

NEO-WEBERIAN STATE: JAPANESE PERSPECTIVE



1

Hiroko SHIMADA Logie
Kyoto University, Japan

JAPAN: HISTORY



Typical WEBERAIN BUREAUCRACY

- Established in 1885 following Prussian Model
- Leader of Modernization
- Administrative Law

1945–

New Civil Service Law under the US Occupation
but **Practice Maintained**

1960s – 80s

High Expectation of Bureaucracy

“Arrogant, but Capable and Clean”

Pursuit of **SMALL** but **STRONG** Government
Economic Policy led by MITI, etc.

C. Johnson.1982 “*MITI and the Japanese Miracle*”

1990s–

Scandals and Failure of Policies

Calls for Reform

Led by Punitive Sentiments; Lacking Vision

2014

Centralized Personnel Control by Prime Minister

Removing Autonomy of each Ministry

INFLUENCE OF NPM ON REFORM

- **Measures:** Adopted since 2000s
 - Politically Appealing
 - as **New Measures for Further Downsizing**
- **Ideology:** Only Partial (regarded as “vulgar”)
 - Not Familiar with Managerialism / Contract
 - **High Expectation of the State**
 - 77% Respondents Agreed “The State takes responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for”. (2019 Survey)

RESULTS OF THE REFORM

TOO SMALL, LACKEY type of Bureaucracy

- Ignoring Accountability and Due Process
- Overwork and Exhaustion
- Decrease in Applicants
- Decrease in Creativity and Innovation

POINT OF CHANGE : COVID-19

- Political Control is NOT a PANACEA
- **Need VISION**

for the **STATE to be MORE EFFECTIVE**

NWS AS A NEW REFORM MODEL IN JAPAN?

○ IDEOLOGY: High Affinity

- Weberian Tradition
- Expectation of “H” as Maximizer of Public Good
- Agreed Values of Equity and Inclusion
- Past Success of Innovative Bureaucracy

 **Will Work as a Normative Model**

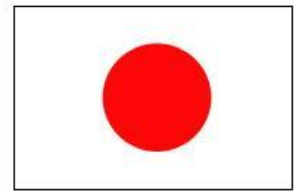
○ APPLICABILITY: ?

- Politics needs to Give an “*Impression of Progress*”
- Taboo of Cost Increase

 **Need Concrete Tools/Measures**

EXPECTED QUESTIONS IN PROMOTING NWS:

- What kind of **Tools can be offered to enhance** Equity, Inclusion, Appropriateness of Logic, etc.?
- How can the degree of **“Success” of NWS be Measured?**
(e.g. new index for policy evaluation)
- What is the **Best Balance among “Hierarchy”, “Market” and “Network”**, in the era when the Private Sector is nudged for **Corporate Social Responsibility?**



CONCLUSION

- **NWS** will work as a **Normative Model**, even outside of Europe
- **NPM** was **Adopted** while its **Ideology** was **NOT widely Accepted**, because it
 - helped **downsizing**
 - offered politics **fresh measures for “reform”**
 - satisfied people’s **punitive sentiments**
- **NWS** needs **Concrete Tools** to be adopted as a **Model for Reality**

Source: H. SHIMADA Logie. 2023. ‘Will the Neo-Weberian State be a Model for Re-forming the Japanese Civil Service?’ *Max Weber Studies*, vol. 23.1. 67–77.