

STUBE Hessen-Seminar 0424

7th-9th June 2024 in Frankfurt am Main

“Dynamics and Politics of War and Peace”

- Seminar facilitators:** Ms Eileen Paßlack-Runkel, STUBE Hessen-speaker
- Co-facilitator:** Ms Sofia Tudoras (Brazil), Sprache und Kommunikaton, Philipps-University Marburg
- Target group:** Students from Africa, Asia, Latin America and MENA studying in English degrees in Hessen
- learning goals:** knowledge about different types of conflicts and wars; understanding how and why conflicts emerge; knowledge about power politics/realism and humanitarian interventions; connecting different wars and state`s involvement; exploring how parties of a violent dispute can build trust, learn to live cooperatively and create a stable peace
- Participants:** The number of registrations totalled 53 and a number of 29 students participated in this English speaking seminar (16 women, 13 men). Out of 29 participants, 15 participants attended a STUBE seminar for the first time. All in all, the number of represented countries was 15. Divided by regions, 4 students from 4 African countries, 13 students from 7 Asian countries, 5 student from 1 state in the MENA-region, 4 students from 2 Latin-American country, and 3 students from 1 European country participated in the seminar.

Process of the seminar

The seminar took place as indicated by the program.

Friday, 7th June 2024

The seminar started with a welcome speech for the participating students by the facilitator Eileen Paßlack-Runkel and co-facilitator Sofia Tudoras. The program started at 7 pm, after dinner. Ms Paßlack-Runkel and Ms Tudoras introduced themselves. The facilitators presented the various offers of STUBE to the participants. Together with the students the co-facilitator developed different rules that need to be followed during the seminar, like respect, punctuality, no side-talking. The co-facilitator then assigned duties like taking pictures to some participants who volunteered. Ms Paßlack-Runkel introduced the participants to the topic.

After the introduction to the topic, the participants discussed their thoughts and Ms Fotio introduced the participants to some games to get to know each other.

Saturday, 8th June 2024

The first workshop was held by Dr. Alex Reichwein who is a Researcher at the Department of Political Science at Justus-Liebig-University Giessen.

He started his workshop **"Why war"** by explaining his angle of approaching the topic, which is the one from a white European male who has never lived (for long) outside of Germany, he locates himself in the realist school of International Relations (IR) in political science. That is, realists believe everything to be about power politics. In the first part Dr. Reichwein gave a brief historical overview over the development of conflicts and wars in the last decades and centuries. He says that there is an increase in the number of highly violent conflicts. Both the number of wars and of limited wars increased. Violent intrastate conflicts continued to be the most numerous conflict type.

The core question of “Why war” has no universal answer. Dr. Reichwein states, that Political Science nevertheless is well equipped to provide approaches, especially because of the three dimensions: Institutions, Power and War (and Peace). E.g. institutions might provide an institutional framework and groundwork that make war institutionally backed possible. A parliament, like the German Bundestag, provides the possibility that with a majority a decision in going to war can be decided upon.

Dr. Reichwein answered all the questions by the participants. One question was why states should intervene in other states. While NATO’s intervention in Libya 2011 supported the critical view to see the responsibility to protect (R2P) as an assault on the sovereignty of weak states and as a hegemonic project of the West, not intervening in Syria or Yemen raised the discussion whether the R2P has failed. At the same time, however, there is a tendency among some non-Western powers to legitimize their military interventions in humanitarian terms. Russia’s interventions in Georgia 2008 and in the Crimea 2014, where humanitarian reasoning has been coupled with the politics of irredentism, are cases in point. This reshaped the perception that only Western actors are allowed to intervene in a foreign conflict. The seminar encouraged the students to discuss these and other fundamental questions and, thus, to rethink the R2P in light of contemporary politics of human rights protection.

For the second part of the day, the participants visited the “Archäologisches Museum Frankfurt” and its current exhibition “**Archaeology of the Nazi Forced Labour Camps**” with a guided tour. Combs, spoons, bowls and barbed wire – archaeological finds tell of life and survival, but also of dying in the National Socialist forced camps. Since the 1990s, archaeological excavations have been carried out at former camp sites in Berlin and Brandenburg and masses of finds have been recovered. The exhibition “Excluded. Archaeology of the Nazi Forced Camps” shows many of these things for the first time. More than 300 objects in seven chapters provide an insight into the complex system of forced labour camps, their archaeological tradition and the work of contemporary historical archaeology. Camps in which people were imprisoned or housed against their will were an important instrument of rule by the Nazi regime. The forced labour camps include concentration camps, subcamps, prisoner of war camps and forced labour camps.

Sunday, 9th June 2024

In the last workshop the participants dealt with the topic “Rebuilding Together: An exploration of social reconciliation in peacebuilding processer”. The workshop has been conducted by Catherine Sophia Castellanos Montenegro, who is a PhD student in the field of sociology at Philipps-University Marburg. In her PhD-project she deals with “Trust and Social Reconciliation in Exile. How exiled Colombians rebuild relationships through creative bodily experiences.”

At the beginning the speaker invited the students to share their ideas about the meaning and their own understanding of the term “social reconciliation”. The participants brainstormed and mentioned “mutual understanding”; “every somebody is someone”; “conversation without weapons”; “humanity”; “trust”. The premise of her workshop is that humans need cooperation to survive. As a long-term process the goal of social reconciliation is to become part of a relationship again, to return to being a community, to be together again. But it is also a question of how we can deal with intergenerational trauma and how can the past, the present and the future be interconnected and create a new shared scenario based on peaceful values. Reconciliation thus is being conceptualised as a collective process of deep transformation with an incorporation of alle parties previously in conflict, who seek for a reconnection.

At the end of the discussion, Ms Paßlack-Runkel thanked all the participants for sharing their thoughts and experiences. She closed the seminar and asked the participants to fill in a short evaluation form. The participants had the chance to share their impressions of the seminar.

Used methods and evaluation of the seminar

discussion and question rounds; teamwork in groups; presenting in front of the other participants; power point-presentation; problem solving methods; film sequences.

Impressions from the seminar:

- I learned a new way of thinking about my country and its relationships to/with other countries. How we're connected, what we share and how it works.
- I really like the input of the guests and participants, specially Dr. John Njenga Karugia
- A very wide perspective about the world politics and political power in the world
- I learned so much, it will take some time to organize all the inputs! I will definitely take home that I have to broaden my lenses to look at the world and can gain so much by spending more time on intercultural communication/contacts. I think the topics of the workshops were great and well taught through.
- Ich habe an diesem Wochenende gefühlt mehr gelernt, als in meinem ganzen Semester. Ich studiere Ethnologie und globale Verhältnisse/Machtstrukturen sind zentral in meinem akademischen Alltag. Jedoch reden wir meistens in einem Kreis an Studierenden des globalen Nordens, andere Perspektiven fehlen! Es war sehr bereichernd mich über eine Vielzahl von Themen zu unterhalten. Außerdem hat es auch einfach echt Spaß gemacht.
- I like meeting these new people! Really miss this offline, face-to-face seminars. Time management: maybe needs to work on the punctuality of end-time, e.g. with time-keepers.
- I like the idea to "invest" on students in a way of knowledge. I got a lot of useful information and I am surely going to share with my other friends too, so in that way we can influence the way we want to see the world
- I learned a lot about development cooperation regrading challenges, limitation, solutions and also great idea exchanges to other colleagues
- Time was too short. Need a day longer or so.
- More interaction during the workshops to reflect the knowledge

24.06.2024

Eileen Paßlack-Runkel

STUBE Hessen-Referentin