## Cross-Cultural Psychology In Japan

Fall 2025

DRAFT COPY (due June 2, 2025) Please note, readings and dates will be updated!

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Office Hours:

How does culture shape what we do and how we think? What's universal to all cultures and what's specific to one or more cultures? This seminar will explore these questions by examining major theoretical and scholarly texts examining psychological processes in Japan and the U.S. In addition, we are very fortunate to observe psychology in action in our daily lives in Japan. Thus, a major component of this class will be to link scholarly evidence and theoretical frameworks to our experiences and observations in the local context. The class will be conducted in an active discussion format, facilitated by in /out-of-class activities and exercises, field trips and possible guest speakers.

#### The goals for this class are to

- 1. Acquire a foundation in relevant theoretical and empirical literature in Cultural and Cross-Cultural Psychology, as it pertains to Japan and/or in comparison with the US.
- 2. Engage in critical and generative thinking through the application of psychological concepts toward understanding the experiences of US and Japanese people.
- 3. Challenge our preconceptions; uncover new ways of understanding; gain a nuanced understanding of cross cultural differences and similarities.
- 4. Strengthen intercultural competence via knowledge of psychological factors involved in cross cultural interactions.
- 5. Develop a nuanced understanding through discussion; i.e. practice engaging in, leading and facilitating class discussion.

#### Course requirements

(20%). Class Participation and Attendance. As a seminar, it is important to participate fully in class discussion. The success of the class depends on all of us! To this end, please come to class 1) having read/viewed the assigned materials and 2) having identified at least one critical/novel question, comment or point from the readings that you'd like to discuss with the class, and 3) a connection between course material and your experience living in Japan (observations and interactions with Japanese people and culture). To enhance participation, there may be occasional "mini-homeworks" and activities assigned for class discussion; please be on alert for these.

Note: I realize you may not be able to thoroughly assess each reading (some readings may contain specialized terminology or statistical information). Become familiar enough with the texts to engage actively with your peers. The quality of your contributions, which promote novel insights about Japanese psychology, is more important than conveying comprehensive mastery of each reading. Contributions that provide unique, insightful perspectives that stimulate deeper understanding will

earn top grades; some effort to participate will earn mid-level grades; minimal engagement in discussion will earn lower grades. Additional details can be found on Moodle.

(20%) Discussion leading and planning. Plan to organize and lead ONE\* class period with a partner (with instructor assistance). Plan to meet with your partner well in advance of your assigned class(s); develop a tentative plan for engaging classmates in the course material (e.g. draft an outline with questions and activities to deepen our understanding of and engage in discussion of the course material), then finalize your plan with Sharon in advance of the class meeting (ideally, no later than the day before your class session). Be sure to schedule an appointment with me that works for you and your partner in advance. \*TBD: there may be an opportunity to lead a portion of a second class period with prior arrangement.

Optional Moodle questions/responses: In order to facilitate student-led sessions, you may choose to post 1-2 Moodle question/s prior to class. Please arrange with Sharon at our meeting so we can add a Moodle forum for your class session. The rest of the class should read, reply, and/or plan to elaborate on your questions during class discussion.

(20%) Weekly Journal reflections. Psychological processes are happening all the time, within ourselves, in others, and in our interactions with one another! The purpose of this assignment is to support ongoing critical and thoughtful analysis of psychological theory and research (i.e. the class material) as it applies to your day-to-day experiences living in Japan. Most of the assigned texts/videos can be seen and experienced where we live (e.g. anime/emoticons focus on eyes; use of honorifics in L1 vs L2; holistic processing, etc.). As you go about your day, I encourage you notice and observe your surroundings, engage in cross-cultural interactions, try to view your experiences through a psychological lens—take notes! For example: what seems different from your experience? Are you surprised by a lack of difference? Then explore why - from an informed perspective.

There are two components to a journal reflection. Try your best to include both if possible and take at least a few notes *prior to* each class period:

- 1) thoughtful assessment or reaction to at least some aspect of the assigned reading. Here are some examples: share a new insight or observation you made about a research study; add a question or critique; explain a connection or contrast with ideas presented in different parts of the readings or with other material outside of class, etc. You may also wish to share novel insights and analyses of Japanese psychology as a whole or in comparison with US/Western psychology.
- 2) a connection between course concepts and real-world observations and experiences. You might reflect on what you are seeing (and not seeing!), and/or what you would expect to observe under x circumstances; and/or note what appears to be more universal or similar across cultures, etc.. Field trips are a great application topic!

Plan to share insights and observations during class discussion every day. This means you'll want to do the reading several days before class, if possible, so you have time to apply concepts and make connections to your lived experience. This assignment is meant to foster deeper and more meaningful insights during class discussion. The journal is also a good place to share anything that came up during class discussion, perhaps something you wanted to share but ran out of time. By the end of each week (Friday), finalize and submit your journal entry for the week (+ 1 day grace period).

Reflections that provide unique, insightful perspectives (not just notes from readings, or superficial descriptions of observations), will earn top grades. Journals will be reviewed periodically, so be sure to stay up-to-date! Please try to keep your entry to no more than ~300-400 words. Additional guidelines can be found on Moodle.

(20%) Two short papers (~3 pages) that stem from two journal reflections of your choice. These are due approximately. 1/3rd and 2/3rd of the way through the semester (i.e., do not submit both at the same time!). This is a scholarly *paper* rather than a journal entry, i.e., it should include a more formal structure and commentary of the scholarly work (e.g., research findings) alone or as it applies to your observations and experiences. Pay attention to writing; include a thesis, argument, or goal to help anchor and structure your paper. Plan to incorporate a small amount of additional information, such as a brief interview/conversation, a more systematic observation, and/or additional scholarly source or two. Write concisely and clearly!

(15%) Final (longer) paper (~5-6 pages) due toward the end of semester, preferably with a partner, in which case, you may use ~8 pages. For this paper, you may 1) expand even further on or elaborate on one of your previous two short papers by conducting additional research (a more thorough literature review, additional data collection/observations, etc.), OR you may choose a different topic (e.g. another journal entry topic). In order to make this project a little easier, I strongly encourage you to work with a partner! This means you'll need to decide together, in advance, what topic/paper you'll explore further. The benefit of a partner is that you can share the research and play to each other's strengths.

Optional (if none of the journal entries/short papers interest you): With a partner, you may choose any topic of your choice related to Japanese psychology. Identify a question, a real-world phenomenon, an experience in Japan, etc. that you'd like to learn more about through a primarily psychological lens. You may either write a formal, literature-based, research paper (including optional interview data), or a research study proposal (strong familiarity with psychological methods is highly recommended), or create an applied product (e.g., a webpage that assists foreign travelers to Japan understand psychological differences).

(5%). Final *informal* presentation. *With your partner*, please plan to share with the class what you learned in your longer paper on one of the last two days of the semester. Since it is the end of semester, and you have much work for your language classes, we will keep this informal. However, please do have at minimum, an outline of what you'd like to share with the class. If you wish, you may prepare handouts, but it is not required.

#### Texts

- Heine, S.J. (2020). *Cultural Psychology*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. New York, NY: Norton. \*\* there is an ebook version of this text.
- Additional readings will be posted to Moodle.

### Laptop Policy

Since our readings are online, including the e-book, I encourage you to bring your laptop to class each day, or bring a detailed set of notes. However, please use your devices ONLY to access class materials. I trust that you will not "surf the net," or engage in personal social media activities while you are in class.

# **VERY Tentative** Reading Assignments and Topics (to be updated for 2025) Updates will be posted to Moodle

All readings are expected to be completed *prior* to each class meeting. Please bring assigned readings to class each day.

## **Organizing Frameworks**

#### Week 1

Mon Introduction to the course and topic: Why study cultural psychology in Japan?

Heine, Chapter 1 (A psychology for a cultural species)

Wed How does culture form and evolve?

Heine, Chapter 3 (Cultural evolution)

Kitayama, S., Ishii, K., Imada, T., Takemura, K., & Ramaswamy, J. (2006). Voluntary Settlement and the Spirit of Independence: Evidence from Japan's "Northern Frontier". *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 91(3), 369–384. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.91.3.369

**Video**: The Rice Theory of Culture: TED talk by T. Telhelm: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-KWM7Shy4BQ

Optional: (if you're curious about the research discussed in the TED talk!)

Talhelm, T., Zhang, X., Oishi, S., Shimin, C., Duan, D., Lan, X., & Kitayama, S.

(2014). Large-Scale Psychological Differences Within China Explained by Rice Versus Wheat Agriculture. *Science*, 344(6184), 603–608. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1246850

Talhelm, T., Zhang, X., & Oishi, S. (2018). Moving Chairs in Starbucks:

Observational studies find rice-wheat cultural differences in daily life in China.

Science Advances, 4(4). https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aap8469

#### Week 2

Mon How do we study psychology cross-culturally? Frameworks for comparing cultures

Heine, Chapter 4 (Research methods)

<u>Triandis</u>, H. C. (1996). The Psychological Measurement of Cultural Syndromes. *American Psychologist*, *51*(4), 407–415. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066x.51.4.407 Online article: A Failure of Fear

 $\underline{https://behavioralscientist.org/a-failure-of-fear-why-certain-nations-flunked-the-covid-19-threat-test-tight-loose-cultures/$ 

#### Optional:

<u>Hofstede, G. (2011).</u> Dimensionalizing cultures: The Hofstede Model in context. In Online Readings in Psychology and Culture (Unit 2, subunit 2.1). International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology:

## <u>http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/orpc/contents.html</u> (skim cultural dimensions, esp. individualism/collectivism)

## Wed Japanese Psychology

<u>Dalsky and Su. (2020).</u> Japanese psychology and intercultural training: Presenting Wa in a nomological network. In *Cambridge Handbook of Intercultural Training*, Landis and Bhawuk (Eds), Cambridge MA, Cambridge University Press.

Ogihara, Y. (2017). Temporal Changes in Individualism and their ramification in Japan: Rising individualism and conflicts with persisting collectivism, *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8, 1-12.

## Becoming cultural - Socialization, Enculturation and Development

#### Week 3

Mon TBD

Wed Development and Socialization

Heine, Chapter 5 (Development and Socialization)

Cook, H.M. & Burdelski, M. (2016). Language socialization in Japanese. In P. A. Duff and S. May (Eds.), *Language Socialization Encyclopedia of Language and Education*, New York, NY: Springer International Publishing.

## Week 4

Mon Parent-child

Rothbaum, F., Kakinuma, M., Nagaoka, R. & Azuma, H. (2007). Attachment and Amae: Parent-child closeness in the United States and Japan, *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 38, 465-486.

Dennis, T. A., Cole, P. M., Zahn–Waxler, C., & Mizuta, I. (2002). Self in Context: Autonomy and Relatedness in Japanese and U.S. Mother–Preschooler Dyads. *Child Development*, 73(6), 1803–1817. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00507

Online article: Have American parents got it backwards?:

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/have-american-parents-got-it-all-backwards b 3202328

#### Optional:

Shimizu, M., Park, H. & Greenfield, P.M. (2014). Infant sleeping arrangements and cultural values among contemporary Japanese mothers, *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5, 1-10.

Senzaki, S., & Shimizu, Y. (2020). Early Learning Environments for the Development of Attention: Maternal Narratives in the United States and Japan. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *51*(3-4), 187–202. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022120910804

## Wed School and Peers

Omi, Y. (2012). Collectivistic individualism: Transcending a traditional opposition. *Culture & Psychology*, 18(3), 403–416.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067x12446232

<u>Takamatsu, R. (2022).</u> Empathy and group processes in Japanese preschool children: The odd one out among friends receives less empathic concern than outgroups. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, *221*, 105460. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2022.105460

Video: Children Full of Life:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1tLB1lU-H0M&t=1s

# The self in social contexts: Are Japanese always interdependent while Americans are independent?

#### Week 5

Mon The Self

Heine, Chapter 6 (Self and Personality)

Kanagawa, Cross, Markus (2001). "Who am I?": The cultural psychology of the conceptual self, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 27, 90-103. Tafarodi, R.W., Marshall, T.C. & Katsura, H. (2004). Standing out in Canada and

Japan. Journal of Personality, 72, 785-814.

Wed Self-awareness and self-effacement

Heine, Chapter 8 (Motivation)

Snibbe, A.C., Kitayama, S., Markus, H.R. & Suzuki, T. (2003). "They saw a game": A Japanese and American (Football) Field Study. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 34, 581-595.

<u>Takata, T. (2003).</u> Self-enhancement and self-criticism in Japanese culture, *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 34*, 542-551.

\*FIELD TRIP: Japan Football (soccer) game: Kyoto Sanga vs? Sanga Stadium by KYOCERA. Please read the following before attending the game and add your reflections, analysis, application to your journal by x date.

Chun, S., Gentry, J. W., & McGinnis, L. P. (2004). Cultural Differences in Fan Ritualization: a Cross-Cultural Perspective of the Ritualization of American and Japanese Baseball Fans. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 31, 503–508. NOTE: this is article is about baseball (no local baseball games during this month), but see if some of these practices transfer to soccer!

https://www.ucanews.com/news/japanese-fans-shocking-behavior-at-world-cupgames/82689

https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/09/world/asia/japan-coronavirus-jleague-soccer.html

#### Week 6

Mon TBD

Wed

Yamagishi, T., Hashimoto, H., Li, Y., & Schug, J. (2011). Stadtluft Macht Frei (City Air Brings Freedom). *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 43(1), 38–45. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022111415407

Morling, B., Kitayama, S., & Miyamoto, Y. (2002). Cultural Practices Emphasize Influence in the United States and Adjustment in Japan. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 28(3), 311–323. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167202286003

Markus, H. R., Uchida, Y., Omoregie, H., Townsend, S. S. M., & Kitayama, S. (2006). Going for the Gold. *Psychological Science*, 17(2), 103–112. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2006.01672.x

## First Short Paper DUE this week

#### Week 7

Mon Relationships and Groups

Heine, Ch. 11 (Attraction and Relationships – focus on Close relationship section)

Kavanagh, C. & Yuki, M. (2017). Culture and group processes. In Online Readings in Psychology and Culture (Unit 5, subunit 4). International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology: http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/orpc/contents.html

Nakayachi, K., Ozaki, T., Shibata, Y., & Yokoi, R. (2020). Why Do Japanese People Use Masks Against COVID-19, Even Though Masks Are Unlikely to Offer Protection from Infection? Frontiers in Psychology, 11.

Niwa, S. & Murano, S. (2009). Self-denigrating humor for constructing relationships and regional cultural differences in Japan: A focus on blunder-telling behavior, *Journal of Social, Evolutionary, and Cultural Psychology, 3*, 133-154.

#### Optional:

Schug, J., Yuki, M., & Maddux, W. (2010). Relational Mobility Explains Betweenand Within-Culture Differences in Self-Disclosure to Close Friends. *Psychological Science*, 21(10), 1471–1478. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797610382786

Talhelm, T., Lee, C.-S., English, A. S., & Wang, S. (2022). How Rice Fights
Pandemics: Nature–Crop–Human Interactions Shaped COVID-19 Outcomes.

Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 014616722211072.

https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672221107209

Wed TBD

## How does culture influence how we feel and think?

### Week 8

Mon Emotion

Heine, Chapter 10 (Emotion-up to well being section)

Miyamoto, Y., Ma, X., & Wilken, B. (2017). Cultural variation in pro-positive versus balanced systems of emotions. *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences*, 15, 27–32. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cobeha.2017.05.014

Park, J., Barash, V., Fink, C. & Cha, M. (2013). Emoticon style: Interpreting differences in emoticons across cultures, *Proceedings of the Seventh International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media.* 

Online article: Facial Expressions Show Language Barriers Too <a href="https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/08/090813142131.htm">https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/08/090813142131.htm</a>

#### Optional:

<u>Kitayama, Mesquita, Karasawa (2006).</u> Cultural Affordances and Emotional Experience: Socially Engaging and Disengaging Emotions in Japan and the United States, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 91, 890-903.

Wed

Ito, K., Mausda, T., & Li, L. M. W. (2013). Agency and facial emotion judgment in context, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 39(6), 763-766.

<u>Tsai, J. L. (2007).</u> Ideal Affect: Cultural Causes and Behavioral Consequences. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 2(3), 242–259. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6916.2007.00043.x

#### Optional:

Safdar etal (2009). Variations of Emotional Display Rules Within and Across Cultures: A Comparison Between Canada, USA, and Japan, *Canadian Journal of Behavioral Science*, 41, 1-10.

#### Week 9

Mon Cognition

Heine Chapter 9 (Cognition and Perception)

Video: "East & West: Culture affects Thought Processes:"

https://drive.google.com/file/d/106ZIFRzvUt-soOjO lbNyJVbCUgz4o7C/view?usp=sharing (Part 1)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ao3x0OR9H0xCh5IeO68ctOLsDXtnsr7I/view?usp=sharing (Part 2)

Nisbett, R. E., & Miyamoto, Y. (2005). The influence of culture: holistic versus analytic perception. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 9(10), 467–473. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2005.08.004

Optional:

## Miyamoto, Y., Nisbett, R.E. & Masuda, T. (2006). Culture and the physical

environment: Holistic versus analytical perceptual affordances, *Psychological Science*, 17, 113-119.

Wed

Wu, S. & Keysar, B. (2007). The Effect of Culture on Perspective Taking, *Psychological Science*, 18, 600-606.

Masuda, T., Gonzalez, R., Kwan, L. & Nisbett, R.E. (2008). Culture and aesthetic preference: Comparing the attention to context of East Asians and Americans, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 1260-1275.

Nand, K., Masuda, T., Senzaki, S., & Ishii, K. (2014). Examining cultural drifts in artworks through history and development: Cultural comparisons between Japanese and Western landscape paintings and Drawings. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *5*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.01041

## Optional:

Ishii, K., Miyamoto, Y., Rule, N. O., & Toriyama, R. (2013). Physical Objects as Vehicles of Cultural Transmission: Maintaining Harmony and Uniqueness Through Colored Geometric Patterns. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 40(2), 175–188. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167213508151

## \*Possible FIELD TRIP: Art museum TBD in Kansai area.

(We will examine the cognitive attentional patterns addressed in the readings thus far, e.g. Masuda et.al, showing differences in positionality and perspective in Japanese vs Western artists' paintings)

## Week 10

Mon **TBD** (possible cancellation - field trip accomodation)

## Mental Health and Well being

Wed

Discussion of field trip, well-being (please plan to share one critical insight from today's readings; students will largely shape the topic and focus of discussion today!)

Heine, Chapter 14 (Mental health) also review section on well-being in the Emotion chapter

Ryff, C. D., Love, G. D., Miyamoto, Y., Markus, H. R., Curhan, K. B., Kitayama, S., Park, J., Kawakami, N., Kan, C., & Karasawa, M. (2014). Culture and the Promotion of Well-being in East and West: Understanding Varieties of Attunement to the Surrounding Context. *Cross-Cultural Advancements in Positive Psychology*, 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-8669-0 1

<u>Kitayama, etal. (2010).</u> Independence and interdependence predict health and wellbeing: divergent patterns in the United States and Japan, Frontiers in Psychology

#### Optional:

Oishi, S., Koo, M., & Akimoto, S. (2008). Culture, Interpersonal Perceptions, and Happiness in Social Interactions. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 34(3), 307–320. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167207311198

Second Short Paper DUE this week (grace period through end of weekend) Be sure to see updated prompt on Moodle!

## Week 11 (possible guest speaker this week)

Mon Culture bound syndromes?: Social Anxiety (Kaela, Peining leads)

Norasakkunkit, V., Kitayama, S. & Uchida, Y. (2012). Social anxiety and holistic cognition: Self-focused social anxiety in the United States and other-focused social anxiety in Japan, *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 43, 742-757.

<u>Kato, T, etal, 2019</u>, Hikikomori: Multidimensional understanding, assessment, and future internal perspectives, Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences, 73, 427-440.

### +*Two very short articles:*

<u>Kato, T. etal. (2020).</u> Forced social isolation due to COVID-19 and consequent mental health problems: Lessons from hikikomori, *Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences*, 74, 506-507.

<u>Suzuki, etal.</u> Letter to the Editor of American Journal of Psychiatry: Is Taijin Kyofusho a Culture-Bound Syndrome?

#### Wed Mental Health Treatment

Nippoda, Y. (2012). Japanese culture and therapeutic relationship, *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture* (Unit 10, subunit 3). International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology: may also download from: http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/orpc/contents.html

Sugg, H. etal. (2020). What is Morita Therapy? The Nature, Origins, and Cross-Cultural Application of a Unique Japanese Psychotherapy, *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy*, 50, 313-332.

Maeshiro, T. (2009). Naikan Therapy in Japan: Introspection as a way of healing, *World Cultural Psychiatry Research Review*, 33-38.

# Organizations: working with others, building cultural competence Intercultural interactions: Building cultural competence

#### Week 12

Mon How do we achieve cross-cultural understanding?

Heine, Chapter 15 (Organizations– focus on the negotiations section); also review communication section in Ch. 9, Cognition)

Nishimura, S., Nevgi, A., & Tella, S. (2008). Communication style and cultural features in high/low context communication cultures: a case study of Finland, Japan and India.

**Video**: "A world of Differences: Understanding cross-cultural communication:" <a href="https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic\_entity%7Cvideo\_work%7">https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic\_entity%7Cvideo\_work%7</a> C3190351

Optional: <u>Yamagishi, T., & Yamagishi, M., (1994).</u> Trust and commitment in the United States and Japan, *Motivation and Emotion*, 18, 9-66.

Wed TBD

## Week 13 Mon

Gannon, M. J. (2011, March). Cultural Metaphors: Their Use in Management Practice as a Method for Understanding Cultures. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture* (Unit 7, subunit 7.1). International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology; also accessible from <a href="http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/orpc/contents.html">http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/orpc/contents.html</a>

Wang, J. (2011). Communication and cultural competence: The acquisition of cultural knowledge and behavior. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture* (Unit 7, subunit7.1). International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology: also accessible from http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/orpc/contents.html

## Wed Wrap Up Activity!

In Class activity: with a partner, we will design a way to promote understanding and effective communication across Japan-US considering what we have learned about differences and similarities across the two cultures.

Final Paper Due today

### Week 14

Mon Informal Presentations I Wed (final exam day) Presentations II if needed

<sup>\*</sup> Field Trips are tentative until finalized by the AKP office