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## “Nodes” in the Intercultural Network of Cultural Borderlands

### „Węzły” w międzykulturowej sieci pogranicza kulturowego

#### Abstract

**Introduction.** A perspective on cultural borderlands through the prism of their specific social environment reveals a cultural diversity constantly produced and reproduced due to social interactions taking place within them. The borderland becomes an inter-nodal area of movement and deterritorialization, a multi-scalar place of proximity, communication, identification, transformation, and universalization. Its inherent multifaceted contact generates a polyphony of phenomena of diverse forms, which, in various configurations, saturate the reality of the cultural borderland, i.e., a social organization in the structure of a network anchored by symptomatic nodes. This type of network is open and subject to constant modification due to the functions performed by nodes, namely: aggregative, structuring, exclusive, and augmentative. This is accompanied by processes of differentiation and commonality, creating a specific cultural system focused on interculturality.

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**Aim.** The aim of this study is to identify nodes in the intercultural network of cultural borderlands and indicate the integrative role of interculturality in the process of creating a community in a culturally diverse society.

**Methods and materials.** A review and critical analysis of the subject literature carried out from a constructivist perspective.

**Results.** As a result of the analyses, nodes in the intercultural network of cultural borderlands were identified: communicative-interactive, local-familiar, national-patriotic, and civic-patriotic. Revealing significant spheres within cultural diversity, processes of (self)identification of borderland residents take place, their identities are constructed, and an intercultural community is built.

**Keywords:** social organization of cultural borderlands, transformation, universalization, network, network nodes, intercultural community.

### **Abstrakt**

**Wprowadzenie.** Spojrzenie na pogranicze kulturowe przez pryzmat specyficznego dla niego środowiska społecznego ujawnia zróżnicowanie kulturowe nieustannie produkowane i reprodukowane w wyniku zachodzących na nim interakcji społecznych. W efekcie pogranicze staje się międzywęzłowym obszarem przemieszczania i deterytorializacji, wieloskalnym miejscem bliskości, komunikacji, identyfikacji, transformacji oraz uniwersalizacji. Właściwa mu wielostronna styczność generuje polifonię zjawisk o wielosztatnej postaci, które w różnych konfiguracjach wysycają realność pogranicza kulturowego, czynią z niego swoistą organizację społeczną i nadają mu strukturę sieci mocowanej węzłami symptomatycznymi dla niej. Tego rodzaju sieć ma charakter otwarty i podlega nieustannym modyfikacjom na skutek funkcji, jakie pełnią w niej te węzły, a mianowicie: agregacyjnej, strukturyzującej, ekskluzywnej oraz augmentacyjnej. Towarzyszą temu procesy odróżniania i uwspólniania, tworzące swoisty układ kulturowy ogniskujący się w międzykulturowości.

**Cel.** Celem opracowania jest zidentyfikowanie węzłów w międzykulturowej sieci pogranicza kulturowego, aby wskazać na integracyjną rolę międzykulturowości w procesie tworzenia wspólnoty w społeczeństwie zróżnicowanym kulturowo.

**Metody i materiały.** Przegląd i krytyczna analiza literatury przedmiotu dokonana w perspektywie konstrukcjonistycznej.

**Wyniki.** W wyniku przeprowadzonych analiz wyszczególniono następujące węzły w międzykulturowej sieci pogranicza kulturowego: komunikacyjno-interakcyjny, lokalno-swojski, wspólnotowy, narodowo-ojczyźniany oraz obywatelsko-patriotyczny. W swej istocie ujawniają one znaczące sfery pośród różnorodności kulturowej, w odniesieniu do których dokonują się procesy (auto)identyfikacji mieszkańców pogranicza, konstruowane są ich tożsamości oraz budowana jest międzykulturowa wspólnota.

**Słowa kluczowe:** społeczna organizacja pogranicza kulturowego, transformacja, uniwersalizacja, sieć, węzły sieciowe, międzykulturowa wspólnota.

### **Social organisation in the cultural borderland: variability and complementarity**

If one looks at a cultural borderland through the prism of its specific social environment, according to Frederik Barth, the ethnic groups operating in it can be ascribed the status of a social organisation whose characteristics are changeability and complementarity. This is because each ethnic group, as an element of this organisation, maintains its own ethnic boundary through the attribution and exclusion of individuals, and the cultural characteristics that define its boundary, its group members or its organisational forms can change (Barth, 2006). Importantly

[...] an ethnic border organises social life – it entails, often to a large extent, a complex organisation of behaviour and social relations. [...] For the maintenance of ethnic boundaries, situations of social contact between people from different cultures are also of great importance: ethnic groups persist as meaningful entities only if belonging to them entails the persistence of cultural differences (Barth, 2006, p. 354).

In doing so, it is important to emphasise that the interdependencies that exist between ethnic groups, as part of the wider social system, are based on the

[...] on the complementarity of these groups while taking into account some of their cultural characteristics. Such complementarity can increase the level of interdependence or symbiosis and create spheres in which the cultural characteristics of the respective groups can be expressed, whereas in spheres where such complementarity is not present, the conditions for the creation of organisations based on ethnic boundaries do not exist either – then social interactions will not take place either, or in these interactions actors will not refer to ethnic identities (Barth, 2006, pp. 357–358).

Within an organisation formed in a cultural borderland, there are

[...] processes of *differentiation* and *commonality* that result in a peculiar cultural arrangement in the area, where elements of different traditions co-occur – within the same region, the same locality, the same family, the same person.

Borderland cultures make up a whole not only by mixing different cultural threads, but also often bear the mark of *transience* – they form a peculiar cultural agglomerate, so that it is not even possible to assign individual characteristics to any of the contact areas (Straczuk, 2006, p. 157).

The social organisation of a cultural borderland with an ethnic provenance is thus constructed taking into account the variability and complementarity at the same time revealed in the relations taking place between members of different ethnic groups. As a result, cultural differentiation is constantly produced and reproduced as a result of social interaction (Jenkins, 1997). This occurs as a result of the open and changing nature of the borderland, which is an interstitial area of displacement and deterritorialisation, shaping the identity of the hybrid subject, in the space of which other people are recognised, identified and classified, identities are constructed and “coded,” as a result, their own actions are made meaningful, filtered through ethnicity and nationality (Brubaker, 2009).

The cultural borderland thus becomes a multiscalar site of proximity, a kind of space of contestation, communication and becoming, where different subjects engage in a re-narration and reconstruction of place and identity, saturated by social processes that are essentially linked to identification (Kaiser, Nikiforova, 2006), which takes place in the cultural borderland in two forms. Well,

[...] borderland ethno-cultural groups undergo processes of continuous construction and reconstruction in relation to both their own group (self-identification) and their neighbouring group (-theirs) (identification, categorisation). [...] In borderlands, respectively self-identifications of the own group and predominantly categorisations of the neighbouring group constantly produce or reproduce similarities and differentiations, respectively, which often go far beyond objectified cultural similarities and differences (Sadowski, 2020, p. 7).

They are defined in relation to the culture of each ethnic group (usually from the perspective of their own group’s culture in confrontation with that of another group), which may also be changing. In this context, the importance of

[...] a vision of culture that emphasises the importance of access to places saturated with difference, where the border, rather than preventing or hindering the encounter, becomes a means of outlining tangibility, bilateralism, or at least multilateralism in terms of profiling phenomena in a way that naturally reveals the “polymorphism” (multiformity) of the form in which they become accessible. The situation of contact with otherness, confrontation with it, but also the chance

to enrich one’s own perspective thanks to even a difficult experience, is at the heart of what I have called “borderland universalism,” where universality does not impose or dictate anything, but only constitutes a situationally recurring culturally significant incidents (encounters) often putting us to the test of going beyond our own shell (Witkowski, 2023, pp. 20–21).

Thus, one has to agree with F. Barth that categories

[...] provide a kind of organisational vessel in which different amounts and forms of cultural “content” can be accommodated in different socio-cultural systems. They may have great influence on human behaviour or they may not; they may permeate the whole of social life or be relevant in limited sectors of activity (Barth, 2006, p. 353).

In the above context, attention should be drawn to the transformation processes taking place in the space of the cultural borderland, which, despite being a place saturated with difference, enables bilateral or multilateral profiling of experienced, culturally diverse phenomena and their universalisation. This profiling can be seen as an activity oriented towards the transformation of the borderland by isolating the objects involved, “[...] which promotes the confusion of ‘everything with everything.’ [...] Finally, by transforming the world, human subjects transform themselves, but these transformations are most often silent (*silencieuses*)” (Barbier, Marynowicz-Hetka, 2021, p. 16). Therefore, transformative activity oriented directly towards another (*versus* another) can be analysed, according to Lech Witkowski, in three categories symptomatic of it: object-oriented (interactions “for”), subject-oriented (interactions “for”) and interactional (interactions “with”), which construct “situations or process states in which the relation of who/what one acts towards is crucial” (Witkowski, 2020, p. 3). However, this requires an awareness, especially within the framework of self-identifications and categorisations made in a culturally diverse borderland space, of the relationship between the dimensions of what is right, what is different and what is one’s own. This awareness is needed in order to direct the dialogue and move

[...] from the dominance of the power of persuasion, reducing difference, to understanding another’s voice, to giving oneself food for thought by encountering a point of view outside the repertoire of previously available means of understanding oneself. [...] In the second variant, the praise of tolerance can be reduced to an implicit indifference and a refusal to take someone seriously. In the third variant, the affirmation of the value of the encounter with the other can be relegated to a self-interested usefulness in an ad hoc perspective. Meanwhile, openness to the trans-

formation of the long term requires “creative adaptation” in the form of working towards a “distant task” with no guarantee of success (Witkowski, 2020, p. 7).

Significantly, a real encounter with the other, as L. Witkowski (2020) notes, with the readiness to engage in a community of dialogue for everyone, can become an opportunity for a transformation in the perception and understanding of oneself, but also for a non-personal transformation in the local perspective, thanks to the co-creation of a cultural resource that is a universal system of reference (Łukowski, 2006). The universality revealed in this way can be considered as a premise for the creation of local culture, which is a complex system of symbols, i.e. certain networks of cultural patterns and associated meanings, making it a system that is a set of diverse cultural patterns in a given local community (Wojakowski, 2006).

Adopting such a perspective on the construction of the culture of a cultural borderland orientates, among other things, to its intercultural character, in particular to its specific network built by nodes, which are the result of the dialogue present in its space, transformation and universalisation.

### **Network specificity of the cultural borderland**

The cultural borderland, by providing access to places saturated with difference, creates favourable conditions for the occurrence of mutual interactions between ethnic groups and their members and for the construction of spheres in which the cultural characteristics of individual ethnic groups can make themselves present. The constitution of these spheres is the result of mutual learning of culturally different individuals, in multilateral interactions, oriented towards specific objects of cultural reference, which should result in the achievement of symbiosis – interculturality. In a situation of complexity, multidimensionality, as well as complementarity of borderlands, the category of networks becomes useful for showing its specificity. For as Kevin Kelly notes,

[...] the only organisation capable of attitude-free development or free learning is the network. [...] The thicket of the network is made up of the edges themselves and therefore can be entered at different points. [...] Indeed, a multitude of genuinely divergent elements can only fit side by side in a network. No other arrangement [...] can contain true diversity within itself, acting as a whole (Kelly, 1995, pp. 25–27).

Manuel Castells agrees, according to whom “The morphology of the network seems well adapted to the increasing dependence of interactions and the unpredictable

developments growing out of the creative potential of these interactions" (Castells, 2007, p. 103), as its characteristics are information, ubiquity, network logic, flexibility and the merging of individual elements into an integrated system (Castells, 2007). These features are part of the specificity of the cultural borderland, which is saturated with information and, in fact, with cultural features focussed within and beyond the boundaries of individual ethnic groups, resulting in cultural differences and similarities being revealed and exposed in the borderland space, making both ubiquitous. In addition, these features remain in various kinds of interrelationships and form multiform and complementary configurations towards each other, having at the same time a variable and open character. Indeed, with the occurrence of and confrontation with a culturally significant event, they are modified and thus become flexible. As such, they form an integrated system – the cultural borderland network.

Thus, it can be assumed that the borderland network in its essence has a socio-cultural connotation, and that its individual fragments (inter-node spaces) are specific resources content-structured and interconnected by nodes. This fragmentation of the network, fixed by nodes, is its constitutive feature, and the very nature of the nodes in each case determines the type to which a particular network falls (Gaşior, 2019).

The structure of the network, despite its fragmentation, is an open whole, allowing for the inclusion of new cultural resources or the elimination of others as a result of the differences and similarities revealed by the interactions taking place in the social environment of the borderland. The modification of the network may concern its existing fragments (resources) or consist in including new resources and building them into the network structure by means of nodes, which may be assigned the following functions:

- Aggregation – enabling the elements of a cultural resource to be combined into a subjective whole;
- Structuring – situating a resource in the network structure, in a place corresponding to its object, by tying a common (new) node to another part of the network;
- Exclusionary – whereby it is possible to eliminate from the resource certain elements that are not complementary to its other elements, or a whole section of the network as a result of transformational changes that have taken place in the cultural borderland and saturated its space;
- Augmentative – enabling the development of the network and therefore its extension, restoration and consequently change.

Thanks to these functions, the network becomes an instrument suitable for cultural communities and their respective cultures, enabling continuous deconstruction and reconstruction, and thus cultural transformation, which gives rise to a community of dia-

logue and “creative adaptation” (Witkowski, 2020, p. 7) and constitutes a qualitative change in the human experience in the cultural borderland.

### **The nature of the intercultural borderland network**

Revealing the intercultural network of the cultural borderland requires adopting a perspective that relates to the everyday experiences of border residents

[...] differentiating the neighbourhood of direct contacts in ethnic border regions from the neighbourhood of cultures [...], because it allows one to approach the problem from the inside, as it were, 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. With such assumptions, the emphasis on understanding the local world of meanings, treated as a unique and peculiar cultural situation and described idiosyncratically, taking into account the relativistic perspective of socio-cultural differentiation, becomes important (Straczuk, 2006, p. 162).

This kind of perspective thus makes it possible to identify culturally significant events confronting the borderland inhabitants and, by transforming them (through differentiation and commonality), make them a locally universal frame of reference (Łukowski, 2006). Once creatively transformed, they also become elements of the cultural borderland network positioned within it by absorbing the node inherent in their essence

Adopting such optics means that the category of the network and the nodes emblematic of it should be analysed in relation to a specific cultural borderland, taking into account its complexity, variability and universality. The borderland from the perspective of which the intercultural network can be presented is the traditional (old) cultural borderland (Szerłąg, 2021). This is because it is characterised by being territorial, historical, with a significant degree of cultural interpenetration, and therefore also by the fact that there are similarities between the ethnic groups living there. It more often takes a transitional rather than a contact form, it does not feature sharp divisions and boundaries between communities, and it shows continuity and fullness of social stratification between social wholes and, importantly, evolves towards cultural equality and intercultural interaction (Babiński, 2002). Therefore, referring to the socially generated attributes of the space of this borderland makes it possible to identify the key nodes in its intercultural network.

The first node can be attributed to a communicative-interactional form, as it focuses in the fragment of the network it creates the peculiarity of communi-



cation and the quality of relationships established in the social environment of a culturally diverse borderland, conditioned by the perceived need of its inhabitants to make ethnic (self-)identifications in their living environment, their commitment to sustaining community and their readiness to understand each other and respect otherness (Suzuki-Crumly, Hyers, 2004; Yampolsky, Amiot, de la Sablonnière, 2013; Chua, 2018). Experiencing in the context indicated is done, among other things, through language, which has two main functions at the cultural interface. Firstly, it serves the purpose of communication between people who are members of different cultural groups and, therefore, of transmitting and receiving information concerning cultural characteristics symptomatic of their groups. It can be considered crucial in the process of building and maintaining appropriate interactions, as it makes it possible for representatives of culturally distinct groups to know, understand, agree and interact with each other. In this context, the specificity of the language is important – whether it is the language of the dominant cultural group or whether it takes a mixed form that does not generate communication problems between culturally different people. The choice of language is also important – whether it has been formally imposed (on the basis of state regulations) or whether it has been chosen naturally, as a result of direct, everyday contacts. The pragmatics of social interaction in a cultural borderland proves that the mixed form of the language of communication, spontaneously created and transmitted from one generation to the next, is the one that definitely facilitates the establishment and maintenance of direct interaction and the formation of cultural symbiosis (Szerląg, 2021).

Secondly, language also has a cognitive-symbolic function, as it serves to identify the objects that make up the socio-cultural reality in the borderland, to fill them with content, to assign and transmit meanings, to value and to persist. As a result, it contributes to the construction of a borderland space in which and in relation to which processes of transformation and universalisation take place that require the direct participation and interaction of people caught up in cultural differences. It should be emphasised that among the strategies of interaction revealed in the cultural borderland, the dominant strategy is one based on intercultural dialogue, which is conceptualised by the following factors: interculturality, interaction despite cultural differences, openness to other cultures, transnational understanding, cultural community and respect for a common cultural heritage. In addition, a dialogical strategy draws on shared values and jointly undertaken actions important for the local environment, namely: religious values, action for the good of the local community, building a common culture, respect for the common cultural heritage, and familiarity, i.e., the recognition of the multicultural living environment as one's own, through which a process of socialisation through culturally diverse relations takes place (Szerląg, Urbanek, & Gandecka, 2021). This kind of strategy is therefore an important factor in the construction of an intercultural bor-

derland network. Therefore, the communication-interaction node, together with its respective fragment of the network, can be considered as the starting point, because it initiates flows to its other fragments.

The next node of the analysed network can be described as local-savvy. In its essence, it absorbs culturally significant events that occur in the immediate proximity of borderland residents. Localness in the cultural dimension, according to Wojciech Łukowski, is usually associated with “something that gives a sense of separateness, uniqueness and security, with something that forms the basis of love for the (small) homeland, and finally with something that can at least briefly arouse interest in its exoticism and otherness” (Łukowski, 2006, p. 47). A locality conceived in this way, limited territorially, is defined by a specific set of values and symbols, which belongs to a small community whose members interact with each other on a daily basis (Łukowski, 2006), usually saturated with intimate, neighbourly everyday life (Wojakowski, 2006). A neighbourhood is a cooperative (non-conflictual) and diadic relationship that occurs within a single local community. The characteristics of a neighbourhood are spatial proximity, the interactions created as a result of this proximity and the normative element (Pyszczyk, 2006). Local resources, on the other hand, are predominantly formed as a result of jointly experienced problems and good-neighbourly relations, as well as shared interests, one history, place of residence, concern for the future, language of daily communication, Christian faith and values, culture, small homeland and general human values (Szerła, 2021). They take the form of socio-cultural resources and can be regarded as integrating factors for the local community. This is because they make it possible to work out the rules of everyday coexistence and build a borderland culture. They also define the boundaries of familiarity and alienation. Following Bernard Waldenfels, it should be noted that

[...] familiarity and strangeness form a difference that can be grasped as the result of a certain differentiation, which therefore presupposes a state of relative undifferentiation. [...] To the difference between the self and the stranger, on the other hand, belongs the indelible *preference for one's own*, and not in the sense of something better or higher, but in the sense of differentiation, self-reference in reference (Waldenfels, 2002, pp. 76–77).

Thus, in this context, familiarity does not reject difference, but allows it to occur in the shared space of locality, which gives rise to the constitution of a community in the cultural borderland, as the local community is a small community and an extended association at the same time (Wojakowski, 2006). In the socio-cultural dimension, its members become a “we” as a reference group, and the “I” of individual members is shaped in relation to the “we” (Muszyńska, 2014).

For the reason outlined above, this community can be considered another fragment of the intercultural network, while the node proper can be described as a community, whose specificity is constructed by the sense of unity experienced by its members. According to Jolanta Muszyńska, "membership is the sense that each person in the community has contributed to belong to it, and has a sense of being part of that community" (2014, p. 81). This sense (expressed in a shared system of symbols) is associated with the formation of boundaries (determined by a sense of belonging and identification), as well as with emotional security (personal emotional investment). In addition to membership, attributes of the sense of community are the two-way influence – of the individual on the group and of the group on the individual, exposing the individual's subjective role in the functioning of the group, the integration and satisfaction of needs – motivating the behaviour of community members, and the emotional connection of individuals to the group – manifested by the sharing of common experiences (Muszyńska, 2014). In this view, "a sense of community is associated with a focus on, care for and intimacy with others. Individuals in whom intimacy and affiliation motives predominate are considered to be communal" (Muszyńska, 2014, p. 92). These are activated in the relationships occurring between members of a culturally diverse community. In contrast, the dominant strategy in dealing with cultural diversity in the community is to engage in community building (Szerłaż, Urbanek, & Gandecka, 2021). This kind of strategy is the result of an intertwining of historical experiences and attitudes and perceptions about everyday life. In particular, it is constructed by: the generational experience of cultural differences in the family, living from generation to generation in a multicultural environment, the community of fate and existence of members of a local community of a different nationality, entering into direct relations with members of different cultural groups in the local environment, as well as the sense of community at the meeting point of cultures, determined by the localness and familiarity of this meeting point. In its axiological form, the indicated strategy also takes into account the cultural diversity of the groups and their members that make up the community. This is because it is saturated by respect for the country of origin of culturally different community members, for other religions, languages, heritage, as well as tolerance, openness, cooperation despite differences and intercultural dialogue (Szerłaż, 2021). They remove barriers and integrate into the community.

The cultural differences faced by members of a local community emerging in a border region usually have a national origin, as nationality (national identification) is one of the factors contributing to socio-cultural stratification. This is because, due to the national identifications made by people living at the cultural interface, their community affiliation is determined. Therefore, the node forming this part of the intercultural network can be given the form of the national-indigenous. The category to be addressed in the national-indigenous context is the identity of the borderland inhabitants.

Well, this identity is formed on several levels: family, local (regional), national, state and transnational. Significantly, each of these levels is saturated by specific cultural content [cultural heritage], rootedness in and identification with a significant place, a sense of national and cultural belonging, inclusion with regard to cultural differences, a sense of civic obligation towards a common state, and a community space that sensitises and opens up to the transnational and transcultural dimension of coexistence. This multilevelity reflects the at the same time processual and dialogical character of the experience in the cultural borderland, resulting in a culturally specific (self-) identification (Szerłąg, 2021, p. 179).

It should be noted that (self-)identification in the situation of functioning in a multinational society is often of a dual nature. In the case of members of national minorities, on the one hand, it results from a strong bond with the cultural heritage of one's own national group, which is transmitted in everyday family socialisation (or also in school education); on the other hand, the awareness of being a citizen of the state in which one's own national minority operates orientates these processes towards its cultural heritage. (Szerłąg, 2013). As a result, attitudes towards both one's own nation (one's own cultural group) and another nation (a culturally different group) as the dominant group in a multicultural state are formed and manifested. At the core is an awareness of a certain cultural distinctiveness and a sense of connection to a group of "their own," as well as an awareness of the continuity of the historical persistence of this group and its collective filiation (Bokszanski, 2005). Predictors of belonging to one's own national group include language, the cultural heritage of one's ancestors, faith and prayer in one's mother tongue and, in the case of belonging to a multicultural state, citizenship, place of birth and life, the need to use the state language, the cultural heritage of the state and the patriotism manifested towards it (Szerłąg, 2021). This dual national configuration permeates the homeland subjectively experienced by the borderland man. Due to the specificity of functioning at the interface of cultures, three dimensions of its identification and feeling can be indicated: the home-family homeland (family nest, paternal homeland, maternal homeland), the national homeland identified from the perspective of belonging to one's own national community or a dual national homeland in the case of simultaneous identification with two nations, and the small homeland (local, regional), saturated by spatial proximity and familiarity, which occur in a specific place subjectively identified as a significant place (Szerłąg, 2024). The last of the homelands – the small homeland – should be ascribed special importance, as it roots man in his world, in a specific place and time, is "a source of identity for individuals and social groups; it connects with culture, the past and the future; it orientates in the world of matter and in the world of ideas; it facilitates the answer to the fundamental question: 'who are we, where are we going from, where are we going to?'" (Theiss, 2001, p. 11). The sense of belonging to a small homeland, where national

identifications intermingle, creates a new socio-cultural quality that makes it possible to open up to differences and to participate in the process of building an intercultural community.

The national-indigenous resources of the intercultural network permeate the last of its fragments – the civic-patriotic node. The state space through active citizenship and patriotism can also become a space for community building with an intercultural connotation. Individuals from culturally distinct groups interact with each other in a dialogical way and can act for the common good in the state by fulfilling civic obligations. Significant to them are civic values considered important, expressed mainly in respect for the state and through patriotic attitudes (Szerląg, 2021). The latter are a peculiar state of mind and feelings that are socially and ideologically differentiated and are part of the axionormative multiplicity of attitudes towards this value, and therefore a particular kind of attachment of a person to his/her homeland, which may have emotional shades (Śliwerski, 2017). Importantly, citizenship and patriotism are also revealed in coexistence in cultural borderlands, and by assuming the form of intercultural citizenship and open patriotism, they become values through which it is possible to belong to a historical community, to a common homeland and to participate in the creation of new cultural, moral and social values (Szerląg, 2023). They are attributes of the national identity of members of a culturally diverse society interacting with and tolerant of each other and saturate the borderland space. At the same time, they are characterised by variability and contextuality resulting from the realities of the cultural borderland and, on a broader scale, the realities of the state. Nonetheless, they enable the presentation and negotiation of positions and views, which fosters a continuous internal and external dialogue that is important for the process of shaping civil society (Nikitorowicz, 2019), and thus a civic community.

Each of the revealed nodes in its own way creates a community acting as a whole. Thus, whichever dimension is referred to, each opens up to its other dimensions. As a result, the network depiction of the multidimensional community in the cultural borderland reveals the dynamic and creative potential of the borderland, for which interculturality is a kind of glue, as it has an integrating function.

## **Conclusion**

A cultural borderland is a social organisation that takes on a communal form as a result of the social interactions occurring within it, saturated by interculturality. Its symptomatic variability and complementarity serve to differentiate and at the same time to communalise, and as a result to create a common space of communicative-interactional, local-familial, communal, national-national and civic-patriotic cultural

references. Each of these dimensions has a unifying function, directing and opening up social interactions to what is common despite cultural differences. Thus, the integrating role of interculturality is definitely revealed, which, by abolishing borders, becomes a value “due to the process of creating identity through contact with others, basing the image of oneself on images of strangers and, as a result, building the image of familiarity on the construction of strangeness” (Nikitorowicz, 2004, p. 86). It is a value thanks to which it is possible to form a sense of community among culturally different individuals and groups in a cultural borderland and, on a broader scale, in a multicultural society.

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