

On the concept of entitlement

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When it is said that we are living in the age of entitlement, I find myself thinking about the nature of entitlement, reciprocity, and altruism and how they exist as mechanics in the human mind, and as a governance system of human interactions. To some, our age is the age of entitlement because young people expect to be handed a job after finishing college, or expect to be given a college education for free. Perhaps this is the manifestation of wanting to be given something for nothing, which is arguably the manifestation of sloth. To some the age of entitlement is symbolized by a baby boomer generation who not only consumed the resources of their time, but also consumed the resources of their children and grandchildren. Their lifetime being what I suppose could be argued as a national or multi-continental exemplification of gluttony.

Then to some the age of entitlement is symbolized by the elites that have taken over public institutions and private corporations, who in a steady bid for more money, more power and more influence are in the grip of greed. I expect some to point out that the age of entitlement is from a world of lust, one consumed by the constant chase for consumption of the carnal desires. Others again, would point to a world filled with envy, where the green eyed monster is fueling a never-ending spiral of keeping up with the Joneses. It is inevitable that some would point out that a world consumed in conflict stems ultimately from from a cycle of violence perpetuated by wrath. Finally, there are those who would argue that our world is entangled in a battle of people's public images, and an obsession by how we are perceived, and thus ultimately lead us to pride.

Entitlement

What is the nature of entitlement? Merriam-Webster defines it as:

| belief that one is deserving of or entitled to certain privileges [1]

If we use the definition that *"belief that one is deserving of certain privileges"* then we also have to include the definition of privilege which according to the same source is:

| a right or benefit that is given to some people and not to others [2]

The dichotomy that arose in my mind, was that the colloquial use of the terms differ somewhat from their definition as it makes no mention of whether or not something has been earned. An example that came to mind was a person who earned a scholarship and attends a University is entitled to get a good education, however he or she was not entitled to the scholarship, that was earned. However, this creates a dichotomy wherein you have earned privileges and unearned privileges, where the scholarship is earned through effort of the individual, while in the case of a National Healthcare System, the benefits of medical care is earned through the effort of society as a whole.

This creates 3 levels of entitlement that we could explore.

1. Person to Person
2. Person to Organization
3. Person to Nation

Entitlement in interpersonal relationships is something I'm sure we can all think of an example of, from the roommate that never did his own dishes and expected you to do them, to the parent who expected to be permitted to govern your life. This can be viewed as a form of "*time thievery*" in that the person is stealing your time, in order to obtain a better time-life balance in their own.

Entitlement in organizational settings depends on the nature of the organization, however what they all share is an input-output paradigm, wherein the individual expects a given output for a given input, and the organization expects a given input for a given output. For instance, you may be volunteering at your church for 10 hours a week, but in return you expect to be given a prominent position within your church, that feeds your ego.

Entitlement in a nation, breaks down to earned privileges on a non-individualized level, in that all privileges are offered equally to all citizens, however they are financed in an unequal manner. A nation is financed primarily by taxes and income from public property and resources, and various programs can be seen as forms of risk pooling. For instance, Person A may be born with a genetic disorder that means he or she will be able to input less to the system and need more output, whereas Person B may be born in perfect health and remain so for his or her entire life and thus end up inputting more and requiring less output. In an individualized system, they would pay according to use, however in a universal system the total cost is divided among the total amount of users.

Reciprocity

This brings up the concept of reciprocity, which could be defined as "*You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours*". A reciprocal transaction could be argued as an equitable transaction based on terms negotiated between two individuals. Wherein both parties to the transaction considers that the transaction has been fair to them. For instance, if I offer the kid next door \$10 for mowing my lawn, he is trading his time for my money, and I am trading my money for his time. To me it's worth \$10 not to have to mow the lawn, to him, the \$10 are worth spending an hour or so pushing around a mower in the sun.

So it follows that what people refer to as "*entitlement*" is at the core, an uneven transaction between themselves and "*others*". Referring to the three levels of relationships outlined above. In effect, they feel like their input and output are poorly aligned to where they are carrying more of the load than other people.

Reciprocity is a fundamental mechanic that governs human relationships and attempts to balance the equation through a mixture of inner and outer tools.

Summary and conclusions

One could argue that many of the issues that dominate the political landscape are related to the mixture of reciprocity and entitlement. In effect, people keep an internal account of how much do they pay in taxes, vs how much are they receiving in state services. How much time are they spending on joint chores and how much is their roommate spending. So when someone is called "entitled" it reflects the perception of the person making the statement that they are seeking a better deal for themselves at the cost of other people. In effect, it is the perception that "*others*" are engaging in social loafing.

This triggers a series of mechanisms through which the person who perceives themselves as receiving the short end of the stick, seeks to re-balance their accounts. In interpersonal relationships it may mean aggressive or passive aggressive methods. In organizational settings it may manifest as work-to-rule, malicious compliance, or adjusting your own effort to a level where you feel like your deal is equitable.

In a national situation, the same mechanics manifest as in an organizational level. This is observed among Japanese “*Herbivore men*” who eschew the traditional focus on working hard to support a family, and instead adapt their effort to a point where they can maintain a lifestyle they are comfortable with. It has also become a familiar discussion in MGTOW environments where men figure out that they can live comfortably on a salary that requires very little discretionary effort.

As argued by author Peter Lloyd in an article [3] men have started to perceive the lives of their fathers, and grandfathers as no longer equitable, and therefore elect to act in the mechanisms that are obvious in any relationship perceived as unbalanced. This is reflected in the declining marriage rates, in the “*prolonged adolescence*” and in the growth of the “*eternal bachelor*”.

I wrote a post recently on [balance](#), and the reality is that any unbalanced situation does inevitably return to a balanced state. A government that turns tyrannical is put down by other governments or by its own people. A government that makes poor decisions over a long period of time, inevitably is taken over by another government. Growth and influence are great indicators of equitable and reciprocal deals made at all three levels in aggregate. This is not to say that every American got an equitable deal during the growth after WW2, or that every British citizen had a great deal when the sun would never set on the British Empire. It is to say that in aggregate the deals made had a net positive effect on the nations growth through creating incentives that maximized output.

A note:

I recently launched a [Patreon page](#) where I will be posting additional content every month for those who support me and I will do a Google Hangout for the highest tier Patrons (limited to 10 people).

I’ve also had some requests for consults, which I’ve declined up until now, but due to demand I’ve chosen to open up for doing some consults on request. For details please check out my [Consulting and Patreon Page](#)

[As always you can buy my book Gendernomics at Amazon.com as both paperback and Kindle](#)

Sources

[1] <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/entitlement>

[2] <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/privilege>

[3] <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-3046350/Why-men-refuse-marry-Women-complain-chaps-today-won-t-settle-Sorry-ladies-s-fault-argues-wickedly-provocative-new-book-Denigration-Men-PETER-LLOYD.html>

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