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GROUP SOLIDARITY AND SOCIAL ORDER IN JAPAN

Michael Hechter and Satoshi Kanazawa

ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to explain why Japan has attained a higher level of social order than comparably developed western national societies. To do so, it distinguishes the attainment of *local* order in social groups from the *global* order in national societies. Recent models of spontaneous, self-organizing order are insufficient to account for global order. In contrast to the more popular normative explanation of order in Japan, which holds that a consensus on fundamental values derived from Confucian roots is an essential cause, this paper proposes a solidaristic theory built on rational choice premises. This new theory views global order as a by-product of dependence and visibility mechanisms within key social groups such as families, schools and firms. A wide range of comparative evidence reveals that the solidaristic theory provides a superior explanation of the high level of social order in Japan than the normative one.

KEY WORDS • crime • dependence • monitoring • rational choice

After a long period during which scholarly concern with social order languished, the popularity of new endogenous models (Taylor, 1976; Axelrod, 1984; Boyd and Richerson, 1985; Sugden, 1986; Hechter et al., 1990; Ostrom et al., 1992; and Calvert, forthcoming) has revived interest in the subject. Predicated on ideas drawn from repeated game theory and evolutionary biology, these models purport to show how social order can emerge spontaneously among individuals in the absence of any specialized, third-party enforcement mechanisms. They have been used to explain the emergence of order in tribal societies (Bates, 1987), in traditional village communities (Taylor, 1982), among participants in irrigation institutions (Ostrom, 1990), and among neighboring cattle ranchers (Ellickson, 1991).

Despite their promise, two basic questions may be raised about these models. How robust are they? Not very. Even in settings most favorable to

the emergence of order, its attainment is contingent and not uniquely predictable (Hechter, 1992). Are they generalizable to large-scale social units such as national societies? Not really. This class of models rests on stringent assumptions about the extent of participants' common knowledge and about their communication capacity.[1] However appropriate such assumptions may be in relatively small groups, they are woefully inadequate in national societies which are extremely large and have extensive divisions of labor. The scale, complexity (in 1991 there were more than 13,000 distinct occupations in the United States [US Department of Labor, 1991: 1] and stratification of national societies drastically reduce the scope of common knowledge and restrict potential communication.

Whereas current models of self-organization sometimes can account for the *local* order found in small groups, they are insufficient to account for the *global* order found in national societies.[2] Order in a national society requires a state – a specialized agency responsible for the enforcement of rules.[3] All national societies possess states, even if their forms and powers vary widely. Although there is a large descriptive literature on the origin of states (see Levi, 1988: 41-7 for a summary), the task of providing an adequate endogenous explanation of their emergence lies ahead.

It is a commonplace that groups attain different levels of order, but little systematic attention has been devoted to explaining variations in global order. Any consideration of differences in order among contemporary national societies can usefully begin with Japan. Just as social scientists concerned with the problem of global order in the beginning of the 19th century wondered why England, that nation of shopkeepers, was so much more orderly than France, home to the Reign of Terror and a seemingly interminable series of political cataclysms, those who are concerned with the same problem in the 1990s must ask why Japan is today's exemplar of global order.

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1. One of the most recent such models (Calvert, forthcoming) includes the following assumptions, among others: complete information on payoffs and strategy sets, perfect information on one's own interactions, perfect recall of one's past interactions; identifiability of other players, a sufficiently large discount parameter, the possibility of multilateral communication, the ability to communicate with any number of players simultaneously, and the ability to reply to a message from another player immediately and without cost.

2. For example, Taylor's (1982: 25-33) mechanism for the production of social order requires common beliefs and values, direct and many-sided interpersonal relations, and generalized reciprocity, none of which is likely to hold in large and complex societies (1982: 91). Although Calvert's (forthcoming) more recent model of institutional equilibrium is expressly designed for application to large groups, it requires an agency that provides centralized communication with the capacity to engage in perfect and unbiased monitoring.

3. Although the market represents one solution to the coordination, production and allocation problems, the state is a precondition for the existence of national markets (Buchanan, 1975).

To the limited degree that social scientists have attempted to account for the relative orderliness of Japanese society, normative explanations have prevailed. These hold that global order emerges on the basis of shared moral, political and religious values (Parsons, 1937; Blau, 1964: 253–82). Thus, Nakane (1970: ix) considers a single 'basic value orientation inherent in society' – the vertical structural principle which 'has become one of the characteristics of Japanese culture (Nakane, 1970: 146)' – as the *leitmotif* of her analysis of Japanese society. Doi (1973) argues that the profound feelings of dependence, which normal infants in every society harbor toward their mothers, are somehow prolonged into and diffused throughout the life-cycle of the Japanese. These feelings, supposedly common among Japanese, are held to shape pro-social attitudes. Reischauer (1977: 141) concurs with Doi in maintaining that 'both *on* [the unlimited debt of gratitude or obligation of the recipient to the bestower of some benevolence or favor] in premodern times and *amae* today underlie the Japanese emphasis on the group over the individual as well as the acceptance of constituted authority and a stress on particularistic rather than universal relationships.' Shirai (1975: 174–6) invokes such dispositional factors as 'the psychology of group orientation,' and 'respect for institutional prerogatives,' common to all Japanese workers, to account for the lack of open confrontation between leaders and members of labor unions. And Smith (1983: 37) argues that 'the Confucian past casts a very long shadow over contemporary Japanese society'. For him, the causes of distinctive Japanese behavior lie in 'how the Japanese think about man and society and the relationship between the two' (Smith, 1983: 5):

> It is clear that in Japan the use of law as a guarantor of rights and duties is little resorted to directly. We must therefore ask if there is another mechanism that serves in its stead to reinforce and maintain social order. There is, and it is to be found in the highly flexible and difficult to systematize domain of reciprocal obligations and human feelings called *giri-ninjo* (Smith, 1983: 45).

Whereas some may think that such unvarnished normative explanations are no longer held by reputable social scientists, a recent review of four models of Japanese society concludes that:

> . . . of the four models, the consensus model, also known by such aliases as 'harmony model' (Krauss, Rohlen and Steinhoff, 1984) and 'group model' (Befu 1980a, 1980b; Mouer and Sugimoto, 1986: 54–63) is by far the best-known and the most popular . . . One may regard the group model as a 'cultural' model in the sense that the model is predicated upon the exercise and observance of cultural values and norms and that it is best described with the aid of culturally specific or 'emic' concepts . . . Why this model is so popular and no other model is anywhere nearly as widely accepted in Japan or abroad is a question deep in the sociology of knowledge. This model is at best a highly partial and inaccurate representation of the reality . . . Yet the model's popularity has not dwindled one iota. Instead it is continually invoked in one guise or another to 'explain' Japanese behaviour (Befu, 1990: 213–5).

The normative theory implies that societies where people share the values derived from a Confucian heritage should have higher levels of global order than those lacking such value consensus, *ceteris paribus*.[4]

We do not doubt that Japan has distinctive values. What is questionable is whether these distinctive values are causes of its relatively high level of order. Advancing beyond these traditional explanations of global order, this paper proposes a new *solidaristic* theory that (like the models of spontaneous local order) is built on rational choice first principles, but that (like all other theories of global order) takes the existence of the state as given.

A Solidaristic Theory of Global Order

In this theory, order is defined as the extent to which citizens comply with important norms – written laws and other mores that the state attempts to enforce. The theory explains how global order emerges from mechanisms producing group solidarity – that is, from spontaneous local order. Whereas the present theory takes its existence as given, the state is not principally responsible for the production of global order. Instead, the state designates those activities that threaten global order and reserves the right to sanction them.

The solidaristic theory views global order as an indirect and largely unintended by-product of the efforts that the members of face-to-face groups make to attain solidarity for their own reasons. In their attempts to increase solidarity to augment the supply of jointly-produced (hereafter, joint) goods, the members of these groups unintentionally contribute a most important collective good for the society – global order. In effect, the state profits from the social control activities of its constituent groups. As if in tacit recognition of this process, democratic states do very little to challenge cults and other deviant groups, so long as they do not directly threaten the state or engage in activities that impose costs on resourceful actors (Hechter et al., 1992).

Individuals always have a finite amount of personal resources such as money, energy, and time. Of course the resources invested in a given activity are unavailable for investment in alternative activities. Since the production of group solidarity requires the members to invest some of their private resources toward collective ends (Hechter, 1987), members of solidary groups have fewer discretionary resources than members of less solidary groups, *ceteris paribus*.

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4. The *ceteris paribus* qualification is important, for it reminds us that structural mechanisms are also responsible for producing global order (see the discussion of Table 1 below).
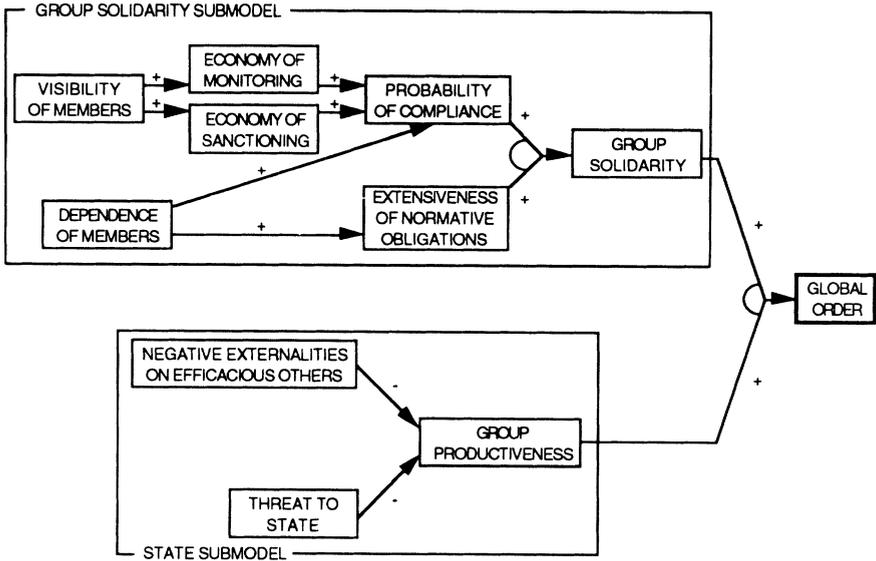
GROUP SOLIDARITY SUBMODEL

VISIBILITY OF MEMBERS

ECONOMY OF MONITORING

ECONOMY OF SANCTIONING

PROBABILITY OF COMPLIANCE

DEPENDENCE OF MEMBERS

EXTENSIVENESS OF NORMATIVE OBLIGATIONS

GROUP SOLIDARITY

GLOBAL ORDER

NEGATIVE EXTERNALITIES ON EFFICACIOUS OTHERS

GROUP PRODUCTIVENESS

THREAT TO STATE

STATE SUBMODEL

Figure 1. A Causal Model for the Solidaristic Theory of Global Order

The nature of collective obligations that social groups impose on their members varies widely. *Counterproductive* groups pursue activities that violate norms the state attempts to enforce, while *productive* groups demand that their members behave in ways that do not violate such norms.[5] High solidarity in counterproductive groups thus decreases global order, while in productive ones it increases global order. In the solidaristic theory, global order is a function of two factors: the average levels of solidarity among constituent groups, and the distribution of productive and counterproductive groups in the society (Figure 1).

Group solidarity.   The solidarity of any group – which varies with the average proportion of individual resources contributed to collective ends – is determined by members' dependence on groups for access to joint goods, and by their collective control capacity, which ensures compliance to the rules necessary for the production of these joint goods (Hechter, 1987). From this point of view, the amount of solidarity in any group rests, in part, on the exploitation of economies of control.

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5. These designations are ideal types; real social groups lie somewhere on a continuum between the exclusively counterproductive and exclusively productive. Even the most counterproductive groups in society probably have some internal norms that are consistent with the state's interest in law enforcement.

The first source of these control economies lies in *dependence*.[6] As dual bases of solidarity, dependence and control are complements. The greater the relative dependence of members, the lower the relative cost of control necessary to produce a given amount of solidarity. The ratio of dependence and control elements varies among different types of groups (Turner, 1991: 358-9). Although the joint goods produced by any given group may fall somewhere on a continuum, social groups can offer two polar kinds of goods to their members. *Compensatory* groups (like firms) tend to offer members fungible instrumental resources (like money, status, or power) as compensation for their compliance to rules that permit the production of joint goods for exchange. In contrast, *obligatory* groups tend to offer imma-nent, non-substitutable goods (like love or friendship) for the exclusive con-sumption of members. Since similar compensation is likely to be available from other groups in the environment, the members of compensatory groups often are not highly dependent.[7]

Hence, the solidarity of compensatory groups rests more heavily on control mechanisms than that of obligatory groups. As the members of obligatory groups are less likely to have a substitute for the given immanent good, they have an incentive to comply with production rules, because non-compliance can result in loss of access to the immanent good. Every group has one relatively costless sanction at its disposal – the threat of expulsion; hence, the greater the dependence of group members, the more weight this sanction carries (Hechter, 1987: 126). Sanctioning and monitoring are, to some extent, substitutes; if the value of the immanent good is relatively large, the threat of expulsion can partly compensate for inadequate monitoring. The more one has to lose by noncompliance, the less likely one is to risk it. By implication, the greater the ratio of obligatory to compensatory groups in a society, the greater the global order.

Another source of control economies lies in social structures that promote *visibility*. To the degree that members of a society are visible to one another

6. It is confusing that Doi's use of the word *amae* has been translated in English as *depen-dence*, because dependence also plays an important role in our solidaristic theory of global order. Whereas *amae* refers purely to internal states, dependence in our theory is partly deter-mined by available alternatives in the environment. The dependence in our theory would be translated into Japanese as *izon*.

7. This distinction between compensatory and obligatory groups echoes Weber's ([1922]1968: 956-1157) distinction between bureaucratic and traditional groups, on the one hand, and charismatic ones, on the other. Naturally, this distinction ceases to make sense when the compensatory group is a monopolist as is the case with *Nokyo*, Japan's agricultural cooperative association. One reviewer notes that *Nokyo* provides farmers with a wide range of market goods and services unavailable to members elsewhere. Hence the farmers have no other exchange partners for the (largely) fungible goods that *Nokyo* provides. The farmers' dependence on this compensatory group therefore is quite high.

in their performance of social roles, this increases the scope and decreases the cost of both monitoring and sanctioning activities. One key requirement for the emergence of cooperative social relations is the provision of common knowledge about participants' payoffs, strategy sets, and intentions in given social situations (Scharpf, 1990). The greater the common knowledge, the easier it is for participants to take each other into account in planning their own action and, hence, the less is third-party enforcement necessary for cooperative outcomes (Sell and Wilson, 1991). Intuitively, social structures are implicated in the production of common knowledge, but little is known about this relationship systematically (for some ideas on this subject see Hechter, 1987; Coleman, 1990). Visibility is one means of increasing the stock of common knowledge, but it is only fostered in specific kinds of social structures.[8]

The state. The second determinant of global order is the *productiveness* of constituent groups. The higher the average productiveness of these groups, the higher the global order. The productiveness of a group is an inverse function of the threat the group poses to the state's monopoly of violence, and of the negative externalities that group members impose on efficacious non-members – those with sufficient power to demand the state's protection and relief. Both factors consume the state's limited resources and sap its strength; efforts to control counterproductive groups at any given time reduce the state's subsequent ability to maintain order (during the 1960s, this notion was captured in the radical slogan, 'One, Two, Many Vietnams').[9]

Although two mechanisms combine to produce global order – one resting on group solidarity, the other on group productiveness – there are good theoretical reasons to expect significant cross-national variations in the solidarity of key social groups, but no such reasons lead us to expect comparable variations in group productiveness. Hence this application of the solidaristic theory explains Japan's relatively high level of global order exclusively in terms of the high solidarity of its constituent groups.

One last caveat. The solidaristic theory suggests that the contribution groups make to global order is largely a function of the extensiveness of their

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8. All that theories do is to isolate some (but not all) independent variables that have significant effects on the outcome of interest; hence, theories always make limited causal claims. We emphasize the role of dependence and visibility in the production of global order because of their theoretical importance – both factors are derived from rational choice first principles. Neither the present solidaristic theory of global order nor Hechter's (1987) theory of group solidarity claim that dependence and visibility are the *only* determinants of the respective outcomes.

9. See Hechter et al. (1992) for further elaboration of and empirical evidence for the state submodel of the solidaristic theory. See Kanazawa (1992) for the most complete statement of the theory, as well as for experimental designs to test it.

Table 1. Rates of Reported Crime per 100,000 Population in Selected Nations in 1979 and 1988

	Murder	Rape	Serious Assault	Theft of All Kinds	Robbery and Violent Theft
1979					
United States	10.0	35.0	279.0	5198.0	212.0
Great Britain	1.6	2.4	188.7	4022.2	25.4
France	3.6	3.2	61.0	2757.8	60.0
West Germany	4.3	10.7	92.1	3778.6	35.8
Japan	1.6	2.4	22.8	957.6	1.8
South Korea	1.1	6.5	268.1	225.4	4.2
China	7.5	3.0	24.5	138.9	4.4
1988					
United States	8.4	37.6	370.2	5248.0	220.9
Great Britain	2.0	5.7	305.4	5534.1	62.6
France	4.6	6.8	76.3	3569.1	90.4
West Germany	4.2	8.6	102.7	4382.8	47.3
Japan	1.2	1.4	17.5	1160.0	1.4
South Korea	1.3	8.2	19.6	229.3	8.8
China (1986)	7.5	3.0	24.5	138.9	4.4

Source: International Criminal Police Organization (1983 and 1990).

membership obligations. By this criterion, the societies under consideration contain a plethora of social groups that have varying importance for the production of global order. Groups that impose few obligations on their members (including most voluntary associations) cannot be expected to have much of an impact. Hence, the following analysis largely concentrates on groups that impose maximum obligations on members in all national societies – families, schools, and firms.

Japanese Social Order in Comparative Perspective

Since we define social order as the extent of citizens' compliance to norms that the state attempts to enforce, crime rates can serve as rough indicators of it. Table 1 shows the reported rates of selected felonies in the major western industrial societies (the United States, Great Britain, France, West Germany) and Japan in 1979 and 1988. Also included are the East Asian states of South Korea and the People's Republic of China. Japan has by far the lowest rates for *all* of these felonies among the advanced industrial societies, and this pattern was consistent over the nine-year period. Other statistics from the preceding decade reveal that the level of civil strife, as measured by various indicators, was relatively lower in Japan than the

comparison societies (Gurr, 1967, 1972a, b). All told, these statistics lend weight to the numerous impressionistic accounts of the orderliness of contemporary Japan.[10]

This table also casts some doubt on the normative explanation of Japanese order. Since industrialization and urbanization are known to increase crime rates (Shelley, 1981; Clinard and Meier, 1992: 61–84) throughout the world (Johnson, 1983; Buendia, 1990), then if Confucianism is responsible for global order *much less* crime would be expected in South Korea and China than in Japan, because Korea and China are considerably less industrial and urban. However, since crime rates in South Korea and China are at least comparable to and sometimes higher than those in Japan, it is likely that factors other than Confucian traditions are responsible for the high level of Japanese order.

Mechanisms of Dependence

Throughout their lives, the Japanese are more dependent on groups than their counterparts in comparably developed societies. This pattern of dependence begins early in the life-cycle and continues throughout it. The relatively high level of dependence characteristic of Japanese society is revealed in studies of Japanese schools and firms.

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10. 'Stifling though their society is, it surpasses western societies in many ways: in fostering a sense of duty to other members of the society, in creating wealth and educating its children well, in running the only big cities in the world where a woman can still feel safe walking alone at night' (*The Economist*, 1990: 10). However, we do not wish to create a mistaken impression that Japan is a completely orderly society devoid of social conflict. On the contrary, Japanese society exhibits the same kinds of social conflict that western nations do (Krauss et al., 1984), but many of these conflicts are hidden. Despite the myth of racial homogeneity, Japan has more than 600,000 Korean immigrants and their descendants (Lee, 1981: 133), whom the government does not allow to become citizens even after several generations. There are also at least 300,000 former outcasts (*Burakumin*) (Beauchamp, 1989: 239). Both of these hidden minority groups, as well as other smaller minorities, present a constant source of political and social conflict in Japan (Lee and De Vos, 1981; De Vos and Wagatsuma, 1966). Further, there are about 10,000 homeless day laborers in Tokyo in the ghetto neighborhood of Sanya, and an additional 40,000 in Osaka in the Kumagasaki area, the site of recent violent riots in the fall of 1990 (de Bary, 1988). Japan also has active factions of Marxist revolutionaries (Steinhoff, 1984) as well as ultraconservative rightist groups which have established mutual symbiotic relationships with the police (van Wolferen, 1989). More recently, Japan faces the problem of accepting and accommodating refugees from its southeastern neighbors, a problem western societies have dealt with for years (Saito, 1990; Mizuno, 1990). Japan therefore is not immune to the kinds of problems that other advanced states face; it does have its 'underside' (Hane, 1982). Our point here is simply that Japan's level of social conflict and problems is low *relative* to other societies with similar levels of economic development, and its *relative* level of global order consequently is higher.

Table 2. Proportion of the Population in School, by Age Group, in Japan and the United States, expressed in percentages

Age	Japan		United States
	School Only	School + Work	
18	66.3	69.4	62.3
19	42.6	69.4	62.3
20	33.2	37.6	34.3
21	25.2	28.9	30.6
22	17.5	20.1	23.9
23	8.0	9.4	18.3
24	3.5	4.3	15.6
25–29	0.8	1.0	10.3
30–34	0.1	0.2	7.1
35–39	0.05	0.06	4.8
40–44	0.02	0.03	3.7
45–54	0.02	0.02	2.2

Source: Brinton (1988: 314).

Dependence on Schools

A major characteristic of the Japanese educational system is its lack of alternatives, which is directly responsible for students' high dependence on schools throughout their educational career. In junior high schools, they are dependent on teachers who determine the high schools to which they may apply (Rohlen, 1983: 126). The high school one attends strongly influences one's ultimate career trajectory. Once in high school, students remain dependent because public academic high schools do not accept transfers; very few students leave their high schools (Kyoiku Joho Kenkyukai, 1988: 2519.52–53), a mere 0.4 percent for public academic high schools in 1980 (Rohlen, 1983: 32). Students must graduate from the schools they enter or undergo the entire examination process once again and enter as first-year candidates. Transfers are not permitted between colleges and universities, either.

Japan has a very condensed and rigid human capital development system (Brinton, 1988) in which people's educational investment is confined to a limited period early in their lives. More than one-quarter of the Japanese are in school at age 21, but the proportion precipitously drops to 1 percent or less in the 25–9 age group (see Table 2). (Corresponding figures for the US are from 30 to 10 percent, and the decrease is much more gradual.) It is almost impossible for the Japanese to return to or remain in school after age 25. The human capital they have acquired to that point must suffice for the rest of their lives.

Adult education, which is usually available in other societies, is conspicuously absent in Japan. South Korea, for instance, provides an established

system of nonformal education both at the primary and secondary school levels (Kim, 1985; Choo, 1990). France, though known for its centralized and standardized educational system, offers alternative adult education in the form of *formation continue* (Ardagh, 1987: 461; Hanley et al., 1979: 264). The availability of alternative education in these societies reduces the dependence of young students on schools. If students do not manage to obtain a diploma with their classmates, they can always go back to school and get it later. The Japanese do not have this option.

Even high school students in Japan who will not go on to higher education are dependent on schools for their jobs after graduation. Workers and jobs in Japan are matched, not in the labor market as in the western capitalist society, but by high schools' semiformal employment contracts (Rosenbaum and Kariya, 1989). Employers simply tell a high school how many new recruits they want, and the school 'nominates' its students to them. Employers normally hire on the basis of these nominations. This system of semiformal employment contract is so complete that 'students cannot apply to "contract" employers without a school's nomination' (Rosenbaum and Kariya, 1989: 1337). Whereas fewer than 10 percent of US high school students use their schools' job placement services to find jobs, the comparable figure is more than 75 percent in Japan (Rosenbaum and Kariya, 1989: 1341). Thus whether they plan to go on to higher education or get a job after graduation, Japanese high school students are dependent on their schools and teachers to a far greater extent than students elsewhere.

Dependence on Firms

Whereas firms normally are not considered to be obligatory groups, one of the distinctive achievements of Japanese-style management is its emphasis on face-to-face interaction in the context of formal organization (Hechter, 1987: ch. 7). Once in the labor market, the Japanese are dependent on their firms until their retirement and even after. Japanese workers are far less satisfied (Table 3) than American or British workers (Kono, 1984: 332; Lincoln and Kalleberg, 1990: 65). Yet despite this high level of dissatisfaction, Japanese workers are less likely than their American and British counterparts to leave their jobs (Table 4).[11] If Japanese workers are less

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11. Lifetime employment is a distinctive characteristic of the Japanese labor market (Abegglen, 1958), and it makes Japanese workers dependent on their companies until or even after retirement. Since lifetime employment in Japan is an informal social practice and not a formal contractual agreement (Nakane, 1970: 82; Cole, 1979: 61), however, it is very difficult to measure precisely what proportion of the Japanese workforce is covered by it. Because of this measurement difficulty, past observers used either the size of one's firm (only large firms can afford to offer lifetime employment to their employees) or the actual length of tenure (one

Table 3. Percentage Job Satisfaction in Japan, United States and United Kingdom compared

	Are you satisfied with your place of work or not?		
	Japan (%)	US (%)	UK (%)
Yes, satisfied			
18–24	8	32	32
over 35	35	49	42
More or less satisfied			
18–24	51	51	55
over 35	56	40	42
More or less dissatisfied			
18–24	28	10	10
over 35	21	7	7
No, dissatisfied			
18–24	11	6	4
over 35	5	4	3

Source: Kono (1984: 333).

has de facto lifetime employment if one stays with the same employer throughout one's career) to gauge the extent of lifetime employment in Japan. Estimates with these indirect measures vary from 28 percent (Galenson, 1976: 615) to 35 percent (Cole, 1979: 65) to roughly half (Dore, 1973: 305; but see also Cole, 1979: 60-1) to 56 percent (Glazer, 1976: 865) of all male employees in Japan. It is universally agreed that lifetime employment applies only to male workers in Japan. More important to both the life of the Japanese and our discussion here is the fact that lifetime employment, regardless of its actual extent, is 'the pattern of public employment and of employment in the large firms, and it is the ideal to which smaller firms aspire' (Glazer, 1976: 865; see also Office of the Prime Minister, 1973: 27; Clark, 1979: 175; Brinton, 1988: 317). These observers concur that lifetime employment is the norm whether or not the workers actually have the privilege. Further, because lifetime employment is seen as the norm, negative sanctions and discrimination befall those who deviate from it (Riccomini and Rosenzweig, 1985; see also Nakane, 1970: 17; Glazer, 1976: 868; Cole, 1979: 62). Therefore, 'whatever the market circumstances, there is little likelihood of the employee finding better employment if he once leaves his job' (Nakane, 1970: 19). Whether they can reasonably expect lifetime employment in the public sector or large firms, male workers in Japan are dependent on their companies because they are expected to stay with their initial employer and there are penalties for job changers. While casual observers have noted a recent increase in labor mobility and corresponding decline in the lifetime employment system (Bohnaker, 1990), statistical evidence shows that the trend is in the opposite direction. In their review of recent labor statistics, Dore et al. (1989: 55-6) note that 'far from disappearing, the "three sacred treasures" of the Japanese system – lifetime employment, seniority-constrained wage and promotion systems and a basically enterprise-based union system – retain their centrality. Moreover, practices conforming to the system appear to have been spreading from the big firms to lesser ones. . . . Whatever the mechanisms, one can cite a number of statistical indicators which show a steady entrenchment of the [lifetime employment] system and its spread down the size hierarchy.'

Table 4. The Probability of Leaving a Job, by Age and Tenure, in Japan, United States and United Kingdom

Age of Worker	Tenure (years)			
	0–1	0–5	5–10	10–15
Japan (1977) all persons				
25–29	.28	.08	.06	.04
30–39	.35	.06	.04	.06
40–49	.26	.05	–	–
United States (1981) all persons				
25–29	.54	.24	–	–
30–39	.52	.18	.09	–
40–49	.50	.15	.05	.07
50–59	.52	.12	.02	.05
United Kingdom (1979) all full-time workers				
25–29	.19	.10	–	–
30–39	.17	.10	.10	.11
40–49	.09	.07	.07	.09
50–59	.02	.01	.06	.08

Source: Aoki (1988: 63).

satisfied with their jobs, yet more likely to stay in them, then one must conclude that in the absence of any legal barriers to job mobility they are somehow more dependent on their jobs than workers elsewhere.

Changing jobs tends to be costly in Japan. Upward economic mobility subsequent to job changes is more common in the US than in Japan (Table 5). Further, among American job changers, those who leave small firms are more likely to get a job in a large firm than to move into another small firm, and those who leave large firms are more likely to get a job in another large firm than to move into a smaller firm (Cole, 1979: 85, Tables 15 and 16). The opposite is true of Japanese job changers; those who leave small firms are more likely to end up in another small firm than to move into a large firm, and those who leave larger firms are more likely, compared to their American counterparts, to get a job in smaller firms. Firm sizes are of particular significance in Japan because they are more important for the career prospects of Japanese workers than the core/periphery distinction of their firm (Brinton, 1989).

This high extent of worker dependence on jobs is unique to Japan. Japan's domination and colonization of Korea from 1894 to 1945 gave the Korean economy many similarities with the Japanese. Korean managers did not, however, adopt Japan's guaranteed lifetime employment system because the practice did not develop in Japan until after 1945 (Bae and Form, 1986: 122). Thus today there is more labor mobility in South Korea than in Japan

Table 5. The Economic Cost of Job Changes in the United States and Japan

Unites States (1987)[a]

	Number (in 1000s)	Pay in Current Job Compared to Previous Pay (%)		
		Higher	About the same	Lower
Total	9,957	52.5	21.2	26.2
Men	5,391	51.3	21.7	26.9
Women	4,566	54.0	20.6	25.4

Japan (1977)[b]

	Wages after the Job Change (%)		
	Up by 10% or more	Up or down within 10%	Down by 10% or more
Men	33.2	47.4	19.1
Women	27.0	55.3	17.4

[a] US Bureau of Labor Statistics (1987);
[b] Dore (1988: 83).

(Woronoff, 1983b: 234; Macdonald, 1988: 79; but see Bae and Form, 1986: 129, for counterevidence). At the same time, seniority as a basis for pay, which increases workers' dependence by making job changes costly, is less important in South Korea than it is in Japan (Bae and Form, 1986). The magnitude of the seniority effect is more than twice as large for the Japanese workers of both sexes as for the American workers (Kalleberg and Lincoln, 1988).

All told, various institutional arrangements in Japanese schools and firms make students and employees more dependent than elsewhere. This higher dependence increases the normative obligations that Japanese schools and firms can afford to impose. This suggests that global order in Japan is high in part because its citizens are more dependent on key social groups than people in other societies. However, the extensiveness of normative obligations alone does not produce group solidarity; what also matters is the probability that members will actually comply with the norms. In the next section, we argue that the relatively high visibility of the Japanese fosters normative compliance.

Mechanisms of Visibility

The lives of the Japanese are under almost constant supervision by other members of their groups, making individuals visible and therefore accountable for their behavior. In a society where people's life courses are highly

predictable (Brinton, 1988; Fallows, 1989), where everybody attends compulsory education through the ninth grade and over 90 percent of the population graduates from high school (Kyoiku Joho Kenkyukai, 1988; Ministry of Education, 1989), where all men work mostly for the same company for much of their lives, and where most women, although they may have part-time jobs, nevertheless stay home much of the time to take care of their children, these few groups account for a high proportion of people's waking hours. If we can show that visibility is higher in Japanese families, schools, and firms than in comparable groups in western societies, then we can make the case that visibility is higher in Japan as a whole.[12]

Visibility in Schools

The 'inescapable embrace' (van Wolferen, 1989) of constant supervision begins early in life. Control in Japanese high schools is effective because 'academic discipline is subordinate to supervisory responsibilities' (Rohlen, 1983: 152) and 'the daily life of the students within the school is organized in order to *maximize their visibility* and accountability' (Rohlen, 1983: 178; emphasis added). Students often are required to wear distinct school uniforms, unique school insignia, and, in some cases, name tags.[13] There are no study halls in Japanese schools, no free periods, no use of class time for independent projects or library work. During class periods students do not go to the bathroom or sign out of the school or engage in individual tasks or do administrative errands (Rohlen, 1983: 158). They are in class under teacher supervision for 34 hours a week. Because of their longer week and longer school year, by the time they graduate from high school, Japanese students will have been in school and under strict supervision for no less than

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12. One factor that compounds the effects of these group-level institutions to increase the visibility of the Japanese is the country's high population density, which makes it difficult for the Japanese to avoid each other's eyes most of the time.

13. How can the daily life of students be organized in order to provide maximum visibility? The students stay in the same homeroom class almost all day, and the teachers travel between classes. They remain in their assigned seats all day so that anyone missing from a class can easily be identified (Rohlen, 1983: 178-9). 'Homerooms of the same grade level are grouped together on the same floor. Not only is the location of any student at any time easily determined, but if there is a disturbance, the homeroom and grade of the perpetrators is quickly discernible. Schools are like egg cartons, with each compartment a classroom. Japanese high school students have a clearly designated compartment for the whole day, one that corresponds with social location in two basic reference groups: homeroom and grade. American high school homerooms, by contrast, are of little consequence. An American student's locker is typically his or her most permanent physical location, and student groups are continually forming and disbanding from one class period to the next, both within and outside classrooms. Whole grades are rarely together physically even at assemblies in American schools' (Rohlen, 1983: 150-1).

four more years than their American or British counterparts (Rohlen, 1983: 160; Lynn, 1988: 128).

Japanese teachers plan events such as school trips with the ease of supervision as their prime concern. Some urban schools even change their trip destination from traditional places like Tokyo or Kyoto to a remote ski resort because 'an isolated, snow-covered dormitory offers no opportunity for a surreptitious night on the town' (Rohlen, 1983: 165). Teachers also can veto the students' part-time and vacation jobs and particular employers. Locker and body searches are a common practice in some delinquency-prone schools, and nobody complains (Rohlen, 1983: 203–6). Japanese teenagers spend much of their free time either commuting in public transportation (an average of an hour and half per day) or at home with parents doing a large amount of homework or preparing for numerous tests and college entrance exams.[14] They spend less than half an hour in social relations with peers outside of school (Rohlen, 1983: 275).

This contrasts markedly with the behavior of American teenagers. A study of the teenagers in Indiana in 1977 revealed that 47 percent of the boys and 56 percent of the girls were out of the house between dinner and bedtime at least five nights a week during the school year (Bahr, 1980). Another study of a large sample of high school seniors in US found 53 percent of them out on three or more nights a week for fun and recreation (Bachman et al., 1980).[15] Rohlen (1983: 294–301) attributes the relatively low rates of juvenile delinquency in Japan to its high degree of parental and teacher supervision.

Visibility in Offices

When the Japanese leave school and enter the workforce, their bosses and coworkers replace their teachers in supervising them. Japanese firms consider privacy and independence of their employees as a barrier to discipline and production of a common company culture (van Wolferen, 1989: 159–63; Alletzhauser, 1990: ch. 19). Japanese office workers have very little privacy

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14. This portrait of the Japanese student as constantly cramming for tests and entrance exams is truer of middle-class and/or male students, for whom educational attainment is more important. However, it is still the case that middle-class male *American* students are not spending comparable amounts of time at home studying. Therefore, Japanese students are comparatively more visible than their American counterparts.

15. Without their own cars (the driving age in Japan is 18), with little money to spend (in 1977 the average total weekly expenditure by Japanese high school students was less than $5), and with few unsupervised places to go, even those who seek privacy and independence are not likely to find it (Rohlen, 1983: 276).

and independence.[16] In some cases, even senior executives share a large office with one another (Rohlen, 1989: 16); other types of workers tend to have little privacy.[17] In general, Japanese workers are as highly visible at work as they were at school.

A national survey conducted in the United States (Harris, 1978) indicates that about half (47 percent) of all US office workers occupy what are called 'conventional offices' with solid walls and doors and an additional 36 percent work in 'open plan' offices with their own work stations enclosed by partitions. Only 17 percent of US office workers work in 'clerical pool' offices with no partitions, which are ubiquitous in Japan (see also Brill, 1984: 97). Studies in organizational ecology indicate that those who work in conventional offices rate both their conversational and visual privacy higher than those in the open plan offices, who in turn rate their privacy higher than workers in the clerical pool offices (Harris, 1978; Marans and Spreckelmeyer, 1981, 1986). Japanese office workers (in their typical clerical pool offices) thus have much less privacy than the vast majority (83%) of US office workers who are in the conventional or open plan offices.[18]

Visibility in Company Housing

Higher visibility in Japan is not limited to schools and offices where people spend most of their weekdays. In some cases, it extends to their place of

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16. 'In broad open spaces, with few partitions to provide the slightest privacy or even the possibility of concentration, there are masses of desks arranged seemingly every which way. Each cluster may represent a group or section with the respective supervisor at a desk on the end or a slight distance away. The desks of the employees will be facing one another and right next to each other so that they can consult – and also chat, it being rather hard to tell which is occurring' (Woronoff, 1983a: 24–5).

17. Schoolteachers, for instance, share one large teachers' room, 'where forty or so desks are cramped together. These desks are home base for all but the physical education teachers. . . . Teachers do not have their own classrooms. . . . Rather, each has a desk cheek by jowl with the desks of other instructors serving the same grade. Privacy and independence at work are evidently of little concern. Teachers who wish to confer confidentially do so in the science labs or in neighborhood coffee shops' (Rohlen, 1983: 149).

18. Yet western workers in the open plan offices often complain about the lack of privacy. For instance, 73 percent of workers in open plan offices in Hedge's study (1986: 163) complained of 'distinct lack of privacy,' whereas only 47 percent of those in conventional offices did. Workers in open plan offices often 'resent being . . . always under someone's observation' (Tweedy, 1986: 126). There are so many complaints and problems associated with the open plan office that the Netherlands has completely abandoned it, and there was a similar move in West Germany (Hedge, 1986: 140). Many US corporations have had to go back to conventional offices in response to their employees' complaints (Business Week, 1978; Rout, 1980). Although western workers dislike the lack of privacy in the open plan office, Wineman (1986: 304) notes that the higher visibility of workers in such offices may promote conformity as well as improved productivity.

residence. Although only 5-7 percent of the population live in apartments and houses provided by their employer at any given time (Japan Statistics Bureau, 1989: 512-3), a much larger proportion experience living in company housing because many firms in Japan either require or strongly encourage their unmarried recruits to live in their dormitories and apartments for up to ten years or until they are married.[19] Company housing is ubiquitous in Japan.[20]

In the first detailed study of a Japanese company dormitory, Rohlen (1974) observed that the dorm director exercised strict control over his charges. Residents had to call the dorm director if they stayed out late or overnight. They needed the company's approval to invite women to their dorm for their semiannual parties; even then, company officials chaperoned the party (Rohlen, 1974: 217, 220-1). Dorm directors in Japan also freely enter the residents' rooms without permission and pressure them to inform on each other (Kamata, 1982; Riccomini and Rosenzweig, 1985: 67).[21]

When residents of company dormitories get married, typically they move out of the dorms and into one of the company houses or apartments for married workers. There the situation is a little different. Unlike their younger counterparts who live in the dorms, married men tend to stay away from their houses or apartments because they are so small and cramped. Thus 'the company apartment building is essentially the domain of wives and children'

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19. In the process of early modernization, Japanese companies established company housing with the explicit intent of controlling their workers (Shibusawa 1958: 319-29). In those days, company houses were more like labor camps than places of residence; workers were often not allowed to leave the walled premises even on their days off. 'All letters sent or received by the girls [in the dormitory] were opened in the office, and in some instances letters critical of the company were confiscated. . . . To guard against escape and possible immorality the dormitory doors were bolted at night, and in one instance thirty girls were burned to death in a fire at night because they could not get out of the dormitory' (Shibusawa, 1958: 325).

20. A study conducted by the government in 1979 shows that 77.4 percent of 2211 private enterprises surveyed have some kind of company housing. The figure is 95.7 percent among the large manufacturing companies employing more than 500 workers (Jinjiin Kanrikyoku, 1980: 13). Ballon (1969: 148) cites statistics from the Japanese Federation of Employers' Association that 'in manufacturing, about 40 percent of married employees live in company apartments or houses, and about 50 percent of the unmarried live in company dormitories'.

21. Kamata (1982: 130, 69) tells a similar story of a Toyota auto factory: 'I found a supervisor in my room when I came back from the bath. . . . Why should they have the right to enter my room without my permission? They always find some excuse, but the truth is that to them the dormitory seems like a warehouse where they keep their human merchandise, which they check from time to time. . . . Kudo [Kamata's coworker] told me that his team chief told him to stay away from a certain worker with whom he had started to make friends. Once the fellow brought his girlfriend to the dorm and was deprived of overtime work [and thus an important opportunity to earn more money] for breaking regulations. That's hard to understand. It's unreasonable, to say the least, that our privacy should be controlled by the management.' It should be noted that Rohlen's fieldwork dates from 1969, and Kamata's from 1972.

(Rohlen, 1974: 225) and they, instead of their husbands and fathers, now become subject to the company's inescapable embrace of supervision (Rohlen, 1974: 232–3; Imamura, 1987: 59–60).[22]

Visibility in Neighborhoods

Even those who do not live in company houses cannot avoid the inescapable embrace of supervision, because they are subject to the social control of the neighborhood. Japanese neighborhoods have formal and informal institutions that commit local residents to social networks and make their behavior highly visible. The backbone of the neighborhood is the *chokai* (neighborhood association), with its own internal organization, power hierarchy, and constitution.[23] Membership in such local neighborhood associations is 'both voluntary and universal. . . . No one is forced to join . . . no households refuse to belong' (Bestor, 1989: 165). Some of the activities taken up in other countries by the government (such as fire prevention and traffic safety) fall within the purview of 'voluntary' neighborhood associations.

The local communication system reflects the strong commitment on the part of the local residents. Whenever the neighborhood association needs to

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22. 'They see the fact that their husbands are all members of the same bank as primarily negative in its effects on their own social life. It causes them to be especially careful in approaching each other, they say. Age, rank, and office group affiliation, that ubiquitous trio of social distinctions with Uedagin [Rohlen's target of study], holds sway for better or for worse over company housing as it does over the entire spectrum of Uedagin life. . . . Life in company housing is never totally out of the shadow of the company's authority, its rank hierarchy, and its moral expectations' (Rohlen, 1974: 225, 227, 232–3).

23. Much of our discussion of Japanese neighborhoods in this section draws heavily on Bestor's (1989) comprehensive case study of a neighborhood in Tokyo. Case studies like this one provide a detailed and first-hand look at the object of investigation but often lack generalizability. Nevertheless, conclusions drawn from Bestor's study that are relevant to our discussion of high visibility in Japan are generalizable to some extent to other neighborhoods in Japan, past and present. First, we can assume that the kind of monitoring and informal control in the neighborhood that we discuss in this section is more characteristic of rural areas than of a metropolis. Since Bestor's fieldwork took place in downtown Tokyo, the largest city in Japan, we can safely surmise that the extent of neighborhood control Bestor discusses in his case study will be stronger in other, less urban parts of the country. Bestor's descriptions of *his* neighborhood in Tokyo probably conservatively portray the actual extent of social control in Japanese neighborhoods in general. Second, as we note below, Bestor compares his own fieldwork in 1979–1981 with Dore's in the early 1950s and concludes that the state of the neighborhood in Tokyo has hardly changed in the past 30 years (Bestor, 1989: 3). It therefore appears that Bestor's case study is somewhat generalizable both cross-sectionally to other neighborhoods in Japan and longitudinally to the neighborhoods in Tokyo in the past several decades. However, Miyamoto-cho (the site of Bestor's fieldwork) might be atypical in that the neighborhood is older (formed in the 1920's) and thus has somewhat tighter organization (Bestor, 1989: 46–81). We are grateful to an anonymous reviewer for bringing this to our attention.

communicate to all of its members, it simply circulates a message board (*kairanban*) among the member households. This system is so efficient that, in one neighborhood, the *chokai* can pass information to, or collect it from, 750 households in a couple of days (Bestor, 1989: 147). Such efficiency cannot be achieved if only one of the 750 households neglects to pass the message board on to its neighbors.

Crime prevention is one of the chief aims of neighborhood associations, which exercise strong control in order to discourage illegal activity.

> Most residents routinely keep an eye on youngsters and admonish misbehavior. And throughout the summer vacation members of the junior high school PTA patrol the neighborhood after dusk – carrying lanterns similar to those used by chokai officials during the winter fire watch – on the lookout for children who should be home; the PTA patrols pay particular attention to dark, secluded patches of shrubbery, back alleys, and the far corners of the shrine precincts, where adolescents might hope to hang out unnoticed. Neighborly social control exists in less dramatic forms as well, and is more frequently aimed at *inhibiting* people's actions than at squelching them after the fact. Residents depend in many ways on each other's goodwill and on maintaining a good reputation in the eyes of their neighbors. Often, for example, the opinions of neighbors are solicited about a candidate for employment by a prestigious company or for an arranged marriage. Thomas P. Rohlen, in his study of the white-collar world of a Japanese bank, describes how the bank seeks out an applicant's neighbors to ask about an array of personal matters: the nature of family relationship; the character and health of family members; the family's reputation, including its religious and political activities, attitudes, and affiliations; the prospective employee's relations with members of the opposite sex, and even the cleanliness and upkeep of the house itself as a clue to the candidate's upbringing (Rohlen, 1974: 70–73). Similar questions come up in the investigations that precede formal agreements over an arranged marriage: these inquiries are normally carried out by the go-between and occasionally private detectives hired for the purpose (Vogel, 1961). A person's immediate neighbors are of course ideally situated to provide information on these matters, and most households therefore have a strong interest both in remaining on good terms with neighbors and in *presenting the best possible image* of themselves. This goal necessarily carries with it fears about becoming too intimate and letting private secrets slip out (Bestor, 1989: 210–11; emphases added).

This is no description of some remote village or of a prewar urban neighborhood; Bestor's fieldwork took place between 1979 and 1981 in the middle of metropolitan Tokyo. In fact, neighborhoods in Tokyo have hardly changed since the early 1950s, when Ronald Dore did his fieldwork research for his classic *City Life in Japan* (1958).[24] Tight neighborhood organization and strict neighborhood social control are still very much part of daily life in urban Japan. In 1978 there were 4067 neighborhood associations just in the

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24. 'As I interviewed Miyamoto-cho's residents the whimsical thought occasionally struck me that they had read Dore's book just before speaking to me. I suspect Dore would not have predicted that the patterns of neighborhood social life he found would remain common throughout Tokyo 30 years later' (Bestor, 1989: 3).

Table 6. Relationship with Neighbors

| | How Closely do You Associate with Your Neighbors? | | | | |
Japanese Sample:[a]	Associate with them very closely (%)	Associate with them but not very closely (%)	Not associate with them closely (%)	Not associate with them at all (%)	Don't know (%)
Total (n = 7739)	49.0	32.4	14.4	3.8	0.4
Metropolitan Tokyo (n = 479)	44.1	30.1	17.1	8.1	0.6
Ten largest cities (n = 972)	36.7	35.5	21.0	6.5	0.3
Cities with more then 100,000 (n = 2777)	40.9	37.2	16.9	4.5	0.5
Cities with less than 100,000 (n = 1539)	53.4	30.7	12.9	2.7	0.3
Towns and villages (n = 1972)	64.2	26.1	8.3	1.1	0.3

North American Sample:[b]	Proportion of respondents for whom more than 30% of their associates are neighbors (%)
Regional core (n = 242)	12.8
Metropolitan (n = 272)	24.3
Town (n = 300)	25.7
Semi-rural (n = 236)	39.8

[a] Prime Minister's Office (1987b: 14);
[b] Fisher (1928: 376).

city of Tokyo (with a land area of 592 square kilometers, the same size as the city of Chicago) (Bestor, 1989: 291).

The effect of strong social control exercised by neighbors is compounded by the closeness of the Japanese to their neighbors. A survey of a large representative sample conducted by a government agency (Prime Minister's Office, 1997a) shows that half of the overall respondents 'very closely associate' with their neighbors (see Table 6). The proportion is higher in small towns and villages (64.2%) and lower in the ten largest cities (36.7%), but even in the latter more than one-third of the respondents have close relationships with their neighbors.

Roughly comparable data are available in Fischer's (1982) study of personal networks in northern California. The lower panel of Table 7 shows the proportion of respondents (N = 1050) for whom neighbors were more than 30 percent of the close associates named in their interviews (over twice the proportion of most respondents). One can argue that these people 'very closely associate' with their neighbors in that they are twice as likely to have neighbors in their close personal networks as others.

The pattern of negative correlation between urbanity and close association with neighbors holds in both countries, but the absolute level of neighborhood involvement is much higher in Japan. Even in semi-rural areas (small towns of under 10,000) in northern California, only 40 percent of the respondents closely associate with their neighbors, corresponding roughly to the proportion in large Japanese cities (with more than 100,000). In the regional core (the San Francisco–Oakland metropolitan area) the proportion drops to one-eighth of the respondents. Although the two surveys' questions are not directly comparable, it seems that the level of neighborhood association and involvement is about twice as high in Japan as it is in the United States. More involved with their neighbors yet subject to their strict social control, the Japanese are under their neighbors' and friends' watchful eyes to an extent that is unimaginable in other countries.

Visibility in the Family: Architecture

Certain common elements of Japanese architecture help promote visibility among family members. One major characteristic is that walls in Japanese houses are much thinner than in western houses (Asahi Shimbun, 1974; Ashihara, 1983: 4–5).[25] Whereas the thickness of walls does not affect visibility in the strict sense of the term, it does affect the *audibility* of Japanese houses and neighborhoods. And, like visibility, audibility constrains behavior; sometimes it even has a greater impact on behavior than visibility (Wichman, 1970).

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25. 'A study some years ago found that the dividing walls of duplexes or row houses in the suburbs of London are on average 70 centimeters thick. It observed that the standard exterior wall of homes in Germany is about 49 centimeters thick, while interior walls are approximately 24 centimeters, meaning that the walls of houses in these areas occupy about 20 percent of the entire floor area (Ashihara, 1983: 4-5; see also Asahi Shimbun, 1974).' In contrast, the post-and-beam construction that is common in Japanese architecture necessarily limits the thickness of walls to from 10 to 12 centimeters (Ashihara, 1983: 14). Engel (1964) offers some insight into why walls in the Japanese house are so thin. He argues that three separate forces conspired throughout the Japanese history to keep construction of houses simple and standardized in Japan. First, frequent transfer of the central military government from the 7th to 16th centuries required an enormous amount of construction to be completed within the shortest time. Second, during the Tokugawa period, the ruling *samurai* class was concerned with the increasing wealth and influence of the merchants and artisans, and prohibited the conspicuous display of their affluence by mandating that their residences be kept simple and frugal. Third, Japanese cities experienced periodic and widespread fires. Throughout history Japanese houses were kept simple and standardized in order to facilitate quick reconstruction of entire blocks or even sections of the city after these frequent (and largely unpreventable) fires, the latest of which occurred as a result of Allied air attacks carried out during World War II. It is entirely possible that the characteristically thin Japanese walls are just a result of the simple and frugal architecture necessitated by these historical factors.

Goffman (1963: 151) underscores the importance of audibility for privacy when he defines private places as 'soundproof regions where only members or invitees gather'. He notes that thick walls are one of the very few means to attain complete privacy and to close the region off physically from outside communication. In this regard, Japanese architecture affords very little privacy to its occupants. Whereas the Japanese build high fences and hedges around their houses in their effort to maintain some privacy from their neighbors, 'inside the traditional house itself, however, privacy from other members of the family is almost nonexistent' (Shioji, 1980: 305).

The traditional townscape in Japan also helps promote higher visibility of the people. Typical streets in Asian cities are less than 70 to 80 feet wide (Ashihara, 1970, 1983: 46–9), the distance at which a human face can be readily recognized. Thus people who live on one side of the streets in Japan can easily recognize the faces of those who live on the other side; recognition is more difficult in western townscapes with their wider streets.

Visibility in the Family: In-Laws

In-laws are agents of control over Japanese women in this traditionally male-dominated society. In the West, in-laws tend to be an annoyance to the husband and the wife equally due to relatively egalitarian marriage and the almost universal prevalence of neolocality. There is still a high prevalence of patrilocality in contemporary Japan (Prime Minister's Office, 1976), how-ever, and this greatly facilitates the supervision of Japanese women by their mothers-in-law. When a woman shares her residence with a man's mother, the older woman is able to – and often does – scrutinize her behavior (Lebra, 1984: 144).[26]

But 'even in neolocal marriages one is unlikely to be totally free from the role of daughter-in-law or sister-in-law' (Lebra, 1984: 141) because the man's

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26. 'Some in-laws were fastidious in demanding perfection in performance. A daughter-in-law in charge of cooking had to be alert to the mother-in-law's fussing over her seasoning. The method of cleaning the house or doing the laundry was also under the scrutiny of a compulsive in-law. More important than these instrumental skills was the expressive aspect of performance such as manners, speech style, and facial expression. . . . Even highly educated postwar-generation brides were not totally free from such demands of in-laws. Harumi, who as a university student had long lived freely away from home, suddenly faced [upon her marriage] a fastidious mother-in-law who carped about her manners as well as her cook-ing. . . . Underlying all these demands was the imperative of compliance with the senior supervisor. Though generally compliant, young women wished to enjoy role release for a few hours a day, once a week, or so; they wished to be alone. But privacy was most scarce (Lebra, 1984: 144).'

family is likely to live close at hand.[27] Failing this, the young women receive frequent phone calls from their mothers-in-law.[28]

The close supervision of women by their mothers-in-law is no longer found in Korea.[29] Traditional Korean society is also male-dominant, and Confucianism mandates a high value on filial piety. In Korea both factors combined in the past to produce a high incidence of patrilocal extended families as in Japan. However, these large extended families are disappearing rapidly in contemporary South Korea in both urban and rural areas (Hyde, 1988: 112; Macdonald, 1988: 77; Sorensen, 1988: 29). Confucianism and patriarchy thus do not explain the continued preference for extended families in Japan. And Japanese women are more visible to their in-laws than their Korean counterparts. One observer (Hyde, 1988: 110) argues that the recent sharp increase in crime among South Korean women may be attributable to their new-found low visibility in their families.

While recent studies show that the incidence of extended families in the West is much higher than previously believed (Beck and Beck, 1984, 1989), such arrangements in the West often are temporary. Only about 8 percent of both white and African-American couples in the United States live with their parents in any given year (Beck and Beck, 1984), as against 19 percent in Japan (Japan Statistics Bureau, 1989: 48). Further, the nature of in-law relationships is quite different in the West: the most common complaint

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27. Of those parents who maintained a separate residence from their children in the government survey mentioned above ($N = 1887$), 60 percent lived either on the same property or within an hour; only 39 percent of people over 60 surveyed lived more than an hour away from their nearest child (Prime Minister's Office, 1976: 43). Further, nearly half of the people who did not live with their children nevertheless saw them either every day (23%) or more than once a week (22%); an additional 26 percent saw them a couple of times a month (Prime Minister's Office, 1976: 44).

28. More than one-fifth (21.5%) of neolocal women under 40 surveyed in 1986 received a phone call from their mothers-in-law more than five times a month, but only 9 percent of them called their mothers-in-law this often (Yoneda, 1988: 338).

29. Underlying the control and supervisory activities of the older Japanese woman (mostly as a mother-in-law but sometimes as a neighbor) is the normative conception that she is the keeper of social order: 'A senior woman naturally identifies herself more with the existing social order in which her life has been invested than does a junior woman, and may try to exercise her influence to maintain that order. . . . A daughter-in-law may be kept in her place under the influence of an elderly neighbor woman, although no informant explicitly admitted to playing such a role herself. A seventy-three-year-old widow has a number of her peers gather in her house regularly to chat over "such things as how to handle a daughter-in-law" and to criticize one another for being "too lenient" or "too strict" ' (Lebra, 1984: 279–80). Many of these older women suffered under strict mothers-in-law themselves when they were young brides. Because of the Japanese woman's self-appointed role as the keeper of social order, however, 'the whole cycle seems destined to be repeated despite her acknowledged unhappiness as a daughter-in-law and wife' (Lebra, 1984: 261).

(unrelated to children) among American daughters-in-law is that their mothers-in-law do not take enough interest in them (Fischer, 1983: 189)!

Visibility Among Coworkers: The Multiplexity of Japanese Life

If in-laws provide strict supervision over Japanese women, coworkers and business associates do likewise for the men. Japanese men are almost constantly in each other's company. Their lives revolve around a handful of people and a few essential relationships which extend into almost every sphere of their lives. Japanese men often have multi-stranded social relations, rather than the single-stranded ones that are more common in the West (Gluckman, 1967). They have fewer opportunities to be alone or to spend time with a different set of friends and acquaintances.[30] Since their networks overlap more than those of westerners, their lives are correspondingly more exposed.

Men's near total affiliation with their company and fellow employees underlies this pattern of social relations, and it is similar for both blue-collar (Cole, 1971: 140) and white-collar (Rohlen, 1970: 188) workers, as well as for workers for both small companies (Kondo, 1990) and large ones. Japanese plant workers have more close friends among their fellow employees than their American counterparts (Lincoln and Kalleberg, 1985: 744, 1990: 88). A typical worker spends 60 or more hours a week with his office mates (Rohlen, 1974: 111).

Government survey data tend to support the impression garnered by ethnographic evidence (Prime Minister's Office, 1987b: 83). Thirty-seven percent of employees surveyed socialize mainly with their coworkers and work associates, as opposed to 32 percent who socialize mainly with other people. The pattern is more conspicuous among men; 43 percent of male workers socialize mostly with work-related people while only 26 percent do so with non-work-related ones, despite the fact that more than 40 percent of those surveyed would prefer to socialize with people outside their work circles. Only half the men who socialize mainly with coworkers actually want to do so (Atsumi, 1979).

In one American study (Fischer, 1982), only 19 percent of respondents working full or part-time have networks where more than 40 percent of

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30. One mechanism that quite incidentally promotes monitoring among Japanese co-workers (and students as well) is their heavy reliance on public transportation. Japanese people use public transportation more often than people in the West, who typically own more private cars than the Japanese (European Community, 1988). People who share a means of public transportation are highly visible to each other. Not only is their behavior visible to fellow passengers, but their conversation is also audible in most cases. Drivers of private cars and their passengers are not subject to such monitoring.

Table 7. Outside Socializing among Japanese and US Workers

	Japan		US	
	Mean	(SD)	Mean	(SD)
How often do you get together with your coworkers outside of work?	2.14	(0.964)	0.801	(1.09)
How often do you get together with your supervisor outside of work?	1.37	(1.10)	0.204	(0.547)
How often do you get together outside of work with managers other than your supervisor?	1.21	(1.10)	0.225	(0.593)

Note: Scale for all items: 0 = seldom or never; 3 = once a week or more.
All the differences between Japan and the US are statistically significant at $p < .001$.
Source: Lincoln and Kalleberg (1990: 88).

non-kin associates are coworkers. Yet fully 70 percent of Japanese respondents associate with their coworkers either 'very often' or 'often' (Prime Minister's Office, 1989: 9). More directly comparable data reveal that the personal networks of Japanese workers (unlike those of American workers) extend beyond their coworkers and include their bosses (Lincoln and Kalleberg, 1990; see Table 7).

Japanese men's lives tend to be more visible because their personal networks have more closure than those of westerners. Network closure occurs when two or more people one knows know each other (Coleman, 1988: S105–08, 1990: 318–20). One of its effects is to reduce sanctioning costs to participants; another is to promote focused interaction (Goffman, 1963: 24) – 'the kind of interaction that occurs when persons gather close together and openly cooperate to sustain a single focus of attention, typically by taking turns at talking'. Focused interaction is more effective as a means of control than unfocused interaction, which occurs when one gleans information about other people present by glancing at them as they pass in and out of view. People engage in internal attribution all the time; when we observe someone who engages in improper behavior, we infer something (usually negative) about the person above and beyond what the behavior tells us objectively. But only in focused interaction where the participants know each other can such an interpretation carry weight. Reputation cannot arise in an open structure that does not allow closure (Coleman, 1988: S107).

There is a saying in Japan (*Tabi no haji wa kakisute*) that is variously translated as 'One can feel free to do all sorts of shameful things while on a trip', 'A person away from home need feel no shame', 'Once over the borders, one may do anything', or 'Leave one's sense of shame at home'. This

saying reveals that travelling is one of the few occasions that allow the Japanese to leave their dense daily social networks and become anonymous and relatively unaccountable for their behavior. Whereas unfocused interaction persists even among complete strangers on a trip to a strange place, there is no focused interaction that makes people personally accountable for their behavior.

Disentangling the Effects of Context: Japanese Transplants in the United States

To this point we have shown that Japan has relatively high levels of global order (indicated by crime rates) compared to other advanced industrial societies, South Korea and China; and – consistent with our theoretical expectations – that Japan alone has various mechanisms that promote high dependence and visibility in key social groups. Our general theoretical contention is that higher dependence and visibility within groups promotes global order in any society. However, a critic might argue that these institutional mechanisms function to produce order only in the cultural context of Japan. Perhaps such high levels of dependence and visibility lead to normative compliance only when people already have internalized collectivistic values (see, for example, Lincoln et al., 1981). Perhaps the institutional mechanisms discussed above are merely the *consequences* rather than the *causes* of Japanese order.

Clearly some kind of societal experiment would be necessary to adjudicate between this more sophisticated normative explanation and our own. In such an experiment, the crucial institutional mechanisms would have to be lifted from the original context and imposed on members of a society that is culturally distinct from Japan. Carrying out an experiment of this magnitude would be completely impractical. Fortunately, however, an almost ideal experiment of this type has been taking place in the United States for the past decade. It involves Japanese transplants – Japanese manufacturing corporations that have opened branch operations in the United States.

Much has been written about these Japanese transplants, mostly in the auto industry (Junkerman, 1987; Cole and Deskins, 1988; Johnson, 1988; Mair et al., 1988; Nathans, 1988; Fucini and Fucini, 1990; Florida and Kenney, 1991). Altogether, these accounts from a variety of sources present a picture that is largely consistent with our contention that dependence and visibility enhance normative compliance even in the relatively individualistic American cultural context. The transplants employing American workers under Japanese management indeed are more successful than their counterparts under American management, both in terms of quantity of production

Table 8. Productivity of Japanese Transplants in the US

	Cars Produced per Employee per Year
Honda (Marysville, OH)	100
Toyota (Freemont, CA)	100
Nissan (Smyrna, TN)	88
Ford (Wayne, MI)	80
Ford (Atlanta, GA)	76
General Motors (Linden, NJ)	61
Chrysler (Sterling Heights, MI)	58
General Motors (Lansing, MI)	53
General Motors (Doraville, GA)	46

Source: Ealey and McElroy (1987)

Table 9. Quality Performance by Location of Parent Firm and Plant[a]

Parent/Plant	Quality and Assembly Defects per 100 Vehicles			
	Best	Weighted Average	Worst	N
Japanese/Japan	36	60	98	20
Japanese/North America	42	65	101	4
US/North America	52	82	152	40

[a] Includes only those defects that assembly plants can affect and thus excludes such areas as engine and transmission performance and reliability.
   Source: Cole (1990: 74).

(Table 8) and quality (Table 9).[31] When one conceives of firms as groups with the goal of producing goods efficiently, then the productivity of these groups, at least in part, is an indicator of rates of compliance to production rules.[32] Productivity then is an indicator of solidarity at the plant level.

How do the Japanese transplants achieve higher productivity? Aspects of Japanese management – including its production rules – promote dependence and visibility within the factories.

Dependence.   In the United States, where few employers are committed to the notion of lifetime employment and there is little stigma attached to job changes, other mechanisms are necessary to insure that workers are dependent on their jobs. Japanese transplants in the US did this by taking

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31. Whereas the transplants are somewhat less successful than their parent firms in Japan, this may be due to the fact that American workers are subject to less dependence and visibility than their Japanese counterparts.

32. The productivity of these groups is to be sharply distinguished from their normative *productiveness* as discussed earlier in this paper.

advantage of a relatively high rate of unemployment in the American labor force. Japanese automakers began production in the United States precisely at the time when many manufacturing jobs in the Northeast and the Midwest were either eliminated due to foreign competition or moved to the Sun Belt. Japanese transplants thus offered employment to those who had few alternatives.[33] Managers of the transplants use the workers' dependence to control their behavior (Junkerman, 1987: 18), sometimes by resorting to a strategy of divide and conquer (Fucini and Fucini, 1990: 158).

The American workers had no choice but to stay and keep up with the rapid pace of production in these transplants (Fucini and Fucini, 1990: 148).[34] Like many workers in Japan, they are dissatisfied with their jobs but choose to be loyal to their company because their exit costs are high.[35] Since the labor supply in services was not nearly so ample as in manufacturing, the managers of Japanese transplants in the tertiary sector (such as auto dealers, banks and hotels) decided not to export their management practices to the United States (Aaker, 1990).

Visibility. Several characteristics of Japanese work organization produce high visibility and efficient monitoring in the transplants. First, the Japanese team system encourages workers to monitor each other. Because the work team, not the individual worker, is responsible for the task, workers have incentives to monitor and control other members of their team. 'The result of Mazda's self-regulating team system is a plant where everyone minds everyone else's business' (Fucini and Fucini, 1990: 137).[36] This is

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33. 'As much as they disapproved of the way things were done at the [Mazda] plant [in Flat Rock, Michigan], few of the dissidents had thought of working elsewhere (although some had begun to look for nonfactory jobs.) The reason they wanted to stay at Mazda was financial. No job within their reach could come close to matching the $35,000 to $45,000 a year they earned at Flat Rock. According to UAW statistics, the majority of displaced auto-workers take new jobs that pay at least 16 percent less than auto factory work, and nearly one-third of them end up earning more than 25 percent less at their new positions' (Fucini and Fucini, 1990: 195).

34. Workers in Japanese auto factories are actively engaged in their production 57 seconds out of every minute (for nine to ten hours a day, six to seven days a week), whereas the average pace at the Big Three factories is 45 seconds per minute (Fucini and Fucini, 1990: 148).

35. The managers of the transplants use the workers' dependence on their jobs effectively to control their behavior. At the Nissan Smyrna plant, 'those who failed to show the proper *esprit de corps* are routinely told, "If you don't like it, here's the door. There are 80,000 people out there who want your job" ' (Junkerman, 1987: 18). In fact, this was an understatement: 130,000 people applied for the initial 2000 positions at this plant.

36. 'By having workers fill in for absent teammates, Mazda created a self-regulating attendance system in Flat Rock, which relies on peer pressure to discourage tardiness and absenteeism. At a traditional Big Three plant, with its pool of reserve workers to cover for absences, the worker who shows up late or skips work altogether to go hunting does not incur the wrath of his fellow workers – for, although he has broken the rules, he alone must pay for

in marked contrast to the typically low supervision in American factories.[37]

Second, visibility is increased by giving great discretionary powers to unit leaders. At the Mazda plant in Flat Rock, Michigan, unit leaders determine which workers get assigned to which jobs, how often they are rotated (thus reducing the chance of occupational injuries from repetitive motions), whether to permit workers to go to the bathroom between breaks, and even whether to accept doctor's notes as excuses for absences. Because the unit leaders have these powers, workers try to please them; some are willing to spy on their comrades and report their misbehavior to the unit leaders (Junkerman, 1987: 20; Fucini and Fucini, 1990: 141).

Third, American workers in Japanese transplants tend to spend more time with each other than their counterparts in American auto factories, just as workers in Japan do. Participation in the Quality Circle and team meetings (either daily or weekly) requires longer workdays because it 'occurs immediately before or after shift work' (Florida and Kenney, 1991: 387). There are also mechanisms to increase informal contact between managers and workers at the transplants. Like their counterparts in Japan, transplants in the US have only one cafeteria for both workers and managers (Fucini and Fucini, 1990; Florida and Kenney, 1991). The Mazda Flat Rock plant has exercise facilities on site for the benefit of both managers and workers (the first of its kind for workers in the US). And 'after work, managers would take workers to Fiorelli's, a local pizza parlor, for pizza and beer and some

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his transgression. To his fellow workers he is the other driver, pulled off to the side of the road for speeding. His problems are not theirs. This is not the case at Mazda. The speeding driver is not ticketed on the side of the road, but in the middle, forcing all traffic to come to a halt. The transgression of one team member creates problems for all team members. When one worker is absent, his teammates will have to work that much harder to pick up the slack. Mazda's team system also encourages one another to maintain a rapid work pace. A worker's teammates must pay the consequences if he is too slow or mistake prone, since this will disrupt the flow of work through the team's station. This, in turn, will make it difficult for the team to complete its collective job assignment on time and will increase the likelihood that everyone will have to put in overtime to meet their production quotas. Because of Mazda's carefully syn-chronized JIT [Just In Time] production schedule, the team's problems will quickly have a rip-ple effect on the next team down the line, preventing it from completing its work on time. The members of this team will then complain to their unit leader, who will then pressure the slow worker's entire team to move faster' (Fucini and Fucini 1990: 136–7).

37. This heightened supervision in Japanese factories shows a marked contrast to the state of affairs in typical American factories. 'Supervision at the large and cavernous casting center [Michigan Casting Center, a Ford subsidiary plant which used to stand where the Mazda factory now stands] was so loose that workers were often able to leave the plant in the middle of their shifts and return later to "punch out" at the end of the day. Most of the truant workers would visit taverns near the plant' (Fucini and Fucini, 1990: 60).' The Flat Rock local police even suspect that two of MCC workers robbed a bank across the street from the plant during their shift. Before Toyota took over management of NUMMI from GM, the Fremont plant 'was characterized by very severe drug and alcohol abuse problems' (Kenney and Florida, 1988: 143).

informal shop talk' (Fucini and Fucini, 1990: 42) just as Japanese managers commonly do in Japan. Finally, architectural features of Japanese trans-plants also facilitate higher visibility and worker-manager contact.[38]

All told, Japanese transplants have higher productivity than comparable American firms (measured by both quantity and quality of automobiles pro-duced), and their workers are subject to high dependence and visibility. While this should contribute to somewhat higher levels of order in commu-nities where the transplants are located, we do not expect these communities to have significantly greater order than similar American cities because these mechanisms affect only a small proportion of the community population. However, these conclusions are consistent with our thesis that dependence and visibility mechanisms produce normative compliance independent of the cultural context, and inconsistent with the claim that these effects are condi-tional on a cultural context emphasising collectivist values.

Conclusion

It is often noted that Japan has a higher level of order than western indus-trial societies. Despite its rapid industrialization and economic development, Japan seems to have maintained a level of global order characteristic of pre-industrial, *gemeinschaft*-like societies. The traditional explanation ascribes the orderliness of Japan to distinctive values, such as Confucianism and a collectivist orientation. The simple version of this normative explanation fails because it does not account for the relatively low level of global order in South Korea and China, which share many of Japan's Confucian and collec-tivistic values; the sophisticated version fails because it does not account for the higher productivity of Japanese transplant firms in the United States.

In contrast, we argue that global order rests in part on the solidarity of social groups, and that it is produced by dependence and visibility mech-anisms. We have shown that the members of these groups in Japan indeed

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38. 'Managers typically do not have walled-in offices but sit at desks on a large open floor adjacent to the production facility. All transplants we visited had single cafeterias. At Nippondenso [a Toyota supplier firm], all executives including the President work at desks on the floor' (Florida and Kenney, 1991: 386). 'The emphasis that Mazda placed on openness and communication would be reflected in the design of the Flat Rock plant itself. The four major shops at Flat Rock (stamping, body, paint, and trim and final assembly) would be located around a central administration area and computer control room. This "four corner zone" layout, borrowed from Hofu [a Mazda plant in Japan], placed managers quite literally in the "middle of the action," increasing their contact with the shop floor and making them more accessible to workers. At American plants, by contrast, administrative offices were located in front of the manufacturing area, separated from the noise and heat of the factory floor by a long and not-too-frequently traversed corridor' (Fucini and Fucini, 1990: 42–3).

have comparatively high levels of dependence and visibility. As a result, these groups tend to have greater solidarity than their western counterparts. The evidence suggests that global order in national societies tends to covary with the solidarity of constituent groups. Although this evidence is far from conclusive, what it lacks in depth is at least partially compensated for in breadth.

What is distinctive about Japan is not its internalized values, but the various institutional arrangements that foster dependence and visibility in its constituent groups. Because the Japanese are highly dependent on them, these groups are able to impose substantial normative obligations on their members. In turn, members comply with these extensive obligations because their behavior is highly visible. By making monitoring and sanctioning more economical, Japanese groups can exercise relatively effective social control. When these groups control a larger portion of members' behavioral repertoires, the result is the highly orderly society exemplified in contemporary Japan.[39]

It would be a mistake, however, to conclude that Japanese social groups are merely constraining; on the contrary, they often are simultaneously empowering. As Yasujiro Ozu's perceptive film *Equinox Flower* (1958) – which focuses on the adaptation of a few fathers to their daughters' wishes for romantic as against arranged marriages – makes plain, the tight web of social relations in Japan not only promotes compliance with existing norms, but it also offers considerable social support to people who must adapt to new ones. Similarly, one possible consequence of Japanese workers' high

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39. Whereas the emphasis in this paper has been on the attainment of global order via enforcement mechanisms that are external to individuals, it is entirely possible that in the context of its homogeneous system of prestige, and high levels of dependence and visibility, Japanese society also provides conditions that can yield normative compliance in the *absence* of much external enforcement. A paradigmatic example is offered by the rigorous compliance of the French nobility to the norms of etiquette at the court of Versailles (Elias, 1983). According to Elias, the nobles at Versailles were prestige maximizers who were both extremely dependent on the King – for it was he who dispensed all prestige in that society – and extremely visible to one another, for they all lived at close quarters in the very same building. These conditions had three quite interesting effects on members of the court – effects that are also found to a large extent in Japanese society. They promoted an intense interest in the art of observing people; they led to a heightened sense of strategic action; and they provided an incentive for people to sanction others, because doing so was their only means of protecting their own (always precarious) position in the court hierarchy. 'Once the hierarchy of special rights within the etiquette was established, it was maintained solely between the people enmeshed in it, each being understandably anxious to preserve any privilege, however trivial, and the power it conferred' (Elias, 1983: 85-6). A reviewer notes that a similar phenomenon also took place in the Tokugawa shogunal court, where etiquette was so crucial that withholding proper instructions was a powerful weapon. Given the vast differences in scale between these two court societies and contemporary Japan (at its peak, Versailles numbered 10,000 residents, although a large proportion must have been servants), however, it is likely that external enforcement mechanisms play a correspondingly greater role in Tokyo than they did at Versailles or Edo.

dependence on firms is that they have more voice than workers elsewhere because their exit option is effectively unavailable.[40]

Although we have illustrated our argument by considering contemporary Japanese society, the paper's theoretical thrust remains a general one.

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