German Philanthropy in Transatlantic Perspective

Veranstalter: Indiana School of Philanthropy at IUPUI
Datum, Ort: 30.09.2012–02.10.2012, Indianapolis
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From September 30th to October 2nd 2012, Arnd Bauerkämper and Gregory R. Witkowski organized the conference „German Philanthropy in Transatlantic Perspective" in Indianapolis, Indiana (United States). The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, the Indiana School of Philanthropy at IUPUI, the Free University of Berlin, and the Max Kade Institute at Indiana University sponsored the conference, which was hosted by the School of Philanthropy.

By identifying philanthropy as an essential element of all societies, German and American historians aimed to explore and discuss the role of individual giving in the creation of those common ties that form the basis of democracy. In contrast to the American-centric focus of most of the research, the conference provided the setting for an historical analysis of the nexus between democracy, civic engagement and civil society, and philanthropic exchanges in Germany. While the Unites States provides a model for philanthropic endeavors as well as for research practices in philanthropic studies, the participants of the conference made a conscious effort to analyze an indigenous German tradition of giving and to find points of interaction with the United States.

VOLKER BERGHAHN (New York) gave the keynote address „Reintegrating Germany into the Atlantic Community: The Role of the Big American Foundations." By focusing on the relationship between state and foundations, Berghahn analyzed the role of U.S. foundations in post-1945 Germany and their efforts to reintegrate Germany in the Atlantic community. In a combined effort of government, bankers, and philanthropy, U.S. strategic elites synchronized economic reconstruction with foundations' policies fostering political culture and thus political democracy. Berghahn argued that patterns of cooperation between state and foundations established during the war continued after 1945 because the Soviet Union emerged as a new enemy after the defeat of the National Socialist regime and because of the Eisenhower Administration's policies. In a „sociology" of this cooperation, Berghahn described foundations' support to intellectual journals (*Monat* in Germany and *Forum* in Austria), universities (Free University of Berlin), extra-university activities such as conferences and libraries, and professional schools (activities of Inge Scholl). Besides the cultural war against the Soviet Block, however, foundations deployed their soft power also to counter the development of a German anti-Americanism. Since the late 1950s, after having successfully reintegrated Germany in the international community, U.S. foundations stimulated the development of German philanthropy (case of the Krupp foundation) and shifted their focus to Africa and Asia (where, however, their policies were doomed to fail for a lack of understanding local problems).

At the opening of the conference, the conference organizers grouped the presentations at the conference in three broad thematic categories, namely the forms of philanthropic activities, the influence of U.S. foundations on German philanthropy, and the relationship between democracy and philanthropy (and civil society). Dwight Burlingame and Stefan Toepler identified crucial issues and topics for an historical investigation of philanthropy in international perspective. In a programmatic comment titled „Philanthropic Studies: Critical Themes and Subjects for Historical Analysis," DWIGHT BURLINGAME (Indianapolis) identified areas requiring further historical investigation (such as collective histories of the „moral imagination," gender issues, the role of the household, and the role of faith and religion as well as of philanthropy as agents of change) and STEFAN TOEPLER (Fairfax) pointed out that speculations on the future may raise problems of path dependency and accordingly stressed the role of lore and religion.

In the section „Philanthropy and Civil Society: Traditions and Continuities in the 20th Century," Peter Weber and Kevin Cramer

analyzed the relationship between civil society, associational life, and democracy in the 1920s and early 1930s and pointed out the continuities and discontinuities between the Weimar Republic and the National Socialist regime. In „Conceptions of Civil Society in the Weimar Republic: The Cases of the Deutsche Hochschule für Politik and the Politische Kolleg," PETER WEBER (Indianapolis) analyzed two contrasting conceptualizations of civil society forwarded in the 1920s in the young German democracy, which ultimately fell under a very different conception of societal organization under the Nazis. In „Philanthropy, Race, and Religion: The Gustav Adolf Association and National Socialism," KEVIN CRAMER (Indianapolis) shifted the attention to the organizational level. Cramer argued that the Gustav Adolf Association was able to reinvent its mission in order to align with each of Germany's new forms of government without breaking the foundational connection between nationalism and Protestantism.

In the section „Philanthropy in the United States and Germany: Interactions," Arnd Bauerkämper, Malcolm Richardson, and Giles Hoyt investigated the interactions between American and German philanthropy by focusing on German academic elites after 1945, on the particular case of Reinhold Schairer, and on the experience of the German American community in Indiana. In „'America' as an Argument: References to U.S. Foundations in Debates about Scientific Funding in West-Germany from 1945 to the late 1960s," ARND BAUERKÄMPER (Berlin) analyzed the shift from the late 1940s and 1950s when in the framework of the Cold War U.S. foundations tried to implement pluralism, mutual respect, and discursive openness to the 1960s when German actors looked at American models of academic funding (paradoxically at a time when U.S. foundations were under attack at home). In „Reinhold Schairer, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Revival of the German Philanthropic Tradition from Weimar to the Bundesrepublik," MALCOM RICHARDSON (Washington, D.C.) developed a case study of „'America' as an argument" through the figure of Reinhold Schairer. After working for the Red Cross in Denmark during the First World War, Schairer became a skillful administrator of student groups and helped to institutionalize work periods for students in the U.S. As co-director of the Lincoln Foundation, he received grants from the Rockefeller Foundation and in a 1928 editorial urged Germany's wealthy to follow the example of J.P. Morgan and other millionaires in shaping the ideals of self-reliance that dominate the American imaginary. Lastly, in „German Immigrant Philanthropy: The Example of Indiana," GILES HOYT (Indianapolis) investigated the contribution of German immigrants' philanthropy to the establishment of a more open and pluralistic American society. By using a linguistic and ethnic rather than geographic definition of „German background," Hoyt showed that the unity of the immigrant community was given by their „German American" identity, which was able to bridge the religious as well as regional differences of their country of origin.

In contrast to the previous focus on large philanthropic foundations, in the section „Donors in East and West Germany," Gabriele Lingelbach and Gregory Witkowski discussed the different dynamics of the relationship between the state and collections involving small donors. In „Charitable Giving between the State and the Market: West Germany from 1945 to the 1980s," GABRIELE LINGELBACH (Bamberg) showed that between 1945 and the 1980s, the interaction between donors and collectors functioned as a market (competition between fundraisers). She showed that while between the 1940s and 1960s few collectors dominated a market characterized by cooperation rather than competition (oligopoly), from the 1960s onwards numerous collectors emerged, shaping a market that was demand-oriented, competitive, and professionalized (polipoly) and offered more choices to the donors but also less transparency. At the same time, the media emerged as a new major actor in regulating the market, but while guaranteeing transparency the exclusive focus on scandals and catastrophes may become counterproductive. In „Philanthropic Giving in a Dictatorship: East German Donations for International Causes," GREGORY WITKOWSKI (Indianapolis) focused on philanthropy in the context of a state with totalitarian ambitions through an analysis of a Church collec-

tion, „Bread for the World." Witkowski suggests the existence of a relationship between philanthropic activities and civil society (in a dictatorship) by showing that, inspired by „Bread for the World," student groups (such as Action Group Tanzania, INKOTA, and Initiative Hope for Nicaragua) and a Catholic collection emerged.

In the section „Foundations in Divided and United Germany," Thomas Adam and Stefan Toepler investigated the different roles of philanthropic foundations in the United States, Germany, and the former East Germany. In „From Restructuring to Dissolution: Foundations in East Germany," THOMAS ADAMS (Arlington) pointed out that foundations survived the establishment of the GDR because they did not contribute to dissent but rather played an economic function until 1952, when, with the dissolution of federalism, the framework changed and the new policies left no space for foundations. Adam analyzed a dissertation defended in 1988 in which Detlef Hammer proposed a new law for foundations that was modeled on the Bavarian Law. Because Hammer was an official of the *Stasi*, Adam argued that his proposal may have foreshadowed a renewed interest in foundations and possible changes in governmental policy. In „Foundations and their Institutional Contexts: A Comparative Note," STEFAN TOEPLER (Fairfax) compared size and scope, structure, and role and function of philanthropic foundations in Germany and the United States. In particular, Toepler stressed the problem of the lack of data on Germany. He showed that surprisingly in Germany foundations' funding appears to be dominant in areas covered also by the state. In comparing the structure, Toepler showed that operating foundations maintain a visible role in Europe, whereas they are less prominent in the U.S. Lastly, by comparing foundations' function in society of the foundation sector, Toepler suggested that the prominence in Germany of complementarity and innovation and in the U.S. of innovation and social and policy change stems from different roles of the government is society.

In the section „International Humanitarian Aid from Germany," Florian Hannig and Nina Berman discussed the emergence of humanitarian assistance in Germany and its limitations. In „A New Philanthropy? The Establishment of Humanitarian Aid in West Germany," FLORIAN HANNIG (Halle) described the transformation of Germany in the 1950s from a recipient to a donor country. By defining philanthropy as a mobilization of resources to which the recipients are not entitled, Hannig stressed collectors' accountability to donors rather than to recipients; hence, in describing the development of humanitarian relief in the 1960s (specifically, in reaction to the Nigerian civil war), he pointed out the question of legitimacy and domestic legitimization in the shift from pressures from the public sphere to interest in humanitarian aid. In „Herr Schmidt and Frau Meier Help in Africa: German Approaches to Philanthropy in Diani, Kenya," NINA BERMAN (Columbus) described the increase of charitable activities in Kenya in tandem with neo-liberal economic policies since the early 1990s. By using two case studies, Berman stressed the problem of long-term misconceptions, the issue of local knowledge, the emergence of a culture of charity, and the disruption of local forms of community support by international charity.

Within the broader debates on philanthropy and nonprofit organizations, the conference contributed to shift the attention to the historical perspective as well as the cultural context. The participants of the conference identified as major themes of an investigation of philanthropic practices from a historical perspective the relationship between philanthropy and other social actions, the role of agency, the resources of philanthropy, the relationship between intention and impact, domestic concerns and international activities, and the importance of seeing philanthropy as action (thus creating new demands and shaping identities). From a scholarly perspective, the conference highlighted the problem of the variation of meaning (economic and ethical approaches, cultural context, and terminology dilemmas) as well as the issue of comparison and different tradition of research; hence, stressing the need to identify what is typically German as well as the interaction and convergence between Germany and U.S.

Conference Overview

Keynote address

Volker Berghahn, „Reintegrating Germany into the Atlantic Community: The Role of the Big American Foundations“

Section I: Philanthropy as a Concept and Subject in History

Dwight Burlingame „Philanthropic Studies: Critical Themes and Subjects for Historical Analysis“

Comment: Stefan Toepler

Section II: Philanthropy and Civil Society: Traditions and Continuities in the 20th Century

Peter Weber, „Conceptions of Civil Society in the Weimar Republic: The Cases of the Deutsche Hochschule für Politik and the Politische Kolleg. “

Kevin Cramer, „Philanthropy, Race, and Religion: The Gustav Adolf Association and National Socialism“

Comment: Arnd Bauerkämper

Section III: Philanthropy in the United States and Germany: Interactions

Arnd Bauerkämper, „‘America’ as an Argument: References to U.S. Foundations in Debates about Scientific Funding in West-Germany from 1945 to the late 1960s“

Malcolm Richardson, „Reinhold Schairer, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Revival of the German Philanthropic Tradition from Weimar to the Bundesrepublik“

Giles Hoyt, „German Immigrant Philanthropy: The Example of Indiana“

Comment: David Hammack

Section IV: Donors in East and West Germany

Gabriele Lingelbach, „Charitable Giving between the State and the Market: West Germany from 1945 to the 1980s“

Gregory R. Witkowski, „Philanthropic Giving in a Dictatorship: East German Donations for International Causes“

Comment: Thomas Adams

Section V: Foundations in Divided and United Germany

Thomas Adam, „From Restructuring to Dissolution: Foundations in East Germany“

Stefan Toepler, „Foundations and their Institutional Contexts: A Comparative Note“

Comment: David Hammack

Section VI: International Humanitarian Aid from Germany

Florian Hannig, „A New Philanthropy? The Establishment of Humanitarian Aid in West Germany“

Nina Berman, „Herr Schmidt and Frau Meier Help in Africa: German Approaches to Philanthropy in Diani, Kenya“

Comment: Gregory Witkowski

Tagungsbericht *German Philanthropy in Transatlantic Perspective*. 30.09.2012–02.10.2012, Indianapolis, in: H-Soz-Kult 20.02.2013.