As might be expected, in both years Americans were more likely to opt for freedom over equality.⁷ The choice was between:

- A I find that both freedom and equality are important. But if I were to make up my mind for one or the other, I would consider personal freedom more important, that is, everyone can live in freedom and develop without hindrance.
- B Certainly both freedom and equality are important. But if I were to make up my mind for one of the two, I would consider equality more important, that is, that nobody is underprivileged and that social class differences are not so strong.

The data in Table 2 point out the greater emphasis in American culture than

⁷ The analysis of the 1990-91 survey directed by Ronald Inglehart is not yet complete. I have not seen much of the data.

in Japanese on individual freedom. Seemingly there was little change in Japan over the decade of the eighties, while the very high commitment in the United States for the freedom choice went down slightly, though it remained the opinion of the large majority.

CONCLUSION

The two nations follow different organizing principles. National traditions continue to inform the cultures, economies, and the politics of both countries in very dissimilar ways. One, the United States, follows the individualistic essence of bourgeois liberalism and evangelical sectarian Christianity; the other, Japan, reflects the group oriented norms of the post-feudal aristocratic Meiji era. The former still stresses equal respect across stratification lines; the latter still emphasizes hierarchy in interpersonal relations. The first continues to suspect the state; the second places heavy reliance on its directing role. They are both among the world's most successful societies as measured by levels of productivity and political stability. Clearly, nations which have reached the same point of technological development and economic success, can still be very different culturally, can continue to be anomalies, outliers, among the developed countries, exceptional or unique compared to most others.

But as noted earlier, while America has been exceptional, Japanese patterns resemble those in Europe, particularly northern Europe. Japanese and European corporations have shown a propensity to cooperate with each other and with the government. Americans are low with respect to both orientations. Efforts to introduce quality circles and worker involvement in industrial production have succeeded in Japan, Sweden, and other northern European countries. They have failed in the United States.

There is an increasing body of literature which concludes that Japan will do better than the United States in the future, consideration of industrial policy apart, because its group oriented culture is better suited to the economic structure of a post-industrial society. The argument is that engineering innovations, the key to economic growth, are more successfully fostered by *groups* while scientific discoveries, yet to be applied basic research, are more likely to occur in societies which stress individual initiative. The latter lead to Nobel prizes, but the contention is that they are less likely to have a direct impact in the post-industrial marketplace. This hypothesis is far from the only one presented to account for Japanese economic success. Others stress the impact of group solidarity values on the willingness of Japanese, including corporate business executives, stockholders and employees, to earn less than comparably placed Americans or Europeans, while the gap between those who run companies and

ordinary workers is also much smaller in Japan (Vogel, 1979, p. 141). Sony Corporation Chairman Akio Morita has 'described in detail the corporate management style of Japan—thin profit margins, low dividends to stockholders, overwork [by and low pay to] . . . employees, seizing market share above all. (Millard, 1992, p. 3).

The comparative evidence indicates that:

[T]he employees of the Japanese company share more equally in the cash benefits available from the company than is the case in other countries [particularly the United States]. . . . Surveys of executive attitudes indicate that Japanese executive pay levels are set with a conscious awareness of the need to stay within reasonable ranges with regard to other levels of compensation. . . . Organizational pressures work to limit executive pay at least as much as do self-sacrificing impulses by the executives themselves (Abegglen and Stalk, Jr., 1985, pp. 194–5).

Survey data bear out the generalization that Japanese executives place the goal of increasing market shares, one which benefits workers, ahead of profits and short-term gains for stockholders. A 1980 cross-national poll of 291 Japanese and 227 American top corporate executives found the Americans giving first and second place to return on investment and increasing the value of company shares, while the Japanese put enlarging market shares first, and placed enhancing the worth of shares at the bottom, ninth (Kagano *et al.*, 1985, p. 38).

The answers to various other questions posed in this survey reiterated the differences presented in the qualitative and case study literature. The Japanese reported close relationships with 'distributors, customers, suppliers, and sub-contractors', and 'somewhat cooperative relationships with competitors', while the Americans noted 'remote relationships' and 'rivalry'. The Americans followed a pattern of 'head-on competition stressing cost efficiency', while the Japanese emphasized 'coexistence with competitors stressing "niche" and differentiation'. The Japanese sought 'information-oriented leadership' and generalists; the American preference was for 'task-oriented leadership' and specialists. The American executives were inclined 'toward innovation and risk-taking', the Japanese toward 'interpersonal skills'. The survey responses indicate that American managers were disposed to handle 'conflict resolution by confrontation . . . [and] decision making [by] stressing individual initiative', while the Japanese engaged in 'group-oriented consensual decision-making'.⁸

The Japanese post-war success, as contrasted to the much slower growth rate and the loss or decline in markets in major industries by American business, has led various analysts to argue that the United States should adopt comparable policies to those followed across the Pacific. Assuming that various specific Japanese ways are responsible for higher productivity, the fact remains that

⁸ The survey results are presented in 12 tables in Kagano *et al.*, 1985. The cross-national variations on well over 100 items are considerable.

these have developed in a very different context. 'The literature on Japanese development is generally pessimistic regarding the transfer of Japanese organization. It suggests that Japanese organizations derive from cultural factors such as homogeneity, familism, and group loyalty' (Florida and Kenney, 1991, p. 382). Yet a comprehensive study of Japanese 'transplants' in the automobile industry in America indicates both that they have done well economically and that they 'have been successful in implanting the Japanese system of work organization in the U.S. environment. The basic form of Japanese work organization has been transferred with little if any modifications' (Florida and Kenney, 1991, p. 391). These do not involve major practices like lifetime employment or the emphasis on seniority, but include a very much lower number of job classifications, more job rotation, greater emphasis on worker initiative and quality circles. Seemingly a Japanese management can secure acceptance of practices which failed when sponsored by Americans. (Quality circles, as noted earlier, were originally an American idea, which, ironically, did not take in its native land.)

The Japanese are bound together by a common history, by a long time desire to remain distinct from foreign culture. From the start of the seventeenth century to the mid-nineteenth, they maintained barriers against contact with other societies and economies. They had to be forced by Commodore Perry and the American navy to recognize the greater power of the West and to open the door to outside influences.

But even though open to intellectual, commercial and physical contact with the rest of the world, they have insisted on preserving their separateness. As a nation, Japan emphasizes ancestral purity. As James Fallows (1986, pp. 37-8) notes: 'Rather than talking about race . . . the Japanese talk about "purity". Their society is different from others in being pure.' The system is closed, unlike the United States, where 'in theory anyone can become an American. A place in Japanese society is given only to those who are born Japanese.' Legal immigration is close to impossible. The more than half million Koreans, left over from the period when Korea was ruled by Japan, do not have citizenship even though most of them were born in Japan. For a long time, the Japanese government refused to accept a quota of Vietnamese boat people on the grounds that the Japanese people would not treat them well. It finally reluctantly agreed to take in 10,000. The traditional concern for 'purity' has not declined. If anything, the 'discrimination against the Korean, Chinese and other minority people who permanently reside in Japan' has been increasing rather than decreasing since the 1970s (Johnson, 1990a, pp. 82-3). The protectionist zeal of the country, the barriers to the import of foreign goods, is a related form of behavior.

The United States, on the other hand, is, as noted earlier, united around an ideology, the American Creed, which is anti-statist, individualistic, and populist. It has welcomed foreigners to enter and join up. It is an immigrant, multi-

cultural, multi-racial society. Those who accept the Creed are Americans, those who reject it or transgress it, even though American-born, are 'un-American'. From a comparative, particularly Japanese, perspective, the United States has been an open society, open to imports as well as people. The past decade witnessed more newcomers to the United States than during any past one. And the immigrants now are overwhelmingly from the Third World, not from Europe.

The American emphasis on individualism and competition has resulted in a 'star' system in all areas of American life with enormous rewards to those on top, business executives, scholars, professionals, entertainers, athletes. The income spread from the top to the bottom is much higher in the United States than elsewhere in the developed world, particularly Japan. This is true in spite of the fact that formal hierarchical distinctions and family background are of greater importance in Japan and to a lesser extent in other post-feudal nations as well. In Japan, the emphasis is on the group winning, on the individual, whether athlete, executive, or worker, subordinating his/her concerns to those of the larger unit. Such behavior even occurs at the summits of politics. Prime Ministers tend to be prosaic figures who hold office for two to four years. They have little authority over their cabinet or party colleagues. This pattern stands in sharp contrast to the American system, where elections focus on the individual rather than the party, and emphasize the role of the President, even though he must rely on influence, not authority, when dealing with Congress.

My stress here on the continued distinctions between the two economically most powerful Pacific rim societies is not intended to deny that both have been changing culturally. Obviously, as they moved from being primarily agrarian societies to industrial giants, with the bulk of their populations living in cities, they changed greatly in norms and behavior. Their family systems are now nuclear, their birth rates are low, they are more meritocratic than in their nineteenth-century formats. Both have become more post-industrial or post-materialistic, to use Daniel Bell's and Ronald Inglehart's terms (they do not mean the same). Reflecting world-wide changes in the developed nations their young people are more permissive with respect to traditional morality, particularly with regard to sexual relations, choice of spouse and the position of women. They are more concerned about protecting the environment, they are more interested in the 'quality' of life, including more leisure time. But their organizing principles remain different. They vary from each other in much the same way as they did a century ago. The value and behavioral differences reported here are much greater than have been found in any other comparison of industrialized nations. Each maintains much of its unique or exceptional character. To reiterate an analogy I first used in discussing Canada and the United States, 'The two are like trains that have moved thousands of miles along

parallel railway tracks. They are far from where they started, but they are still separated' (Lipset, 1990, p. 212).

Japan, as much of the quantitative survey and behavioral data presented here indicate, has challenged the assumption that technological development leads to convergence with the cultural models that emerged in western industrialized societies. It seemingly is now rejecting aspects which it appeared to accept during the post-war decades. Some attribute the reversals to the country's changed international and economic status. As a defeated economically 'backward' society, many Japanese consciously took America as a model to be emulated. Now that Japan thinks of itself as 'number one', it can return to its own traditions.

The dean of the four decade old Japanese National Character studies Chikio Hayashi (1988, p. 11) points out the way in which Japan's changed position over a century of development has affected popular response to its culture.

Intent on the assimilation of Western culture and ways of thought, people naturally tended to neglect and even denigrate traditional customs and practices. Now, however, the Japanese lead the world in many areas of technology, and they are rapidly losing their infatuation with imported culture. . . . For this reason the new breed will be motivated to reassess the Japanese heritage and turn its attention to what makes the Japanese Japanese.

Frank Upham (1987, pp. 206–7), an American student of comparative law, makes a similar point in noting that

two decades of increasing Japanese social and economic success vis-à-vis the West have led many [domestic] observers to reverse the normative evaluation, so that sociolegal characteristics formerly seen as embarrassingly premodern are now celebrated as models for the overly individualistic and litigious West. The 'modern' legal system exemplified by the rule-centered model . . . has ceased to be the ideal and assumed destination of a Japanese social and legal evolution. Instead, commentators envision a legal system that preserves the social interconnectiveness which they perceive as Japan's unique cultural foundation and which is immune to the corrupting influence of the same individualistic rights consciousness that previous observers had considered a prerequisite to a modern democracy.

American individualism won the major international competitions in the twentieth century. Will it continue to be number one in the twenty-first? The American economy is still the more productive of the two, while 'per capita consumption in Japan was only 63 percent of the U.S. level', as of 1988 (Johnson, 1990a, p. 82). Still, the Japanese have clearly moved ahead of and are more efficient than the United States in industrial organization in major areas, such as automobile and electronics production. Some contend that their systems, which are leaner in the scope of management, more egalitarian in economic

reward, and place more emphasis on worker participation in quality control, are more 'modern' than the American, that the United States should modernize, learn from a more efficient system, much as the Japanese did for a century. In the coming years, will the world be more interested in American exceptionalism or Japanese uniqueness?

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