Conference Report

“Chances for Global Cooperation in the 21st Century”

Inauguration Ceremony of Käte Hamburger Kolleg / Centre for Global Cooperation Research

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Museum Küppersmühle, Duisburg

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About the Centre

Käte Hamburger Kolleg / Centre for Global Cooperation Research (KHK / GCR21) is an interdisciplinary research institute of the University of Duisburg-Essen. Our Centre is the tenth and youngest Käte Hamburger Kolleg supported by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research of Germany. We focus on the chances for global cooperation in the 21st century. Interdisciplinary research fellows from all regions of the world examine the opportunities and challenges of global cooperation amidst political-cultural difference in the world society.

Our work is organised in four research units: The (Im)Possibility of Cooperation (Unit 1), Global Conflicts of Culture and Transcultural Cooperation (Unit 2), Global Governance Revisited (Unit 3), and Paradoxes and Perspectives of Democratisation (Unit 4).

The Centre offers a setting for joint learning among international research fellows and seeks a close dialogue with policy-makers, diplomats and representatives of civil society.

Käte Hamburger Kolleg / Centre for Global Cooperation Research was co-founded by the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE), the Institute for Development and Peace / Institut für Entwicklung und Frieden (INEF), and the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI) in Essen.

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Chances for Global Cooperation in the 21st Century

On the occasion of its inauguration, the Käte Hamburger Kolleg / Centre for Global Cooperation Research took up its core research question as the thematic focus of the ceremony: How could global cooperation be achieved amid the attempts to solve the central challenges of the 21st century? Honourable representatives of the academia, politics, and administration were invited to give an insight into this complex, multifaceted research area.

Welcome Addresses and Introductory Remarks

At the beginning of the Inauguration Ceremony Prof. Dr. Tobias Debiel, Director of the Centre for Global Cooperation Research (KHK / GCR21) welcomed the guests, expressed his gratitude and introduced the ceremony program.

After this short welcoming speech, Prof. Dr. Ulrich Radtke, president of the University of Duisburg-Essen, made his welcome address. He emphasized the importance of the Centre for the University and its’ claim “open minded” that leaves room for international research. He assured the support of the University for the Centre and expressed his proud about the successful application in the final selection process.

Ulrich Schüller, Head of the Department of Science Systems of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), also addressed in his introductory remarks the success of the Centre in an ambitious selection round to come out on top of the group of twenty candidates. Schüller highlighted the change of perspective within the ministry after 2007 and the initiative “Freedom for Research in the Humanities” that supports interdisciplinary research and the internationalisation of research in the humanities within Germany. He emphasized the characteristics and goals of the initiative that supports each Käte Hamburger Kolleg for six years with the option of another six years extension.

Helmut Dockter, State Secretary within the Ministry of Innovation, Science and Research of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), also congratulated the
Centre as an innovative, interdisciplinary institution and exemplified the importance of its research areas due to the global challenges that only can be solved by cooperation. He quoted Stephan Hessel and his concerns about baleful dynamics and also mentions the criticism on economic science. He argued for the development of a culture of involvement as well as counterstrategies based on research findings and that focus on the people. At the end of his remarks Dockter highlighted the support of NRW for social science and humanities. With its four Käte Hamburger Kollegs, NRW had become more attractive to international researches. The final introductory remarks were made by Sören Link, mayor of the City of Duisburg. He expressed his gratitude towards the University that has proven excellence and emphasized the focus on international research with practical relevance. While global crisis also manifest themselves on local level, he stressed the importance of research on global cooperation in general as well as for the city. The Centre will become a lighthouse of the city, with its inhabitants out of 140 nations.

Keynote Speeches

Keynote Speech I: “The Roots of Human Cooperation”

by Dr. Daniel Haun, Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics / Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology

In his keynote speech Dr. Daniel Haun discussed from a cognitive science perspective, whether and to which extent collaborative action is rooted in humans. He stated that human beings are selfish and power-hungry but that cooperative behaviour is also deeply rooted within human nature. Therefore, it is worth asking why global cooperation is failing. In the first part Dr. Haun talked about the ability of humans and great apes to cooperate. He explained the genetic and biological roots of the ability for cooperation and demonstrated with different tests that all great apes share the ability to cooperate. Consequently successful cooperation relies on a combination of ability and motivation. Dr. Haun exemplified the preference of young children to cooperate even in cases of costly giving
and with no direct benefit. Moreover, it is proven that children enjoy sharing as it raises the level of happiness afterwards. So what does this mean for global cooperation? Against the rational choice assumption, it is expected that in a dilemma individuals have an intuitive tendency to cooperate. It is shown in case studies that also adults’ spontaneous reaction is cooperative, and thus much depends on timing.

Keynote Speech II: “Cooperation – Chances and Limits from a Practitioner’s Perspective”

by Dr. Gunter Pleuger, President of the European University Viadrina, Frankfurt/Oder

The second keynote speech was held by Dr. Gunter Pleuger, a former ambassador to the United Nations (UN). Before starting his keynote speech, Dr. Pleuger mentioned to be delighted to participate at the ceremony and sees room for cooperation between the Centre and the University Viadrina that he considers as one of the most international universities. Dr. Pleuger highlighted that global challenges strive for cooperation and that the 21st century could even be called the century of cooperation. He explained the specific approaches of diplomacy as a form of cooperation: On the one hand the classical bilateral diplomacy that demands a compromise so that there are no winner or losers in the end; and on the other hand multilateral diplomacy within global institutions such as the UN, where decision making processes are based on the vote of majority. Being successful in multilateral cooperation requires either to convince the counterpart voting in your favour or to make a deal to win the majority. In this regard, he pointed out the importance of trust as basis of diplomacy. Since the number of diplomats engaged in multilateral negotiations is limited, confidentiality and mutual trust are essential for a successful diplomacy. Furthermore, he underlined that cooperative action is extremely difficult but it happens and referred to the enormous amounts of cooperation within the UN and its agencies. As the most important bodies within the UN, Pleuger explained the differences between the General Assembly and the Security Councils with their different strengths...
and weaknesses. Whereas the General Assembly has the highest legitimacy, because every state is represented, the body doesn't have the authority to make legally binding decisions. Still, it changes international behavior, as well as psychological and political behavior. In contrast, the Security Council can create new international law, but is hampered by a lack of efficiency and legitimacy. Pleuger concluded that it is necessary to reform the Security Council in order to reform the UN. At the end, Dr. Pleuger asked for the role of Europe and Germany in multilateral cooperation within the UN. He stressed the important role of Europe because it is considered as peaceful and unites many votes.

Keynote Speech III: “New International Cooperation Approaches in a Radically Changing Global World Order – Perspectives from India”

by Prof. Dr. Upendra Baxi, Senior Fellow at Käte Hamburger Kolleg “Law as Culture”, Bonn

Prof. Dr. Upendra Baxi, one of the most renowned contemporary Indian legal scholars, held the third keynote speech about the changing global world order and the perspective from India. First Prof. Baxi alluded to the Year of Germany and India, which is celebrating the 60th anniversary of Indo-German diplomatic relations, and referred to the history of Indo-German cooperation. He exemplified different projects to foster the development of human rights from below and brought up the critical issue of costs and benefits of development. He criticized the little impact of the United Nations Global Compact and that cooperate social responsibilities of companies must be strengthened. For him a real reform of the UN needs to make the organization more democratic. This could be achieved, for example, through a third chamber; a General Assembly of the Peoples. In his final remarks Prof. Baxi talked about global justice and the rising requirements to states and quoted St. Augustine that “a state without justice would be a band of robbers”.

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Roundtable I: “Global Civil Society”

with Prof. Dr. Claus Leggewie (Director), Prof. Dr. Abdolkarim Soroush (Iranian Philosopher), and Dr. Navid Kermani (Writer and Orientalist)

Prof. Leggewie, director of the Centre and the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI) in Essen, started the roundtable by asking Prof. Soroush about the development of civil society within Iran since the 1950s. Prof. Soroush, one of the leading liberal thinkers of Iran, stated that the concept of civil society had not been an issue of debates within Iran for a long period of time. Only after the election of Mohammad Chātamis as president in 1997 a broader discussion about civil society was initiated in Iran. But this debate was heavily influenced by religious concepts of society. After the coming into power of the conservatives the discussion about civil society faded again. Though the impact is noticeable, especially within the educated, and for the first time the idea and concepts of citizenship and nation state not only linked to Islam come up.

Referring to the Arab Spring, Prof. Leggewie asked Dr. Kermani about the rise of religious leaders that stepped in after the revolutions in the Arabic countries seemed to evolve out of secular issues like dignity and work. Dr. Kermani linked the success of the Islamist (especially the Muslim Brothers) with their degree of organisation. They are rooted with different welfare-systems within the society, well known to the voters, and are not supposed to be corrupt. Thus trust rather than religious reasons was often the motivation to vote for them. Secular forces will have to organise themselves better to become more visible and Dr. Kermani predicted that Islamist parties will lose voters at the next elections as they don’t seem to have a concept of governance in the first place.

Asked about the role of religion in civil society movements, Prof. Soroush explained that the importance of religion is underestimated and had made a comeback. Whereas religion is mostly painted as a source of conflict, it has to be seen as a source of cooperation, peace, and justice. In this regard,
he emphasised the transnational aspect of religion and that “spirituality has a common language”.

Addressing the field of peace and security (R2P), Prof. Leggewie asked for the responsibility of global civil society, for example in the conflict in Syria. Dr. Kermani criticised the international reaction and the lack of cooperation as a disaster. Through the involvement of regional and international actors who are following their own agenda, the conflict had become more complex and more difficult to solve.

At the end of the first roundtable Prof. Leggewie raised again the topic of a civil society in the Arabic region. Giving an academic definition, he quoted Mary Kaldor that global civil society is a fuzzy concept, descriptive as well as normative, and could be described as a sphere of ideas settled between family, state and market. He emphasized the transnational dimension of this concept and asked about the possible role of a global civil society in these regions. Prof. Soroush expressed his hope that citizens from exile might return to their home countries after the revolutions and introduce new ideas to the local society. Dr. Kermani asserted that even no trans-arab civil society exists. In contrast to the positive example in the case of South Africa, he criticized the lack of awareness of the global civil society for the conflicts in Syria but also between Israel and Palestine. At least he wished for global civil awareness.

Finally Prof. Leggewie gave a prospect on the research project within the Centre for Global Cooperation Research concerning the addressed topics. The Centre will focus on questions about NGOs, resistance movements, refugees and human rights organizations, concepts of transnational citizenship and global initiatives, which work in favour of global common goods.
Roundtable II: “The Role of International Justice in the Community of States and in the Realm of Societies”

with Prof. Dr. Dirk Messner (Director) and Prof. Dr. Tobias Debiel (Director) in a dialogue with Prof. Dr. Angelika Nußberger (Judge at the European Court of Human Rights)

Prof. Messner, Director of the Centre and the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE) in Bonn, started the second roundtable by asking Prof. Nußberger about the influence of the European Court of Human Rights on the development of national law of the members. Prof. Nußberger stated that the Courts foremost task is to protect individuals and that this had led to a reform for example in Eastern Europe. But there is also an ethical debate about European moral standards, and the judges of the European Court of Human Rights are able to set standards that influence the development of national law of the members. By doing so the Court is not detached from national debates and before rendering a judgement the judges make a comparative analysis of 47 national laws, which can be completely diverse in certain points. The Court then interprets, evaluates and reflects on developments to find a European consensus that is binding for all members. So the Court doesn’t really create new norms but develop European norms out of existing national legal norms.

In his last question Prof. Messner asked about a joint movement of human rights within the European Union. Prof. Nußberger explained about systematic problems of the Court and within the 27 member countries compromising around 800 million people. She exemplified that the Court can provide the direction of human rights development but the acceptance of the standards by member states differs.

Prof. Debiel, Director of the Centre and the Institute of Development and Peace (INEF) at the University of Duisburg-Essen, posed the question about how international courts contribute to peace and security processes. He gave the example of the war between Georgia and Russia and the complaint of Georgia at the European Court of Human Rights. Prof. Nußberger explained this rather exceptional interstate complain of Georgia
about Human Rights violations of Russia during the war. The complaint was not about the conflict as such. The role of the European Court of Human Rights can be helpful as it is an independent institution and the 47 judges analyse the violations. She added that also a high number of complaints had been brought to the Court by citizens of South Ossetia.

Prof. Debiel raised the issue of human rights violations of states that are not members of the EU, or that are committed outside their territory. Prof. Nußberger emphasized that states are responsible for human rights violations within their jurisdiction and exemplified the case of NATO bombing in Serbia. She stated that there is a possibility to export values to other systems but the direct influence is limited.

Coming back to the case of Georgia, Prof. Debiel asked about Prof. Nußberger work within the independent fact-finding commission in Georgia compared to the Courts’ tasks. She stated that work within the fact-finding mission was different from the Court. The commission assembled experts due to their competence in regard to the conflict and also included historians and social scientist. Whereas the representation within the Court is based on the equal election of judges and is therefore the source of its legitimacy.

In his final remark Prof. Messner addressed the global perspective of the European Court of Human Rights and if the court reflects on debates in other parts of the world. The Court is based on traditions of European law, explained Prof. Nußberger in her final statement, and is clearly focused on the EU. Though there are exchanges with other courts in the USA and Africa for example, the focus of the court is a European one.