

6. Outline of academic activities

My visit to Japan provided multiple opportunities for academic and scholarly dialogue with Japanese researchers and students working in the areas of political communication and mass political behavior. First, I made formal presentations at three workshops covering different aspects of my current research. Second, I served as commentator and discussant for faculty and student research presented at two of these workshops. Third, I had several individual-level discussions with Japanese scholars concerning areas of mutual interest and potential collaborative research. I elaborate on each of these activities below.

Presentations

At the Kobe University Workshop on Political Communications (June 17th), my lecture covered the use of experimentation in political communication research. Experimental methods have become standard practice in American political science and their use has dramatically transformed several sub-fields of the discipline including political psychology, voting behavior, and the study of mass media. I provided a brief overview of the reasons underlying the growth of experimental research including the ability to make reliable causal inferences and the rapid development of online research panels which has enabled researchers to administer experiments to national rather than local samples. The latter is a breakthrough development because it has effectively neutralized the major weakness of experimental design, namely, the lack of generalizability. In the post-Internet era, market research companies such as YouGov have been able to recruit and incentivize large-scale samples to participate in scholarly research. YouGov currently maintains online panels in more than thirty countries. It is now possible to implement the identical experimental design in multiple nations, thus making it possible to test hypotheses in a truly cross-national context. I described one such comparative study in which researchers from twelve countries (including Professor Tetsuro Kobayashi, from the National Institute of Informatics) collaborated in an experimental study of the factors underlying public opposition to immigration.

Experimental research often requires deception as participants typically do not realize that the materials they are provided with are subject to manipulation by the researcher. As a result, most research institutions maintain institutional review boards (IRBs) that enforce strict regulatory oversight over the conduct of experiments involving human subjects. I covered several basic principles designed to protect the rights of human subjects including informed consent and maximal transparency in the form of complete debriefing of experimental participants. I provided examples of consent forms and debriefing protocols used in my own research. I also reviewed recent controversies involving field experiments in the U.S. in which the researchers did not fully comply with IRB requirements.

At Waseda University, I was asked to speak on my current research on “partyism,” or prejudice toward political opponents. I described a four-nation comparative study in which my collaborators and I compared prejudice toward people who affiliate with particular political parties with prejudice toward people who belong to different social groups. In the U.S., for instance, we investigated whether supporters of the Democratic Party discriminated against Republicans and whether the level of inter-party discrimination was greater than that directed by White Americans against African-Americans. We found that party discrimination easily

exceeded racial discrimination. Similarly in Basque Country, we found that party labels elicited more prejudice than regional-ethnic labels.

Our research design implemented an online version of the standard trust game in four nations –the U.S., Spain, Belgium, and U.K. Spain and Belgium are divided societies with very strong regional, ethnic, and linguistic cleavages. (The regional cleavage in Spain was the basis for prolonged violence in the Basque region.) We anticipated, therefore, that the regional divide in Belgium and Spain would be a strong basis for inter-personal trust and that regional ties would be stronger than party ties. The U.S. and U.K., on the other hand, are societies that lack strong social cleavages. We therefore anticipated the opposite pattern, i.e. that party ties would be a stronger basis for trust than racial or religious ties. The results, however, showed that in all four countries trust was affected more by a person’s party affiliation than by her social group affiliation.

Finally, at the National Institute of Informatics Workshop in Political Communication, I discussed the state of research on party polarization in the U.S. The traditional definition of party polarization is policy disagreement. Polarized parties take clearly diverging positions on the issues. However, in a series of papers, my colleagues and I have argued that an alternative and more meaningful indicator of party polarization at the level of the mass public is the extent to which partisans view each other as a disliked out-group. To the extent that party identification represents an important group affiliation, the more relevant indicator of polarization is partisan affect rather than ideology.

After developing the argument in favor of affective rather than ideological polarization, I presented evidence demonstrating that hostile feelings for the opposing party are ingrained or automatic in Americans’ minds, and that affective polarization based on party is just as strong as polarization based on race. I also showed how party cues exert powerful effects on non-political judgments and behaviors. Partisans discriminate against opposing partisans, and do so to a degree that exceeds discrimination based on race. In conclusion, I pointed out that the willingness of partisans to display open animus for opposing partisans can be attributed to the absence of norms governing the expression of negative sentiment and that increased partisan affect provides an incentive for elites to engage in confrontation rather than cooperation.

Commentary on Faculty-Student Papers

At the Kobe Workshop, I provided feedback and commentary on the following papers:

- (1) “Charity Begins Abroad? Understanding Public Support for Foreign Aid” by Mari Miyagawa and Atsushi Tago

- (2) “Casualties or Commitments? Determinants of Public Support for Coalition Defection” by Yoshitaka Komiya and Atsushi Tago

- (3) “Does pork attract voter: A survey experiment” by Masaki Hata

- (4) “To Denounce, or Not To Denounce: Survey Experiments on Diplomatic Quarrels” by Shoko Kohama, Kazunori Inamasu and Atsushi Tago

(5) “Media Priming Replication Project” by Tetsuro Kobayashi, Asako Miura and Kazunori Inamasu

These papers are all based on data from survey experiments and my comments focused on the areas in which the data presentations could be strengthened. I also suggested ways in which the experimental designs might be revised to shed further light on the factors underlying the anticipated treatment effects.

At Waseda University I served as a discussant for the following papers:

(1) “Long- or Short-Lasting Media Effects? Longitudinal Study of Newspaper Coverage Influence on Foreign States Perceptions in Japan” by Gento Kato - Waseda University

(2) “Hard News & Soft News: Effects of TV Programs Exposure on Political Involvement and Political Knowledge in Japan” by Ling Liu - Waseda University

(3) “The Effects of Cross-Cutting Exposure in Interpersonal Environment on Political Participation” by Tomoya Yokoyama - Hitotsubashi University

(4) “The *Spiral of Siren*: Opinion Expression after Fukushima Nuclear Crisis,” by Prof. Airo Hino - Waseda University

In addition to providing written comments on these papers, I had further follow-up conversations with Dr. Hino, Mr. Kato, and Ms. Liu. I suggested to Dr. Hino that the key hypothesis concerning greater conformity to majority opinion in the interviewer condition could be more explicitly tested by including an interaction term between survey mode and climate of opinion. I provided Mr. Kato with theoretical guidance and advised him to abandon the concept of “second level agenda-setting” which conflates agenda-setting with priming (two very different concepts). I provided Ms. Liu with several bibliographic references concerning the statistical issues raised by the inclusion of a lagged dependent variable in her regression analysis.

Individual Contacts

During my brief stay in the Kansai area I was able to meet individually with Professor Ken’ichi Ikeda of Doshisha University. Professor Ikeda is a recognized authority on social networks and their role in shaping political attitudes. We discussed how social media is altering the structure and strength of social networks and the ways in which these dramatic changes might be investigated. I also had the opportunity to meet with Professor Yoshitaka Nishizawa, also of Doshisha University. (Prof. Nishizawa, had taken my graduate course on research design 30 years ago while he was a PhD student at Yale University.) We discussed the possibility of testing the concept of deliberative polling and informed opinion (introduced originally by Professor James Fishkin of Stanford University) through online as opposed to face-to-face experimental manipulations. This discussion will continue when I meet Prof. Nishizawa next month in San Francisco at the American Political Science Association annual meeting.

The most extensive and concrete discussions occurred with Professor Atsushi Tago, who organized the Kobe University Workshop. Professor Tago pointed out that there is considerable student demand for courses on the use of experimental methods in political science. I have co-taught (with Professor Simon Jackman) the graduate-level course on “Design and Analysis of Experiments” at Stanford University. We discussed the possibility that I might return to Kobe University in 2016 and offer a week-long intensive seminar on experimentation in political communication research. Professor Tago has already submitted this proposal to the Dean at Kobe University.

In Tokyo I was able to meet with Professor Airo Hino, who presented a paper on the spiral of silence at the Waseda International Workshop. Professor Hino is planning a sabbatical and is interested in the possibility of coming to Stanford University for 8-10 weeks as a visiting research scholar in the Political Communication Lab. I provided Prof. Hino with the necessary contact information of administrative personnel at Stanford and also gave him a copy of the syllabus for my PhD seminar on political communication. This seminar will next be offered in the Fall term of 2016 and I encouraged Prof. Hino to plan his visit to Stanford accordingly.

Finally, I was able to meet with Professor Kyu Hahn of Seoul National University and Professor Tetsuro Kobayashi of the National Institute of Informatics. Prof. Hahn was a participant at the NII Workshop organized by Prof. Kobayashi. We discussed our ongoing collaborative work on immigration and the possibility of a co-authored paper that investigates the effects of implicit racial bias on opposition to immigration in the U.S., U.K., Korea, and Japan. We administered a modified version of the Race Implicit Association Test in all four countries and are in a position to test whether participants with higher levels of implicit racial prejudice are also more averse to admitting a dark skinned immigrant.

Conclusion

As described above, I was able to participate in several interesting scholarly exchanges during my short stay in Japan. In addition to formal presentations and workshops, I could interact personally with several Japanese scholars, both faculty members and graduate students. In the case of Kobe University, I believe this visit has laid the foundation for continued exchange in the form of the short course on experimental methods that is being planned for June 2016.

Overall, I am most grateful to the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science for making possible the activities described above. The workshops and seminars gave me the opportunity to meet a wide range of Japanese social scientists with common research interests; I found the ideas expressed at these sessions highly stimulating and beneficial to my own research agenda. I would also like to express my gratitude to Professor Kobayashi of NII who organized and planned the schedule for my visit, and to Professor Tago of Kobe University, and Professor Tanaka of Waseda University for their warm hospitality during my visits to their universities.