

2010 Osaka University Forum

Globalization and Conflict:
Entanglement between Local and Cosmopolitan Orientations

28th - 30th September 2010
University of Groningen, the Netherlands

Organized by:

Osaka University
Global COE Program “Conflict Studies in the Humanities”
Global Collaboration Center (GLOCOL)
Groningen Center

In cooperation with:

University of Groningen

Call for Papers

Osaka University invites researchers to present papers at our forthcoming forum “Globalization and Conflict: Entanglement between local and cosmopolitan orientations”.

This forum aims to open up new spaces for international academic dialogue on globalization and conflict. Since the breakdown of the Cold War power balance, the world has experienced an enormous number of social, cultural and linguistic-ethnic conflicts. These conflicts have occurred and continue to occur at various levels from the micro to the macro, namely as part of people’s everyday lives, as well as part of regional, national and international confrontations. Conflicts are now ubiquitous, from the influence of which none of us is free.

In today’s increasingly globalizing world, we often face contradictory socio-political situations. On the one hand, people seek to achieve an efficient, modern state which guarantees a rise in the standard of living, a more effective political order and greater social justice. Such an aspiration presupposes a set of universalistic values, such as humanitarianism, egalitarianism, market fundamentalism and neo-liberalism, which we term here as “cosmopolitan orientations”.

On the other hand, people also have “local orientations,” in which they make efforts towards the establishment, reconstitution and retrieval of their unique identities. That is to say, people also wish to locate themselves in the world as particular persons

(differing from others), who are valued and respected for their own worth. This desire for self definition and belongingness can lead to essentialism, nativism and xenophobia. The process of ethnicization and indigenization, for instance, can be understood in terms of such endeavors.

In this forum, we propose to comprehend the various forms of conflict across the world as tensions between these two discordant orientations. We will be focusing our attention on entangled relationships between cosmopolitan orientations that are becoming apparent in parallel with the process of rapid globalization, and local, parochial orientations that are emerging at the grassroots as reactions against globalization from above, including those at the national level.

Reference to “the local” here should not be taken simply as values and practices at the community level. It should be seen as a category that entails a much broader range of orientations. Our definition of “conflict” is also widely framed here. Conflicts are not limited to military or political ones, but extend to broader symbolic and cultural frictions. In other words, we propose to discern a variety of “conflict zones” at different levels and spheres.

We are confident that this forum will enhance opportunities for new debates and interventions on the pressing issues of globalization and conflict. Papers may review the theoretical literature relevant to this theme, or examine the theme through case studies from actual fields of conflict.

We welcome paper proposals particularly from PhD students and post doctoral researchers of the Graduate School of Human Sciences and Graduate School of Letters, Osaka University. Please send the title and abstract (300 words) of your proposed paper to the following e-mail address by April 30th, 2010.

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The COE Board will consider proposals, and notify the applicants of acceptance or rejection by May 28th, 2010.