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**Title of Session:** Methodological and comparative challenges in XXI century sociology

*Subsession II*

**Name of Session Convener(s):** Masamichi Sasaki, Marina Shapira

**University/Organization incl. City:** Chuo University, Tokyo; University of  
Edinburgh

**Chair:** Masamichi Sasaki

**University/Organization incl. City:** Chuo University, Tokyo

**I) Title of Selected Paper:** Understanding the labor market impact of immigrant in  
Britain

**Name/s of Author/s:** Marina Shapira

**University/Organization incl. City:** University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh

**Abstract:** -

**II) Title of Selected Paper:** Bridging "East" and "West" in Comparative Research

**Name/s of Author/s:** Nikolai Genov

**University/Organization incl. City:** Free University, Berlin

**Abstract:** -

**III) Title of Selected Paper:** Realism and structural neorealism

**Name/s of Author/s:** José G. Vargas-Hernández

**University/Organization incl. City:** University of Guadalajara, Guadalajara

**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to analyze the theoretical methodological approaches of realism and neo realism o structural realism. It departs from the assumption that the realist theory helps to solve the social fragilities and dangers in the context of a conservative ideology and from an elitist theory of democracy. The realist approach competes with the neorealist or structural realism and the

institutionalist theory. Neorealist and institutionalism conceptions of institutions consider that these are functional needs to generate order. However, neither the realist theory nor the institutionalisms treat properly the variations of time and space.

**IV) Title of Selected Paper:** Structural-Semiotic Analysis as a Methodological Principle for Contemplating Modern Social Myths

**Name/s of Author/s:** Nvard Melkonyan, Anna Pokhsraryan

**University/Organization incl. City:** Yerevan State University, Yerevan

**Abstract:** The paper is devoted to such scantily explored issue as methodological principles of analyzing contemporary social mythologies. In this article the authors describe myth as steady and somewhat distorted representation of different facts or phenomena of social reality, which arises in the context of public life of a certain historical epoch. Moreover, myth is a holistic portrait of a certain social reality; it has its inner semantics and logic of development.

The central idea of the paper is described above the fact that myth itself is a socially constructed reality, it is built upon systemized phenomena of ordinary life that determine the sense and the direction of social relations and of a social system at all. Hence, myths verify those ‘stratums’ of reality, which seem to be problematic in sense of social perceptions and explanations.

The authors suggest contemplating myth as a stock of society’s knowledge combined through subjective senses, collective notions and stereotypes. As such, myth is presented in form of a public discourse that has different semantic stratums and can be analyzed through structural-semiotic approach.

The paper brings the model of structural-semiotic analysis of myth and discusses it through two semiotic systems and triple semiotic degrees, described by R. Barthes and other representatives of semiology. The model was used during researches of mainly political myths conducted by the authors since 2004. Each concept of both semiotic systems is modeled by different elements, such as frame of plot, types of heroes, etc. The types of language meta-models and degrees of contextual or semantic contradistinction are also presented. Finally, the authors suggest using the offered model during the process of analyzing different forms of myths’ manifestation.

**V) Title of Selected Paper:** The features of studying brands in modern world

**Name/s of Author/s:** Lilit Shakaryan

**University/Organization incl. City:** Yerevan State University, Yerevan

**Abstract:** This article describes semantic methods of studying brands. The development of the commodity production during the last century overloaded the market with products of mass demand. Producers, realizing that their products do not differ from each other by their functional features, started to use emotional constituents of products - brands. In the contemporary world brand is a condition of product’s existence. Therefore nowadays, branding of any product, starting from yoghurt to educational services, is not a whimsy, but a necessity. Preparing competitive strategies of market entry more and more companies focus on creation and development of a good branding strategy as one of the most important factors for

gaining a market share because a successful brand can make the product famous, but an inadequate one can fail even the best product.

The author pays special attention to conducting various brand researches on each stage of brand's life cycle and especially to the method of semantic-differential. The method allows combining traditional research methods used in branding (quantitative /mass surveys/ and qualitative /focus-groups, in-depth interviews) with identification of the deep, unconscious features of consumer minds using quantitative measures of assessment. Besides, the author discusses in detail the procedure and stages of formation of the semantic-differential method.

In conclusion author substantiates the necessity and importance of using the semantic-differential method in regulation and creation of new brands, which is important both for the owner as an important and expensive asset of the company, and for the consumer - as a factor which allows identifying a product or a service in the total supermarket system.

**VI) Title of Selected Paper:** Democratic Governance at Local Level and People's Participation: Evidences of Grassroots Institutions' in Development from Indian States

**Name/s of Author/s:** Yatindra Singh Sisodia

**University/Organization incl. City:** Madhya Pradesh Institute of Social Science Research, New Delhi

**Abstract:** After independence of India, persistent efforts have been made to make rural local self-government viable and self-sustainable on the lines portrayed by Mahatma Gandhi. Unfortunately the response of the state governments was of very different nature and as a result the pace and pattern of establishment of rural local political institutions was not very enthusiastic in the initial phase. Almost after forty-five years, the Central Government realised this hard truth that the delivery system was not effectively operational, it realised at last that without making people's direct and responsible participation through local self-government(hereinafter as panchayat), purposeful development in the desired manner was not possible. As a result the introduction of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act was made in 1993.

The execution of the Act was made mandatory for all the Indian states and panchayats have been provided a constitutional status. A special chapter has been added to the Indian Constitution on Panchayats. The 73rd Amendment Act has provided uniformity and formal structure to these traditional institutions of self-governance for the sake of their effective functioning. The 73rd Amendment Act has initiated a fundamental restructuring of governance and administrative system of the country, based on the philosophy of decentralization and power to the people. The enactment of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act and the subsequent state wise panchayat raj acts in India has brought to frontline the significance of grassroots democratic processes. This experience has brought the lesson that the success of the new panchayat raj system largely depends on the congruence of perception and commitment of people, their leaders and the officials, about the role to be played by them in the new system. The objectives of decentralisation are to execute and implement schemes and programmes to meet the local needs, to mobilize people, to

channelise their energies towards socio-economic reconstruction and to involve them in all the activities of the communities through the new institutions.

A decade and a half of panchayat raj in India has been a matter of debate and speculation about its performance and impact. All the major states have completed at least two round of panchayat elections and in majority of cases at least three successive rounds. Almost three million people including one million women and a sizeable number of SCs/STs took part in these elections. The sizeable presence of under privileged and poor as representatives through reservations in the grassroots political institutions is a landmark development in the rural politics of the country. This significant development has special meaning because more than a decade earlier in most parts of rural India these groups were excluded from public life and political participation. This is also a matter of serious debate as how this excluded lot after their inclusion in active politics at grassroots would effectively tackle local power equation and set the agenda for development. Yet the fact remains that these backward and so far ignored classes have heralded their arrival on the political stage of the country in the country side.

The Indian States have responded with innovativeness and remarkable commitment to making the system sustainable and successful. The experience of the States is extremely rich and provides vital insights into the process of institutionalising Panchayat Raj. Looking in to the relevance of new system, an attempt is made to evaluate the ground reality and potentiality of the panchayat raj system in Indian States. The paper is dealing with the issues of People's Participation through Gram Sabha; Representation of Marginalised Sections of Society; Women's Participation in Panchayats; Working of Panchayats; Panchayats and Bureaucracy; Devolution of Powers; Financial Status of Panchayats; Decentralised Planning in separate sub headings.