

lifestyle – abroad – world problems – entertainment

*Journal of American and British Studies*

# Jabs

## Abroad

What Brits think of Dresden



## Lifestyle

How to name your child?



## World Problems

Same sex marriage equal to “normal” ones

Summer Semester 2013

# Content

## lifestyle

3 Behind the Name

6 From Evolution to  
Revolution

8 Time Management

## world problems

10 Ethical Trade

12 Blood-red Oceans

15 Obesity

18 Organic Seal

21 Gun Debate

23 Equal Marriage Rights

26 How faith can  
"heal" you

## entertainment

28 Kopflicht.tv

30 Sigur Rós in Dresden

## abroad

32 China's New First  
Lady

35 Brits in Love with  
Dresden

37 Aotearoa

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# Behind the Name - Names and Personal Identity

Author: *Julia Torchalla*

**With more than 30,000 namesakes, "John Smith" is one of the most widespread names in England.**

**It seems to be a simple name which does not provoke any further thinking about its meaning or origin. However, the truth is that names are of enormous importance both to the people who receive them and to the society that gives names.**

In 2012, of all the names given to newborns, Harry took the top spot for boys while Amelia was the favourite name for girls. Moreover, traditional names such as George and William dominated the top ten - perhaps the Royal Wedding and Jubilee influenced parents' choices.

For girls there was a trend for names ending in 'a' - such as Sophia and Olivia. For boys names ending in an 'ee' sound continued to be popular - such as Frankie, Tommy and Charlie. One syllable names that cannot be shortened like Mia and James were rising in popularity, reflecting a trend for uncomplicated yet lovely names. Hugo made a new

entry into the top 100. Also the Olympic fever seems to have inspired baby name choices with Louis entering the list.

The choice of a child's name often follows certain trends or schemes. The London Times reported on names that go out of date, such as Richard, a very popular name for a long period of time, which is very rarely given nowadays. The Times also mentioned the phenomenon of a circle, which makes old fashioned names reemerge in the top ten. One example is the name Oliver which did not come into consideration for newborns for a long time because of the unpopular bearer of the

name 'Oliver Cromwell'. Today, Oliver again belongs to the list of favourite names.

In 2010, Oliver was even recognised as the most common name for baby boys but the official version was disguising the truth because in fact, in all its various spellings, Mohammed had become the favourite name for newborn boys in England and Wales. Its popularity was "symbolic of Britain's diversity", said Dr Justin Gest, an academic at Harvard and the London School of Economics. Muslims see Mohammed as "a paragon of excellence" and seek to emulate his life and follow his guidance, making the name an obvious choice for parents, Dr Gest said.

There is another trend which has come into being in the last few years. With 50 per cent more baby names on the new national register than there were 25 years ago, it is

little surprising that parents are becoming ever more adventurous when it comes to naming their children. Some of the names that have made the list go far beyond the unusual, straying well into weird territory.

A new list compiled by Nameberry has unearthed a selection of unlikely names including Tequila, Cougar and Moo.

Also part of their round-up of the most bizarre names is Swayze, after late actor Patrick, after whom five boys were named last year.

The name Tomorrow also appeared on the register, alongside Evening and Future.

'To the six girls named Bunny out there: Watch out,' joked site founder Pamela Redmond Satran.

The strangest has to be the dismissive Eh, which 14 girls were named last year and one can only pity the six baby boys who were named Penisimani. Though it appears to be an established if rare name in the South Sea Islands, it is likely to cause much ridicule when they reach school age.

Elvis's home inspired parents to call their daughters Grace-land which was the name

given to seven baby girls.

Conjoined names - those without a space, hyphen or even spelling the second of the two names with a capital letter - also emerged as an unlikely new trend. Five boys were named Kingsolomon, while others on the register were Princewilliam, Princemichael, Sircharles, and Marcjacob.

Celebrities are often considered to be the pioneers of this movement. One example are Jamie Oliver's children who bear the following names: Buddy Bear Maurice, Poppy Honey Rosie, Daisy Boo Pamela und Petal Blossom Rainbow.

For some people it might be difficult to live with such a creative yet extraordinary name. A possible solution is quite simple: in Great Britain everybody is allowed to change his or her own name. The UK poll service is responsible for every change of names within the United Kingdom. A strict right to a name does not exist, so a wide range of possibilities is offered. However, this does not mean that the employees do not carry out their

principles: others might not take offence at the chosen name.

Applications for names that are vulgar, offensive or blasphemous, promote criminal activities or racial or religious hatred will not be accepted. While single letters are possible, punctuation marks are not allowed.

When it comes to marriage, many bridal couples decide on creating a common surname, being a mixture of both of their names. Miss Griffin and Mister Pugh become the Puffins; Miss Price and Mister Nightingale become the Prightingales.

The so called "Meshing" describes an American trend which has become more and more popular with the British population in the last three years.

According to Claudia Duncan, who works for the UK Poll Service, "Women do not want to give up their own names. It is a matter of preserving their identity."

The free choice of a name is connected to the question of how people want to be seen by others. Desired names shall often express a relation-



The free choice of a name is connected to the question of how people want to be seen by others. Desired names shall often express a relationship - to a partner, an animal, an admired person.

The sense of personal identity and uniqueness that a name gives us is at the heart of why names interest us and why they are important to us as individuals and to our society as a whole. In spite of their importance, though, most people know very little about

names and the effects they have on us and on our children in everyday life. In a real sense, we are consumers of names and we have a need and right to know about the psychological, magical, legal, religious and ethnic aspects of our names.

Finally, a change of name should be well planned. The official website of UK Deed Poll Service gives the following hint: "If you are considering a fun name and belong to a professional body, you should

check to ensure there will be no problems registering your new name with them. The Law Society would not be happy with a solicitor being called Mickey Mouse!"

# From Evolution to Revolution: How the Gaming Market Changes

Author: *Hans Diemer*

The casual gamer as profit maker - Gamers can be roughly divided into two categories: core and casual gamers. The former play very regularly and are willing to spend

much money on new hardware and immersive blockbuster games. This is why core gamers have been the major profit-makers of the industry so far. But the condi-

tions are changing as more and more casual gamers enter the market. Often female and/or over 30 years old, casual gamers are interested in short-term and social entertainment with spending no money on it. The number of casual gamers has increased rapidly with the birth of social games like FarmVille, where interaction with friends is a key element. Virtual item selling is what makes social games

Everyone plays: Video gaming is a hobby that is no longer limited to nerdy adolescents. Social interactivity and family-friendly games have changed the market and its perception in society. What may the future of this new form of entertainment look like?



*Nintendo's family-friendly console Wii has also brought many casual gamers into the play.*



*“Virtual reality” is a dream that was already worked on in the 19th century with paintings. Arcade cabinets pushed its technical development in the 1970s and 80s. The enthusiasm for virtual reality could soon celebrate a comeback with affordable hardware for consoles.*

profitable. In 2010, FarmVille sold virtual items with a value of about 650 million euros.

Mobile games are another fast growing market. The distribution of powerful smartphones allows developers to create inventive games with little effort and a broad range of customers. Angry Birds, a game that costs less than one euro, created a profit of almost 155 million euros in 2012.

*Will motion controls save consoles?*

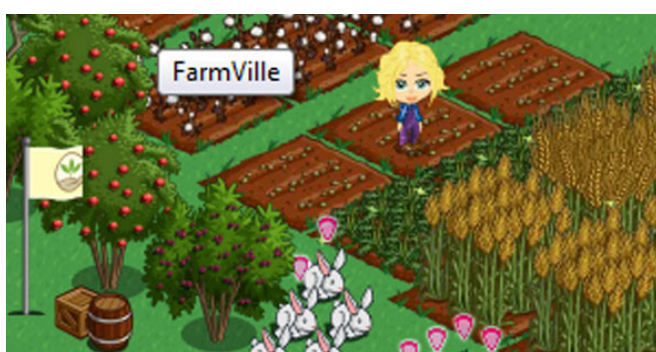
In fact, the business with mobile and online games is going so well that many experts predict an early death of the consoles. Why pay 40 euros or more for a game (on a 300-euro-console), when you have access to games for less money on a system you already possess? Good

graphics is no longer an exclusive feature of consoles as the power of tablets increases. They can easily be connected to a large monitor - even game pads for mobile devices are in development. That could also attract core gamers, making consoles redundant. They can only survive by offering new gaming experiences. Nintendo's Wii made the first step in this direction. Its motion controls enabled a new kind of immersion and social interactivity.

*The future is called “gamification”*

Without a doubt, mobile and online gaming have changed the market situation, the acceptance of gaming in society as well as the daily gaming behaviour of a great part of the population. But the development will go on as we

are in the middle of an evolution: Web compatible smartphones will lead to the “gamification” of our lives - a process where game elements are implemented in our daily reality to motivate and help us. The possibilities are infinite: a software that gives you rewards for cleaning the bathroom; virtual zombies following you during your jogging session; a guided city tour, driven by a virtual criminal case you have to solve... Many therapies, rehabilitations and schooling facilities already use “serious games” as a regular training method. As a matter of fact, video games will become the most prominent form of entertainment. It only remains to be seen what gaming (and the gamers) will look like in the future.



*Mark Zuckerberg, inventor of Facebook, stated that 50% of the website's visits are just to play social games.*

# There is enough time- is there enough time?

In times of time management and tight schedules, we only seem to get even busier, more hectic and more stressed. Illnesses like depression and burnout are gaining ground drastically. More than 9 million Germans have been diagnosed with burnout so far and the number of unreported cases is even higher. One reason is that there is a huge variety of symptoms, which are also quite vague. Such symptoms can be, for instance, back pain, stomach aches, weight gain, sweating, insomnia or tinnitus. Further, burnout is still a taboo subject. What can we do to protect ourselves from this? Is there really enough time? Are we all going down the same road?

The campus is one place where you can observe a stressful environment. There one will inevitable notice that almost all of the students are running from one building to the next, they quickly shove a sandwich in their mouths, hop on the overcrowded bus and try to make it in time to their next class. They barely have time for a proper lunch. These are well-known facts and not something new. Both

students as well as lecturers are stressed and have to rush to achieve everything in time. It is no wonder that after a while of constant pressure one has the feeling of burning out, is it? What are we supposed to do? Do we have to change the structures at the university? Every man is the artisan of his own fortune. The best solution is to change your own way of life, the way you look at your life and to allow yourself to slow down in your leisure time. How do we achieve this?

**Geissler himself has not wore a watch for 20 years now. He does not plan every minute of his day and developed a good feeling for his nature of the time. Geissler lives according to the position of the sun and the changes of the seasons. If he is tired, he simply goes to bed.**

Prof. Dr. Karlheinz Geissler has written a couple of books about the ecology of time. His latest publication is called "Enthetzt Euch!". Geissler emphasizes that schedules and time management are only raising the time pressure. Through such schedules we try to squeeze as much as possible

into our days. However, there is no additional time, and we cannot save any time and add it to the end of our lives. Sometimes it is possible and also practical to make plans, but there are certain limits. We should listen to our bodies and allow ourselves to slow down. If those limits are passed, people suffer from burnout. Geissler stresses that a heart attack really is a "time attack". We have to be aware of our own time signals.

Is it really this simple? Maybe we make our life more complicated than it actually is. According to Geissler, we should not try to slow down everything..



University life may be stressful, but we do not necessarily need to slow down our studies. What we do need is quality time for ourselves to renew our strength. Sitting down on the couch and watching television or playing computer games will not help our bodies to reduce stress. Helpful and important is doing sports. No matter what kind of sports we like to do, everything is suitable as the body will always release hormones, such as endorphin and adrenaline, after approximately half an hour of physical strengthening.

Finally, it may seem far away and it hopefully is, but we only have this one life and it will be over someday. We should not waste it while worrying about what other people might say or think, we should not rush from one place to another until we are completely burnt out. Allow yourself to slow down from time to time. We all need this time for ourselves. We should not be embarrassed to say that we cannot do this extra work or that we are not able to meet up with that acquaintance. We should set realistic goals for

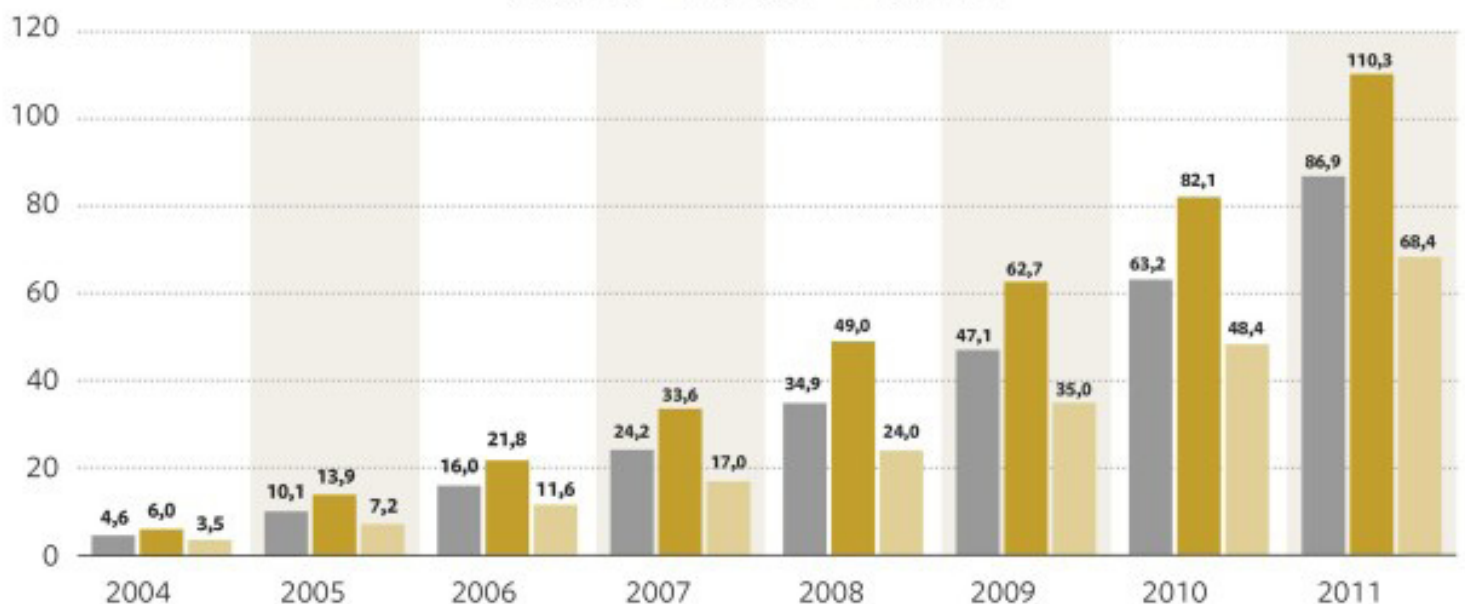
ourselves. This is the only way you will be able to achieve them and be satisfied. There is enough time. We just have to make the decision to use it consciously. Do not think about the fact that you do not have time, but think about why you feel this way and what you can change. Sometimes it's the small changes in your habits which have the biggest effect.

Author: *Tina Fentsch*

## — PSYCHISCHE ERKRANKUNGEN AUF DEM VORMARSCH —

**Krankheitstage durch das Burn-out-Syndrom 2004 bis 2011  
je 1000 BKK-Mitglieder, ohne Rentner**

■ Gesamt ■ Frauen ■ Männer



# A business relying on cheap labour in developing countries: the textile industry

Where do our clothes come from and who has to pay the price for the low prices? The issue of ethical trade

Author: *Lisa Frowein*

We all want it: Go shopping and get as much as possible for the smallest amount of money. But where does the seven euro shirt come from and who has to pay the price because we are not willing to spend more on it?

As a matter of fact we all have something from Bangladesh in our wardrobe. With this developing country being the worldwide biggest producer in the textile industry, this seems almost inevitable. Already in 2002 the country, one of the worlds' poorest, was leading the list of countries, whereby the majority of their exports were within the textile and clothing trade. This field comprised 85.9% of Bangladesh's exports. Thirteen million out of the country's 150 million inhabitants live in its capital, Dhaka. This is also where most of the garment factories can be found. 1,500

workers weave, knit and sew in a hall that is as big as a football field. It is hot in there and the air is filled with the noise of rattling sewing machines. Usually about 14 of these machines, all imported from Europe, stand in a row in which the first sewer starts with the trouser leg and the last one finishes the jeans. This way they produce up to 150 pieces each hour. In order to save the money for the bus or be able to go home in their break, a majority of the workers lives in plain bamboo huts with ribbed roofing right beside the factories. A sewer earns 3,000 taka a month. That is the minimum wage and is the equivalent of 37 dollars. It is the cheap labour in developing countries on which the garment industry relies in order to keep the costs of production and therewith the prices down. Due to the

fact that security standards in Bangladesh are extremely low, production is nowhere cheaper than here. Therefore, it might also be more dangerous than anywhere else. In November 2012 a fire broke out in the Tazreen Fashion factory, a big textile producer situated in Dhaka. More than a hundred people died and at least 200 were injured. A lack of emergency exits made it almost impossible to escape from the nine-storey factory. On 24 April 2013, another disaster hit the front page. This time at least 382 people died when the illegally constructed eight-storey Rana Plaza collapsed while thousands were working inside in five garment factories that supply leading western brands including Primark, Mango and Benetton. In response, demonstrators outside the Primark store on Oxford Street called for the

company to take responsibility for the factory collapse. Furthermore, a new campaign urged shoppers to pay a voluntary T-shirt tax for victims, representing fairer factory wages. The Irish retail giant Primark is one of the UK's most popular budget clothing shops. Prices of 15 euros for clothing and shoes or five euros for a bag speak for themselves and make it all but impossible to pay fair wages to its producers. Even though the company clearly militates against child labour in its code of conduct, it also claims it is impossible to oversee the long supply chains. Especially with its sub-contractors being so far away. Primark has repeatedly been accused of child labour. But what about other companies?

### Need for Fairtrade labels for clothing

Many retailers have the same suppliers. An example is the DBL Group, also situated in Bangladesh, which produces for companies such as Esprit, G-Star, Walmart, Puma or H&M. With its "Vision two zero two zero" it aims to be the world's biggest garment

producer by 2020. Not buying cheaply produced clothing seems to be nearly impossible. Even if the label in your jeans tells you whether they were made in Turkey or China, you do not know what farmers, spinners or weavers have been included in the long supply chain. And would the workers in developing countries actually have a better life if we boycotted the cheap and unfair produced products? However, arguing that they would then lose their jobs cannot be an excuse to ignore dehumanising labour conditions. What we need instead is to guarantee fair wages. This means production and import under fair conditions, living and working conditions that eliminate child labour, sexual abuse or unpaid overtime, and wages from which workers can live and enable their children to go to school. Thanks to companies like GEPÄ, EL PUENTE, dwp or Bonafair, which only sell fair traded products, it has recently become easier to buy fair trade groceries. While fair trade labels on groceries help consumers to make informed

decisions about what to buy, this is still not the case when it comes to clothing. One possibility could be to call for the introduction of a fair trade label here as well. Besides, we as consumers can already co-decide through our buying behaviour. Through questioning where our clothes come from and supporting campaigns like the voluntary T-shirt tax, we can learn to consume more ethically. Organisations like the International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF) offer shopping guides to companies that ensure a living wage for their workers. Also having a look at webpages like "aktiv-gegen-Kinderarbeit.de" can help avoid companies which are suspected of being linked to child labour. Due to public pressure, some retailers have already started to publish the names of their subcontractors. This transparency facilitates the challenge of shopping ethically. By speaking up for the enforcement of ethical production standards and supporting workers' rights through the global supply chain, you can make a difference.



**FAIRTRADE**

Guarantees  
a **better deal**  
for Third World  
Producers





# Blood-red Oceans

For a long time, people deemed the shark to be the most dangerous carnivore on earth - but while shark attacks occur, they are extremely rare. The table has turned and now studies have shown that an even more treacherous predator exists - man.

Sharks have swum in our seas and oceans for over 400 million years - they are living dinosaurs. Yet within the space of our lifetimes, we are the reason for wiping out most of them. Not only do they need urgent action to prevent the collapse and possible extinction of populations and entire species, those events will cause far wider ecological disruption than we can imagine. Massive economic losses, decreased food security and social problems are just some of them.

Over-fishing, careless and vicious fishing practices and, increasingly, the growing demand for shark fins threaten the population of sharks all over the seas. Fishing has reduced shark populations to 10% of their pre-industrial levels. The worldwide trade of shark products, especially their fins, has doubled since 1991 with as many as 79 million sharks killed each year. Disturbingly, it seems that the majority of consumers are eating shark products unintentionally. A survey conduct-

ed by WildAid in more than 16 cities across China revealed that over 35% of those surveyed had consumed shark-fin soup, but more than 75% of them did not even know it was made of shark fins. Traditionally, this dish was served to Emperors, as an exclusive show of generosity to guests. It is said to have medical benefits and even aphrodisiac effects, yet there is no scientific evidence for this. However, studies have found that shark fins actually contain high levels of dangerous substances such as methylmercury or arsenic.

In the last few years, shark catches have hit a record high.

Alarmingly, half the global catches of sharks, skates and rays are not caught by targeted fisheries, but rather as by-catch. While several of them are kept for their meat, most have their fins removed and then are discarded back into the ocean where they either drown or bleed to death. This practice is widely known as 'finning'. Not only does it waste as much as 98% of the shark, it is also extremely barbaric, since the shark is doomed to die a horrible unnatural death. Though people may perceive sharks as 'extinction proofed' killing machines, with lifetime prevalence and vast populations, the opposite is true. Sharks are naturally vulnerable, since they grow slowly and reach their sexual maturity very late. They produce few young and stay with them for a long time. The female Atlantic dusky shark, for example, doesn't fawn until the age of 20 years, while the spiny dogfish carries her young for almost two years. Due to that, shark popularity slowly increases, causing a very low resilience to fishing mortality. Obviously, even modest levels of fishing by man can cause population diminution and stock downfall in most shark species. However, global fishing efforts are far from being modest.

Studies have shown that shark fishing has reached a critical level in the last few

years, with more than 125 countries still engaging in the trade of shark products. Reported shark catches grew by more than 200,000 tons between 1984 and 2004. Now the annual reported catch



has reached 800,000 tons. Based on statistical analysis, 79 million sharks are caught and killed each year. While worldwide around 10 humans a year die from the consequences of a shark attack and 50 humans are killed by an attack of a hippopotamus, around 220,000 sharks a day die by human hand. From 450 known shark species, more than 100 are already on the red list of endangered animals.

Recent reports show that a set of shark fins can sell for more than US\$ 700 per kg in Asia, making the fins of large sharks worth thousands of dollars. Due to that, many fishermen are encouraged to engage in the dreadful and

wasteful practice of shark finning. Shark finning entails the live capture of sharks and the removal of their fins. The live sharks are then thrown back into the ocean. This practice is widely condemned, and has been banned by many countries, yet it continues today.

Though many people are wondering why we should care for these frightening creatures, very few people know of the indispensable functions of sharks in the economic system of the oceans. Sharks can be seen as the 'regulators' of the sea. For more than 400 million years, they have been at the top of the food chain. By eating sick animals or smaller predators, they preserve the ecological equilibrium of the seas. Scientific studies have proven that coral reefs die at least one year after the shark has become extinct.

But what can we do to change this? First of all, we need to see controls placed on the level of exploitation of sharks to bring it to sustainable levels. Consumers need to recognize and accept that their choices generate a demand that is causing the extinction of sharks. By that same token, consumers must be aware that they have the potential to effect change, ensuring that sharks will continue swimming in our waters in future.

Furthermore, governments need to develop action plans for sustainable catch, the minimization of waste, biodiversity protection, the preservation of the ecosystem and data collection.

Moreover, the education of consumers of the problems and solutions is highly important. Binding agreements on national as well as international scales must be actively enforced, before it is too late. Thereby, shark catches can be reduced and the highly

wasteful practice of finning prohibited. National governments should consider the value of saving sharks for tourism, rather than slaughtering them as food. In the Maldives, shark-generated tourism is worth three times the amount of exported shark meat.

There is so much and yet so little we know about the deeply misunderstood animals, to preserve their species major changes in awareness are necessary. Sharks are not

invulnerable killing machines, but preservers of the ecological balance of the seas. Making sure that one of the oldest living predators on earth survives the destructive era of mankind is not only a duty of organizations like GREENPEACE or SHARKPROJECT, but also our responsibility.

**More Information:**

[www.sharkproject.org](http://www.sharkproject.org)  
[www.greenpeace.com](http://www.greenpeace.com)  
[www.wildaid.com](http://www.wildaid.com)

Author: *Jennifer Lapp*



# We are overfed and at the same time starving to death

Author: *Linda Scharner*

Evansville, Indiana recently earned the title of "fattest city of the United States of America" with an outrageous number of 65 percent of all adults and 30 percent of all teenagers between the ages of 10 to 17 being overweight or obese.



Actually, 37.8 percent of Evansville's citizens are serious victims of obesity. Overall, in 2012 a shocking 68 percent of adults are overweight or obese, whereas 35.7 percent are obese and those numbers still seem to be increasing which is not a surprise considering the fact that on the first of June 2012 Michael Bloomberg, Mayor of New York City, was happy to celebrate "The National day of the Donut" by giving away 7,500 free donuts or equally 2.2 million calories. However, there are various books, for instance Michael Pollan in his work *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, stating that "obesity

is officially an epidemic" or as Tracie McMillan expresses it "obesity may outpace tobacco as deadliest health threat in the United States" with an estimated number of 300,000 deaths per year due to obesity and their health threatening results. The American diet is the so-called Western diet, which contains a lot of processed foods, meat, added fat and sugar refined grains - basically everything except fruits, vegetables and whole grains. One simple reason for those poor nutritional choices is that healthy food is more expensive and people would be obliged to cook a meal. Another obstacle is our atti-

tude towards food, regarding the fact that we use food to reward ourselves and at the same time we eat when we are bored or stressed. Even more alarming is the fact that the food industry uses those triggers ingrained in the human psyche to sell their products and therefore created the "paradox of plenty", which means that people who are presented larger amounts of food will eat up to 30 percent more than usual. Merely think about the menu sizes of McDonalds, sodas, ice cream pints or even burgers. A great movie to actively perceive the results of eating fast food is the documentary of the

self-experiment of a man, who only eats McDonalds for one month, called "Supersize Me". He not only gains 30lbs (approximately 14 kg), but his doctors advise him to stop the experiment while repeatedly emphasizing that he risks

the United States of America I also gained quite a lot of weight, because every meal has a ridiculous number of calories, for instance the healthy choice offered at IHOP, for breakfast, still has approximately 800 calories, which is

for me and my roommate, but mostly we went somewhere to get food or picked something up while we were running errands. My fundamental principles concerning food changed in its entity, as everything revolves around food, food courts or which restaurant we should go to tonight. Bearing that in mind it is not absurd that America is such a fat nation. Inevitably, the U.S. needs to wake up and lose some weight, but instead of acknowledging the problem the "National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance ([www.naafa.org](http://www.naafa.org)) was founded. Of course, not everyone ignores obesity as number one health problem, for example Michelle Obama founded an organization to fight childhood obesity. She funds programs to educate children in High Schools and helps schools to reorganize their food plans for the children. Another celebrity, who aims to revolutionize cafeterias and equip them with healthy and delicious food choices, is Jamie Oliver. Everybody adores his cooking shows and books; especially in Great Britain his influence is unique.

**Although we have just eaten, we are still hungry, because our bodies long for different vitamins and proteins, which are certainly not provided in fast food or processed foods. In that sense we are overfed but still starving, because we don't take in what our bodies actually need.**

a permanent liver damage. Other diseases directly associated with obesity are diabetes type II, coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, cancers (breast, endometrial) and strokes. The statistic shows the development of obesity among U.S. Adults in 1990 compared to 2000 and 2010 - with obvious and rather shocking results.

Personally, I consider my eating habits to be healthy and balanced by avoiding enormous amounts of sugar, meat or carbohydrates. Moreover, I do not eat any frozen, canned or instant foods. Nevertheless, while I was living in

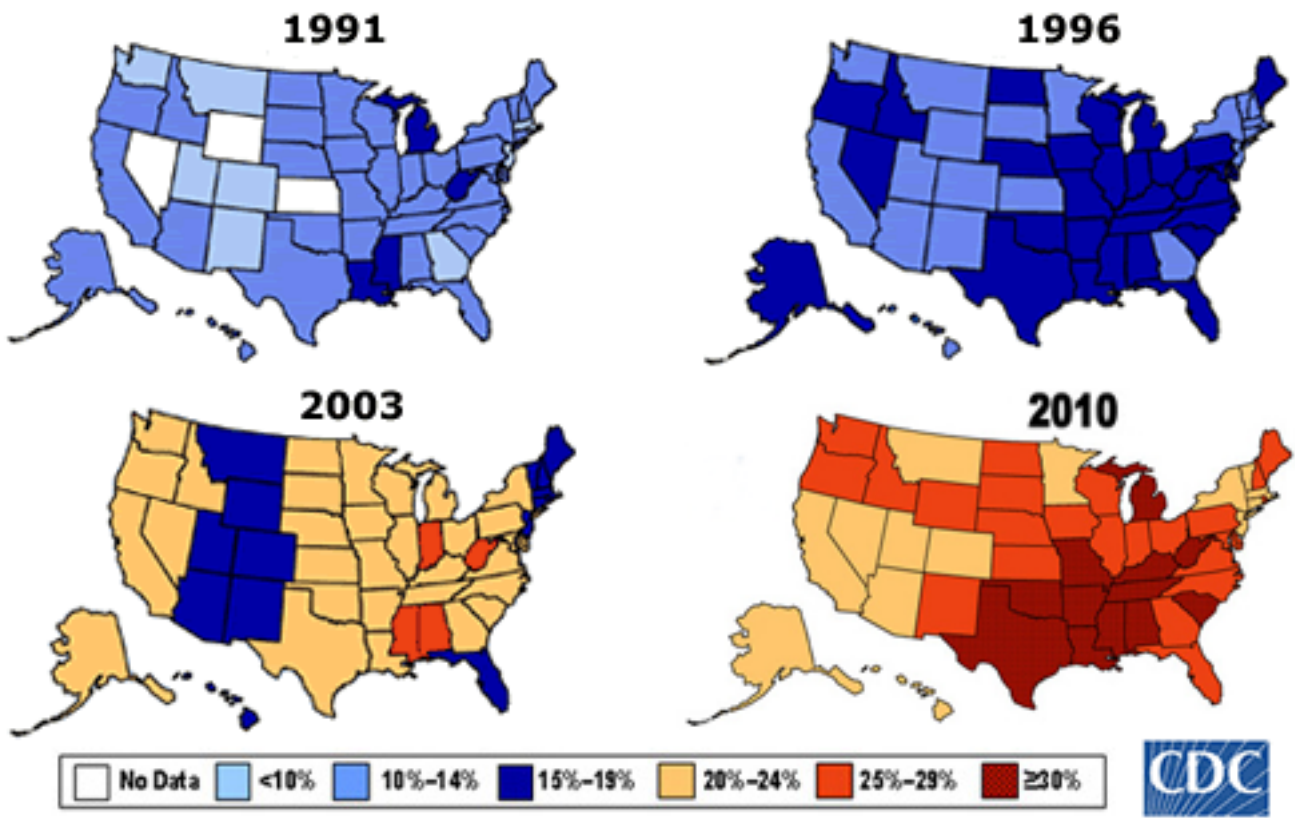
almost the equivalent daily intake of calories of an adult woman. Furthermore, usually after 2 to 3 months I considered myself addicted to sugar, HFCS and fast food places like Panda Express. Additionally, I started liking foods such as syrup or peanut butter which I immediately disliked as soon as I settled back into my German eating habits. Americans prefer to go out to eat, which is undoubtedly connected to their social habits. Almost every day, even at the University I had a lunch date to catch up with friends, to plan the weekend or upcoming trips. Sometimes I cooked



The FRAC (Food Research and Action Center [www.frac.org](http://www.frac.org)) is a federal institution organizing food programs for schools, breakfast programs, fights against childhood hunger and has a fruit and vegetable program. The mere existence or need of the FRAC is a clear indicator of America's malnutrition. As a matter of fact, the European obesity rate is increasing as well, which has been shown in recent statistics. For everyone who is interested in eating healthily the

movie "Hungry for change" ([www.Hungryforchange.tv](http://www.Hungryforchange.tv)) can be highly recommended. Experts and people, who changed their lives completely, talk about their and our bodies and good nutrition. It is quite simple; we are overfed with food, which is getting less and less nutritional. Although we have just eaten, we are still hungry, because our bodies long for different vitamins and proteins, which are certainly not provided in fast food or processed foods.

In that sense we are overfed but still starving, because we don't take in what our bodies actually need. The extremely popular TV- Show "The Biggest Loser", the fourteenth season recently aired, cannot transform every obese American. People need to acknowledge their disease and find their inner strength to save their lives. We all need to open our eyes to obesity as an epidemic.



The German organic seal, introduced in 2001, and the EU seal, 2010, are supposed to guarantee uniform EU-wide standards of organic production of agricultural products. Both seals indicate that 95 percent of the item must be produced ecologically, which

refers in particular to species-appropriate husbandry. This means in turn that the farm animals must be fed with ecologically produced fodder and the crop must not be fertilized with synthetic chemicals and there is no gene manipulating technology allowed. The

usage of antibiotics is strictly limited, as well (see [www.bio-siegel.de](http://www.bio-siegel.de)). Only if all these criteria have been met is the product labelled with the organic seal - so much for the theory.

Author: *Anne-Marie Schmidt*

Due to explanatory work, the demand for ecologically produced food has risen steadily in recent years. But consumers are losing trust in the reliability of the organic seal because according to experts, regulations are weak and controls are rare.



Once the seal has been awarded to a farm, the circumstances will never be checked again - this seems to have become a philosophy of some pseudo-organic farmers. As some short clips on Youtube uploaded by Greenpeace members show, some of the chicken farms look even worse than their conventional counterparts. Hundreds of hens are squeezed together in a dark hall, plucking out each other's feathers because of the great stress. Although the German Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection maintains that organic agricultural holdings are examined once a year, critics are convinced that it is just a logical inference that authorities are simply overwhelmed when it comes to controls considering the fast-growing rate of organic farms.

It is true that animal rights activists and environmentalists have raised awareness for the sensitive topic of species-appropriate husbandry

through intensive educational programmes in recent years. A representative survey of the above-mentioned ministry in 2012 revealed that the demand for organic products had grown rapidly within the previous two years (see [www.oekolandbau.de](http://www.oekolandbau.de)).

Unfortunately, the latest organic boom has opened doors to cheaters because it brings numerous dubious businessmen into the arena who want to jump onto the environmental bandwagon in order to sell their conventional products more profitably. Bearing that in mind, according to the survey, 94 percent of consumers buying organic products place value on species-appropriate husbandry, this is consumer fraud on a huge scale which demands that those responsible be charged.

What the survey illustrates is that organic activists have encountered another problem: If a huge number of people crave organic food and sustainable farming methods, will our resources be able to provide for that? One ob-



stacle to overcoming this lack is the eat-or-be-eaten competitiveness of the free market economy in which organic farmers compete for the best price. Since big discount supermarket chains are now in need of vast quantities of organic food, eggs for instance cannot be laid by the happy hens from the little farm next door. Consequently, purely ecologically produced food becomes an off-the-shelf article in the end and, thanks to insufficient and irregular controls, large-scale animal husbandry with the organic seal of approval is possible. In contrast to what the colourful advertisements suggest, there is no farmer with a pitchfork and a milk churn in his hands who stands behind the organic seal, but rather there are phoney companies and dubious businessmen.



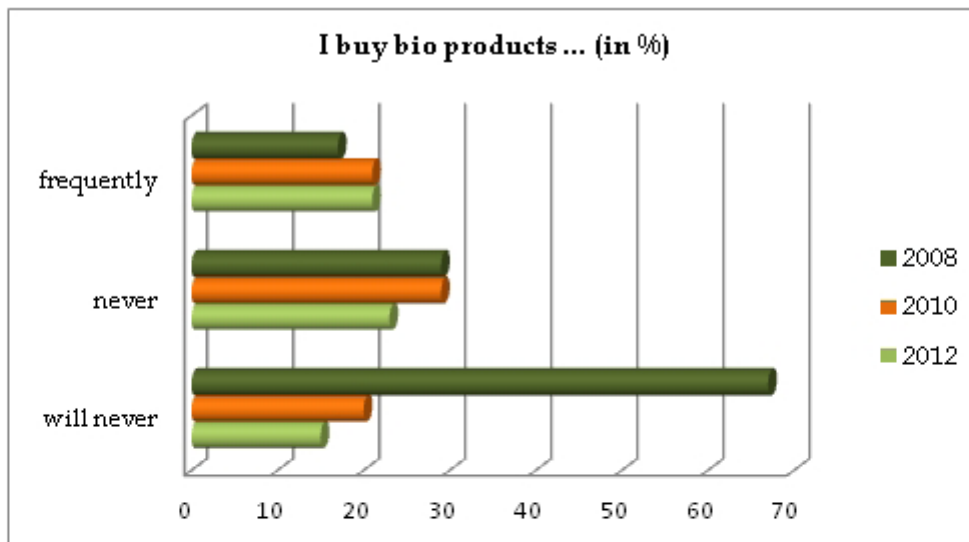
Another problem is seen in the fact that the demand for organic food is growing much faster than the size of the organic fields in Germany. We therefore need to import ecologically produced food from abroad, in particular Eastern Europe, South America and China. But even foreign organic food is losing its credibility due to some recent scandals, including strawberries from China which carry the Norovirus and the horsemeat scandal starting in Southeast Europe. It is preferable to import organic products in order to encourage organic farming in other countries but the lack of strict surveillance affects the quality of these groceries.

As a result, consumers do not trust food from abroad but apparently they cannot trust food produced in Germany either. Apparently, we have reached a dead end in our trust of food safety here.

The current task is therefore no longer to raise awareness for the importance of sustainable food production, but, when faced with great demand, the task is to still meet the required standard. Unfortunately, legislative changes at the EU level take months or years of negotiation between the 27 member states. However, one workable solution has been provided provided by regional farmers' associations which are trying to shed

light on the darkness of this impasse. Since many critics view the EU organic seal as insufficient, JABS wants to highlight some regional farmers' associations which aim at stricter regulations and transparent food labelling (see e.g. [www.bioland.de](http://www.bioland.de)).

Seeing that there are ways to live eco-consciously, it would be wrong to stop believing in ecological agriculture and turning back to conventional food production. We, the consumers, definitely need to pay attention to buying the right organic products.





# Reigniting the gun debate

Denver, Colorado and Newtown, Connecticut. On the surface, these two locations do not have much in common - the former is a metropolis and the capital of the state of Colorado, and the latter - a small town of no more than 27,000 people. Nevertheless, in 2012 both cities gained worldwide notoriety for two of the most daunting mass shootings in the history of the United States.

The tragic events of the mass shootings in the Denver cinema and the Newtown elementary school have sparked a vehement nationwide debate over gun control. Americans are, yet again, divided between those who want stricter gun control laws and more extensive background checks for people who purchase firearms, and those who fear that the federal government wants to take their guns. From a European perspective, this clinging to extremely dangerous assault weapons is highly irrational, but from the point of view of the self-made, individualist American the right to bear arms is one of the most important ones; it stands right next to his freedom of speech and religious affiliation.

The gun issue is, howev-

er, not one-sided and despite America's love of firearms there is a large number of people on both sides of the debate. According to a recent Washington Post-ABC News poll a slight majority of 52 percent is in favor of stricter gun control laws, while 45 percent are against it.

What are the arguments both sides bring forth in this debate?

Gun enthusiasts quote the Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States and often, quite passionately, voice their concerns that the implementation of stricter gun laws is a slippery slope to an authoritarian regime. This argument is easily refutable by the gun control advocates who argue that the Amendment is outdated

and poses a threat to the liberties of American citizens.

Furthermore, gun control proponents evoke the tragic stories of those who have lost a loved one in a recent firearm massacre and are convinced that if the public had limited access to guns, fewer people would get hurt.

What solution to America's 'gun problem' could be found?

The most obvious and straightforward method of implementing gun control, without taking away any of the available firearms, would be to introduce universal background checks. What does this entail? Current federal laws prohibit the selling of firearms to convicted felons and individuals who have previously been committed to a mental institution.

Unfortunately, many states do not report the names of people who have been labeled dangerous and mentally ill. The goal of the universal background checks is to impose tighter control on these states. Furthermore, it will also close a significant loophole in the existing law, making it mandatory to conduct checks in private gun sales as well. According to the National Rifle Association (NRA), who have a very strong anti-gun regulations agenda, those who buy guns legally are the law-abiding citizens and mandatory background checks will only make it harder for them to defend themselves; meanwhile criminals can easily purchase any weapon they wish on the black market. Despite the fact that there is some truth in the words of gun supporters, their somewhat libertarian argument is not convincing. Regulations cannot be eliminated on the premise that they create bureaucracy and do not prevent outlaws from obtaining firearms illegally.

Be that as it may, a majority of politicians still regard

universal background checks as an infringement on the liberties of the people. In April 2013, in spite of the strong NRA lobby, a taskforce of bipartisan senators proposed a bill expanding background checks. In the Senate, however, the bill received only 54 out of the 60 votes needed and did not pass.

Those opposed to the universal background checks suggest other compelling solutions, such as strengthening the failing mental health system of the country. In an interview for CNN earlier this year, Gov. Rick Perry asserted that imposing universal background checks was a 'quick fix' and would not lead to a long term mitigation of gun violence. 'We need to be looking at who are these individuals who, in fact, are involved with these violent crimes. Who are the people that are pulling the triggers?' the Texas governor stressed. Indeed, poor mental health is often associated with higher rates of gun violence, but this is only one small fraction of the much wider problem. The

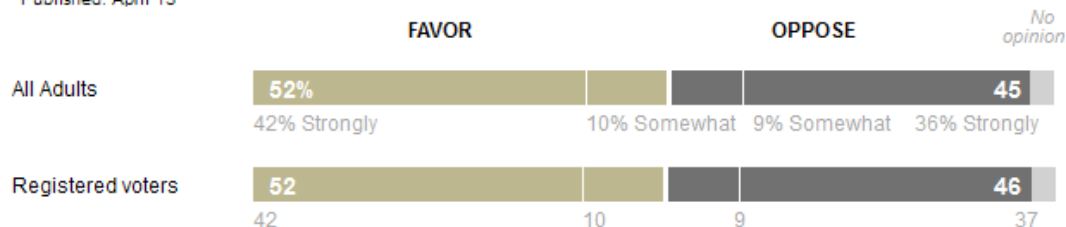
ever-growing social inequality, the lack of education, and the deficient employment opportunities all lead to a climate of intolerance and, consequently, increase in violence. Therefore, America's policymakers ought to focus on stabilizing the economic situation and investing more in health and education.

The two sides of the debate have been contesting each other's views for months but a solution has yet to be decided on and implemented. The hardest thing, it seems, for American politicians is to work together and reach, at the very least, a sensible compromise. Everyone agrees that mass shootings have no place in a modern Western democracy, but the biggest issue is coming together and admitting that there is a problem in the first place. Unfortunately, the 'land of the free and the home of the brave' has to first find a way to bridge the divide and learn to work together.

For more on the gun debate: <http://edition.cnn.com/SPECIALS/us/gun-debate>

## Q: Do you favor or oppose stricter gun control laws in this country?

Published: April 13



Author: *Katya Radovanova*

# A 'Gay' Day for the American Human Rights Movement

A few weeks ago, on June 26, 2013, the Supreme Court of the United States delivered judgments in two cases which will surely go down in American history: the abolition of both 'DOMA' and 'Prop 8'. So what does this mean for homosexual couples in America?

June 26, 2013, has been a great gain for all gay Americans, at least according to the people of 'Americans for Marriage Equality', a campaign started by the 'Human Rights Campaign'. This campaign has become one of the biggest agents of the American gay rights movement, raising awareness of the topic among the people,

on the rise during the last decade, as in the year 2000 not a single state recognized any form of same-sex unions. Now, thirteen years later, the highest court has abolished one of the most discriminating laws of modern America.

'Ding, Dong! The Witch Is Dead!'

This phrase could be seen all over the internet during the days that followed the Supreme Court's decision to declare the 'Defense of Marriage Act' (widely known as DOMA) to be unconstitutional. From its coming into effect on Sep-

tember 21, 1996, during the presidency of Bill Clinton, the act had defined marriage as a union between a man and a woman on a nationwide scale and therefore barred same-sex unions from various advantages such as social security and tax benefits, health insurance, hospital visitation rights, immigration laws and more than a thousand other benefits which were only granted to heterosexual couples. In addition to that, no state had to recognize a same-sex union as a marriage, even if the wed-

ding took place in one of the states that did. Now, although that last part is still in effect, the Supreme Court ruled that same-sex unions have to be treated just like their heterosexual counterparts as it deemed DOMA to be unconstitutional as it violated one of the constitution's amendments.

The major case which led to this decision was the case of Edith Windsor versus the United States. Windsor and her spouse Thea Spyer (both residents of New York) had been legally wed in Ontario, Canada, in 2007. After Spyer died in 2009, Windsor was not permitted to inherit her late wife's estate without first paying \$300,000 of inheritance taxes (which heterosexuals would not have had to pay) because of DOMA which prompted her to file a lawsuit against the federal government. Subsequently, the U.S. Attorney General, Eric Holder, passed on a statement from the Obama administration, which agreed with Windsor, and said he would not defend DOMA in court, which later on led to the aforementioned repeal of the law and the refunding of the inheritance taxes to Edith Windsor.



especially with their symbol, a pink equality sign on a red background which was used by many Facebook users as a sign of support.

Furthermore, the campaign conducted a few polls that, among other things, show that the support for equal marriage rights is at 53% among the American people, which is quite a high number if one considers that even nowadays only 20 out of the 50 states even recognize some level of same-sex relationships. Yet, the polls also show that the acceptance of marriage equality has been





In addition to that, California's 'Proposition 8', a state amendment which was passed in the state elections of 2008 and that declared that 'Only a marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California', has been overturned. It was a ballot proposition by opponents of same-sex marriages, which had been allowed beforehand only to be permitted again (although already married couples were not affected by this change). Now, after the rulings of the Supreme Court, California, once again, joins the ranks of the states that offer equal marriage rights to their citizens, namely Massachusetts, Connecticut, Iowa, Vermont, New Hampshire, New York, Maine, Maryland, Washington, Delaware and the District of Columbia, a hopefully ever-growing group of states that will now be able to treat

all their citizens equally when it comes to marriage. Yet these recent developments are only the latest steps that have been taken on the road to full equality for LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) people in America. In December 2010, the Congress of the United States abrogated 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' (DADT), an official US policy from 1993 on gays serving in the military. Although this policy prevented closeted homosexual and bisexual members of the military from being discriminated against, it barred openly gay, lesbian or bisexual people from serving in the military. However, after years of hiding, DADT was formally abolished on September 20, 2011, by President Obama (who is, by the way, the first American president that openly supports gay rights).

All in all, it can be said that during the last few years, and especially under the Obama administration, a lot of things have changed for the better for the American LGBT community and one can hope that more and more people will join our ranks to fight for equality and against injustice and prejudice, so that one day, we will be seen as something else than the second class citizens we are now. To my mind, there are plenty of reasons to be optimistic about that, be it the recent victories of proponents of equal marriage rights in France and Brazil or the development towards equal marriage in Great Britain. Or in the words of a famous anti-bullying campaign: 'It Gets Better!'

Author: *Hans Gießner*



# 60 days

## How faith can 'heal' you -

### *A commentary*

Bizarre. That's the word most articles use to describe an app which allegedly 'cures' homosexuality. Early in June after its release, the App-stores of Apple and Android received a barrage of criticism for an app called 'Setting Captives Free' that promises to 'heal' all sorts of ailments such as substance abuse, gambling and, oh well, homosexuality of course. In a matter of 60 days only and with the right amount of faith, all 'sinful' lust and perversion will be taken care of with just one of the many courses available. 'Door of hope' is the name of the remedy that 'frees' the believer from 'the bondage of homosexuality'. And it seems to work, too! Keith Bell speaks forth where others cave in and calls it 'the darkness of homosexuality' and how he was taught the truth about himself and his life. 'I learned that the emptiness inside me could never be filled by homosexuality but only by the Living Water that God offers.' Really, Keith?

60 days. Each day a new psalm. Each day, a new ex-

planation as to what is wrong with you and what can be done about it. 60 easy steps to freedom and all you have to do is enrol. Sounds simple enough, doesn't it? Indeed! If you are a Christian believer it seems that way, at least. Odd then how the public reacted to this seemingly wonderful elixir a good man named Mike Cleveland from Ohio, USA gave to humanity. It sounds so very inviting, this course that frees the aggrieved from the pain of abnormality.

No, seriously. The Christian fundamentalism in America is well known all over the planet. Someone with a different worldview is easily cast into the fire of purgatory, but that won't stop the saviours of the holy church from delivering us from evil. And Satan has been busy these past 20 years. Over the last two decades, support for same-gender civil marriage grew rapidly, from only 12% in 1988 to 53% in 2012, and Washington decided it was time that married same-sex couples were entitled to federal benefits, effectively allowing same-sex marriages

there. A new American national survey finds that much of the shift is attributable to the arrival of a large cohort of young adults - the millennial generation - who are far more open to gay rights than previous generations. Equally important, however, is the fact that 14% of all Americans - and 28% of gay marriage supporters - say they have changed their minds on this issue in favour of gay marriage.

So, what's going on? Is humanity trying to obliterate itself from the face of the earth? Are you contemplating curing yourself, yet? Well, the download of the app is not as readily accessible anymore. 'All-out', an organisation that supports homosexuals and transgender, promptly started a petition against any sort of app which attempts to 'heal' homosexuality. Apparently, Apple read its general terms and conditions again and remembered that they condemn homophobia. The app was taken down 24 hours later. Evidently, Google-play can't read.

The Android based app-store still offers the app to salvation or stupidity. Disappointed? You can enrol on a course on the website of 'Setting Captives Free' if you wish to 'save' yourself and stop derivation as well.

Is all of this nonsense really necessary? The assumption homosexuality can be 'cured' shows an inhuman contempt for self-determined judgment. Homosexuality and other non-conforming sexualities which are acted out freely and non-violently aren't illnesses that have to be cured. They are unproblematic ways of life. What amount of pig-headedness and arrogance is needed to deny somebody's freedom of self-determination? Does humanity actually require self-proclaimed saviours that see a threat in love and companionship? Does anyone seriously believe hu-

manity will become extinct if some men and some women love someone of the same gender? Does the emptiness and sorrow the sufferers feel originate in their homosexuality, or is it rather their inability to freely lead their lives as they choose? Is it the oh so mighty God's will to be heterosexual, and does the Bible condemn other sexualities? If so, why would any of the believers eat pork, or shrimp, or rabbit? Why would they have sex before they get married? Has anyone even read the Bible? Is it worth it? To all of you believers and wannabe saviours: what is more important? Some homosexuals or a great number of suicides, failed marriages and the unimaginable dead? In ten countries LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans) is legal grounds for life imprisonment or execution! Every 16 hours,

one transgender person is murdered! In 76 countries LGBT is a crime! The world is becoming more homosexual-friendly, true. But progress advances slowly. There's absolutely no need for a remedy, course, app or whatnot that promises a cure for the incurable.

Are you a 'homosexual', or do you have 'homosexual' tendencies? So what? Are you a 'homosexual' who wants to get married? Have children? So what? How is it possible that genitals affect your life to such an extent that safety and freedom become issues? Isn't humanity a race that functions through the brain and not through what is between your legs? Bizarre, indeed!

## Door of Hope



### Description

*You have arrived at the Door of Hope, the 60-Day interactive course that will teach you to enjoy a newfound relationship with the Lord and how to find freedom from homosexuality. It is possible, and you can learn how.*

***This course is also available in following languages.***



[Enroll Today For Free](#)

[Preview Course](#)

Author: *J. Wustlich*

# TV Journalism for Students

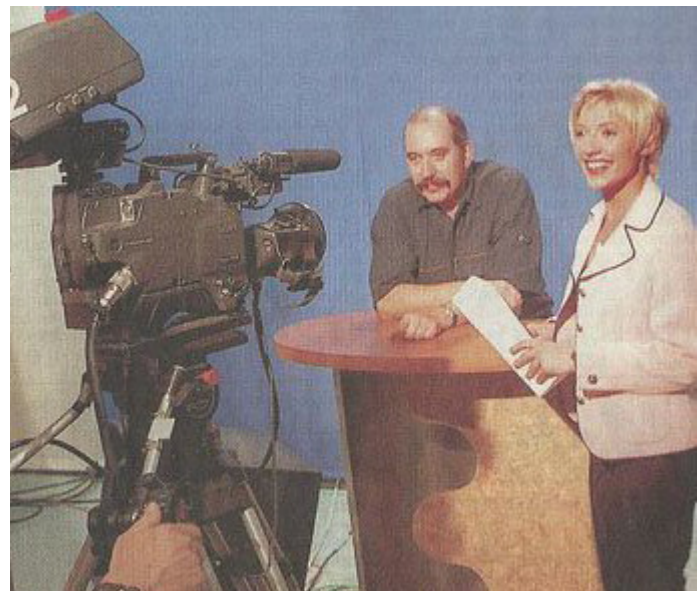


Television became available for the consumer during the 1930's in Great Britain, USA, and Germany. Twenty years after, in the 1950s, television experienced its 'Golden Age,' becoming a popular source of information and entertainment. However, the broadcasting time and the number of programs were limited. Today, with a decent Internet connection and an average smartphone one can stream online videos almost anywhere. Television has become available for everyone, it is not bound to a schedule or a TV set, and the range and quantity of video programs and podcasts have dramatically increased. In particular, making news is no longer a prerogative of the big networks, but anyone can tell their story. Today, we don't need a huge camera, rolls of film, or a laboratory. Digital cameras are compact, light, and they eliminate such post-production stages, such as the development of film negatives after the shooting. However, in order to produce a comprehensible piece of news, it is vital to learn the rudiments of television production, how a video

piece can be structured, and conventions that can help to bring a message across.

Universities in Germany, besides the major and minor subjects, provide extra courses for all students. These courses help to explore other areas, improve different competences, and perhaps give students a better idea of what they would be interested in doing in a couple of years. Since television is such a big part of today's world, TU Dresden also offers a student television which is called Kopflicht.tv and is organised by the Institute of Media and Communication. The German word 'Kopflicht' refers to the headlight on a camera that illuminates the interview partner. Thus, the name stresses the main focus of this television on news coverages. Kopflicht.tv is a platform that gives students a taste of television journalism and freedom to cover the topics that are interesting for them and their fel In order to give the students some orientation in the world of television journalism, a lecture

course is offered by Dr. Thomas Hartung, who has long experience in video journalism, and who has been in charge of student television at TU Dresden since 1998. The lecture gives many insights into how to design video coverage, what the guidelines for writing texts for television are, how cinematography works, how to interview people, and many other details. Every student is required to make their own video coverage in the course of the semester. The topic can encompass everything that is student-related, for example a report on some critical university issue, a video portrait of a professor, or a depiction of students' lives in a shared apartment. After deciding on a topic, one can start researching for necessary information, collecting filming permits, planning the shooting, and writing a script.



After finishing the script for the lecture course, and presenting the shooting plan, one can start interviewing selected people and filming the additional material that may be required for creating a four-minute long video. It is clear that planning, filming, and editing will consume a lot of time apart from the lecture course, but the results are almost always worth it. During this time, students gain experience in TV-journalism, filming, editing, audio mixing, and afterwards they have their own piece of journalistic work.

The theoretical lecture cannot illustrate all aspects of video journalism. Besides attending the lecture and planning the video, a visit to a practical workshop is recommended, where the basics of camera work can be learned, as well as audio recording, lightning, and post-production. Koppflicht.tv is equipped with two professional television cameras, microphones, and mobile lights. For editing the material, there is a Mac-based edit suite with Final Cut Pro 7 software,

which is widely used by many television companies. In the practical workshop, which is only four days long, students create short video coverages, and it gives them an idea of different practical aspects of video production.

At the end of a semester, the best student videos are summed up in a one-hour TV magazine program that is broadcast on the local Dresden channel. All videos are also available on the official webpage of Koppflicht.tv. Currently, Koppflicht.tv is financially supported by Studentenwerk Dresden, but there are plans to cooperate with "SZ-online" and "Ad rem." In the following years, the student television will grow, and new students can improve it by proposing their projects, new formats, and new ideas. Koppflicht.tv always welcomes new students.

Among other extra courses, the Institute of Media and Communication at TU Dresden offers students a student television course every semester. This course opens a golden opportunity for stu-

dents to explore the media of television and at the same time to collect credits for AQUA. Besides providing a theoretical basis for video journalism, the course gives students a deep insight into journalistic activities. In addition, Koppflicht.tv is a unique platform to cover critical student issues.

Web: [www.Koppflicht.tv](http://www.Koppflicht.tv)

### Theoretical Lecture Koppflicht.tv

Usually Wednesday (3): 9:20 - 10:50

3 CP

### Practical Workshop Video Production

Usually two Fridays: 16:00 - 18:00

and two Saturdays: 10:00 - 18:00

3 CP

For more information and present schedule check the AQUA web-site of The Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Science (Philosophische Fakultät).



Author: *Julianna Michaelis*



# Allur heimurinn óskýr\*

Sigur Rós live in Dresden;

Concert at Freilichtbühne Junge Garde

Wednesday, June 19, 2013. Freilichtbühne Junge Garde in Dresden. It is 33 degrees Celsius, and quite a lot of people are looking to claim one of the limited seats in the shade. The rest are standing in a queue, waiting to buy a ticket to enter, or purchasing a Langós after passing the strict checking procedure at the entrance. All these people have one thing in common: They are Sigur Rós fans, ... or are going to be by the end of the night. But who is Sigur Rós and what is so fascinating about them?

Sigur Rós, whose name stands for 'victory rose' in Icelandic, was founded in 1994 in the nation's capital, Reykjavík. They are an internation-

ally renowned Icelandic band who play ambient art rock. The band consists of singer Jón Þór "Jónsi" Birgisson, bass player Georg "Goggi" Hólm and drummer Orri Páll Dýrason. Apart from their ethereal sound, which is often found amongst film soundtracks such as that in 127 Hours or in series like The Vampire Diaries, Sigur Rós is known for Jónsi's incredible falsetto and the bowed guitar he plays. Another remarkable fact about Sigur Rós is their own, home-made language called Vonlenska, Hopelandic in English, which is often sung on some songs. Many songs, however, are sung in Icelandic.

And there we are, sitting on

some uncomfortable wooden benches, with our eyes fixed on the stage longingly awaiting our favourite Icelandic band. Occasionally, a stage crew member can be seen working; an unpleasant sight for the audience, whose patience was running thin. Furthermore, the range of instruments on stage looked rather intriguing: various drum sets, bells and guitars - everything one would need to present a musical masterpiece. The expectations of the fans remain incredibly high. Suddenly, a gust of silence sweeps over the crowd. It is almost 7:30, and two men clothed in black appear on stage. They are known as OAKE, a two-person band from Berlin, who are

ready to enchant the audience with their experimental techno and hard electric sound.

Despite their enthusiasm, the set list reminded one of a tour of the amazon, and the band consisted of a human pogo-stick bobbing to the drum beat and a pale figure whose singing sounded as if she was trying to woo a banshee. The gathering of hippies, weirdos and forlorn students bore the sound for a complete 45 minutes in the hope of seeing the main attraction for which they had been waiting so long. 8:45 and no Sigur Rós in sight. Nonetheless, the instruments were now being repositioned and finely tuned. Suddenly, almost as the audience was about to give up all hope, ten men covered in black apparel appear onstage, reach for their instruments and begin to play *Yfirborð*, a song featured in their new album *Kveikur*. It is really the Icelandic band Sigur Rós with their expansive set of band

members.

Their sound is amazing, the animated colours and interesting figures projected against the back-stage screen serve to enhance the musical performance and deliver a fantastic show.

The light effects and their various formations make for the perfect visuals. Directly under this show of lights is Jónsi, who is playing his electric guitar with a violin bow while receiving back-up from the three other violinists and brass; the creation of an orchestral masterpiece.

Although the band mainly performed songs featured on their latest album, songs which significantly contain more of a rock element in comparison to their older material, several famous hits such as *Sæglópur*, *Varúð* and *Hoppípolla* did make a return. A further hit, *Svefn-g-englar*, was special due to the fact that pieces of the music video produced by August Jacobsson were projected

against a screen. Also featured in the video were the down-syndrome afflicted actors of the Perlan Theatre Group, clothed as angels while dancing through a grass field. The closing number on the set list was the song *Festival*.

Not a single member of the audience wanted to go, and their applause was tremendous. As a reward for their enthusiasm, the band presented an encore consisting of the extended versions of *Glósóli* and *Popplagið*.

It is 10:16, and Sigur Rós takes a bow and quietly disappears back stage. Later it is possible to read in various newspaper articles and blog entries about the incredible concert given by Sigur Rós; complete with songs sung live, which, although virtually impossible, sounded seemingly better than the studio version.

For just a mere two hours, the city of Dresden was fully enchanted by the music of Sigur Rós, and I was witness to it.





## *Elegant and Stylish* Meet China's new First Lady

On March 22, one week after this year's election, China's new president Xi Jinping paid a state visit to Russia. As the new leader of the second largest economy in the world, Xi's first presidential trip abroad attracted worldwide attention. Yet it seems that Xi's wife, Peng Liyuan, who accompanied him on the trip, turned even more heads than her husband.

Wearing a well-tailored black

coat and a sky-blue scarf, carrying a sweet smile on her face, Peng slowly walked down from the plane with her husband, arm in arm. Merely hours after Peng's debut as the new Chinese First Lady in Moscow, Sina Miniblog, China's equivalent of Twitter, was filled with more than 100,000 messages discussing how stunning she looked. "It's the first time that China's First Lady appears like a modern

woman. I think she dressed very well, with taste and confidence," said Zhang Yu, editor of China's Vogue magazine. "After so many years, we finally have a first lady who can represent us so appropriately. I think it is a landmark event." Xinhua News Agency, the Party's official news press agency, openly commented that "America has Michelle Obama and we have Peng Liyuan."



While the foreign media have just started to grow curious about this gorgeous woman and to investigate who she is, Chinese people have already known her name for almost 30 years. Peng Liyuan, 50, is one of the most renowned folk singers in the People's Liberation Army with the civilian rank equivalent to [HYPERLINK "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major\\_general"](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major_general) \o "Major general" major general. Long before Xi joined the central leading organ in Beijing in 2007, Peng had already established her position as a top Chinese soprano artist through her regular appearances on the annual [HYPERLINK "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CCTV\\_New\\_Year%27s\\_Gala"](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CCTV_New_Year%27s_Gala) \o "CCTV New Year's Gala" New Year's Gala, a widely viewed mainland Chinese television program that is aired during the [HYPERLINK "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese\\_New\\_Year"](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_New_Year) \o "Chinese New Year" Chinese New Year, and her performances in the Lincoln Center in New York City and the Vienna State Opera.

According to the Atlantic, "Peng Liyuan has all the right traits for a First Lady: ease in the spotlight, approachable beauty, and her own powerful fame". In the eyes of the public, Peng has been a down-to-earth and outgoing celebrity singer with almost no negative news. Her military expe-

rience as a cultural troupe member also adds fortitude and honesty to her character. What's more remarkable is the fact that she has always kept a low profile in terms of her private life over all these years despite of her lasting popularity.

After Xi seized power in the government, Peng has gradually moved her career focus from singing to public service and charity work. Assuming the role of a U.N. ambassador for health, Peng comforted survivors of the Sichuan earthquake and helped raise awareness of the dangers of smoking and unprotected sex. Many media believe that she is a perfect spokeswoman to represent the confident, talented and loving side of modern Chinese women on the international stage. Moreover, it is also predicted that Peng, with such a positive public image, will definitely win more support for her husband, help China forge friendship with more countries and even become a diplomatic idol.

Such high expectations of Peng Liyuan are not without reason. First Ladies' power in political affairs should by no means be underestimated. On the contrary, their grace and poise, strength and wisdom can sometimes make the difference. During the Second Sino-Japanese War (a major Asian front of WWII), the then first lady of the Re-

public of China, Soong May-ling, became the first Chinese person and the second woman to address the [HYPERLINK "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Congress\\_of\\_the\\_United\\_States"](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Congress_of_the_United_States) \o "Congress of the United States" U.S. Congress in an effort to convince America to support China against the Japanese army. With her fluent English, passionate speech, and elegant manners, Soong earned respect from the whole of American society and contributed greatly to China's eventual defeat of Fascist Japan.

Since the Communist Party led by Mao came to power in Mainland China in 1949, most Chinese First Ladies have had one trait in common: anonymity.



Yet as China has now more access to outside media, Chinese people have seen Hilary Clinton, Michelle Obama, Samantha Cameron, and Carla Bruni-Sarkozy and witnessed how the behaviors, life styles, even fashion tastes of these glamorous western First Ladies have influenced people's impression of their husbands and their countries. Naturally, they are now looking at their own First Lady and guessing what kind of difference she

can make.

Some believe that the appearance of this bright and charming new First Lady will humanize the communist regime and make China's image on the world stage a little more friendly and dynamic. Publishing the love story and early photos of the First Couple also shows the effort of the Party to demystify Chinese leaders' lives and reduce the gulf between the government and the people. In

this sense, we could say that Peng Liyuan is wisely used as a soft power weapon, both at home and abroad. While celebrating the fact that there's finally a presentable First Lady, Chinese people might not want to count on much intrinsic change too soon.

Author: *Yue Wu*



# Brits in love with Dresden!

Abby, Amy, Holly, Laura and Andrew are five students from the UK who came to Dresden for a year abroad.



Studying abroad is a wonderful opportunity for university students to have new experiences, learn in a different environment, encounter a new culture and meet people from many other countries. According to British Council statistics released in November 2012, more UK students than ever are choosing to work or study for up to a year in Europe through the Erasmus programme. Since 2010/11 the number of students from the UK engaging in the programme has risen by 6.5 per cent.

Looking forward to a year filled with unforgettable adventures, five British students came to Dresden last autumn. Since then, they have gathered many great experiences. Four of them have been spending their time teaching in public schools in and around Dresden. The Fifth has had the chance to study at Dresden University of Technology. Abby, Amy, Holly, Andrew and Laura are young, en-

thusiastic and enjoying their year abroad to the fullest. Not only have they come to appreciate the German lifestyle, but they have also spent a lot of time travelling around Europe: Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark Poland, Spain and Turkey are just some of the countries they have travelled to. "School holidays are definitely a plus," says the 21-year-old Andrew Jones, who works as an assistant teacher at the "Gotthold Ephraim Lessing primary school" in Pirna. "And there are so many public holidays", Holly adds. "Dresden is situated in a really good position. It is quite close to Berlin," Andrew says.

Apart from missing free tap water at the pubs and Cadbury chocolate, they are not struggling with homesick-

ness. "Nowadays, it is really easy to get in contact with people from home. Even if you do miss them, you can talk to them via Skype," says Holly. "It is actually not that far away. So if we were desperate we could hop on a plane," Laura adds.

22-year-old Holly Mortimer from Oxford studies German and International Politics at Aberystwyth University. Coming to the land of Schnitzel and Sauerkraut was compulsory for her as well as for the other four. "It was part of my degree scheme to come to Germany and I decided I wanted to work rather than study because I needed a break from my studies", explains the 22-year-old. She has been to Germany before.

"I did two study exchanges and one work experience here. Before that I had been to Germany three times with my mum," says Holly. Even if she did not know much about Dresden she is very happy to be here. She teaches at a middle school in Radebeul. "I assist in all English classes and we have conversations about British culture, geography and grammar," she explains.

Coming to Germany for the same

reason as Holly, 21-year-old Amy Mulhall from Birmingham teaches at a primary and middle school in Otten-dorf-Okrilla. "I work with children from grades 3 to 10," she says. "I really enjoy teaching the younger ones because they are very enthusiastic. Years 7 and 8 can be quite difficult though", Amy adds. Back home in England she studies German and Spanish at the University of Warwick. "I chose Saxony for my year abroad because you have the opportunity to travel to Eastern Europe very easily," she explains. Apart from the fact that Amy had never been to the east of Germany before, she also did not know much about Dresden. "But I would never want to go anywhere else. I think

we are all very happy with our choice", she adds joyfully.


Neither Holly, nor Amy want to become teachers. They are teaching because they enjoy working with people and wanted to do practical work, rather than studying. In contrast to them 21-year-old Abby Hardy-Turner from Nottingham is thinking about a career in teaching. "Since I was

**Nowadays, it is really easy to get in contact with people from home. Even if you do miss them, you can talk to them via Skype**

five I wanted to be a teacher", she says. "Now I do teaching to try it out for real", Abby explains. Apart from a weekend trip to Berlin the 21-year-old assistant teacher at a primary school in Dresden Gorbitz had never been to Germany before. "I feel really comfortable here and like the culture very much", Abby says. Andrew adds that German and British cultures are quite similar. The only rooster in the yard was not bothered by where in Germany he would be during his year abroad. The 21-year-old had been here before and has found that he could be happy anywhere. "I really like Dresden and it has a very interesting history," he remarks. Laura Mugford from Newbury is the only one of them who

came to Dresden to study. Just like Amy and Andrew, the 22-year-old studies German at the University of Warwick. "This year is about practising my German and meeting new people", Laura says. "It's been an awesome opportunity. I'm very happy to be here and to experience the student life," she says. The 22-year-old could choose between seven universities. "Berlin and Cologne were very popular but I wanted to go somewhere nobody else was going because I knew we would just stick together," she explains. Laura chose Dresden without knowing anything about it but now would recommend the "Florence of the Elbe" to anyone. All of them want to come back to Germany. "I think a year is a good amount of time but it is not long enough to get you up to the level that you want to be in terms of language. I would definitely want to come back relatively soon after my studies in Britain," Holly says.

Author: *Lisa Maria Merta*



# Aotearoa: An adventure at the other end of the world

The 3rd of August 2009 was the day that changed my life. My boyfriend and I stepped on the plane to fly as far as we could. Our destination: Aotearoa - the land of the long white cloud, also known as New Zealand. Without knowing what to expect, we started our unforgettable journey from Frankfurt via Singapore and Sidney to Auckland, New Zealand. Although the journey was initially planned by a company called "step in", we soon realised that we would not have needed the support they actually offered as everything turned out to be much

easier than we had imagined it to be.

The moment we arrived, after 26 hours on the plane, we knew that our choice was the right one, when the subtropical climate, the maritime air and the foreign sounds welcomed us. A whiff of adventure was in the air, although we were still standing in front of the airport. Instantly, we realised that this year would change our perspective on many things in our lives and that we would come back 365 days later with our backpacks brimmed with experiences, memories and a differ-

ent view on the things in life. Soon after our arrival, we realised that the world was turning a bit slower in this part of the world. In contrast to Germany, the people were more welcoming as well as more relaxed and had a completely different attitude to life. Basically everyone on the streets, especially in the smaller towns greeted us with a cheerful smile and a heart-warming: "Hey, howz it?", thereby demonstrating their unique "Kiwi-accent", an accent that soon found its way into our own English.

After meeting the first “Kiwis”, as the New Zealanders call themselves, thereby not referring to the fruit but to their national animal, the flightless kiwi bird endemic to New Zealand, we were delirious with joy to notice that they did not consider us strangers but visitors to their country who were interested in their wonderful culture and the “Kiwi-way-of-life”. Just after two weeks on the road north of Auckland we were picked up by a couple that pulled their car over and asked us, where we were off to. We told them that we were on our way to a hostel and they wanted to give us a lift. Finally, we did not end up at the backpackers’, but in the house of Renée and Mike, a newlywed kiwi couple, who offered us a soft bed, a hot shower and a delicious dinner. Just after one night at their place, they offered us a free stay at their “batch”, the kiwi expression for “beach house”, for the next week. Soon we found ourselves close to the

remote Oakura Bay in this wonderful beach house. We were overwhelmed by our hosts’ high degree of trust in us, although they had just known us for 10 hours at the most. After our stay Renée and Mike gave us a lift to our next destination, a little farm in Whangaruru, and left us impressed by their kindness and generous hospitality, which we were to encounter on many more occasions during our time at the other end of the world.

However, the lovely Kiwis are not the only reason that made living in New Zealand an unforgettable experience. New Zealand is also widely known for its spectacular scenery that comprises sun-drenched beaches, snow-capped mountains with cascading glaciers, the tropical rainforest, active volcanoes and bubbling geothermal attractions as well as a flora and fauna with many animals and plants that can exclusively be found in New Zea-

land, such as the kiwi and the kea, the world’s only alpine parrot. When we first saw New Zealand’s unspoiled nature we were speechless. We could understand why the Maori, the indigenous people of New Zealand, believed that their mountains were gods that are watching over New Zealand. We suddenly felt very small, surrounded by all the beauty and there were moments where the feelings were so overwhelming that I cried tears of joy for the simple reason of being a part of this magical world.

Even after almost four years since the beginning of our adventure, we think about our favourite country every day and the memories and experiences we made during this one year have profoundly shaped all parts of our lives - as the maori saying goes: *m u an e rapu he oranga - life is in your own hands.*

Author: *Denise Günther*



