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"THE BORDERLAND OF CULTURES" – SELF-IDENTIFICATION AND CONVERGENCE IN THE CULTURES OF THE BORDERLAND IN THE CONTEXT OF CULTURAL MOBILITY

Abstract

Purpose of the study: The aim of the study is an attempt to characterize borderland culture in the context of the Polish experience, the problems of self-identification of communities, and convergence in the cultures of the borderland. The main questions the present study strives to answer are: How is the concept of culture defined in the sphere of social sciences and humanities? What are the borderland cultures in the context of contemporary cultural migration and cultural mobility from the Polish perspective? What determines and shapes self-identification of the groups in borderland areas and approaching one culture to another?

Research methods: In this particular study, classical methods and techniques developed within the framework of humanities and social sciences were applied to approach the raised questions and to formulate conclusions. The basic method of the research was critical analysis of the subject related literature. To some extent, the comparative method has been also applied to indicate similarities and differences of the borderland cultures.

Results: In borderlands, there is a high frequency of interactions among people who represent different cultures. They are not limited to economic issues, but they also include some concerns of politics, faith, education, or art. When the intensity of the contacts and convergence in cultures are higher, there is a greater chance of the development of a specific border culture.

Conclusion: Advanced technologies lead to expansion of the information space, but at the same time, they cause processes of depersonalisation, the risk of selection, and processing information. Ethno-cultural groups that live in borderlands undergo processes of constant auto-identification in relation to their own group, and identification and categorisation in relation to the neighbouring group.

Keywords: *culture, borderland, civilization, territory, integration, globalization, tradition, community*

Introduction

The comprehension of culture in the colloquial sense usually comes down to some selected anthropological aspects. It is identified with the style or way of life of a given society and it is conceived as a phenomenon of the spiritual, intellectual, or artistic spheres. It is associated with the desirable achievement of a level of social development. Numerous representatives of social sciences and humanities examine the influence of tradition and modernity on culture. They also ponder over globalization and new information technologies, which reformulate and substitute the content of symbolic culture.

It is significant that currently the virtual space enables the development of sustained relationships and interactions. The concept of cultural space becomes a kind of metaphor, it acquires the different significance and new meaning. We traditionally link cultural communities with a specific territory. In fact, it is not the only way in which they evolve. Determinants of the emergence of cultures, such as interactions, the formed bonds, and the identity (sense of coherence and separation) that develops are not necessary linked to a territorially restricted location. The development of virtual space enables the real formation of social networks that can be characterized by the strong integration and a high degree of permanence. It might be observed that the space of cultural mobility is becoming wider. The presence of a territorial perception of the space affects the cultural imagination and the way many categories and concepts of the humanities and social sciences are defined. Therefore, an important feature of the above sciences today is the attempt at a new conceptualization of many categories (Korporowicz, 2021, p. 60; Opiłowska, 2019, p. 61).

Borderlands might be perceived as areas located at the interface of two or more countries where different communities with different ethnic and cultural characteristic come into contact. It should be also taken into account that borderlands may arise inland, they may constitute multicultural spaces being inhabited by culturally diverse communities. As a result of cross-border or transcultural contacts and migration process, specific traditions and cross-cultural and hybrid cultures can emerge in borderlands. However, it should be also considered that living at the cultural crossroads and interacting with the others might make the residents of borderlands aware of their, religious, cultural, moral, or linguistic differences. Being situated at the crossroads of diverse cultures may lead to isolation from the other communities and arise some conflicts.

The process of European integration introduced the new vision of borderlands, and the study of borderlands has been developing intensively for several decades. They are the object of many scientific disciplines, e.g. cultural studies, sociology, anthropology, or history. The undertaken research includes Europe-defined areas as well as the examination from the angle of a borderlands that conceives interactions focusing on trade relations, cooperation on migration, border security of Europe's Southern neighbors (Del Sarto, 2021). However, the analyses of borderlands are influenced by important political

developments and events, particularly refugee crisis, Brexit, or some attempts to set up autonomous districts or even nation-states, e.g. in Spain. Although, the process of Europeanisation and globalization introduced the vision of a borderless world into a scientific discourse, the borders have not disappeared.

It should be emphasized that definitions of borderland present in the subject-related literature show ambiguity and a multifaceted character of the phenomenon. Although some scenarios of the development of borderland cultures are indicated, it is necessary to take into closer consideration such phenomena as virtual space, globalization, and political development, because it may influence cultural and interactional factors. Therefore, some previous assumptions might be changed. Polish subject related literature is impressive (e.g. the works of Andrzej Sadowski, Jerzy Nikitorowicz, Zbigniew Kurcz, Andrzej Sakson, or Wojciech Łukowski). The overmentioned issue is also present in European and worldwide scientific discourse (see literature in Opiłowska, 2019, pp. 70-72).

The purpose of this publication is an attempt to characterize borderland culture in the context of the Polish experience, the problems of self-identification of communities, and convergence in the cultures of the borderland. Unfortunately, since the modest scope of this article does not allow for an exhaustive treatment of the subject, the present work is contributory in nature. The main questions the present study strives to answer are: How is the concept of culture defined in the sphere of social sciences and humanities? What are the borderland cultures in the context of contemporary cultural migration and cultural mobility from the Polish perspective? What determines and shapes self-identification of the groups in borderland areas and approaching one culture to another?

The work consists of two parts. Some selected positions relating to the definition of culture and the relationship between culture and civilization are presented in the first part of the article. The second part of the publication is devoted to multifaceted directions of research on borderland culture undertaken in Polish social sciences and humanities.

In this particular study, classical methods and techniques developed within the framework of humanities and social sciences were applied to approach the raised questions and to formulate conclusions. Therefore, the basic method of the research was critical analysis of the subject related literature.

To some extent, the comparative method has been also applied to indicate similarities and differences of the borderland cultures.

"Culture" – the ways of defining

It should be emphasized that *culture* is an imprecise concept and often valued ideologically. There is a wide variety of approaches to the definition of culture undertaken in Polish and worldwide science (Bartkowicz, 2009, p. 64) . Reflections on lifestyles, culture, and civilisation have provoked a great deal of controversy over the phenomena in the field of social sciences and humanities, particularly in sociology, the study of culture and religion, ethnology, or cultural studies. The review of positions concerning the concept of culture is taken up very frequently, and in a very broad manner in the subject related literature. Since the modest scope of this article does not allow for an exhaustive treatment of the subject, in the following text, there is presented a review of positions particularly relevant to the objectives of the present article (in the opinion of the author).

Professor Bronislaw Malinowski, one of the most famous Polish anthropologists and sociologists who lived at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, expressed the view that the culture is an organised human behaviour. Man depends on an artificially shaped environment and can produce things, amenities, and use them. He needs knowledge and technology, but also the help of other human beings, which means that he needs organised and well-ordered communities so as to live. Material, spiritual, and social equipment of a man can be technically described as culture. Culture in every generation is in some way created, but also it is processed by the people who are its participants. Culture as an entity is subject to certain laws, bout also as the determinant of human behaviour, it is a dynamic, causally determined reality. Therefore, it might be presumed that scientific laws relate to culture (Malinowski, 1937, p. 101). Bronisław Malinowski perceived culture as social heritage constituting an internally integrated whole with individual components performing a variety of functions, while at the same time, constituting an instrumental apparatus for the satisfaction of human needs. Cultural change would thus be the result of clashes or conflicts with other cultures.

Antonina Kłoskowska proposes a broad approach in order to define culture, emphasising that culture should be understood as a concept integrating anthropology and sociology of culture. She understands culture as a relatively integrated whole, which encompasses the behaviour of people, which takes place according to patterns developed and acquired in the course of interaction that are common to the social community, and includes the products of such behaviour (Kłoskowska, 1980, p. 40).

The sociologist distinguishes the culture of being, social culture, and symbolic culture (Kłoskowska, 1983, p. 67-81). It is interesting the importance she attaches to the symbolic culture, and particularly to autotelic values, which seems to be an important feature of the Polish sociology of culture, especially in comparison with the behaviourist approaches present in American psychoculturalism (e.g. Ralph Linton). For many authors, only symbolic culture – the third category – constitutes the core of culture. Symbolic culture is a sphere of activities, values, and autotelic experience (autotelic activities are activities that provide pleasure for an individual), not connected with satisfying human needs as biological beings and as members of society. Such phenomena of culture as those associated with arts, play, science, and religion might be placed here. They fulfil aesthetic, cognitive, and ludic functions which serve to sublimate the culture of being and social culture towards human creativity, not towards existential or historical coexistence. This culture it is not something beside social or material culture. It permeates all spheres of material and social human activities. The symbolic culture of a society is never uniform. The basic spheres of symbolic culture are religion, science, and play. The differentiations of symbolic culture is influenced by social and economic conditions, class divisions of the society, national diversity, and regional traditions (Gruchoła, 2010, p. 100).

Being inspired to some extent by the studies of Alfred Louis Kroeber and Clyde Klukhohn (Kroeber and Klukhohn, 1952, pp. 1-172; Boroch, 2013, pp. 18-20), Antonina Kłoskowska presents a typology of definitions of culture in her monograph *Sociology of Culture*. According to her, definitions of the term of culture undertaken in the worldwide science can be divided into: enumerative, historical (which emphasise traditions and cultural heritage), normative (which emphasise the imperative functions of culture),

psychological (which emphasise the mechanisms that give culture its shape, including the role of learning and the functions of adaptation), structuralist (which take into account the coherent nature of each individual culture, the integration of its components, the character focusing on the analysis of the cultures of individual societies), genetic (which particularly emphasize the social origins of culture, perceiving it as a product or result of social coexistence) (Kłoskowska, 1983, p. 20; Kłoskowska 1968, pp. 194-216).

The definition of Edward Burnett Tylor might be associated with enumerative explanations. The representative of evolutionist anthropology and creator of the evolutionist theory of culture, in his monograph *Primitive Culture* published in 1871, presents the opinion that development of all human cultures is similar and goes through some similar developmental stages (Tylor, 2010a, pp. 1-453; Tylor, 2010b, pp. 1-426). Norbert Elias (*Civilising Process*, 1939), Fernand Braudel (*Grammaire des Civilisations*, 1987), Stefan Czarnowski (*Kultura*, 1938), or Feliks Koneczny (*Cywilizacja bizantyńska*, 1973 posthumous ed.) put forward historical expressions of culture (Koneczny, 2006, pp. 1-470). So-called normative definitions of culture are presented by Talcott Parsons (*The Structure of Social Action*, 1937) – best known for its social action theory, and the representative of structural functionalism (Parsons, 1939, pp. 1-817). Johann Gottfried Herder (*Essay on Being*, 1763-1764) might be connected with psychological definitions of culture. Definitions of the genetic type (Karl Marks and other sociologists of the 20th century) indicate that the development of societies is governed by deterministic laws, and that studying these laws makes it possible to predict future changes (Bartkiewicz, 2009, p. 64).

It should be taken into closer consideration that Ruth Benedict with her work *Patterns of Culture* (1934) fits the mood of structuralist interpretations of culture (Benedict, 2005, pp. 1 – 290). American anthropologist advocates in her study looking at each culture from the angle of values and priorities. As a proponent of cultural holism, she is of the opinion that each culture, while consisting of elements that are interdependent, ultimately constitutes a coherent whole. Some patterns are then produced. They can be adopted and followed by different cultures. In *Patterns of Culture* she expresses her belief in cultural relativism.. She is of the opinion that each culture has its own moral imperatives. However, we are able to understand them if the culture is

studied as a whole. Others should not evaluate people only by their standards because morality is relative to the values in which one operates. The study on intercultural differences is very important. We can develop a certain distance and point of reference concerning our own culture, and do not view other cultures pejoratively. The cultural patterns developed by individual societies correspond to the values that emphasize community and become the foundations for determination of universal elements of culture. Behavioural patterns can be shaped because they are not determined biologically but imposed by the culture. Therefore, ethnocentrism should be rejected, and cultural relativism is proposed instead (Benedict, 2019, pp. 1-322). It is significant that the types of culture definitions outlined above should be considered as helpful in systematization of the research on cultural patterns.

It is significant that culture establishes the systems of values and criteria for defining a hierarchy of values. It also determines which patterns of behaviour are aspired to be by individual and collective, and which patterns should be rejected or condemned. It influences social life by establishing some models of behaviour. The influence of culture on the social life of individuals and communities is achieved trough various channels, e.g. through socialization and shaping the personality of individual, through the creation and establishment of values, through action patterns and patterns of behaviour, but also through the creation of models of institutions and social system (Szczepański, 1963, p. 54, Gruchoła, 2010, p. 112).

Professor Roman Tokarczyk, examining contemporary legal cultures where principles of law are components of legal cultures (Maroń, 2012, pp. 223-231), is of the opinion that culture can be defined taking into account its attributes, which means features flowing from its essence. These include intentionality, groupness, symbolic character, normativity, compulsiveness, adaptability, systemic character, autonomy, temporality, and spatiality (Tokarczyk, 2005, pp. 51-54). We can observe different attitudes referring to the need to compare cultures in the research community. Some researchers are of the opinion that comparison of cultures is not justified, as their distinctiveness has been determined on the basis of different factors. They express far-reaching scepticism towards this type of endeavour. In contrast, the proponents of cultural comparativism believe that the exploration of cultures is linked to the necessity of comparison.

However, cognitive objectivity must be maintained in doing so. Comparativism of cultures entails a research practice that uses various criteria for distinguishing and comparing cultures. Most often, specific features of cultural factors (components of culture once cultural ideas) and those that can be considered as non-cultural (such as territorial community) are taken into consideration (Tokarczyk 2005, p. 116). When considering the issue of culture, attention should be also paid to concepts such as subculture (subculture), superculture (superculture), counterculture or alternative culture.

It should be taken into account that there are some attempts to define the relationship between culture and civilisation at the plane of social sciences and humanities. In the perception of Roman Tokarczyk it is necessary to distinguish between culture and civilisation, therefore, it will be possible to undertake an evaluation and critique of culture from the point of view of civilisation or vice versa (Tokarczyk, 2008, p. 116). As far as the relationship between culture and civilization is concerned, there are three trends: some scientists link culture and civilisation and the two categories are even treated interchangeably; some researchers take into account the subordination of civilisation to culture; or civilisation is a phenomenon superior to culture (Bartkiewicz, 2009, p. 65).

Edward Burnett Tylor's view of culture and civilisation is that it is 'a complex whole' that encompasses morality, law, knowledge, beliefs, customs, habits, and abilities acquired by people who are the members of a society. In turn, in the view of the Polish philosopher Władysław Tatarkiewicz, civilisation is a separate conceptual category, where civilisation makes the modern world different from the original world, and culture makes modern people different from the original world. Taking into account that the distinction between culture and civilisation takes place, culture is often regarded as a measure of civilisation (Tokarczyk, 2005, pp. 37-38). According to Alfred Weber, there is a hierarchy of cultural values, describing social culture as an internal civilisation, and placing the spiritual sphere of cultural values higher than the sphere of being.

It should be taken into closer consideration that also so-called symbolic interactionism needs attention in the Polish reflection on culture. According to this sociological theory, the main mechanism in the context of formation of social structures might be the continuous exchange and evolution of symbolic

meanings that take place in all processes of interactions between the members of society. The main assumptions of symbolic interactionism are that people act on the basis of the meanings that things have for them, and that meanings come from interactions and are modified by their interpretation which is made by people in factual situations. Some types of cultural interactions are creative, and others conflictual. Consequently, it affects the communication of cultural heritage through different types of communicative and cultural competence (for mor about symbolic interactionism – Blumer, 2009; Konecki, Kacperczyk, 2010).

In the perception of Samuel P. Huntington, civilization represents the highest cultural grouping of human beings, and the broadest plane of cultural identity (Huntington, 2011, p. 51; Bednarczyk, 2017, p. 30; Karsznicki, 2014, p. 75; Miłoszewska, 2008, p. 3). Inspired by the model of culture and civilisation proposed by Weber, Norbert Elias modernizes it, and he proposes to treat the social system as a non-static entity, subject to development. He argues that the development of culture is a process in which people modify and adapt their behaviour and customs to social requirements. Civilization does not only distinguish the European societies, but it is the result of social development to which all societies are subjected (Elias, 1980, p. 7, 93). According to Felix Koneczny, civilization is divided into cultures, which are its varieties (Koneczny, 1935). Florian Znaniecki rejects the fact of civilisational development. He argues that civilisation is a historical sequence of behaviour and cultural values, and culture is subject to unlimited creative evolution. Therefore, civilization can be understood as the social integration of culture, and the universal civilization of the future should be governed by the ideals of humanism (Znaniecki, 1968, pp. 26-34).

Currently, there is also widespread discussion on societal security (Kowalczyk, 2018, p. 112). Societal security (as seen by the so-called Copenhagen School, which draws on the work of the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute), refers not only to the material dimension, e.g. in terms of the protection of monuments, but also to the immaterial dimension, which includes symbols, values, lifestyles, etc. Therefore, cultural security can be perceived as a dimension of the state security (Ziętek, 2013, p. 59).

Borderland culture

The term of *borderland* is multifaceted and ambiguous. In subject related literature, there is no consent concerning the definition. The reason is the specificity of the research area (Bobryk, 205b, p. 5; Chodubski, 2005, p. 57; Romanowicz, 2007, p. 87-88; Orłowska, 2005, p. 7; Opiłowska, 2019, p. 61). The term 'ethno-cultural' is often applied, although, the particular emphasis is not placed on the culture itself, but rather on cultural differences when outlining borderlands (Straczuk, 2006, p. 146). According to the definition included in *Słownik języka polskiego*, a borderland is an area close to the border separating certain space (sjp.pwn.pl/slowniki/pogranicze.html), and it offers the potential for interpretative diversity. Research on borderlands has become an important part of the research of the representatives of Polish sociology, especially of those who conduct research in scientific institutions located in borderlands. The confluence of two or more political-social systems, e.g. states or nations, and cultural entities marks the borderland area. Viewed from the angle of political and social organisation, a borderland represents a periphery situated away from the centre. The rank of the borderland seems to be rather marginal in the scale of the whole, but its importance is revealed when the stability of the political system is threatened (Wadowski, 2005, p. 11). Borderline issues are linked to the subject of multiculturalism, and multiculturalism in its broadest sense becomes one of the important challenges of the present day (Weres, 2012, p. 61). It should be also taken into consideration that some theoretical reflections on multiculturalism understood in a broad way are set in the context of globalisation and democratisation of life (Bieńkowska-Ptasznik, 2003).

In the context of problematic perspective, at least three conceptions of borderland have emerged in Polish science. Some researchers are of the opinion that the essence of a borderland is associated with the areas that are adjacent to political borders, inhabited by culturally diverse people, thus differentiating them from culturally homogeneous areas. The second group is of the opinion that a border region consists of both border areas (administrative borderlands) and areas on both sides of the border, which are transformed into social borderlands as a result of the mutual movement of people. The third position attaches the greatest importance to the territorial criterion, thus treating the

borderland as a territory located next to the border (Kurcz, 2008, pp. 19-27; Babiński, 1994, pp. 5-28).

It is significant that the potential for interpretative diversity of the term of borderland is great, however, Antonina Kłoskowska proposes a broad definition of a borderland as a territory located between two ethnic, national, or state areas, which is characterised by a certain 'mixing' of nationalities and ethnicities resulting from spatial proximity. A borderland here is a neighbourhood of national cultures, where previous cultural ties have not been completely broken, e.g. as a result of mixed marriages or ethnically mixed genealogy (Kłoskowska, 1996, p. 125).

In early 1990s, Andrzej Sadowski (representing the scientific community of Białystok) proposed defining borderland as a category encompassing the area where various forms of coexistence between representatives of two or more ethno-cultural groups come together, as well as the consequences of this coexistence, inter alia, in the form of a borderland man with his individual and group consciousness (Sadowski, 2020, p. 2). Three elements are highlighted here, namely a territory, a culturally diverse (mixed) nature of the inhabitants (inter-ethnic coexistence), and an identity of the borderland (the borderland man), which are structurally related to the category of borderland. The coexistence is to be considered here in a broad way, as historically and culturally complex forms of contact between ethno-cultural groups (Sadowski, 1992, pp. 5-6). The third category relates to the phenomenon of the interpenetration and overlapping of different cultural forms, resulting in a human being of two or more cultures with an inherent awareness (Sadowski, 1992, p. 6). The final version of the definition of the borderland proposed by Andrzej Sadowski at the beginning of the first decade of the 21st century,, seems to be multi-faceted. It characterizes the borderland as a category applied to define an area defined by a special relationship of the territory of representatives of two or more ethno-cultural communities in permanent contact with each other, equipped with identity, actions aimed at maintaining (appropriating) it, adapting it, as well as the results of these actions (Sadowski, 2008, pp. 23-24).

In Poland after 1989, along with the processes of democratization of the state, three directions of borderland research were developed. They concentrated on the eastern, southern, western and northern borders (Sadowski, 2003;

Lisiecki, 1993, pp. 107-109) . Since the beginning of the 1990s, the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship has also been subjected to research from the perspective of the borderland, in particular by Andrzej Sakson (Sakson, 1990; 1998; 2011) and Wojciech Łukowski (Łukowski, 1998; 2002). Some differences in research approaches may be the result of the different ethno-cultural structure of a given borderland. It was only in the early 1990s, when on a larger scale the empirical research was undertaken in our country. This was the result of the recognition that (as a result of border shifts after World War II) Poland did not become a homogeneous society, but socially and culturally diverse one.

It is interesting to consider that some eminent researchers initiated the reflection on the need for a new subdiscipline – the borderland sociology. Since 1992, *Pogranicze. Studia Społeczne* has been published in Białystok; since 1996, cyclical conferences has been organized in Zielona Góra (*Transgraniczność w perspektywie socjologicznej*); in 1997, Department of Borderland Sociology has been established at the University of Wrocław (Kurcz, 2011, p. 5). As changes occur, the attention of experts of the field is even focused on the emergence of a something new – a cross-border (Kurcz, 2011b, p. 5; Kurcz, 2011c, pp. 84-85). The consequences of mobility and open borders arouse great interest, and that field of multiethnicity and multiculturalism become popular. Polish scholars strive to determine how the Polish borders are changing in a civilizational perspective, and how the globalisation, political integration processes, economic relations, computerisation processes, and the establishment of a world-wide network influence the economic relations in borderlands. They are interested in the social integration process that takes place in border areas and the extent that borderlands remain linked to the centre of the country, especially in the perspective of European integration. Perhaps integration does not take place everywhere, and the new circumstances, resulting above all from material disparities, are more conducive to deepen divisions rather than to integrate (Kurcz, 2011b, p. 6).

It is significant that areas along national borders become places where different social and ethnic groups, representatives of different cultures, and people of different religions and political beliefs are brought together. These communities exert some influences on each other. In some cases, the impacts are so strong that they transform and modify a cultural entity which cannot be reduced to any established culture, therefore, we can conjecture about

a specific borderland culture. It is not only the amalgamation of elements of the culture of different communities, but it introduces an additional value by making use of elements of wider cultures, but combining them in different configurations, also giving them different meanings, and enriching them with its own specific content which has been shaped within its new framework. In this way, borderland culture constitutes a certain 'third value' (Wadowski, 2005, p. 12).

The peculiar character of the borderland culture and its formation is influenced by many factors. They intermingle, and they are related to each other to some extent. Dariusz Wadowski distinguished the following factors: the historical experience of mutual contacts; the intensity and scope of mutual contacts; the overlapping of differentiating factors such as economic status, social position, or religious affiliation; the intercultural distance, namely the degree to which elements of individual cultures match; the degree of similarity between the forms of economic and political life developed in wider societies; the way in which the borderland is perceived by wider society that means the degree of distinctiveness of the borderland; ideologies that concern, e.g. the place and purpose of one's own society, nation, or state among other nations, people, or countries, which are present in wider societies (Wadowski, 2005, pp. 12-16).

As far as the intensity and extent of interaction are concerned, in border areas there is a high frequency of interaction between people who represent different cultures. They are not limited to economic issues, but they also include some concerns of politics, faith, education, or art. When the intensity of the contacts and convergence in cultures are higher, there is a greater chance of the development of a specific border culture.

Collective memory of the communities living together in the border area is shaped by historical events, experiences from the past, which are subject to a certain selection and valuation, often very subjective. It may include both positive and negative experience, perceived through the prism of differently conceived historical or social realities, often resulting from the relations of superiority and inferiority of partners. At the same time, the content of collective memory is susceptible to being subjected to certain modifications due to the current social or political situation and experience of the past is selected. As for the overlapping of differentiating factors such as economic status, social position or religious affiliation, through differences in economic status and social distances

can increase, leading to conflicts, but ultimately still shaping the individual characteristics of the borderland (it should be noted that this phenomenon has been noticed in Polish borderlands, e.g. Belarusian or Ukrainian borderlands).

Intercultural distance, meaning the degree to which elements from the individual cultures fit together, refers to the fact that the elements of the cultures do not only differ, but also the configurations of these elements, their functions, and the meaning ascribed to them may be different. This may determine the emergence of intercultural distances, which in turn inspire the possibility of using elements from the individual cultures, and their influence on the shape of the border culture. Elements from one culture may penetrate into the other in a selective manner. It may concern the phenomena of a marginal and superficial nature, but at the same time, it may be the case that whole sets of cultural elements passed into the other culture, and the meanings ascribed to them are of a profound nature.

The degree of similarity between the forms of economic and political life developed in wider societies relates to the formation of borderland culture in relation to the organisational and political structures developed in individual societies. The relative autonomy of borderland culture in relation to the political sphere makes it possible to conclude that the above factor is relatively the factor with the weakest influence on the formation of borderland culture.

The degree of distinctiveness of the borderland, concerns the perception of borderland culture through the prism of its autonomy. On the one hand, borderland culture is often assimilated into the culture of the wider society so that its distinctiveness and specificity is weakened. This occurs when borderland culture is perceived as a certain threat to the cohesion of the state. In some societies, on the contrary, a high degree of autonomy of the borderland cultures is allowed, ascribing to them the factor that can increase the dynamics of social development on a state-wide scale by bringing in new content or cultural interpretation. In turn, the ideologies spread in a society, nation, or state, influence the openness or closeness towards the borderland cultures. The cultures that are closed and limited are certainly not in favour of the usually open borderland culture. This is also not beneficial for borderland cultures because it leads to their evaluation (Wadowski, 2005, pp. 12-15).

Some social interactions taking place in borderlands create favourable conditions for the situation that the ethno-cultural groups that live there undergo processes of constant construction and reconstruction in relation to their own group (self-identification) and the neighbouring group (identification, categorisation) (Sadowski, 2020, p. 7). It is important to distinguished here personal and communal levels of participation in cultural interactions. It should be taken into consideration that according to the research of Andrzej Sadowski, in borderlands self-identifications of the own group and, for the most part, categorisations of the neighbouring group continually produce or reproduce similarities and differentiations, respectively, which often go beyond objectified cultural similarities and differences (Sadowski, 2020, p. 7). Therefore, ethno-cultural stratification is constructed, which can cause divisions, tensions, or conflicts.

The communication of cultural heritage through different types of communicative and cultural competences influences the difference as far as the identification and identity of individuals are concerned. It is very significant particularly in the context of the dynamics and construction of 'patterns of culture'.

Conclusion

On the one hand, with the development of global communication networks, national borders are becoming open and permeable. It is worth to emphasize that borders between civilisations do not need to be of a territorial or spatial character. In the matter of the fact, the borders of civilisations go across the cyberspace of *'drifting' civilisational and subcivilizational communities* (Zagórski, 2011, p. 31). These borders set the scope of real and virtual civilisational practices, and their consequences for individuals or groups that fulfil their specific values. On the other hand, religious fundamentalisms and the practices of nation states that foster them remain significant barriers to bringing communities of civilisation closer together. Under the influence of globalisation, with the changing functions of nation-states and their borders, civilisational and other contemporary processes, with the need to collectively resolve some security problems that even the largest national societies and supranational bodies such as the European Union are not able to cope with,

and when the differences between national societies persist and grow, the importance of civilisational communities (and thus of the borders between them) increases (Zagórski, 2011, p. 13).

Communication, deterritorialization, creation of multimedia space using multiple media, the possibility of mobility in the media space for multiple actors as a result of advanced technologies, and the rapid penetration of messages where audiences are simultaneously diverse communities, become constrained and differentiated (Korporoowicz, 2021, p. 65). From this perspective, effective practices towards ensuring individuality, cultural rights, or the lack of interference in the processes of creating and protecting identity (which is seen as a value under threat) are important.

The operation of social bonds, which means some kind of identification of an individual with a group, is important in the context of the proper performance of a social life (Bobryk, 2005a, p. 43). A culture emerging in the borderlands, where tolerance is promoted in connection with responsibility and freedom, is to some extent a challenge for education and state policy (Nikitorowicz, 2001, p. 43). Neighbouring social systems need to create a positive climate approving the cultivation of regional distinctiveness in order to develop the borderland culture. The borderland culture is subjected to gradual evolution and, it benefits from wider cultural systems. Comprehensive measures aimed at the integral development of borderland culture can contribute to the enrichment of the culture of groups that meet in the borderland.

The globalisation trends of the contemporary world generate a high degree of the cultural mobility. The effect of this phenomenon can be the penetration as well as the convergence of cultures, which means approaching one culture to another. Elements from one culture may penetrate into the other in a selective manner. The peculiar character of a borderland culture and its formation is influenced by many factors. Ethno-cultural groups that live in borderlands undergo processes of constant auto-identification in relation to their own group, and identification and categorisation in relation to the neighbouring group. It is significant that some research show that multicultural thinking can be even treated as manifestation of human maturity. This is confirmed by the qualitative and quantitative research made by Anna Maria Jeznach who analysed multicultural thinking in the Polish realities (Jeznach, 2005, pp. 141-146).

It should be taken into closer consideration that globalisation processes stimulate the emergence of the international *cultural market*, which fosters the transformation of meanings ascribed to the own culture. In the context of the contemporary space of cultural mobility, it is significant that advanced technologies lead to the expansion of the information space, but at the same time, they cause processes of depersonalisation, processing, and selection of information, or the risk of misinterpretation. They might be some informal instruments in order to support or design the borderland cultures.

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