

Summation of the NASSS International
Graduate Student Seminar
History and Society Workshop
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Ten students attended the Social Science Section Workshop as paper presenters. They had diverse academic backgrounds: history, American studies, women's studies, sociology and public health. They were from various countries: the U.S., Japan, China, and the Netherlands. Professors who attended this workshop were: Professors Eric L. Muller, Rukhsana Quamber, Kawashima Masaki, Okuyama Michiaki, Sheri Yasue Love, Ooi Yuki and Takagi-Kitayama Mariko. The session was also attended by other graduate students, as observers.

In the workshop, ten students presented their projects, based on their working papers, master thesis or dissertations. Each student was given 15 minutes for the presentation, and another 15 minutes for comments, questions and answers.

The morning session had five presenters and it was chaired by Professor Takagi-Kitayama Mariko. The first speaker for the morning was George Blaustein from Harvard University. His title was "Identity Crisis: Americanism, American Studies, and Reeducation after World War II." He introduced Margaret Mead's works, and traced the anthropological concept of "national character" from its instrumentalization for wartime "moral" through its postwar international diffusion. He explained the ways the Americans tried to resolve the dilemma of American imperialism in democratization of occupied countries and emphasized the important role American Studies played in European reconstruction by showing what happened at the Saltsburg Seminar, held in 1947.

The next speaker was Ito Koji from Osaka University, and the title of his presentation was "An Interpretation of the Historical Significance of the Bush Doctrine." Showing the features of the George W. Bush administration policy especially for the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars, the speaker spelled out the structural differences between the two wars. He then pointed out that the Bush Doctrine for the two wars was not a monolithic strategy, but an amalgam of two basically different policies. In the end, he welcomed comments on the validity of dealing with the foreign policy of the Bush administration from 2001 to 2003 as a historical study.

The third speaker was Oharazeki Kazuhiro from State University of New York at Binghamton. In his talk titled "Japanese Prostitutes' Migration in the Pacific Economies," he explained how Japanese prostitutes migrated to various parts of the Pacific Rim. He pointed out the fact that scholars of Asian American

history had focused on the role of Western and American imperialism as the structural causes of underdevelopment in Asian countries and Asian labor migration to the U.S. He emphasized that we should shift our focus from the U.S. to Japan in order to see that Japanese imperialism also played a critical part in shaping the migration pattern.

As the fourth presenter, Fan Wang from Nanjing Normal University talked on the topic “Liberty and the Right to Property: Edmund Burke’s Defense of the Cause of the American Revolution.” She introduced the ideas of Edmund Burke, a British politician, who was known as author of “Reflections of the Revolution in France.” She explained that Burke was a supporter of the American Revolution, and explained about Burke’s defense of the cause of American Revolution with an analysis of the relationship between property and liberty.

The last speaker for the morning session was Kojima Mieko from Tsuda College, and her topic was “Anna C. Hartshorne and the Philadelphia Committee: The Founding of Tsuda College.” She showed the important role played by Anna Hartshorne when Tsuda Umeko founded and developed Tsuda College in the 1900s. Ms. Kojima looked at the Philadelphia Committee as a fund-raising base for Tsuda College, and studied its members, who were mostly white middle-class women, and its functions. She also introduced the fact that graduates of Tsuda College gradually changed the gender system of Japan in those days.

In the afternoon session of the History and Society section, five graduate students presented their work. This session was chaired by Professor Ooi Yuki.

The first presenter, Ann Marie Wilson from Harvard University, gave a talk under the title “Exporting Religious Freedom: Christians, Jews, and American Power, 1890–1910.” She investigated the ideal of “religious liberty” and its relevance to American participation in the international human rights movements of the late nineteenth century. In order to do this, she focused on two types of groups, that is, the Evangelical Protestants and prominent American Jews of German descent. With these examples, she revealed how the United States, in a humanitarian mold of “religious liberty,” expanded its rule and power in the world.

Next followed Aoki Erika from Japan Women’s University, with her paper titled “War and International Adoption in the U.S.: In the Case of World War II”. Her work attempted to re-interpret the adoption of Japanese biracial children by American parents by employing the narratives found in postwar Japan. To help demonstrate this, she shed light on historical materials such as historical newspapers and notes left by Sawada Miki, founder of an orphanage designed for Japanese children of American parentage. She describes that such children were stigmatized in society in the postwar period, which explains why Sawada encouraged their adoption by American households, and she challenged its current positive image celebrated in the context of multiculturalism.

The third speaker, Kris Noam-Zuidervaat from the University of California (Irvine) shared her research “The Intergenerational Transmission of Culture by

Intermarried Second-Generation Chinese: An International Comparison.” She questioned the assumption proposed by some migration studies scholars that intermarriage signifies the end point of assimilation. In order to see whether or not Chinese culture is transferred to the third generation and whether the assimilation process is complete, she conducted in-depth interviews with intermarried Chinese of the second-generation both in the United States and the Netherlands. Showing results that they do transmit the culture to their children, she pointed out that her findings could contribute the way how people understand third-or succeeding-generation children today as the number of intermarriages is on the rise.

Our fourth presenter, Tanaka Tsuneo from Nanzan University, examined the background of the unpopularity of passenger trains compared to cars in the United States. Under the title of “A Historical Perspective on American Passenger Trains: With the Focus on the Transportation Policies of the Federal Government,” he attempted to reveal why the intercity passenger trains in America declined, and referred to two reasons. Firstly, he speculated that the government had favored and privileged cars over trains, which was noticeable in the government’s expense on construction and maintenance of highways and its strict regulation on railways. Secondly, he mentioned the viewpoint of railroad companies regarding passenger trains. To them, carrying freight meant a lot more than carrying people. With these points, Mr. Tanaka described the structural background to the unpopularity of passenger trains.

The last presentation, “Social Justice and Public Health in Post-WWII America: Community Mobilization and Health Care in the South Bronx and Lower East Side”, was given by Merlin Chowkwanyun from the University of Pennsylvania. With his case studies of the South Bronx, he first demonstrated how health politics at the local level arose for a better quality of health delivery in the 1960s; an activism born out of criticism against the city’s privatizing public hospitals as the abuses of public ones became apparent. For this purpose, health activists successfully mobilized the community. However in the 1970s, their battle waned, without any broader transformation in the health sector, leaving unsolved problems associated with privatization. He highlighted not only difficulties in organizing health care issues, but also the limit of local politics surfaced in his study.

The session as a whole worked well as an opportunity for the participants to receive as much feedback as possible. They enjoyed comments from all the participants and time to exchange ideas. Furthermore, they were fortunate to be given warm and insightful suggestions by Professor Eric L. Muller, keynote speaker for the conference, which surely helped them make further progress in their future research.