
Corporate Crime through Citizens' Eyes: Stratification and Responsibility in the United States, Russia, and Japan

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A citizen's judgment of wrongdoing in an organizational setting may depend on *characteristics of the citizen, of the accused, or both*. In 1993, random sample surveys exploring judgment of corporate wrongdoing were carried out in Washington, DC ($N = 602$), Tokyo, Japan ($N = 600$), and Moscow, Russia ($N = 597$). Respondents heard hypothetical vignettes about wrongdoing in organizations and were asked to judge the actor's responsibility and related issues; they also provided demographic information and recounted their attitudes toward corporations. Education was more powerfully related than social class to responsibility judgments. In the United States, education's effects on responsibility were indirect, operating through attitudes toward obedience and toward corporate accountability. Russian and Japanese results were unmediated by attitudes. It appears that responsibility is primarily a function of sociolegal factors (such as aspects of the case) and secondarily a function of social characteristics and the sense of similarity or difference they engender. The article concludes by discussing general issues in accountability within corporate settings across cultures.

Social scientists have an important stake in understanding how citizens perceive corporate actors and their agents. Theoretically, if we do not understand how human responsibility changes in these settings, we run the risk of having a social psychology and a jurisprudence of persons who happen to be at home, on the road, or on vacation but are neither governing others nor being governed by them at work. This is obviously an unacceptably truncated view of human nature and its foibles. Practically, these complex organizations have a ubiquitous presence in modern life; corporations are dominant players in the legal arena,

An earlier version was presented at the Law and Society Association annual meeting, Toronto, 2 June 1995. Research was supported by NSF grants SES-9113967 and SES-9113914 (Law and Social Science Program). We could not have carried out the research without the advice and collaboration of our colleagues in Japan (Naotaka Katoh, Mikio Kawai, Haruo Nishimura, and Kazuhiko Tokoro) and Russia (Gennady Denisovsky, Polina Kozyreva, and Mikhail Matskovsky). We are also grateful to Ralph Kuhn and Toshiyuki Yuasa for assistance with the data management and analysis. Address all communications to V. Lee Hamilton, Sociology Department, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742-1315.

disproportionately affecting litigation and distorting the effectiveness of sanction (e.g., Coffee 1981; Stone 1975).

Public opinion can be highly instructive in this matter for at least three reasons. First, from a practical standpoint, ordinary citizens can and do play key roles in this system of decisionmaking. Second, jurists find that it is necessary to understand the ordinary citizen's viewpoint in order to make sense of the entire "iceberg" of dispute resolution, of which legal cases are but the tip. Finally, most social control is informal social control, conducted by the citizenry itself (Black 1976, 1993; Braithwaite 1989). Social control of the corporation is likely to be enhanced if we understand how ordinary citizens judge it.

This article's central focus is how citizens judge individual actors who participate in wrongdoing within a corporation's organizational hierarchy; we pay particular attention to the impact of individual differences among citizens and of cultural differences on judgments of the actor's responsibility. Predictions are derived both from the sociology of law and from the personality and social structure subfield of social psychology. Below we first set the stage by summarizing sociolegal knowledge about the impact of a corporate setting on an actor's responsibility. Second, we briefly define white-collar and corporate crime and locate wrongdoing in corporations within this definitional space. Third, we summarize sociological evidence about how individuals' places in the social stratification system can affect judgments.¹ Our introduction closes with an overview of cross-cultural differences among the United States, Japan, and Russia.

A. General Overview: Individuals in Organizations

Sociologists of law have considered the role of the individual actor in an organization from the standpoint of the organization itself. Fisse and Braithwaite (1993), who address the more macro-level question of corporate accountability, also review the literature from organization theory in a search for general principles of the accountability of actors within organizations. They note that sometimes scholars have considered corporations to be unitary rational actors within the law (enterprise accountability); sometimes as congeries of individuals, each of whom is responsible for actions taken (individual accountability); and sometimes as neither of these but as a structured array of opportunities and accountabilities that reflects in some way the organizational nature of the actions. Regarding the question of how the actor embedded within a corporate structure is judged when wrongdoing occurs, Fisse and Braithwaite (p. 122) conclude: "We find no sin-

¹ The general terms *social standing*, *social position*, or *stratification* refer to such characteristics as a person's educational attainment, social class, income, or prestige of occupation. This study concentrates on education and social class.

gle theory of how organisations make decisions to break the law, and how they hold actors accountable for them, of sufficient generality and explanatory power to be a practical guide to the design of a corporate criminal law appropriate to all types of organisations.” To date, then, there is no fully satisfactory account of the behavior of these organizational actors that would explain, *at the organizational level*, how or why they behave.

We therefore lean on social-psychological attribution theory for a perspective within which to consider responsibility for actions within organizations (Hamilton & Sanders 1992b; Schlenker et al. 1994; Shaver 1985). We assume that when ordinary citizens judge corporate misdeeds, they tend to see the corporation neither as a center of pure enterprise liability in Fisse and Braithwaite’s (1993) sense nor as a site where individual accountability reigns but something in between. That is, people still act within organizations, but they are seen to do so with lesser autonomy than in their private lives. And clearly, companies are responsible for what their agents do, but the extra burden of accountability placed on the corporation may vary according to such factors as the size and power of the company, the social status of the individual doing the judging, and the like (Hamilton & Sanders 1992b; Kelman & Hamilton 1989; see also J. S. Coleman 1990). Our hypotheses, developed below, will refer to these issues.

B. White-Collar and Corporate Crime: Useful Misnomers²

Edwin Sutherland in a sense created white-collar crime—by naming and defining it as a category—during a 1939 presidential address to the American Sociological Society; according to Sutherland, “White collar crime may be defined approximately as a crime committed by a person of respectability and high social status in the course of his occupation” (1983:9; see also Weisburd et al. 1991). Since Sutherland’s time the white-collar criminal has generally been defined in terms of the concepts of social status, respectability, and occupational opportunities. There have been many discussions, but relatively few modifications, of his definition over the years. For our purposes, the most important subcategories or subtypes to have been recognized are (1) crimes

² In general, our research may have implications for the legal and social-scientific literatures on corporate crime, white-collar crime, and whistleblowing. Space considerations here do not permit a full review of these sources. For discussions of factors leading to the occurrence of corporate crime and the difficulties in adjudicating corporate disputes or redressing corporate offenses, see Braithwaite 1984; Braithwaite & Fisse 1985; Ermann & Lundman 1982; Fisse 1983; Hawkins 1984; Huber 1988; Lederman 1985; Lempert & Sanders 1986; Moore 1987; Nader, Green, & Seligman 1976; Perrow 1984; Pitt & Groskaufmanis 1990; Stone 1975; Vaughan 1983. For a focus on white-collar offenders and on factors that are likely to deter them, see Clinard 1983; J. W. Coleman 1985; Fisse & Braithwaite 1983; Shapiro, 1990. For discussion of whistleblowing in organizations, see Graham 1986; Miceli & Near 1985; Near & Miceli 1987.

against organizations or society that occur because the person's *occupation* allowed their commission (e.g., bank embezzlement by tellers), versus (2) crimes against consumers or society that occur because a person did their job within their *organization* (e.g., "corporate crimes") (Clinard & Quinney 1973; Schragger & Short 1978). We are most interested in the latter category of white-collar crimes, those committed by organizational actors for the organization.

Within this category of acts, the notions of white-collar and corporate crime overlap. The major fuzziness in the notion of "corporate crime" is that it embeds a value judgment by social science rather than a sheer description of a phenomenon; the term is used to describe a variety of actions by and within corporations, most of which are treated legally as *civil* offenses (if they are sanctioned at all). "Corporate crime" is more a term of moral opprobrium than a statement of fact, but this does not make it a useless phrase. We have included it in our title precisely because it implies both that organizationally embedded rather than individually motivated wrongdoing is at issue and that a sanction attaches, or should attach, to the offenses. Specifically, our research program focuses on citizens' reactions to offenses that occur as part of carrying out one's job in the organizational context of corporate life. Because we focus particularly on the impact of the citizen's own social standing on how he or she judges others, we turn next to the question of how sociologists studying the law or the interplay of personality and social structure incorporate social stratification.

C. Effects of Social Position I: Objective Characteristics

1. *Defendant Characteristics*

Sociological scholars have long been interested in the role of personal characteristics in legal judgment. Characteristics of the *defendant* have received relatively more intensive attention, particularly with regard to such issues as the role of race in capital punishment (e.g., Baldus, Woodworth, & Pulaski 1992). Regarding the individual versus corporate identity of the defendant, "organized actors" (Black 1976) and "repeat players" (Galanter 1974) such as corporations appear better able to make use of the procedures of the legal system (or avoid its clutches altogether). At the same time, recent research suggests that citizens hold corporations to a more stringent standard of accountability than ordinary individuals (Hans & Ermann 1989; Hans & Lofquist 1992; Miller, Rossi, & Simpson 1991). The picture is, if anything, even less clear regarding the possible advantages versus disadvantages of high status for the individual defendant. Some social scientists have argued that higher standing leads to privileged treatment

(e.g., Clinard & Yeager 1980:286; Reiman 1979; Sutherland 1983:53-60), but the bulk of the empirical evidence is mixed, and there is some evidence of a post-Watergate tightening up in how such offenders are treated (Hagan & Palloni 1986). Indeed, one systematic analysis of actual sentences received by white-collar offenders in the post-Watergate era shows greater *harshness* in their conviction and sentencing, as compared with that of "street" criminals (Weisburd et al. 1991). It has been argued, however, that such results are a function of the context: the particular jurisdictions studied and their mix of cases (Benson & Walker 1988; Peterson & Hagan 1984). In sum, the overall picture regarding individual defendants is mixed.

One reason for such mixed findings may be the multiplicity of factors that come into play in determining responsibility and sanction. Weisburd et al. (1991) also explored how to model most accurately the determinants of punishment received by their white-collar offenders. One argument found in the legal literature (Judge Frankel's aptly named "chaos model") has it that sanction is idiosyncratic to the point that it appears randomly determined, insofar as the "noise" generated by individual judicial opinions is likely to swamp "signals" regarding common values and views. A second argument, more often heard from the social-scientific community, is that systematic sources of bias exist (such as the defendant's race or social class) which distort the passage of individuals through the system. This is the sort of argument about class privilege referred to above. A third argument is that patterns of legal decision and sentencing make sense in terms of what Weisburd et al. (1991) call a "sociolegal" model, whose main elements are relevant aspects of the law. The sociolegal model is described in terms of three broad principles: more serious offenses are more deserving of being punished, and of being punished severely (Seriousness); the more blameworthy the offender, the more deserving of punishment (Blameworthiness); and judges should consider the effects of punishment on both the offender and others (Consequences).

Weisburd et al. (1991) found that determinants of both imprisonment and length of sentence were consistent with the sociolegal model and inconsistent with the other two. Such factors as the statutory offense, or, within financial crimes, the dollar amount stolen (seriousness), or having played a major rather than a secondary role in the offense (blameworthiness) were highly significant predictors of the sanctioning of white-collar offenders. In contrast, the defendant's race and social class *per se* were not.

In addition to representing an empirical victory for a particular set of variables as against another set, these findings can be seen as a victory for a particular kind of model of legal decision-making. Decisions within a sociolegal model are based on the

considered, deliberate weighing of pertinent information rather than on self- or group-interest. Such a model stands in direct contrast to the emphasis placed by most sociologists on the (biasing) impact of objective demographically based differences.

2. *The Judge/Jury*

A good deal of research on defendant characteristics in fact incorporates assumptions about the decisionmakers in a case: prosecutors, judge, and jury. The most typical assumption is probably that “birds of a feather flock together”; a defendant who is similar to the decisionmaker is favored. Various characteristics of the judge and/or jury have also received explicit attention as determinants of legal decisionmaking. Questions have been raised both about the impact of specific juror characteristics (e.g., gender) and about the possibility of stable individual differences among jurors and/or judges which could affect long-term distributions of outcomes (e.g., Bornstein & Rajki 1994; see also Hans & Vidmar 1986, especially chs. 8 and 9). Indeed, the move in recent decades toward the imposition of sentencing guidelines at state and federal levels can be seen as an effort to minimize the distortion of judgment because of either judicial idiosyncracies or defendant characteristics or both (Blumstein et al. 1983).

Among the possible demographic influences on judgment this article concentrates on traditional issues in social stratification (education and social class) because of their direct relevance to the question of “fit” between white-collar defendants and their judges. Additional demographic characteristics, including gender and age, will be assessed in a later publication. In general, it should be noted that research emphasizing (1) sociological variables versus (2) demographic “contaminants” of decisionmaking may not always lead to clear, contrasting predictions, particularly about why certain results occur. Under certain circumstances, however, the two approaches do imply different hypotheses. The most obvious place to look for such contrasts is where self-interest or group identity comes into conflict with values about law and the rule of law. Social standing, as it affects the judgment of white-collar crime, offers one such dilemma.

D. Effects of Social Position II: Explanatory Mechanisms

1. *Values*

A growing body of research in the social sciences, particularly sociology, focuses on the manner in which a person's life circumstances shape aspects of personality. One strand of this research has emphasized the impact of historical events on the life cycle (Elder 1974, 1994); other, related research traces trends in val-

ues and attitudes among different cohorts (Alwin, Cohen, & Newcomb 1991; Inglehart 1990). Another strand of research traces the impact of work life, especially cross-cultural differences in work experience, on values (Inkeles & Smith 1974; Kohn 1977; Kohn & Slomczynski 1990). Whereas most of this literature has not directly addressed sociolegal issues or variables, in many cases its interest in values makes the findings relevant to sociolegal work.

Perhaps the most directly relevant work for our purposes, by Kelman and Hamilton (1989), concerned the public's judgments of a military officer who participated in atrocities during the Vietnam War. This research explored how survey respondents' own life conditions shaped their attitudes, values, and judgments of this officer. In fact, the authors found that higher-status survey respondents were likely to judge this defendant more stringently than their lower-status counterparts; education, occupational prestige, income, and socioeconomic status all showed the same trends. The explanatory factor appeared to be the respondents' conceptions of responsibility. Higher-status respondents were more likely to adhere to a position that individuals are responsible for their actions regardless of circumstances; lower-status respondents, to assert that doing one's duty relieves a person of responsibility for the consequences.³

These results about social standing, in turn, are consistent with results from a broad cross-cultural research program by Melvin Kohn and colleagues (Kohn 1977; Kohn & Schooler 1983; Kohn & Slomczynski 1990). These authors have observed that across both capitalist and socialist countries, individuals' social standing (education, occupational prestige, and social class) is related to values and opinions in a particular pattern: higher social standing is associated with valuing self-direction and devaluing conformity for oneself and one's children. These associations can be accounted for by the facts of life in jobs: The degree of self-direction the person actually exercises on the job shapes the values held.

Kohn's research program is particularly relevant for its demonstration of independent impacts for occupational prestige and social class. In general, occupational prestige is a function of educational attainment. High-prestige occupations tend to be cognitively challenging, with working conditions that are flexible, varied, and autonomous. High occupational prestige is associated with, and in fact causes, a system of values which includes the valuation of personal self-direction and devaluation of conform-

³ In addition, Hamilton (1975, 1978) examined the effect of the rank of the accused in a hypothetical military war-crimes case, finding (as anticipated) that a higher-ranked actor was held more responsible. Thus, responses were sensitive to the social standing of both the judges (i.e., citizens) and the defendants in real and hypothetical military contexts.

ity. Education, which affects both values and occupational opportunities, has an even more potent overall effect on legally relevant values than occupational prestige (Kohn 1977). Social class is defined in terms of economic power (relationship to the means of production) and hence is conceptually independent of educational attainment and occupational prestige, although invariably correlated with both to some extent. Together, education and social class can be said to operationalize the major dimensions of stratification. According to Kohn's work, respondents who are highly educated or who have a relatively autonomous class position (owners, managers) are more likely to value self-direction positively; hence we anticipate that they will be relatively stringent in judging that subcategory of white-collar crime in which the actor works within an organizational setting, seeking to fulfill organizational rather than personal goals.

2. *Self-Interest*

A different, and at least partly competing, dynamic could also be in operation. Consider the possibility suggested earlier: that judges, insofar as they are more likely to identify with white-collar defendants than with the poor, may be correspondingly more lenient toward these similar others (perhaps with the feeling that "there but for the grace of God go I"). The psychological literature on such topics as "defensive attribution" (Shaver 1970, 1985) provides some evidence for a similarity-based, self-defensive judgment process (see also Dane & Wrightsman 1982; in contrast, see Miller & Ross 1975). However, to our knowledge no studies of the role of stratification have attempted to pit an argument based on values (e.g., Kohn's self-determination) against an identification-based argument (that higher-status judges may be biased toward leniency when the defendant is also high status). Kohn and colleagues have focused on general aspects of personality and on the workplace-related aspects of social structure. Kohn's research program has not included tasks likely to evoke identification (and hence defensive leniency), such as the making of responsibility attributions or punishment decisions.

Even the Kelman and Hamilton (1989) study, which was more closely an attributional inquiry, is of limited relevance in this regard. Although the main defendant they focused on (Lieutenant William Calley) was a military officer, his defense emphasized the extent to which he had been acting as a *subordinate* (following illegal orders to kill civilians). In this case, social standing—education, occupation, income, class—played the role predicted by the sociolegal model. In passing, however, they also reported evidence that was consistent with an hypothesis of identification with the defendant. Most notably, their respondents with military experience were more lenient toward Lieutenant

Calley, a military defendant, than were those without such experience. In addition to the measurable impact of socialization and experience in military settings, more general kinds of identification appeared to occur. Men more than women, and residents of the South and Midwest (areas relatively congenial to the military) more than of the Northeast and West Coast, judged this defendant more leniently. The “there but for the grace of God” phenomenon of identification with the judged is a general one that can apply to any perceptible characteristic; our current investigation simply concentrates on the assumptions of similarity that are likely to follow from knowing about another’s position in the corporate hierarchy.

3. *Summing up*

The existing evidence is consistent with three conclusions:

- a) Higher social standing is associated with judging an individual as more personally responsible for his/her own actions, as a function of the greater self-determination of the high-status judge.
- b) Sources of similarity to a defendant are associated with greater leniency toward a defendant who shares one’s own group characteristics, as a function of identification with that person.
- c) When high social standing and similarity co-occur (e.g., when a high-status “judge” deals with a high-status defendant), it is unclear whether the decision will be made on a basis of sociolegally related values or on the basis of identification with a similar other.

Figure 1 depicts some of the possibilities in this third scenario. The overall pattern of responsibility assigned should be a linear trend upward if values drive the relationship between status and responsibility judgments (Kohn’s pattern: Fig. 1, A). Conversely, the trend should be linear and downward if judge-defendant similarity governs reactions (Fig. 1, B). Third, if both values and similarity-based identification occur, these counteracting forces could generate a host of outcomes. Here we have suggested two of the many possibilities (Figs. 1, C and D). If the two forces counteract each other, it is reasonable to imagine that no discernible trend may emerge (Fig. 1, C, flat line). Alternatively, perhaps the most easily interpretable joint pattern might look something like Figure 1, D, in which responsibility attribution rises with education to a point and then declines. This pattern suggests that judging another’s responsibility flows from values but only up to the point at which maximal similarity to the other is reached (when the other is a relatively high-status corporate agent). At that point, responsibility drops as self-serving attributions come into play. In short, Figure 1, D, suggests that a se-

quencing of forces—first the sociolegal model, then the group interest model—dominates responsibility judgments.

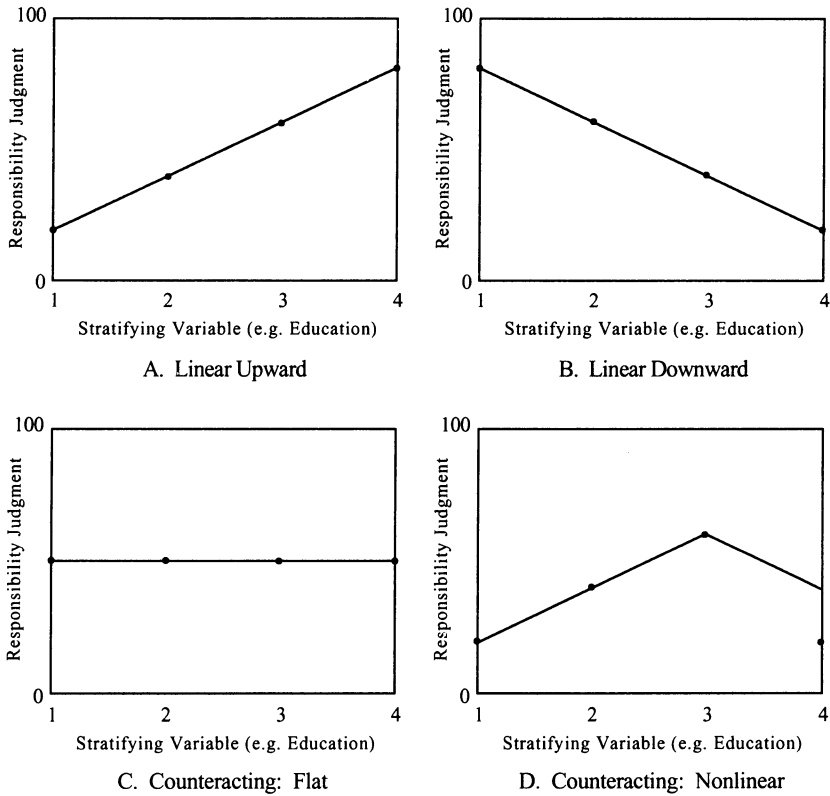


Fig. 1. Potential impact of the judge's standing on responsibility attributed to others in organizational settings.

Overall, we offer no hypotheses about how social standing is related to judgments of responsibility in corporate wrongdoing, because countervailing forces are likely to govern the relationships.

4. Mediating Variables

An additional complexity arises in attempting to trace effects of stratification: Is its impact on responsibility and related sociolegal judgments a *direct* (unmediated) or an *indirect* one? Sociological research suggests that a variable like education might determine responsibility attributions either directly or indirectly, via the general orientations and personality inclinations it conveys. For example, Kelman and Hamilton (1989) found that education was associated with certain value orientations, which were in turn linked to responsibility judgments. The current research focuses on two sociolegally related potential mediating factors.

The first, OBEY, taps the respondent's attitudes toward obedient action on the job; a high score indicates approval of obedience (even when the action is illegal/wrong). The second, CORPACC, taps the respondent's view of corporate accountability. A high score means that a corporation is to be judged by stricter standards than individuals. (See Table 1 below for question wordings.)

In the case of OBEY, the literature reviewed above suggests that higher social-status respondents should be *less* approving of obedience. The path from OBEY to responsibility is also predictable. To approve of or condone obedience should predict assigning lower responsibility to an actor whose wrongdoing was embedded in and inspired by an organizational context.

CORPACC does not appear likely to mediate the impact of social standing, or at least not to do so clearly. On the one hand, those who are higher status (more educated, higher social class) might be expected to see corporations as ordinary because they are less awed by corporations. Alternatively, higher-status respondents might hold corporations to a stricter standard, just as they hold the self to a higher standard. The first pattern would yield a negative relationship between education and CORPACC; the second, a positive one.

In contrast, expectations about the potential path from CORPACC to responsibility are relatively straightforward, based on our recent findings regarding allocation of responsibility to corporate entities versus their human agents (Sanders & Hamilton et al. 1995). We found that responsibility allocated among human actors within a corporation is hydraulic—with responsibility of some parties going up as that of others goes down—but the responsibility of the corporation as a whole is a positive, additive function of the responsibility of all the human agents involved. Thus, here we anticipated that respondents who did hold the corporation to a higher standard of accountability would also assign more responsibility to the human actor who performed the corporation's bidding.⁴

E. Effects of Social Position III: Cross-cultural Comparison

1. *Choosing Japan, Russia, and the United States*

In what way might the setting of the research—the fact that it was carried out in the capital city of the United States, or Japan, or Russia—make citizens' judgments of responsibility different?

⁴ Of course, this CORPACC-responsibility relationship is likely to be even stronger for assignment of responsibility to the corporation itself rather than to the corporation's agent, as studied here. Although initial analyses of these data have confirmed this expectation, for brevity we focus on individual actor responsibility. The impact of sociolegal attitudes on the attribution of responsibility to a corporate actor will be addressed in a later publication.

In terms of our overall research design, we chose these three societies because they represented three different ways to organize and define the relationship between individuals and enterprises: market capitalism (United States), corporate capitalism (Japan), and socialism (Russia). Differences between Japan and the United States are the most well defined in the literature. American market capitalism is part of a larger cultural orientation toward individualism in which both human and corporate actors are perceived to be relatively autonomous. Japanese corporate capitalism, on the other hand, is part of a larger communal orientation in which individuals and organizations are less autonomous and in which individuals are expected to conform to social expectations (Jacob et al. 1996; Hamilton & Sanders 1992a, 1992b; Nakane 1970; Smith 1983; Upham 1987).

Russian society presents a more complex picture, especially at the time we were doing our research. Like Japanese corporate capitalism, Russian socialism was part of and embedded in a less individualistic culture than found in the United States. Individuals and enterprises enjoyed relatively less autonomy in the socialist system (Berliner 1957, 1988; Beissinger 1988; Sypnowich 1990; Markovits 1986).

The different world in which the Russians lived can be illustrated by a problem in the translation of our survey instrument. It was not feasible to translate "corporation" or "company" in a literal fashion, because so few such economic creatures existed at that point (and few Russians, even in Moscow, had encountered them). Therefore, the terms "corporation" and "company" were translated into "enterprise" in Russian; the latter is a more general term that could encompass state enterprises as well as private ones. At the time of our survey, the great majority of employed individuals in our sample still worked for state enterprises. However, the winds of change were clearly blowing. By 1993, perestroika was well underway and privatization had begun (Burawoy & Hendley 1992; Earle et al. 1993). Russian legal culture and the way Russian citizens thought about wrongdoing in corporate settings was changing (Handelman 1995; Hendley 1995; Jankiewicz 1995).

As the problem with the Russian translation of "corporation" indicates, cross-cultural comparisons always involve complex questions of data interpretation. Univariate comparisons across societies are always open to multiple explanations, so one must always be careful not to read too much into variations in overall average scores or percentages from one culture to another. It is safer to look for cultural differences in patterns of responses or patterns of relationships among more than one variable (Hamilton & Sanders 1992a:120; Przeworski & Teune 1982). Ultimately, the issue is whether a set of hypotheses is confirmed in a way that

makes nonsubstantive explanations (e.g., problems with translations) implausible.

2. *Expected Cultural Effects*

To investigate differences in the legal cultures of these three societies—the goal of our larger research project—includes exploring how the various differences among the societies translate into attitudinal and attributional differences in the judgment of wrongdoing (Hamilton & Sanders 1992a). Overall, we envision this research as involving the study of the legal cultures at multiple levels. At a micro level, we assess how individual respondents judge the actor, as related to their demographic characteristics and to the specifics of the situation they are asked to judge; at a more macro level, we assess how individual actor responsibility is related to that of the organization within which action occurs; and at a most macro level, we speculate on the sources and meaning of cultural differences in these and other response patterns. Thus far, we have addressed certain of these questions, as we have already mentioned. These include (1) how the actor's responsibility changes as a function of the situation depicted (Hamilton & Sanders 1995), and (2) how the responsibilities of the actor and other human agents contribute to corporate responsibility (Sanders & Hamilton et al. 1995).

This article attempts to map differences of a particular sort, those related to the classical sociological topics of social class and stratification as sources of individual differences in attitudes. Thus our primary focus here is micro level. We also attempt, however, to suggest plausible cultural and structural sources of differences observed among the three samples, as outlined below.

Certain differences between Japan and the United States seemed highly likely based on prior research. For example, Hamilton and Sanders (1992a) project an image of the legal culture of Japan as more concerned with the nuance, the interconnections, the relationships among actors than is the legal culture of the United States. Specifically, the Japanese are more likely to take account of an issue like the presence of influence or orders in a situation when they judge an everyday life offender. Conversely, American respondents are more sensitive to factors that have to do with the actor's immediate performance and that might be thought of as classical "elements of the crime" (e.g., mental state, consequence severity). Therefore, we expected to find that any difference between Japanese and Americans in the current study would take one of the following forms:

First, given the greater social and legal homogeneity of Japanese society, there might be a *smaller impact* of social status on responsibility judgments. Commentators on Japanese society

have specifically noted that Japan is more economically equal, less stratified, than the United States, so the impact of stratification should be minimal (cf. Sanders & Hamilton 1987).

Second, if stratification is felt indirectly via effects on attitudes (in this case, OBEY or CORPACC or both), the contextual nature of Japanese responsibility judgment suggests that mediation occurs primarily through OBEY—reflecting views of the offender and his relationship to the organization—rather than through CORPACC, which addresses the more abstract target of the corporation itself.

Third, American respondents, in contrast, are at least as likely to derive their responsibility views from their general judgments of corporations (CORPACC) as from their views of obedience (OBEY).

Fourth: What about Russia? We were not sure. For the Russian respondents, we had no firm expectations about whether (1) stratification would be directly linked to responsibility judgments, or (2) legally relevant attitudes (OBEY and CORPACC) would mediate between stratification and responsibility judgments. The greater concreteness of the OBEY items and the hierarchical social structure from which Russia was emerging suggested that Russian citizens might be most comfortable drawing connections between OBEY items and responsibility; CORPACC, in contrast, dealt with the more novel issue of corporate accountability. One additional feature of Russians' reactions seemed predictable: The novelty of issues concerning corporate life suggested that Russian respondents would show a higher rate of "don't know" answers and nonresponses to such items than Japanese or Americans.

II. Methods

A. Surveys and Sampling

The surveys were conducted in the spring, summer, and fall of 1993. The Washington, DC, survey ($N = 602$) was done over the telephone in the spring and summer. A standard random-digit-dialing method was used to ensure that we reached a random sample of residential phones in the Washington, DC, Metropolitan Statistical Area (which includes both Maryland and Virginia suburbs); the response rate was 65%. The Moscow survey ($N = 597$) was administered face to face in the summer, and the Tokyo survey ($N = 600$), also face to face, was administered in the summer and fall; their response rates were 70% and 64%, respectively. The Tokyo survey included somewhat fewer questions because of length considerations (it takes longer to ask a given question in Japanese than in English because of linguistic differences). Both face-to-face surveys were probability samples of the

respective metropolitan areas; in the case of Moscow, the unit is the Oblast, an administrative unit in which the city of Moscow predominates. While results cannot be generalized to Japan, Russia, and the United States as a whole, they probably tap basic similarities and differences in responsibility judgments within urban areas in each country. We also have reason to believe that citizens of these cities are relatively experienced in dealing with bureaucratic hierarchies in private and governmental organizations and, indeed, selected the cities for this reason.

B. Creating the Instrument

The survey instrument was constructed over a period of months in consultation with our Japanese and Russian colleagues.⁵ The process involved writing and sharing experimental vignettes (described below) and other questions. The three groups of researchers then met for a week in Tokyo to discuss tentative drafts of a number of possible vignettes. Several potential vignettes and other questions were rejected because they did not describe plausible situations of wrongdoing in each society or because they did not translate well into all three languages. We also used the meeting to select the final experimental manipulations to be introduced into the vignettes. After the Tokyo meeting we constructed a final English-language version of the instrument. The instrument was translated into Japanese and Russian by our colleagues and then back-translated into English. Discrepancies between translations were discussed and resolved. Brief pilot surveys preceded the administration of the main instrument in each city. After data collection the group had a second week-long meeting, in the United States, where we reviewed the findings and once again discussed possible translation-related explanations for cross-cultural differences we observed.

C. Vignettes

We presented a set of four basic vignettes about wrongdoing in corporate life, each of which took place in a different organizational setting.⁶ The wording of each vignette was also varied

⁵ The Japanese group was led by Professor Kazuhiko Tokoro from Rikkyo University and included Naotaka Kato, Mikio Kawai, Takashi Kubo, and Haruo Nishimura; all were specialists in law who were working as law faculty or in the government bureaucracy. We had collaborated with Professors Nishimura and Tokoro on earlier research. Our Russian colleagues included Drs. Gennady Denisovsky, Polina Kozyreva, and Michael Matskovsky, who are survey research specialists from the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences. We had also collaborated with these researchers earlier.

⁶ Although we had no specific hypotheses about differences among corporate settings, we attempted to capture some of the natural variation in organizational factors among instances of wrongdoing in organizations—chiefly, the extent to which the organization is tightly versus loosely coupled and the extent to which the actor is in a professional or bureaucratic role. Within the realm of what James W. Coleman (1985) calls “violent white collar crimes,” we also varied the type of wrongdoing depicted (products

according to a $2 \times 2 \times 3$ factorial design (Mental State by Hierarchy by Influence). The vignettes are briefly described below with reference to the nature of the harm caused. For simplicity, these descriptions ignore the Mental State manipulation. They briefly indicate the variation in actor's position in the Hierarchy ("high" versions are in parentheses). Finally, they refer to two of the three variations in Influence (acting autonomously versus under orders; the third variation is conformity to a group decision).

- a) *Factory Pollution*: a foreman (or manager) of a fertilizer factory is under pressure to cut costs; his actions (or orders) lead to a toxic waste spill. This story was inspired by numerous cases involving corporate pollution, both intentional (e.g., Hooker Chemical at Love Canal) and unintentional (e.g., Exxon Valdez oil spill).
- b) *Faulty Auto Design*: a design engineer (or the head of the design team) for a new car fails to carry out (or order) adequate testing because of time pressures. The car has a defect that causes several accidents in which people are injured. This story was inspired by the civil and criminal trials regarding the Ford Pinto's defective gas tank.
- c) *Defective Drug*: a lab technician (or scientist) working on a new drug fails to carry out adequate tests for side effects in the animals being tested (or order the tests), because of time pressures. A serious side effect (blindness) occurs among a few purchasers of the drug. This story was inspired by numerous product liability cases involving the pharmaceutical industry, and especially by the example of the drug MER-29 (Stone 1975).
- d) *Newspaper Fails to Publicize*: a newspaper reporter (or editor) suppresses (or orders suppression of) information about a company's toxic waste, because the economy is poor and he is concerned that the company might close down. The waste problem goes unexposed, and a later increase in birth defects is traced to the pollution. This story had no specific inspiration in news accounts or court cases. It differs from the other stories insofar as it involves a secondary rather than primary harm. The newspaper is not the organization initiating the toxic waste, but wrongdoing in information transmission by media organizations characteristically involves secondary injury. We were interested in this situation because we expected the actor to be perceived as relatively self-directed.

Each of these vignettes involves "corporate crimes," that is, wrongdoing committed by organizational actors for the organization. They involve actors who are influenced by organizational

liability versus pollution) on an exploratory basis. In each country, respondents saw all four incidents as quite serious.

constraints, often in the form of direct orders from superiors or pressure from co-workers. The analyses here collapse across the experimental variations in order to focus on respondent characteristics. For further details of the experimental design, see Hamilton and Sanders (1995) and Sanders and Hamilton et al. (1995).

D. Independent Variables

Educational level was difficult to code across the three samples because of differences in the structure of the educational systems. In particular, respondents in Russia might carry on their education within various types of schools as well as for varying periods. With advice from our Russian colleagues, we collapsed these responses into four categories that could be directly compared with American and Japanese data (which were coded in numbers of years of school attended). Final categories were 1 = less than high school; 2 = high school diploma; 3 = some college; and 4 = college graduate/ postgraduate work.

Social class questions were inspired by those of Erik Wright (Wright & Perrone 1977; see also Kohn & Slomczynski 1990). First, we determined whether a person was or was not self-employed. Below the ownership level, the remainder of the class typology was constructed from questions about whether the respondent managed others and whether these others managed anyone. These questions enabled us to create four dummy variables: Owner (1 = owner/self-employed); High-level manager (1 = manages others who also manage); Low-level manager (1 = manages others who do not manage anyone); Worker (1 = employed but not in any managerial role). Respondents who were not working were categorized as "Other" and were grouped with the workers as an excluded category (not owner, not manager) in regressions. Because education was a more powerful predictor than social class, for brevity this report focuses on education, with class effects summarized in text or footnotes.

E. Dependent Variables

Following each vignette, respondents were asked a number of questions. The first question—our dependent variable—asked respondents to rate the actor's responsibility on a 100-point scale, where 0 means that the actor is not at all responsible, 50 that the actor is somewhat responsible, and 100 that the actor is fully responsible. The same question was later asked about other participants in the vignette (the actor's co-workers, the actor's boss, and the company itself); we also assessed whether and how the actor and other participants should be punished. These items about other actors' responsibilities and about punishments are ana-

lyzed elsewhere (Sanders & Hamilton et al. 1995; Sanders & Hamilton 1996). Additional supplemental questions included inquiries about whether the actor could have avoided the outcome (0–100, where 100 = could have avoided), whether the actor was influenced (dummy variable where 1 = influenced), and how serious the consequences were (0–100, where 100 = very serious). Avoidability will be explored in analyzing the form of the relationship between social stratification and responsibility.

F. Mediating Variables

Attitude items were interspersed among the vignettes. (The vignettes, in turn, were rotated in a Latin Square design to control for possible effects of order of presentation.) We concentrate here on six attitude items, three of which refer to the obedience of actors within organizational settings (OBEY) and three of which refer to conceptions of the corporate actor (CORPACC). Table 1 reproduces the items and indicates where items were reverse scored for scaling purposes. We discuss analyses of these items in the Preliminary Results section.

Table 1. Attitudes toward Corporations and Their Agents: The United States, Japan, and Russia

Item Description	% Agree		
	United States	Japan	Russia
Corporate Accountability: CORPACC Scale			
S1c. When an organization makes a decision I expect it to be more careful than an ordinary person is when he or she makes a decision.	86.0	60.5	61.7
S1d. If companies are careful, they can always avoid doing things that hurt people.	62.7	79.9	83.8
S1k. Corporations have a greater obligation than individual persons to try to avoid accidents.	79.3	87.2	84.3
CORPACC scale mean (see below for coding) ^a	2.0	2.1	1.9
Orientation to Obedience: OBEY Scale			
S1i. You should not keep silent when you see a fellow employee do something seriously wrong at work.	92.5	81.9	94.7
S3i. People are always responsible for what they do, even when they are following orders.	78.0	78.2	92.1
S3j. People should do what their supervisor says, even when they think it might be wrong.	13.0	12.7	15.7
OBEY scale mean (see below for coding) ^b	1.9	1.9	1.9

NOTE: "% agree" refers to answers of "strongly agree" or "agree," where 1 = strongly agree and 4 = strongly disagree. In scaling, CORPACC items were reverse scored, so a high score means corporation is superior to ordinary human, has extra obligations; for OBEY, item S3j was reversed, so a high score = approve/condone obedient action.)

a All country means differ significantly at $p < .001$, both for scale scores and for factor scores.

b No country differences were significant.

G. Initial Data Analyses

Before carrying out the analyses reported here, in which effects are assessed for each story and each country separately, we first carried out omnibus analyses to (1) establish that effects were significant when we took account of the multiple stories and (2) discover whether differences among stories demanded that they be separately analyzed.

In keeping with the experimental nature of the basic design, we used analysis of variance techniques (primarily repeated measures, a type of multivariate analysis of variance) rather than regressions to carry out these analyses. We found that analyses carried out (1) across nations, (2) within nations, (3) with experimental manipulations included, or (4) with only the variables treated in this article as covariates yielded the same conclusions. Differences between stories *were* significant, indicating that the separate analyses presented below are appropriate. And effects of stratification variables and manipulations were basically unchanged in the multivariate framework and in the univariate framework presented here. Overall, the conclusions remain the same if findings are reported separately by story.

In the next section, we first summarize descriptive data on the samples and on the attitude items' intercorrelations. Next, we assess linkages between (1) attitudes and social status and (2) social status and responsibility. We then report on causal models in which social stratification was allowed to affect responsibility both directly and indirectly (through attitudes). Finally, possible nonlinearity in the relationship between education and responsibility judgment is explored.

III. Preliminary Results

A. Characteristics of the Samples

Table 2 summarizes demographic information from each survey. With regard to both age and gender, the three samples were quite comparable. The Washington area showed a much higher percentage of highly educated respondents (college graduates or graduate degrees) than either of the other cities. However, one should not conclude from such figures that any given city (or culture) is more or less educated than the others. In Japan, for example, literacy is virtually universal, and higher than in either the United States or Russia. Hence in certain senses we might expect the Japanese sample to be the best (i.e., most uniformly) educated. Like education, social class also differed across surveys. Japanese respondents were the most likely to report themselves to be business owners or self-employed, consistent with their culture's emphasis on maintaining the role of small-scale employers

(Cole 1979; Lincoln & Kalleberg 1990). Below the ownership level, Americans were more often managers, Russians more often simple workers, Japanese more often "other" (i.e., out of the workforce, typically housewives).

Table 2. Demographic and Occupational Profiles of the Washington, Tokyo, and Moscow Samples

	United States (Washington, DC)	Japan (Tokyo)	Russia (Moscow)
Demographic information			
Age (in years)	39.8	41.5	41.4
Gender (% female)	50.5	48.2	52.6
Education:			
Less than high school (%)	4.0	12.3	14.2
High school graduate (%)	20.9	40.5	26.8
Some college (%)	24.9	22.8	25.3
College grad/postgraduate (%)	50.2	24.3	33.7
Social class:			
Owner (%)	10.0	15.5	5.5
Upper management (%)	12.1	4.5	7.4
Lower management (%)	18.4	11.8	14.1
Worker (%)	38.4	37.7	44.7
Other (%)	22.1	30.5	28.3
Job characteristics:			
Employed full-time? (%)	68.4	57.8	68.2
Years worked for current employer	8.1	11.2	10.0
Type of employer:			
Private (%)	55.9	90.9	13.2
Government (%)	37.6	6.8	80.1
Other (%)	7.5	2.3	6.7
<i>(Asked of managers)</i>			
No. of employees you supervise	13.0	9.4	24.1
Do any of them supervise others? (0 = no, 1 = yes)	0.4	0.3	0.4
Relations with co-workers:			
How often meet coworkers privately (% seldom/never)	44.9	20.8	39.4
How often meet supervisors privately (% seldom/never)	62.1	31.8	68.5

Next, Table 2 summarizes a series of items about the workplace and workplace relationships. The Japanese stood out from both other groups of respondents regarding employment: More Japanese were out of the labor force (predominantly housewives). Americans were distinctive in the frequency with which they changed employers; their average of approximately 8 years with the same employer was significantly different from both Japanese and Russians. Japanese workers had (insignificantly) longer stays with the same employer than did Russians. Given that it is reasonable to assume that the right and opportunity to change employers was relatively novel for most Russians in 1993, the relatively long tenure of Japanese workers with their current employer is all the more striking.

Table 2 also presents contrasts between the cities in the type of employment that dominates. For example, Washington, DC, is

considerably more of a “company town” with regard to governmental employment than is the larger metropolis of Tokyo. Moscow shows overwhelming concentration in the public sector, but “government” work there has a broader meaning than in either other city. Any answer to a question about whether one worked for the government was (and is) complicated in Russia by state ownership of businesses. The most reasonable interpretation of “government work” in Moscow, in mid-1993, is that there was still limited participation in the private sector; workers in a wide range of jobs “worked for the government” because they worked for state enterprises. Differences among the cities are less dramatic for “other” employment, which encompassed not-for-profit enterprises in the United States and Japan, plus a variety of hybrid enterprises in Russia.

Table 2’s next pair of questions fleshes out the meaning of the social class categorization of managers. If people said they managed any other workers, they were then asked how many people they supervised and whether those others were also supervisors. As noted earlier, “high-level managers” had underlings who were at a supervisory level, whereas “low-level managers” were only one rung up the supervisory ladder. National differences are quite substantial here. Russian managers appeared to bear the heaviest burden of oversight in the sense of sheer numbers of subordinates. Japanese managers, in contrast, both oversaw the smallest number of employees and were least likely to be at a second level up in the managerial hierarchy (rather than one level up). Another way to describe such results is to say that these data are consistent with the well-known tendency of Japanese business hierarchies to be relatively flat (Lincoln & Kalleberg 1990).

Table 2 concludes with questions about the nature of relationships with co-workers and supervisors. Results show, as usual, that Japanese citizens’ after-work lives are entwined with work life and the people in it (cf. Lincoln & Kalleberg 1990). Japanese responses are also significantly different from those in either other country; both the individualistic Americans and the supposedly collectivistic Russians more closely resemble one another than either resembles the Japanese.

B. Characteristics of the Mediating Variables

Returning to Table 1’s attitude items, we explored the feasibility of constructing the proposed attitude scales, OBEY and CORPACC. We first constructed two three-item scales that were simple averages of the items shown in Table 1. However, these proved to be of low reliability. Scaling based on factor analysis proved more successful. Exploratory principal-components factor analyses of each group of items revealed a single factor in

each case; all item loadings were .67 or higher.) Therefore, later regressions use *factor scores* rather than scale scores for both OBEY and CORPACC. It must be cautioned that results might not generalize to other samples where the factor structure differs.

Although the factor structures were similar across countries, reflecting similar intercorrelations among items, the absolute level of agreement or disagreement with these attitudes was more variable. As Table 1 summarizes, citizens of Washington, Tokyo, and Moscow did *not* differ significantly in their attitudes about obedience (OBEY); all three samples were, at least in theory, highly critical of unthinking obedience and highly supportive of whistleblowing. In contrast, each country differed significantly from the other two regarding corporate accountability (CORPACC). As Table 1 shows, Japanese were the most likely to see a corporation as special, different from ordinary humans; Russians were the most likely to agree with judging corporations according to the same rules as individual actors; and Americans were intermediate.

It is not clear what these latter results imply for the stringency of Russian judgments of corporations. Supplemental evidence suggests that Russians were relatively opposed to constraints on corporate freedom of action. Russian responses to certain items are sharply different from American responses:

The government places too many restrictions on corporations
(United States, 26% agree; Russia, 65% agree).

There should be less government regulation of corporations
(United States, 30% agree; Russia, 68% agree).

American respondents come across as more cautious about unfettered corporate power. However, these results must be interpreted against differing regulatory backgrounds in the two countries. Russian respondents may have been reacting to what they perceive to have been a society in which the state was overly intrusive. Unfortunately, these interesting items tapping attitudes about corporations are not incorporated in scales here because the shorter Japanese survey excluded them, making a three-way comparison impossible.

It is also likely that Russians had a less well-developed conception of corporations. This is suggested by the patterns of nonresponse throughout the attitude portions of the survey. With regard to the items in the OBEY scale, the three samples are only marginally different, and the percentage having complete data ranges from a low of 92 (Russians) to a high of 96 (Americans). Corporate accountability (CORPACC) presents a different picture. The nation difference is highly significant (chi-square = 90.8, $df = 6$, $p < .0001$), with the Americans and Japanese (at 98% and 97% complete, respectively) standing in contrast to the Rus-

sians (86% complete data). All this suggests that Russians in 1993 supported corporate freedom of action, but perhaps they had a less developed set of attitudes about the nature of corporations. Therefore results involving CORPACC—which assesses a new creature on the Russian economic scene—should be interpreted cautiously in the Russian data. We are more confident about interpreting Russian responses to OBEY, for the dilemmas presented by obedience are an old and familiar part of the Russian social fabric.

C. Interrelations among Mediators

The role of stratification may vary from one nation to another, but it is more likely that the attitudes associated with stratification, or with one another, vary cross-culturally. Before turning to an evaluation of whether education's effects are mediated by CORPACC and OBEY in each sample, therefore, we must take into account how these attitudes relate to one another. In fact, there was a noticeable difference between the American sample and the other two in this regard. Among American respondents, views about OBEY were essentially uncorrelated with CORPACC ($r = -.043$, n.s.). Yet in Russia, and to a greater extent in Japan, views were constrained; OBEY and CORPACC correlated $r = -.189$ among Russians and $-.245$ among Japanese ($p < .0001$ in each case). Those who were more lenient toward, or condoning of, an obedient actor in the corporate context also tended to deny that the corporation has any special obligation to exercise care, any special accountability toward the society.

We may provisionally suggest that among Americans, there is minimal ideological pressure toward consistency between judgment at the individual level and the aggregate or collective level; judgments at one level are quite literally unconstrained by judgments at another. The Discussion section will return to this issue after we have examined the differential roles of OBEY and CORPACC in shaping responsibility judgments among Americans, Japanese, and Russians.

IV. Results: Effects of Stratification

A. Stratification and Attitude Scales

Table 3 shows the linkages of OBEY and CORPACC to education by country, both as zero-order correlations and as betas (from regressions in which social class was controlled). Controlling for class has little impact on the relationship of education to these attitudes anywhere in the table. Instead, education is the dominant determinant of these sociolegal views across Washington, Tokyo, and Moscow.

Table 3. Education as Determinant of Respondents' Accountability Views (OBEY = Approve of Individual Obedience; CORPACC = Corporation has Obligations)

	United States		Japan		Russia	
	OBEY	CORPACC	OBEY	CORPACC	OBEY	CORPACC
Education:						
<i>r</i>	-.21***	-.19***	-.04	-.15***	-.13**	-.10*
With class controlled:						
beta	-.21***	-.18***	-.01	-.11**	-.13**	-.11*
Overall impact, Education + Class:						
<i>R</i> ² =	.05	.05	.00	.04	.02	.01

NOTE: Regressions included dummy variables for class categories. *N* = 567 complete cases in the United States, 549 cases in Japan, and 485 cases in Russia.

* *p* < .05 ** *p* < .01 *** *p* < .0001

Since higher scores on OBEY signify greater approval of (or at least condoning of) wrongful obedient action, this scale should be negatively correlated with education; it is significantly so in both the United States and Russia. Similar, weaker linkages were observed between OBEY and social class (not shown). Higher-status respondents were less likely to endorse (or condone) destructive obedience. In Japan, however, responses to OBEY were unrelated to education or class. This latter result is consistent with the argument that Japanese society is more homogenous and, at least in part because of this homogeneity, more likely to be consensual about sociolegal values.

The results for CORPACC are more complex. Overall, there was an almost identical (negative) relationship between education and CORPACC in all three samples: More educated respondents answered that the corporation was essentially "like people" (did not need to be more careful, could not always avoid harming others, was not obligated to avoid accidents). This is consistent with an argument that education "brings corporations down to size" as attributional objects; alternatively, taking a more cynical perspective, it could also represent the use of looser standards of accountability by those who see themselves as more likely to be involved in corporate governance.⁷

⁷ The relationship of CORPACC to social class varied across countries. In the United States, corporate accountability related to class in much the same way as it did to education; owners and the self-employed were significantly less likely to respond that corporations are special, or should be judged by different/higher standards, in comparison with ordinary workers or the unemployed. In Russia, there was no clear connection between class and CORPACC. Finally, Japanese owners were significantly *more* likely to respond that corporations are special, set apart with regard to accountability. These latter results may reflect a larger truth about random sampling in capitalist economies. There are likely to be many more grocers than CEOs in any economy; thus the person who claimed to own a business in Tokyo or Washington or Moscow was often far from a captain of industry. And Japanese government protectiveness toward small business may boost the percentage representation of such small-scale entrepreneurs in the population (Lincoln & Kalleberg 1990). We were able to indirectly assess this possibility by exploring the link between education and class position, to see if the Japanese owners differed from Americans by being less educated). In fact, 63% of all owners in the Washington sample had at least a college degree; in Tokyo, only 23% did so. This difference between the

B. Stratification, Mediating Variables, and Responsibility

Table 4 provides standardized coefficients (betas) for the effects of education and the potential mediators (OBEY and CORPACC factors) on the responsibility of the actor in each of the four vignettes. We examine results for each country in turn.

Table 4. Respondents' Education and Views about Accountability as Determinants of Responsibility Attributed to Actors

	Factory Pollution	Auto Design	Defective Drug	Newspaper Publicity
A. United States				
Education: beta	.05	-.05	-.01	-.13**
OBEY: beta	-.16***	-.08	-.19****	-.06
CORPACC: beta	.06	.14***	.11*	.19****
$R^2 =$	.03	.04	.05	.07
B. Japan				
Education: beta	-.01	-.06	-.02	.01
OBEY: beta	-.17***	-.15***	-.12**	-.15***
CORPACC: beta	.01	.02	.04	.01
$R^2 =$	.04	.03	.02	.03
C. Russia				
Education: beta	-.11*	-.12**	-.04	-.03
OBEY: beta	-.10*	-.06	-.07	-.09
CORPACC: beta	-.10	.00	.00	.00
$R^2 =$	.02	.03	.01	.01

NOTE: Standardized coefficients are presented. All regressions included dummy variables for social class. $N = 559$ to 566 complete cases in the U.S., 533 to 546 cases in Japan, and 472 to 483 cases in Russia.

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ **** $p < .0001$

One striking result in the United States is that there are almost no direct effects of education (or, for that matter, class) with CORPACC and OBEY controlled. More educated Americans did assign less responsibility in the newspaper publicity case (where a reporter/editor suppresses a story about pollution because of worries about economic effects on his town). Both of the factor scales for legally relevant attitudes played important roles in the American data. In two stories, there was a linkage between the respondent's OBEY score (approving or condoning obedience) and responsibility: those who condoned or approved obedience were also inclined to relieve the actor of responsibility for having done his job in such a setting (Factory Pollution, Defective Drug); and the sign of the effect of OBEY was consistent in the other two stories. As expected, then, those who are more likely to condone or approve wrongful obedience in general are more likely to assign less responsibility to these specific actors.

CORPACC's impact was even more pervasive in the United States. Asserting that the corporation should be held to higher

countries disappeared among managerial personnel, as 67% of both American and Japanese higher-level managers had at least a college education.

standards was consistently associated with assigning more responsibility to the actor, who was an agent of the corporation. Thus, social stratification also affects responsibility judgments through CORPACC. Whereas Table 3 showed that more educated respondents were less likely to say that the corporation was special, or under special obligation, and more likely to say it should be judged like a person, Table 4 shows that CORPACC itself predicts responsibility judgments.

In combination, Tables 3 and 4 show that among Americans, the indirect impacts of education on responsibility through OBEY and through CORPACC basically cancel each other out. The effect of education through OBEY is positive (a negative relationship to OBEY multiplied by its negative relationship to responsibility); the effect through CORPACC is negative (a negative linkage of education to CORPACC is multiplied by CORPACC's positive relationship to responsibility). Without consideration of the intervening variables, we would incorrectly conclude that education had little or no impact on responsibility in organizational settings.

Table 4's findings for Japan were much more sparse. No direct effects of social stratification (education or class) were observed. Among the attitude scales, OBEY always affected responsibility. CORPACC never did. As in the United States, the Japanese data overall suggest no relationship between social stratification and responsibility judgments. This time, the overall picture is accurate: Social stratification is linked only to CORPACC, but CORPACC is not linked to responsibility judgments.

Results for Russia were in some senses intermediate between these two patterns. First, the Russians showed several direct effects of stratification on responsibility (education in the Factory Pollution and Auto Design stories, Owner class in Auto Design). In all cases the higher-status position was associated with lower responsibility attribution, consistent with the direct effect observed in the United States. As in Japan, OBEY tended to be linked to lower responsibility attributions among Russian respondents, significantly so in the Factory Pollution case. We did not have strong expectations that Russians would take any particular view of corporate accountability, and Table 4 shows that they did not. CORPACC was unrelated to responsibility judgments in three cases; in the fourth (Factory Pollution), the effect of CORPACC was opposite to that observed in the United States (i.e., seeing the corporation as like ordinary humans was associated with assigning the actor more responsibility).

C. Conflicting Impacts? Departures from Linearity

One final question remains about the pathways through which stratification affects sociolegal judgments. It can be phrased both substantively and statistically. From a substantive viewpoint: Does stratification's influence derive from the values inculcated by one's work and one's family, or is the impact of stratification interest-driven, reflecting perceived similarity to a defendant (or both)? Statistically speaking: Is the relationship of stratification variables to responsibility judgments really linear, or is something more complex going on? Figure 1 illustrated some of the possibilities, assuming value-driven and interest-driven judgments. Table 5 shows mean scores by country for the actor's responsibility and the closely related question of whether the action was deemed avoidable by the respondent. Here we have analyzed the respondent's mean score across the four stories for brevity; separate analyses by story reveals some variability, as would be expected, but does not alter the fundamental story of Table 5. As the table reveals, the rather weakly linear patterns in earlier regressions (see Table 4) hid a small kernel of non-linearity.

Table 5. Evidence of Nonlinearity in Judgments: Responsibility of Actor and Avoidability of Outcome

	United States ^a	Japan ^b	Russia ^c
Responsibility:			
Education level			
1	65.0	68.6	77.5
2	74.1	65.1	71.6
3	70.8	67.7	71.3
4	68.4	64.6	70.4
Avoidability:			
Education level			
1	74.0	70.4	78.3
2	76.3	73.4	74.6
3	80.3	78.8	73.5
4	72.9	73.0	69.9

NOTE: Responsibility ranges from 0 (not at all responsible) to 100 (fully responsible). Education level 1 = less than high school diploma; 2 = high school graduate; 3 = some college; 4 = college graduate or beyond.

a In one-way polynomial analyses of variance, Education has significant nonlinear (quadratic) relationship to responsibility ($F(1,594) = 5.71, p = .02$) and to avoidability ($F(1,596) = 4.05, p = .04$).

b Education is not significantly related to responsibility; avoidability has a quadratic relationship ($F(1,591) = 5.99, p = .01$).

c Education has a significant linear relationship to both responsibility ($F(1,595) = 7.34, p = .007$) and avoidability ($F(1,594) = 9.92, p = .002$), with no quadratic effects.

One-way analysis of variance with tests for linear and quadratic terms for each variable in each country revealed a significant quadratic effect of education on responsibility in the United States: that is, responsibility attribution rose steadily with education, then dropped at the highest level of education. The same

was true for avoidability: a significant quadratic term, with the same substantive source. Thus American judgments were closest to the image in Figure 1, D. We have suggested that this pattern is consistent with a combination of value-driven and interest-driven response.

This combination is not, however, cross-culturally invariant. The Japanese evidenced no linkage of education to responsibility at all, and they showed a statistically significant quadratic rather than linear linkage of education to avoidability. Among Russians, Table 5 shows a simple, linear relationship of education to both responsibility and avoidability. The more educated the respondent, the less likely he or she was to hold the defendant responsible (and the less likely to consider the events avoidable). This pattern is consistent with decisionmaking entirely in terms of self-interest, whereby a person is most likely to spare the defendant in a corporate misdeed to the extent that the defendant is a similar other.

V. Discussion

Organizational actors and their misdeeds are a matter of grave concern to law, to society, and to the field of sociolegal studies. It matters—morally, legally, socially, and politically—who is held responsible for corporate wrongdoing. Yet scholars know relatively little about how ordinary citizens assess wrongdoing that occurs in the hierarchies of corporate or political life. To know how such deeds are judged is to know, in part, how they can be stopped.

We have drawn here on the sociolegal and sociological literatures in white-collar and corporate crime, on the one hand, and in the linkage of personality to social structure (and their effects on judgments of others), on the other. Together, these literatures enabled us to address social variation in the responsibility of actors whose wrongdoing occurs within organizational settings. We also explored the role of the surrounding legal culture and economy by carrying out the study in the United States, Japan, and Russia. Our most important expectation of cultural difference was probably that we expected Russian respondents to be relatively less certain in their judgments involving corporations.

The central individual difference studied was stratification: education and, to a lesser extent, social class. We paid the lion's share of attention to education here, as it was the more powerful predictor of responses. The sociological literature suggests that an organizationally embedded defendant may evoke two conflicting impulses in the higher-status judge or jury member. The *values* adhered to by the higher-status judge, which include valuing autonomous or self-directed action, suggest that higher status would be associated with more stringent judgments of such a de-

fendant. But the *self-interest* of this same judge works the other way: to the extent that the defendant evokes a sense of similarity or identification, then we would predict that this judge would be more lenient toward such a defendant, in comparison with lower-status respondents. Results in the United States and Japan showed departures from linearity that we interpreted as evidence of a judgment process dominated by values until the point of maximum similarity with the defendant, at which point self-interest plays a role. Of course, these nonlinearities do not vitiate the analysis of mediational processes using ordinary least squares regressions, because they simply mean that any linear patterns found to be significant in the regressions occurred *in spite of* the downturn in scores in the most educated stratum. In Russia, finally, no evidence of values-based judgment appeared.

We also explored whether stratification had indirect as well as direct effects on judgments of an actor's responsibility. Consistent with our interest in combining social psychological and sociological themes, we concentrated on two attitude scales—OBEY and CORPACC—that we saw as sociolegally relevant potential mediators. The first of these referred to attitudes about a person who obeys unthinkingly, whereas the second captured attitudes about the responsibility of corporations. We predicted and found indirect paths from education through both attitude scales to responsibility judgments—but only in the United States. These impacts were counteracting; the impact of education through OBEY was to increase responsibility attribution and the impact through CORPACC was to decrease it. These patterns of results were not replicated in Russia and Japan. In Japan, education affected CORPACC, and OBEY affected responsibility—but the remaining connections were missing. There was no relationship from CORPACC to responsibility or from education to OBEY. In Russia, the impact of education was mainly a direct one; and as noted above, this impact was consistent with a self-interest interpretation of education's role.

These results imply that a characteristic like level of education or social class may affect attitudes and judgments for several different and even competing reasons. From the standpoint of the current findings, the theoretical argument between values or self-interest as governing the linkage of stratification to sociolegal judgment appears moot: both play a significant role. Second, this weighing of forces, this multiple meaning of social standing, appears to be most true in the United States and to a lesser extent in Japan. Third, education has an indirect as well as a direct impact on responsibility judgments, via its effects on sociolegally related attitudes; indeed, in the United States the effects were entirely indirect. The fact that the American indirect paths were counteracting ones also warns us against too readily believing an apparently weak or nil global impact of social stratification on

sociolegal judgment. Fourth, this importance of indirect paths can vary cross-culturally. In this study these paths were most evident in the most openly litigious and in some ways most openly stratified society, one where citizens may perhaps be most likely to have formed sociolegally related values, attitudes, and linkages among such.

A. Russia: Birth of a Legal Culture?

It is important to pay particular attention to the meaning of the Russian responses, given the virtual absence of prior data on Russian sociolegal views. As anticipated, much more missing data appeared in the Russian data set—and largely from the attitude items, not the vignettes. In 1993, residents of the Moscow Oblast were largely ignorant of the ways and wiles of corporations. At the same time, they were not without thought and feeling about corporate life. On a set of three attitude items about corporations, Russians were significantly more pro-corporation (or, perhaps more accurately, more *laissez-faire*) than American respondents. Russian respondents also showed linkages between social stratification and responsibility judgment, but they simply did not express these linkages through their sociolegal attitudes.

Our survey captured an image of the Russian public through a particular window in time: a window in which they had begun to gather information about capitalism, and about corporate life, but in which they did not yet have an articulated “theory of the firm” that would provide strands of accountability with which to tie the corporation down. In short, a capitalist legal culture, while perhaps in formation, had not yet been absorbed by the Russian citizenry, even the most educated members.

B. Individualism and Unconstrained Responses

Our first impulse in looking over the results for Japanese versus American responses regarding CORPACC was to ask why the Japanese had failed to show a linkage between CORPACC and actor’s responsibility. Our second impulse was to realize that it may be not the Japanese but the Americans who are the odd respondents. It appears from the pattern of zero-order correlations that not only the Japanese but also the Russians show a modest but significant linkage between CORPACC and OBEY; responses to one have implications for the other. A side effect of this interconnection is that when one of these scales (say, OBEY) proves to be more powerfully predictive of responsibility judgments, it washes out any effect of the other (here, CORPACC). Americans may show such a clear impact of OBEY and CORPACC in these analyses only because their responses to these two scales were essentially uncorrelated. For Americans—and only for Ameri-

cans—an opinion about obedience to orders had no implications for an opinion about corporate accountability, and vice versa. Clearly we are at the beginning rather than the end of the trail in attempting to trace out patterns of cultural difference in this regard. But this example serves to illustrate the fact that American responses may be the aberration rather than the standard. It is important for sociolegal scholars to learn to tell the difference.

C. Limitations and Strengths of the Research

Numerous possible weaknesses of this research are evident. First, if our research is to be relevant to either social science or sociolegal studies, it is necessary to believe that (1) responses to public opinion surveys are somehow relevant to behavior; (2) patterns of response can be interpreted as evidence for or against competing theories of such behavior; and (3) survey questions can meaningfully be asked across cultures that differ dramatically in their languages, economic systems, and legal traditions. There are likely to be many ways in which we were not fully successful in each of these realms. At minimum, the study is ultimately tied to its methodological genre—survey research.

With regard to illuminating the bases of allocating responsibility to an actor in an organizational setting, and especially the role of social stratification in that allocation, we believe the main strength of the study is its revelation of the complex and sometimes competing influences that status can have on judgments of another. At the same time, the tables reveal a generally puny absolute amount of variance explained in these judgments. This is not a function of translation failures in two of the surveys; the American results are comparably puny. If social stratification has *something* to do with allocating responsibility, it does not have an overwhelming impact on it. This result, of course, is consistent with what Weisburd et al. (1991) have termed a sociolegal model of judge and jury behavior, which asserts that the main determinants of judgment should be the facts of the case, not the characteristics of any of the parties. As sociologists have long argued, social position shapes identities and interests. As jurists have long hoped, social position also reinforces values, and values guide if they do not govern legal decisions. Finally, as comparative legal scholars have begun to insist, the power of even so crucial a variable as education in modern capitalist economies subtly differs depending on a nation's history, its culture, and that culture's understanding of the human actor.

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