

Report of the Academic Organizer

The 18th EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Students took place at the Department of Asian Studies at Palacký University Olomouc in the Czech Republic 23-26 August 2022. Fortunately, despite the worsening Covid-19 situation in some countries, the workshop did not have to be changed into an online event as in the previous two years. 48 Ph.D. candidates pursuing their studies at various European universities, but also in Japan and the U.S., applied this year. It was a rather challenging task to choose the final 20 workshop participants as the projects were thematically diverse and multidisciplinary, and all of them were of very good quality. Depending on the nature of their research theme, the participants were divided into five thematic groups – linguistics, literature, contemporary society, international relations & foreign policy, and politics, gender & media representation. Each group was supervised by one senior advisor invited by the workshop director, Dr. Ivona Barešová (Palacký University Olomouc). The senior advisors were:

Prof. Reiko Abe Auestad (University of Oslo)

Dr. Marcos Pablo Centeno (Birkbeck, University of London; University of Valencia)

Dr. Nathan Edwin Hopson (University of Bergen)

Dr. Ra Mason (University of East Anglia)

All student participants presented their projects in front of the whole group, that is, the other doctoral students and senior advisors. Several academics and students from the organizing institution also joined for some sessions. The presentations were structured as a small conference, grouped into six sessions over two days. As all the students were expected to submit a 5,000-word project report prior to the event which was shared among all participants, the presentations were limited to only 10–15 minutes, so that more time was left for Q & A and open discussion. This arrangement seems to have worked very well. Each presentation was followed by a lively and constructive discussion which, I believe, was beneficial for the presenters. In addition, there were also two sessions in the small thematic groups, one each day of the workshop. The discussions within these groups were led by the senior advisors who provided each student with more thorough feedback. The participants were, therefore, able to discuss their research project with people who work across different disciplines as well as receive more detailed feedback from the senior advisor and fellow students within their group.

One of the issues that came up repeatedly in the presentations and discussions was how to conduct primary research during the Covid-19 pandemic. The various ways of coping

with the situation presented were appreciated by the other participants who have been facing similar problems.

The event was not only about presenting and discussing research topics, but also about exchanging ideas, networking, and sharing academic experience. This was possible not only during the coffee breaks, lunches, and dinners we spent together, but also during enjoyable sightseeing walks organized by local Ph.D. students each day after the workshop. Walking through the park and the city center, climbing a church tower, discovering some hidden corners of the city, and enjoying ice cream together was a pleasant addition to the whole event.

I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Abe Auestad, Dr. Centeno, Dr. Hopson and Dr. Mason for taking on the role of a senior advisor and coming to Olomouc, despite their busy schedules. I greatly appreciate their support throughout the whole event. My sincere thanks go also to the organizing team, especially to Dr. Halina Zawiszová, who was my main collaborator when planning and running the workshop. Finally, I also thank all the student participants for their extraordinary level of engagement and I sincerely hope everyone left Olomouc with some fresh inspiration, new motivation, and extra energy to successfully finish their work.

With fond memories of the event,

Ivona Barešová, Palacký University Olomouc

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