

# A HISTORY OF THE PUBLIC OPINION AND SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH DIVISION, SCAP

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## Chapter 1: Social Research in a Military Occupation

Up to World War II, the majority of research on Japan's society and culture had been done by historians, economists, and political scientists--many of whom were attached to Western diplomatic services. Jon Embree's pioneer community study, *Suye Mura* (1939) was the only major piece of research done by a professional anthropologist or sociologist. One reason for the neglect of Japan by these two related disciplines was the difficulty of the language. Even under the best of circumstances, training in Japanese is arduous; and the study of this language in Western universities was extremely rare before the war. However, perhaps even more important was the pervading climate in each of these disciplines: until recently anthropologists were not interested in the older civilizations, tribal societies having captured their attention for generations; sociologists were principally concerned with the West, and, moreover, had not displayed a great deal of interest in cultural differences as a key to understanding social structure.

During the war large numbers of Americans and British were trained by the armed forces in the language, history, and culture of Japan. Still others, not so specially trained, were stationed in Japan as part of the Occupation forces and had the opportunity to learn about and appreciate the country. Out of these experiences has come a whole generation of social scientists who specialize in Japanese studies. Nearly every major American university has at least one of these people on its staff, and in several institutions, specialized institutes or study programs have developed around one or more of these scholars.

The work reported on in this volume was a pioneer venture. It was carried out during the Occupation by a team of young social scientists either trained in the language by the armed services or brought to Japan because of some special interest or competence. The studies reported here thus have a certain historical importance aside from whatever intrinsic value they may have as social research.

Nearly a decade has passed since these studies were done. During this interval the data have been analyzed and viewed against a background of related studies and the experience of the writers. The research venture itself--working with "conquered" colleagues in a military occupation with the objective of serving social science and a great social reform program--can also now be considered from the standpoint of our increased professional experience. In this chapter we present a brief history of the research organization and an appraisal of its work in the light of subsequent reflection.

### A. THE PUBLIC OPINION AND SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH DIVISION

The Public Opinion and Sociological Research Division, Civil Information and Education Section, General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (Japan Occupation), Tokyo--this was the formal title of "PO&SR," a research organization of about fifty Japanese social scientists, translators, and clerical workers, supervised by four or five American social scientists. Most of the Japanese scholars were men of considerable distinction in their professions; the Americans were all young, some still in graduate training. (Such disparity in experience between the American and their Japanese employees in Occupation agencies was typical.) The organization was lodged in Radio Tokyo, a large, modern office building in central Tokyo; down the hall from its offices was the small studio in which at the end of World War II Japanese technicians played the recorded surrender speech of the Emperor. The Civil Information and Education Section (CI&E) of which the PO&SR

 Division was a part was one of the several major bodies that constituted the Supreme Command for the Allied Powers--"SCAP"--or the central Tokyo bureaucracy of the Japan Occupation, headed by the General Douglas MacArthur.

  
 From the beginning of the Occupation various informal or semiofficial organizations had been assigned the job of collecting information on the many reforms the Japanese were guided to undertake by the Occupation ("guided," because in the Occupation it was officially held that the Japanese were never ordered to do anything). This collection of data was necessary because of the language barrier, since while Japanese sources of information were relatively abundant, very few Americans could read Japanese well enough to use these sources in their original form, and obtaining translations was a constant problem. And of course the Japanese data were thin in certain key areas, above all in "public opinion," a phenomenon cherished by Americans, who feel that social change should be liked as well as endured. Another stimulus for research was the general and growing sense of mystery about how the Japanese did things in their complicated society. Numerous reforms seemed to fan out over the surface and vanish; others had unexpected results; and in almost all cases, Americans in "command" positions had difficult determining just who had the responsibility in Japanese organizations.

  
  
 In response to these various needs (exploited, of course, by a few Americans in uniform who preferred research above anything else), the Public Opinion and Sociological Research Unit was established in the Analysis and Research Division of the CI&E Section early in 1946. The unit began operations with a small uniformed staff of social scientists (transferred from other assignments) who devoted themselves to assessing the operations of the numerous public opinion agencies which had mushroomed in Japan after the surrender. (The Japanese, like Americans, were anxious about what people thought, and once the authoritarian political system was eliminated, devices for finding out sprang up on all sides.) Opinion surveys of direct interest to Occupation officials were translated, analyzed, and evaluated-- especially the latter, since this early Japanese work was crude--and a number of original surveys were carried out with members of the Japanese organizations (see Passin, 1951). The Japanese were delighted to participate, for it meant free instruction in technique. This work of the unit was under the direction of Herbert Passin and John Pelzel.

  
 By 1948, the unit had begun making sociological field studies and increasing the scope of cooperative research with Japanese survey agencies. The unit had accumulated many data on Japanese institutions, and it began planning research with an eye to basic social problems. Since the number of requests for studies from Occupation offices exceeded the capacity of the unit, the desirability of some change came under discussion. By this time too the uniformed staff had been restored to civilian status, and with this arose a keener interest in professional activities--that is, they began agitation for expansion. Since prestige and authority are vital considerations in bureaucracy, it was felt necessary to import a number of distinguished American social scientist to make a study of the unit's future. Consequently, Clyde Kluckhohn, Herbert Hyman, and Raymond Bowers visited Japan at the invitation of SCAP. These men toured the country, talking to Japanese social scientists and opinion survey people, and wrote several detailed reports on the inadequacies of the situation they observed and the needs for the future. Their final report became the basis of an official "staff study," which was presented to MacArthur's chief of staff on 20 September 1947 by Donald R. Nugent, chief of the CI&E Section. The recommended new organization, in the opinion of the chief of staff, was much too elaborate, and the plans were not approved. In personal correspondence with the authors of the present volume concerning the team of visiting experts, Kluckhohn noted that the time was too short for effective action and that about the week he left he finally knew his way around well enough and was well enough known to be in a position to advocate what needed to be done. Kluckhohn also observed that the CI&E Section was the weakest of the big staff sections, with little prestige "topside," and this meant that its officials were unable or unwilling to press hard for the expansion. He felt that if the team had stayed in Japan another two months, and had used more judicious techniques with the top brass, more might have been accomplished.

However, all was not lost. In 1948, as part of the SCAP "visiting expert" program, Dr. Florence Powdermaker, psychiatrist, was sent to Japan as a consultant on social research. After extensive travel and interviewing, and a thorough study of the existing unit and the earlier staff study, Dr. Powdermaker recommended that the work and staff be employed in a more modest direction. This was soon accomplished by simply transferring social scientists languishing in other divisions of CI&E to the unit. While this was taking place, an efficiency committee

within SCAP was streamlining the whole organization, and after an investigation by this group, Dr. Powdermaker's insistence on division status for PO&SR (also recommended by the Kluckhohn team) was approved. Disputes with other Occupation agencies (discussed later) were resolved, and the unit became a division in October 1948. John C. Pelzel was announced as division chief, with Herbert Passin as deputy chief. The original staff consisted of Tamie Tsuchiyama, Cynthia Mazo, and David L. Sills. John W. Bennett joined the division in late 1948, and became chief when Pelzel returned to the United States in 1949. Later additions were James T. Thayer and Iwao Ishino. The Japanese staff remained at about fifty throughout PO&SR's existence. The division was "deactivated" on 30 June 1951.



During its lifetime the division was engaged primarily in research and writing, with advisory and consultative work a secondary function (see Bennett, 1952). Some thirty-two attitude surveys, two sociological monographs, and one brief psychological study were mimeographed and circulated within Headquarters. In addition, about thirty special memorandums and reports were issued to interested agencies in typewritten form. One major sociological study, *The Japanese Village in Transition* (Raper and others, 1950), was lithoprinted and distributed fairly widely in the United States. It has since become the foundation for a series of re-studies of the same communities by various American and Japanese scholars.



In addition to research activities, members of the staff acted as consultants to Japanese opinion polling agencies, and in a number of cases trained their top personnel. The most important polling agency during this period was the Nation Public Opinion Institute, a Japanese government organization established in the prime minister's office as a specific project of the PO&SR Division, and for a long time the division's major instrument for survey research. The staff of the division also devoted considerable time to lectures and to giving advice on research in social science to Japanese universities, and they were required as well to brief SCAP officials and agencies on topics of mutual interest. Occasionally foreign newspaper correspondents and visiting VIP's were briefed by division officers.



Some of the public opinion surveys at regular intervals sampled attitudes on a variety of topics concerning the Occupation reform program and "social trends" in Japan. Most of the surveys, however, were devoted to single topics and issues--for example, prostitution, the land reform, financial reforms, marriage, status of women, the population problem, and international relations (see Thayer, 1951). Such surveys were always made with careful attention to social strata and cultural patterns, and we were always conscious of our professional obligation to look into basic issues in the study of Japanese life.



The sociological and social anthropological researches went much further in this direction (see Bennett, 1951). Examples are studies on the social effects of the land reform (the findings were published in *The Japanese Village in Transition*); on social and economic aspects of arrangements concerning fishery rights in coastal communities; on the organization of neighborhood associations and their history; on labor boss organizations; on the socioeconomic structures of forestry communities; and on the range and variety of family and household composition. Most of the data for these studies were acquired in the course of detailed investigations made in the field--for example, the forestry research required two field trips of about two months' duration, with a total of twelve field workers. In addition to field studies, the sociological research also utilized reports and original data from field work carried out by Japanese social scientists attached to the division.



In addition to these major studies, the division supervised a number of specialized or small-scale research projects, such as Minoru Go's study of slang terms and jargon of the Tokyo underworld. Many translations of key documents on Japanese society were also made. In Appendix A [in the original publication of this chapter] we present a list of desirable research topics as they appeared in Dr. Powdermaker's original report to SCAP. While we did not use this list as a formal program, our work on the whole followed its major topical emphases: (1) problems of the relationship between the state and the public; (2) forms of social control by tradition and hierarchical organizations; and (3) social relationships in the economic system.

Conspicuous by its absence among the topics of research is education. Aside from one or two public opinion studies, both brief, PO&SR did no research on educational reforms--even though we were part of other CI&E Sections. Our failure here was due principally to the fact that the Education Division rarely requested our

services and we rarely felt it appropriate to press its staff for a request. In the background lay the familiar tension between educationists and social scientists which were carried into the Occupation. In addition, we thought that the Education Division was fundamentally uninterested in the effects of its reforms. In our view, it conceived of its function as that of making basic structural changes in the school system and revising a few textbooks, but not as molding the minds and experiences of the new generation. This attitude prevailed in CI&E: the section was hardly a vital force in reorientation of Japanese thinking.

#### **B. THE AFTERMATH: A RESEARCH PROGRAM IN JAPANESE SOCIAL RELATIONS**

Before we take up other aspects of PO&SR's work, we should describe the organization which succeeded it after the division's "deactivation" in 1951. During the final year of the division's activities, plans were made by some of the staff members for preserving and publishing of the original research data. This was deemed important not only because of our professional attachments, but because the official research reports hardly did justice to the materials. Most of these official reports pertained to topics of specific interest to the initiating SCAP agency and its Japanese governmental twin, and it goes without saying that far more data were collected than just the amount necessary to satisfy these obligations. The staff maintained at all times its interest in basic social science and in the general characteristics of Japanese culture, and utilized opportunities to acquire information on these matters. Hence many of our projects were not only "applied" or "program" research, but also scholarly studies.

The data were transferred to Ohio State University by the authors of this book with the intention of setting up a small research and analysis organization to see the materials through publication. Bennett acquired a contract to perform this task from the Office of Naval Research in 1952, and was able to bring Iwao Ishino to the campus from his research assignment in the Ryukyus. Michio Nagai, now of Tokyo Technological University, became a full-time research associate. The organization was given the name "Research Program in Japanese Social Relations" (RJSR). Additional grants-in-aid from the Rockefeller Foundation permitted the group to carry on its work and a research contract from the Social Science Research Council in 1953 extended RJSR activities into a study of Japanese education abroad--a study to which Herbert Passin gave his services, as did Bennett and Ishino (see Bennett, Passin, and McKnight, 1958).

The RJSR staff proceeded to analyze and reanalyze the PO&SR data, issuing a series of mimeographed technical reports and preparing a number of articles in professional periodicals. This book [as originally published] consists of revisions of certain of these materials, particularly those concerning the relationships between the Japanese economy and social organization. The village and family research will be combined with the materials collected in a re-study made in Japan in 1959, and will be published separately.

#### **C. RESEARCH IN A MILITARY OCCUPATION: LIABILITIES AND ASSETS**

We may now turn to consideration of the setting in which the PO&SR Division conducted its activities.

First must be noted our position in the bureaucratic structure of SCAP, a title referring mainly to an assemblage of organizations located in Tokyo, involved in the planning of reforms in Japanese society, and working directly with the Japanese government. In addition to SCAP, there existed an entity known as the Far Eastern Command, also captained by MacArthur, and concerned with the military side of the Occupation and its Ryukyuan extension. Finally, there was the Eighth Army and its military government, which did not really govern, only supervised and shepherded, since the SCAP agencies and the Japanese government possessed the real power. All this meant that PO&SR was located in the topmost echelon of the Occupation, SCAP--not shunted into military organizations or buried in an ambiguous military government.

However, in this elite hierarchy, PO&SR occupied a lowly position--like the lieutenant, closest to the men, but still within the officer corps. Within SCAP, we were located in the lowest ranking of the large organizations known as "staff sections." These staff sections were based on the standard breakdown of functions in the military Table of Organization (intelligence, quartermaster, finance, etc.), but modified to suit the needs of the reformist and housekeeping enterprise of the Occupation. Hence there were sections devoted to government, natural resources, health and welfare, economic and scientific activities, and education (and a few others, not important in the present context). Each of these major sections, except Natural Resources and Civil Information and Education, was headed by an Army officer with the rank of general. Natural Resources had an Army colonel,