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Introduction

TransCanadiana 7, 7-10

2014-2015

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

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INTRODUCTION

How is Canada perceived abroad? Has it retained its capabilities to influence and inspire? What is the position of Canada in the complex global system? How does Canada construct the modern world and what constructs Canada's international image? These are the classical questions which Canadian international relations' scholars have asked since Canada became an independent actor on the global stage. In order to address these questions fully, however, one cannot focus merely on Canada's military and economic position. In the modern, globalized and interconnected world equally (if not more) relevant are factors of immaterial nature, which are collectively referred to as *soft power*. Joseph Samuel Nye, an American political scientist who coined the term 'soft power' in 1990, defines it as a country's "cultural and ideological attraction." This attraction may arise from (*inter alia*): "the openness of the culture to various ethnic minorities" and its popularity worldwide, "the values of democracy and human rights that exert international influence," "the openness to immigrants," political values, moral authority, the power of persuasion, diplomacy, an international reputation, intellectual achievements, or involvement in the creation of international institutions. In Nye's other words, *soft power* is exercised when "a country may obtain the outcomes it wants (...) because other countries – admiring its values, emulating its example, aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness – want to follow it" (5). *Soft power* is thus achieving goals by being attractive to others or exhibiting exemplary behaviour worth imitating.

Canada – "a Peaceful Kingdom" – has had a long history of using *soft power* elements in its foreign policy. Its positive image and fine international reputation in the world has been built by sticking to the rules of international law, membership in international organizations and commitment to international development agendas. Ottawa has a strong record of peacekeeping, promotion of human rights, multilateralism, and dispute

resolution. Canada has also been the foremost promoter of minority rights and gender equality and the first country in the world to proclaim multiculturalism as the state's official policy. Still leading in multiculturalism policy indexes, Canada attracts a large number of immigrants every year.

There is, however, a darker side of Canada's international image. Canada has recently been often criticized for squandering the reputation it has earned for decades as a promoter of climate change awareness and a global actor. Repeated criticism of Canada by the United Nations (for example for Quebec's language laws) has poisoned Canadian international image. Also, Canada's position as an environmentally sustainable country is being questioned due to its withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol (Canada was the first country to do so), large-scale and controversial seal hunting, as well as massive extraction of oil and gas from Alberta's tar sands.

Given all the above, we decided to devote the 7th volume of *TransCanadiana* to a discussion and an evaluation of the soft power of Canada. The authors of the articles collected in this issue use a broad spectrum of perspectives to look at the role, influence and perceptions of Canada's cultures, literature, media, politics and policies or ideologies in the modern world. As a whole the collection tries to assess if and to what extent contemporary Canada can be inspiring, admired, emulated or culturally and ideologically attractive.

The volume is divided into three sections. The first one, "Dimensions of Politics, Policies and History," contains four articles. **Frédéric Boily**, the author of the opening article, examining the political ideas of Harper's Conservatives, analyzes Harper's conceptions of the government and state's role and compares Canadian conservatism to the conservative ideologies in the so-called "Anglosphere" countries. Boily's paper attempts to answer the question to what degree the Canadian ideological landscape has changed after the Conservatives took power in Canada in 2006.

Magdalena Marczuk-Karbownik analyzes selected problems in Canada's transatlantic relations (with the European Union in particular) and presents the key moments and milestones of Canadian-European cooperation since the beginning of the 21st century. **Marczuk-Karbownik's** article also addresses Canada's initiatives concerning the recent crisis in Ukraine.

The two subsequent articles by **Jarema Słowiak** and **Jean-Michel Turcotte** use historical perspectives to assess how Canada inspired and shaped international relations during the Second World War and the post-war period. The former author focuses on the Canadian involvement in the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam. He analyzes the issue from the perspective of Canadian-Polish cooperation within the Commission. Not only does the author show the peculiarities of Polish perceptions of Canada, but he also argues that despite the predictions made before the

start of the activities of the Commission and profound ideological and political differences, the delegates of both countries were able to go beyond divisions and cooperate in a friendly, sometimes even cordial, manner. Turcotte, on the other hand, proposes an innovative approach to assess Canada's position among the Allied nations during the World War Two by showing Canada's leadership on the issue of prisoners of war (POWs). Canadian involvement, according to the author, inspired the improvement of the conditions of detention of German POWs.

The second section titled "Cultural and Linguistic Landscapes" opens with the article by **Magdalena Fiřtová** and **Barbora Polachová** discussing the use of cultural diplomacy as a means of *soft power* by Canadian governments in the years 1993-2012. The paper compares two contrasting Canadian identity narratives – liberal and conservative – and presents the recent decline of traditional role of cultural domain as a tool in Canada's foreign policymaking.

Following is the article by **Rafał Kuś**, in which the author underlines the uniqueness of the Canadian electronic media, whose national Canadian character is guaranteed by the protective legal provisions and regulations.

The problem of Canadian identity is further discussed by **Anna Chyla**. The perspective offered in her text concentrates on the hybrid nature of Franco-Ontarian cultural, gender and linguistic identity as illustrated in Lola Lemire Tostevin's novel *Frog Moon*. The paper examines challenges connected with the nature of national and cultural identity – problems that are by Chyla presented from a Canadian perspective – but which in fact are (to a large extent) of a universal character. Such results of intercultural contacts like deterritorialization, hybridity, dominance, otherness and alienation are, however, problems known and experienced far beyond Canada.

Józef Kwaterko, in turn, analyses how political and social ideologies shape the evolution of literature. The author focuses on selected *Québécois* writings from 19th to early 20th century to prove how political thoughts, ideologies and programs of Canadian and non-Canadian origin influenced the growth of resistance and dissident sentiments among the Quebec poets and novelists.

The last text in Section Two by **Tomasz Soroka** evaluates the relevance, effectiveness and the perceptions of Quebec's language policies. The author examines the reasons of criticism and negative reactions towards Quebec's language law, both inside and outside Canada. The article gives an overview of Quebec's language regulations, presenting them in historical, contemporary and comparative contexts. The author argues that the criticism and ridicule that Quebec often receives for its language policy is often undeserved and largely unfair.

The volume also contains selected parts of three M.A. theses which in past years received the PACS Nancy Burke Best M.A. Thesis Award.

Sylvia Bezak's dissertation on the Inuit commitment to ecology and climate changes, written at Jagiellonian University under the supervision of Prof. Anna Reczyńska, was given the award in 2012. In 2014, two awards were granted – to **Kamila Scheithauer (Niemiec)** for her thesis on *Struggle Against the Colonial Educational Legacy and the Process of Rediscovering Aboriginal Knowledge in Contemporary Canada* (supervisor: Prof. Eugenia Sojka, University of Silesia) and to Agata Sieroń (not included in this volume) for the dissertation supervised by Prof. Krzysztof Jarosz (University of Silesia) titled *Traduire la littérature québécoise postmoderne: problèmes traductologiques dans la traduction du Vengeur masqué contre les hommes-perchaudes de la Lune de François Blais*". PACS also recognized by honourable mention **Jagoda Tuz**'s thesis titled *The Hipster in Three Contemporary Canadian Novels*, supervised by Prof. Joanna Durczak and defended at the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin.

Canada's position in the global system and the Canadian abilities to affect and construct the modern world, as this volume intends to show, can be perceived, researched and debated from a wide spectrum of perspectives. Obviously, the fields where Canada manifests its global presence and influence are too plentiful and diverse to discuss them all in one volume of an academic journal. Nonetheless, the articles presented in this issue study Canadian attractiveness and potential in a number of crucial fields: politics, ideologies, culture, literature, education, media, language regulations, Aboriginal heritage, urban life. We thus believe that collectively the texts published here offer a fresh perspective in looking at how Canada has influenced (and has been influenced by) the outside world. We hope this issue will provide a reader with a broader image of the nature of and the challenges to Canada's *soft power*, and may open new ways of thinking about solutions not only to unique Canada's problems, but also to complex tensions the world has been facing in the recent years.

Works Cited :

Nye, Joseph S. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs, 2004.