

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
Department of Sociology Workshop

Asian Studies in the Age of Globalization

Tuesday, March 29, 2011
3:00-6:30 p.m.
Saunders Hall 244

This workshop aims to deepen our understanding of Asia in a global context. The workshop is inspired by challenges and puzzles Asian studies scholars often face. For example, how we observe, problematize, and analyze social phenomena in Asia are shaped by various scholastic lens including academic trends, disciplinary subfields, and nationally-bounded academic programs (e.g., U.S. sociology, Japanese sociology, Asian Studies, Sinology, etc), and harmonizing different perspectives under the name of “global sociology” poses enormous challenges for its realization. On the other hand, however, it is also the case that residing within the framework of “methodological nationalism” is not an adequate solution given the increasing globalization and transnationalization of both empirical realities and epistemological communities. We are convinced that the time is ripe for reviewing and clarifying varieties of ways of capturing Asia by having this opportunity for graduate students and professors from Asia and the U.S. to share and discuss past accomplishments, present conditions, and prospects for the future of Asian studies in the age of globalization.

Workshop Schedule

Welcome and Opening Remarks

3:00-3:05 p.m.

Session 1: Case Studies: Graduate Student Presentations (3:05-4:25)

3:05-3:25 Qian Zhou (University of Tokyo), "Media Images of the Middle Class: A Comparative Analysis of Chinese and Japanese Newspapers"

3:25-3:45 Akiko Ishioka (Waseda University), "Who is dissatisfied with the Social Welfare System in East Asia? : Data Analysis of AsiaBarometer 2006"

3:45-4:05 Hiroki Igarashi (University of Hawai'i at Mānoa), "Japanese Transnational Families in Hawaii as Lifestyle Migrants"

4:05-4:25 Session 1: Discussion

4:25-4:40 Break

Session 2: Asian Studies: Past, Present, and Future: Faculty Presentations (4:40-6:20)

4:40-5:00 Seio Nakajima (University of Hawai'i at Mānoa), "What is this *not* a case of?: Contributions of Asian Studies to Social Science Disciplines in the Age of Globalization"

5:00-5:20 Shigeto Sonoda (University of Tokyo), "From Localization to Regionalization?: New Challenges of Sociology in Asia in the Age of Globalization"

5:20-5:40 Hagen Koo (University of Hawai'i at Mānoa), "TBA"

5:40-6:00 Patricia Steinhoff (University of Hawai'i at Mānoa), "Global

Sociology and Global Japanese Studies”

6:00-6:20 Session 2: Discussion

Final Collective Discussion

6:20-6:30

Presentation Abstracts

Session 1: Case Studies: Graduate Student Presentations

Qian Zhou, Ph. D Student Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Information Studies,
University of Tokyo / Research Fellow of the Japan Society for the Promotion of
Science

Media Images of the Middle Class: A Comparative Analysis of Chinese and Japanese Newspapers

The influence of media on stratum construction has been mentioned by many scholars in media and cultural studies. In current studies on the middle class by scholars of social status, the media’s role is often discussed. Nevertheless, in existing academic fields, nearly all scholars think that social status studies are entirely different from media studies. Thus, until now, these two research fields have not intersected. In order to fill the gap in previous research, this study combines media studies and stratum research by analyzing the images of the middle class in Japanese and Chinese newspapers during the two countries’ respective periods of rapid economic development. In this study, the Content Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis methods were mainly utilized; meanwhile, the concept of Intertextuality has also been adopted as an analysis template. As it turns out, the middle class perceived from media images is quite different from that represented in traditional social status research. The middle-class images are created by media, producers, consumers, governments, and intellectuals, based on the mechanisms of capitalism. Considering media as a “national ideology device,” it is easy to see that the image of the middle class is a kind of ideology and a group ideal. During periods of rapid economic development, this ideology spurs people to be keen

on consumption and improve their private lives, promoting economic growth. It also conceals certain inequalities in order to maintain social stability and integration.

Hiroki Igarashi, Visiting Research Fellow, Education, University of Tokyo / Ph.D Candidate, Sociology, University of Hawai`i at Mānoa

Japanese Transnational Families in Hawaii as Lifestyle Migrants

Since the 1990s, a growing number of affluent Asian families have embraced transnational family arrangements where mothers bring their children to English-speaking countries for their children education to achieve international social mobility while fathers stay in their home countries to support the family financially. This study aims to extend the existing understanding of high-income Asian transnational families as “educational migrants.” By considering the patterns of Japanese transnational families in Hawaii, I ask the followings: 1) What factors motivate Japanese families to adopt the transnational family arrangement? 2) What kind of patterns of life course do Japanese transnational families plan to take? 3) How can we understand the form of Japanese transnational families? I argue that the existing theory fails to capture the Japanese case whose features can be considered in the form of “lifestyle migrants.” Central to taking this family stagey is considered as a “balanced project,” or overall attempt to search for a better way of life—that is, not only for their children’s short and long-term well-being and academic success in this globalizing world but also for parents’ particularly, mothers’ well-being away from domestic social constrains.

Akiko Ishioka, Ph.D. Candidate, Graduate School of Asia Pacific Studies, Waseda University

Who is dissatisfied with the Social Welfare System in East Asia? : Data Analysis of AsiaBarometer 2006

Institutional adjustments are urgently needed for rapidly “Aging East Asia” because existing social welfare system is becoming dysfunctional. The problem is that there is a risk of intensifying public’s feeling of unfairness and

consequently threatening social stability under the persistent “East Asian” norm that family should be responsible for their own lives. However there seems to be an implicit “common sense” in all countries that subjective feelings are not worthy of consideration when institutional adjustments are discussed in previous social welfare studies which mainly focus on objective environments and life resources. In this research, multiple regression analysis on five regions of East Asia (Japan, South Korea, China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan) was conducted to compare factors, including subjective indicator and objective indicators which define satisfaction level to social welfare system, by using the dataset of AsiaBarometer 2006. As a result, objective indicators, namely informant’s age, academic background, and so on was correlated with the satisfaction with social welfare system in some regions, which the effect of subjective indicator was strong is all the regions, which suggests that people who give lower evaluation to their standard of living are more dissatisfied with the social welfare system. The purpose of this research is to illustrate the importance of subjective dimensions of social welfare system which most of the previous studies didn’t think seriously due to their emphasis on objective aspects of social welfare system.

Session 2: Asian Studies: Past, Present, and Future: Faculty Presentations

Seio Nakajima, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

What is this *not* a case of?: Contributions of Asian Studies to Social Science Disciplines in the Age of Globalization

Asian studies scholars are often told by their disciplinary colleagues to think in terms of “What is this a case of?” While I agree with the suggestion of going beyond idiosyncratic “area studies” “description,” I contend that we need to go further if Asian studies are to substantially contribute to social science disciplines. Despite its merit, “What-is-this-a-case-of?” approach often, if not always, presupposes the primacy of disciplines, and could entail a pitfall of fitting empirical anomalies into preexisting “cases.” A brief review of existing Asian studies scholarship suggests that those research that have had the strongest impact on social science disciplines are those which focus on

anomalies that do not easily fit the existing cases. In other words, thinking in terms of “What is this *not* a case of?” I contend, is one way Asian studies can contribute to social science disciplines. I briefly discuss examples of this approach from the field of Chinese studies including Andrew Walder’s concept of “communist neotraditionalism,” Kevin O’Brien’s concept of “rightful resistance,” and my work on “critical public discourse without public sphere.” In the age of globalization, when more and more social science disciplines are interested in empirical phenomena found in different parts of the world including Asia, opportunities for academic communication between Asian studies and social science disciplines are increasing. I would argue for the strength of “What-is-this-*not*-a-case-of?” approach to make such interactions more fruitful. I will also briefly discuss potential pitfalls and challenges for realizing the approach by sharing my personal experiences existing in the interstices of Chinese studies and sociology as a non-native area specialist.

Shigeto Sonoda, Professor of Sociology, Vice Director of Research and Information Center for Asian Studies, Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia / Course Director, ITASIA, Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Information Studies, The University of Tokyo

From Localization to Regionalization?: New Challenges of Sociology in Asia in the Age of Globalization

Recently a lot of social scientists, especially political scientists, have come to discuss the issues of East Asian Community Building and regional integration in Asia, but contribution from sociologists, unfortunately, is quite rare. In other words, Asian sociologists, who have come to pay more attention to “global phenomenon” like international migration, international marriage, spread of transnational media, and so on, show little interest in participating in the discussion from regional perspectives.

Why so? What are the missions of sociologists in Asia in the age of globalization? Is it really meaningful or feasible to construct “Asian sociology”? Is “Asian sociology” just a collection of local sociologies in Asia?

This short speech tries to address these questions and clarify new challenges of sociology in Asia with special reference to “AsiaBarometer (2003-2008)” Project initiated by Prof. Takashi Inoguchi, and activity of JSPS

Asia-Africa Science Platform Program “Frontier of Comparative Studies of Asian Societies (2010-2012),” coordinated by the author.

Hagen Koo, Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

“TBA”

Patricia Steinhoff, Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

The Intersection of Global Sociology and Global Japanese Studies

I would like to comment on the intersection of Global Sociology and Global Japanese Studies from three perspectives that reflect different facets of my professional life. As an American academic I have participated in the intersection of sociology and Japanese studies as a researcher, as a teacher of graduate students, and through my involvement in a series of studies of Japanese Studies in the United States and Canada over the past 25 years.

Initially, the intersection between sociology and Japanese Studies was not really global. It was largely a linear track between the United States and Japan, except for occasional interactions with scholars and students from other countries at both ends of this track. In network terms, there were two nodes, Japan and the US, with strong ties between them, but only occasional ties to scholars from other countries that went through those two nodes. My studies of Japanese Studies in the United States and Canada have tracked the globalization of Japanese Studies since the 1990s along several dimensions. This globalization has also affected my own research activities in various ways.

The globalization of sociology and Japanese Studies has also impacted our sociology graduate students in various ways. I will raise the question of how at the University of Hawaii we may be particularly well-positioned to develop global sociologists who specialize in the study of Asia, and what we need to do to maximize this potential.