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**Cultural borderlands: borders, commonality of worlds,  
identity, and homeland connotations**

Przestrzeń pogranicza kulturowego: granice, uwspólnianie światów,  
tożsamościowe i ojczyźniane konotacje

**Abstract**

**Introduction.** One of the phenomena of contemporary multiculturalism is the constitution of a cultural borderland, marked by a multitude of constantly revealed and created internal(social) borders, which are characterised by overdetermination, polysemy, heterogeneity, and omnipresence. In this context, the process of commonality of worlds in the space of a cultural borderland, resulting in the construction of the order of this borderland, appears cognitively interesting. In the case of a cultural borderland in particular, we are dealing with a multiplicity of identities defined and realised to different extents. This, in turn, has an impact on the degree of distinctness of borders in social consciousness. As a result, the borderland appears as a dynamically interactive and discursive, multi-scalar place of proximity. In this regard, the national, socio-cultural, and intercultural

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contexts of this process are of paramount importance.

**Aim.** The object of the study is to provide an insight into the cultural borderland from a constructionist perspective, enabling the disclosure of its identity-related and homeland connotations, resulting from identifications taking place in the cultural borderland.

**Methods and materials.** Critical subject literature review.

**Results and conclusion.** The analysis revealed there are areas in which a multidimensional identity is constructed, embracing national, familial, state, transnational, and communal provenances. In its essence, such identity orientates towards the homeland space, which, in the cultural borderland, has an increasingly symbolic value and meaning and becomes a “place” where familiarity dominates over strangeness. As a result, the perceived homeland also takes on a multidimensional form, as the family homeland, the national homeland, and the small homeland are revealed. In the “borderland” person’s awareness and everyday life, these homelands can dominate each other individually or interpenetrate each other, creating a multifaceted homeland space.

**Keywords:** borders, cultural borderland, borderland order, socio-cultural space, identity, homeland.

### **Abstrakt**

**Wprowadzenie.** Jednym z fenomenów współczesnej wielokulturowości jest konstytuowanie się pogranicza kulturowego, wyznaczanego przez wielość ustawicznie ujawniających się i kreowanych wewnętrznych (społecznych) granic, dla których specyficznymi cechami są: naddeterminacja, polisemiczność, heterogeniczność i wszechobecność. Interesujący poznawczo w tym kontekście jest proces uwspólniania światów w przestrzeni pogranicza kulturowego skutkujący konstruowaniem porządku w tym miejscu. Tym bardziej że w przypadku pogranicza kulturowego mamy do czynienia z wielością tożsamości, które są w różnym zakresie zdefiniowane i uświadamiane, co wpływa na stopień wyrazistości granic w społecznej świadomości. W rezultacie pogranicze jawi się jako dynamicznie interaktywne i dyskursywne, jako wieloskalarne miejsce bliskości. Istotne są przy tym narodowe, społeczno-kulturowe oraz międzykulturowe konteksty tego procesu.

**Cel.** Celem opracowania jest spojrzenie na pogranicze kulturowe z perspektywy konstrukcjonistycznej, która pozwala na ujawnienie jego tożsamościowych oraz ojczyźnianych konotacji, będących efektem identyfikacji występujących na pograniczu kulturowym.

**Materiały i metody.** Przegląd i krytyczna analiza literatury przedmiotu.

**Wyniki i wnioski.** W wyniku przeprowadzonych analiz ujawniono przestrzenie, w których konstruowana jest wielowymiarowa tożsamość, mająca narodową, rodzinną, państwową, ponadnarodową i wspólnotową proveniencję. W swej istocie orientuje ona na ojczyźnianą przestrzeń, która na pograniczu kulturowym ma wartość i znaczenie coraz bardziej symboliczne i staje się miejscem, w którym swojskość dominuje nad obcością. W rezulta-

cie ojczyzna odczuwana przyjmuje również wielowymiarową postać, gdyż ujawniają się w niej ojczyzna rodzinno-domowa, narodowa oraz mała ojczyzna. W świadomości człowieka pogranicza i jego codzienności każda z tych ojczyzn może dominować lub mogą się one wzajemnie przenikać i tworzyć wielozakresową ojczyźnianą przestrzeń.

**Słowa kluczowe:** granice, pogranicze kulturowe, porządek pogranicza, przestrzeń społeczno-kulturowa, tożsamość, ojczyzna.

## **Introduction - the emergence and creation of borders in the cultural borderlands**

Modern man functions among and between many worlds. To a greater or lesser extent, they are close and familiar to him, but also alien and often threatening. He identifies them from the perspective of a particular place and a particular time, which saturate both individual and collective experiences. Attributive to these worlds are boundaries, which, as Étienne Balibar argues, have their own history and are not the same at every level. Their ambiguity is determined by three fundamental aspects. The first is the overdetermination according to which every border in its historicity

[...] is a combination of the demand for the rights of the people and the power of states, or lack thereof, cultural differences (often called “natural”) and economic interests, and so on. But what is less noted is that no political border is ever a simple demarcation between two states, but is always over-determined, and in this sense both sanctioned, doubled and relativised by other geopolitical divisions (Balibar, 2007, p. 320).

The historical overlapping of borders, their multiplication is, among other things, the result of differently conditioned boundary-setting, which can result, among other things, in ethnically distinct communities being incorporated into the society of the nation-state together with their mother places in the territorial sense and with the spaces specific to these places and in them objects to which a generationally determined meaning, significance and order has been ascribed. Indeed, ethnicity, according to Richard Jenkins (1997), is a kind of collective identity created in social interaction, during which a community of meanings is produced as a result of the dialectic between similarity and difference. However, they do not, as Eugeen Roosens notes, constitute separate cultural wholes. They never contain an overall observable culture, they are only a combination of certain characteristics which users attribute to themselves and consider important and which may be replaced by others over time (in: Straczuk, 2006).

Therefore, the indigenous character of a place is determined by whether a community associates with it “a system of knowledge, perceptions, values and rules of behaviour through which it identifies most fully with that particular area” (Wallis, 1990, p. 26). This gives rise to a sense of rootedness activating and making itself present in the construction of a collective identity. Such a state of affairs can (and usually does) lead to the internal stratification of the nation-state and the generation of new internal boundaries of ethnic provenance.

For this reason, the second aspect of the ambiguity of borders is related to their polysemy, meaning that they are not essentially the same for everyone. While the official character of a boundary (its materiality) makes it identical with itself and unquestionably unambiguous, its polysemy is determined by the nature in which it is crossed. As a result, two different boundaries within the same name are revealed. For example, if we are dealing with the otherness of people crossing borders, cultural differences influence the creation of new spaces. Their borders, on the one hand, provide a sense of a cultural security for both the majority and the minority and, on the other hand, their crossing causes new intercultural spaces to be created together with borders specific to them (Szerłağ, 2021). Indeed, cultural security is dualistic in nature, as it refers to the state sphere as well as the social sphere, i.e., the cultural security of individuals and communities, mainly nations, ethnic groups and faith communities (Hrynicki, 2014). Therefore, when cultural differences emerge that saturate the everyday life of these individuals and groups, the creation of an intercultural space and the definition of its boundaries become more important. It is distinguished from other spaces in which cultural differences are visible and give rise to various political, socio-cultural or economic consequences. Intercultural space, on the other hand, is identified as a functional whole which, as a result of the acceptance and taming of differences, becomes a community space in the cultural borderland.

This state of affairs leads towards the third aspect of the ambiguity of borders, namely their heterogeneity and ubiquity, which is reflected in the interpenetration of political, cultural or socio-economic borders. Thus, some borders, as É. Balibar, are no longer located at borders, but wherever selective controls are exercised. Consequently, these borders cannot be clearly located, which also means that they do not function in the same way in relation to things and persons. There is also unequal treatment for some people if they do not have the same social status due to their cultural difference. However, despite the polysemous nature of borders, they are idealised because they are imagined as places where different conceptions of the world and of human beings intersect and where choices have to be made – including the choice of self (Balibar, 2007). This state of affairs is symptomatic of cultural borderlands, which, due to their specificity, soften borders and make them permeable in reality and symbolically (Nikitorowicz, 2000).

Nowadays, with the cultural differentiation of states and societies, “borders have ceased to be purely external realities and have also become, or perhaps above all, what Fichte in *Reden an die deutsche Nation* magnificently called “internal borders”: *innere Grenzen*, that is, *invisible* borders, situated «everywhere and nowhere»” (Balibar, 2007, pp. 318, 320). The space in which these borders reveal themselves in this way is the borderland. Indeed, their internal character is determined by the following socio-cultural creators:

- A society that is a nationally dominant collective in a multicultural state, with the internal and external policies, legislation, economics, social order, culture and education appropriate to that state, with a specific (official and unofficial) orientation towards cultural differences and with an attitude towards citizens representing those differences.
- Groups with the status of ethnic groups, oriented towards their own community and more or less open to realities beyond the borders of their own group, formulate expectations of their needs and rights from the state, e.g. with regard to the preservation of their own language, customs and traditions, religion, protection and development of their own culture or civil, socio-economic, educational rights and freedoms, etc. It should be emphasised that groups of this kind are highly organised and integrated formations, and the ethnicity resulting from identification with them, according to Rogers Brubaker, is expressed not only within and through the group boundaries, but also in categories, schemas, knowledge, symbols, language, institutional and organisational forms or individual interactions, changing according to socio-cultural and political contexts as well as individual experiences (Brubaker, 2009).
- The historical past of each ethnic group, which, as a result of their location in a common territory, can be a source of conflicts of various natures, social distances or discrimination. The reverse can also occur – the past can be seen from the perspective of a community of destinies and therefore a shared (in certain dimensions) history.
- Social relations determined and dynamised by cultural similarities and differences, which are more or less accepted or rejected.

As a result, social boundaries are produced in the cultural borderlands, which, according to Fredrik Barth, due to their specific criteria, delimit individuals in a contractual space as members of a specific group and signal this to members of that group as well as to other people outside the group. In doing so, it should be emphasised that these criteria are based on socially ascribed and recognised cultural differences between members of one’s own and a foreign group and are socially organised. In this sense, internal boundaries (actively produced, sustained and re-established and therefore

historically and socially variable) should be considered as one aspect of the organisation of collective life (in: Lubaś, 2013). Such an organisation in a multinational state is specific to the borderland and its borderality. It is here, as Lech Witkowski notes, that the borderland

[...] becomes a way of outlining tangentiality, bilaterality at least, or multilateralism in terms of profiling phenomena in a way that naturally reveals the “polyformity” (multiformity) of the form in which they become available. The situation of contact with otherness, confrontation with it, but also the chance to enrich one’s own perspective thanks to at least a difficult experience, is at the heart of what I have called the universalism of the “borderland,” where universality does not impose or dictate anything, but only constitutes a situationally recurring culturally significant events [zdArzenia – zdErzenia] in the cross-section of human encounters, often putting us to the test of going beyond our own shell (Witkowski, 2023, pp. 20–21).

### **Cultural borderlands – commonality of worlds: border order**

The essence and dynamics of the borderland, as Andrzej Sadowski notes, are illustrated by certain of its autonomous features (Sadowski, 2008). One of them is treating the borderland as a social area that is a territory inhabited by a culturally diverse collective. Separate cultures or their autonomous parts are present in this space, which in turn leads to the generation of political, historical, ethnic, religious or other socio-cultural borders. They are realised by the members of the multicultural community and as such are their cultural equipment. Also characteristic of borderlands is the territorial bond that links culturally distinct communities to a specific place. In the representatives of these collectivities, it can manifest itself subjectively as a kind of moral obligation towards this territory, perceived as “my land.” Intercultural contacts of different configurations, intensity and character, as well as the content saturating its socio-cultural space, are also characteristic of the borderland. As a result, borderlandness becomes a dynamic dimension of the borderland, reflecting the multiplicity of individual and collective efforts to cross borders, thanks to which it is possible to create a new social order or, as A. Sadowski points out, a specific order of interpersonal relations, as well as new identities and cultural patterns. Following the author, it should be emphasised that

[...] in borderlands there is a multiplicity of identities, to varying degrees defined and realised, which affects the degree of clarity of existing boundaries in social consciousness. Clear identities imply clear boundaries of cultural group ranges,

and conversely, poorly articulated identities blur boundaries. In the long run, boundaries as institutions mark identities, but identities also mark boundaries by “reducing their complexity” to specific socio-spatial ranges (Sadowski, 2020, p. 9).

One must therefore agree with Akhil Gupta’s and James Ferguson’s thesis that the borderland is an interstitial area of displacement and deterritorialisation, shaping the identity of the hybrid subject. In this sense, it is a conceptualisation of the “normal” place of the postmodern subject (Gupta, Ferguson, 2006), where one comes to recognise, identify and classify other people, construct sameness and difference, and “encode” and make sense of one’s actions, filtered through ethnicity and national belonging (Brubaker, 2009).

This borderland and this identity can consequently be considered as mutually constructive and constitutive, dynamically interactive and discursive, and as practical categories of becoming subject to (re)interpretation and (re)construction in a specific place. The borderland thus takes on the form of a multiscalar site of proximity, a kind of zone of contestation, communication and becoming, where different actors (individuals, groups, institutions) engage in the re-narration and reconstruction of place and identity, underpinned by social processes of identification (Kaiser, Nikiforova, 2006).

Therefore, “[...] any discussion of borders is precisely about the institution of specific identities: national and other” (Balibar, 2007, p. 318). This is because the construction of identities takes place in a contractual space created by social relations that give a sense of belonging to a group and a shared group identity. As it follows from the above, and as F. Barth also points out, it is the boundary that defines the group and not the cultural content it encapsulates, as it is a spontaneously emerging aspect of the social organisation of human collectivities (in: Lubaś, 2013). According to Józef Obrębski, to whom Justyna Straczuk refers, an ethnic group exists “[...] only insofar as it exists in the consciousness of those who belong to it and those who, belonging to other similar groups, exclude themselves from it. Like any social group, an ethnic group is an imaginary creation, not a concrete one” (Straczuk, 2006, p. 152), while ethnicity itself is a specific way of perceiving and thinking (Gil-White, 2005). As a result, it is not a fixed and immutable creation. For this reason, cultural difference only reveals itself or intensifies as a result of the establishment of an intergroup boundary. As J. Straczuk points out, group culture and forms of social organisation can change without violating this boundary (Straczuk, 2006). In its essence, according to F. Barth, it contains three components. The first is the cognitive element, expressed in the categorisation and conceptual dichotomies of the elements of culture, through which it is possible to distinguish

the bearers of one's cultural traits from the bearers of foreign traits. The second element reveals the normative character of the border, as it provides the norms and rules that define the nature of the social relations expressed in the relationship "one's own" and "one's alien." The third element, on the other hand, is expressive and communicative, denoting the border as a symbol, a sign of belonging to a particular group (in: Lubaś, 2013). These can therefore be considered as premises for the organisation and management of cultural differences in the cultural borderland. As a consequence, processes of attributing ethnic connotations to cultural differences on the one hand and processes of differentiation and commonality on the other are triggered (Straczuk, 2006). In the first case, ethnic demarcation occurs, resulting in the separation and exposure of ethnic groups and their encapsulation within political, social or cultural boundaries. In the second case, on the other hand, as a result of differentiation and commonality, there is the generation of boundaries delimiting an intercultural system, a certain functional whole in which elements of different cultures co-occur within the same place, in individual and group identifications and references. In such a case, cultural difference, as J. Straczuk notes,

[...] becomes an internal category of the world, rather than a boundary dividing two worlds. It is under such conditions that the "cultural amalgamation" that is the hallmark of the borderland can occur [...]. The common space of everyday life tames and habituates the otherness, so that the difference often becomes invisible and unconscious, becoming a natural phenomenon (Straczuk, 2006, pp. 161–162).

For this reason, the existence of individuals and groups that are "in-between" gives rise to the construction of something new, different and common at the same time, and therefore a new quality of functioning of the whole, in which the order of the borderland is revealed, combining "[...] the mechanism of balancing and oscillation in a dual link that integrates and at the same time dislocates structural dominants" (Witkowski, 2023, p. 34). Adopting a constructionist perspective in the discovery and understanding of the borderland (Sadowski, 2020) makes it possible to reveal not only the dynamism of its borderlandness, but also the dominant elements structuring and conceptualising the dimensions of the intercultural space, together with the symptomatic tendencies focusing on them in the process of integration of a multicultural society. This kind of approach, according to J. Straczuk, "[...] makes it possible to approach the problem from the inside, so to speak, from the perspective of the subject of the study, i.e., the borderland inhabitants themselves and the conceptual categories developed by them concerning the world in which they live" (Straczuk, 2006, p. 162). Thanks to this, it was possible to reveal the levels of integration taking place



in the cultural borderland, namely: the construction of individual and collective identity (multidimensional identity), dialogical-patriotic, communal, civic and integrative readiness, which is saturated by civic, patriotic, teleological-communal predicates and the transnational identity made present in the process of this integration (Szerłaq, 2021). These form a multidimensional whole, specific to the borderland, which is characterised by relative constancy and a predictable direction of development. On the other hand, in the case of factors triggering change in this whole, an amalgamation mechanism is triggered, which leads to the emergence of a new quality in it, without, at the same time, disturbing the order of the borderland developed through collective efforts (also in a historical perspective).

### **Identity identifications in the cultural borderland space and its homeland dimension**

Space, which is produced by individuals, groups and human collectives, is

[...] historically shaped, territorially closed, changing in time, in the material and non-material dimension multifaceted, complex structure and system of connections and relations between people, then, besides the identification of ties between individuals, human groups, equally important are the relations with the physical space. The socio-cultural closure of socio-cultural space is primarily reflected at the local and regional level. The high inertia of the formation of socio-cultural space results in its poor conformity to the course of political-administrative borders (Runge, 2023, p. 36).

This is the form a space acquires as a result of being socially marked by certain emotions, feelings and values, as a result of which it acquires a certain intrinsic value and conditions the possibilities of human action (Jałowiecki, 2010). In the case of a cultural borderland, it reveals itself through its culture, which

[...] overcomes boundaries, making them developmental and life-giving by moving from reaction to interaction, from closure to opening. By noticing each other, taking an interest in each other, embracing cooperation, constantly discovering and experiencing each other, dialoguing and negotiating, while developing the ability to defend and protect one's own patterns, norms and values, a contemporary multidimensional human being is created, constantly developing the ability to function at social, cultural, psychological, intellectual, artistic or political boundaries (Nikitorowicz, 2017, pp. 141–142).

The cultural borderland space can therefore be considered as a conceptual reference for the cultural identification processes of both individuals and ethnic groups, resulting in the formation of a multifaceted and multidimensional identity. This kind of identity should be considered

[...] as a creative effort by the subject to alleviate tensions and contradictions between fixed, inherited elements resulting from social rooting in family and community, identification with significant individuals and groups, indigenous symbols and values, and variable, acquired elements resulting from reactions and interactions, social roles and positions, and experiences of participation in a multicultural world. The result is a set of distinctive qualities of varying quality in the form of overlapping ranges and layers. In this collection, constructed from multiple elements, a cohesive whole can be discerned, logically and factually ordered elements that are interrelated, interdependent but not in dynamic relationship with each other (Nikitorowicz, 2017, pp. 347–348).

The identity so understood is constructed by dimensions, revealed by the application of the constructionist perspective in the study of the cultural borderland, of provenience: national – also of a dual nature; familial – for which the cultural system of the family, and in particular language and religion and dialogue as a value, is the anchor; state – and in it civic competence and dialogue values; transnational – for which patriotic values and the intercultural integration of a multicultural society are specific; communal – this is the dimension of identity conceptualised by religious and communal values (Szerłąg, 2021).

A multidimensional identity is thus created in the cultural borderland in relation to:

- national culture of the state identified from a historical and contemporary perspective;
- the culture of one's own nation building national self-awareness (mother tongue, ancestral cultural heritage, faith);
- the socio-cultural status of the family, its situation as perceived from a social perspective and the social attitudes manifested towards it, and the culture of the family, saturated by the ethnicity and cultural heritage of its own ancestors;
- the quality of social relations occurring at the cultural interface (mainly in the familiar local environment);
- borderland culture (resulting from the interpenetration of cultures or the creation of a new transnational culture), saturated by interculturalism made present in the everyday life of individuals and groups through borderland axiology and, in the case of members of ethnic groups recognised as minority in relation to the dominant collective, also through nationally dual identification (Szerłąg, 2021; Wei, 2016; Hardwick, Mansfield, 2009).

It is in the multidimensionality of this identity, therefore, that the premises for the commonality of the space at the cultural interface, in which cultural inbreeding and openness are revealed at the same time, evolving towards coexistence and togetherness of the borderland community, should be sought. Specific to the latter is the learning of understanding, agreement and tolerance, as well as the need to get to know each other, to cooperate and dialogue in order to preserve and shape peaceful solutions (Nikitorowicz, 2020), which saturate the community expressing itself through the affective relations of its members identifying themselves with shared values, norms and meanings, as well as with a common history and identity. At the same time, it should be emphasised that a specific feature of a community understood in this way is its responsiveness (Jaskuła, 2021), which serves the formation of a sense of bonding and social integration of people of the cultural borderland, as it allows for mutual communication despite differences (Misiejuk, 2021). It is not without reason, therefore, that communities of this kind are considered, according to Jan Szczepański, to be sources of self-worth and the value of fellow members of these communities. For the value of a human being derives from a sense of solidarity with the narrower collectivity in, for and by which he or she lives (Szczepański, 1984). As Jan Kazimierz Przybyłowski emphasises, identity is shaped in internal and external relations and tends to seek “[...] «unity and similarity» in internal relations and «otherness and diversity» in external relations” (Przybyłowski, 2021, pp. 59–60), particularly from the perspective of what unites rather than divides. Thus, as Susan W. Hardwick and Ginger Mansfield argue, by being reflexive and symbolic, identity makes it possible to name and identify oneself in specific terms, in relation to others, in order to be able to exist in the situations experienced and their socio-cultural contexts, especially in terms of perceived and denoted similarities and differences, values or roles of the individual in confrontation with the roles of others. It is thus symptomatic of identity that it is sensitive to different contexts and at the same time (re)constructed through relationships with others and is internally and externally divided and multiple (Hardwick, Mansfield, 2009). Thus, experienced unity and similarity as well as otherness and diversity conceptualise together a multidimensional identity and reveal in it, among other things, the paternal dimension of the cultural borderland space. With regard to this dimension, it should be emphasised that the homeland (the land of the fathers) has an increasingly symbolic value and meaning, it is a “place” where familiarity dominates over strangeness (Lalak, Pilch, 2008). Therefore, it can be understood “as a correlate of certain psychological attitudes that are part of the cultural heritage of a social group” (Ossowski, 1946, p. 159). Thus, in its essence, it refers to the national territory (since it is a legacy of the fathers), but also to the state and all cultural values. For, as Krzysztof Wielecki notes, the state is the institutional form of life of a nation or nations, identifying themselves with a common homeland, which is expressed in a common material and spiritual heritage,

including cultural heritage, and which are linked by cultural, emotional, economic and historical ties (Wielecki, 2021). In this context, it is important to draw attention to the two faces of the homeland, namely the private and the ideological.

The private homeland is different for different members of the nation, and its scope may be narrower or broader. The ideological homeland is the same for everyone, because it is ascribed to the whole nation. Everyone who participates in the national collectivity is bound to it – according to the national ideology – equally, unless ideological divergences come into play; but then every active patriot strives to impose his conception of the fatherland on the whole nation, for this his fatherland is conceived by him as the universal fatherland, even if it does not agree with the universal fatherland of other patriots (Ossowski, 1946, pp. 162–163).

Thus, it is not without reason that it signifies “[...] a specific human collectivity, referred to by the ambiguous term nation, land, i.e. territory, history, spiritual and material heritage, customs, traditions, beliefs, axiological principles and rules, and an approving state of consciousness for perceiving oneself and the community as one’s own space of living and experiencing” (Lalak, Pilch, 2008, p. 11). A category that seems to be relevant to identification with the homeland and the nation is the sense of belonging, which in the case of the cultural borderland reveals different kinds of homeland configurations. For one can

[...] not to recognise one’s new homeland and nation, or to feel no connection with the old one, or to feel a dual belonging. This is a matter of emotion and state of consciousness. This does not change the fact that one bears the consequences of coming from somewhere else for at least two generations and, whether one wants to or not, one benefits from the heritage of the former homeland. Our experience is always influenced by the culture in which we, our parents and grandparents, social position, economic conditions, traditions, lifestyles, superstitions, beliefs, the language of our ancestors, and perhaps our own past (Wielecki, 2021, p. 22) were raised.

Thus, with the occurrence of multiculturalism, according to Magdalena Lemańczyk, diverse levels of identification with the homeland, complex national and ethnic self-identifications, different organisational cultures, values and attitudes, etc. are revealed. Nevertheless, the homeland has a cultural value, shaping and sustaining group, identification or symbolic bonds (Lemańczyk, 2014). The key process through which the homeland dimension of the cultural borderland can be revealed is identification gaining three main connotations in the cultural borderland (Szerłąg, 2021). The first

of these can be described as national, as it is conceptualised by a sense of national belonging, which can be regarded as the fundamental motive regulating its action both in relation to one's own national group and to a different one. For this reason, the sense of belonging can take different forms, expressed in relation to one's own national group, to the nationally dominant group or to each of these groups simultaneously. In the last case, we are talking about a sense of national dualism, which on the one hand can manifest itself in subjective attitudes relating to one's own cultural group, also in the awareness of a certain separateness from strangers and in a sense of connection with a group of one's own, as well as in an awareness of the continuity, historical continuity of this group and its collective filiation. On the other hand, in the subjective attitudes manifested towards the nationally dominant group with which one remains in everyday relations in a specific place peculiar to it. The indicated configurations of the sense of national belonging oscillate towards the homeland experienced in three ways: the family-home homeland, called the family nest, the fatherland, the motherland, the national homeland, perceived from the perspective of one's own belonging to the national community, while in the case of experiencing national dualism also from the perspective of the country of birth and origin (it is a dual national homeland, internally coherent), and also towards a small (local, regional) homeland, resulting from a sense of spatial proximity and familiarity built in a specific place by generations and giving a sense of rootedness. In the consciousness of a borderland person, these homelands can reveal themselves individually or interpenetrate each other and create a multifaceted homeland space.

The second connotation of the identification process occurring in the cultural borderland is of a socio-cultural nature. The second connotation of the identification process occurring in the cultural borderland is of a socio-cultural nature, as it is composed of civic obligations towards the state, expressed in particular in the display of civic activity and patriotic attitudes, as well as family acculturation models, mainly the national-intercultural model, within which there is an orientation towards the content of one's own national culture with a simultaneous openness to other cultures, and the hybrid model reflecting the mixing/penetration of cultures in family life. The third connotation of the aforementioned identification process, on the other hand, is decidedly intercultural in nature, as its components are dialogue, cultural borderland axiology and borderland culture. Dialogue is seen here as a means of knowing and understanding other cultures, expressing openness, transcending internal boundaries or protecting a common cultural heritage and building an axiology of coexistence in the cultural borderland. In turn, the values to which individuals functioning in the conditions of this borderland ascribe importance include: transnational values (respect for the common cultural heritage, transnational understanding, cultural community and its well-being, familiarity), intercultural values (tolerance, openness to other

cultures, cooperation despite differences, understanding), and civic values (respect for the national homeland, patriotism, citizenship). Values oriented in this way expose commonality in the cultural borderland and foster the building of order and its culture, which “(...) poses a difficult task for contemporary man to shape identity, prepare for identity choices and build reality together with respect for the differences of the partners involved in this process” (Nikitorowicz, 2017, p. 163). As can be seen from the above, the indicated types of connotations of identification made in the cultural borderland create the boundaries of interpenetrating spaces – homeland, socio-cultural and community – in which and from the perspective of which identity and the homeland world of the borderland man are constructed. The following fragment of a poem by Irena Pietrulewicz (1996) (a poem donated from a private collection by I. Pietrulewicz, a folk poet from the Vilnius region) is an illustration of their anchoring in the cultural borderland.

*Each of us with our mother's blood and milk  
He absorbed his lineage, his background.  
Although subconsciously, he already had a nationality  
Even before birth.  
Is it now fair to change something in the content of  
By lineage and blood instilled in us?  
For even in the name of wealth and honour,  
This is unjustified.  
So let's give the children what we have to give:  
Homeland, nationality, surname, first name,  
And also culture, mother tongue  
So beautiful and close to the heart.  
(I say Polish because we are Polish,  
in other nations means the same thing).  
Who gave us this right today  
A native despise speech,  
Teach children in another language,  
Where national identity will be lost.  
As it used to be with the soviet:  
“Я - только в русскую!” – and what came of it  
You know it well!  
Nothing is lost by a statement like this:  
“I love my homeland Lithuania –  
But I am Polish.”  
For what is a man worth without lineage and tribe,  
What to boast about, to shield, where to seek understanding?*

The poet's stanzas expose two main elements that are part of the identity-war dimension of the cultural borderland. These are: generationally shaped awareness of national belonging – nurtured and realised through the presence of cultural heritage in everyday life, and national identity – also dualistically felt and constructed. Thus, one can risk stating that self-identification and community-building in the cultural borderland has a decidedly identity-native connotation, in which an intercultural component is also revealed as a peculiar bonding agent for them.

## Conclusion

In order to discover and understand the cultural borderland as a “place” and its space, it is extremely important to adopt the perspective of the borderland inhabitants themselves, who in their own way recognise, understand, make sense of and conceptualise their multicultural world. Getting to know it allows one to see its internal boundaries revealing the spaces where the processes of commonality and construction of the borderland order take place. This is all the more so because in a cultural borderland we are dealing with a multiplicity of identities and a polyphony of socio-cultural identifications. A reflection on the space of a cultural borderland oriented in this way thus reveals aspects of the borderland that escape disclosure and viewing in a different optic of cognition.

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