

Research Summary

Subject of research project I have been doing is “New middle class in China and Japan: a comparative research on the situation and function of new middle class in social transformation”. With a sociologic perspectives, this research project is trying to compare the new middle class of China and Japan, and find similarities and differences of new middle class of two countries. It focus on the comparisons of four features of the new middle class of China and Japan: 1) formation process; 2) income, consumption and lifestyle; 3) values and attitudes; 4) social-political impacts and functions. This research is a quantitative research which conducts comparative analysis based on national sample survey data of China and Japan. The research duration is from April 1 2008 to September 30 2009. During this period, I have completed below research work.

1) I had studied during April –August 2008 existing literature of new middle class of China and Japan, collected books, articles and video materials on this subject. That is the starting work for this research. Based on literature study, I found there were many similarities of middle class of these two countries because they share similar historical and cultural characteristics as representatives of the East Asian countries.

2) Using Japanese General Survey data and Chinese national Survey data, I did comparative analysis on the process, size, income and consumption, lifestyle, values and attitudes and other characteristics of Japanese and Chinese middle class. That concluded that Japan is a forthergoer for China in the process of industrialization and economic development, and also in the formation of new middle class and the change of social stratification. A comparative research between two countries is very helpful to find out or predict the characteristics of Chinese middle class.

3) I had organized a meeting “Middle class with comparative perspectives” in Jilin, China in July 2008 and invited Chinese and Japanese researchers to discuss this issue.

4) I edited a book titled by “Formation of Middle Class in Comparative Perspective: process, influence and socioeconomic consequences” which include papers on middle class of China and Japan.

5) I did case study on middle class of China, interviewed 100 families of middle class in Chinese cities and recorded interview materials of more than 100,000 words.

6) I wrote two papers on middle class of China. One is about development of middle class which titled by “Emerging middle class in China: controversial definition, heterogeneous composition and multiple identity”. Another is about political attitude of middle class of China which titled by “Political conservatism or liberalism? a study on sociopolitical attitudes of China’s middle class”.

7) I visited Tokyo University and Tohoku University during August 20-28 2009, discussed with Professor Sonoda Shigeto, Professor Hiroshi Ishida, Professor Yoshimich Sato and other two researchers, interview five families of Japanese middle class, and give a lecture in Waseda University.

Major conclusions of this research include:

- 1) Middle classes of China and Japan have been in different stages of development and had different experience of development. Japan’s middle class has been experiencing a stagnant period but China’s middle class has been in booming period.
- 2) Both two countries’ middle class share some similarities in political personality, such as conservative and apolitical attitudes but China’s middle class seems to play more important role in democratization.
- 3) Japan’s middle class has been forming certain class culture and identity but China’s middle class has not yet shaped such kinds of culture and identity.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

March 16, 2009, Lecture in the Department of Sociology, Seoul National University, *Rising Middle Class in China*, Li Chunling

April 24-25, 2009, Princeton University, Global Network on Inequality Conference *Political Conservatism or liberalism? A study on sociopolitical attitudes of China's middle class*, Li Chunling

August 26, 2009, Lecture in Institute of Asian Studies, Waseda University, *Educational expansion and rising middle class*, Li Chunling

September 22-23, 2009, Brookings Institution, Washington DC. China's Emerging Middle Class: Beyond Economic Transformation, *Emerging Middle Class in China: Controversial definition, heterogeneous composition and multiple identity*, Li Chunling

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

The Growing Tendency of Middle Class, *Social Sciences of Jiangsu*, No.5 2008

The Growth and Present Situation of the Chinese Middle Classes, *Xue Yuan*, No.1 2008

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)

Li Chunling: *Formation of Middle Class in Comparative Perspective: Process, Influence and Socioeconomic Consequences*, Beijing: Social Science Academic Press, 2009 (ISBN 978-7-5097-0748-7)