

Mai Tran:

On the first day of arrival, it was a pleasure to have professor Schulte und professor Korn as our company and tour guide. We were guided through Mannheim to the Rhein and Neckar river, then ended up sitting in a cozy pub. The informal meeting with the two professors outside the university was quite an unusual yet absolutely nice experience. During the four days of the Congress, as many as around 800 research projects were presented. I have learnt that economics has become an interdisciplinary science with a broad range of fields. I have seen an immense intellectual network of economists, discussing and exchanging ideas. During lunch and coffee breaks, I still sensed the enthusiasm and the endless discussion on common research interest. As a fresh graduate, I searched for new ideas. The Congress was a wonderful opportunity for me to get an overall picture of what other economists are pursuing. The lunch sessions and plenary sessions were organized as panel discussion with the participation of many well-known economists. The Nobel session was inspiring with Jean Tirole presenting „Market failures and Public Policy“. As for the invited and contributed sessions, I selected the ones which matched the topic of my master thesis and some others which I did now know well. Research projects were grouped into 278 sessions, based on their common topics or the close relation. Each presentation lasted 20-30 minutes, followed by heated discussion. It certainly did not suffice the authors to present their long-term engaged projects. Hence, the theoretical models were briefly explained, the empirical strategies were often compressed. The focus on the role of institutions and their interactions in shaping the economic world in the Master degree equipped me well to comprehend the general research ideas at the frontiers. However, I also realized I still lacked knowledge in many other fields in order to grasp the matter of discussion thoroughly. I was most into the labor economics field with the focus on taxation, social insurance, immigration and parental leave legislations. Besides, I also attended other sessions in political economy, macroeconomics and finance (recession, business cycles and financial crisis), health economics. The Congress ended with a party in the prestigious Schwetzingen palace, which was the summer residence of the Electors Palatine Charles III Philip and Charles IV Theodore. Tremendous food and drinks were offered. We had a great chance to walk around the ornate garden, enjoy the last summer breeze and build up our network.

Chi Trieu:

I arrived in Mannheim early in the morning with great excitement. As the hotel we booked is close to both main train station and conference site, I had no difficulty finding it out. After checking in, we took a walk to get used to Mannheim University and Mannheim Palace - where the conference would take place. Afterwards, we registered to the conference and quickly participated in our interested sessions. Four conference days took place in a promptly and professional mode. At the beginning of each day there was an invited session where ground-breaking ideas were presented by leading names of the fields. Following were contributed sessions where most recent researches are grouped into topics such as Economic Theory, Monetary Economics, Labor Economics, etc. Lunch sessions are

organized during lunch break to discuss hot topics like Euro Crisis, Monetary Policy Measures or Competition and Innovation.

I am particularly interested in Behavioral Economics and therefore most of the sessions I chose to participate belongs to this topic. Though Behavioral Economics has been on the research frontier for the last decade, it still remains an intriguing field. Several previous fundamental findings such as loss aversion or prospect theory are still challenged by recent researchers. At the same time, I have learned that Behavioral Economics has become a methodological approach, which is applied to re-analyze models of all economic branches – from industrial organization to labor economics.

After each session, there was a coffee break, which was a great opportunities for me to engage in informal discussion with other researchers of same interest. I got to converse with two professors and three young researchers. Their profound knowledge and passionate enthusiasm for research encouraged me to progress further than my master study.

At the end of each day, I got the chance to explore the city. Mannheim was bigger than I expected with branches of several big names such as KPMG or EY. The city has a modern atmosphere with crowded and hectic streets. Besides Mannheim University and Mannheim Palace, which together compose a wonderful Baroque complex, Mannheim offers long shopping streets and a wide variety of restaurants. All of the streets here are organized and named as a chessboard, which is very convenient for our navigating.

The gala dinner to close the conference was celebrated at the gorgeous Schwetzingen Palace. Excellent German specialties together with amazing landscape offered in the dinner left me with prodigious memory about four days in Mannheim.