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Deutsches Institut für
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German Development
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KULTURWISSENSCHAFTLICHES
INSTITUT ESSEN

FORSCHUNGSKOLLEG DER
UNIVERSITÄTSALLIANZ METROPOLE RUHR



Is the world the limit? Human cooperative bias and the possibilities for global cooperation

International Workshop in preparation of the launch of the
Käte Hamburger Kolleg "Political Cultures of World Society"
Centre for Advanced Studies in Global Cooperation

Bonn, 13 September 2011

Our era is defined by the enormous creative power of global economic, political and socio-cultural interconnections, but also by the unprecedented scale and complexity of the challenges that they entail. Some of the key problems that we face as a society are not bound by national entities, and dealing effectively with them will require a high level of cooperation between countries. Climate change is the foremost example of these new types of global challenges. While the effects of climate change transcend national borders, the emission of greenhouse gases is still largely controlled by domestic policies, and the solution to this global problem hinges on the decisions of individual countries. In the absence of a global monopoly of power, climate change can only be solved through unprecedented levels of international cooperation, but the slow pace and timidity of climate negotiations is not very auspicious. The difficulty of dealing with climate change and other world-scale problems exposes a global cooperation gap: the difference between the actions that should be taken by all nations to jointly tackle common problems, and the reality of power struggles and the pursuit of national interests.

This obvious under-provisioning of cooperation at the global level stands against the astonishingly high level of cooperation among individual human beings. For decades – if not centuries – our understanding of nature (evolutionary theory) and society (economic and political theories) has been based on the notions of fierce competition and survival of the fittest. In this picture there is only room for self-interest. However, a new paradigm of human behaviour is emerging from recent research in economics, psychology, evolutionary anthropology and neuroscience, among other fields. A growing body of evidence from field observations and experiments with humans and some of our primate relatives suggests that our species is naturally inclined to cooperate and care about others. Cooperation is not a marginal phenomenon that occurs among singularly well-intentioned individuals, but instead appears to be at the very core of human interaction, enabling the type of cultural evolution that guaranteed our success as a species.

The workshop – as well as the longer-term research work of the Käte Hamburger Kolleg – was driven by this seeming incongruity between the rather optimistic picture of human cooperation at the interpersonal level, and the bleaker outlook presented by the challenges of dealing with looming planetary-scale problems. The main question that we would like to address is rather simple: what do the new findings about the collaborative bias of individual human beings mean for cooperation at the international level? What, in other words, does this new knowledge about the micro have to say about the macro?

Programme

- 10:00-10:30 Welcome and introductory remarks
- Prof. Dr. Dirk Messner, Director of the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE), Bonn**
- 10:30-12:30 **Panel I: Moderator: Prof. Dr. Claus Leggewie, Director of the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI), Essen**
- Individual and structural barriers to global cooperation: The case of financial market regulation.
Prof. Dr. Renate Mayntz, Emeritus Director, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies, Köln
- The psychology of human cooperation: evolutionary and cultural foundations
Dr. Daniel Haun, Group Leader, Comparative Cognitive Anthropology Group, Max Plank Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig
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- 13:30-15:30 **Panel II: Moderator: Prof. Dr. Tobias Debiel, Director of the Institute for Development and Peace (INEF), University of Duisburg**
- The state of the art in global governance research: what do we know, and what do we need to find out about global cooperation?
Prof. Dr. Michael Zürn, Social Science Research Center, Berlin
- Trust and cooperation: insights from Decision Neuroscience
Prof. Alan Sanfey, Principal Investigator, Donders Center for Cognitive Neuroscience, Radboud University, Nijmegen, The Netherlands
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- 15:45-17:45 **Panel III: Moderator: Prof. Dr. Dirk Messner, Director of DIE**
- Cooperation: Experimental approaches from behavioural economics
Prof. Jeannette Brosig-Koch, Chair of Quantitative Economic Policy, University of Duisburg-Essen
- Evolution of sociality: what primates can tell us about cooperation
Dr. Julia Lehmann, Reader, Department of Life Sciences, University of Roehampton, UK
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- 17:45-18:30 Plenary discussion and conclusion

Your directions to the German Development Institute /
Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE)

Tulpenfeld 6
D - 53113 Bonn

From Bonn Central Station (*Hauptbahnhof*):
Take the U-Bahn U 16/ U 63 or U 66 to “Heussallee/Museumsmeile”.
Take the exit Heussallee. Turn right after 50 m onto the footpath towards
the office complex 'Tulpenfeld'. Follow the signs across Tulpenfeld to the
building of DIE at Tulpenfeld 6.

The buses No. 610 and 611 run from the train station Bonn *Haupt-
bahnhof* to the bus stop “Heussallee/Museumsmeile”. Turn onto the foot-
path towards the office complex 'Tulpenfeld'. Follow the signs across
Tulpenfeld to the building of DIE at Tulpenfeld 6.



Organisers



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