

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

Aim of Forum

2010 Osaka University Forum, “Globalization and Conflict: Entanglement between Local and Cosmopolitan Orientations,” to be held from 28th to 30th September 2010 at University of Groningen, the Netherlands, aims to open up new spaces for international academic dialogue on globalization and conflict.

In today’s world we experience an enormous number of social, cultural and linguistic-ethnic conflicts. Particularly since the breakdown of the Cold War power balance, 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 effects of which none of us is free.

The present forum is an attempt to tackle this contemporary universal predicament by focusing 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.

In today’s increasingly globalizing world, we are often confronted with 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 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 this context.

This forum hopes to present theoretical as well as practical interventions into the understanding of various kinds of conflict across the world in terms of tension between these two discordant orientations. Here, “the local” should not be taken simply as values and practices at the community level. Rather it should be regarded as a category that entails different forms of selfhood and socio-cultural, politico-economic identities in a broad sense, including those at the national level.

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 intend to discern a variety of “conflict zones” at different levels and spheres, and the forum will be focusing on the conflict zones that appear at a variety of locations in the context of globalization.

The forum will have contributions from around 30 scholars from across the world. The participants will include members of Osaka University’s Global COE Program, doctoral candidates and post-doctoral researchers of the Graduate School of Human Sciences and Graduate School of Letters, Osaka University, and invited scholars from Japan and elsewhere (please refer to the Call for Papers).

About the Osaka University Global COE Program: Osaka University’s Global COE Program “A Research Base for Conflict Studies in the Humanities” began in July 2007 on the basis of the achievements of the university’s 21st Century COE Program, “Interface Studies in the Humanities”. The program has initiated many innovative research projects conducted both by members within the program and through collaborative research with scholars from outside Osaka University. The disciplinary scope of the program is diverse. With anthropology providing its central methodology and epistemology, it also includes linguistics, history, literary studies, sociology and many other fields. The research projects have resulted in numerous publications and successful symposia.

About the Global Collaboration Center (GLOCOL): Osaka University’s Global Collaboration Center was established in 2007. It conducts cross-disciplinary research on international cooperation and multiculturalism, and develops academic programs that aim to foster students' transcultural communicability. It also promotes international cooperation activities based on the experience gained through its research and educational projects.

About the Groningen Center: Osaka University Groningen Center was established to encourage interchange between the Netherlands, other European countries, and Osaka University. It supports the studying abroad of Osaka University students, promotes visits by European students to Osaka University and research activities in higher education in European countries. It also aims to reinforce relationships between Japanese Organizations and Government-Affiliated Organizations.