



Global Diplomacy Lab

2nd Global Diplomacy Lab

Under the patronage of Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier

Fragmentation vs. Integration: Towards a More Inclusive Global Order 4 to 7 June 2015, Istanbul, Turkey

Conference report

The second Global Diplomacy Lab took place in the beautiful city of Istanbul, a perfect location for this Lab's programme, which was entitled: "Fragmentation vs. Integration: Towards a More Inclusive Global Order". The perfect place that is, says Ruprecht Polenz, Dean of the Global Diplomacy Lab, not only because Istanbul is where Europe and Asia meet, but because Turkey is in the centre of a lot of questions of fragmentation and integration, which concern the world right now. "As the longest-waiting country on the European Union's accession list, it stands for questions of how to integrate nations into wider alliances", Mr. Polenz explained at the welcome reception at the summer residence of the German Ambassador in Istanbul. "Also, Turkey is a neighbour to a lot of countries, which suffer from processes of strong fragmentation, as we see for example in Syria", he said. And third, it struggles with issues of integration in its own society, which still discriminates against ethnic groups like the Kurds or the Armenians as well as physically or socially disadvantaged people. "A society, which is not inclusive itself, cannot play a role in an inclusive world order. The EU-Membership-Negotiations will hopefully have an impact to change these shortcomings and finally make Turkey ready to join the EU", Mr Polenz made clear, as everyone gathered together on this first evening. Ambassador Eberhard Pohl himself also welcomed the participants to Istanbul and admitted his envy and regret at not having had the opportunity to take part in international labs like this when he was a young diplomat.

Turkey's role in this Lab's programme

Therefore, while discussing global and overall topics, the location of the Global Diplomacy Lab also played a big role in its programme:

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For the 32 participants to get to know each other, it started with a gallery walk through the centre of Istanbul, where everyone picked out a piece of art, they could relate to, personally, professionally or on their expectations of this lab, and introduced themselves to the group.

Speakers from Turkey were invited to share their knowledge and views: Soli Özel, Professor of International Relations at Kadir Has University of Istanbul for example, gave an introductory key note on "Implications of the overhaul of the post 1945 / post 1989 world order". In just 20 Minutes he summed up very lively, how as few as six events since 1945 set the course for the world order we are dealing with today.

Hakan Altınay, President of the Global Civics Academy, held a session about the "Search of Global Civics: Who does What?" and made impressive points on what it means for this generation to be 'Global Civics' and why it is important to act like one: "As a 30-year old, you have the same amount of shared interests with a 30-year old from the other side of the world, as you have with a 60-year old in your own country", Mr. Altınay said. "Never before in history has this situation occurred."

Turkey's struggle with integration vs. fragmentation in Turkish-Armenian history was a topic at three site visits, which we will discuss in detail later. Its foreign policy was discussed in an Open Situation Room, led by Fuat Keyman, Director of Istanbul Policy Center and Professor of International Relations at Sabanci University. In this 'atelier politique', participants worked on "The role of Turkey in the new multi-polar world – Is the 'zero problems with neighbours' policy a model for the future?"

A closer look at five special highlights of the programme

FISHBOWL DISCUSSION: WHAT ROLE DOES DIPLOMACY HAVE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM?

This lab's fishbowl discussion bore the title "The fight against religious extremism and terrorism: which role for diplomacy?" Chaired by Soli Özel, Nuhu Ribadu, Chairman of the Petroleum Revenue Task Force and former Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission in Nigeria, and Sanem Guner, Assistant Director at the Hollings Center for

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International Dialogue, it was open for everyone who wanted to join in. Just as last time, Tobias Leipprand moderating the debate had to keep a close eye on the time, as almost everyone wanted to contribute to the discussion, which was very lively, committed and at times, personal too.

Words matter!

Speaking about religious extremism and terrorism revealed quite early on in the discussion, just how much words matter. Sanem Guner asked to speak of 'terrorism' rather than 'extremism', since extremism is very difficult to define and does not necessarily lead to the atrocities, we associate with the word, which are rather the outcome of terrorism. "I also advise you to not use the word Islamist, as Islamists are extreme, but legitimate politicians, who want an Islamic state, but are not necessarily terrorists", Ms Sanem said. "That is why, not Muslims need to distinguish themselves from Islamists, but Islamists need to distinguish themselves from terrorism." One Muslim diplomat also stressed the fact, that the word 'Jihad' is usually used incorrectly. "It does not mean 'holy war', only western media and terrorists use it in this way."

A part of our society

In order to prevent terrorism, one needs to be aware of its sources. When it comes to Boko Haram, Soli Özel proposed to take in consideration the life threatening circumstances in Nigeria, which are usually not mentioned: "We have to look at environmental degeneration there: Lake Chad has shrunk by 90 percent in the last half century, desperation makes people open to terrorist ideas", he said. "Plus, we have a collapsed state there with no functioning legal system, so they are not reliable for their actions." But Nuhu Ribadu from Nigeria disagreed: "I would not relate it to poverty. There are poorer countries in Africa and their Muslims do not turn to terror, and on the other hand we have terrorists in rich countries like France." He rather stressed the power of religious beliefs. One participant continued this argument by saying that openness to these beliefs often correlates with the feeling of being unwanted and underprivileged. "In this motive, terrorism has always been a way to challenge an empire or hegemon. Therefore it's important that we don't take it as something external, but realise that it is part of our society." The

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exclusion, another participant added, is what the Boston Marathon terrorists felt, not a financial, but a cultural exclusion. "We need to pay attention to the inclusiveness of society. France, for example, forbidding girls to wear a head scarf in school, could be considered drastic and creates exclusion", she said. Human dignity in imbalance, said another diplomat, is what terrorists in Kandahar and Boston might have in common.

The role of Islam

While moderator Tobias Leipprand repeatedly mentioned extremist groups of other religions, such as Christian, Buddhist or Hindu extremists, the debate always returned to Islamic extremists, which soon led to the question why that is. "We need to ask, why terrorism flourishes so well in the Islamic world", Soli Özel said. "Why did the Vietnamese or Latin America never do something like 9/11? And I say, it has to do with the Saudi Arabian government using religion to legitimate their power in 1979. This helped pave the way for Islamist terrorism which we have to deal with today. "Saudi Arabia gave a blank cheque to its religious establishment after the Iranian revolution and supported the Mujahedeen in Afghanistan and expanded the reach of its Wahhabi interpretation of Islam, which is very sectarian, harsh, anti-western, etc. That paved the way ideologically to the proliferation of Jihadism, and the ideological roots are not all that different. So if Iran is considered a terrorist nation, then so should Saudi Arabia as well", Mr Özel said. Nuhu Ribadu gave consideration to the thought that Islam might still have to undergo developments like Christianity did. "And then maybe in 50 years, it will not have these problems anymore", he said.

How this affects the life of Muslims was explained by another Muslim diplomat who said: "I personally refrain from saying that I am a Muslim, because I see how people react and how they link it to terrorism", she said. "But I appreciate it very much, that here, at the Global Diplomacy Lab, we are not afraid to ask the unpleasant questions."

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Diplomatic Solutions?

So, what can we do? Soli Özel advocated supporting the Arab peoples, their protests and democratic movements. He sees uprising powers like China, India and Brazil having a special responsibility to do so. Sanem Guner offered three points: 1) Western countries, deal with the problem of Islamophobia in order to not let it rise. 2) Go to the source of the problem: Syria, Iraq, and yes also ISIS, and work with the civil society there. 3) Terrorist propaganda is bottom-up, so we should not try to convince people top-down: Use Twitter, Facebook, Social Media instead to go bottom-up as well.

“WHERE DO YOU TAKE YOUR COURAGE FROM, MR. RIBADU?”

After the fishbowl discussion, the relentless corruption fighter Nuhu Ribadu stayed on for an interview. He talked about the differences in corruption in Africa and Europe, the role of civil society and personal satisfaction with his work. A few questions by participants were:

Your life has been at stake more than once. Where do you take your courage from to keep doing this dangerous work?

Nuhu Ribadu: “It’s true I have survived several attacks. Once my car was shot at several times. I don’t want to die, but it is simply my destiny. It was my own choice that I made when I was in my twenties and I feel very strongly about it. To be honest, it gives me happiness and satisfaction. Nothing else gives me as much satisfaction as confronting someone who is corrupt, someone who takes advantage of others. I want to believe, that the difference between developing and developed countries lies in the way, they use their resources, be it money, nature, culture or innovation. But corruption stands in the way; it stands in the way of development. So that is a great mission.”

How can e.g. South Africa help other African countries fight corruption without them fearing, South Africa would want to colonize them like the Europeans did?

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Nuhu Ribadu: "It is very important that we as African countries work together, because corruption doesn't have borders. If it is in one place, it will spread. We have worked together successfully with some countries, such as Botswana and Kenya, but others are still refusing to do so. But if they refer to colonization, either the European one as a reason for corruption today or to a new one, implicated by other countries, I don't believe them. I think this is used as an excuse. We need to wake up and understand that these are our own problems and we must address them. In order to do so, we need to work with the civil society in other African countries and support the structures and initiatives there, which could help raise awareness. Then the people will put pressure on their own governments to implement anti-corruption laws. Then it is not coming from outside."

How about corruption in developed countries? What do you recommend doing about that?

Nuhu Ribadu: "Corruption is a global problem. People tend to romanticise developed democracies as non-corrupt, because it doesn't affect the daily lives of the people there. Further, institutions are strong and you have a legal structure to fight cases of corruption. However, too many people have the illusion of corruption not being a problem there. So I think the biggest task here is to realise that it is happening and that we have to strive to get out of it, so that one day we could be like the Scandinavian countries, where there is nearly no corruption."

PEER-TO-PEER OPEN SPACE: ART AND COMPUTER HACKING FOR DIPLOMACY?

In a more complex world, diplomacy occurs both inside and outside of formal diplomatic circles. International cooperation takes place through national and local governments, business associations, foundations, arts and culture and many more levels. Each GDL member brought unique diplomatic insights and perspectives to Istanbul and this was the session where traditional diplomats and other international actors could learn from each other.

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Participants were so eager to share their knowledge that eight interactive sessions were held. People switched between the sessions, in order to take the most out of them.

A few examples:

- Angelina Davydova is teaching at various universities and has learned how to use her voice effectively. So she held a session on voice, including very lively exercises.
- Adi Farjon, Spokesperson of the Israeli Government in Berlin, held a session on 'Writing tomorrow's newspaper'. How to place the right information with the right journalists at the right time?
- Shen Quilan is an art curator and critic and spoke about 'Art as a mirror of diplomacy'. She had recently visited the Venice Art Biennial as well as the Havana Art Biennial and noticed how the art business reflects the political changes in Cuba.
- Diego Osorio, a diplomat from Canada, has worked with 'Diplo Hacks', a method, which focusses on solving political problems with digital tools.
- Sabrina Schulz is a policy expert working mainly on climate change, energy and international security. She gave an insight on climate diplomacy: Which initiatives are there and how do co-operations and processes work?

This wasn't the only session, where skills and ideas were shared between members of the GDL. Later that day, an 'Idea Gallery' was established, where members presented projects they were currently working on or brand-new ideas of co-operation they would like to realise and win people to join. Those ideas included innovation labs, an online/offline platform for international art, a joint paper on 'Multi Actor Global Governance' to be presented at a UN General Assembly and public private partnerships in the health sector.

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A lot of the members found these sessions especially inspiring and fruitful, since they were interactive, peer-to-peer and provided a lot of future co-operations and skills, which are usually not taught to traditional diplomats, but nowadays more needed than ever.

TURKISH-ARMENIAN RECONCILIATION: 4 SITE VISITS

- 1) Hrant Dink Foundation and 'Agos': Hrant Dink was an Armenian journalist in Turkey who campaigned for the rights of Armenians and minorities, both as a prominent spokesman for his ethnic community in Turkey and as the founder and editor of the bilingual Turkish-Armenian newspaper 'Agos'. He was shot dead outside the 'Agos' offices in 2007. The Hrant Dink Foundation seeks to carry on his ideas of a culture of dialogue, empathy and peace. They do so in particular by working towards equal opportunity among children, ensuring that cultural diversity is recognised as an enrichment, developing cultural relations among the peoples of Turkey, Armenia and Europa and supporting Turkey's democratisation process. They publish books, create archives and organise summer schools, as well as film, music, arts, dance and literature festivals.
- 2) 'Agos' is the first newspaper in the Republican period of Turkey to give Armenians a voice. It is published in Turkish and Armenian and focuses on issues such as democratisation, minority rights, coming to terms with the past and the protection and development of pluralism in Turkey. "It struck me just how much grief and despair there is among the Armenian people", one member said. "And we learned that the founding myth of Turkey after the fall of the Ottoman Empire is keeping reconciliation from happening. If Turkey admits the genocide perpetrated against the Armenian people, it affects the deep roots of their identity of being Turkish." "That is why we keep saying, that genocide is done to a nation and not by a nation", one speaker explained. But so far, the Turkish government is not giving in. "Instead, when other nations call it genocide, the situation for Armenians declines at times, because it raises national sentiment amongst some of the

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Turkish population”, one member said. The member further added “This site visit is a strong reminder, just how fragile democracy is.”

- 3) ‘Anadolu Kültür’ is a non-profit cultural institution, founded in 2002 by people coming from various fields of arts, business and civil society. It aims to improve dialogue and understanding by supporting the production and sharing of culture of art of both sides in cities of Turkey and abroad. Osman Kavala, one of the founders of ‘Anadolu Kültür’ said: “Art and culture are a very good way to make young people from both sides work together. We let them produce a film or a theatre play together, because everyone loves stories. At the same time they realise what they have in common and also get to know the other culture.” Especially for the young people; they don’t focus on the genocide, but on a broader perspective of both cultures. The discussion quite quickly opened up to broader issues of discrimination in Turkish society and Mr Kavala talked about structural discrimination he was observing. But he also said, the situation is slowly improving in Turkey: “The Peoples’ Democratic Party for example is now a respected political party and popular among a lot of Non-Kurdish people as well. Whereas twenty years ago, they were seen only as Kurdish activists.”
- 4) Tarlabasi Community Center began as a pilot project in the Beyoglu district Tarlabasi under the leadership of the Research Center for Migration Studies Application at Bilgi University in order to promote equal participation of urban life to immigrants in the city. Since 2006 they have provided social, psychological and educational support for more than 10.000 disadvantaged children, young people and women, who often are not granted asylum status but have a ‘guest-status’ in Turkey, which denies them a lot of basic civil rights. „I was very struck by Ebru Ergün, one of the coordinators of the center”, said one participant, “She displayed strong resilience and was so touched by the kids and their parents’ stories, drawing strength from them. She told us, ‘People are so strong. It’s unbelievable. The stories they’re telling: You’ll see that they’re fighting, you’ll see.” But at this moment the center itself is fighting for its existence, because the Tarlabasi district, which is

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now one of the poorest, but located in the centre of Istanbul, is facing gentrification, partly organised and supported by the state. Facing these structural threats, Ebru Ergün pledged: “We don’t want people to just donate money, we need them to take responsibility.”

The sharing of impressions of these site visits led straight to a very committed debate about migration policy in general. One member stated that the concept of closed borders is not an appropriate model anymore for the 21st century. The discussion had to be cut short due to schedule reasons, but gave a promising forecast of the upcoming Global Diplomacy Lab in November in Berlin. This lab will focus on migration: “Status: unresolved! Designing migration policies for the future.”

DESIGN AND DIPLOMACY – A BETA GOVERNMENT?

What can design teach us for shaping a new kind of diplomacy?” Brenton Caffin asked. Caffin, who is the Director of Innovation Skills at ‘Nesta’, the UKs innovation foundation, held a very inspiring presentation on the answers to that question.

In case anyone was still thinking of design as being applied only to material things, he made very clear: “Everyone designs who devises a course of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones. Design means change.” Then he explained the seven key principles of design, being:

1. Questioning

“It is a lot more about asking the right questions than about having a solution in mind,” he said. “If you want to hang a picture on the wall, the usual question would be ‘How do I get the nail into the wall?’ But think again, isn’t the question really ‘How do I get that picture to stick to the wall?’ Then you might get very different answers”.

2. Empathising

“Do always step into the user’s shoes”, Caffin said. In The Australian Centre for Social Innovation, which Caffin had founded, they didn’t only

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think about the support families could need, but actually joined some families in their daily lives to get a better picture.

3. Reframing

Reframing means, looking through a new lens. Having spent time with the families they were trying to support, they realised that families, who have been through rough times and were thriving were an untapped resource and could be very helpful to other families facing similar struggles.

4. Visualising

Show, don't tell. Prototypes help to evaluate the looks, procedures and processes and serve a better understanding.

5. Collaborating

Always work across silos, domains and disciplines, bring in as many perspectives to the problem as you can get.

6. Iterating

"Don't think it all through till the end. Try and fail. Fail early, fail fast – find out what works and what doesn't, go back and do it differently", Caffin said. "Yes, it is a very messy approach".

7. Aligning

Aligning goals, requirements, interests, conflicts, etc. A solution has to truly fit all three, the problem, the user and the provider.

How can these principles be applied to diplomacy? "How can we afford a trial and error approach?" one participant asked. "Start more pilot projects, to test ideas and procedures", Caffin said. "Just as the industry is testing new products with a beta-phase, I advocate for the concept of a Beta-Government. Find the bugs!" Another diplomat agreed: "Logic framework kills passion", "Being allowed to fail is very motivating", said another. "I would love to see trial and error happening in funding", another participant said.

While a lot of the members were really euphoric, others remained skeptical: "The diplomatic mindset is still very conservative", one diplomat

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said. "But look at the pharmaceutical sector", another participant replied, "it is said to be the most conservative and innovative sector at the same time. The two can go together." "You can bring in innovation from outside of traditional diplomatic fields", another one suggested.

Dean Ruprecht Polenz was very intrigued by this discussion too. As he stated, he sees design principles as definitely applicable to diplomacy, both inside as well as outside. "For international conflicts like in the Ukraine for example, we should maybe start with the inside, to change how the diplomatic system itself is working". This Global Diplomacy Lab has surely contributed to initiate this process.

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