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UNH Global

Elizabeth Carter

Assistant Professor of Political Science—France and Italy

I am very grateful for the UNH CIEGE Faculty International Grant, which helped fund my summer research in France and in Italy. My principal objectives were to make new institutional contacts, maintain existing contacts, complete an article and conduct research for my new project on the politics of quality food production.

I began my travel in Paris, where I was a visiting scholar at the MaxPo Institute at Sciences-Po, Paris. The MaxPo is a collaborative institution, bringing together political scientists interested in European political economy in both the Sciences-Po Paris and the Max Planck Institute

in Cologne, Germany. Here I was both able to access the Sciences-Po's extensive library collection on European agricultural politics, and to make connections with other researchers at the MaxPo. My time here was invaluable both to completing my article on wine politics and collecting background materials for my next project on quality food. In addition to making new connections in Paris, I was able to visit Cologne and reconnect with my former colleagues at the Max Planck Institute.



Prof. Carter visiting the Correns, the first organic village in France

While in France, my research took me to two regions: the Loire Valley and Provence. In the Loire Valley, I visited with producers in Cheverny in order to learn about producer networks in biodynamic and organic wine production. In Provence, I visited Correns, the first organic village of France. Here I met with Michael Latz, the mayor of Correns. I learned about the origins of the organic movement in the village, the linkages between producers and regulating bodies, and the linkages between Correns and other villages within and beyond France.



Inside La Granda Factory in Piedmont, Italy

My research in Italy took place in the region of Piedmont. First I visited La Granda in Genoa. La Granda is the traditional quality meat consortium of the quality Slow Food movement and the principle meat supplier of Eataly. Here I met with Sergio Capaldo, one of the leaders of Slow Food and the Italian quality food revolution, and Beppe Dho, a leader of quality meat production. They described to me their innovative cooperative production model and together we shared a meal of what was easily the best meat I have ever consumed.


I then visited Turin, where I met with members of Turin Mayor's office to learn about Turin's attempts to move the city towards local, quality food consumption. Like Correns, Turin is a member of the 5-city intra-European consortium of "Città del bio" ("Organic cities"). In addition to learning about Turin's food initiatives, we discussed the new 5-Star political movement, as this is the new political movement of the mayor and her deputies.


Also in Piedmont I met with a family of farmers to learn about the challenges they face and how these challenges have changed over time. I also interviewed the supplier of a high-quality restaurant, who described to me some unique political challenges in the Italian food supply chain network. Finally, I met with a researcher from the "Slow Food University", a university which appears to be a great fit for future collaboration both with my research as well as the EcoGastronomy program at UNH.


My time in Europe this summer proved invaluable to my research and potential future collaborations. Since returning to the US, I have made future plans to meet with the director of Città del Bio, Davide Turchetto, as well as a leader of the 5-star Movement, Federico Mensio. I look forward to future collaboration with my MaxPo colleagues, my Max Planck colleagues, and the network of Italian food scholars and activists I met in Piedmont.

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