

Report on Participation in Germany Field Trip

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The short-term study program in Germany had an impressive variety of activities and interviews that provided invaluable knowledge and experience for my research and future job opportunities.

(a) Academic outcomes:

The study program solidified my interest in and the value of doing research in Europe. This is particularly the case in regards to my research focus in economic inequality, human development and discrimination. In general, continental Europe takes very different approach to these matters in comparison to other regions throughout the world, and while there is still much variety within continental Europe, Germany provides shining example of how current social, environment and economic issues can be addressed. The trip made it clear that there is a lot to learn from European institutions in regards to inequality, welfare reform, employment opportunities and outcomes. Particularly, my experience interviewing IG Metall provided much insight into trade union's workings and their role and limitations in ensuring equitable access in outcomes in labor markets. This is particularly applicable and helpful in my research into the complex refugee crisis, where a lack of understanding of what is possible by which entities and how things should be conducted can have very real consequences for many years to come. In addition to obtaining valuable knowledge and experience, I was also able to make valuable connections with contacts at universities and other institutions which are likely be beneficial throughout my academic career.

(b) Experiences while overseas:

The study program, by nature of its cultural location, provided me with a variety of experiences not likely to found elsewhere. Being in Europe where there is so much history provided a sensory and intellectual experiences both unique and striking. From the way people go about their workdays, off-time and life in general, to the way people think about and approach current issues, all was unique and new to me in light of my background. One experience that particularly stood out in this regard was our visit to the government office in Wiesbaden, where both the meeting and a short walk through the Hessen state's capital was both stimulating and invigorating, providing me with a real feel for the kind lives led there.

(c) Content of the program:

The content of the study program boasted a large variety. From the German stock exchange, to University lectures, to interviews with trade unions and other entities both private and public, there was plenty to learn in many different areas of interest and from variety of perspectives.

(d) The impact of the program on your career plans:

The trip made it very clear that it would be both feasible and valuable to work in Europe. Furthermore, I discovered that a working with trade unions is a great avenue through which human lives as well as public economic policy can

be positively influenced. As I progress with my research and future plans, this is one opportunity that I will not discount lightly. On the other hand, some of the limitations of making an impact on policy through work with trade unions etc. were also revealed to me, which gives me a better idea of other available routes and their strengths and weaknesses.