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Culture and International History II

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Following an earlier convention in 1999, this conference explored the cultural dimension of international relations while also forming an international forum for researchers interested in this topic. This included the role of culture in diplomacy, the culture of politics, cultural contacts outside of the political arena, as well as new methodologies applying culture to global relations. In a total of thirteen panels, more than forty scholars from Asia, Europe and the Americas addressed topics ranging from cultural diplomacy over tourism, competing modernities, borderland studies and NGOs to the study of new methodologies applying culture to global relations.

I. Cultural Diplomacy

Two panels investigated aspects of cultural diplomacy. In the first panel, Eckard Michels (Birbeck College) began with the case of Franz Thierfelder, the founder of the Goethe Institut. Mirroring the French mission to proselytize their language, Thierfelder became the key proponent of the idea that German should become the "universal language." Michael Krenn's (Appalachian State University) paper focused on the controversial inclusion of modern American art at the Berlin Cultural Festival. Even though American modern art was very much requested in Germany at the time, in the 50's such art was practically denounced by American Congressmen for its display within the United States, let alone as a representation of American culture abroad. Still, this festival represented a major change in U.S.-German policy, which had previously only focused on economic, political, and military factors, and now was accepting the great influence that culture can have as an integral part of foreign policy. Ulrike Stoll's (UniversitÃ¤t Muenchen) paper introduced the seminar to the new foreign cultural and educational policy in the Federal Republic of Germany after the Second World War. A new wave of semi-private Institutions were born, such as the DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst) founded in 1950, the "Institut fÃ¼r Auslandsbeziehungen" founded in 1950, the re-founding of Goethe Institut in 1951, or the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung in 1953. The other

key development was located in the AuswÃ¤rtige Amt in the 1960s, led by its new director, Dieter Sattler, who enlarged the role and influence of the institute dramatically. Brian Etheridge (Louisiana Tech University) showed the other side of cultural diplomacy, in the sense of the major challenges that Germans faced in the 60s and 70s with the Anti-German Wave in the United States. Sparked by events such as the publishing of Anne Frank's diary, or the NÃ¼rnberg Trials, the negative image of Germany was reinforced among Americans and the Anti-German Wave became the main concern of German Kulturpolitik.

"Cultural Diplomacy 2" addressed issues related to the United States' cultural diplomacy towards Asian and African societies in the aftermath of World War II. Julia Thomas (University of Notre Dame) opened the panel with her presentation on cultural policy and the American occupation of Japan. Focusing on the medium of photography, her paper depicted how American officials and Japanese elites considered cultural factors to be of central importance for the process of nation re-building. According to Thomas, crafting democracy and crafting culture were immediately interlinked, so the proper definition of "Japanese culture" became a heavily contested issue. In the next presentation Kenneth Osgood (Florida Atlantic University) shifted the focus to "A New Type of Cold War." During the mid-1950s the U.S. government discovered the "Third World" as a major cultural battlefield. In institutions such as the United States Information Agency (USIA) anti-communist themes were only one among several themes–in many societies anti-colonial nationalisms seemed to pose more immediate threats. The following two papers took a closer look at U.S. cultural diplomacy in parts of Africa and Asia. Marc Frey (UniversitÃ¤t KÃ¶ln) depicted the challenges and constraints of U.S. cultural diplomacy, which led to an analysis of the convictions and goals underlying USIA's activities in the region, particularly the effort to promote Western-style modernization. The effort to retain Western influence over de-colonizing societies by discouraging communism and endorsing the United States as a role model was also a central aspect of Wibke Becker's (UniversitÃ¤t KÃ¶ln) presentation. Specifically examining the situation in Ghana, Becker argued that virtues such as democracy and freedom were mainly promoted for utilitarian reasons.

II. Culture and Politics

Questions surrounding the culture of and in politics were at the heart of the second set of panels. Contributions to the session on "Culture of Diplomacy" ranged from the early modern period to the Cold War covering European as well as non-European affairs. First, Alan McPherson (Howard University) analyzed Fidel Castro's trip to the United States and Canada in 1959. After just having risen to power Castro played to three different audiences–the U.S public, its policy makers, and the Cuban press–in deliberately ambivalent ways. The role of the media, self-perceptions and concepts of the enemy also figured prominently in the following contribution by Magnus RÃ¼de (Humboldt UniversitÃ¤t Berlin). He reflected on the English-Palatine dynastic alliance of 1613. Although the channels were different from 20th-century communications the speaker demonstrated that the effects of the symbolic diplomacy in the early 17th century depended just as much on the mental frames of the actors and their audiences and on the specific underlying structures of international relations. In the third contribution Friedrich Kiessling (UniversitÃ¤t Erlangen) showed how much officials before World War One were aware of alternative mechanisms of foreign policy when considering the propositions by the peace movement. Diplomats sought to reject or use public opinion as they thought proper not only in the national interest but also in regard to their self-image as European experts for conducting international relations. The limits to professional internationalism became apparent when Eberhard Demm (University of Lyon III/University of Heidelberg) looked at German officers in the Ottoman Empire during the second half of the 19th century. Although clashes between military cultures dominated the contacts, the speaker also pointed towards areas of understanding and learning between the different parties.

A panel titled " National Identity and the Cultural Dimensions of Diplomacy" explored the relationship between national identities and international relations through three intriguing case studies. Prefacing his paper with an examination of some of the key conceptual debates about identity formation, Andrew Johnston (University of Western Ontario) focused on the "strategic culture" which underpinned the Eisenhower administration's tactical fixation with nuclear air power. John Foster Dulles and other conservative nationalists, Johnston argued, identified nukes as the modern culmination of an American "way of war" which was itself part of a larger understanding of the national past–one that was contested by the strategic culture of New Deal-style liberal internationalists. Contestation was also a strong theme of the next paper by Michael Donoghue (University of Connecticut at Storrs), which concerned two notorious trials that took place in Panama during the mid-1950s, both involving American servicemen accused of

crimes against Panamanians (rape in one case, child murder in the other). The two trials became extremely potent sites of Panamanian resistance to American colonialism, not least because contemporary accounts of them drew on heavily gendered tropes of national identity. Finally, Alessandro Brogi (University of Arkansas) shifted the focus of attention to early Cold War Europe, analyzing attempts by Communists in Italy and France to resist American cultural power by appealing to nationalist impulses in their respective countries, as well as the "psychological warfare" measures adopted by the U.S. Government to counter this strategy.

In a panel titled "Culture and Politics," Ursula Prutsch (UniversitÃ¤t Wien) explored the conflicting messages that cultural diplomacy often generates, especially when the United States was forced to support less-than-democratic countries with which it nevertheless sought to generate some cultural solidarity. Sooner or later, the "American Way" either conflicted with the ruling order (thus undermining the benefits of the relationship for the local ruling elite) or became synonymous with it (thus weakening America's image as a defender of democracy). Roberto Bran's (Fort Irwin, California) paper discussed American foreign policy in Angola. He argued that dogmatic Cold War worldviews blinded Kissinger from appreciating the cultural realities of Angola, forcing the United States to back the wrong horse, as it were.

III. NGOs

Several panels dealt with the role of NGOs in international relations. During a panel dedicated to the role of NGOS prior to World War One, Fabian Hilfrich (Institut fÃ¼r Zeitgeschichte Muenchen) looked at the ways in which the American debate on imperialism in the late-19th century was influenced by memories of the Civil War and how memories of the Civil War were reshaped and modified by the contemporary discussion concerning American overseas expansion. Barbara Keys (Franklin & Marshall College) examined how the globalization of sports served as a highway for cultural transfer (and, on occasion, conflict) by focusing on the 1932 Olympic games in Los Angeles. Corinne Pernet (UniversitÃ¤t Zuerich) dealt with the rising popularity of popular arts and folklore in Latin America in the 1930s and 1940s; such art played a role in both the growing nationalism in Latin America and as an avenue by which cultural and diplomatic officials from the United States attempted to construct a vision of Pan-Americanism. Finally, Thomas Weber (Oxford University) contradicted the traditional interpretation of British-German hostility prior to World War I by examining the generally cordial and often quite friendly relations between British and German students at Oxford and Heidelberg before 1914.

"Culture and Resistance" basically dealt with encounters of different sets of culture. Brian McKenzie's (Colby-Sawyer College) paper described how the United States were using a modern and international magazine to spread American Cold War ideology and the American Way of Life in rural France; Hugh Wilford's (University of Sheffield) presentation outlined a cultural clash within Britain that set modernist and anti-modernist writers against each other and was played out in the Encounter magazine, which was financed by the United States government. Holger Nehring's (University College, Oxford) contribution dealt with the difficulties of two national protest movements sharing common aims and adversaries in communicating with and understanding each other; Martin Steinwand's (Brandeis University) paper described the problems of perception and communication between different cultures of class, namely elite and popular culture within one country.

In the panel dedicated to "Cultural Interaction and Borderland Studies," Claudia Haake (UniversitÃ¤t Bielefeld) described the changes in Yaqui culture due to the deportation of the people from their homeland in Sonora to Yucatan. While Yaquis in Sonora had a long history of resistance to state interference, their behavior in Yucatan–traced through court cases–appears to have been characterized by internal fights under the influence of alcohol. Martin Klatt (Danish Institute for Border Region Studies) gave a detailed historical overview over the cultural and political development of the Danish-German cross border region. Here, German culture was identified with the elite class in society while Danish culture represented the lower class majority of the population. This history can explain the difficulties and misunderstandings arising in the course of the attempt to create a cross-border region in the area under the auspices of the European Union.

Unfortunately reduced to a single paper, the session titled "Tourism" was nevertheless characterized by a lively and substantive discussion about the informal role of tourists and the representation of history in the field of cultural diplomacy. Scott Laderman (University of Minnesota) focused on the War Remnants Museum in Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City, addressing its representation of the war between the United States and Vietnam as well as the impact of this representation on the views of Western tourists. The author argued that the exhibition challenged the dominant Western version of the conflict, i.e. that of an American war for liberty and democracy, and

that this "insurgent narrative" was indeed having an impact on those, who visited the museum.

IV. Theoretical and Methodological Approaches

Theoretical and methodological approaches marked the fourth set of panels. The panel dedicated to "Resistance" featured a presentation by Gabriele Vogt (UniversitÃ¤t Muenchen) in which the speaker addressed the rise and fall of the Renaissance of the Okinawan Peace Movement of the years 1995 to 2000. This social movement can be understood as Okinawa's attempt at formulating a role of political opposition against the central government by actively presenting the region's strong cultural identity. The self-perception of cultural identity as a narrative of victim among left-wing Okinawan politicians, competed with the right-wing politicians' self-perception of cultural identity as Nichi-ryÃ» dÃ´so-ron, an idea that strengthens the cultural coalition between Japan and Okinawa by proclaiming their cultures' common origins. It was argued that a social movement, no matter on how powerful a cultural identity it leans itself on, will thus not be successful if it cannot build up strong alliances to other social movements throughout the country or even transnational alliances. Stefan Schwarzkopf (Birbeck College), in turn, argued that the current historiography of American cultural imperialism neglects the profound European sources of so-called "American" methods of mass marketing and consumption. Not only were department stores and bill board advertising campaigns mainly inventions of 1870s/1880s French market culture. In addition, the dominating concepts of the psychology of advertising and consumption can be traced back to German and Austrian psychological schools since the 1890s as well as the, by origin, European discussion about the psyche of the masses around 1900.

Two papers were presented in a workshop that dealt with the problem of perceptions in international history. Max Paul Friedman (Florida State University) demonstrated how the misperception of German immigrants as a "fifth column" of the "Third Reich" in Latin America determined policy options and structured the decision-making process of the Roosevelt administration during World War II. He showed that the perceived threat existed mostly in the minds of the U.S. decision-makers; nevertheless these perceptions led to a morally highly problematic policy initiative, i.e. to induce the governments of Latin America to put Germans into internment camps. Michelle Mart (Pennsylvania State University) reconstructed Eleanor Roosevelt's development from a "casual anti-Semite" before 1948 into an adamant supporter of the state of Israel. Mart argued that Roosevelt's attitude towards Israel were firmly embedded in perception patterns set up by the Cold War, and she demonstrated how Eleanor Roosevelt understood the state of Israel to be a test of liberalism and enlightenment in the Arab world.

"Visions of Internationalism" represented a multidisciplinary as well as intercultural panel. Political scientist Beate Jahn (University of Sussex) argued that John Stuart Mill's philosophy of history, based on a hierarchy of cultures, explains fundamental contradictions between his political theory and his theory of international relations. This philosophy of a hierarchy of cultures, Jahn argues, may underlie all liberal theories of international relations, suggesting that international theorists must investigate culture as a central paradigm. In his examination of colonial Macau in the 1910s and '20s, Philippe Foret (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology) focused on an application of Mill's vision of internationalism. Although the city had played a pivotal role in the history of modern progress in Asia, by the turn of the last century it had become a languid summer resort. Macau's Outer Harbor agency believed, however, that technical progress and infrastructure facilities could express the superiority of Portuguese school of colonialism. Foret analyzed the contradictions and silences he found in the colonial discourse and iconography of Macau by drawing on tourist guidebooks, postcards, and maps of the port and bay of Praia Grande. Finally, Hatsue Shinohara (Meiji Gakuin University) combined historical and contemporary data to show how the United Nations (and the League of Nations before it) emerged as a symbol of international community. Shinohara concluded that the UN's activities and public-relations efforts have been largely successful in winning worldwide acceptance of its ideals.

Finally, a panel dedicated to concepts of "modernity" covered Russia, China, and Japan during the first decades of the 20th century. It offered new and intriguing perspectives on the visions of the global order that Japanese anarchists and Chinese conservatives elaborated on in response to European theories and the crisis of World War I. Both Dominique Sachsenmaier (Harvard University) as well as Sho Konishi (University of Chicago) questioned the unity of modernity, the universality of the paradigm of the nation-state, and the necessity of equating capitalism and modernity. As they showed, already in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Chinese and Japanese intellectuals sought alternatives and shortcuts to the Western path to development. They believed in the imminent emergence of a new international order, be it Marxist, Wilsonian or neo-Confucianist. Their pre-

sentations underscored the significance of the "nation as culture" concept, showed the need to investigate transcultural reactions to global events, and led to the conclusion that worldwide trends result in surprising local adaptations.

In closing, the various panels reflected the incredible diversity of approaches being used by scholars of culture and international relations, as well as some of the underlying theories and ideas that serve to bring such approaches together into a coherent whole. Most importantly, the participants to all sessions convincingly demonstrated that historical research on specific topics also may profit from looking beyond the immediate issues (or facts) at hand. During the concluding discussion, the participants were expressed their interest in a third conference dedicated to this Culture and International History, in 2005.

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