



The impact of 1989 on Europe: structural integration but ideational divergence? Interdisciplinary conference on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of 1989. Florence: Philipp Ther, European University Institute (EUI), Florence; Chris Armbruster, Research Network 1989 and Max Planck Gesellschaft, Berlin, 06.11.2008-08.11.2008.

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Published on H-Soz-u-Kult (February, 2009)

The impact of 1989 on Europe: structural integration but ideational divergence? Interdisciplinary conference on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of 1989

As the 20th anniversary of the events of 1989 approaches, their significance, impact, and meaning are broadly discussed. To prepare the ground for academic debates in 2009, the European University Institute (Florence) and the Research Network 1989 organised an interdisciplinary conference, focusing on new research questions about the impact of 1989 on Europe and European integration. The period from 1989 to 2004 currently enters the realm of contemporary history, and there are first attempts at a historicisation of the transformation processes in the Central European states. Until now, discourses on the significance and the meaning of 1989 have mostly been led in national contexts. The subject itself, however, has a global significance due to the breakdown of the Soviet empire, the dissolution of the communist parties, the end of state socialism and the victory of democracy and market economy. The conference was one of the first attempts to analyse the historical impact, social consequences and cultural shifts that are rooted in 1989 in transnational approaches. Asking for the impact of the East on the West, its topic went beyond the initial, Central European arenas of the revolutions of 1989. The conference contested the working hypothesis of structural integration and ideational divergence of the former East and West of Europe after 1989. Did the end of the Cold War and the re-unification of Europe evoke such a seemingly paradoxical impact on European integration? Historians and social scientists discussed this in transna-

tional and trans-regional perspectives, interconnecting East European history with European history.

PHILIPP THER (European University Institute (EUI) Florence), who hosted the conference, stressed that unclear terminology reveals desiderata in the examination of 1989 and proposed the notion of "negotiated revolutions" in his introductory lecture. He criticized the regional limitations of transformation studies and raised the question what impact 1989 also had on Western Europe. Furthermore, he elaborated upon an East-West gap of experience. CHRIS ARMBRUSTER (Research Network 1989 and Max-Planck-Gesellschaft Berlin) presented six rivalling research programmes on the causes in consequences of 1989 and introduced the co-organising network of young researchers and its motivation to foster new research on 1989.[1]

Competing explanations for causes and consequences of 1989 were the topic of the first session. BENOÎT CHALLAND (EUI Florence) analysed how Western agents positioned the East in a different time. With the underlying concept of allochronism, he explained the emergence of perceived Eastern backwardness in the European collective memory. He argued that there is still a subtle Western domination in political and academic discourses on Central and Eastern Europe. CHRISTOPH BOYER (University of Salzburg) discussed the different conceptions of welfare before and

after 1989 according to Western and Eastern path dependencies. MILLS KELLY (George Mason University, Fairfax) argued that the demise of the socialist state and the disintegration of the communist parties in Central Europe were the result of changes in their governing strategies concerning global and local economic problems in the 1970s and early 1980s. They could be explained only in a translational framework.

Public discourses about intra-European migration after 1989 and their impact on the socio-economic integration in Europe were debated in the next panel. EWA MORAWSKA (University of Essex) discussed unintended consequences of East-West income-seeking migration on the sender- and receiver-societies on the example of Polish migration to the UK. She argued that East European work-related migrants in the West make use of skills and practices known from the *âhomo sovieticusâ*-syndrome. The bewildering omnipresence of the *âPolish plumberâ* in the public debate between 2005 and 2008 was subject of the presentation by KORNELIA KOÅCZAL (Centre for Historical Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Berlin). The career of this iconic figure in France, Germany and Poland exemplified perceptions and functions of Eastern migrant labourers in the relationship between the EU of 15 and former Eastern Europe. NINA WOLFEIL (University of Vienna) and RALUCA PRELIPCEANU (Pantheon Sorbonne, Paris) presented a joint project concerning the mobility of students and graduates in Europe after 1989 and described the emergence of transnational education biographies and new lifestyles as a result of *âsilentâ*, non-registered migration.

The following panel widened the geographical scope and discussed Russia and the Far East as regions that challenge the West economically. VOLKER SCHMIDT (National University of Singapore) discussed theories that describe the formation of multipolar centres of modernity or even a shift of the epicentre of modernity to East Asia â which could possibly mark the end of Western supremacy in the world. LAURE DELCOUR (Institut de Relations Internationales et StratÃ©giques, Paris) described the development of Russia as an exceptional pathway of modernity that challenges the EU model of modernisation and questions the western meaning of 1989 as the victory of liberal democracy. It was discussed to which extent democracy would be a necessary condition for sustainable modernisation or whether authoritarian rule could steer societies into modernity as well, as, for instance, Soviet modernisation in Stalinism demonstrates.

The impact of East European revolutions of 1989 on self-understandings and political objectives of West European left-wing parties was discussed in a session about democracy and the European left. MAUD BRACKE (University of Glasgow) revisited the most important moments in the history of social democracy during the Cold War and the social democratic self-presentation as an alternative to communism. Bracke stressed the importance of anticommunism as a part of Western European social democratic identity and analysed the crisis of this political force after 1989 in this context. PETER THOMPSON (University of Sheffield) argued that 1989 marked only one of several events that shaped the pathway of the West German Left. ALBENA AZMANOVA (Brussels School of International Studies) did not interpret 1989 as an eastward enlargement of the European economic and political space but stated that the revolutions of 1989 had changed the nature of political competition in the West as well as in the East. A new configuration of Left and Right had resulted from a trans-European transformation over the past 20 years. In opposition to the working hypothesis of the conference, she argued that ideational integration had been taking place in Europe. JULIE RINGELHEIM (University of Louvain) argued that the re-emergence of national questions after 1989 fostered new debates about minority protection in Europe and thus led to a transformation and Europeanisation of minority law. PAUL BLOKKER (University of Sussex) stated, the *âculmination and explosionâ* of dissent ideas in 1989 constituted a heritage that can be applied in an innovative further development of democracy theory. He referred to rich political practices of the dissident *âs civil democracy* and argued that the regional *âre-invention of democracy from the marginâ* in 1989 rather brought innovative elements than only reminding of older approaches in democracy theory.

The following session assembled four presentations concerning different narrations and readings of Europe. DRAGOÅ PETRESCU (University of Bucharest) examined the regime change of 1989 in Poland, Hungary, the former GDR, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania by focusing on such key concepts as revolution, reform and reconciliation with a traumatic past. CHRISTIAN DOMNITZ (Free University of Berlin) discussed how Central European debates about the nation *âs places in Europe* brought up essential meanings of culture in European debates from 1989 on. Cultural self-understandings became more popular in Western Europe as well, as, for instance, in Belgium or Spain. CRISTINA BLANCO SÃO LÃPEZ (EUI Florence) analysed three subsequent narratives in

the internal and external communication of the European Commission concerning the Eastward enlargement of the EU: enthusiasm (until 1993), impatience (1993-2000) and pragmatism (2000-2004). ZDENĚK KÁHN (Charles University, Prague) provided a paper about the influence of state socialist legal structures and understandings of law on legal thought in East and West after 1989 (in absence, paper presented by Marise Cremona).

In the last panel on the consequences of 1989, Armbruster stated that the global dimension of 1989 was underestimated. He pledged for comparative evaluation of diverging interpretations of 1989. JÄRGEN KOCKA (Social Science Research Centre, Berlin) summarised the consequences of 1989 for European history writing as âno revolution, but changeâ. Europe as a historical space became more important since 1989, and the description of relations between the societies of East and West changed from ânon-relationsâ to asymmetric relations. On the methodological level, he underlined a decline of Marxist and New Left historiography and the emergence of the history of remembrance. Since 1989, there would be increasing distrust in historical master narratives, and a stronger politicisation of history writing. MAREK SKO-VAJSA (Charles University, Prague) discussed the question how Western âtransitologyâ relates to the Eastern research on transformations. He explained the lack of unique Central European theoretical work on transformation by critically analysing the situation of social sciences in East Central Europe. He stressed that 1989 had not fostered any paradigmatic innovation both in Western and Eastern social science. JÄNOS MÁTYÁS KOVÁCS (Institute for Human Sciences, Vienna) argued that the revolutions of 1989 have deeply changed the economies of the West, but had no intellectual impact on economic thought here. He presented four reasons to explain why economic theory today is actually the same as it was twenty years ago: the economic deficiency of communism, a weak interest of Western theorists, and intellectual and institutional problems in the communication between Western and East European economists.

The final discussion referred to crucial questions of consequences and explanations of 1989. Ther stated that the negotiated revolutions had well-researched consequences on memories and politics of the past inside nation-states; for the impact of 1989 across nations; however, new research questions about the tremendous change in East and West are to be further elaborated. They should reach beyond representations of the East in the West; because no direct East-West impact of 1989 was observable in the most subject areas, and because East-

ern Europe had remained the Westâs negative other after 1989. The conferenceâs working hypothesis, to which extent 1989 encouraged convergence or divergence in Europe, has to be further qualified, proposed Patel, for instance, in the examination of heterogeneity across the former East and West. THOMAS LINDENBERGER (Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for European History and Public Spheres, Vienna) encouraged more research upon grassroots movements â and thus pledged for an interpretation of 1989 as a revolution. THOMAS MERGEL (Humboldt University of Berlin) stated that more attention should be focused on negative effects â Europe- and world-wide problems and challenges caused by 1989.

The workshop fruitfully reversed West-centred perspectives against the background of well-researched transfers from West to East that cannot fully explain ruptures and changes in Central European and European history in and after 1989. Pathways for further research had been sketched, but not elaborated on yet. Promising interdisciplinary work could strengthen perspectives on Europe from its peripheries and from non-Western viewpoints, interconnecting macro- and microhistory. In doing so, further research has to operationalise the mechanisms that made the events of 1989 a turning point not only for Eastern Europe, but for the whole continent and the world.

Conference Overview:

Introduction

Philipp Ther: âBeyond the transformation. Reflections on the impact of 1989 on European historyâ

Chris Armbruster: âPresentation of the nascent interdisciplinary research programme on the impact of 1989 on Europe, East and Westâ

Panel âExplaining the causes and consequences of 1989: competing explanationsâ, Chair: Philipp Ther

Benoît Challand: "From external other into the forgotten insider of Europe: Eastern European communism and European identity before and after 1989"

Christoph Boyer: âOld problems in a new context: welfare before and after 1989â

Mills Kelly: âThe demise of the socialist state and the disintegration of the communist parties in Central Europeâ

Martin Sabrow: âRemembering 1989 in United Germanyâ

Panel âIntegrated flows but divisive perceptions? Intra-European migration since 1989â, Chair: Ettore Recchi

