

### **U.S. and European Philanthropy after 1945. Historical Research and the Role of Foundations**

**Veranstalter:** Arnd Bauerkämper, Freie Universität Berlin; James Allen Smith, Rockefeller Archive Center; Gregory R. Witkowski, Indiana University

**Datum, Ort:** 14.02.2014-15.02.2014, Berlin

**Bericht von:** Nora Derbal, Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies, Freie Universität Berlin

The international conference „U.S. and European Philanthropy after 1945: Research and the Role of Foundations“ was unique for several reasons. The organizers of the event stood for three rather different institutions and disciplines: Arnd Bauerkämper, Professor of History at the Freie Universität Berlin, James Allen Smith, Vice-president and Director of Research and Education at the Rockefeller Archive Center, and Gregory R. Witkowski, Professor of Philanthropic Studies at the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy of Indiana University. As such, the organizers represented the kind of transatlantic and transdisciplinary knowledge production intended at the gathering. The conference succeeded, on the one hand, in bringing together academics from a broad range of disciplines, such as history, sociology, cultural studies, and anthropology working on philanthropy and the role of foundations. On the other hand, the conference attracted professionals, who have been actively engaged in shaping philanthropic institutions and the formation of their archives. This became possible not least due to the generous support from the Stiftung Mercator, the Rockefeller Archive Center, the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy of Indiana University, the Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft and the Freie Universität Berlin. The conference started by investigating the role of U.S. philanthropy in Germany after the Second World War. From here, however, given this variety of perspectives and expertise, the discussion often expanded to current debates about the state of philanthropy in Germany and the U.S.

In his keynote, HELMUT ANHEIER (Berlin) established a comparative transat-

lantic perspective on philanthropic foundations. He highlighted the contemporary global resurgence of philanthropic institutions and provided reasons for this phenomenon. At the same time, he pointed to an increasing public discomfort about the role of foundations in Germany; a disquiet that he related to the prevalent lack of transparency and accountability of foundations in Germany. Whereas the U.S. state law, according to Anheier, creates a straightforward, transparent legal foundational framework, „in Germany, we have a serious deficit when it comes to accountability“<sup>1</sup>. This, he maintained, represents a serious challenge to the innovative potential inherent to (German) foundations. After his lecture, this unquestioned and highly normative positive societal evaluation of philanthropic institutions provoked a lively debate on how to measure the impact of foundations and invited criticism of performance measurement in an age of the increasing market-orientation of philanthropy. Furthermore, his lecture left a strong impression of the normative tension that he called „untested assumptions of institutional similarity“<sup>2</sup>. In fact, it provided a case in point of this tension: While his conceptualization laid emphasis on the unique geographic and historical context out of which foundations emerge, prominent cases of American foundations, such as the Rockefeller and Ford Foundation, seemed to be notoriously promoted as role models of ‘the’ successful and universal philanthropic endeavor.

This rather general discussion was fed with concrete historical examples of academic renewal after the Second World War and the role of American foundations during the initial years of Freie Universität Berlin. By looking at philanthropic engagement through the lense of post-war politics, ARND BAUERKÄMPER (Berlin) suggested that support from American foundations had been closely intertwined with U.S. cultural diplomacy in post-war Europe. He

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<sup>1</sup> Helmut Anheier in the opening address „Comparative perspectives from the U.S. and Europe“ on 14 February 2014 at the international conference „U.S. and European Philanthropy after 1945. Historical Research and the Role of Foundations“, Freie Universität Berlin.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

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argued that philanthropic institutions represented – at least to a certain extent – the softer policy of strategic U.S. foreign interests. Academic renewal in Germany was not least an integral component of U.S. foreign affairs. JAMES ALLEN SMITH (New York) translated Bauerkämper’s conceptualization of charity as a social practice into a perspective on how U.S. foundations conceived their engagement in Europe. Through his reading of the Gaither Report, he showed that the Second World War was perceived as a national emergency in the United States. Thus, he suggested that philanthropic institutions engaged in Europe according to the logic of national emergency programs. Yet, philanthropic institutions did not aim at relief and aid. Rather, he argued, the intellectual black-out of Nazism led to a deep commitment of American philanthropy to intellectual engagement and a better understanding of human behavior. GREGORY R. WITKOWSKI’s (Indiana) contribution further complemented the picture with a description of how American institutions on the ground worked together with American and German citizens. His rich and differentiated analysis of a book collection campaign in the U.S. ascertained that local contexts matter. He pointed to the limits of what foundations could do in such a situation of crisis. In particular, Witkowski highlighted how they could engage outside of a government frame. However, in the following discussion, Ludovic Tournès reminded us that the relation between foundations, individuals and the state cannot be reduced to a binary depiction of private versus public actors or the state versus private foundations. Tournès emphasized that a theoretical conceptualization of foundations either in the Gramscian sense of being instruments of the elite strengthening cultural hegemony or in a liberal manner describing foundations as citizens’ tools for social innovation are both simplistic descriptions. Instead, he argued for a more differentiated analysis with emphasis on the role of networks and the personal entanglement of individual actors in several identities, functions and institutions.

The second panel further stimulated the debate about the role of U.S. foundations through case studies of American philan-

thropic engagement in the wider European, post-war context. OMAR BORTOLAZZI (Bologna) presented Giuliana Gemelli’s paper on Italy and France. FRÉDÉRIC ATTAL (Cachan) introduced the case of the Bologna Center of the Johns Hopkins University. LUDOVIC TOURNÈS’ (Geneva) presentation dealt with the reconstruction of higher education in France after 1945 with special emphasis on the formalization of area studies and the restructuring of social sciences. Enriching the discussion with great detail, all contributions proved that local contexts and networks in which the philanthropic foundations acted were of fundamental importance for the nature of the philanthropic endeavor. DAVID HAMMACK (Cleveland) added to this notion the important factor of the timing of the U.S. intervention in Europe. For U.S. foundations, post-war crises and devastation were also an opportunity – for action and influence.

The evening panel discussion, which was held in the Projektzentrum of the Stiftung Mercator in Berlin Mitte, turned towards the state of German philanthropy today. Several foundation leaders shared their experience from inside their respective institutions, namely HEINZ-RUDI SPIEGEL (Berlin) on behalf of the Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft, STEFFEN BRUNDEL (Stiftung für die Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Künste Nordrhein-Westfalen), DANIEL FALLON (Carnegie Corporation of New York), WOLFGANG ROHE (Stiftung Mercator) and KATJA HARTMANN (Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung). These short work reports were followed by an open exchange on issues of accountability, transparency and governance of German foundations. In the discussion, DIANA LEAT (London) remarked that no matter how the overall question of a podium was framed, it seemed that the debate finally always circled around the question of what – in this case German – foundations could learn from American foundations. Yet, similar to the previous presentations and discussions, when speaking about ‘American foundations’ this only referred to a prominent few, namely the Rockefeller, Ford, Carnegie and Soros Foundations. In her opinion, this does no justice to the vibrant scene

of German philanthropy, which encompasses over 20.000 foundations.

On the next day, the third conference panel circled around the meaning of post-World War 'crisis'. It started with HELKE RAUSCH (Freiburg), who questioned whether post-war crises conditions in Europe formed an optimal context for U.S. philanthropy. In what she termed a „symptomatic analysis“<sup>3</sup> of the Rockefeller philanthropic engagement with the Dortmunder Sozialforschungsstelle and the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales Paris, Rausch argued that financial support did not automatically mean straightforward American-style modernization. Instead, she emphasized that German and French academic specificities also shaped the U.S. philanthropic endeavor. ANNE KWASCHIK (Berlin), too, suggested a more nuanced understanding of the post-war landscape by mentioning the important role of translators and moderators in the negotiation processes involved in reshaping social research in France. The main French actor in her narrative of the Rockefeller Foundation's engagement with the Center for Area Studies in France, for instance, Fernand Braudel (1902-85) was not able to directly communicate with his American partners, as he did not speak or understand English. DANIEL FALLON (Washington/ Bochum) added on the notion of post-war crisis that U.S. philanthropic institutions were notably absent in the very first years after the Second World War. Although the devastating material and intellectual condition of post-war Germany were an opportunity for action, historical circumstances and the uncertainties of the post-war years overwhelmed American philanthropy, which he provocatively termed „the dog that did not bark“. PETER WEBER (Indiana) also elaborated on the tension between war devastation on the one hand and the sense of opportunity on the other hand. With a historical perspective centered on the Weimar Republic, he argued for a positive contemporary understanding of the meaning of crisis. According to Weber, the upheavals after World War II were perceived as a chance to break with the old.

The final panel dealt with the meaning and the nature of archives in the study of phi-

lanthropy. Two theoretical contributions by DIANA LEAT (London) on archives and accountability and again WEBER on the archive in the digital era were supplemented by two insightful accounts from foundation leaders in charge of archives. JACK MEYERS (New York) evaluated the initial dream of the Rockefeller Foundation, that their archive would provide lessons of philanthropy, and elaborated on today's fear of a digital dark age versus an overabundance of information. HEINZ-RUDI SPIEGEL (Berlin) of the Deutscher Stifterverband spoke about the practical difficulties of setting up an archive. The panel provided a neat transition to the final discussion on challenges and chances of the academic study of philanthropy. Even though the societal value of philanthropic institutions as an important part of civil society is widely acknowledged, philanthropy has not been on the research agenda of academic institutions and disciplines. If an academic discussion on philanthropy takes place, it extensively deals with the same handful of large foundations – be they German or American. The final panel implied that an important reason for these deficits in our contemporary and historical investigation is the nature and availability of the archives. Yet, although the conference has on many occasions shown that research so far focuses on the same prominent philanthropic institutions, the structural and interpersonal relations between these actors still remain deeply understudied. The research presented highlighted the important role of mediators, as well as the crucial notions of exchange and entanglement between the different philanthropic institutions, their environment and the broader national and historic context. In order to understand the role of foundations, a space for dialogue and exchange between academics and foundations, as it was created by this conference, is an urgently needed basis for any academic endeavor in philanthropy.

### Conference Overview

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<sup>3</sup> Helke Rausch in her presentation „The Philanthropic Modernizing Mission and its Discontents – Postwar Social Sciences Funding in Germany and France“ on 15 February 2014 at the international conference „U.S. and European Philanthropy after 1945. Historical Research and the Role of Foundations“, Freie Universität Berlin.

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*Welcome:* Peter-André Alt, President of the Freie Universität Berlin

*Introduction:* Arnd Bauerkämper (Freie Universität Berlin), James Allen Smith (Rockefeller Archive Center New York), Gregory R. Witkowski (Indiana University)

*Opening Address* Helmut K. Anheier (Hertie School of Governance, Berlin): Comparative Perspectives from the US and Europe

**Panel 1:** U.S. Foundations and Academic Renewal in Post-War Europe: the Case of West Germany

*Chair:* Helke Rausch (University of Freiburg)

Arnd Bauerkämper (Freie Universität Berlin): Academic Renewal at the Freie Universität Berlin and American Foundations

James Allen Smith (Rockefeller Archive Center New York): Planning for Peace: Carnegie, Rockefeller and Ford Look Ahead, 1939-1948

Gregory R. Witkowski (Indiana University, Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University): Foundations and Society: a Critical Reflection on the Role of Foundations in Constructing the Post-War World

**Panel 2:** U.S. Foundations and Institutional Change in Germany, Italy, France and Austria after 1945

*Chair:* Gregory Witkowski (Indiana University, Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University)

Omar Bortolazzi (University of Bologna, Philanthropy and Social Innovation Research Centre): United States and Europe. A Historical Perspective on Foundations

Frédéric Attal (Ecole Normale Supérieure de Cachan): U.S. Foundations and Institutional Change in Italy: the Case of the Johns Hopkins University's Bologna Center in the Fifties and Sixties

David C. Hammack (Case Western Reserve University): Thinking About the Role of Foundations in Europe after 1945: the Contexts of All Giving from the U.S. to Europe, and the Context of All Giving By U.S. Endowments Relevant to Europe

Ludovic Tournès (University of Geneva): American Foundations and the Reconstruc-

tion of Higher Education in France after 1945

**Podium Discussion at the Mercator Stiftung, Projektzentrum Berlin:**

The State of German Philanthropy: Views from Foundation Leaders

*Chair:* Jack Meyers (Rockefeller Archive Center)

Heinz-Rudi Spiegel (Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft)

Steffen Bruendel (Stiftung für die Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Künste Nordrhein-Westfalen)

Daniel Fallon (University of Maryland/ Ruhr-Universität Bochum)

Wolfgang Rohe (Stiftung Mercator)

Katja Hartmann (Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung)

**Panel 3:** Changing the Landscape of Debate: Foundations and Education after Crises

*Chair:* Frédéric Attal (Ecole Normale Supérieure de Cachan)

Helke Rausch (University of Freiburg): The Philanthropic Modernizing Mission and its Discontents – Postwar Social Sciences Funding in Germany and France

Daniel Fallon (University of Maryland/ Ruhr-Universität Bochum): The Dog that did not Bark

Anne Kwaschik (Freie Universität Berlin): The Unintended Consequences of American Grant Making in Europe: Area Studies and Research Practices in Postwar France

Peter Weber (Indiana University, Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University): Crises and the Philanthropic Foundations

Steven Heydemann (United States Institute of Peace): Foundations and Education After Crises

**Panel 4:** Archives and Documentation in the Age of E-mail

*Chair:* Omar Bortolazzi (University of Bologna)

Jack Meyers (Rockefeller Archive Center): An Inside View from the Rockefeller Archive Center

Heinz-Rudi Spiegel (Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft): Smaller Foundations

and Archives – a Workshop Report

Diana Leat (Carnegie UK Trust): Archives and Accountability

Peter Weber (Indiana University): Archives in the Digital Era

**Final Roundtable Discussion:** Creating Academic Institutes and Projects in the United States and in Europe

*Chair:* Arnd Bauerkämper (Freie Universität Berlin)

David C. Hammack (Case Western Reserve University)

Gregory R. Witkowski (Indiana University, Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University)

Rupert Strachwitz (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Maecenata-Institut für Philanthropie und Zivilgesellschaft)

Volker Then (Universität Heidelberg, Centrum für Soziale Investitionen und Innovationen)

Tagungsbericht *U.S. and European Philanthropy after 1945. Historical Research and the Role of Foundations*. 14.02.2014-15.02.2014, Berlin, in: H-Soz-u-Kult 02.05.2014.