

## Final Report: Junior Research Stay at University of British Columbia

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One of my key aims of the research stay at the University of British Columbia (UBC) was to engage in interdisciplinary exchange on my own research on conflicts over land and mining as a challenge to sustainable development. I am a political scientist, my host professor at UBC, Professor Philippe LeBillon, is based at the Department of Geography as well as the Liu Institute for Global Issues. We discussed my research on several occasions also with other PhD students in the geography department. My work benefitted hugely from these discussions. I learned on the one hand about new methods and tools like mapping techniques and the use of satellite data. I also learned a lot from the discussions with physical geographers whose take on sustainability is much more derived from the natural science. This enhanced my understanding on opportunities and challenges of interdisciplinary research especially between social and natural scientists. On the other hand, Philippe pointed me to information and arguments that were missing from the point of view of a geographer. Another interesting aspect of my research stay included the exchange with other PhD candidates on how dissertations are written and PhD are structured in Canada. Both the style of writing as well as the structure of PhD programs differ in a number of ways in Germany and Canada.



Key for my future academic work was also the in depth discussions on publication strategies in the field of land conflicts and sustainability. During my research stay I gained a good overview of the important international journals and developed several article ideas tailored to different journals. During my stay I also developed and worked on a communal publication together with Philippe which we hope to finalize in 2019 and which is concerned with similarities and differences in conflicts over agro-industrial and mining projects. Finally, I presented the work of my berlin-based research group 'Global change-local conflicts' (GLOCON) on a number of formal and informal occasions, including a public talk at the Liu Institute for Global Issues. On these occasions I also exchanged with UBC researchers on the challenges and opportunities of disseminating our research on sustainable

development to make it more accessible to civil society, institutional and state actors. For example, I learned a lot about the research project on global production chains at the school of journalism at UBC and how they link academic research and journalism. I also had the opportunity to present GLOCON's own "research products". Overall, I learned that in Canadian academia the idea of creating a policy impact seems to be much stronger than at German Universities – close research partnerships with state institutions and NGOs seem to be a lot more common. And while this might create difficulties regarding the independence of researchers at University, I liked the idea of disseminating our research beyond the academia in new formats and collaborating closely with non-academic partners.

The stay at UBC has been very helpful to me in developing my further academic career. The contacts I have made at UBC will be very valuable for developing future research projects and applying for future research grants.