

Report on “2019 CGCSE International Conference Urban Culture and Spaces for Social Empathy”

Wonho JANG and Tetsuo MIZUKAMI

The East Asia Sociological Association and the Center for Glocal Culture and Social Empathy organized an International Conference on Urban Culture and Spaces for Social Empathy. It was sponsored by the National Research Foundation of Korea and the Center for Social Value Enhancement Studies and was convened on 1st (Friday) November 2019. The venue was our familiar location at the Law School Conference Room, University of Seoul. This was the latest “Shuttle Conference” which has become part of the life of the University of Seoul, Rikkyo University and Tongji and Fudan Universities: In 2010, the first symposium was also held at Rikkyo University and its focus was upon Asian urban culture. At that time, paper-presenters were from Tokyo, Shanghai, and Seoul, and we then promised to organize the next conference in Seoul, to be followed by Shanghai. In terms of shared rotation, this 10th anniversary event was supposed to have been organized in Tokyo. However, in 2018 Rikkyo University was celebrating its 60th anniversary of the foundation of the College of Sociology. Our Korean members generously took their turn in the annual conference rotation.

In 2017, we congratulated Tongji University’s 110th Anniversary where the forum was held to commemorate this milestone as well as being part of the World Cities Day Series. Last year was the 9th consecutive annual conference for us, and this time the University of Seoul hosted a somewhat larger event than the earlier 2010 conference aimed at fostering social-scientific discussion about the contemporary issues facing East-Asian metropolises. In fact, we have issued invitations to a wider circle than just our regular members from Seoul, Tokyo, and Shanghai, and the major conception of this conference, “social empathy,” is briefly explained below:

Social empathy is a concept that has recently attracted attention for its role in alleviating social conflict not only within one society but among different societies. By contributing to the understanding of situations and problems that other groups of people face, social empathy can lead to the development of policies and practices that address social conflict

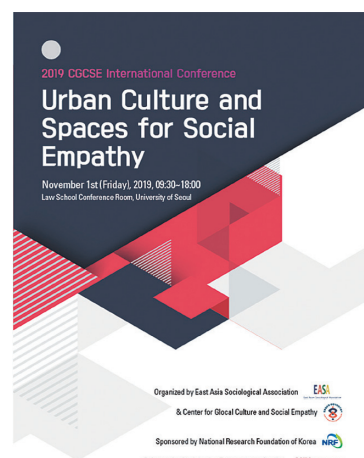
in a way that helps to realize social justice. While the conflicts themselves may range from local to international in scope, the key to resolving them may involve specific urban spaces such as ethnic enclaves, tourist sites, and art districts where diverse groups of people gather together and regularly come in contact with each other. Because these kinds of urban settings can foster intercultural awareness and understanding among tourists, residents, and businesspeople alike, there is the potential for them to become sites for the development of social empathy. This conference is designed to bring scholars from around the world together to share case studies, theoretical propositions, and other forms of analysis regarding this ongoing phenomenon (from the proceedings).

The 2019 conference program consisted of three sessions. We commenced with an opening ceremony by Seoul University's conference convener and organizer Prof. Wonho Jang (Director, Center for Glocal Culture and Social Empathy). The first session was moderated by Prof. Ikki Kim (Renmin University), with two discussants, Prof. Byungmin Lee (Konkuk University) and Donggen Rui (Pukyong National University). The four paper presentations were as follows:

“Place Leadership and Governance in the Seoul Digital Industrial District.” by Prof. Kee-Bom Nahm (University of Seoul); “Hyper Urbanization in Tokyo.” by Prof. Yasushi Matsumoto (Rikkyo University); “Urban Farm Breaking Boundaries of Gated-Community: A Human Geographical Action of Community Rebuilding.” By Prof. Yu Hai (Fudan University); and “Improving Cultural Sensitivity through Tours, Food and Wine: An experience from Bordeaux, France” by Stéphane Couralet (Université Bordeaux Montaigne).

After a lunch break the second session started with Prof. Wonho Jang (University of Seoul) as moderator and Prof. Sungwoong Choi (Konkuk University) and Prof. Hae-Bo Kim (Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture) as discussants. The four paper presentations were:

“Creative City and Region-led Growth.” By Prof. Jongryn Mo (Yonsei University); “The University's Two Pioneering Inner-City Research Projects Left on Japan's Sociological Trails.” by Prof. Tetsuo Mizukami (Rikkyo



University); “Exploring Participatory Micro-regeneration as Sustainable Renewal of Built Heritage Community: Two Case Studies in Shanghai.” By Prof. Xiaohua Zhong and Prof. Weijue Zhu (Tongji University); and “Hatching the Social Fantastic: Multimodal Spaces, Social Empathy, and the DDP.” by Prof. Michael Hurt (Center for Glocal Culture and Social Empathy).

After a coffee break, the third session began with Prof. Michael Hurt (Center for Glocal Culture and Social Empathy) as moderator. The following four paper presentations were discussed by Prof. Peter Moody (Center for Glocal Culture and Social Empathy) and Prof. Alexandra Leonzini (Freie Universität Berlin and Humboldt Universität zu Berlin).

“Community Study as Paradigm: The Social Making of Knowledge in Modern China (1930-1980).” By Prof. Jin Chen (Tongji University); “Our School Trip to the <Homeland> - What Choson School Students in Japan Saw and Felt in the DPRK.” by Prof. Kaori Yamamoto (Aichi Prefectural University); “Choice and Pursuit: The Korean Folk Music Activities of an Seong-hyeon.” by Prof. Cui Yuhua (Yanbian University); and “The East Asian cultural communicate narrations and problems in Korean Social Textbooks.” by Prof. Piao Jinhai (Yanbian University).

After the conference, the group enjoyed dinner together in Seoul promising to gather together again in order to continue the stimulative discussions.



Photograph: Law School Conference Room, University of Seoul

