Max Weber in Japan

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In order to properly welcome Professor Scaff in Japan, the author of *Max Weber in America* [2011], it would be necessary to speak something about “Max Weber in Japan” as comment on his excellent presentation. Although this task, too, was already done by another excellent book of the German historian, Professor Wolfgang Schwentker, *Max Weber in Japan* [1998], I would like to briefly sketch Max Weber in Japan from my own perspective, adding some complementary information to Professor Schwentker’s book.

1. Max Weber and Social Policy in Japan

As Professor Schwentker pointed out, Max Weber was first accepted by economists rather than sociologists in Japan.⁽¹⁾

For many Japanese economists the German historical school (Friedrich List, etc.) was more reliable than the classical economics (Adam Smith, etc.), because they found themselves in the same situation of late (or delayed) industrialization as the German. Also, the ideas and theories of the new historical school in Germany, namely *Sozialpolitik* of Gustav Schmoller et al., was already introduced to Japan in the late 1890s.

ŌKOUCHI Kazuo (1905–1984), one of the key economists for the Japanese social policy, introduced Max Weber’s argument of the value neutrality in his *History of the German Thought of Social Policy* [Ōkouchi, 1936]. His (mis)understanding of Max Weber is worth to mention here. For Ōkouchi Schmoller’s way of social policy which brought the ethical principle for the just (re)distribution from outside into the capitalistic economy was not correct. He insisted that social policy should inevitably come from inside of the capitalism, because it always needs the labor force at disposal, which, however, cannot be adequately reproduced without a careful (non-laissez-faire) policy [Ōkouchi, 1940: 4]. The ultimate goal of social policy is, therefore, not the (re)distribution of goods, but the “the highest development of productive forces” or the establishment of the “economic system of the highest productivity” as Werner Sombart once said.⁽²⁾ If you expel any kind of ethics or moral from social policy, and analyze the mechanism of capitalism “objectively”, then you can see that the real name for “social policy” is “labor force policy” [Ōkouchi, 1951: 171]. This understanding of social policy and capitalism by Ōkouchi, which he thought was partly assisted by Max Weber’s methodology of social science, was also tightly connected with the Japanese *National Mobilization Law* (1938–1945) which promoted the idea of “the creation and cultivation of human resources (or elements) for production” as its prerequisite [Ōkouchi, 1944: 33]. This idea itself continued to work in the formation of Japanese social and welfare policy even after 1945.

In today’s presentation Professor Scaff mentioned “the acting human individual” which is to be activated in the legacy of Max Weber’s sociology. The question is, whether “the creation and cultivation of human resources for production” by social policy of this kind can activate the individual or not. If not, what kind of social policy should come?

2. Sociology in Japan until 1945: Formal, Cultural, and “Japanistic” Sociology

Sociology in Japan started with introducing Herbert Spencer, first by Ernest F. Fenollosa in 1878, and then by TOYAMA Masakazu (外山正一 1848–1900) since 1881. Later in the early 1900s, Auguste Comte was introduced by TAKEBE Tongo (建部遯吾 1871–1945) who combined Comte’s sociology with the Confucian philosophy.

In 1924 the Japanese Sociological Society (JSS), which is still in action today, was established, and the monthly publication of its *Journal of Sociology* (社会学雑誌) also started in the same year. Until September 1930, this journal held 77 issues in total, and from No.1 (May 1924) until No.60 (April 1929) each issue contained a frontispiece which was a picture of sociologist or sociological matter (see, Table). In these frontispieces we can see the intellectual interests of the Japanese sociologists at that time.⁽³⁾

Max Weber appeared in the frontispiece of No.16 (August 1925), which, however, never means that he was highlighted in this issue. The main attention of the journal went to Emil Lederer,⁽⁴⁾ whose German article “Zur Methodenstreit in der Soziologie” was published with its Japanese translation in No.15 & No.16. Max Weber was drawn here, only because in this article Lederer argued Weber’s “verstehende Soziologie”. It was not until No.69 (January 1930) that the article with the name “Max Weber” in its title appeared in this journal.⁽⁵⁾

The much more favored German sociologist than Max Weber in this journal was Georg Simmel. From No.1 (May 1924) until No.48 (April 1928), there are a total of 6 articles which

Table (Japanese) Journal of Sociology (社会学雑誌) No.1 (1924)–No.60 (1929)

No.	Y	M	Frontispiece	No.	Y	M	Frontispiece
1	1924	5	Auguste Comte FRA	33	1927	1	2nd Annual Meeting of JSS JPN (November 1926)
2		6	Herbert Spencer UK	34		2	Charles H. Cooley USA
3		7	Georg Simmel GER	35		3	Leopold von Wiese GER
4		8	Gabriel Tarde FRA	36		4	Edward A. Ross USA
5		9	Lester F. Ward USA	37		5	Albert Schäffle GER
6		10	Walter Bagehot UK	38		6	Werner Sombart GER
7		11	Franklin H. Giddings USA	39		7	Franz Jerusalem GER
8		12	Emile Durkheim FRA	40		8	James M. Baldwin USA
9	1925	1	Masakazu Toyama JPN	41		9	Wilhelm Dilthey GER
10		2	Hans Kelsen GER	42		10	Kurt Breysig GER
11		3	William G. Sumner USA	43		11	James G. Frazer UK
12		4	Max Adler AUT	44		12	Alfred F. Vierkant GER
13		5	Vilfredo Pareto ITA	45	1928	1	3rd Annual Meeting of JSS JPN (November 1927)
14		6	Nikolai K. Mikhailovsky RUS	46		2	3rd Annual Meeting of JSS JPN (November 1927) Study Reports
15		7	Emil Lederer GER	47		3	Ferdinand Tönnies GER
16		8	Max Weber GER	48		4	25th Anniversary of Faculty of JPN Sociology in University of Tokyo
17		9	Enrico Ferri ITA	49		5	Karl Bücher & Robert E. Park GER/USA
18		10	Nagao Ariga JPN	50		6	Thomas Masaryk CZE
19		11	Maksim M. Kovalevsky RUS	51		7	John (1st Barron) A. Lubbock UK
20		12	Othmar Spann AUT	52		8	Max Scheler GER
21	1926	1	1st Annual Meeting of Japan JPN Sociological Society (JSS)	53		9	Sociological Society (in 1899) JPN
22		2	Lewis H. Morgan USA	54		10	Richmond Mayo-Smith USA
23		3	Hiroyuki Katoh JPN	55		11	Célestin Bouglé FRA
24		4	Albion Small USA	56		12	John Stuart Mill UK
25		5	Alfred J. E. Fouillée FRA	57	1929	1	Ernest F. Fenollosa USA
26		6	Nobushige Hozumi JPN	58		2	Henry Suzzallo USA
27		7	René Worms FRA	59		3	Gustave Le Bon FRA
28		8	Chicago University Hall USA	60		4	Ernst Grosse GER
29		9	Ludwig Gumplowicz AUT				
30		10	Edward C. Hayes USA				
31		11	Gustav Ratzenhofer AUT				
32		12	Robert E. Park USA				

directly named “Simmel” in their titles, and also 4 reviews of the Japanese books of, or about Simmel. This was not the case with Max Weber until 1930.⁽⁶⁾

But the interest in Simmel was gradually surpassed by that in the “formal sociology” (of Leopold von Wiese et al.). In the late 1920s there emerged a boom of formal sociology among the Japanese sociologists.⁽⁷⁾ Quite a few of them were crazy about the formal sociology at that time, just as they are now about Niklas Luhmann’s system theory.

However, soon after this boom of formal sociology, there also arose a movement for the “cultural sociology” in Japan. Those who advocated the latter criticized the former as follows: What the formal sociology made up from the consideration of the social relations & interactions, was formal, abstract, therefore, universal. But it failed to grasp the historicity of the social phenomena, and also the cultural diversity in concrete.

And Max Weber’s sociology of religion was referred in the cultural sociology, while in the formal sociology only his *verstehende Soziologie* as method and his sociological concepts (*Grundbegriffe*) were mentioned very shortly [Imori, 1927: 30, 38]. In a book for cultural sociology, SEKI Eikichi (1900–1939) wrote about Weber’s sociology of religion as follows:

[Weber’s] sociology of religion planned a study of the world religions, especially of the Asian ones, which are different from the economical ethics of the Western capitalistic culture. The reason for this could be (...) that he was driven by the deterioration and deadlock of the spirit of the modern Western capitalism to study other cultures than the Western, even though he was not aware of it [Seki, 1929: 43].

SEKI not only pointed out the diversity of religions or cultures, but also implied the superiority of the Asian religions or cultures to the modern western capitalism.

Further on this line of cultural sociology, there emerged in the 1930s the third type of sociology, namely “Japanistic sociology” [Kawamura, 1975: 211–282] which was already suggested by Seki [1929: 3–4].⁽⁸⁾ In the article in 1924 that has been mentioned repeatedly as origin of the Japanistic sociology, WAKAMIYA Unosuke (1872–1938) said as follows:

In these 25 years (...) the Japanese sociologists have never thematized the Japanese society. (...) The Japanese people and the Western people have different passes for development. (...) The structure of the Western society is different from that of the Japanese society. (...) The cause of the social problems in the West is different from that in Japan. (...) Can these problems be solved automatically if we only review and discuss the Western sociologists’ theories? [Wakamiya, 1924]

A very good question which I think, however, was wrongly answered by the Japanistic sociology. It insisted on the different sociologies based on the different societies and cultures.

There are many things to say about the Japanistic sociology. But one thing should be mentioned here: The Japanistic sociology was tightly connected with the Japanese nationalistic movement in the 1930s and ’40s, and it could never prevent World War II which it rather justified.

The concept of “multiple modernities” (S. N. Eisenstadt) also belongs to the legacy of Max Weber’s sociological comparative study of the world religions. But the question is always, how the multiple modernities can avoid the “clash of civilizations” (S. P. Huntington).

3. The Necessary Ethos for the Modernity of Universalism

The ideology of “Japanism” was also combined with such a slogan as “overcoming modernity” in Japan [Kawakami, 1943] [Calichman, 2008]. However, after 1945, it newly became the task of the Japanese people (including sociologists, naturally) to reset and restart the modernization. As Professor Scaff pointed out, for many Japanese intellectuals Max Weber became a guide who could show the way out of “the magic garden” in which Japan still half remained because of its “partially completed rationalization”.

ÔTSUKA Hisao (1907–1996) of economic history was one of the typical and important Japanese intellectuals of this kind. The titles of some of his books like *Human Condition for Modernization* [1948], or *Human Beings in Social Science* [1977], already suggest his basic orientation. For Ôtsuka it is not machines, coal, oil, also not money, law codes, etc. but human beings that could modernize a society, using and making these materials adequately.

In today’s presentation Professor Scaff proposed four modes of analysis (or perspectives) that Max Weber had prepared for social science, namely (1) *structure*, (2) *culture*, (3) *institution*, and (4) *rational actor*. The most important for Ôtsuka was the *actor*, which, however, is not always rational. It is something that has to *become* rational, acquiring the necessary *ethos* (or *Lebensführung*) for modernization.⁽⁹⁾ For Ôtsuka it is quite possible that the structure, the culture, and the institution of a certain society can be estimated modern, though the actors in it are *not* (or only partially) modern.

Anyway, it is clear that the *further* modernization, or *re-modernization*, became the basic task for the Japanese. But what kind of modernization? Even if it is correct to say that the Japanese society was until 1945 only “partially” modernized, how can we make the modernization “full” or “entire”?

Robert N. Bellah argued in his *Tokugawa Religion* [1957] that there was a functional equivalent of the Protestant ethics in the Japanese religion of the Tokugawa period (1603–1867). Bellah saw one of the essences of this religion in the ideal set of *on* (blessings) and *hōon* (return to blessings) that was vertically placed between the socially upper and the under as well as between the parents and their children. Because the upperness and the underness were relative (e.g. the father in the family who blessed his children was blessed by his master, who himself was further blessed by his lord, etc.), all the members (except the absolute top like *Shōgun* or *Tennō*) have the obligation to make return to blessings. This obligation motivated the industriousness of the members. But “the blessings one receives are so much greater than his ability to return them that actually he can only return an infinitesimal amount. (...) He can never repay; he always stands in debt” [ibid: 73]. Therefore, the industriousness that the Tokugawa religion could motivate had no limits, just like that of the Calvinists who were taught that they could never know anything certain about their salvations.

MARUYAMA Masao (1914–1996), a historian of political thought, criticized this argument of Bellah in many points [Maruyama, 1958]. One point was that Bellah underestimated the negative consequences of the “particularism” in the Japanese religion. Applying the pattern variables of T. Parsons, Bellah said clearly that in Tokugawa Japan “particularism held primacy” [Bellah, 1957: 13]. But important for him was the understanding that this particularism prepared and promoted the modernization which we should say, however, was only partially completed. Maruyama stressed, on the contrary, the “pseudo-

universalism” or the “lowness of universalism” of the Japanese religion, or moreover of the Japanese modernization which Bellah thought was prepared and promoted by this religion.

One thing that was doubtlessly in Maruyama’s mind was the Japanism in the 1930s and ’40s. The ideas, thoughts, and value-orientations only valid to a particular nation do not belong to the universalism, even though they promoted the modernization *partially*. Maruyama and others thought that not the overcoming of the modernity per se, but the overcoming of the partial modernity based on particularism, by making it more universalistic, should become the central task of the Japanese after 1945.⁽¹⁰⁾

But how can we make the modernity really universalistic?

4. The Colonial Modernity and the Universal History

Max Weber began his *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* as follows:

The son of the modern European culture world will deal with the problems of *universal history* by questioning, inevitably and legitimately, to what combination of circumstances should be attributed the fact that on the ground of the Occident, *and only here*, appeared the cultural phenomena which, at least as we like to think, have developed to acquire the *universal* significance and validity (“Vorbemerkung”).

In short, the cultural phenomena that could be universal(istic) emerged only within the Occident.

Gurminder K. Bhambra, a British sociologist, would criticize this type of questioning from the postcolonial point of view. Weber’s questioning here is exactly what she calls “Eurocentrism” or “Occidentalism”, namely “the belief in the world historical significance of events *believed* to have developed *endogenously* within the cultural-geographical sphere of Europe” or of the Occident [Bhambra, 2007: 5]. The simple belief that the culture or civilization of Europe (or the Occident), is superior to the others, is still *not* Eurocentrism (nor Occidentalism). If one believes that this (maybe) superior culture or civilization generated itself only within Europe (or the Occident), separated from other spheres in the world, then emerges the Eurocentrism (or Occidentalism).

Opposing to these believes, Bhambra stresses repeatedly the *colonial* connectedness between Europe and the non European regions as well as between the Occident (West) and the Orient (East). For example, the economical glory of Great Britain was never separated from the impoverishment of India, etc. It could be said that the Occidentalism is a way of thinking that *erases the others in the self*, while the Orientalism criticized by E. W. Said erases the self in the others.⁽¹¹⁾ The modernity, or modernization, cannot but become universal(istic) because it has expanded the colonial connectedness all over the world. Bhambra proposes the concept of “connected histories” of S. Subrahmanyam [1997] to make the historiography of modernity really universal.

Also, the concept of “colonial modernity” proposed by T. E. Barlow [1997] for the complex histories of East Asia (especially China, Korea, and Japan) seems necessary to sufficiently analyze the universality of the modernity, or modernization. This concept illuminates the coexistence (or complicity) of modernization and colonialization. No matter how partial the modernization of Japan was, it was already tightly connected with the colonialization of Taiwan and Korea.

Anyway, in order to make the modernity really universalistic, we have to connect it with the colonized others. The oblivion of their experiences only confines the modernization, or modernity, to the particularism.

Note

- (1) The first work of Max Weber that was translated into Japanese was his *Die Grenznutzlehre und das »psychophysische Grundgesetz«* (1908), and this translation was done in 1925 by KITO H Nisaburo (鬼頭仁三郎) who later introduced also the economical theory of John M. Keynes in Japan.
- (2) W. Sombart, "Ideale der Sozialpolitik" in: *Archiv für soziale Gesetzgebung u. Statistik*. 10 (1897): 1-48, S.44. Its Japanese translation by TODA Takeo (戸田武雄) who had also translated Max Weber's well-known "objectivity" treatise (1904) in 1937, was published in 1939.
- (3) The biggest group of the sociologists (or the sociological matters) picked up here was American as well as German (15 for each), followed by Japanese (10), French (7), British (5), Austrian (4), Russian (2), Italian (2), and Czech (1).
- (4) From 1923 to 1925, E. Lederer held lectures of economics as guest professor at Tokyo Imperial University (now, University of Tokyo).
- (5) OKADA Yuzuru (岡田謙) "Inquiry of Max Weber's Interpretative Sociology" [in Japanese] in: *Journal of Sociology*, No.69, No.70, and No.71. In all 77 issues of this journal, this is the only article that named "(Max) Weber" in the title, and there is no book review concerning Max Weber.
- (6) See, note 5. And the (*Japanese*) *Journal of Sociology* was succeeded by *Quarterly of Sociology* (季刊社会学) which held a total of 4 issues from 1931 to 1932, and then by *Annual Report of Sociology* (年報社会学) (9 issues in total, from 1933 to 1943). In this *Annual Report* there is only one article that named "Max Weber" in its title, namely ANZAI Fumio (安西文夫)'s "Max Weber's Study of the Chinese Social History" (No.8, 1943). And in *Sociological Study* (社会学研究) (maybe 5 issues in total, 1944-47) which succeeded the *Annual Report*, there is also only one article, namely SHINMEI Masamichi (新明正道)'s "An Example of Historical Sociology: The Standpoint of Max Weber" (No.1, 1944).
- (7) IMORI Rikuhei (1903-1982), *Study of Formal Sociology* [Imori, 1927]. Also, SHINMEI Masamichi (1898-1984), *Theory of Formal Sociology* [Shinmei, 1928], which already contained the criticism of the formal sociology.
- (8) As an example of the Japanistic Sociology, KAWAI Hiromich, *Principles of the Japanese Sociology* [Kawai, 1943], could be mentioned.
- (9) We should remember here the idea of "the creation and cultivation of human resources (or elements) for production" proposed by K. Ōkouchi for social policy which I mentioned above. I leave the question open here, whether Ōkouchi and Ōtsuka shared the same idea or not.
- (10) Remember here, for example, the following sentences in the preamble of the Constitution of Japan (1946): "Government is a sacred trust of the people, the authority for which is derived from the people, the powers of which are exercised by the representatives of the people, and the benefits of which are enjoyed by the people. This is a *universal principle* of mankind upon which this Constitution is founded".
- (11) The Orientalists, who themselves are Occidental, construct the Orient in the name of the Orient, without permitting the Orientals to speak directly about themselves.

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