

Welcome to the MEG Newsletter 1/2010!

By Michael Pregernig,
(MEG Program Director)



It is only half a year since we published our last MEG Newsletter but there are again quite a few things that we achieved – or that simply happened to us ☺ – but, in any

case, that deserve reporting:

- After three years as MEG Program Manager, **Rainer Hummel** left the Institute of Forest and Environmental Policy and the MEG program to work as a forestry consultant in the Northwestern United States. Rainer was one of the strong pillars of the program, getting things going in a systematic but unobtrusive way, serving as information hub for all MEG-related questions and acting as motivational supporter for students and staff alike. We wish Rainer all the best for his new professional challenges outside of MEG!



In December 2009, Rainer's position was filled by **Philipp Späth**. Philipp who comes from the Inter-University Re-

search Centre for Technology, Work and Culture at the University of Graz, Austria, will introduce himself in an article within the present newsletter.

Newsletter 01/2010



- In October 2009, a new generation of MEG students – **MEG5** (!) – began their studies at Freiburg University (see group photo above). Student interest in the program was still very high: 447 online applications reached our program coordinator, Esther Muschelknautz, and her team resulting in 157 complete applications from 34 different countries, out of which 26 students from 16 different countries finally enrolled in the program in Winter Term 2009.
- Also in October, Prof. Dr. **Mark Swilling**, Professor at the School of Public Management and Planning at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, and Mrs. **Eve Annecke**, Director of The Sustainability Institute at Stellenbosch, held a one-month guest professorship at the Institute of Forest and Environmental Policy. During their stay at the Institute, they gave two guest lectures in the course of the module "Governance and Sus



tainability". In her talk on "Sustainability and Action", Mrs. Annecke introduced "The Sustainability Institute" and the Lyn-doch Ecovillage as a role-model for sustainability in a development context. In his talk entitled "Just transitions: explorations of sustainability in an unfair world", Prof. Swilling asked the provocative question of whether and how it is possible to "green the developmental state". The two talks were taken up enthusiastically by the MEG community. We plan to



expand and institutionalize the successful cooperation with Mark and Eve in the future.

- In December, the well-established **Intercultural Teambuilding Seminar** was held for the third time. This year, the seminar was not staged at the University

but rather at the Faculty's seminar house at the Schauinsland in the Black Forest. The fact of being "trapped" in a snowy, picturesque winter landscape even intensified team experiences. With a mix of theoretical knowledge and interactive exercises, the two intensive days allowed the group to explore their own group dynamics and find ways of improving their interactions.

- Also in December, **Leonora Lorena**, MEG3 student from Portugal, was awarded the DAAD prize for excellent achievement of international students. This prize, which is endowed with a 1000 Euro, is awarded once a year to an international student who not only demonstrates excellent academic achievement, but is also exemplary in his/her commitment to society and intercultural activities. "Leo" is a deserved winner of the prize as she excels by exceptional commitment in and for the MEG (including her role as student representative and co-initiator of the "MEG Survival Book"), devoted engagement in socio-cultural affairs and as an "ambassador for the Portuguese culture".



- Good news reached us by the end of the year when the MEG program was awarded a two-year sponsorship under the “**DAAD Alumni Program**”. Based on that funding, the “Freiburg Forum on Environmental Governance 2010” will serve as a kick-start for the MEG Alumni program. MEG Alumni have been invited to take part in and contribute to the Forum event. The MEG4 class has chosen a very topical theme for that event, namely “The Role of New Media in Environmental Governance”. Topics to be addressed in the event include: monitoring and accountability, the role of images in environmental governance, social media and networks, “green” online-services as well as new media and social exclusion. During that event, the interactive online platform meg-forum.net will be launched.



tional NGOs. The workings of UN conventions such as Ramsar, CITES and Aarhus were illuminated in presentations, discussion sessions, and question and answer periods. The whole program was focused on the concept of “greening the economy” – challenges and the necessary action required on the path towards a more sustainable future. The topic focus was tailored towards the Student Organized Event the MEG5 generation is planning for the spring of 2011. Several students made contacts for their internships, and one most probably secured a position right on the spot! Once again the UNECE-FAO’s Timber Section generously acted as liaisons for the group, escorting the group through all three days. At the end of the excursion all participants and hosting organisations agreed to repeat the excursion with the MEGs of next year!



- In February 2010, MEG students again went on an excursion to visit prominent international organizations in **Geneva**. Students were presented with insider information, and expert panel discussion with various UN agencies and interna-
- Finally, just recently the MEG program was featured in the Journal „**SOZIOLOGIE**“, the official bulletin of the German Sociological Society. That should help to popularize the MEG program beyond the environmental science community and to sharpen MEG’s social-science profile.

Graduation Party 2009

By *Esther Muschelknautz*
(Program Coordinator)

Newsletter 01/2010



In November 2009, the MEG and FEM students celebrated their graduation party in Peterhofkeller, a wonderful historical cellar owned by the University. This was the first

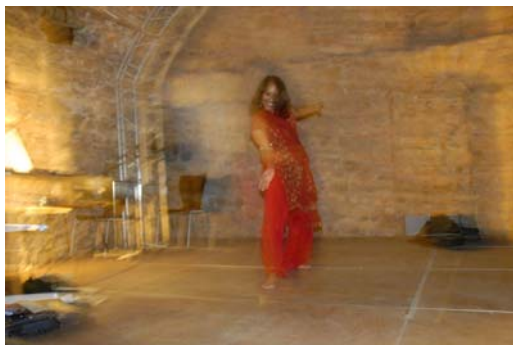
graduation party celebrated outside the faculty, and it was a great success!

Starting in spring 2009, Jana Wendler and Shannon White (MEG graduates 2007-2009) expressed their wish to have the graduation party in a festive location, instead of a classroom, as has been tradition over the last years. They were not alone, as many of their classmates felt that this very special day deserved an equally special setting. Jana and Shannon not only had a great idea, but they also volunteered right away to help with the planning and preparation of the event. So we sat down together very early on and discussed the format of the evening, the catering, the decoration, the invitations, the small gifts for the graduates, the certificates and many other little details. We divided tasks, and while I was working on organisational issues (location, catering, equipment, artistic performances, DJ, and student helpers for arranging and cleaning) Jana and Shannon wrote the invitations, designed the "fake" certificates, organised the decorations and, importantly, always kept in touch with their classmates to be sure that what we were planning was in line with everyone's expectations and wishes.



In addition to the new location, the whole design of the celebration changed quite a bit from previous years. Student contributions were everywhere...To start with, the evening was not moderated by faculty staff, as had traditionally been the case, but by a graduate, Shannon herself. She did a great job guiding us smoothly through almost 3 hours of programme, and on top of her MC duties she also gave a speech on behalf of all the MEG graduates! The graduates were not presented by the programme directors this time, but by the graduates themselves! For the MEGs, Leonora Lorena and Annie Montpetit took over this job and impressed and entertained the 100 people in the audience, with their humorous and at times touching anecdotes about their fellow classmates. For every single graduate they created a presentation, including photos, animations, short movies, humorous texts, and citations...it was unbelievable. Seeing these heartfelt presentations, it was obvious that the MEG class of 2007-2009 had a very good time together and developed deep friendships and great affection for one another. It is already a tradition that younger MEGs and FEMs provide little artistic performances in between the various presenta-

tions. This time we had African singing and dancing with Esinam, Catherine, Hanna, Jessica and Mari Carmen from MEG 2008, Brazilian songs with Philippe and Barbara from FEM 2009 and a very energetic and modern Indian dance with Paru, also from FEM 2009. Now, it may sound as if there were only students on stage but that was not the case. The MEG and FEM programme directors, Prof Pregernig and Prof Storch, addressed the graduates with a speech and handed over – with the help of Prof. Becker, the dean of the faculty - the symbolic certificates and small gifts. All this was documented by our faculty photographer, Dr. Reiner Mühlisieg. The fotos are available on the MEG website under News 2009.



The official programme ended at around 22.00 and was followed by drinking, eating, talking, dancing, and a general good time was had by all. Alanus, from MEG 2009, volunteered as DJ and kept people moving until early the next morning. The last students left Peterhofkeller around 5:00 a.m. The night will remain a fond memory for all who were there.



A warm thank you to all the people who contributed to the great success of this evening and a very special thank you to Jana and Shannon for all their work and for leading us towards this great new format!

Philipp Späth completes the MEG team



In December 2009, Dr. Philipp Späth joined the MEG team. He took over from Rainer Hummel who had left the MEG in September heading for the US. Besides teaching modules and contributing to the management of the MEG (e.g. as internship coordinator) Philipp Späth will also develop research proposals in order to establish a research group on environmental governance. As he has previously done much research on social-technical issues of energy system development, some of his future research might also follow this line. He introduces himself in his own words below:

Newsletter 01/2010

Hello MEG,

I am very glad to join the MEG-team and to come back to Freiburg. I had a good time in Graz (Austria) where I worked at the Interdisciplinary Research Centre IFZ on social aspects of technology development and environmental governance. I lived there with my wife for the last 6 and a half years as our family grew larger (my daughter is now 4). We nevertheless kept an eye on possibilities to come back to Freiburg. But we could nearly not believe that suddenly such an ideal opportunity showed up, just when I was about to finish my PhD in Austria (on new modes of co-shaping socio-technical change). The MEG and this new position here at the Faculty of Forest and Environmental Sciences now miraculously ties together many of my long-standing interests: (A) my affinity to development studies and intercultural learning, which I have developed when studying political sciences and social geography in Freiburg and Berlin. I can now again draw from the exciting experiences I made as an intern and researcher in South-Africa and as a participant and tutor within an intercultural scholarship program (ASA-programm.de). I can also follow (B) my deep interest in environmental policy, which drove me to critically observe and comment on traffic and energy policy particularly at the local level since the early 1990s. A central theme of my scientific writing (C) is the role of 'guiding visions' and the discursive dynamics, institutionalizations and social networks related to environmental policies.

I am thus very enthusiastic to employ all facets of my background to my new tasks related to the MEG and to contribute all-out to its performance and further development.

Philipp Späth (spaeth@ifp.uni-freiburg.de, Tel: 0761-203 3725)

Newsletter 01/2010

The Copenhagen Accord: not what the world needs and asked for

By: Maria Cristina Espinosa (MEG 4, Ecuador)



On December 8th I arrived in Copenhagen to attend the fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the fifth Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP 15 and COP/MOP 5). I was lucky enough to join the (student) delegation from the University of Freiburg along with other MEGs and FEMS: Tatiana, Romy, Carolina, Tpsi, Maria Augusta, Jade, Andrés and Shane. Right after stepping out of the train, I was impressed by the amount of climate activism all over the city. In Bella Center, the venue where the conference took place, the climate issue was exposed in the information booths of governments, IOs, and NGOs, like the one of "Gender CC" at which my classmate Catherine was working.

By tiptoeing through these kiosks, one could grasp many divergent opinions about the climate challenge. The tone became noticeably more antagonistic as delegates from different countries and groups voiced their perspectives in plenary debates and closed sessions.

While the EU timidly expected leadership from the US, the G77 revealed profound fragmentation and weakness without China and India on board. Two major blocks emerged: countries advocating for a 1,5 °C maximum increase in temperature caused by man-made greenhouse gases and countries pushing for 2 °C. It seemed that the impasse between “climate radicals” (1,5°C) and “moderates” (2 °C) would last longer than the conference. In fact, the lack of political willingness to “seal the deal” was revealed through unfruitful discussions among negotiators, and later among government officials. It often appeared that delegates were not only getting lost in translation due to language differences, but also because they were discussing entirely different issues. For instance, during a plenary session, Tuvalu’s delegate made an emotive call for urgent action which was “answered” by a bizarre and time-consuming comment from China’s delegate about the inappropriateness of the conference logo.

Civil society actors, however, never rested in loudly and clearly expressing their plea for a fair and ambitious climate agreement. Diverse “side events” and performances were organized by civil society during the Climate Summit, including an alternative “Klimaforum”.



One activity that I found particularly touching was the climate action demonstration December 12th. At 10 a.m. people both young and old, families with small children, environmental groups, human rights campaigners, and climate activists from all over the world, gathered at Christiansborg Slotsplads with the objective to march to Bella Center and ask for climate action. About 100,000 people attended and MEG and FEM students were also part of the group: Tosi, Linde, Carolina, Andrés and I. We flowed through the streets singing, dancing and carrying heavy posters. Feeling a collective euphoria and the warmth of social action on that cold December day renewed my faith in humanity. After being part of this display of environmental awareness I cannot understand how the negotiations resulted in a weak political agreement that falls short of what the world needs...





Interview with Paulina Campos, MEG alumna (2008)

By Brindusa Birhala (MEG 5, Romania)
and Paulina Campos (MEG 4, Costa Rica)



1. Please tell us a bit about yourself

My name is Paulina Campos and I'm 27 years old. I come from a mixed Costa-Rican/Mexican family, was born in Mexico and raised in Costa Rica. I graduated from a German School in Costa Rica and studied my Bachelor in Business and Marketing in a so-called "Dual System", where the academic knowledge was complemented with "on-the-job training" in different departments within the Bayer Group.

For over 10 years I also studied violoncello performance in the National Conservatory

of Music in Costa Rica and played in different orchestras and bands. It was great!

I came to Freiburg in 2006 and joined the MEG Program. I did my internship with the GTZ in Bolivia and wrote my master thesis within the framework of the ForLive Project. My research had to do with the changes in the societal structures of indigenous communities as a consequence of the intervention of development organizations. For this, I spent three months working closely with a Peruvian NGO in the Amazonian city Pucallpa and had the chance to spend some time with an indigenous community in the Amazon. This was an amazing experience!

After finishing my studies, I had to say goodbye to Freiburg and moved to Frankfurt, where I started my work with the GTZ. At first, I was very skeptical about this change but Frankfurt proved to have much more to offer than I imagined. It is definitely an interesting city, full of bankers and foreigners, fancy restaurants and quirky little bars. During the summer, every weekend was a new surprise, as you would find yourself jumping from one street festival to another, each of them offering a completely different world of food, culture and music.

2. What prompted your decision to obtain an internship with GTZ? Could you relate some interesting moments from your internship in Bolivia that you will always remember?

I did my internship with GTZ's Program PRO-AGRO (Agricultural Development Program) in Bolivia. The project was located in a small town located in the Chaco Region, a lowland semi-arid region close to the border with Argentina. It's objective is to support the Chaco's Regional Development Plan by promoting sustainable agricultural development. As part of this plan, I carried out a study of the honey business in the region and developed a strategy for the com-

mercialization of this product in the national market.

My internship experience was amazing. I had the chance to visit different municipalities in the region, talk to producer organizations, governmental officials, NGOs and retailers. Shortly before my departure we found out by chance that a meeting was being held within the next days in the city of Cochabamba, where local and regional honey organizations would discuss the possibilities of joining efforts to supply large honey demand. This demand came from a national program that aimed at providing food supplies for women in their breastfeeding period. Since this was a great opportunity for the organizations in our region, I was assigned to coordinate the presence of as many organizations as possible. Since many had no access to telephones, we had to travel for hours to try to find some of them at home, or call public phones and leave messages with the hope they would call back. Finally, we managed to get some of the organizations together and attend this meeting. The effort done by the team proved to be worth it, since some of the organizations took leadership positions within the national association, made interesting contacts and found new markets for their product.

3. Could you make a brief history of your affair with GTZ?

My first contact with the GTZ was during my internship in 2007. After concluding my studies I did another six-month internship in the "Priority Area Rural Development and Natural Resource Management" within the Division "Agriculture, Fisheries and Food". During my internship I attended a workshop on Natural Resource Governance and met the colleagues in the Sector "Biodiversity, Forests, Governance of

Natural Resources" within the Division "Environment and Climate" that were working with Governance issues. After concluding my internship, I joined them and have been working with this topic ever since.

4. How would you characterize the working environment within the company?

I would describe the GTZ as a constellation of many different worlds, and as it, every one of them differs from the others. But in general terms, people here are friendly, motivated, and collaborative. I have met very interesting people and made good friends. And I am particularly happy that in such a short time, I have had the chance to get to know at least two "worlds" from the inside so far...

5. What do you miss most from your MEG experience? What do you feel was the most valuable lesson you took from MEG?

From the MEG experience what I miss the most is the time I got to spend with my friends outside class ... the long discussions about different topics, the barbecue and the parties. I also miss Freiburg in general, the simple life riding my bike to school and having free time, also during the day. From the program itself, I miss learning every day something new and being challenged to think "outside the box" and question my paradigms on a general basis.

6. Possible plans for the future?

My current contract is about to end and I will be finding new challenges within the organization soon, but what they will be is still under discussion. By the time we meet in Freiburg I will have figured it out. ☺ My plans for the future are to stay in Germany for one or two years longer and then work in a project abroad. My only conditions are to live in a tropical country, with

access to the ocean and in an interesting project... besides from that, I'm flexible!

7. Isn't Eschborn just too small?
Eschborn, yes!!

So, as an advice to any student planning to work in the GTZ...live in Frankfurt!

Email from Copenhagen

By Jade Buddenberg (MEG 5, Germany)



As a city Copenhagen has kept all its promises: beautiful, well-organised, expensive and bitterly cold. During the climate negotiations (COP15) a kind of state of emergency prevailed under which the sympathy for environmental protection of the local residents unfortunately suffered. Police forces were omnipresent. A huge globe hung above the city hall square where musicians and provoking speakers of all kind incited the masses - even in front of the Little Mermaid people were quarrelling about climate change.

In contrast, the Bella Centre, the large exhibition hall where the COP15 took place, was remarkably calm, albeit a tense atmosphere among the participants. NGOs

were trying their best to bring the strong emotions from the outside into the negotiation halls, but campaigning was heavily regulated. The WWF tested the limits with an ear-splitting protest and the organizers were on the verge of forbidding access of all NGOs for the entire event. But for the most part the Bella Centre was an isolated world whose denizens only noticed the hundreds of arrests during the mass rally through the news screens in the entrance hall.

As everyone expected, the official UN negotiations were unspectacular and dragged along slowly. It seemed that the delegation were more interested in looking at the past than standing united towards the future. Just as in Bali 2007, the discussions were stuck around the questions of whether to renew the Kyoto-Protocol or to set up a completely new treaty. Similarly, the debate over the historical responsibility of the industrialised nations was running in circles. The G77 states and China formed a united front and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) fought rancorously for lowering the 2°C goal to 1.5°C. Yet at the end of the session the disputed issues were adjourned to the next meeting.

For me personally the great number of side events were much more exciting. High-profile scientists presented their most recent studies, NGOs convinced Environmental-celebrities of the necessity for a new climate deal, banks assured that sufficient money for green investment was available, and international companies urged for clear international legal frameworks. I learned for instance from a talk by the Meteorological Service (UK) that the probability for staying below the 2°C limit of global warming is only about 50 %, and staying below 1.5°C seems infeasible (bad news for the AOSIS). Another event dealt with the Carbon Capture and Storage Technologies (CCS). Even the developers conceded that CCS is still in its

Newsletter 01/2010

infancy and thus should not be incorporated into policy strategies. Due to the side events the learning factor for me was exceptional. The most far-reaching statement in my eyes came from Friend of the Earth: Even though the threat of a house fire is minimal, house owners do have fire insurance. Hence the international community should take concrete counteractive measures against climate change, even if some still deny the catastrophic trend of the global climate system.



A highlight in entertainment terms was a daily evening comedy show staged by the Climate Action Network International in which the "Fossil of the Day"-Award was given to a country. Canada was ranking highest on the list. The otherwise nature-loving country had ratified the Kyoto-Protocol but instead of reducing its CO₂-Emissions compared to 1990 they grew by about 20%.

My memories of the COP15, which was dubbed "Hopenhagen" and unfortunately turned out to be "Flophenhagen", were not

only stale and depressing. In particular, the non-governmental participants enriched the conference not only through their entertainment contributions but also content-wise. Their presence reminded the official delegates of their great responsibility for the future of our planet. Without the NGOs the negotiation halls would have been even more isolated. The great variety of types of environmental activists, ranging from people with Birkenstock-sandals to suited business people, were a sign of hope: environmental concerns were no longer represented by a marginalised group but have become Mainstream.

Beautiful surprises in Deutschland

By Joseph Faniyan (MEG 5, Ghana)



Surprises are one of the commonest everyday experiences in life. Surprises could be pleasant or unpleasant depending on expectations and happenings. With wild imaginations and expectations about Europe, particularly Deutschland, it was a great

achievement to be granted a scholarship to study at the University of Freiburg. The count down to the date of my arrival in Deutschland began with high anticipation to experience the beautiful stories told about Europe.

From an Anglophone country somehow it was hidden in my sub-conscious mind that every European speaks English. A few encounters at the Frankfurt Airport shook me to the realization that I was in a strange land. The beautiful archi-

ecture and infrastructure were nice to behold, but inability to read and understand Deutsch made the use of a telephone booth a shocking experience. Hence, a lasting consciousness was created that not all white-skinned Europeans are English language compliant.

German efficiency is known worldwide for leaving no room for mistakes and excuses. To prevent any frustration with my arrival schedule, the MEG program appointed a student helper to pick me up from the "Bahnhof", take me to my apartment and provide guidance for initial administrative procedures for every student foreigner in Germany. After correspondence about arrival schedule, my student helper secured the keys to my apartment a day before my arrival. In anxiety for my departure I forgot to note down the mobile phone number of my student helper. What an unfortunate and "ungerman" situation! With the help of the map I had received, it was now my responsibility to locate SLI – the host institution for my Deutsche language course. After many "merry-go-rounds" I finally found the SLI office and received a warm "german" welcome. It was then realized that my key had been picked up by my student helper and to reach her was impossible because her particulars were not taken. It was getting late so the only option was for me to lodge at a guest house for the first night with the assurance that the problem would be fixed. My student helper felt the frustration even more, as she kept waiting for my call and could not sleep the whole night. Could that be a surprise or the other side of efficiency? Life is complex and in our quest to simplify it may rather complicate it. Being asked to pay for the night accommodation at the guesthouse with assurance of reimbursement, it was not a struggle for me knowing

that Germans "don't lie". To my big surprise, the reimbursement turned out to be a "German lie" – a punishment for throwing "German efficiency" into disrepute and causing frustration. What an eye opener! German efficiency results in "excusitis" – a situation where no one takes responsibility but gives reasons for an unexpected failure.

As part of the administrative procedures, a bank account was to be opened for all my financial transactions with a reputable German bank. Having waited for more than a week and not received any letter of my account details, I went to the "Kundenberatung" (client service desk) to inquire. I was told to wait for another three days in a friendly apology. By now I was getting used to the fact that Germans run from taking responsibility for an unexpected failure. The story was the same in the next follow-up to the Kundenberatung, but after the third visit came a demonstration of "excusitis" as follows:

"The problem is not with us; the problem is with the postman. Go and report to your house master that the postman should be changed. I will also go to the post office myself to report the situation. Please come back in another three days if you have not received the letters." That was unbelievable!

To crown all the surprises in my first two months of stay in Deutschland was a cultural shock. Coming from a culture of group and collective living, though I had read about the individualistic lifestyle of Germans, little did I know how that affects the social gatherings like party. From my country, being invited to a party required one to come with his/her time and appetite. On the contrary in Deutschland, in the context of student party in student hostels, one has to come with something to drink and eat. A beautiful surprise awaits anyone who shows up at a party empty handed; be warned those of you from collective cultural background.

Deutschland is a beautiful country with a conservative and individualistic culture. Student foreigners from a culturally different background in or yet to come to Deutschland should therefore be expectant of surprises stemming from their high expectations of German efficiency and cultural differences.

Managing the “Managing Human-Environment Interactions” Module

By Brindusa Birhala (MEG5, Romania)



At the very end of our first semester, when the main concern for each student is day-dreaming and making plans for the much desired spring break, we started what many of my classmates

will refer to as “the most demanding module ever taken”. Under the skillful coordination of MEG director Michael Pregernig and Uni Freiburg Professor in Honor Margaret Shannon, the Managing Human-Environment Interactions (MHEI) module reunited the MEG and FEM classes for three intense weeks. I had the pleasure of being the tutor of this module whose highlights were three teamwork presentations, two in-between quizzes and an intellectually stimulating final exam, just to mention the “hardships” first. The challenge which the two lecturers were facing was to pack

the content of the module so as to address forestry students as well as us social sciences folk. I possess inside information that the outcome was excellent, according to the informal poll I was conducting in my quality of “the fussy tutor”.

Week one introduced us to issues of property rights and regimes for natural resources. Undoubtedly Prof. Shannon’s vivid lecturing through schemes and drawings will stay with us for a long time. We also had the luck of a guest visit to reinforce the teaching effort in the person of Law Professor Errol E. Meidinger, no other than Prof. Shannon’s husband. This was the week in which we started concocting imaginary worlds. They were established around three given resources - water, fish and forest- which had to be wisely distributed and consequently managed. The task made the mixed MEG-FEM teams spend many creative and insightful hours together. The middle week of the module was dedicated to understanding various paradigms of human-environment interactions and to the reassessment of the property regimes which operated our imaginary worlds.



The last week put the practical cherry on the theoretical cake by means of a first hand account about how bioregional assessment was carried out in a particular case in US, by a team

of leading scientists including Prof. Shannon. She started the lecture by making a thorough and personal introduction to forest policy in the US and the beautiful geography of the Pacific Northwest. One of the prevailing conclusions of the case was the important change in role of scientists. From their misty ivory tower they were gradually proselytized into becoming important political actors due to their ability to synthesize what is known and apply it to policy problems.

Prof. Shannon joined the Uni Freiburg Faculty of Forestry and Environmental Science in 2000 as a guest professor and has been previously involved in the co-teaching of the MHEI module. Her academic carrier spans over a few decades dedicated to research both in the field of natural sciences as well as social sciences. In the large number of scholarly articles and books by Prof. Shannon, one can notice a vast range of interests, from governance and public participation to forest management or the policy-making role of science. In our third semester, an environmental law elective will be offered by Prof. Errol E. Meidinger to which we are eagerly looking forward. And why not, a guest lecture by Margaret Shannon in one of the classes?

Chilling Alternatives

By Hugo Rosa (MEG 5, Brazil)

MEG will stress you. Here are some hints to let your brain breathe.

Before coming to Freiburg, I had no doubts about the academic excellence of MEG and of the University in general. But I had some worries about how interesting my extra-MEG life would be. After all, I was

born and raised in a city in Brazil which is roughly the size of Freiburg and there is pretty much nothing to do there. My worries, however, disappeared in the very first week I was here. Before going further, I must warn you that this is a very personal account of my social experiences here. I am pretty sure that each MEG student will give you a different account of what goes on in the city, with different preferences and dislikes.



As a DAAD scholar, I arrived in August for a two month German course. And August was still bright and warm, with the relative surprise of having daylight lasting up to 10 pm. The town was still relatively empty of its usual students, as the University was on break, but luckily my WG (student house) had its full crew and there were plenty of foreign students doing the German course. In my second day in town, I went to one of the better known meeting spots in town, the Augustinerplatz. The place gets crowded with students hanging out and drinking beer every time weather allows.

During August I also got to know some of Freiburg's nightlife. For a town of a little more than 200 thousand people, there are many, many options. I will talk a little about the town's clubs along the article. One of the first I've been to, and still one of the coolest, is the Reng Teng Teng. It has one of the tiniest dance floors I've

ever seen, which assures an always packed place, with people dancing to indie rock or to music that you're not likely to listen to in clubs. It is hard to describe though, you have to listen to it yourself! Also in August, I got to know one of my other favourites in town, El.Pi., where I can also listen to indie rock, although sometimes they insist too much on commercial rock classics from the 1990s. I also don't like the place when it's too crowded, because the tendency to rough moshing increases. But still, you might find me there if you decide to go.

The warm and sunny August weather (which is by the way coming back now in April!) also allowed for many barbecues. I mostly went to barbecues in the Seepark or in the Stühlinger Wohnheim. The only low about the barbecues is that the beer is never cold enough. Back then, drinking beer German style (warm) was a crime for me as a Brazilian, although I'm used to it now. I still prefer mine ice cold, but, apart from when the weather is itself ice cold, it is a distant dream. It helps that German beer is great and very cheap if you buy in supermarkets. Really, it's around 70 cents for a half litter bottle of a good beer, but you can find good enough ones for 30 cents!

From September my social life had a huge change. The Erasmus students arrived in town and I met them in my German course in my residence, the great, awesome, übercool Händelstrasse Wohnheim. With the Erasmus, I got to know other cool places in the city. The first was the recently reformed Stusiebar. It is the landmark place for foreign students in the city, as it is located in the Studentensiedlung am Seepark, the biggest student residence in the city, known as StuSie. Stusiebar has

two special nights for students, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, with cheap drinks and people from all over the world who come to study in Freiburg, except for Germans, who are actually a rare presence there. The music is really not the strong feature of Stusiebar, nor the quality of the long drinks if you're into that, but for me it was, since September, a great place to meet with my Erasmus friends and to get to know new people. As a foreign student, you should go there, at least once, to make your experience of studying at Uni Freiburg "more complete".



Another discovery from September is the White Rabbit, a cool concert club, that opens its stage on Wednesdays for amateur musicians to show their talents. Usually they are very competent and sometimes just plain awesome. I also got to know around September one of the few places where I like the electronic music they play: Waldsee. A beautiful but quite far place (close to Universitäts Bibliothek 1), which has a student's night on Monday. It is quite a long bike ride, but it's worth it, especially when it's not so cold.

These are still my main picks. Oh, and I forgot to say, all of them are free of charge, at least in the days I described. There are of course many other places in the city, which I'll list more

quickly. If you want to go for my nightlife nemesis in the city, you can visit Karma or Kagan, especially the last one, which is seen as the poshiest club in the city (well, posh for a city like Freiburg), with its commercial music and expensive drinks. For cool music and a wide array of vodkas, go to KGB. For electronic music, Kamikaze and Jackson Pollock are always a good choices. Of course, the salsa dancers have a fixed feature in Palladium. And you can always go to Ruffetto, KTS, Walfisch, Jazzhaus, Agar, E-Werk, Crash...

The last part of this text must go to my favourite type of party, very common in many countries and cities, but kind of a novelty to me, who studied in Brasilia, a city particularly hostile for parties being held in apartments. They are the WG parties, or parties organized by flatmates. They are quite common in the city, and they pop out especially more after you meet more people. It is the best place to know people, German people specifically, because the usual coldness of Germans melts a little if you're in a place where you're at least supposed to know the organizers of the party (actually you usually don't).

Also, the drinks are cheap, since you usually bring your own, and the atmosphere is usually very relaxed. Many of these parties also have themes, which in a not-very-open-to-strangers culture is a great ice breaker. Here's a picture of the party we made in my WG!



All you prospective students will come here to have a high level education in MEG, but you will see that Freiburg has more to offer. This was just about nightlife and parties, but if this is not your thing, there is a lot more to do to relax from our very demanding modules, like hiking or biking in the beautiful Black Forest, having relaxing times in the many bars of the city, cooking together with friends and much more.

Imprint

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Sharing a little bit of my

NEITHER NEW NOR OLD MEGGIE WISDOM



MEG4


BY MARICARMEN RIVERO

HELLO AGAIN! HERE I AM ONCE MORE, TRYING TO SHARE MY MEGGIE WISDOM WITH THE WORLD!
I GUESS IT'S NOT "NEW MEGGIE" WISDOM ANYMORE. I WONDER IF I ALREADY COULD CALL IT "OLD MEGGIE" WISDOM THEN?
IT'S JUST AS WELL, HERE ARE SOME SPECIAL THOUGHTS THAT I'D LIKE TO SHARE WITH ALL OF YOU...

AFTER 3 SEMESTERS OF THE MEG PROGRAMME AND RIGHT ABOUT TO START MY MASTER THESIS, OF COURSE I HAVE TO ASK MYSELF, "WHAT HAVE I LEARNED IN ALL THIS TIME?" I CAN TELL YOU THAT THE BIGGEST CHANGE I FWD IS THE WAY I THINK ABOUT THE WORLD... DON'T MISUNDERSTAND ME, THAT'S NO SMALL THING! IT'S LIKE TWO ABSOLUTELY DIFFERENT PLACES NOW, WHEN I COMPARE BEFORE AND AFTER THE MEG. LET ME TRY TO EXPLAIN WHAT I MEAN...


so here it is:
MY WORLD BEFORE THE MEG
(sorry if you find it too narrow or ignorant, so it was, I can't deny it!)

SCIENCE WAS ONE...
AND IT WAS
THE TRUTH




AND NO QUESTION ABOUT IT!


IT WAS A NICE
ROUND WORLD,
WHERE BALANCE
WAS ALWAYS
A POSSIBILITY




ECONOMICS
HAD MORE
TO DO
WITH
THE AMOUNT
OF MONEY
IN MY BANK
ACCOUNT




MEXICO, MY
HOMELAND, WAS
A "THIRD WORLD
COUNTRY",
LOCATED IN
THE
NORTHERN
PART OF
THE
HEMISPHERE



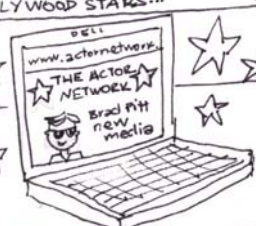
WORKING WITH
PEOPLE FROM OTHER
COUNTRIES JUST REQUI-
RED ONE LITTLE PIECE
OF EFFORT...



PRESSING ENVIRONMENTAL
PROBLEMS HAD SPECIFIC
SOLUTIONS, AND NEEDED
COMMITTED INDIVIDUALS TO
COME AND SOLVE THEM...



NOT THAT I EVER DID, BUT
IF I HEARD OF AN "ACTOR
NETWORK" I WOULD THINK OF
AN INTERNET SITE FOR
HOLLYWOOD STARS...



NOWADAYS, AFTER A YEAR AND A HALF OF MEG, HOW DIFFERENT EVERYTHING LOOKS!! I HOPE MY STILL GREAT IGNORANCE IS NOT TOO SHOCKING FOR MY DEAR CLASSMATES. I'M REALLY DOING MY BEST! ...

So here it is:

MY WORLD AFTER THE MEG.

It looks complicated... but IT ALL DEPENDS...

INSTEAD OF THAT NICE, ROUND WORLD OF BALANCE, NOW I THINK THAT (QUOTING ONE OF MY MEG PROFESSORS): "THE WORLD IS A POTATO"

SCIENCE, TRUTH, POWER... ALWAYS TO BE QUESTIONED



MEXICO, MY HOMETLAND, IS A "DEVELOPING COUNTRY" (Term "Third World" erased from my vocabulary for ever) AND IT'S LOCATED IN THE "GLOBAL SOUTH".



NOW I KNOW THAT AN "ACTOR NETWORK" IS RELATED TO THIS SOCIAL THEORY DEVELOPED BY LATOUR, CALLON & LAW AND IT'S ABOUT... ABOUT... ABOUT...



THE IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE OF ECONOMICS, ESPECIALLY RELATED TO THE ENVIRONMENT, IS ONE OF MY GREATEST DISCOVERIES...



Somebody has to pay for all those externalities!!

BALANCE?



NAAA...

WORKING WITH PEOPLE FROM OTHER COUNTRIES REQUIRES SPEAKING A COMMON LANGUAGE, BUT ALSO TOLERANCE, PATIENCE, A SENSE OF HUMOR, PRUDENCE, SOLIDARITY, EMPATHY... AND SOME MUSICAL SKILLS CAN'T HURT EITHER!!

Malaika Nakupenda Malaika...



PRESSING ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS ARE SO COMPLEX BUT GUESS WHAT? I STILL BELIEVE WE NEED TO COMMIT TO TRY TO SOLVE THEM... BUT TOGETHER!



THAT'S IT FOR NOW! GOTTA GO BACK TO MY SOE / THESIS WORK!!!



Special thanks to Kathryn Howard for proof reading the texts!

SEE YOU SOON!

Mari Carmen Riveno