

Report/Sustainability Workshop held in May, 2017/ Dr. Sarasij Majumder/ September 27, 2017

**Sustainability Workshop at the European Academy of Oztenhausen, Germany, 12-19<sup>th</sup> May**

I participated in the Perspectives on Global Issues workshop focused on sustainability in May 2017. My interest in this workshop arose from my interest in researching community -based development strategies that take sustainability and resilience of ecology and habitats into account. As an economic anthropologist studying land-use, agriculture and rural change, I look at the impact of market-based and non-market based policies on sustainability and related livelihood issues on the ground. For the past ten years, I have published numerous articles on issues such as micro-credit, community level protests against land acquisition, informal land dealings and the promises and pitfalls of Fair Trade-organic certification of agricultural commodities at the global scale. Sustainability has always been the subtext of many of my teaching, research and publication projects.

**Impact on Science and Technology Studies (STS) Gen-Ed:** My exposure to sustainability policy, practices, and ethics as it pertains to Germany and EU has resulted in the creation of two modules for my Science and Technology Studies Gen-Ed course in its online format. The modules are titled Responding to Climate Change: Adaptation vs. Mitigation and Cultures of Sustainability. To teach these modules I extensively draw on the presentations by Dr. Lenelis Kruse-Graumann of University of Hiedelberg. In these modules, we discuss how technology can contribute to the responses to climate change by producing technology that helps us to adapt to the change without reversing our practices. But I push students to see how technology is also a crucial part of the cultures of sustainability or how new technology can be developed to promote a culture of sustainability. I refer to Dr. Kruse-Graumann's concepts of mitigating ecological crisis rather than adapting to it. Here, I refer to Environment as a relational concept to an organism.

I engaged/engage students in a group-work assignment that asks them to compare policy, practice, and ethics of technological advancement and its relationship to current concerns over sustainability between Germany, USA and India. I referred them to websites of the environmental campus that we visited during the workshop. Here Dr. Susanna Haartard's presentation helps me to talk and lecture on industrial ecology and share the experiences of visiting the wind energy farms and organic cultivation farms. This kind of a comparative framework to engage students in science and engineering to appreciate context-specific implementation of sustainability related policy is critical for a holistic STEM education. It will also advance the core mission of KSU's Gen-Ed curriculum in fostering diverse, cross-cultural education about topics of global significance like sustainability.

**Impact on PAX/STS cross-listed upper division seminar "Peace, Development, and Environment:"** I have developed a unique special topics course which will have sustainability issues as a core focus. This course is unique since it will be cross- listed between two units in the Interdisciplinary Studies Department (ISD): Peace Studies and Science and Technology Studies to create a space for bringing in students across the social

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science, science and engineering and humanities to engage in “out of the box” thinking about the future of our planet as we grapple with technological advances, growing inequalities, but at the same time a growing desire among young people to make grounded social and policy change. Germany, as we learnt in the workshop lectures and the discussions that followed, has a long history of meaningful engagement with the global peace movement, pioneering sustainable practices in agriculture (through Steiner’s organic movement) and cutting edge energy/climate efficient German engineering and has also made significant contributions in the global south assisting many kinds of community development through funding or liaison work through its cultural centers. This workshop engagement has enabled me to further expand my knowledge in these unique German contributions to global peace, development and sustainability. Through networks built during this workshop I have collected relevant policy documents, published work, art, news items and event information that I am delivering through three modules in this elective. Therefore, this workshop at Germany was timed well to facilitate a unique learning opportunity for me and through me the diverse student body at KSU as we prepare the next generation to tackle complex issues like sustainability, international development locally and globally.

I witnessed first-hand the effects of EU policies on the development of sustainable agriculture in rural Germany. I could see how Fair-Trade certification policy works in Germany. How different standards of organic cultivation and fair trade cohere to form an emergent German Fairtrade organic standard. The ground-up emergence of standards is based policies of decentralization, which really caught my attention. While teaching science and technology studies classes, I regularly compare German strategies with Gandhi’s ideas of decentralization.

This workshop came at the right time for me to learn directly from visiting an EU member state with a long history of agricultural innovation. This workshop enabled me to pursue three distinct lines of inquiry in my engagements with German and European scholars and mentors:

1. I could see and understand how EU policy and member states policies differ on sustainable agriculture and how that affects global funding as it pertains to developing nations.
2. I learnt how does the German heritage/innovation affect local agricultural practices in the global south, and how such methods are interpreted in communities in the Global South. Since India’s independence, there have been many experiments in agricultural modernization and tremendous borrowing from technological advances in Europe and the US. I could compare how influences of German and US agricultural innovations on India national agricultural policy and its community- level effects.
3. I came to know about the intersections of German peace movements and environmental policies affecting sustainable agriculture and sustainable development in the Global South.

The most immediate impact of my participation in this sustainability-themed workshop is on KSU and CHSS's Gen-Ed curriculum and upper division offerings in ISD (see below) and my own research project on alternative agricultural practices in the global south.