**REGULAR SESSION INFORMATION**


**Session:** Being Human in Global Society: Concepts of the Self and Socialization Processes in Asian Cultures

**Session Convener(s):** Andrea M. Maccarini, University of Padova; Riccardo Prandini, University of Bologna

**Chair:** Andrea M. Maccarini, University of Padova; Riccardo Prandini, University of Bologna

**Comments:** -


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I) *Self, Self-transcendence and Recognition as Dimensions of Indian Social Thought*
Martin Fuchs, Max Weber Kolleg, Erfurt


II) *The Global and Local Dimension of Discourse on Mankind (Anthropou-logos)*
Emanuela Ferreri, University "La Sapienza", Roma


III) *Religion and Partnership Behaviors in Japan, South Korean and Singapore: A Comparative Analysis Focusing on the Effects of Religion by Age*
Hiroshi Kojima, Waseda University, Tokyo


IV) *Creation of Identity for Self and Others*
Padideh Pakpour, Uppsala University

# ABSTRACTS

## Session description
 "The Human" appears to be an increasingly crucial symbol in the cultural landscape of global society. There seems to be a growing need to take "the human being" as a reference point in most cases when hard societal decisions are to be made – ones often involving intercultural relationships. At the same time, the notion of the human is used to articulate fears that global society could be undermining its own foundations through its most profound processes of social and cultural change. However, it is not clear what this notion really refers to, and how global society and its cultures are transforming it. This raises a lot of issues. Will global society require a shared culture of what it means to be human? Can its increasingly complex networks of social, political, cultural, religious relationships go on without it? And if so, what consequences will obtain?

Moreover, where is a culture that is able to sustain the human rights and dignity emerging? Different paths of cultural change are conceivable: we might live to witness the further cultural diffusion of the Western notions of the individual and its "sacredness". But Asian societies obviously nourish their own "sources of the Self", which are increasingly coming up in the global setting. This process parallels their rise to the role of global powers. Will these versions ultimately prevail? Again, is it possible that there will be no shared culture, but a situation of permanent pluralism, through which forms of "local universalism" may emerge?

This session welcomes empirical and theoretical papers which examine concepts of the self, human formation and socialization processes in Asian societies – particularly China, India, and Japan – possibly in a comparative perspective. Papers will be most welcome that point to experiences of socialization which exhibit some potential of universalization.

## Papers
I) *Self, Self-transcendence and Recognition as Dimensions of Indian Social Thought*
Martin Fuchs, Max Weber Kolleg, Erfurt

Social theory has not yet found a satisfactory way to analyze and incorporate Indian concepts of humanness and self. The paper will argue against generalizing approaches that try to identify a whole civilizational culture with one model, be it of the Dumontian kind, or be it of (Neo-)Vedantic derivation. Over long stretches of its history India has been the arena of sometimes widely diverging and often conflicting notions of self-hood and, closely connected, of diverging notions of sociality. It seems requisite to probe more thoroughly into the theoretical implications of Indian conceptualizations of the individual self, inter-subjectivity and self-transcendence (both in its religious and the non-religious dimensions). The paper will focus in particular on processes of individuation and (religious as well as political) liberation of Indian Dalits *against the triple background* of their experiences of humiliation (including the respective modes of expression), significant traditions of self-assertion, self-transcendence and social recognition (esp. certain forms of *bhakti* and Buddhism), and conceptual as well as political interaction with western strands of thought.

II) *The Global and Local Dimension of Discourse on Mankind (Anthropou-logos)*
Emanuela Ferreri, University "La Sapienza", Roma

Through the notions of "anthropo-poiesis," "ethnocentrism" and "cultural identity", anthropology and sociology allow us to define the cognitive roadmap and tools for an investigation which over the last fifty years has moved between the cultural phenomenon of the "'universalization of the Other" and the corresponding phenomenon of "local universalism."

The universalism and particularism of mankind belong to society, and have global and local dimensions in the world of human beings.

Anthropologically speaking, humanity does not have a date of birth, but has "conditions" of existence and self-identification, conditions which often appear clear and compelling, as in the case of universal human rights, but can just as often can seem blurred and ambiguous.

All the conditions of humanity are historically diverse, subjective and objective, tangible and intangible, ephemeral and enduring. Cultural identity is made as vulnerable as it is made strong by the effective space which society grants to cultural identities to express themselves at the various local and global levels.

This report addresses these issues and processes through the prism of contemporary India, a place set between tradition and modernity, between East and West.

Indian society is, in fact, the perfect example of the issues described above, which the work of scholars of international stature and diverse disciplines and backgrounds allows us to and study and reflect upon. India, then, as *object* of the structural anthropology of L. Dumont, between sociological holism and individualism, as *subject* of the global cultural anthropology of A. Appadurai, between exogenous historical processes and endogenous genealogical processes, and thus India as ethnographic *birthplace*, yesterday and today, of new identities, as described by P.G. Solinas, of diverse gender, generation and social class.


III) *Religion and Partnership Behaviors in Japan, South Korean and Singapore:  A Comparative Analysis Focusing on the Effects of Religion by Age*
Hiroshi Kojima, Waseda University, Tokyo

This study presents the results of comparative analysis of the effects of religion on premarital cohabitation in Japan, South Korea and Singapore, drawing on microdata from the 2009 Survey on Comparative Study of Family Policies in East Asia (South Korea, Singapore and Japan) and the 2005 Comparative Opinion Survey on Declining-Birthrate Societies (South Korea and Japan only), which were conducted by the Section for Measures against Declining Birthrate, Director-General for Policies on Cohesive Society, Cabinet Office (Japanese Government).  It focuses on the effects of interaction of religion with age to examine the effects of religious socialization on partnership behaviors of adults of reproductive ages (20-49) in the three Asian societies.

The effects of religion on several types of partnership behaviors have been analyzed, but only the results for premarital cohabitation are presented below due to the space constraints as well as recent increase of short-term cohabitation in East Asian societies.  The results of preliminary analysis using logit analyses with stepwise selection show that Japanese women aged 40-44 without religion are more likely to be in cohabitation and Japanese women aged 20-24 are more likely to have experienced cohabitation, but Japanese women aged 40-44 with religion are less likely to have experienced cohabitation.  In South Korea Buddhist men aged 30-34 and men aged 35-39 with religion are more likely to have experienced cohabitation.  In Singapore Catholic and Muslim men aged 35-39/40-44 and Protestant men aged 35-39/45-49 are more likely to be in cohabitation while Protestant men aged 30-34 are more likely to have experience cohabitation.

In sum, the interaction of religion and age does not have any significant effects on premarital cohabitation among Japanese men, but limited effects among Japanese women.  It has larger effects among Korean men than women (due to their under-reporting ), but about the same effects among Singaporean men and women.  Religious socialization seems to be correlated with partnership behavior through the life course.

IV) *Creation of Identity for Self and Others*
Padideh Pakpour, Uppsala University

The main psychological theory about how individuals in subcultures create identities is "social identity theory" defining social group as people sharing common social identifications, or perceive themselves to be members of the same social category". Individuals tend to exaggerate similarities within their group and exaggerate differences between their and other groups, creating a sense of "us" and "them".

The term "identity" is referred to as a person's intentions in social relationships, depending on who he is with, where he is, the situation he is in etc. The creation and usage of identities can also be understood through people's linguistic use. By studying conversations and communication the creation of people's own versions of reality can be understood.

In different situations, individuals elaborate different linguistic codes, and the more a group has in common the more likely it is that they use words and terms they share, resulting in particularized language practices, or linguistic codes, "restricted" in the sense that they present difficulties of comprehension outside of the group.

My research regards the social identity among young people of Rasht in northern Iran. Since the linguistic usage has altered from Gilaki to Persian in the past century, due to socio-economic factors, I have been interested in how it has affected the identity of young Gilaks. I began my research with examining how young women identify themselves and the older generation. After two fieldtrips I have extended my research into looking at how they identify their group towards other groups in their conversations, through participant observation. The focus for the study has been based on how these young women identify themselves and other groups, based on economical, ethnical, gender, geographical, and generational differences etcetera.