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The two-month internship at the Technical University of Darmstadt was exciting, engaging, helpful, and memorable. The research project I was working on was not directly related to my own research; however, it allowed me to immerse myself in a new topic and analysis method.

The project I was assisting with focused on media representation of the European Eastern Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The ENP is a means of creating closer ties with the countries to the east and south of the EU territory. Specifically, we were interested in how German newspapers and Russian newspapers describe the EU's relationship with Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, and how their descriptions differ.

The analysis of the German newspapers had already been completed before my arrival, and my job was to analyze a selection of Russian newspapers (in Russian language), following the same research method. The two months at TU Darmstadt were mainly devoted to collecting the desired data and analyzing this data.

Some difficulties encountered included locating the necessary sources for the research. While one of the newspapers required is published and available online, the other was harder to get a hold of. This circumstance required being resourceful, and communicating with people from multiple countries, to find what I was looking for.

The other parts of the research process went smoothly, however, they involved a fair amount of background reading and studying to familiarize myself with the research method. In this case, I needed to learn how to conduct a media analysis and comparison.

I was given a choice at the start of my internship to do something related to my own major research project research, but I chose to work on this research on media analysis. I not only wanted to learn a new topic, but also get experience on assisting with somebody else's work and research. It is one thing to research something you are passionate about, but another to show the same interest, dedication and hard work for somebody else. To me, this was a very valuable experience.

Furthermore, I did receive a good amount of guidance, and my supervisors were always open to questions and clarification, but the majority of the project was very independent. We generally had weekly meeting regarding research progress, and the rest of the time I was working at my assigned office, or elsewhere on campus, or at a coffee shop in the centre of Darmstadt. This approach worked very well for me.

Overall, if given the choice to go back and do this internship again, I would in a heartbeat. Whether you are looking to further your own research, or gain international experience for a job in academia, government, or elsewhere, working abroad, especially in this kind of welcoming environment, is a wonderful experience.



A short trip to the nearby town of Heidelberg



A must-see when in Germany – Munich.



A wonderful weekend trip with Darmstadt Airbnb roommates, to Colmar, France