

DUALISTIC PORTFOLIO STRATEGIES IN JAPANESE SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING: CULTURES AND INTERESTS IN INTERACTION*

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Abstract

On the basis of a number of findings from a preliminary interview research, this paper presents and refines an analytical framework for an ethnographic research on the structural transformation of the scholarly publishing in Japan. One of the key concepts in the analytical framework is “dualistic portfolio strategy.” Dualistic portfolio strategy is a sensitizing concept by which we can conceptualize the process in which several types of actors involved in scholarly publishing pursue their own interests deploying symbolic as well as economic capitals and by combining several types of institutional logics. This concept refers both to “strategies of action,” or habitual ways of perceiving, thinking, feeling and acting (Swidler 1986, 2001) and to a more conscious and deliberate action plan aimed at pursuing relatively articulated interests. Inclusion of these two otherwise contrastive meanings in one term is intended to capture the dialectics between human agency and cultural determination. It will be argued that in analyzing institutional changes, we have to take account of the specific social contexts in which different action strategies of individuals are integrated into deliberate action plans. Actors’ interests themselves are often “discovered” (or invented) and articulated in that process.

Key Words: publishing industry, dualistic portfolio strategy, symbolic capital, institutional logics, unintended consequences

Introduction

The precarious balance between culture and commerce is a nagging question that has plagued various subsectors of the cultural industry in many societies. Scholarly publishing in Japan is no exception. Japan has lacked well-developed university press system or substantial subsidies to academic publications, and most scholarly publishers have to make ends meet by themselves and operated on a shoestring basis. The situation has worsened considerably in the

* This research was partially supported by the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture, Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (B)(1) 13410055, 2003. This research was also supported by a Grant-in-Aid for the 21st Century COE “Center for Research on Dynamics of Knowledge, Corporate System and Innovation.” The author is grateful to Professors Manabu Haga (Sophia University), Mamoru Yamada (Waseda University), and Hidehiko Tomiyama (Tokyo University of Information Sciences) for their helpful and critical comments for an earlier version of this paper.

last decade during which the publishing industry as a whole suffered severely from the continuing recession. Many small-scale publishing firms and bookstores bankrupted. Quite a few old-standing and prestigious houses and bookshops all over the country also bankrupted or closed their operations.

Several types of explanations have been provided for the predicament of the publishing industry. Some argue that not only the general economic recession but also the problems of distribution system characterized by consignment and resale price maintenance systems are the chief causes of the quandary of the Japanese publishing industry in general and scholarly publishing in particular. Others maintain that the ever-accelerating massification of Japanese society and declining readership for academic books is a far more important cause of the predicament of the academic publishers. Although both arguments have certain merits in making sense of the current predicament of the scholarly publishing in Japan, the lack of a clear-cut conceptual scheme as well as the dearth of reliable data on publishing industry has hampered more accurate and deeper understanding of the real situation.

On the basis of an ethnographic research on the decision-making process and corporate strategy of a number of publishing firms, this paper presents and refines an analytical framework for a more thoroughgoing analysis of the causes of the structural transformation of the academic publishing and its consequences for scholarly communication in Japan. A key concept in the conceptual framework is “dualistic portfolio strategy.” Dualistic portfolio strategy is presented in this paper as a sensitizing concept (Blumer 1969) by which we can conceptualize the process in which several types of actors involved in scholarly publishing (e. g., academic authors, publishers, readers) pursue their own interests by deploying symbolic as well as economic capitals and by drawing on several types of institutional logics.

This concept is intended to infuse the ideas of interests and agency into a research framework inspired by sociological neo-institutionalism. By “strategy,” then, we do not merely refer to a deliberate action plan constructed in pursuit of articulated interests but also to “strategies of action,” or habitual ways of perceiving, thinking and acting (Swidler 1986, 2001; Friedland and Alford 1991; Lamont and Thévenot 2000; Boudieu 1993).

This concept is also intended to stress the dualism of the interests of the actors involved in scholarly publishing. Dualism (or plurality) of interests, indeed, characterizes various subsectors or “sub-worlds” constituting the scholarly publishing: e.g., publishing industry *per se*, the social world of academic authors, readers’ world. In explaining the structural transformation of the scholarly publishing, one should take note of the process in which different types of non-economic as well economic interests are shaped and articulated in various institutional settings. One should also note the possibility that strategic actions based on those interests have a number of intended and unintended consequences, and ultimately may change the very institutional framework that have shaped the interests.

Predicament of Scholarly Publishing in Japan

The last decade revealed that the myth that publishing was recession-proof was just that (Kobayashi 2001; Cf. Connors, Henry, and Reader 1985, p. 45). Indeed, the continuing recession over the last decade poses a serious threat to the Japanese book industry. The total sales of the books and magazines indicated consistent growth in the postwar period until the

mid-1990s. Even after the economic bubble burst in 1991, the sales showed robust growth until they hit the peak of ¥2.7 trillion in 1996. The sales showed a decline in 1997 for the first time in Japanese postwar history and the total sales plummeted to ¥2.3 trillion in 2002, close to the level of 1991.

While bankruptcies of small publishing houses and retailers are “fact of life” in the publishing industry, the Japanese witnessed financial difficulties and bankruptcies of a number of major houses and bookshops during the last several years. One of the most notable events in this regard is the merger of Chuo-Koronsha, one of the largest and most prestigious publishing houses, by Yomiuri Shimbunsha, a major newspaper company in 1998. In 2001, Suzuki Shoten, the largest wholesale distributor specializing in technical books, closed its operation and the bankruptcy gave a great shock to those who were involved in scholarly publishing. Nowadays, while the total sales of books still rank the second in the world next to the U.S., many people in the publishing business talk about the prospect of fundamental structural transformations, or even eventual disintegration or “demise” of the publishing industry in Japan.

The scholarly publishing sector of the industry, in particular, has been hit hard by the economic recession as well as by the secular trend of declining readership for academic and semi-academic literature. Declining sales of the backlist titles is one of the most serious problems for scholarly publishers in Japan. In order to cope with these situations, many publishers have increased the number of new titles with relatively small print runs. Those books targeted at general audience, rather than at professional readers have increasingly occupied these new titles. It is now very difficult, for publishers as well as for academic authors, to publish research monographs of high quality but with slim sales potential.

Two types of explanations have been provided for the major cause of the slumping sales of books and magazines in general and scholarly publishing in particular (Hasegawa 2003). One type of explanation focuses on the internal structure of the publishing industry and points out the problems of distribution system, especially problems inherent in the consignment and resale price maintenance systems. Many critics argue that these systems have led to speculative publishing as well as overproduction and form a vicious circle by creating information overload (Oda 1999; Kobayashi 2001; Sano 2001).

The other type of explanation stresses the fundamental transformation of market structure, or the declining readership for academic and semi-academic books. Those who adopt this explanation argue that ever-increasing massification of Japanese society has led to the demise of the cultural authority of *Bildung* or worship for knowledge for their own sake (Takeuchi 2003; Tsutsui 2000). They also maintain that while *kyoyoshugi* or culturalism that extol educated person as a cultural hero had supported the “book revolution” (Cf. Escarpit 1969) in Japan, its decline with the advent of mass higher education has led to the declining sales of academic and semi-academic books.

Although each type of explanation has some merits in suggesting possible causes of the predicament of the scholarly publishing in Japan, both accounts suffer from a lack of clear-cut conceptual framework that enables one to grasp the changes in the larger social context of scholarly publishing. Indeed, while the first type of explanation focuses almost exclusively on the internal structure of the publishing industry, the scope of the second category of explanations tends to be limited to the market structure. There are few studies that attempt to delve into the relationship between the two. In addition to that, the dearth of reliable empirical

data on the publishing industry has hampered a detailed empirical analysis of the socio-economic and cultural contexts of the scholarly publishing. Japanese publishers and bookstores, most of which are privately-owned enterprises, are generally reluctant to disclose financial information of their firms. Industry-wide statistics are also of limited reliability largely because of the low proportion of membership in trade associations. There are also few reliable readership surveys that warrant conclusive arguments. As a consequence, both types of explanations are mostly based on impressionistic observations.

Research Framework and Methods

We have been engaged in an ethnographic research on the structural transformation of scholarly publishing during the last several years (Sato 1999, 2002, 2003a, 2003b). The central research questions of the research are concerned with the causes of the structural transformation of the scholarly publishing in Japan and its consequences for scholarly communication in general. The research builds on the ideas of production of culture perspective (Peterson 1976, 1994; Coser 1978; Griswold 1994), and the research has focused on the relationship between cultural objects and social worlds, or on the question of how the social milieus of book production has influenced the content of publications. Drawing specifically on Wendy Griswold's heuristic scheme of "cultural diamond" (Griswold 1986, 1994), we have paid special attention to the roles played by cultural creators (e.g., authors, publishers, retailers) and receivers (e.g., readers, reviewers) in analyzing the relationship between the social world and cultural objects. In other words, we have paid special attention to the role of human agency, of active human beings involved in the scholarly publishing (Griswold 1994, p.43).

In this conceptualization, the configuration of the scholarly publishing is not treated as a mere reflection of societal circumstances. Rather, it is assumed that the behaviors of those who create, produce, distribute and make sense of academic ideas actually influence the configuration of the scholarly publication. It is also assumed that there are two-way influences between human actions and the social world or cultural objects.

In general, the actual research procedure followed the logic of "grounded theory" approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Glaser 1978; Strauss and Corbin 1990; See also Emerson, Fretz, and Show 1995, pp.143-144, 167). Emphasis was on the continuous reformulation both of research questions and hypotheses rather than one-shot testing of a series of hypotheses or "verification" of the very theoretical framework from which the hypotheses are deduced.

We are still in the initial phase of the research, and the major task of this period is the formulation of preliminary research questions and several working hypotheses. The major subjects at this stage of research are a number of publishing houses specializing in academic and/or semi-academic books. While the publishers are themselves crucial players in the social world of the scholarly publishing, it is also expected that findings of the research on the publishing firms serve as a "window" to see through the characteristics of other players (e.g., authors, retailers, wholesalers) so as to generate research questions and hypotheses regarding those players, which are to be examined in later stages of our research.

Two major research techniques we have employed are analysis of documentary materials and in-depth interviews with managers and editors of a number of publishing firms.

We first constructed a comprehensive digital database of the index of the *Shinbunka*

(New Culture), the major trade journal of the publishing industry in Japan over the last thirty years (1973-2002). Since the indices of most volumes of the reduced-edition of the journal were not digitized, research assistants had to construct the database manually by using desktop scanners and OCR software and correcting an enormous number of garbled and misconverted characters. Through their painstaking efforts, a comprehensive database consisting of approximately 140,000 entries was finally created. The database enabled us to examine the general trend of the publishing industry in a systematic way. It turned out that the database was also very useful in checking out the trend of specific subsectors of the industry as well as the histories and financial conditions of specific firms, including publishers, wholesale distributors, and bookstores. While, as mentioned before, detailed financial information of publishers and bookstore was not available, knitting together fragmentary information found in the *Shinbunka* was useful in getting some sense of the financial conditions of the firms.

Other documentary sources consulted for the research on publishing houses included, among others, books on publishing industry, biographies and memoirs of distinguished publishers, company histories of major houses, and back issues of *Shuppan Nenkan* (Publishing Yearbook) and *Shuppan Kenkyu* (Studies on Publishing) edited and published by the Japanese Society of Publishing Studies. These materials were used to narrow down research issues and construct specific interview questions.

So far, we have interviewed approximately thirty key persons in the Japanese scholarly publishing, including editors, owners of publishing firms, scholars and chief editors of academic journals. The length of interview ranged from 1.5 hours to 3 hours.

In conducting interviews with editors and managers of other publishing houses, the publication catalogue of each publishing house was an important source of information. In order to narrow down research topics and tailor interview questions to specific firms and informants, the catalogues were transformed into digital databases and analyzed from various angles. We first used the database to examine the changes or continuity of the overall publication lineup of a specific house from its founding to the present in detail. We then subdivided the dataset according to such criteria as the titles that specific editors were in charge of, combination of authors and editors, and the sales record of each title. The major research question was how the publishing houses producing scholarly books manage the age-old dilemma of “culture and commerce” in publishing.

Dualistic Portfolio Strategy of Publishers

Through some preliminary research, it gradually became apparent that the portfolio strategy used by publishers provided an important clue not only to the understanding of the structure and actions of the firms but also to the understanding of the behaviors of various types of actors involved in scholarly publishing, including publishers, authors, retailers, and readers.

Portfolio strategy, in this case, refers to a corporate strategy evolving around the product mix of several types of publications. It is widely known that publishers often use product mix as one of the basic business strategies in order to cope with cash flow problem and economic viability. Product mix, indeed, traditionally has been *the* chief management strategy of Japanese publishers, mainly because Japan has not had well-developed university press system

nor substantial subsidiary system for scholarly publications. Lacking revenues from subsidies of any sort, most of the publishers specializing in scholarly publications have constructed some type of product portfolio or other. In many cases, profits from the sales of college textbooks and books targeted at general readers are used to complement the financial loss accruing from the publication of academically distinguished but less profitable books. In other cases, publishers have several imprints or subsections that specializes in totally different lines of publications. (For example, a Japanese publisher has a semi-independent subsidiary that specializes in highly profitable study-aid books for school children so as to complement the financial loss by the publication of technical books.) One of the publishers in our sample started its operation by the publication of college textbooks and it gradually added research monographs to its publication catalogue. The president of the publisher once wrote that, "we finally come to be able to do what we wanted all along after becoming economically viable through the publication of textbooks."

Product mix or product portfolio itself is a fairly common practice among nonprofit as well as for-profit organizations. But the rationales behind the portfolio strategy are often quite different. The chief goal of the product portfolio management (PPM) employed by commercial enterprises is the maximization of corporate returns and company growth by balancing resources across all product lines, with specific attention to product lifecycles (Collis and Montgomery 1998; Kotler 1980). On the other hand, product portfolio in nonprofits are used for "cross-subsidization," namely so as to support unprofitable core activities through the earnings from more profitable activities (Oster 1995). The goal of increasing revenue by product mix, in this case, is subordinate to the more essential goal of the fulfillment of the organization's core missions.

While most of the scholarly publishers in Japan are privately owned commercial enterprises, the rationale behind the portfolio strategy they adopt is akin to that of nonprofits rather than that of for-profit firms. Indeed, we can find many statements such as the following in our interview records as well as the writings by editors and owner-managers of the publishing firms, specializing in scholarly publishing.

While scholarly publishers earn their living by college textbooks, they maintain their prestige by unprofitable technical books (Nakajin 1996, p.3).

Scholarly publishers have been able to make their ends meet by balancing the loss of the money-losing original works with the profits from the sales of college textbooks and manuals (Minowa 1983, pp.201-202).

Of course, it would be an implausible assumption that scholarly publishers are solely driven by charitable motives and thus essentially same as nonprofits. It would be more reasonable to think that publishers are equally interested in symbolic and economic capitals, if we adopt Bourdieuan terminology (Cf. Powell 1985, pp. 85-86). In other words, we may assume that there exists a dualism of goals in the product mix strategy employed by scholarly publishers. On the one hand, publishers, as in the case of other for-profit firms, employ product portfolio strategy in order to improve cash flow and maximize corporate returns. On the other hand, product mix often serves to keep balance between symbolic and economic capitals. We may, then, assume a kind of dualistic portfolios, one of which consists of economic assets and the other of symbolic assets and may call the strategy of product mix by publishers, "dualistic

portfolio strategy.” The backlist of each publisher can be regarded as a manifestation of various types of dualistic portfolio strategies that the publishing firm has employed since its foundation.

Dualistic Portfolio Strategy of Other Actors

Dualistic portfolio strategy of publishers, in turn, may be regarded as a rather straightforward manifestation of the dualistic nature of scholarly books both as commodities and scholarly “works,” which often have symbolic values well beyond their economic values (Bourdieu 1992, 1993). In a similar vein, a publisher producing academic books has dualistic organizational identities both as a commercial and a cultural enterprise. (As mentioned before, most Japanese scholarly publishers are privately owned companies. This makes it easier for their owner/managers to assume the role of cultural rather than economic entrepreneurs.) In other words, both publishers and their books belong to multiple institutional domains each of which is characterized by distinctive logics of action (Cf. Friedland and Alford, 1991; Lamon and Thévenau, 2000; Bourdieu, 1992, 1993). The dilemma of “culture and commerce” in publishing is a manifestation of the conflicts and contradictions between these different types of logics. Dualistic portfolio strategy of publishers is a corporate strategy employed so as to cope with and manage the conflicts and contradictions between the multiple logics of action and organizational identities.

Similar dualism is found in other types of individual and collective actors involved in scholarly publishing, including authors, retailers, and readers. We may assume that they also belong to multiple institutional domains and often construct dualistic portfolios of some kind or other.

In the case of the academic author, publication list in his/her curriculum vitae is a good indicator of the portfolio of economic and non-economic assets s/he has constructed. Some of the publications in the list, such as journal articles and books published on one’s own account in an early phase of his/her career, are published mainly as an evidence of his/her academic achievements. These publications, then, constitute symbolic assets of the author. We should note, however, that the symbolic assets could function as a means to enhance the probability of survival and status mobility in the academic world characterized by the principle of “publish or perish.” The symbolic assets, then, often have economic significance and can be actually converted into economic assets. Later in his/her career, s/he may be able to convert the symbolic capitals into economic capitals further by publishing books expressly aimed at short-term economic gains. In this connection, it should be noted that there is a relatively large demand for “in-between books,” i.e., books that can be located somewhere between purely technical books and books aimed at popular audience, in Japan. And in some cases, there is an explicit or tacit agreement between publishers and their house authors that the authors should publish college textbooks or popular books after publishing money-losing research monographs. In other words, there is often a close connection between dualistic portfolios of publishers and those of authors.

In the case of bookstores, their inventories of books and magazines symbolize the dualistic portfolio consisting of intangible as well tangible assets they have accumulated. In Japan, many traditional bookstores have had organizational identities both as commercial retailers

and as cultural institutions that have a considerable degree of cultural authority (Cf. Miller 1999). Especially in many local communities, municipalities have given exclusive rights to deal with el-hi textbooks to long-established bookstores. These bookstores also have close connections with the “reading class” in those communities, which comprises of such people as schoolteachers, medical doctors, bank clerks and local government employees. The owner/managers of the bookstores themselves often belong to the social circle of intellectual, if not economic, elites. Although the sales of technical books are uncertain and while it often takes a long time to sell them, such books constitute important symbolic assets for such bookstores. In this connection, we should note that unlike bookstores in North America, most bookstores in Japan are outlets of magazines as well as books. (Subscription-based magazine sales occupy only a negligible portion in the industry total in Japan.) The sales of magazines and comics for each bookstore comprise as much as fifty to sixty percent on average, so that bookstores can complement the fluctuating and uncertain sales of serious books with the steady sales of magazines and comics.

As for readers, the lineup of items found in their bookshelves would tell much about their dualistic portfolio strategies. In this regard, we should take note of the significance of cultural capital related to *kyoyoshugi* (culturalism). In the process of modernization of Japanese society, high schools under the old system of education played a crucial role for status mobility of common people, and liberal education was the keynote of the high schools. Reading philosophical and literary books, and later Marxist and liberalist literature had a great symbolic significance for Japanese public. It led to the formation of a relatively large size of reading class as well as the demand for academic and semi-academic books. Indeed, semi-professional books and manuals as well as purely professional monographs constitute substantial portion of the so-called technical books and amateur or semi-professional readers have played a crucial role in linking professional knowledge with the lay public in Japan (Cf. Stebbins 1979, 1992). It would be needless to say that the most ardent readers of scholarly books are academicians and students who are themselves potential authors of academic or semi-academic books. They are naturally keenly aware of the potentiality of technical books as symbolic as well as economic assets.

Two Meanings of Dualistic Portfolio Strategy

The above arguments suggest that various actors involved in scholarly publishing more or less belong to multiple institutional domains and are influenced by multiple “institutional logics.” As Friedland and Alford (1991) maintain in their original formulation of the concept, actors do not always blindly adhere to a specific institutional logic but often manipulate or switch among different logics. What we mean by the term dualistic portfolio strategy is intended to capture this dialectics between human agency and cultural determination. This idea also builds on the view of culture as fragmented, often inconsistent “toolkit” or “repertoire” and the view of the actor as a user of cultural tools available in a given socio-cultural context (Swidler 1986).

Conceptualization of actor as a manipulator of institutional logics or user of a cultural toolkit, however, does not necessarily imply a model of actor as a utility maximizer motivated chiefly by the pursuit of clearly articulated interests. On the contrary, the act of switching

among several institutional logics may be influenced by some sort of switching rules, and thus is culturally determined to a considerable extent (Dobbin 1994; DiMaggio 1994; Cf. Lamont and Thévenot 2000). Similarly, culture shapes both the content of toolkit (or behavioral repertoires) and “strategies of action,” namely a general way of organizing action (Swidler 1986, p.277; 2001, p.83).

By “dualistic portfolio strategy,” then, we do not always mean a deliberate and conscious action plan intended to maximize the total sum of economic and symbolic capitals or to keep balance between the two types of capitals. Dualistic portfolio strategy at times refers to culturally-shaped styles and habits of feeling, thinking, and acting that define which kinds of interests are appropriate to pursue in which specific contexts.ⁱ In this sense, dualistic portfolio strategy as culturally-shaped styles and habits logically antecedes the dualistic portfolio strategy as a deliberate action plan.ⁱⁱ

It follows, then, that if differences in publication lineup of two publishing houses are a manifestation of the differences in portfolio (i.e., product mix) strategy of the two firms, they will in turn reflect the differences in action strategies or mindsets of the members of the two houses. The characteristic action strategies of each publisher would define what types of publications are appropriate for each company in order to maximize corporate return or so as to keep balance between its economic viability and cultural missions. The differences in action strategies may, in turn, reflect differences in the dominant institutional logics or “repertoires of justification” that are predominant in the industrial subsector to which each publishing house belong (Weber 2000).

Similarly, if the publication lineup of a firm changes over time, one of the most plausible causes would be the changes in corporate culture and mindsets characteristic of the firm, which in turn may be a consequence of the changes in institutional logics predominant in the publishing industry or its subsector (Cf. Thornton and Ocasio 1999; Thornton 2002). Those institutional changes themselves may be caused by strategic behaviors of individual and collective actors mindful of their interests. While some of the changes could be in line with the original intentions of the actors, others may be unintended consequences of their strategic actions.

In short, by the term dualistic portfolio strategy we cover two different things, that is, (1) culturally-shaped styles and habits of acting and (2) relatively conscious action plan constructed by an actor motivated by clearly articulated interests. The first meaning refers to what Swidler (1986, 2001) calls strategies of action and the second meaning refers to what is called strategy in common parlance.

Inclusion of these two otherwise contrastive meanings in one term may be at times quite confusing. Yet, if we take care not to confuse one usage with the other, the term will alert us to the dialectics between human agency and cultural determination. Careful use of the term

ⁱ While the “logic of consequentiality” applies to the former, the “logic of appropriateness” applies to the latter (March and Olsen 1989).

ⁱⁱ This suggests a way of reformulating Alfred Chandler’s (1962) famous thesis, “Structure follows strategy.” If culturally-shaped strategies of action of organization members come before the corporate strategy they eventually construct, one can rephrase Chandler’s thesis as follows—“Structure follows (corporate) strategy that follows strategies of action of the executives.” The action strategies themselves, needless to say, often follows cultural logics that are predominant in specific social contexts in which the firm and its executive members of are embedded (Cf. Fligstein 1990).

will also make it possible for us to avoid both oversocialized and undersocialized conception of social actors (Wrong 1961; Granovetter 1985). As mentioned before, we adopt Griswold's heuristic scheme of "cultural diamond" and emphasize the role of human agency in explaining the relationship between culture and society. Inclusion of the two meanings in the term "dualistic portfolio strategy" will serve as a precaution against overly utilitarian as well as overly deterministic interpretations of the behaviors of actors involved in scholarly publishing.

Reformulation of Research Questions

Introduction of a new concept or elaboration of a key concept often leads to reformulation of research questions as well as key hypotheses (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Emerson, Fretz, and Show 1995). Elaboration of the concept of dualistic portfolio strategy suggests that the predicament of scholarly publishing in Japan can be viewed in a way quite different from simple reflection models. Namely the declining sales of technical books would not merely reflect the slumping economy or accelerating massification of Japanese society. Rather, it can be a manifestation of the changes both in the "rules of game" in the organizational field of scholarly publishing and in action strategies and deliberate action plans that individual and collective actors have adopted.

In other words, we can conceptualize the social context of the scholarly publishing as a socio-cultural and political "field" (Bourdieu 1992; DiMaggio and Powell 1991) in which various types of actors pursue their own interests deploying symbolic as well as economic capitals and by combining several types of institutional logics. The interests are often in conflict with each other, and the interactive field becomes a political arena in which economic and symbolic resources as well as cultural hegemony are fought for (Bourdieu 1993).

Their pursuit of interests is not completely free from any social and cultural forces. On the contrary, both the ways of pursuing the interests and the very interests are, to a considerable extent, shaped by specific institutional frameworks. The institutional frameworks include, among others, logics of action characteristic of societal institutions (e.g., market, science, profession), the dominant rules of the game in the organizational field coterminous with the publishing industry (Thornton and Ocasio 1999; Thornton 2002), organizational culture of a specific firm, subcultures characteristic of specific professions, occupations, and social circles (Dobbin 1994; Swidler 2001).

While actors are often tormented by the conflicts and contradictions among these various institutional demands, the multiplicity of the institutional domains at the same time often leaves a room for those who are involved in scholarly publishing to improvise and pursue their own individual and/or collective interests. The interests themselves may be "discovered" and articulated through a process in which actors smooth out the conflicts and contradictions among various institutional demands. Thus, the behaviors of actors are institutionally constrained, but are not determined (Friedland and Alford 1991, pp.255-256). In this way, institutional frameworks function not only as constraints but also as resources for actors (DiMaggio 1994) and strategic actions of the actors mindful of their own interests often lead to institutional changes.

The above arguments suggest that we can meaningfully analyze the structural transformation of the scholarly publishing in terms of following research questions.

- In what way can we periodize the history of the publishing industry in Japan?
What were the distinctive structural characteristics of the industry in each period?
What types of logics of action were characteristic of which institutional sectors and subsectors in each period?
Which key actors had what kinds of interests and resources in each period?
Through what kinds of social processes were the interests of the key actors shaped and articulated?
What types of economic and symbolic capitals were deployed by which key actors?
What types of strategies (as deliberate action plans) have been constructed and implemented by which key actors in each period?
What were the rationales behind the strategies?
What were the intended and unintended consequences of the actions based on the strategies?
How did the consequences of the actions based on the strategies influence the structural characteristics of the publishing industry?

Dualistic Portfolio Strategies and Organizational Context

In asking questions such as the above, we will have to pay attention to the specific social contexts in which dualistic portfolio strategies as deliberate action plans are constructed through political processes. We will have to pay special attention to the political process in which conflicts and contradictions among different action strategies and action plans of organization members are smoothed out and integrated into a dualistic strategy characteristic of the organization as a whole. The question of which types of action plans win out in the political process largely depends on the institutional logics and corresponding strategies of action predominant in the organizational field to which a specific organization belongs (Fligstein 1990).

For example, the higher education publishing in the U.S. was characterized by personal capitalism up until the 1960s. At that time, the “editorial logic” was predominant and the prestige of publishing houses and increase of the sales rather than profits were major preoccupations of those involved in higher education publishing. The expansion of the market and intensification of resource competition led to the M&A movements involving publishing firms. It also led to the shift from publishing as a profession to publishing as a business during the 1970s. Market logic instead of editorial logic came to dominate the organizational field involving higher education publishing, which had by then included investment bankers, corporate parent firms, and public shareholders as key players. Within the firm, corporate managers and marketing specialists gained ascendancy over editors. Increase of short-term profits and cash flow became the major corporate missions that defined basic framework of business strategies of publishing firms (Thornton and Ocasio 1995; Thornton 2002).

Unintended Consequences of Strategic Actions

Strategic actions based on the action plans that won the political struggle sometimes lead

to unintended as well as intended consequences and transform the very institutional frameworks on the basis of which the action plans were formulated.

For example, our historical examination of the resale price maintenance systems of books (Sato 2003b) revealed that there was a great difference between the original motives behind the introduction of the fixed price system and the rationales that had been offered to justify the system. Resale price maintenance system and consignment system were originally introduced in prewar Japan by major trade publishers and wholesale distributors for the purpose of efficient and speedy distribution of mass magazines (Matsumoto 1981; Shimizu 1991). Yet, it also contributed to the nationwide expansion of the outlets of literary and technical books published by small presses. The steady economic growth and the expansion of mass education in the postwar period further led to the proliferation of bookstores as well as mid-size and small publishers specializing in scholarly publications (Minowa 1983). Meanwhile the origins of the consignment and resale price maintenance systems gradually came to be (mis)interpreted in terms of the logic of “publishing culture” which extol technical books as its typical embodiment. Nowadays “publishing culture” constitutes an essential ingredient of the vocabulary of motives and rhetoric of those involved in publications of technical books and other types of serious books, and they are the most aggressive defenders of the resale price maintenance system, which have been under attack by the Japan Fair Trade Commission several times since 1980 (Kinoshita 1997). On the other hand, there is an observation that major publishers are preparing, behind the scene, for the decline of the resale price maintenance system, while they are officially against the abolishment of the system (Kobayashi 2001).

In accounting for institutional changes, therefore, we should take note of the possibility that while the logics of action characteristic of certain institutional domains often actually determine the courses of action of individual and collective actors, the logics are also sometimes used as rhetorical devices to justify the behaviors that are not necessarily in line with the logics (Friedland and Alford 1991; Lamont and Thévenot 2000). What kinds of vocabularies of motives and logics actually motivate behaviors or are used as rhetorical tools will depend on the social context in which actors are embedded, as well as on their interests. The interests themselves may be shaped and articulated through specific social processes in which actors are involved. For example, we found that the logic of publishing culture as the rationale of resale price maintenance was “invented” and clearly articulated for the first time around 1980 amid the political negotiation process between the Japan Fair Trade Commission and the representatives of the publishing industry (Sato 2003b). In this connection, discrepancies between behaviors and accounts for the behaviors will provide important clues to the understanding of the causes and consequences of institutional and structural changes.

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