

# **A Comprehensive Study of Takabatake's Concept of 'Modernization': Insights from National Progressive Movement, Mexican Studies, and Local Politics**

**T A N A K A   S h u n s u k e**

This paper explores how Michitoshi Takabatake engaged with modernization theory in postwar Japanese political science. Drawing on the 1960 Hakone Conference, Japan's partial endorsement and critique of US-led frameworks, and evolving social movements across Japan, such as anti-Vietnam War activism, he proposed an alternative vantage point distinct from both American behaviorist constructs and interpretations stemming from doctrinaire Marxism. He examined the “progressive national movement”, a local power structured under Kakuei Tanaka, and Mexico's revolutionary trajectory to illustrate how simplistic linear models overlook domestic “north-south” inequalities and complex social legacies. While Walt W. Rostow and Seymour Martin Lipset posited universal correlations between economic expansion and democratization, Takabatake underscored Japan's distinct historical processes and uneven regional dynamics. By comparing Mexico's quasi-authoritarian rule with Japan's postwar transformation, he emphasized that modernization is neither a monolithic nor value-neutral phenomenon. Grounded in anti-Vietnam War activism, he integrated empirical inquiry with a commitment to citizen-based movements, eschewing rigid prescriptive formulas. Takabatake's approach advocated historical specificity and ethical reflexivity, challenging both Cold War-driven methodologies and purely scholastic perspectives. His legacy, encompassing multi-sited research and transnational comparisons, underscores the necessity of interpreting modernization through localized experiences and historically situated agency. In conclusion, this approach reaffirms the necessity of reconfiguring the very concept of modernization in relation to the concrete contexts of everyday life and social movements.