

To: SSSP Board of Directors and the Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee  
From: SSSP Transnational Initiatives Committee, John Dale (Chair), Héctor Delgado, Fatime Gunes, Tom Hood, Shirley Jackson, A. Javier Trevino, and Diana Therese Veloso  
Date: July, 24, 2015

**Re: Report from the Ad Hoc Transnational Initiatives Committee**

At last year's SSSP Conference in San Francisco, the Transnational Initiatives Committee requested a budget of \$5,000 that was approved by the Board of Directors and the Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee to help defray the costs of bringing four international graduate students from poorer countries around the world to the SSSP's 2015 Annual Meeting in Chicago. The intent was to identify international graduate students who are doing research on transnational processes in countries of the global South and to showcase their work on a panel in session meant to draw more of the SSSP graduate student members to participate and learn from this research that reflects perspectives from the global South. This idea grew out of the mini-conference on "Re-imagining Human Rights" (emphasizing perspectives of the global South) that the Transnational Initiatives Committee organized at the 2013 Annual Meeting in New York City (see <http://www.sssp1.org/ReimaginingHR>).

The aim of this initiative is to increase the numbers and participation of international graduate students from within and outside the United States and Canada to the SSSP each year. Many of these graduate students in the United States and Canada come from universities whose graduate departments have conference travel funds to support them. We want to create events, panels and service opportunities within the SSSP that contribute to a more welcoming environment and reputation for fostering transnational research and activism that includes the perspectives of collaboration with scholars and activists living outside the United States and Canada. We think that international graduate students represent a relatively untapped resource for contributing greater vibrancy and transnational understanding to all of the divisions within the SSSP.

The Transnational Initiatives Committee organized a special session for the SSSP 2015 Annual Meeting. The title of this special session is "Transnational Connections: International Graduate Student Research in the Global South," and it is scheduled to take place on Saturday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, from 10:30 AM to 12:10 PM in room Atlantic D. The Global Division is co-sponsoring this session with us. The Chair of the Transnational Initiatives Committee John Dale will preside over the session.

This special panel will feature invited international students who are conducting research in the global South (Egypt, Myanmar/Burma, Honduras, and Bolivia) that focuses on transnational processes. The panel and discussion has been designed especially to encourage graduate student members of the SSSP with an interest in globalization and transnational research to exchange ideas and perspectives across North/South boundaries of knowledge production. Of course, all attendees of the SSSP Annual Meeting are welcome to attend!

*Papers:*

"Arab Spring: From Democracy Aspirations to Germinating Seeds of Islamist Extremism, What Went Wrong?"  
Abdallah Hendaway, George Mason University

“Democratic Transition? Ethno-Religious Conflict, Identity Crisis, and Communal Violence in Western Myanmar (Burma),” Ye Khaung Oo, Augustana College

“‘Los Deportados’: A Transnational Ethnography of U.S. Mass Deportation Practices and Honduran Migrant Experience,” Hansel Aguilar, George Mason University

“‘The Colonial State has Died’: Negotiating the Decolonial State Bureaucracy in Bolivia,” Marcelo A. Bohrt, Brown University

Three of these graduate students will be traveling straight from field sites (Abdallah Hendaway from Libya/Egypt; Ye Khaung Oo from Myanmar; and Hansel Aguilar from Honduras). Money from the budget was used to cover their airfare and conference fees. The Bolivian student, Mario Bohrt, is studying at Brown University and was already planning to come to the ASAs, so we did not have to cover his expenses. John Dale recruited the Egyptian student this year straight from Egypt; The Myanmar student he met doing research in Myanmar this past year. He is graduated with a BA from Augustana College this past May and John has been working with the Open Society Institute to try to get him fellowship to start his graduate studies in the United States. His research is impressive and grows out of his own experiences growing up in Myanmar. The third student is from Honduras and does ethnographic work on Honduras deportees from the US to Honduras. John found funding to recruit him to George Mason University’s PhD program starting this Fall and to continue what he had already been doing as an MA student and continuing to do for the past year on his own. These three amazing international graduate students are committed to doing social research on conflicts in their home countries, and John plans to get them heavily involved in the SSSP. They all will be attending the New Member Breakfast and we hope that you will make a special effort to welcome them.

The Transnational Initiatives Committee hopes to use this panel to energize graduate students who already members of the SSSP to become not only involved in transnational and global issues and research, but also to incorporate perspectives from sociologists from the Global South, and hopefully to begin building research collaborations across North/South boundaries of knowledge production in ways that do not simply re-frame the Southern researchers' perspectives on the social problems along the lines of Northern researchers' perspectives.

Following the conference, we also want to organize a workshop for the international students with graduate student attendees (SSSP graduate student members) to discuss broader themes linking their work and helping them to think about framing together a transnational problem that could become the basis of a theme for individual or collaborative publications that they could submit to journals or publishers. Whether we can achieve this or not, it is too soon to say. But we think that this event will help the Transnational Initiatives Committee to showcase its vision and demonstrate that is making innovative efforts to realize it. We hope that our efforts draw positive attention from graduate students and generate among them a sense that the SSSP is a place to conference if you want to explore cutting edge sociological research in the areas of globalization and transnationalism.

Respectfully submitted,

John Dale, Chair, SSSP Transnational Initiatives Committee