

International Conference

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Session 2: Cross-continental Connections

What are the points of articulation between material cycles and socio-economic movements of capital, human, technology, and institutions? What are the consequences of connections, not only at the local but also at the cross-continental and global scales? How do we locate linkages among non-adjacent and seemingly disconnected locations in nature and society? Looking at spatial configurations of natural resource commodity chains and non-indigenous species across continents, session 2 examined the nature of human and nonhuman relationships in the making of global landscapes and the dynamics of the spatial interconnections of nature as history and process.

Prof. Anna L. Tsing's paper compared the disturbance histories that produce matsutake forests in four world areas (Japan, southwest China, the U.S. Pacific Northwest, and Finland), all of which have joined a Japan-centered matsutake commodity chain. The comparison addressed the role of continent-crossing commodity chains in gleaning wealth from radical disturbance. Dr. Eric Tagliacozzo then looked at Overseas Chinese networks through one window: the historical and contemporary trade in marine produce, which linked China and the many countries of Southeast Asia in an economic embrace for hundreds of years. Tracing the overall redistribution of salmon in the North Pacific over the course of the past 200 years, Ms. Heather Swanson made visible the patterned ways in which processes such as frontier encounters and the displacement of indigenous peoples, the rise of the global canned salmon trade, the development of new hatchery technologies, and the territorialization of ocean waters have impacted the people and fish of the North Pacific. Prof. Fumito Koike took up the issue of non-indigenous species found across continents induced by the expansion of global commodity chains. The paper specifically looked into the intentional introduction of non-indigenous species (erosion control, horticulture, zoo, etc.) and examined the cause and effect of biological invasion into wilderness areas.