

Young Scholar's Workshop on "Law and Transformation"



As part of its project on 'Legal Cultures in India and Europe' in collaboration with three Indian partner institutions, the Chair for Public and Comparative Law at Humboldt-University (Prof. Dann) organised a Young Scholar's Workshop on "Law & Transformation" from February 19-21, 2020. This Workshop, organised by Professor Philipp Dann and Tanja Herklotz, is the first of a series of workshops to be organised by the partner institutions in both Germany and India. The focus of these workshops is to increase mobility between the partner institutions, to start a set of new conversations between Indian and German scholars while also continuing knowledge-exchange that has been going on for the last fifteen years, and to provide young scholars with carefully designed platforms where they may present their work and receive diverse but detailed feedback.

The participants of the Workshop included researchers, PhD students and senior academics from each of the four partner institutions: Humboldt-University, Berlin, Azim Premji University (APU), Bangalore, National Law University Delhi (NLUD) and Jindal Global Law School (JGLS), Sonipat. Each partner institution selected three young scholars to present papers, and the twelve papers presented in total covered a wide range of issues within the broad fields of legal theory, private law, environmental law, Indian legal history, law & politics, law & development and criminal law. The format of the Workshop was such that the author of each paper benefited from having two participants specifically designated to comment on their paper, including one junior and one senior academic. The discussions that took place were characterised by deep engagement with the texts prepared by each of the paper

authors, including suggestions on how to improve comparative law frameworks, clarify complex concepts, and to employ a variety of legal research methodologies.

The sessions on the second day of the Workshop were followed by a Panel Discussion on 'Democratic Decay and Resilience in Europe and India', where discussants from Germany and India presented their thoughts on threats to democracy at the international and national level, and offered suggestions as to how such threats may be safeguarded against. The discussants were Professor Anna-Bettina Kaiser (HU Berlin), Professor Arun Thiruvengadam (APU), Professor Pritam Baruah (JGLS)

and Maximilian Steinbeis (Verfassungsblog). Following their presentations, an insightful discussion took place over the similarities and differences between the threats to democratic institutions in India, Germany, and also Europe.

The third day of the Workshop included a special session on developing and enhancing academic skills, and a session on how to take the collaborative project forward. Discussions during these final sessions were distinctly personal, with participants explaining their motivations and struggles in researching and writing, and with senior scholars suggesting methods of overcoming difficulties to produce rich scholarly work over long periods of time. The Workshop strengthened the bridges between the partner institutions, and highlighted the promise of the long-term collaborative project on "Law and Transformation".

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