

Lars Fischer
Karl-Heinz Minks

The International Standing of the Humanities in Germany

- Abridged version -

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Project team:

HIS Hochschul-Informationen-System GmbH | Karl-Heinz Minks | Goseriede 9 | 30159 Hanover
Karl-Heinz Minks
Lars Fischer
Julia Behrens
Lena Rösler

Academic advisory board:

Dr. Ulrike Albrecht (Alexander-von-Humoldt-Stiftung, Bonn)
Prof. Regina Bendix (Kulturanthropologie/Europäische Ethnologie, Uni Göttingen)
Prof. Ludwig M. Eichinger (Institut für Deutsche Sprache, Mannheim)
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Prof. Andreas Gestrich (German Historical Institute, London)
Prof. Michael Lackner (Sinologie/Area Studies, Uni Erlangen-Nürnberg)
Dr. Harald Rosenbach (Stiftung Deutsche Geisteswissenschaftliche Institute im Ausland, Bonn)
Dr. Dorothea Rüländ (Center for International Cooperation, FU Berlin)
Christiane Schmeken (Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst, Bonn)
Prof. Ulrich Teichler (Internationales Zentrum für Hochschulforschung, Uni Kassel)

Imprint

Karl-Heinz Minks
Tel.: +49 (0511) 12 20 203
E-mail: minks@his.de
HIS Hochschul-Informationen-System GmbH
Goseriede 9 | 30159 Hanover | www.his.de
Translation: Paul Cohen
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Summary

An outsider's perspective

Germany's achievements in the humanities are highly respected around the world. Humanities scholars from abroad unanimously underscore the outstanding quality of Germany's libraries, archives and museums, and the wide range of source material available induces them to take frequent research trips to Germany.

Researchers and instructors from abroad also particularly appreciate Germany's programs to promote international mobility (the DAAD, the Humboldt Foundation, etc.).

Nevertheless, they feel that it is extremely difficult in Germany to penetrate the "inner research circles" or acquire a German professorship. When this succeeds, however, they say that outsiders receive an extremely collegial welcome and a great deal of friendly support.

Germany's reputation as a center of research in the humanities still heavily relies on the "legacy of the grand old masters" of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Germany's ongoing high level of methodology, which is largely based on the academic foundations that were laid decades ago, still defines the image and status of the country's current research practices in the humanities.

Challenges

Germany played a key role in helping to differentiate the humanities into separate disciplines, and it is the very existence of these small disciplines that today constitutes an enormous – yet endangered – wealth of diversity of thought.

This resource is threatened in part by a widespread yet biased economic applicability rationale, which acts as a determining factor when universities decide whether to maintain or fill top academic positions.

Institutionalized international research collaborations consisting of project-related research consortia tend to be the exception rather than the rule. In the interest of appropriately adapting international research collaborations to meet current needs, humanities scholars would like to see a more flexible funding system.

Both German and foreign humanities scholars are concerned about cutbacks introduced in recent years in Germany that have resulted in the elimination of professorships and mid-level faculty positions, particularly in the small disciplines that traditionally enjoy an outstanding reputation. This is echoed by criticism of the conditions for young academics in Germany – conditions which are seen as not highly competitive in comparison to Anglo-American countries. Although the situation enjoyed by young academics in other countries may on average be no better than in Germany, the tendency is actually for the best educated young academics in the humanities in Germany to be attracted toward prestigious and comparatively well-endowed higher education institutions abroad.

Internationality

Humanities scholars from Germany maintain most of their research-related contacts in the USA (43%), the UK (30%) and France (23%). This is followed by Austria (20%), Switzerland and Italy (each with 16%); the figures for all other countries remain under ten percent.

Research in the humanities in Germany and abroad is highly individualized and, at the same time, influenced by informal research networks. The international character of these endeavors often varies according to subject and area.

Instrumental music is one of the fields of study with the highest proportions of foreign students in Germany (33% during the 2006/07 winter semester). Many future musicians study not only one or two semesters in Germany, but also conclude their studies here. This has to do with promising career prospects as well as Germany's excellent master-student ratio. It also explains both the high proportion of international students in Germany as well as the relatively low foreign mobility of German music students.

The HIS graduate survey (2006/07) revealed that the pursuit of a course of study in the humanities includes a stay abroad more often (51%) than studies in nearly all other disciplines. Nevertheless, study-related stays abroad are primarily undertaken in the fields of languages and cultural studies.

A large proportion of the foreign humanities scholars in Germany who receive funding are graduate students, particularly doctoral students. Most guest researchers come from the USA, followed by Russia, France, Poland and China. When it comes to foreign faculty members at German higher education institutions, European and Anglo-American countries of origin dominate in languages and cultural studies, but also in artistic and musical areas of study.

Visibility of the research

German is still internationally recognized as an academic language in only a few disciplines of the humanities. Research results published in German have too little impact on international academic discourse. By all appearances, it would be advantageous to provide more funding for high-quality English translations of academic essays and monographs.

Of the surveyed humanities scholars from Australia, the UK and the USA, it should be noted however that 69 percent read publications in French, followed by 59 percent who read German, 21 percent Italian, 17 percent Spanish and 12 percent Dutch.

Readers from abroad are often confronted with a "highly academic" language in German research publications that laypeople cannot decipher. By adopting a more popular style of writing, which nonetheless retains the substance of the results, Germany's latently jeopardized humanities research could reach a wider audience.

Introduction

“Die Leistungen der Geisteswissenschaften in Deutschland sind in der Forschung ebenso wie in der Qualifizierung des wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchses sehr gut und international anerkannt.”¹

This is the introductory statement to the 2006 abridged version of the recommendations of the German Council of Science and Humanities on the development of the humanities. Such a strong emphasis on the international character of the humanities is more than just mere globalization rhetoric. Philosophers and later historians gleaned their main early sources of inspiration from interregional and international exchanges. For instance, the emergence and development of pre-Socratic philosophy – which had a considerable influence on the development of scientific thought – would have been unthinkable if the Phoenicians had not expanded their trans-regional trade routes to Greece. During the Middle Ages, the reciprocal exchange of scientific-philosophic ideas between the Islamic (for example, Avicenna, Averroes) and the Christian-Western world (for example, Albertus Magnus, Thomas of Aquin) stimulated learning and prevented the loss of key treasures inherited from classical Greece. This also holds true for the recent past and the present, where securing long-term peaceful coexistence in Europe would be virtually inconceivable without the collective efforts of international groups of historians to revise national and nationalistic interpretations of history and to rewrite chapters in school textbooks.

These three examples illustrate the enormous importance of international and intercultural discourse in the humanities. Whenever this was broken off, it reflected a severe crisis and often led to an academic standstill or decline. The question of the international importance of the humanities thus goes far beyond the statistical performance indicators of disciplines competing on a global scale.

Today, the humanities in Germany face an increasing number of opportunities and necessities engendered by factors like globalization. Special attention should be paid here to the growing range of careers pursued by humanities scholars. Although areas of activity have traditionally focused on research, the media and public cultural institutions, these are now being superseded by functions and jobs in the private sector. Courses of study with an international and intercultural focus make graduates in these areas of the humanities particularly attractive for internationally active companies. Young humanities scholars often find that assuming such new functions presents itself as a "crisis-ridden" vocational transition because it comes as an unexpected development and

¹ The achievements of the humanities in Germany are highly and internationally recognized with regard to research as well as the education of young academics.

leads to business sectors that are not (yet) professionalized and well established, although these new jobs often turn out to offer satisfying career prospects. Nonetheless, there is also the danger that "Studienangebote aus den Geisteswissenschaften ... zur Garnierung direkt berufsbezogener Studiengänge abgewertet [werden]"² (Nida-Rümelin, J., 2006).

As the range of professional activities undertaken by graduates in the humanities continues to expand during the course of globalization, it is also possible to observe a change, or rather a necessary modification, in the descriptions of disciplines in the humanities. As a result, interdisciplinary courses of study within the humanities, which are often referred to as "small disciplines" or the so called "orchid subjects" are attaining ever greater importance. In its recommendations on area studies at universities and non-university research institutes, issued in July 2006, the German Council of Science and Humanities rightly drew attention to the growing emphasis on area studies. Today's comprehensive merging of economic and cultural issues requires enhanced mutual understanding of other cultures and religions. At the same time, Arabic and African studies are currently gaining increasing importance for their roles in fostering international and transcultural communication.

What's more, old and regional patterns of perception and value systems are losing their importance only to be replaced by different patterns as new worldwide communication and information technologies are developed that engender a flood of information. This creates new opportunities and risks for the sustainable formation of a civil society that extends beyond national and cultural boundaries. Tackling this enormous challenge is only possible with the support of the humanities acting on an international and intercultural stage. The humanities can and must act as a meaningful and contributing element of change.

As cutbacks are made in the humanities, however, it is primarily academic positions in the "small disciplines" that are in danger of losing ground as they are edged out by the major disciplines and today's strong focus on technical and scientific specialist disciplines.

In its original form, competition in the humanities was a contest of ideas. It thus stands to reason that it is not solely of interest that ideas originate from German researchers or from Germany, but rather that Germany presents itself as a venue for stimulating international discourse and for pursuing ideas in the humanities. The present study funded by the Federal Ministry for Education and Research was designed to illustrate the international character of the humanities in Germany. Its objective was not to conduct an international comparison of venues for the humanities, but rather to gain a clearer understanding of the reputation of the humanities on the international academic stage, and to assess the ex-

² ... studies in the humanities ... are dismissed as mere garnishing for directly career-related courses of study.

tent to which research and teaching faculty in Germany take part in the international exchange of ideas. By exploring the problems and strengths associated with the international character of the humanities in Germany, this report also aims to help create a better empirical basis for a debate over possible initiatives to enhance its international standing.

Data and survey methods

The core of this explorative study consists of 49 structured interviews and an online survey of humanities scholars from Germany and abroad. These interviews and the online survey do not reflect the complete range of subject areas in the humanities. Nine subject areas were selected – African studies, Egyptology, German studies, history, Islamic studies, communication and media studies, art history, musicology and religious studies – to explore the possibilities of more accurately specifying area-related particularities within the context of internationality. At the same time, this selection represents fields of study with various academic traditions in Germany.

A third pillar of this study consists of secondary analyses of official statistical data as well as data from academic programs to provide funding for international exchanges of students and researchers. This data covers all disciplines in the humanities, as defined in the recommendations of the German Council of Science and Humanities in 2006. A number of core results from these analyses are given in the corresponding chapters, represented in the blue textboxes below.

Some of the issues addressed in this study have already been examined and discussed in the past. What makes the present study unique, however, is that various aspects of the international character of the humanities in Germany are described from the viewpoint of the players involved in research and teaching at German, Australian, British, Japanese and American higher education institutions.

Online-Survey in Germany and abroad

All academics in Germany in the above-mentioned nine fields of study whose e-mail addresses were available on the websites of their respective departments at German universities were invited to take part in the online survey. In addition, a non-representative selection of 400 to 500 representatives of these fields of study from each of the three English-speaking reference countries (Australia, the UK and the USA) was asked to take part in the online sur-

vey³. A total of 4,633 individuals at German universities were asked to participate (see Table 1) along with 1,356 persons in the reference countries⁴ (see Table 2). The field phase of the study took place from mid-November 2008 to early January 2009. The responses of 1,211 respondents were suitable for evaluation. This corresponds to a response rate of 22 percent among the humanities' faculty in Germany. In some cases, this varies significantly from subject area to subject area. When it came to the survey respondents abroad, the response rate varied between 12 and 15 percent.

Due to the small number of scholars for the reference countries Australia, the UK and the USA especially in some fields of study, it was decided to forgo a presentation of the results for these countries according to subject area. For this reason, subject areas have been pooled to display the results from Germany as well.

Qualitative Interviews in Germany and abroad

During the winter of 2008/2009, academics in the above-mentioned subject areas and countries were invited to take part in an interview. In addition to Australia, Germany, the UK and the USA, interviews were conducted in Japan. In selecting the interviewees, steps were taken to ensure that all potential respondents had a wide range of experience abroad. Emphasis was also placed on selecting individuals with numerous years of experience in academia. A number of the participants are or were actively involved in international bodies. Efforts were made to maintain a balanced mixture among the interviewees with regard to gender, titles and counties of origin. In Germany two interviews were conducted in each discipline. In Australia, the UK and the USA one individual was questioned in each discipline, with the exception of the UK, where two additional academics in the area of religious studies were willing to participate in the study. Only five interviews could be conducted in Japan. As a result, there were no interviews in Japan with individuals in the subject areas of religious studies, Islamic/Arabic studies, German studies and history.

The interviews were conducted primarily personally and, in some cases, over the phone and digitally recorded. The time period for conducting the interviews ranged from October 2008 to March 2009. All quotations from the interviews are anonymous. Source information is therefore generally limited to the subject area and country where the interviewees were researching and teaching at the time of the interviews.

³ An additional online survey planned for Japan could not be conducted.

⁴ The survey focused on the English-speaking world due to the predominant position of English as an academic language, the USA due to its competitive position in the humanities and Japan as a country with an Asian culture.

Tab. 1 Response of the online survey in Germany according to subjects (number of invited and participants, response in %)

	Invited	Participated	Response in %
African studies	70	17	24
Egyptology	52	14	33
Islamic/Arabic studies	132	24	18
German studies	1536	357	18
History	1664	331	20
Communication/media studies	232	82	35
Art history	372	65	17
Musicology	416	109	26
Religious studies	115	20	17
Others	44	11	25
Total	4633	1030	22

HIS Online Survey: Humanities Scholars

Tab. 2 Response of the online survey in Australia, the UK and the USA (number of invited and participants, response in %)

	Invited	Participated	Response in %
Australia	368	48	13
UK	471	73	15
USA	517	60	12
Total	1356	181	14

HIS Online Survey: Humanities Scholars

Results

International activities

International activities by humanities scholars begin during their studies. Early study-related foreign mobility plays a particularly important role in enhancing a long-term international orientation, even after a course of study has been completed.

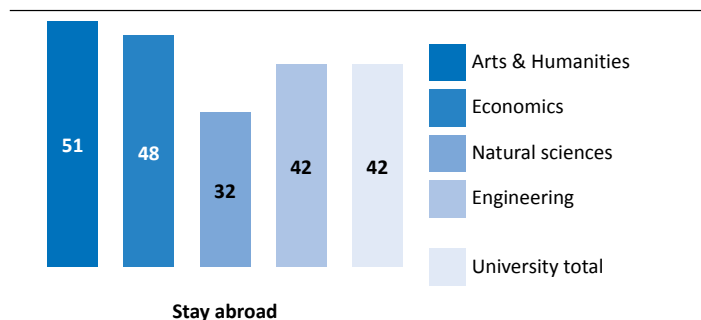
Stays abroad by students at German higher education institutions

The HIS graduate survey (2006/07, class of 2005) revealed that the pursuit of a course of study in the humanities includes a stay abroad more often than in nearly all other disciplines (51%). Nevertheless, study-related stays abroad are primarily undertaken in the fields of language and cultural studies. Within the context of the short bachelor's program, nearly four out of ten graduates of subject areas in the humanities are able to acquire experience abroad. Despite the existence of funding programs, the relative chance of a stay abroad during a course of studies is 1.7 times higher for children whose parents attended university than for students whose parents did not. Graduates with excellent and good grades have completed stays abroad significantly more often than those who have average or poor grades. The influence of gender is by contrast slightly less, but still remains significant. The probability that female students go abroad is 1.4 times higher than among male students.

The data from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) provide detailed information on Erasmus*-sponsored stays abroad in Europe. After the social sciences, students in the humanities most often benefit from funding from the DAAD, with students of linguistics constituting the leading beneficiaries within this group. DAAD-sponsored students spend their external study-related stays abroad primarily in one of the large EU countries. Nearly three quarters of them spent the 2004/2005 winter semester in Spain, France, the UK or Italy.

*Erasmus is an EU education and training programme, enabling students as well as university and business staff to study, work and teach abroad.

Fig. 1 Study related stays abroad by graduates* from German universities in the Humanities and other subjects as well as overall (Diplom, Magister, degree in art, multiple answers, in %)



*only first degree

Source: HIS-Graduate Studies 2005.1; special evaluation

Stays abroad by humanities scholars attending German universities

Data from relevant funding organizations (cf. *Wissenschaft Weltoffen*) provide insights into the structure of funded foreign mobility for German academics. The largest proportion of funding for foreign mobility in the humanities is received by the "graduate students" group – primarily doctoral candidates. The leading destination country by far is the USA (21% of German guest academics abroad) followed by the UK (10%). This also holds true for natural sciences and engineering.

DAAD funding within the framework of Socrates/Erasmus reaches not only European students but also academics in Europe. In 2004, 30 percent of all German humanities academics abroad who received aid benefited from DAAD grants.

The Humboldt Foundation is another important source of funding for the international mobility of faculty members, although it provides significantly less aid than the DAAD. In 2006 only 12 percent of all academics in the humanities who received funding benefited from Humboldt Foundation grants. The Humboldt Foundation focuses however primarily on promoting the natural sciences. The vast majority of destination countries for academics benefiting from Humboldt grants are in Western Europe and North America.

Most of the interviewees have no doubt about the importance of an international orientation. However, they have differing views on the necessity of international networking, depending on their field of study. The more international their own objects of research and the smaller their scientific community, the higher they tend to rate the necessity of taking an international approach. In addition, their own research network tends to have a more pronounced international character. Thus it is the "small" subject areas (African studies, Egyptology, Arab/Islamic studies, religious studies) in the present survey that ascribe the greatest amount of importance to international networks.

Research in the humanities is a highly individualized undertaking. When it comes to internationalizing their efforts, all researchers endeavor to build up their own personal networks or seek to become integral members of existing ones. In the opinions of those interviewed, young academics should begin as early as possible to establish contacts with colleagues in Germany and abroad. Forging such a network can hardly be planned in advance, but it can be fostered. A prime way of doing this at the beginning of a career in the humanities is by attending international conferences and conventions to make contacts and present one's own research to an international audience. Being part of a network is the key to an international approach in the humanities and often forms the ba-

„Internationalisierung bedeutet, dass man Kontakte mit Forschern und Forscherinnen sucht, die an ähnlichen Fragen [...] arbeiten. Also eine Art Internationalisierung über gemeinsame Fachinteressen.“

(Germany, German Studies)

„Die Universitäten setzen uns relativ stark unter Druck, Drittmittel zu akquirieren.“

(Germany, German Studies)

„The Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft funds a lot of things, much more generously than their equivalents in Britain.“

(UK, Egyptology)

„Es ist immens schwierig, den Anforderungen von EU-Anträgen gerecht zu werden, weil es so viele Bedingungen gibt, wie man an die Mittel überhaupt rankommt. Man ist ständig damit beschäftigt, Partner zu finden: einen Partner hier, einen Partner dort. Und dann gibt es unzählige weitere Hürden: dieses noch und jenes noch. Also ich empfinde es als einen derartig bürokratischen Aufwand, dass ich immer wieder davor zurückschrecke.“

(Germany, Art History)

sis for wide-reaching international activities such as conducting reviews or serving as a member of an editorial board.

International research projects, i.e., collectively working on an issue or research topic with other colleagues or even institutions abroad, are relatively rare occurrences, according to the interviewees. Occasionally, there are circumstances that lead to such projects, for instance, an Egyptologist noted that international research collaborations are often established for field work in Egypt. International research projects are frequently launched when collaborating with project partners from other countries is a compulsory element for acquiring funding. Many interviewees were highly critical of such obligations since not all research objectives require collaboration with others and they can sometimes be achieved even more effectively alone. However, interviewees reported that they were also confronted with the opposite problem. Humanities scholars who feel that international research collaboration would be useful due to the nature of the topic, and who are interested in closer cooperation in the form of a joint project with partners abroad, often complain of overly strict rules for grant applications. For instance, they criticize that sources of funding occasionally prescribe the countries from which the collaboration partners must come.

Financing international activities

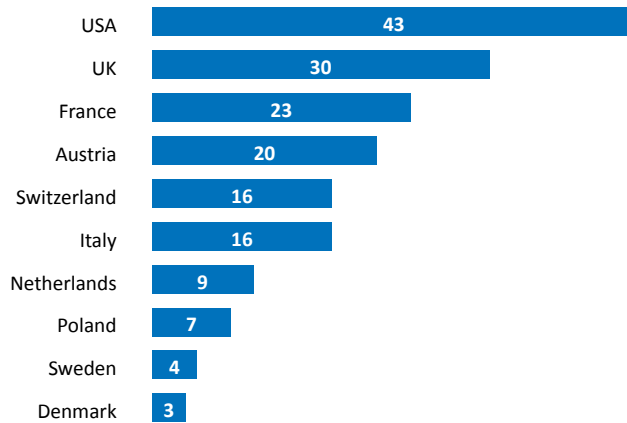
German university departments can only grant funding for international activities – ranging from conference participation to research trips and even international projects – to a very limited extent from their own budgets. Due to a lack of other funds, some academics say that they have to pay "out of their own pocket" for air fares and overnight accommodation when attending conferences or project meetings. This explains why third-party funding is so important here. However, the interviewees generally highly praise and welcome the available programs in Germany to fund foreign mobility. Time and again, respondents of the online survey highlighted German research funding institutions like the German Research Foundation (DFG), the Humboldt Foundation and the DAAD. Foreign academics find it especially helpful that they can receive approval for third-party funding from these organizations in order to take part in conferences and conventions in Germany.

The German language: Bridge and barrier

Attracting international attention to outstanding research results from Germany ultimately depends on the language in which the articles are written. In the humanities, however, language serves as more than just a means of communicating. It constitutes an integral part of specific (area-related) cultural thought and commu-

Fig. 2 Countries in which humanities scholars from Germany have the most research-related contacts (multiple answers, probands from Germany, in %)

In which of the following countries are the majority of your research-related contacts?



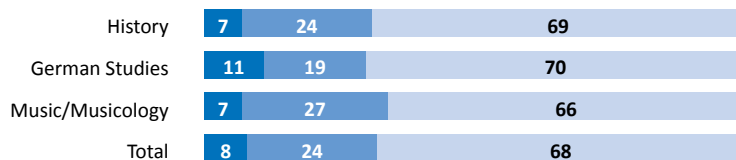
HIS Online-Survey: Humanities Scholars

Fig. 3 Assessment of the application for subsidies for international research projects by institution (figures on a 5-level scale; 1+2 = not difficult (at all), 4+5 = (very) difficult, probands from Germany, in %)

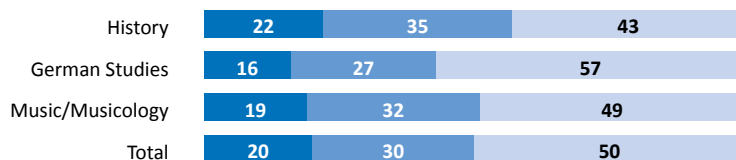
How would you assess the application for subsidies for international research projects at the following institutions?

■ not difficult (at all) ■ medium ■ (very) difficult

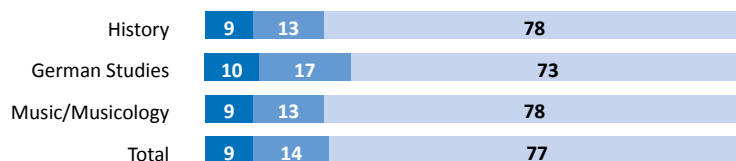
Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)



Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG)



EU Funding



HIS Online-Survey: Humanities Scholars

„German is an important academic language. But I suspect that is beginning to slip quite seriously in the field and increasingly German colleagues will just write in English because they are aware of the international context in which they are writing and they are much more likely to have an impact if they write in English.“

(UK, Islamic Studies)

nication patterns and, in that sense, acts as a means of conveying knowledge and culture. When it comes to the international dissemination of research results, it is not enough to publish in the most frequently read languages, with English at the top of the list. Researchers also use translations to convey the language-based academic and cultural characteristics of each specialist discipline. This places extremely high demands on translation work.

Articles written in English are generally noticed by humanities scholars abroad. Interviewees had varying opinions about whether – and to what extent – German research results in the humanities are internationally recognized. A large number of interviewees from abroad are under the impression that German academics go to great lengths to make their research results available to an international readership by presenting them at conferences and conventions and in English-language articles. Other respondents in Germany and abroad said that German colleagues still publish too little in English and rely too much on the belief that articles in German will also receive an appropriate amount of attention abroad due to the traditional status of German as an academic language. Over the years, numerous standard works in the humanities have been written in German, many of which have still not been translated into English, for example, important works by the Egyptologist Jan Assmann, the philosopher Hans Blumenberg, and a wide range of German texts in Islamic studies. This is particularly true for works that are only of interest to small academic circles and cannot claim to attract the attention of a wide interdisciplinary audience, as is the case with great philosophical treatises, for instance. What's more, monographs are less often translated from German into English than articles for professional journals.

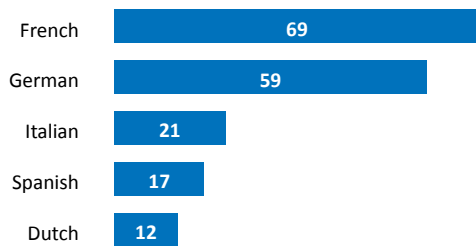
Of course there are still areas within individual disciplines where it is necessary to have a working knowledge of German. However, the humanities scholars interviewed also notice a decline in the importance of German in all disciplines. Whereas one religious studies scholar felt that a knowledge of German was necessary when studying Islamic mysticism or pursuing Bible research, this does not hold true to the same degree for other areas of religious studies. Disciplines in the humanities where a reading knowledge of German is still essential today include Egyptology, Arab/Islamic studies, art history, musicology, religious studies and of course German studies. German also remains a leading language of publication for historians working in a number of areas. German is less important in African studies and media and communication studies. Since multilingualism tends to be on the decline in the English-speaking world, German academics will probably increasingly need to publish in English in the future, if their research results are to influence international discourse. German has already lost ground in the humanities and has been reduced to a language of publication in certain areas of research.

„I think it is fair to say that German work in the area that I work on, is not well enough known.“

(UK, Communication Studies)

Since producing high-quality translations of works in the humanities entails considerable linguistic and context-related challenges, a large number of interviewees would like to see more programs that provide funding for translations from German into English.

Fig. 4 Foreign languages in which scholars from Australia, the UK and the USA read scientific publications the most (multiple answers, probands from abroad, in %)



HIS Online Survey: Humanities Scholars

The "legacy of the grand old masters" and research quality today

Interviewees working in a wide range of disciplines underscored the key historical role played by Germany during the 19th and early 20th centuries in developing the humanities – a legacy which is still felt today. Some of the subject areas included in this study date back to this era.

Many respondents pointed out that this influence can still be witnessed today with regard to the country's prestige as a research center. They say that this reputation continues to provide an incentive to take research trips to Germany. It is true that a large number of great minds and researchers fled Germany during the 1930s and settled abroad, often in the USA or other English-speaking countries. Yet despite these losses to academia, which left their mark during World War I and then under the Nazis, in the opinion of many interviewees, the "desperate clinging to the ideals of science" and the outstanding methodological standards of the humanities in Germany are still exemplary today.

In all of the fields covered by the study, the interviewees attributed a high research standard to Germany. One US academic called German research contributions in the humanities "state of the art." Nevertheless, many academics expressed concern about the future of humanities research in Germany. Such views cannot be attributed alone to the dominance of the English language and the limited international attention achieved by non-translated research results from Germany. Academics in Germany and abroad have noticed an ongoing trend toward cutbacks in university posi-

„And I am always a bit surprised, a bit disappointed in a way that the German art history, which is so important and so interesting, you know, it is the founding of the discipline, should not be better known. But language is a principle obstacle to it.“

(Australia, Art History)

„German is a very important language for European historians because so much high quality work is written in the language. Not being able to read it is to be excluded from major findings. On the other hand, partly because German scholars in history speak English. English has become the international language obviously.“

(USA, History)

„I deal a lot with dead Germans, you know, and my desk is awash with dead Germans of various sorts, because I think that their work certainly is still important.“

(UK, Musicology)

„Many of the most important words were written or still are being written in German. That is because Germany has a good art history. Intellectually open, all kinds of things, all kinds of features about the German style of doing art history which are attractive.“
(Australia, Art History)

„German scholars produced very important and basic work since 19th century. We should also notice publications and reports on other things like i.e. archaeology; not only language studies.“
(Japan, Egyptology)

„Methodologically speaking [research from Germany is important] because of the German attitude to things like method and the dominance of the philosophical component in the research in humanities.“
(USA, Islamic Studies)

tions in the humanities that primarily affect the mid-level faculty. They also regret that it is primarily chairs in the small disciplines that are often not filled again. To make matters worse, humanities scholars in Germany often do not have the necessary time available to complete long-term research projects. Basic research suffers the most from this development and international collaborations are also adversely affected.

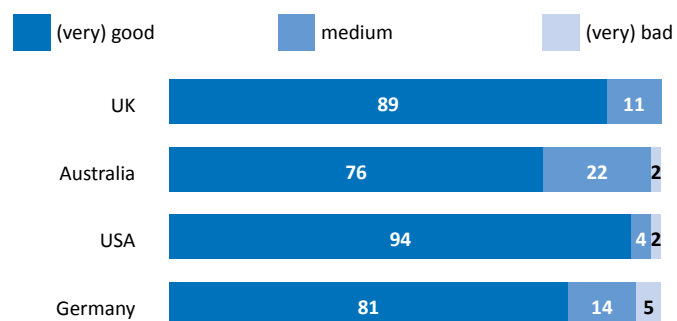
A number of interviewees say that this “critical” situation is caused by an overemphasis on economic considerations when assessing individual academic areas, including the humanities. As a result, quite a number of the German humanities scholars see themselves locked in a nearly hopeless, never-ending battle to legitimize their existence with regard to the so-called MINT⁵ fields. The respondents say that this trend affects particularly the (small) subject areas in the humanities, where even today German research still significantly influences international discourse.

Many German humanities scholars say that they have some catching up to do when it comes to the challenge of more effectively utilizing their research results. Academics from English-speaking countries appear to have no qualms about a broader and more popular "marketing" of their own research results. Although German humanities scholars are widely seen abroad as maintaining extremely high academic standards, respondents say that the "highly academic" style of writing of their research reports often makes these texts difficult to understand outside academia and thus of little interest to many readers.

Fig. 5 Judgement on research quality in the arts and humanities in the country of residence as compared to international standards by scholars from Australia, the UK, the USA and Germany (figures on a 5-level scale, 1+2 = (very) good, 4+5 = (very) bad, all probands, in %)

How would you judge the research situation in [your country] for your subject in an international comparison?

Quality of Research



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⁵ Mathematics, information technology, natural sciences, technology

Germany's attractiveness for humanities scholars from abroad

Germany's attractiveness for foreign humanities scholars starts with the opportunities and conditions for young students in Germany. These experiences often form the basis for later academic contacts with Germany.

Foreign students at German universities

Current statistical data show a significant increase in the number of foreign students at German universities. The number of foreign students rose by more than 100 percent between 1997 and 2005. In fields of study in the humanities, however, there was only roughly a 30-percent increase during this period. German studies and English studies are the most popular fields of study among foreign students in the humanities. Slavic studies, Byzantine studies and Romance languages also have a strong international attraction with high percentages of foreigners. These small subject areas enjoy a long academic tradition in Germany, but in view of current trends toward consolidation at many universities, they now have to fear for their very existence. It is also worth noting that there are a high proportion of foreign students in Eastern European languages and cultural studies. This also holds true for musical and artistic areas of study. Instrumental and orchestral music, for instance, are two of the fields of study with the highest proportions of foreign students in Germany (33% resp. 31% during the 2006/07 winter semester). At the Academy of Music Hans Eisler Berlin, the University of Music Lübeck, and the University of Music Freiburg, the proportion of foreigners is even over 50 percent. In addition, many future musicians study not only one or two semesters in Germany, but also conclude their studies here. This is due in large part to the comparatively good professional opportunities here. Germany has one of the highest numbers of professional orchestras per capita in the world. In addition, Germany's excellent master-student ratio is responsible for not only the high proportion of international students in Germany but also for the relatively low foreign mobility of German music students.

Over the past decade, increasing numbers of foreign students from the new EU member countries in Eastern Europe have made this the main group of origin. For instance, in 2006/07 Polish students in the humanities (with the exception of art and music) were the largest group of foreign students in Germany.

*„My impression about Germany as a research location in Islamic Studies is that it is one of the leaders.“
(USA, Islamic Studies)*

Humanities scholars from abroad unanimously underscore the outstanding quality of Germany's libraries, archives and museums. The wide range of source material available here induces them to take frequent research trips to Germany. They see the wide range of top-notch conferences and conventions as an additional magnet. Their participation in such events is often funded by German organizations such as the DAAD or the Humboldt Foundation. The majority of interviewees also mentioned that they maintain good personal contacts to researchers from Germany. Primarily Australian and American respondents underscore the high proportion of research institutes and the friendly, collegial and supportive atmosphere in the German scientific community.

Criticism of Conditions and a lack of transparency

„Also, wenn sich jemand über Deutschland unterhält, dann gibt es eben immer dasselbe Stereotyp, das doch weitgehend wahrscheinlich der Realität entspricht; nämlich dass Deutschland im Moment geradezu ein Schlaraffenland ist, was Projekte, Tagungen, Teamarbeit, Graduiertenkollegs und so weiter betrifft, dass aber an festen Stellen nach wie vor enorm eingespart wird und das geht dann auf Kosten der Lehre und Studentenrelation an den Universitäten.“

(USA, Art History)

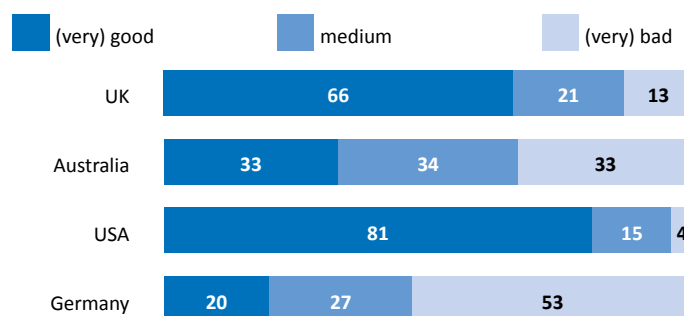
In addition to unreserved praise for Germany as a center for research and instruction in the humanities, some aspects are also criticized by German and foreign respondents. This criticism focused primarily on research conditions and teaching resources in Germany. Their criticism can be summed up in one essential point: German academics don't have enough time to conduct research. Respondents often said that the added strain of administrative and teaching duties and the pressure to acquire third-party funding detracts from the attractiveness of working as a department chair at a German university.

According to humanities scholars abroad, the procedures for filling positions at German universities present a major obstacle to

Fig. 6 Judgement on available resources for research in the country of residence by scholars from Australia, the UK, the USA and Germany (figures on a 5-level scale, 1+2 = (very) good, 4+5 = (very) bad, all probands, in %)

How would you judge your subject area in [your country] in an international comparison concerning the following aspects?

Available resources for research



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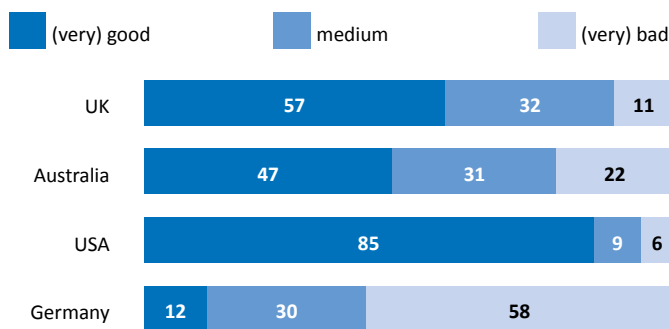
making internationality a reality. They say that positions are frequently advertised only in Germany, giving the impression that these selection processes are often not open-ended. As a result, foreign humanities scholars who do not benefit from extensive networking in Germany often feel that they have little chance of acquiring a chair at a German university.

„In Deutschland ist es nicht ganz so schlimm wie in Italien, aber die Wahrnehmung entspricht dann doch weitgehend der Realität, nämlich dass man es relativ schwer hat als Nicht-Deutscher, in Kunstgeschichte überhaupt eine Professur zu finden.“
(USA, Art History)

Fig. 7 Judgement on available resources for teaching in the country of residence by scholars from Australia, the UK, the USA and Germany (figures on a 5-level scale, 1+2 = (very) good, 4+5 = (very) bad, all probands, in %)

How would you judge your subject area in [your country] in an international comparison concerning the following aspects?

Available resources for teaching



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The situation of young academics in the humanities

The future of Germany as a center of research can only be assured by the perspectives held by upcoming generations of young academics. Statements made concerning career opportunities for young academics in Germany highly resemble each other across a wide range of subject areas. A number of interviewees from Germany expressed concern that nowadays highly promising graduates often decide against pursuing a university career. Many of them would rather switch to the private sector or go into teaching. The reasons given included improved career prospects and earnings opportunities. According to a large number of respondents, the uninspiring outlook for secure research positions in Germany prompts many talented young German academics to move to the USA or the UK. When it comes to funding for young academics in Germany, many complained about a far too restrictive corset of academic dependencies and too much uncertainty over career prospects. By contrast, the possibility of tenure track and the promising opportunities of acquiring a position at a prestigious university have lured many young German researchers abroad. Many

„Also [für ausländische Wissenschaftler(innen)] ist Deutschland vielleicht die zweite oder dritte Wahl. Aber normalerweise geht das ja umgekehrt ... normalerweise gehen unsere nach Amerika. Weil sie hier gut ausgebildet werden und dort eine gute Stelle kriegen.“
(Germany, Religious Studies)

„We get dozens of extraordinary well qualified German academics who don't have positions and have no real opportunities back in Germany. With this in my head, I would never think of applying for a German chair.“
(UK, Religious Studies)

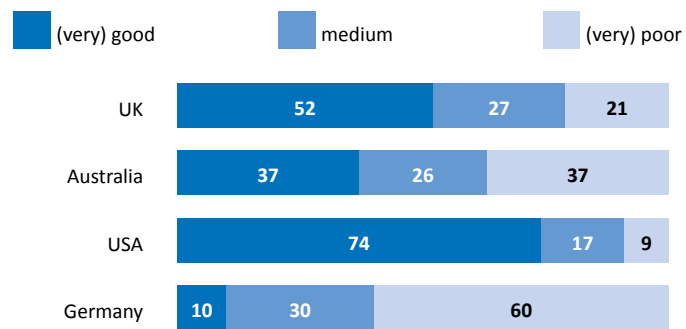
„The biggest single worry is the uncertainty about whether there is a proper career-track in Germany. We now find very talented young German scholars coming to the States and Britain to do their PhD. And I can think of quite a lot of cases.“
(USA, History)

respondents said that the attractiveness of work positions in the countries cited is further enhanced by the greater degree of creative freedom that can be enjoyed in designing research programs.

Fig. 8 Judgement on career opportunities for young academics in the country of residence by scholars from Australia, the UK, the USA and Germany (figures on a 5-level scale, 1+2 = (very) good, 4+5 = (very) poor, all probands, in %)

How would you judge your subject area in [your country] in an international comparison concerning the following aspects?

Career opportunities



„I think that one possible answer to combat the brain drain [in Germany] would be to set up real jobs that actually have a chance of tenure. Then it would be much more attractive to people than just a kind of a five year thing and then it is over.“
(USA, Musicology)

HIS Online Survey: Humanities Scholars

An international comparison of research conditions at German higher education institutions

There are no relevant studies that undertake an international comparison of the work and research conditions at humanities institutions. The measured indicators in various countries, the subject area groups formed and, last but not least, the university systems are often so diverse that they render it difficult to draw correct conclusions from a direct comparison. Nevertheless, a recent study (Janson et al. 2007) which compared the number of positions, the salaries of faculty members and the time budgets of academics in Germany and the USA across all subject area groups demonstrates that, on average, in all departments and fields, at least these employment conditions in Germany were no worse than, for example, in the USA. After the introduction of Germany’s new pay scale, known as the “W-Besoldung”, faculty at German universities actually earn on average more than their colleagues in the USA. Nonetheless, employment conditions vary to a fairly high degree between Europe and America. Competition to recruit outstanding researchers educated in Germany comes primarily from attractive top universities abroad. Another study (Kreckel 2008) analyzed the career paths of young academics, focusing on a comparison of va-

Foreign academics in Germany

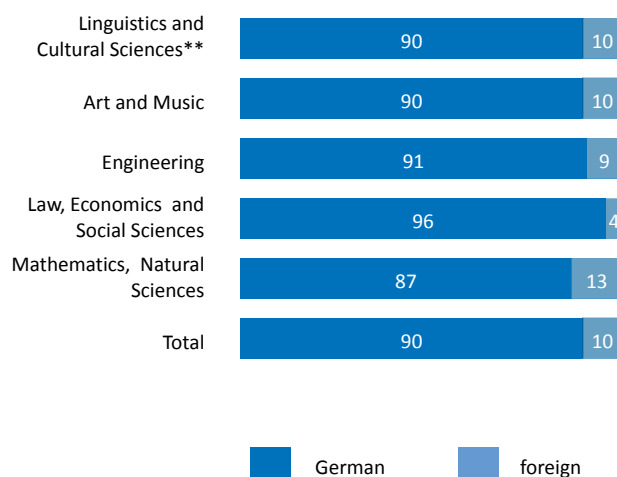
A large proportion of the foreign humanities scholars who receive grants in Germany are graduate students – primarily doctoral candidates. Analogous to the destination countries of German academics, the USA also plays an outstanding role as a country of origin in the humanities, followed by the Russian Federation, France, Poland and China.

In the year 2006, 16 percent of researchers receiving Humboldt grants came from the humanities. This makes the humanities the second largest group after the social sciences. Most recipients of Humboldt grants come from the USA, followed by China and India.

When it comes to foreign faculty members at German higher education institutions, European and Anglo-American countries of origin dominate in languages and cultural studies, but also in artistic and musical areas of study.






















In 2006, nine percent of the faculty members at German universities came from abroad. In languages and cultural studies as well as in artistic and musical fields, the proportion is 10 percent, which is roughly equivalent to the national average. Academic faculty in languages and cultural studies come primarily from France, the UK, Spain and Italy. It should be noted that there are only five non-European countries among the top 20 countries of origin. In artistic and musical areas of study, foreign academics at German higher education institutions often come from Japan and the USA, but Germany’s European neighbors clearly dominate here as well (fig. 10).

Fig. 9 Academic staff at German institutions of higher education 2006 according to nationality and subject groups (in %)*



* Only cases with available data on nationality Source: Federal Bureau of Statistics, HIS calculations
 ** Incl. Theology, Psychology, Educational Science, Sport and Special Education

Fig. 10 Country of origin of foreign academic staff at German institutions of higher education 2006, linguistics and cultural studies* (numbers and in %)

Country	Number	Percentage	
France	376	10,1 %	
United Kingdom	337	9,0 %	
Spain	331	8,9 %	
Italy	321	8,6 %	
USA	314	8,4 %	
Austria	200	5,4 %	
Switzerland	154	4,1 %	
Russian Federation	134	3,6 %	
Poland	124	3,3 %	
Netherlands	95	2,5 %	
Japan	90	2,4 %	
China	74	2,0 %	
Greece	67	1,8 %	
Turkey	65	1,7 %	
Czech Republik	56	1,5 %	
Belgium	46	1,2 %	
Canada	43	1,2 %	
Bulgaria	41	1,1 %	
Sweden	40	1,1 %	
Rumania	38	1,0 %	
Other	785	21,0 %	
Total	3.731	100,0 %	

* Incl. Theology, Psychology, Educational Science, Sport and Special Education

Source: Federal Bureau of Statistics, HIS calculation

rious higher education systems and highlighting other distinguishing features between the "Habilitation", i.e., the German qualification for a professorship, and the tenure model. An important criterion here is the freedom and independence that individuals enjoy in pursuing their own research. This freedom exists already for young academics under the tenure model, whereas under Germany's "Habilitation" model, such liberties in pursuing research can only be enjoyed after a PhD holder has been appointed as a professor, which is usually a lifetime position in Germany. In addition, a tenure track position offers a more secure basis for long-term planning.

All in all, humanities scholars in Germany and abroad say that the general conditions for young academics, and the time budgets for those who have received their qualifications for a professorship in Germany, are less favorable than in English-speaking countries (primarily in the USA).

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