

## Report of the ISPSO 2016 New York Regional Meeting

The 2016 New York Regional Meeting took place on November 4 and 5 at the William Alanson White Institute in Manhattan. The theme of the program was “Identity and Irrationality in the 2016 American Presidential Election” and featured Dr. Edward Shapiro as the speaker. Dr. Shapiro is the Former Medical Director/CEO of the Austen Riggs Center in Stockbridge, MA. A board certified psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, family researcher, and organizational consultant, he is also Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Yale University School of Medicine, and formerly Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School.

Occurring only 3 days prior to the election, the topic was certainly relevant and prescient, but perhaps like the rest of the nation and world, not fully anticipating the outcome. The program developed by the organizing committee along with Dr. Shapiro was based on the following set of observations put forth in the invitation to set the stage: “The last sixteen years of American politics has been a time of increasing polarization, brinksmanship, and rancor floating atop massive shifts in the ethnic, cultural and economic fault lines of the country. The 2016 presidential election cycle is the pressurized distillation of these trends, exploding into a circus-like fracturing of the Republican Party, fueling fears of a rising American demagoguery, and producing a Democratic Party deadlock between establishment elitism and populist progressivism. Amidst the chaos, cacophony, and confusion, many are left wondering what is happening to the great American experiment. Identity and irrationality seem to define the political struggle unfolding on the national stage.” Based on several of his previous papers that explored the American electorate and aspects of irrationality in leadership roles, Dr. Shapiro addressed several questions presented by the organizing committee: How might we begin to unpack the dynamics of identity and irrationality in this election season and what do those dynamics suggest about the state of our union? More important for ISPSO, what are the implications for our work with organizations?

The meeting began the previous evening with a reception and informal dinner at a local restaurant. On Saturday, thirty participants engaged in a lively discussion led by Dr. Shapiro, and focused on the importance of “negotiated interpretations” and the importance of the task in the leadership role. Some of the ideas presented and generated at the meeting will be discussed more thoroughly in Ed Shapiro’s forthcoming article “Citizenship as Development”, his central theme in the presentation, soon to appear as a Speaking Out piece in *Organisational and Social Dynamics*.

We were pleased to welcome some new attendees, resulting in at least 1 new ISPSO membership. The ISPSO Board scheduled its meeting to coincide with the Regional Meeting, and several Board members attended. The meeting broke even financially with 32 registrations and 30 attendees. (Two members attended only the reception and dinner.) The committee will consider expenses in planning for next year as we overspent on food, and some of the orders were co-mingled with those of the Board meeting. We will explore other cost savings.

Plans for 2017 are taking shape as the meeting is scheduled for October 27-28, once again at the White Institute. Although details remain to be developed, the emerging theme will likely be centered on LGBTQ issues in organizational life.

**2016 NY Regional Meeting Committee:**

Aaron Nurick, Chair

Debbie Bing

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