

Transatlantic Summer Workshop

July 9-13, 2018

The Graduate Center, City University of New York, New York, USA

Ruhr Universität Bochum, Bochum, Germany

Final Report

This year's installment of the annual Transatlantic Summer Workshop between PhD students of the social sciences and the humanities -- the fourth already! -- took place in Bochum, Germany, where it was hosted by Ruhr University Bochum (RUB). Nine PhD students from the CUNY Graduate Center (GC-CUNY) met their counterparts at RUB for one hot German summer week. Participants in this cohort came from a broad range of academic fields including political science, history, sociology, anthropology and literature.

As students presented their work in small panels, they enjoyed in-depth discussions both with peers and with faculty from both sides of the Atlantic. Dissertation and research topics ranged from contemporary international relations to the problem of femicide and the literary representations of animals.



Academic and cultural highlights of the week included a keynote lecture by German author Per Leo, a well-known German author and philosopher. Introduced by Kornelia Freitag (Vice Rector for Education at Ruhr University Bochum) and Wilhelm Loewenstein (Dean of the RUB Research School), Per Leo presented this year's keynote lecture on the subject of communication in comparative contexts, and sparked a very lively transatlantic discussion among a larger audience.

A few days later, after a long day of group discussions among the PhD students, three academic experts addressed the nature and purpose of PhD education in the United States and Germany, starting a discussion about the future of doctoral training in the two countries. Why do people pursue PhD degrees? Does it pay? How do they serve larger labor market structures - or do they? A lively panel with Mayannah Dahlheim (Head of Division of Societal Responsibility and Diversity, University Duisburg/Essen), Dean Wilhelm Loewenstein, and Stephen Milder (Assistant Professor of Politics and Society, University of Groningen) stimulated an intense debate within the group on the future of the PhD.

Several networking opportunities ensured the creation of lasting bonds. Besides a guided tour through the Bochum brewery Fiege, on its last day the participants in the workshop took an excursion to Villa Huegel, the former Krupp family estate, in the nearby town of Essen, both for lunch and for a guided tour of the property of one of the major German industrial families.

The students in this cohort look forward to meet again next year to pursue and solidify the relationships created during this year's workshop. In the meantime, they plan to create a transatlantic group for joint research projects and fundraising.

Successful collaborative outcomes of past workshops and cohorts include publications and transatlantic panels with representatives from both universities, such as:

- **publications** by GC-CUNY student Nicholas R. Micinski: 1) "NGO Frequent Flyers: Youth Organisations and the Undermining of Reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina," *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 11, no. 1 (2016): 99-104 (based on workshop feedback from the 2015 Transatlantic Summer Workshop) & 2) Nicholas R. Micinski and Thomas G. Weiss, "International Organization for Migration and the UN System: A Missed Opportunity," *Future of the United Nations Development System (FUNDS) Briefing* 42, September 2016 (based on feedback from the 2016 workshop);
- a transatlantic **panel** „Negotiating Security in Europe and the United States“ - a joint event with Tanesha Thomas, Emily Campbell (both GC-CUNY students) and Professors Constantin Goschler and Michael Wala (both RUB professors) in October 2016;
- a **panel** at the Latin American Studies Association 2018 with Guillermo Yrizar Barbosa (GC-CUNY PhD Program in Sociology) & Christian Schramm (RUB, PhD Program in History) - both students in the 2015/2016 cohort - in collaboration with RUB Professor Ludger Pries
- **Research Fellowship** for Emily Campbell, a GC-CUNY student of the 2015/2016 group, as Visiting Scholar at the Department of Sociology, Organization, Migration and Participation, developing a project on "Human rights in the US-Mexican illicit political economy" to complete the dissertation process in 2018 (hosted by RUB Professor Ludger Pries).
- a joint **faculty book project** between Michael Wala (RUB) and Benjamin Hett (GC-CUNY), who "are writing a book about the case of Otto John, president of the Bundesamt fuer Verfassungsschutz from 1950 to 1954, who disappeared under mysterious circumstances in July 1954 and reappeared in East Berlin as an apparent defector, only to re-defect a year and a half later." The publishing target is 2018 with Rowohlt Verlag.
- several students of the first cohort have successfully completed their PhDs, in part based on research such as interviews and archival work based in Europe or the US, which they were able to access in part because of the transatlantic flights the program covers.

We wish to thank our sponsors for their continued generous support of the annual Transatlantic Summer Workshop: the Max Kade Foundation, the Otto and Fran Walter Foundation, the CUNY Graduate Center, and the Research School of the Ruhr University Bochum.

For questions please email

Prof. John Torpey, Director, Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies at jtorpey@gc.cuny.edu or

Dr. Patrizia Nobbe, Associate Director, European Union Studies Center at pnobbe@gc.cuny.edu