

The Bearing of Social Theory on Japanese Studies; the Bearing of Japanese Studies on Social Theory

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This panel, organized by Edward A. Tiryakian of Duke University, consisted of two contrasting sessions: "The Bearing of Social Theory on Japanese Studies," chaired by KASHIOKA Tomihide; and "The Bearing of Japanese Studies on Social Theory," chaired by Edward A. Tiryakian. Four papers in the first session, and three in the second, were read and discussed.

Intensions of the Session:

The theme's title derives from a pair of classical essays by the world's foremost sociologist, Robert K. Merton. The essays are entitled "The Bearing of Sociological Theory on Empirical Research" and "The Bearing of Empirical Research on Sociological Theory" (in Merton, *On Theoretical Sociology*).

Recently the eminent political comparativist Samuel P. Huntington, in an op-ed article in *The New York Times* (June 6, 1993) suggested that world politics is entering a new phase of cultural conflict between civilizations, replacing ideological and economic conflict. He sees other civilizations seeking modernity as potentially hostile if they feel blocked by the West, unless "elements of commonality among Western and other civilizations" can be identified. Huntington notes that of all non-Western civilizations "only Japan has fully succeeded" in the quest "to become modern without becoming Western."

Huntington does not consider disruptions within Western civilization which may drag down the level of modernity already achieved, but his remarks provide a timely rationale for a panel bringing together scholars from Japan and from overseas to relate: (1) how the Japanese experience or the Japanese case is significant for civilizational analysis of modernity, including how Japanese civilization may be viewed as mediating Western and non-Western civilizations, (2) how social theories of modernity are reflected in or heuristic for Japanese empirical studies, (3) how empirical developments in Japan call for modifications, changes, or validation of social theories that are implicitly or explicitly embedded in Western cultural settings, (4) whether the further path of modernity, including emergent globalization, may make it more difficult for Japan (and the United States) to maintain the social structure and value-orientations which have made it so distinct (i. e., the theme of "exceptionalism"). These considerations were the foci of the two sessions.

The Authors and the Titles of Papers:

1. The Bearing of Social Theory on Japanese Studies:

Shmuel N. EISENSTADT, "The Comparative Study of Collective Consciousness, Nationalism, Civil Society, With Special Emphasis on the Japanese Experience."

BEFU Harumi, "The Bearing of the Concept of Civil Religion on Japanese Studies."

Bernard S. SILBERMAN, "Japan and Social Theory: Modernization, Modernism, or Postmodernism?"

Edward A. TIRYAKIAN, "Sociological Theory and the Good Society: Rethinking Durkheim and Japan Today."

2. The Bearing of Japanese Studies on Social Theory:

YABUNO Yuzo, "Between Super-Power Japan and Micro-Power Japan: A Search for the Real Image of Japan."

YOSHINO Kosaku, "Social Theories of Nationalism and the Japanese Case,"

MIYAJIMA Takashi, "Homogenization, Heterogenization, and Integration: Cultural Reproduction and Minorities in Japan."

The revised versions of these papers are now being edited by Tiryakian and Kashioka, and will be published from Brill in 1996.