



Research Interests

Main objective

It is the main objective of the Global Studies Programme to be a competence center for the education in global studies both on the Masters as well as on the PhD level and to contribute through educating students, public lectures, academic research and active participation to the study of the phenomenon of globalization. The special focus of the Global Studies Programme rests on the study of the Global South. The programme generally focuses on three main topics: the perception of globalization, the rise of the emerging powers and a global social structure.

First interest – Glocalization: The Dynamics of Heterogeneization and Homogenization of Globalization

Due to the fundamental insights that all global processes are at the same time of local-regional as well as global-transregional importance “Glocalization” describes the configuration of the transnational processes of globalization on the concrete local or regional level. Thus, analyzing the process of globalization explicitly from the factual specifications in everyday life is the main characteristic of this research interest. In summary, glocalization deals with the local characteristics of the world wide globalization. Accordingly, it is a goal of the GSP to analyze the various forms of globalization from different regional perspectives. Being located in five different world regions and having an international faculty the Global Studies Programme is well prepared to tackle these questions.

Second interest – Emerging Powers:

Today, the increasing economical, political and military importance of China, India, South Africa as well as parts of Latin America and Southeast Asia are effectively challenging the traditional west-bound world order. Moreover, these countries started to build networks without Western participation especially in the Global South. While the Western ‘Anti-Globalization Movement’ – from the Left as well as from the Right – did not really succeed in influencing global institutions, new networks between several rising countries cannot be underestimated regarding their ability of criticizing and delegitimizing international institutions like WTO or IMF and consequently, acting as a voice for the Global South. Observed from a more academic point of view the question arises, which nations have to be considered as emerging powers today, what makes them an emerging power and how does this change the world we are living in?

Third interest – Global Social Structure:

Researching the existence of a global social structure a particular interest of the faculty involved in the Global Studies Programme focuses on the role of elites as important and influential individual actors in the new world order, and inquires whether national elites, networks of globalized elites or even a global elite is emerging and how these social groups can be characterized. In literature, political action on an international level has always been regarded as the domain of nation states, sometimes in addition with international institutions or organizations. Nation states – as the primary actors within the international system – were often viewed as black boxes which social sciences cannot access, but assumed to be similar units. However, to analyze collective global political action it is necessary to take a look behind the ‘black box’ of the nation state. Consequently, it is the Programme’s intention to analyze elites as very important actors shaping globalization today.

Fourth interest – Global Social Justice:

Another major interest of the Global Studies Programme lies on the analysis of just global structures and processes of democratization. Taking the model of a social market economy as a guiding principle the question arises how global social politics and a global welfare state can be achieved. Being confronted with many global challenges like pandemics, terrorism, natural disasters, economic crisis the need is for a sustainable and just international structure recognizing the interests of all the world citizens, the poor as well as the rich, from the global North as well as from the global South.

Fifth interest – Global Environmental Issues:

Up to now neither social nor natural sciences have come up with sustainable solutions about what can be done to preserve the world from being destroyed. In particular the consequences of globalization causing significant environmental damages to many nation in the international system at the same time just added the burden of global threats to the entire international system in the last few years.

The inability of nation states, international institutions, civil societies, and non-governmental organizations from both national and international level to face these environmental problems has proved that these new and global issues cannot be resolved by local and individual actors single-handed, but rather by global and collective action. However, accepting the fact that there



is no global government almost all realistic and neo-realistic approaches state that the structure of the international system is anarchic and cannot be influenced by actors. On the contrary, it has been argued that to avoid any “Tragedy of the Commons” collective action has to be initiated by individuals on a local level. Consequently, there are two questions emerging for the Global Studies Programme: First, which actors are capable of shaping the global environmental agenda? Second, which actors are desirable to do so?