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Reviews. Reports

Recenzje. Sprawozdania

Andrzej Ceglarz, Report from the International and Interdisciplinary Conference of Young Scholars *The Weakening of a National State? Transnational Spaces in Europe*, Willy Brandt Center for German and European Studies of the University of Wrocław, May 28–31, 2014.

In academic work not only the results of conducted research are important, but also the exchange of ideas and knowledge among scholars. The regular meetings can cause debates, which afterwards contribute to better understanding of a discussed issue and shed light on aspects, which were somehow omitted by a researcher. Moreover, by amassing scholars from different fields of studies and from different cultures of academic work, the final conclusions are much more fruitful and present a multi-faceted spectrum of different perspectives, which can enrich the researches in the future. It is even more desirable to initiate such cooperation among young scholars, so they could gain a new experience at the beginning of their academic career and, at the same time, they could create a network of professionals, whose closer collaboration in the future may result in joint projects. And it was a main goal of the International and Interdisciplinary Conference of Young Scholars "The Weakening of a National State? Transnational Spaces in Europe", which was held on May 28–31, 2014 at the Willy Brandt Center for German and European Studies (WBZ) of the University of Wrocław.

The conference assembled over twenty young scholars from universities in Poland (University of Warsaw, University of Wrocław), Germany (European University Viadrina in Frankfurt/Oder, Free University in Berlin) and the United Kingdom (University of Birmingham, University of Portsmouth). It was organized by the WBZ in cooperation with the Center for Interdisciplinary Polish Studies at the European University Viadrina (ZIP) and it was supported by the Polish-German Foundation for Science and the Hanns Seidel Foundation. The scientific objective of the conference was the analysis of theoretical concepts of transnationality, with special focus on case studies from Poland and Germany. The participants considered the role of national state in the context of Europeanization and globalization. They analyzed also the transnational spaces in political, judicial, economic and social-cultural aspects. The conference encompassed five thematic panels and two lectures. It was held in German but one lecture and

two papers were held in English. Every thematic panel had its moderator and specialists, who gave their comments to presented papers.

The conference was officially opened in the afternoon on May 28, 2014 by Prof. Adam Jezierski, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wrocław, Prof. Krzysztof Ruchniewicz, the Director of the WBZ, Prof. Dagmara Jajeśniak-Quast, the Director of the ZIP and Dr. Michael Czepalla (in replacement of Prof. Hans-Peter Niedermeier, the Head of the Institute for Particularly Gifted Students of the Hanns Seidel Foundation). During the opening of the conference, the agreement about close cooperation between the WBZ and ZIP was signed. It envisioned collaboration in a scientific sphere between these two units, like organizing joint research projects, conferences and publications, as well as exchange of scientists and PhD candidates. The opening lecture, *On identity in sociology*, was held by Prof. Zdzisław Mach from the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. In his speech, this famous sociologist brought closer the aspects of identity from the individual and collective perspective. He underlined the importance of the process of shaping the identity, especially the relation to whom the identity is created. The interesting lecture spurred discussion between the participants and was a great start for the next two days of debates.

The first thematic panel concerned *Economic Interdependencies – Labour Market, Euro-crisis and Solidarity* and it was moderated by Prof. Jajeśniak-Quast. The participants of this section focused on different aspects of economic transnational relations, mainly on the Polish-German border, which applied to judicial and political relations. From five different papers, it is worthy to mention Falk Flade's presentation (a PhD candidate from the ZIP), which was the summary of his dissertation project. The young researcher concentrates on nuclear energy in Poland with the background of Polish-Russian relations in the years 1955–2014. This issue was interesting when considering complex relations between these two neighbours, especially taking into account the current conflict in Ukraine, which had an impact also outside its borders and on different areas. With regard to the content, the presenter left the audience with an open question about the future of the Polish Nuclear Program and its implications.

The second thematic panel, moderated by Dr. Elżbieta Opiłowska from the WBZ, was called *Transnational Social Spaces – Migration, Integration and Development of Identities*. Two out of five papers could be found extraordinary: Charlotte Galpin from the University of Birmingham presented her dissertation project "Center and peripheries, North and South Europe? The discursive construction of the European Identity in Poland during the Euro-crisis". The young researcher, in her study, strongly rooted in a theoretical approach, argued that existing Polish discourses about the Old Continent helped to strengthen the "Polish Come Back" to Europe, through supporting the idea of division into North and South Europe. And this thesis was proved by empirical research. The second interesting paper by Joanna Staśkiewicz from the ZIP concentrated on a Catholic female movement in Poland. She analyzed the reasons why there is no organized feminist movement in such a strong Catholic country as Poland. She also discussed the archetypes of 'the Polish mother' or 'Polish-superwoman', which are present in social life in this country.

The last thematic section during the first day of conference *Transnational Communication Spaces* was moderated by Prof. Izabela Surynt from the University of Wrocław. In this section, a paper by Anna Jagielska from the ZIP – "Where is the feminist theology? The critical résumé of current development in Germany and Poland" – presented the main assumption of feminist theology and compared its evolution in both countries. As this paper referred indirectly to the

paper of Ms Staśkiewicz, it created a fascinating basis for further discussion. After the presentation of the three papers, Prof. Surynt presented a project on which she had been working for a few years – "Lexicon of interactions. Intercultural communication on the example of Polish-German relations". The end-effect of this endeavor was going to be an on-line platform with scientific, popular scientific and journalistic articles about key (sometimes controversial) issues in Polish-German relations. The main goal of the lexicon was an attempt to change dominating opinions about Germans among Poles by opening a critical discussion on some topics and showing different, multidimensional perspectives on them.

The last day of conference started with a panel *Transnationality and National State. Supranational, National and National Actors in Political Space in Europe* which was moderated by Dr. Monika Sus from the WBZ. In terms of this issue, a really fascinating mosaic of interconnections between actors on many layers was presented by Piotr Solga from the WBZ in a paper "Social and Political actors on the scene of energy transition (*Energiewende*). An unavoidable clash of interest groups?". The young researcher attempted to show how complicated relations are functioning between players in Germany by implementing the energy transition, although the limited time of presentation did not allow depicting the whole complexity of this problem.

The afternoon session *The European Union's Law vs. National Law – Harmonization of Legal Regulations* was the last panel during the conference and it was moderated by Prof. Robert Grzeszczak from the University of Warsaw. Among six papers, which concentrated on different judicial aspects, the one presented by Ewelina Kwietniak from the University of Warsaw seemed to outstand from others. In her paper "The End of equality of EU's official languages in the light of processes of Europeanization and globalization", she analyzed the advantages and disadvantages of multi-lingual system of the European Union and discussed extraordinary cases and examples of using different languages and translating them in EU's judicial system.

The International and Interdisciplinary Conference of Young Scholars "The Weakening of a National State? Transnational Spaces in Europe" was a great opportunity for young scholars to meet and discuss the issues on which they worked in their dissertation projects. The multi-layered character of the meeting and debates after every paper enabled to discover the aspects which, until this moment, were rather unnoticed in their scientific work. Moreover, gathering over twenty young scholars from different universities and countries, who work on issues mainly connected to Poland and Germany helped to create a network of contacts, which in the future might develop into professional networks of cooperation. Taking into account that four of six represented universities (Warsaw, Wrocław, Frankfurt and Berlin) are relatively close to each other, such close cooperation is highly possible. Finding the answers to the questions of transnationality and the role of a modern national state was hardly possible. Different aspects which were described in the papers proved that this issue is very complex and further discussion is needed. On the other hand, the conference also built the basis for such a debate and conferences in the future. And new ideas, enthusiasm and positive reactions of participants on this initiative enable assuming that other editions of this conference will take place in the future.