

***Becoming a Citizen in Times of Transformation:
Poland, Ukraine and Germany after 1918/19 and 1989/91***

**International Conference
University of Warsaw 24–26 February 2027**

State-building in Poland, in Ukraine, and in Germany after 1918/19 and after 1989/91 has so far primarily been examined separately, even though developments in these countries were highly entangled. Research on the interwar era was either accomplished in the framework of diplomacy and international politics or within the framework of national history. More recent research has stressed imperial legacies, the nationalizing character of state-building, the role of individual experience and expertise as well as local and global perspectives. Meanwhile, the emergence of new states in Eastern Europe after 1989/91 has been mainly analyzed from the angle of post-socialism and transformation studies. But also in this case, research on continuities and individual biographies has emerged.

During this conference, we want to gather experts on both times of transformation to focus on a different question, namely of how citizens appropriate and craft the new state. Doing so, we shift attention away from the founding moments to processes of state-building, and highlight phenomena previously under-represented in research.

The conference focuses on a broader range of social and political actors involved in state-building – their visions, programs of action, and practical implementations. We seek to explore how civic and social activism served as a key driver in creating new state structures, and how these structures, in turn, shaped and constrained actions.

The aim of the conference is to provide a platform for researchers working on one of the three above-mentioned countries to exchange knowledge, and to discuss methods, similarities and differences. Our call is addressed to scholars from fields such as History, Sociology, Law, and Cultural Studies, but also from other disciplines.

We propose the following thematic areas that can be extended:

I. Actors

- political, social, and cultural activists
- civic self-organization movements
- institutions and administrations
- international and transnational organizations

II. Processes

- appropriating and mediating the state's principles
- creating founding myths
- migration as action and object of discussion
- transfer of expert knowledge

The conference is organized within the framework of the project *Entangled State Building: Polish, Ukrainian, and German Experiences in Times of Transformation, 1918 ff. and 1989/91 ff.*, in cooperation of the Aleksander Brückner Center for Polish Studies at Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, and the University of Warsaw. Funding is provided by the Polish-German Foundation for Science and the University of Warsaw.

Organizational information

We invite you to submit proposals (an abstract of up to 300 words, including the author's name, affiliation and title, and a CV of up to 100 words) to statebuilding@uw.edu.pl by **25 September 2026**.

The organizers will reimburse travel expenses and provide accommodation at One Hotel Warsaw, in case that no own funding is available.

Organizing Committee

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