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**THE PROCEEDINGS OF  
THE “TWO POLITICAL ECONOMIES IN CRISIS:  
HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES  
ON THE FISCAL DILEMMAS FACING JAPAN AND  
THE UNITED STATES” CONFERENCE**

**INTRODUCTION**

Eisuke IDE

*Faculty of Economics, Keio University, Tokyo, Japan*

In December 10–11, 2011, thanks to the conference program of the Keio Economic Society, my collaborator, Elliot Brownlee (Professor of History, University of California, Santa Barbara) and I organized an interdisciplinary group of about 20 scholars from both Japan and the United States. From their own perspectives, participants explored the social, economic, and political origins of the fiscal crises in our two nations and suggested what broad-gauged social, economic, and political reforms might be required to resolve the crises.

In the conference, although there were many important differences in fiscal conditions in Japan and the United States, Professor Brownlee and I were struck by at least a few similarities. These seemed potentially significant and included, for example, the small size of the public sectors, the low level of tax effort, the high degree of reliance on income taxes, and the high levels of deficit and debt (when compared to other major economies). We were aware of the tendency of social scientists to treat each of the two nations as special or “exceptional” cases, and to engage only rarely in systematic comparisons of the two. And the conference succeeded to test the value of engaging in comparative analysis of the two nations from the standpoint of their fiscal circumstances.

With respect to the chronological focus of our discussions, we had some preference for a focus on roughly the last forty years, that is to say the period since the early 1970s. In the conference, we concluded historical approaches to comparative social analysis as extremely promising. This was in part because of our belief that the fiscal problems which both nations faced would probably require fundamental changes in social, economic, and political arrangements and practices, and that effective changes of this sort would require deep historical understanding of the interactions among social structures, economic conditions, and political institutions. In other words, we believe it would be useful to understand the social, economic, and political origins of current fiscal problems in our two nations in preparing to solve those problems. We had a strong interest in investigating the large questions of the interaction between the structure of

government spending and tax consent, and the interaction between fiscal crises and social contracts. To answer our big puzzle, we will hold the Second conference in 2013 and plan to publish a conference volume in 2014.

**TWO POLITICAL ECONOMIES IN CRISIS:  
HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES  
ON THE FISCAL DILEMMAS FACING JAPAN  
AND THE UNITED STATES**

**December 10, Keio University Minami-Kosha 441**

**10:00–12:00**

The Fiscal Crises in Japan and the United States:  
Toward a Comparative Perspective  
W. Elliot Brownlee (UC Santa Barbara)

How and Why Japanese Government Sector has Gone Deeply in Debt?  
Takehiko Ikegami (Rikkyo University)

From the Affluent Society to the Intolerant Society:  
Fiscal Mechanism of Generating the Poor Tax Consent in Japan  
Eisaku Ide (Keio University)

Commentator Morinao Iju (Yokohama National University)

**13:30–15:30**

Who Helps State's Financing as 'Fiscal Agent' and How? :  
A Brief Comparison of Germany to Japan  
Takaharu Shimada (Ph.D. Candidate in Keio University)

Spending and Tax Consent in the US and Japan  
Gene Park (Loyola Marymount University)

Japan's Debt Crisis and Two Lost Decades  
Masaru Kaneko (Keio University) and Yukiko Yamazaki (University of Tokyo)

Commentator Shigeru Sato (Tohoku Gakuin University)

**16:00–17:20**

The VAT Laggards: A Comparative History of Japanese  
and US Resistance to the Value-added Tax  
Ajay K. Mehrotra (Indiana University)

The Outliers: Corporate Income Taxes in the United States and Japan, 1970–present  
Joseph J. Thorndike (The Tax History Project at Tax Analysts,

University of Virginia)  
 Commentator Satoshi Sekiguchi (Rikkyo University)

**December 11, Keio University Minami-Kan 2B31**

**10:00–12:00**

Taxing, Spending, and Public Opinion:  
 The Erosion of Tax Consent in the United States  
 Andrea Louise Campbell (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)

Imagine All the People: Public Finance and the Welfare State  
 Cathie Jo Martin (Boston University)

Revenue-raising side is more problematic than spending:  
 the case of Japan's societal crisis  
 Mari Osawa (University of Tokyo)

Commentator W. Elliot Brownlee (UC Santa Barbara)  
 and Ajay K. Mehrotra (Indiana University)

**13:30–14:50**

The political economy of intergovernmental fiscal relationship  
 and local government deficit—Japan's  
 case in comparative perspective  
 Masayuki Takahashi (University of Niigata Prefecture)

A comparative analysis of the accumulation of the Japanese  
 and US subnational government debt since 1980  
 Masaya Ueda (Ministry of International Affairs and Communications)

Commentator Gene Park (Loyola Marymount University)

**15:20–16:40**

The Campaign for Federal Tax Limitation in the United States since 1973  
 Isaac William Martin (UC San Diego)

Demanding More/Trusting Less:  
 American Disaster Politics in an Age of Diminished Solidarity  
 Gareth Davies (University of Oxford)

Commentator Joseph J. Thorndike (A Tax Analyst and University of Virginia)