BORDERLANDS - MULTICULTURALISM

Invitation to a conference:

‘Transcultural processes on the borderlands with a special emphasis on Central and Eastern Europe’
September 17-18, 2015

The Faculty of Sociology of Multiculturalism at the Institute of Sociology, Department of History and Sociology, University of Bialystok in collaboration with the Bialystok Branch of PTS and Bialystok Centre for Research and Social Initiatives is organizing an international conference entitled: ‘Transcultural processes on the borderlands with a special emphasis on Central and Eastern Europe’. The conference will be held from the 17th to the 18th of September 2015 at the premises of the Department of History and Sociology of the University of Bialystok.

Attachments:

Theoretical assumptions of the conference
Organizational matters
Registration form

I. Theoretical assumptions of the conference

The conference is a continuation of our research interests which are broadly defined by the categories of borderlands and multiculturalism.

In foregoing research projects we have been primarily treating borderlands as autonomous or even separate areas located at the frontier which are inhabited by a culturally diverse population. In our opinion, they have provided great laboratories for research on minorities, peripheries, interaction or separation of minorities in relation to national majorities as well as themes such as territorial bonds, cultural boundaries and overcoming thereof, the phenomenon of ‘people of the borderlands’ or constructing a vision of the (regional) multicultural society.
At the core of the forthcoming conference lies a conviction that borderlands, granted their socio-cultural diversity, are in fact dependent areas and collectivities. The latter are reliant on national majorities in the countries where they reside as well as their matrices organized in neighboring countries. They are also subject to broader regional processes and globalization. In most cases, the events and ongoing processes on the borderlands are just a manifestation of more general phenomena which we shall refer to as transcultural for the purposes of the conference.

We combine transculturality with internal processes of cultural differentiation, escalation of complexity of modern cultures that individuals and communities are equipped with, as well as an increasing deficit of adequacy between – on one hand – cultures and communities and on the other – network systems, as defined by Wolfgang Welsch, that get to be created through exchange (mass media, migrations).

We do not intend to limit the scope of substantive issues presented at the conference. In our opinion, transcultural borderland processes – in a sociological perspective – primarily include:

1. **TRANSNATIONAL processes** – expansion of borders and national domains, constructing cultural nations or national networks across borders (e.g. the Polish, Lithuanian, Belarusian, Rusyn, Hungarian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Macedonian and other nations),

2. **TRANS-RELIGIOUS processes** – clashes of religions (denominations), national functions of religions, peculiarly upon the demise of the Soviet Union, creation of ‘religious worlds’ as well as new religions and denominations on the borderlands,

3. **TRANS-LINGUISTIC processes** – novel dependencies (or a lack thereof) between the language and the nation, linguistic assimilation of minorities or even majorities, nationalization of languages, new functions of languages on the borderlands, with English being a particular case,

4. **TRANS-CIVILIZATIONAL processes** – the clash of civilizations on the borderlands of Central and Eastern Europe, including Western and Eastern civilizations and its consequences, especially for ethno-national structures of states,

5. **TRANSREGIONAL processes** – construction or deconstruction of new regions on the borderlands.

In addition, we intend to seek answers to the question: what is – in this respect – the role of the country of dominant majorities and neighboring countries which are in most cases foreign homelands for national and ethnic minorities in the countries of their residence? Who
are the main actors engaged in transformation processes that are referred to as transcultural, including states, national, religious and civic institutions, ‘cultural leaders’, experts on cultural management and cultural industries.

Is this a forerunner of formation – initially taking place at cultural junctions – of post-national, post-religious, post-linguistic, post-regional or even post-civilizational future?

Alternatively, are we dealing with complex formation processes of new national, religious and even civilizational communities which surpass frontiers and extant cultural communities that may set new political boundaries in the future?

We assume that several phenomena and processes which take place on the borderlands are accidental. At the same time, their massive character, durability and dynamics indicate that we are witnessing the commencement of a new order which may evolve in at least three directions:

– maintenance and protection of the status quo,
– construction of new political divisions in concordance with cultural boundaries,
– development of pluralistic societies.

We believe that transcultural transformations on the borderlands which are carried out on the grounds of democratic values lead to creation of pluralistic societies.

Andrzej Sadowski

II. Organizational matters:

The organizing committee of the conference:

1. Dr hab. Małgorzata Bieńkowska
2. Dr Katarzyna Sztop-Rutkowska – Secretary: sztop@yahoo.com; mobile phone: 601 15 55 46
3. Dr Maja Biernacka
4. Dr Urszula Ablażewicz-Górnicka – Secretary: u.ag@interia.pl; mobile phone: 691 22 12 33
5. Prof. dr hab. Sergiusz Jackiewicz
6. Prof. dr hab. Andrzej Sadowski – Chair of the Organizing Committee – a.sadowski@uwb.edu.pl; mobile phone: 602 34 69 30
7. Dr Andrzej Nikitorowicz – Secretary: andiki@wp.pl; mobile phone: 608 02 03 70
Deadlines for participants:

APPLICATION – by the 31th of March 2015

CONFERENCE FEE (in the amount of 500 Polish zlotys/120 EURO) – by the end of June 2015

The program of the conference will be publicized by the end of May 2015.

III. CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM:

"Transcultural processes on the borderlands with a special emphasis on Central and Eastern Europe"

International conference, 17th-18th of September 2015, Institute of Sociology, Department of History and Sociology, 15-420 Bialystok, Pl. Uniwersytecki 1

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Please send the completed form by the **31th of March 2015** at: isoc@uwb.edu.pl or by traditional mail at the address of the conference office:

**University of Białystok**

**Department of History and Sociology**

**Faculty of Sociology of Multiculturalism**

**15-420 Białystok, Pl. Uniwersytecki 1**

with the annotation: ‘**CONFERENCE – TRANSCULTURAL PROCESSES ON THE BORDERLANDS – 2015**’

A detailed program will be announced in the next statement after the receipt of registration forms.

Place, date ............................ Signature ..........................