

MIMESIS

INTERNATIONAL

HASEKURA LEAGUE INTERCULTURAL STUDIES EDITIONS

n. 7

Editorial Board

Raffaele Milani (University of Bologna), Rolando Minuti (University of Florence), Ikuko Sagiyama (University of Florence), Andreas Niehaus (Ghent University), Judit Arokay (Heidelberg University), Harald Fuess (Heidelberg University), Ivo Smits (Leiden University), Franco Mazzei (University of Naples "L'Orientale"), Giangiorgio Pasqualotto (University of Padua), Matilde Mastrangelo (Sapienza University of Rome), Glenn Hook (University of Sheffield), Ozaki Akihiro 尾崎彰宏 (Tohoku University), Nagaoka Ryūsaku 長岡龍作 (Tohoku University), Satō Hiroo 佐藤弘夫 (Tohoku University), Satō Yoshimichi 佐藤嘉倫 (Tohoku University), Takahashi Akinori 高橋章則 (Tohoku University), Paul Ziche (Utrecht University), Bonaventura Ruperti (Ca' Foscari University of Venice), Georg Stenger (University of Vienna)

REVOLUTIONARY TIMES

A Comparative View of the Long 1960s
in Japan and Italy

Edited by
Adachi Hiroaki, Christopher Craig,
Marco Del Bene, and Enrico Fongaro

MIMESIS
INTERNATIONAL

© 2022 – MIMESIS INTERNATIONAL – MILAN
www.mimesisinternational.com
e-mail: info@mimesisinternational.com

Isbn: 9788869773952

Book series: *Hasekura League Intercultural Studies Editions*, n. 7

© MIM Edizioni Srl
P.I. C.F. 02419370305

Cover image: Roger Wollstadt, *Tokyo – Bullet Train*, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/24736216@N07/3429753993/in/set-72157623081490477/>

Back cover image: courtesy Archivio Video Fotografico Storico di Autostrade per l'Italia

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION <i>Marco Del Bene</i>	7
---------------------------------------	---

PART 1 THE POST-RECOVERY ORDER: SOCIAL CHANGE AND THE POLITICAL SYSTEM IN THE LONG 1960S

SOCIAL CHANGES AND THE POLITICAL SYSTEM IN ITALY <i>Umberto Gentiloni Silveri</i>	15
SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH-SPEED ECONOMIC GROWTH IN JAPAN <i>Adachi Hiroaki</i>	31

PART 2 CHARTING THE COURSE: STUDENT AND OTHER MASS POLITICAL MOVEMENTS

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND ITALIAN REPUBLICAN HISTORY (1960s-1970s) <i>Emmanuel Betta</i>	55
THE JAPANESE STUDENT MOVEMENT AND ITS CHANGE IN THE LONG 1960s <i>Kosugi Ryōko</i>	69

PART 3 WRESTLING WITH PROSPERITY: MASS CONSUMPTION, RESISTANCE, AND SOCIAL CHANGE

THE BIRTH OF CONSUMERISM AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF RETAIL VENUES <i>Elena Papadia</i>	89
---	----

CHARACTERISTICS OF JAPANESE CONSUMERISM: A FOCUS ON HIGH-SPEED ECONOMIC GROWTH <i>Harayama Kōsuke</i>	105
---	-----

PART 4

HIGH CULTURE, POPULAR CULTURE, AND MASS MEDIA
IN AN AGE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

POPULAR CULTURE AS A SOURCE FOR ASSESSING SOCIAL CHANGE IN ITALY AND JAPAN IN THE LONG SIXTIES <i>Marco Del Bene</i>	123
CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION IN JAPAN DURING ITS HIGH-SPEED ECONOMIC GROWTH <i>Takaoka Hiroyuki</i>	141

MARCO DEL BENE
INTRODUCTION

The magnitude of economic, political, and societal changes that took place in Italy and Japan during the Long 1960s is so extensive that producing a comprehensive analysis is a daunting task. Nevertheless, it is a useful and necessary task to undertake since it is surprising how these two countries, so distant geographically and - at least apparently – culturally, have followed similar historical paths, particularly after the end of the Second World War.

The 1960s in Japan was a decade of dramatic change that went beyond the formal structures of society, politics, and the economy to provoke fundamental transformations in values and consciousness. The most visible of these developments occurred between 1960 and 1970; however, the roots of change reached back into the previous decade and the processes of which they were a part continued into the following. Together, this period comprises “the long 1960s”.

The long-cherished idea of studying the “long 1960s” from a comparative perspective between Italy and Japan began to take shape in the spring of 2019 in Sendai at Tohoku University, when the first workshop on Japan and the “long 1960s”, *A Global Perspective on an Era of Revolutionary Change*, was held. On that occasion, the participants agreed to pursue a comparative approach to the study of contemporary Italy and Japan based on the many similarities - as well as the equally significant differences - between the historical and social paths of these two countries. The perspectives of future development for this comparative approach appeared to be very promising for both raising new research paths and for deepening the investigation

of ongoing research projects. These possibilities were again the focus of the special panel on the “*Long 1960s*” in *Italy and Japan: The Possibility of a Comparative Historical Approach* at the 6th Hasekura League symposium, *Yonaoshi: Envisioning a Better World*, in March 2021. In preparation for future comparative research on Japan and Italy, scholars from the two countries gathered and discussed the themes of social change and the political system, student and social movements and cultural changes.

Italy and Japan faced similar challenges during the long 1960s, each experiencing eras of fast economic growth, instrumental for the final leap towards “modernity”. Both countries underwent radical demographic, social, cultural, political, and institutional changes. On the political front, Italy and Japan, while formally democratic systems, were characterized by what was called in Italy the “*alternanza bloccata*” [blocked alternation] or “*bipartitismo imperfetto*” [imperfect two-party system]. Both terms described a paralyzed political system with no alternation in power. In Italy the Christian Democracy Party (CD) and its allies held power while the Italian Communist Party (ICP) never managed to achieve a voting majority, despite the significant electoral support it enjoyed. The so-called “1955 system” of Japan, based on a similar confrontation between the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and Japanese Socialist Party (JSP), was also a case of an “imperfect two-party system”.

In both countries, political conflict gave rise to extreme forms of violence, both right-wing and left-wing, a phenomenon that became more apparent when the New Left movements emerged in Japan and Italy in 1956 following the crisis of the traditional left triggered by Krushev’s criticism of Stalinism and the Hungarian revolution. It does not seem a coincidence that Japan and Italy (and of course also Germany) experienced years of strong political tension and violence, each not only seeing particularly lacerating social changes in the postwar period, but also marking the eastern and western borders of the “iron curtain”.

A solely political interpretation of the “Long Sixties”, however, is not adequate. The revolutionary changes in economy,

society, and culture were profoundly interconnected. The rapid development of the economy brought about major changes in the social and demographic structure. Social changes triggered, or perhaps were anticipated by, changes in costume and in cultural production. Criticism of the cultural establishment led to the emergence of new “subcultures” and new artistic forms of expression, and it often happened that the ideas and symbols created in the arts influenced political action. This is why, besides adopting the Long 1960s perspective, it is necessary to approach the study of these years with an interdisciplinary and global approach.

If research on the “Long 1960s” in Italy and Japan is to be dealt not only from a political standpoint but also from cultural, economic, social, and ideological perspectives, is it possible to transform such a complex multidisciplinary approach into an operative practice? Moreover, is it feasible for a period with an elusive nature such as the “Long 1960s”, whose starting and ending points are vague and change according to the perspective adopted? When, for Italy and for Japan, did the Long 1960s begin and end? This is a question to which it is not possible to provide an unambiguous answer. Considering this inevitable vagueness, we can perhaps be content to say that it was a historical cycle that began in the first half of the 1950s and ended in the second half of the 1970s. We might wonder whether, from such premises, a comparative approach between Italy and Japan is of any value.

The essays collected in this volume are intended to be an initial reply to such questions, and a contribution to the development of a comparative perspective of the histories of Italy and Japan in the tumultuous period of change of the Long 1960s. We decided to address the problem from four different perspectives, each discussed by a scholar from Italy and a scholar from Japan.

Part one, *The Post-Recovery Order: Social Change and the Political System in the Long 1960s*, features Umberto Gentiloni Silveri’s “Social Changes and the Political System in Italy” and Adachi Hiroaki’s “Social and Political Characteristics of High-Speed Economic Growth in Japan”. For Gentiloni Silveri, political and social change were inextricably interwoven in

Italy's Long 1960s, a period often associated with the word "miracle". While this term was often misused and does not adequately describe the complexity of the events that took place in Italy, it does remind us that these were exceptional years, characterized by tremendous and unparalleled vitality. Adachi points out that this was also economically and socially a "golden era" in Japan. The steady and prolonged period of high growth from 1955 to 1973 caused drastic changes in the social structure of Japan that accompanied the creation and calcification of the so-called "1955 System".

In part two, *Charting the Course: Student and other Mass Political Movements*, Emmanuel Betta offers "Political and Social Movements and Italian Republican History (1960s-1970s)" and Kosugi Ryōko "The Japanese Student Movement and Its Change in the Long 1960s". According to Betta, 1968 was a year of pivotal importance, but during the entirety of the long 1960s the mobilisation of citizens was instrumental for watershed changes in Italy's social structure. The reform of the anachronistic psychiatric hospital system by Franco Basaglia, the legalization of abortion, and the new National Health system are signature examples of such changes. Kosugi focuses on the Japanese student movement in the long 1960s, an approach necessary to treat not only the movements themselves but also the nature of cultural changes and strife as an expression of social change. This provides a broader perspective, connecting political activism and cultural change with the social changes Japan experienced.

Part three, *Wrestling with Prosperity: Mass Consumption, Resistance, and Social Change*, presents Elena Papadia's "The Birth of Consumerism and the Transformation of Retail Venues" and Harayama Kōsuke's "Characteristics of Japanese Consumerism: A Focus on High-Speed Economic Growth". Papadia reminds us that Italian families in the early 1950s had a "hunger for consumption". The establishment of large-scale retail distribution in Italy began during the 1960s, a late start compared with other European countries. The assimilation of the new US-like consumption this enabled replaced people's needs with their desires as a reason to spend. Harayama notes that in postwar

Japan consumerism started in a state of deprivation and became tightly connected with democracy as a reaction to economic control by the State. Consumer associations, accordingly, assumed an important role in representing consumer interest.

Part four, *High Culture, Popular Culture, and Mass Media in an Age of Economic Growth*, is comprised of Marco Del Bene's "Popular Culture as a Source for Assessing Social Change in Italy and Japan in the Long Sixties" and "Cultural Transformation in Japan During Its High-Speed Economic Growth" by Takaoka Hiroyuki. Del Bene emphasises the importance of popular culture products as evidence for historical research. From this standpoint, comics, being both a visual and textual medium and having achieved "adulthood" during the Long 1960s, are particularly useful. The political debate over comics among Italian politicians allows for an assessment of their values, priorities, and prejudice. Takaoka focuses on the relations between rapid economic growth and Japanese culture. The disconnection of "high" and "popular" culture produced a "dual economic structure", just as differences in the size of industries resulted in a "dual economic structure". Within popular culture, Japan's manga culture should be considered a "long revolution", even exceeding the temporal framework of the long 1960s.