

Summation of the NASSS International Graduate Students' Social Science Workshop July 28, 2008

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(SECTION MENTORS)

Thirteen students attended the Social Science Section Workshop which was held on July 28. The participants had diverse academic backgrounds—ethnic studies, history, political science, sociology—and diverse nationalities—Americans, Australians, and Japanese. Five professors also joined—Professors Kawashima Masaki, Jennifer Lee, Okuyama Michiaki, Takagi-Kitayama Mariko, and Yamagishi Takakazu.

In the workshop, eight students presented their projects. Each student was given 15 minutes for their presentation. Then 20 minutes were assigned for feedback from other students and professors. Finally, the presenter had a 10-minute response time. The goal of this format was to give the presenters as much feedback as possible.

The morning session was presided over by Prof. Yamagishi. As the first presenter, Eunmi Mun of Harvard University presented her dissertation proposal, "Pressure and Response in Organizational Change: The Case of Japanese Companies after the Bubble." She focused on the slow diffusion process of market-oriented employment practices among Japanese companies since the 1990s. She argued that the lower economic performance of companies that started new practices might have slowed down the diffusion process.

Jody Vallejo of the University of California, Irvine, talked about part of her doctoral dissertation, "Latina Spaces: Middle-Class Ethnic Capital and Professional Associations in the Latino Community." Based on her three years of participant observation, thirty in-depth interviews, and fifty conversational interviews with association members, she demonstrated that the rising Latinas mobilize middle-class ethnic capital to create professional associations in ethnic communities that provide valuable business skills, networks and social capital to co-ethnics.

Ms. Yasui Michiko of Osaka University presented her work, "The Meaning of the Philadelphia Plan." Her questions included: What was the meaning of the affirmative action policies proposed by the Nixon Administration in the form of the Revised Philadelphia Plan? How did the grass-root Civil Rights activists and the white workers of the trade unions react to them? She argued that an historical perspective on the Philadelphia 'battle' would reveal that both 'damage' and 'benefits' were caused by the Philadelphia Plan.

As the last speaker of the morning session, Tsuchiya Tomoko talked about her dissertation proposal. Her project examines marriages between American GIs and Japanese women as a result of the American occupation of Japan. She demonstrates the comprehensive processes by which the contradictory subject of the “Japanese war bride” works to build and reinforce the postwar U. S. -Japan alliance.

The afternoon session was presided over by Professor Takagi-Kitayama. The first speaker in the afternoon, Hiramatsu Ayako of the University of Tokyo, presented her paper, “Analysis of Ideological Caucuses in the House of Representatives, 1995–2000.” She explained the ideological polarization between the two major congressional parties since the 1970s. She argued that understanding the five ideological party caucuses in the post 1995 House of Representatives could shed new light on the polarization phenomena.

The second speaker, Tsutsumi Mikiko of Nanzan University, discussed the up-to-date topic of the neurotic non-attendant, high school students in Japan. Her title was “How to Support the Neurotic Non-Attendant High School Students: In Search for Better Supporting Ways from a Comparative Perspective.” She pointed out the seriousness of the problem, since these students would be able to neither earn sufficient credits nor graduate from school. Her study highlighted the specific problems of neurotic, non-attendant students and attempted to discover solutions to solve this social problem and successfully return them to school.

The third speaker, Kathryn Slattery of the University of New South Wales, gave a presentation titled “Building a Transnational Network for Life: Human Life International.” She focused on the formation and evolution of Human Life International (HLI), the hub of a conservative pro-life transnational advocacy network, formed in Washington, D. C., in 1981. She argued that broadening the scope of analysis to include conservative transnational NGOs should permit a reassessment of existing hypotheses regarding transnational NGO evolution, maintenance and success.

The last speaker, Noguchi Kumiko of the University of California, Davis, discussed her dissertation research, titled “Transformation of Indian Identity and Tribal Autonomy: Case of Tule River Indian Reservation in California.” She argued that “Tribe” as well as “Race” was a created concept through colonization by western countries since contact with Native Americans. Since government policies and laws were important external determinants of Indian identity yet were rarely examined in detail, she described how the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934 created and strengthened tribal identity with a case study of the Tule River Reservation, one of the tribes that reorganized their tribal government in California under the IRA.

The format of the presentation session worked very well. After each presentation the time for feedback started with Prof. Jennifer Lee who offered comments and asked a few questions, followed by valuable comments and questions from the participants. Since the presenters were entitled to choose

whichever questions and comments they would like to respond to, they did not feel too tense. Actually the presenters enjoyed the various comments from participants of different backgrounds. We hope that all the graduate students will utilize this precious experience in their academic future.