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THUS Working Papers – Introduction

Nicolaus Copernicus University is among 10 leading Polish research universities and has been granted the right to implement an innovative program developing various areas and research groups. The “Excellence Initiative – Research University” project IDUB NCU is a part of the nationwide IDUB (Inicjatywa Doskonałości Uczelnia Badawcza) program, which was implemented under the Law on Higher Education and Science of 2018. The Toruń Students Summer Program (TSSP) is part of this project. It is aimed at the youngest part of the academic community, i.e., students who collaborate with the researchers from NCU as part of the research they conduct.

Due to the disciplinary diversity of individual faculties, the TSSP proposals have been divided into 5 field programs: TSSP ExSci – Toruń Students Summer Program in Exact Sciences; TABMED – Toruń and Bydgoszcz Medical Summer Program; TSSP NatSci – Toruń Students Summer Program in Natural Sciences; TELSP – Toruń Economic and Legal Summer Program; THUS – Toruń Humanities and Social Sciences Summer Program. Individual activities are carried out during the summer period, free from academic classes, from July to September. Each summer school lasts

4 weeks and is divided into three parts: scientific – participation in mini-research projects under the supervision of NCU-based researchers; didactic – lectures addressed to school participants, predominantly of interdisciplinary nature; and integration – sightseeing and social events organized by the program coordinators. The cooperation offer is addressed primarily to foreign students, but also to those already studying in Toruń.

The first edition was planned for the summer of 2020, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns in Poland and the countries of students' origin, it had to be postponed until the following year. Therefore, 4 series of programs have been implemented so far – in the years 2021–2024. In these years, 59 students from 17 countries participated in 35 programs offered by the NCU researchers from the Humanities and Social Science Departments. We had the pleasure of hosting and working with students from neighboring countries, such as Ukraine, Czechia, and Lithuania, from other European states, such as Italy, Hungary, Romania, Albania, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Greece, Turkey, Denmark, Norway, as well as the students from other continents, like Tunisia, Bangladesh, and the USA. The offered programs were from various fields: philosophy, linguistics, history, archaeology, anthropology, sociology, political science, and international relations.

The first coordinators of the Toruń Humanities and Social Sciences Summer Program (THUS) were Piotr Pranke (main coordinator) and Maria Winclawska (deputy coordinator). Since 2024, the function of the main coordinator has been held by Maria Winclawska, and her deputy is Michał Głuszkowski. Each year, students chose, depending on the number of proposals submitted and qualified by the committee, from 9 to 15 projects. In the summer, these who qualified in the recruitment process implement projects individually or in small groups of 2–3 students. The teams are supplemented by students from Toruń interested in a given study.

Despite the short period of research activities, thanks to their anchoring in long-term projects conducted by NCU researchers and the involvement of students, it has been possible to achieve measurable effects in the form of presentations finalizing the stage implemented during THUS, conference presentations, and articles. This thematic block is intended to present the latter, which were created as part of the summer school projects or were discussed and improved during it. These are both works by students themselves and in co-authorship with NCU scholars.

This year, the “THUS working papers block” appears for the first time in *Theoria et Historia Scientiarum*. It contains three texts from different areas of the humanities and social sciences. The article by Grzegorz Koneczniak, Damla Yağızıylmaz, and Mahmoud Abu Hanieh, which opens the section, is located between cultural and literary studies and addresses the issue of paratextuality in various contexts. Based on Gérard Genette’s concept, the authors analyzed their domestic cultural environments: the Arab region, Poland, and Turkey, using WebQuest research. This article was written as the result of the project lead by Grzegorz Koneczniak “Editing Contemporary Literary Discourses across Cultures (Selected Approaches)”.

The research conducted by Afrina Tasnim, under the supervision of Paweł Hanczewski, “The Scottish National Party’s (SNP) vision of an independent Scotland”, in the field of political science, resulted in the article aimed at thoroughly assessing the Scottish National Party’s (SNP) defence strategy. The author analyzed key aspects of Scotland’s security, including maritime security, taking into account internal and external obstacles, e.g., resource constraints, as well as the broader implications for its international standing. The text by Yuliia Pysklynets and Mariana Dolynska concerned memory studies, and aimed to analyze the perception of cultural and social stratification in Lviv in the second half of the 20th century in the memories of the inhabitants of the city and its surroundings. The main sources of material for analyses were field materials in the form of biographical interviews. Their article is an example of developing cooperation that also includes researchers from the units from which the participants of our projects come. Yuliia Pysklynets took part in the project “The 2nd Half of the 20th Century in Social Memory” offered by Michał Głuszkowski, and together with her domestic supervisor M. Dolynska refined the text for this thematic block.

Contacts initiated during THUS are often continued and expanded to new people. These are both other undergraduate and graduate students of a given university, as well as PhD students and faculty members. The publication of the results of projects implemented in new editions of the summer school is planned for the next issues of *Theoria et Historia Scientiarum*.