

Final Report: Senior Stay at Free University Berlin

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Methane Regimes – A Comparative Analysis

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The initial plan for my stay at the FUB was to work closely with Dr Lutz Mez on a joint application on methane regimes in the global realm. The underlying idea of the project was developed during the research stay of Dr Mez at UBC in Vancouver, and my visit was meant to further develop the initial idea into a first draft for an application. During our joint work in Berlin, we slightly changed the focus of the project by giving it a firm comparative dimension. Given the empirical finding of rather substantial differences in gas flaring emissions between energy-producing economies, we pose the puzzle of how those differences can be explained. Despite the practical relevance of methane emissions for climate policies, there is not much social science literature that tries to analyze performance variation. Our project wants to close this gap by taking an explicitly comparative approach. In a first step, the project takes a close look into policy regulations and abatement practices of the large group of methane emitters. The goal is to identify public-private methane regimes. Regimes are here defined as social-political complexes of rules, norms, laws and practices that govern methane emissions. We expect to identify regime variety. In a second step, we go for case studies of a representative sample of methane regimes to identify best practices. Case studies will then inform policy recommendations.

We are now in a position to address potential sponsors for the project.

The beauty of a research stay is that it comes with surprises. In my case, it turned out that I got involved in planning discussions about the next Spring Campus. What started as intense dialogue with Dr Kuhn from the FUB and Dr Itay Fishhendler from Hebrew University in Jerusalem may turn into a workshop at the upcoming Spring Campus in 2020.

Personal meetings and encounters are critical to enhancing cooperation, and thus I am, grateful to had this opportunity.