

Learning Report (Chung Cho Him)

The MPSA Annual Conference was successfully held in Palmer House Hilton with over hundreds of paper sessions from 5 April to 8 April 2018.

I presented my paper in the session "Public Opinion and Legitimacy in China" on the 6 April, chaired by Professor Daniela Stockmann. I am very glad to meet other renowned scholar in political science. In particular, I am grateful to get insightful comments from Dr. Xu Yiqing, the another presenter and Professor Lu Jie, the discussant. The most remarkable moment is the Q&A session, when I was avalanched with questions and comments that I have never expected. In particular, Dr. Lu gave very constructive comments on how to strengthen our paper's theoretical foundation by a more in-depth discussion on the theories about regime legitimacy. Other members of the audience also offered a variety of advice and recommended some relevant journal articles to read. One helpful postgraduate student even came to me after the session had concluded and discuss with me how to refine my survey instrument.

As a participant in the Annual Conference, I was also allowed to partake in other paper sessions as audience. Throughout the four days I attended numerous paper sessions on topics ranging from public opinion research methodology, East Asian politics to state society relations in China. I was particularly impressed by Professor Xia Lu's paper presentation on state building and political socialisation of China in the early Maoist period. In his research, he conducted an extensive content analysis on the middle school politics course textbook of China in the 1950s. As audience, this time it was my turn to raise a few suggestions for him to refine his research. He was also very helpful in offering me advice on conducting content analysis.

Besides, there are also poster sessions consisting of undergraduate poster presentations. As different from paper session, poster sessions are more interactive in which presenters have to explain to visitors person-in-person. My friend and I had a great conversation with a presenter researching on the causes of "ghost cities" in China. While we gained insights into the phenomenon, we also offered our views from the perspective of a Hong Kong people.

The four-day conference triggered me to reflect upon the meaning of attending the conference and more deeply, how we "produce knowledge". To me, the most impressive part of the conference is how scholars and students exchange knowledge with little reservation. During presentation, presenters were humble to receive comments from the floor. When being a part of the audience, they were willing to comment and give suggestions. This echoes with a commonly known idiom – to stand on the shoulders of giants. The expansion and refinement of knowledge are endless and count on the efforts of each and every one. As everyone has his/her own limitations, only through helping each other can we build better knowledge. This resonates the advice from my supervisor, Dr. Kai Quek, before I set off for the trip: there is no need to treat my own paper as a once-and-for-all piece of work which addresses all the issues in controversy. Telling me that it was great enough to contribute to a small

but essential part of a big issue, he encouraged me simply to enjoy the presentation and be open to comments. After the trip, I am convinced. The most crucial attitude of doing academics is neither to overestimate nor underestimate oneself. On this basis, one can both be humble to receive comments and be willing to assist others in polishing their work.

I am going to revise my paper according to the suggestions received. After further research and amendment, Dr. Quek and I plan to submit the paper to an academic journal for publication as the final step. To proceed any further, I believe that the experience gained in Chicago is ever indispensable.