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POLAND'S EASTERN BORDERLANDS  
IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF CULTURAL CHANGES  
TRIGGERED BY MIGRATION PROCESSES  
IN THE SECOND AND THIRD DECADES  
OF THE 21ST CENTURY

**Abstract.** The article presents the Eastern borderlands in the context of contemporary international migration. In the first part, using the center-periphery dependency model and Pierre Bourdieu's theory of capital types, I analyze the specificity of this region stemming from intense interactions between competing cultures and identities. This analysis helps to understand how migration processes fit into the cultural landscape of the borderlands and what challenges and threats its inhabitants face. The second part of the text is dedicated to the cultural security of the borderland. Here, I highlight the potential dissonance between the state's perception of cultural security and how it is perceived by the borderlands' residents. I argue that this discrepancy results from differing interpretations of cultural phenomena occurring in the borderlands and from the distinct values underlying national and local identities as well.

**Keywords:** migrations; eastern borderland; cultural security; center-periphery concept

INTRODUCTION

Since the early 1990s, borders and borderlands have become the subject of numerous studies conducted by representatives of various scientific disciplines, including geography, history, anthropology, sociology, political sciences and cultural studies. The increased interest in this topic resulted from a new perspective on borders and their social functions. It was recognized that analyzing borders from a territorial perspective, focused on the center of power, is insufficient,

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as it does not fully encompass the broad range of phenomena and processes related to economic, social, and cultural systems occurring in these areas. The critique of this static approach in previous research also highlighted the underestimation of the role of borderland communities in shaping the borderland environment.

In research practice, the borderland is treated both as a specific type of area and as a distinct socio-cultural phenomenon. In the first approach, it is defined as a territory located along a border, usually distant from the center. As such, it is situated on the periphery of a politically, economically, socially, and culturally organized system. The nature of the borderland is determined by the type of political border, particularly its degree of openness or closure, which influences the flow of people, services, and goods. At the same time, the social function of the border – which can both connect and divide – varies depending on the international political situation and the relationships between neighboring countries, as well as their economic, political, and ideological conditions. In the second approach, the borderland is viewed as a specific socio-cultural phenomenon, representing both a historical space and a domain of symbolic culture. Its essence lies in the interaction and mutual influence of different cultures in a situation of direct proximity. Here, the borderland is analyzed from the perspective of the subjectivity of communities that create and transform their culture through interaction with other groups (Machaj, 2000, pp. 125-127).

The growing number of studies on borders and their contexts has coincided with a time of dynamic and mass human mobility between state territories. Although in the era of modern national states borderlands have always been perceived as uncertain spaces (transitional zones), their significance as sensitive areas has increased in the face of escalating migration crises. Past historical experiences, such as the mass migrations of people during the Second World War, show how dramatic and life-changing it can be for an individual to be forced to leave their homeland due to an ongoing armed conflict (Bylina, 2023). Contemporary migrations – although driven by different causes – often bring similar challenges. Therefore, the need for a responsible migration policy has been recognized, with a key component being the regulation of social life (labor market, education, culture), which has a crucial impact on the level of migrant integration (Lesińska and Duszczek, 2023; Zacharuk and Sobczak, 2024).

Crossing borders is not only a transition from one political, social, and cultural reality to another; it also poses a challenge for states seeking to maintain their traditional monopoly over controlling the socio-cultural processes occurring in these spaces. Borders are places where key decisions materialize, resulting

from the needs of individual nations as well as individuals and social groups. While they reflect the stability and strength of states, still the social and cultural processes taking place within them often escape the exclusive control of these states. This occurs due to the unique characteristics of borders that distinguish them from other areas, as well as the people of the borderlands, who are “part of the social and political system in a slightly different way than other citizens of a given country” (Donnan and Wilson, 2007, p. 18). It appears that, unlike the inhabitants of central regions, who live within relatively stable social structures with a strong dominant culture, borderland communities are expected to take on greater responsibilities. Among these expectations are an identification with the state (nation), which, on the one hand, goes beyond just adhering to legal regulations and includes the protection of national heritage and identity, and on the other hand, it also enables attitudes and values that support cooperation within a multicultural environment.

Borders rarely reflect actual ethnic and cultural divisions. Ethnic identities, kinship ties, and local traditions that existed before borders were established, continue to play a significant role, shaping how communities coexist in these spaces. This highlights their role in either strengthening or undermining the position of states (Nash et al., 2016, p. 7). Although the heterogeneity of borderlands seems to be a natural asset that fosters the creation of new hybrid identities and communities, one can agree with Grzegorz Babiński’s view that, in ethnic relations within borderlands, the approach of being “equal but separate” is far more common than “equal together” (Babiński, 2003, p. 126). This particularly applies to Poland’s eastern borderland, where culture plays a strong controlling role, and ethnicity functions as a selective factor (Machaj, 2005, pp. 169-170).

The aim of this article is to analyze the eastern borderland of Poland in the context of migration from neighboring countries that once belonged to the Soviet Union. Since 2014, the year of the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, there has been a significant increase in the number of immigrants from Ukraine, culminating in the launch of the full-scale Russian invasion in February 2022. In the case of immigrants from Belarus, the key moment was the falsified presidential elections in 2020 and the escalating repression by Alexander Lukashenko’s regime. In both cases, a common denominator for the analyzed groups of foreigners is the geographical proximity of their countries of origin, which facilitates population movement and influences the nature of the incoming migrant groups. In this context, the borderland appears as an empirically interesting place, as its inhabitants maintain their cultural continuity based on long-term settlement and intergenerational cultural transmission. As a result,

there is a relatively high level of social distance toward outsiders, which is an indicative of the significance of ethnic criteria (Machaj, 2005). By applying the center-periphery dependency model and Pierre Bourdieu's theory of capital types, I seek to illustrate its unique characteristics, which result from ongoing intense interactions between competing cultures and identities. This approach will help to understand how migration processes shape the cultural landscape of the borderland and what challenges and risks its inhabitants face.

Clarification is needed regarding my understanding of the concept of the borderland. This is one of the key issues arising from the lack of a uniform, widely accepted definition. The primary dilemma in this context is the difficulty in determining its precise scope (Raczyk, 2020). It allows researchers to adopt an appropriate analytical perspective that helps eliminate emerging doubts. If it is assumed that the borderland is most commonly defined as an area stretching along a state border, it becomes difficult to decide whether it includes regions on both sides of the border or only on one (Niedźwiecka-Iwańczak, 2020). I concur with scholars like Zbigniew Kurcz and Andrzej Sadowski, who argue that a border separates two borderlands. Therefore, in the context of this article, when referring to the Eastern borderlands, I mean the Polish-Belarusian and Polish-Ukrainian borderlands. By focusing solely on these two areas, I aim to highlight their significance in the cultural processes related to migration occurring there.

In addition to the literature review, in my text I will also refer to the results of two quantitative studies that I conducted in 2023–2024 and which I discuss in more detail in two of my publications (Chabasińska, 2024a, 2024b). The first study involved a group of 715 war refugees from Ukraine who found shelter in the Lublin Voivodeship. The second study involved a group of 136 immigrants from Belarus who arrived in Poland after the presidential elections in 2020 and settled in Podlaskie Voivodeship. In both cases, the studies were conducted in the form of the pen-and-paper personal interviews. The sample was selected based on the availability of adult respondents. The questionnaires were prepared in the native languages of the participants. The inclusion of these two ethnic groups was driven by their significant population increase in these regions in recent years. The research aimed to understand how, from an immigrant's perspective, the process of integrating into the cultural and social space of the host society looks like. I focused on issues such as immigrants' perceptions of cultural differences, their aspirations and their socio-cultural activities. In the context of this research problem, it is worth recalling one of the seven arguments for diversity presented by Ulf Hannerz. He points out that, under certain circumstances, people may not simply choose their culture, as they possess the ability to transform and

their “cultural repertoire” remains open to new possibilities. In other words, when faced with alternative cultures different from the one they have lived by, “they may sometimes prefer to follow them, regardless of whether they fully understand them in every detail and with all their consequences or not” (Han-nerz, 2006, p. 92). This raises the question: Are the Polish-Belarusian and Polish-Ukrainian borderlands environments conducive to such processes?

### 1. BORDERLANDS FROM PERIPHERAL PERSPECTIVE

The starting point for analyzing cultural processes occurring in borderlands is the reference to the “center-periphery” concept, in which the center is perceived as the hub of political domination, using the full apparatus of the state to assert its authority over the territory it governs (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). Particularly inspiring in this regard is the theoretical model of center-periphery relations proposed by Tomasz Zarycki, which allows for the description of various levels of spatial organization – from global interactions between continents to regional structures and smaller territorial units (Zarycki, 2007, p. 6). The researcher linked center-periphery dependencies with Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of three types of capital and the principle of compensation. He observed that, in the context of globalization, centers become areas of economic capital concentration, whose domination shapes social status of inhabitants and reinforcing inequalities in access to economic resources. In contrast, peripheries, influenced by the center, adopt a strategy of compensating for their economic weaknesses by focusing on other types of capital – namely, those based on solidarity, trust, and cooperation. This compensatory advantage becomes an element of social stratification, particularly on a local scale. Viewing borderlands as a form of periphery, one can observe that, especially in the Eastern borderlands, prestige is defined through the lens of social and cultural capitals. This means that particular emphasis is placed on knowledge acquired through a long-term socialization process (familiarity with traditions and customs, value systems, language, historical references, local contexts, etc.) as well as the ability to establish relationships in a multicultural environment and build social, often international, networks. Such capital is significant because it is generally unique, less fluid, and more difficult to convert or accumulate. It thus becomes the strongest differentiating and inhibitive factor, particularly for immigrants from distant cultural backgrounds, to integrate into the local cultural space. Meanwhile, it favors those who operate within similar cultural standards and socially recognized identity patterns.

Tomasz Zarycki also points out that peripheries differ from centers not only in having fewer economic resources but also in experiencing greater instability in social positions (Zarycki, 2006, p. 12). A way to achieve balance is to rely on capitals that are more resistant to crises and sudden changes, mainly social and cultural capital. They simultaneously exist within a space of competing narratives centers, shaped by different center–periphery hierarchies and more multiple central hubs capable of independently shaping various aspects of the social world. Their interaction, accumulating in the peripheries, contributes to the complexity of the local social environment. In the context of international migration, important points of reference for immigrants may be civilizational centers located outside the host country’s borders that influence in various ways how they function within the borderlands.

Assuming that stability in the peripheries is achieved by strengthening cultural and social capital, it is worth referring to Stein Rokkan’s view that the relationship between the center and the peripheries is a source of political and cultural conflicts (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). The root of these conflicts lies in the center’s endeavors to monopolize the cultural sphere, which contradicts the ambiguity and fluidity of life in the peripheries. As a result, the asymmetric flow of culture from the centers to the peripheries may serve as a defining factor for both areas (Hannerz, 2006, p. 94). Faced with the dominance of the center promoting standardized narratives and controlling access to resources, peripheral communities may feel that their interests are underrepresented. The neglect of local needs in areas such as culture, education, and infrastructure contributes to social tensions and alienation. The sense of distinctiveness among borderland communities also stems from their experiences, knowledge, and competencies shaped by their peripheral position. While they are often excluded from broader social structures, they can leverage their experiences as a source of creativity and innovation.

They are equipped with local insights and “adopt frequently pragmatic ways of negotiating the contradictions created by globalization processes and the incompatible political and bureaucratic institutions characteristic of each neighboring nation-state” (Pavlovich-Kocki et. al., 2007, p. 1).

It should be emphasized that the residents of the borderland resist the values, aesthetics, lifestyles, and the broadly understood dominant culture. A special role is attributed to the elites of the periphery, who, according to Immanuel Wallerstein’s theory, pursue a strategy of establishing boundaries with the center and building social capital based on residents who are strongly influenced by local culture (Wallerstein, 1984). In this way, an attitude of separation is shaped

towards the so-called oppressive culture of the center (Martinez, 1994, pp. 8-9). An element of this is the strengthening of cultural diversity (referred to by Ulf Hannerz as cultural resistance), which is interpreted as a characteristic that distinguishes the periphery from the center. This allows for the inclusion of culturally and territorially close immigrants in the social space of the borderlands, whose presence historically refers to locally integrated national and ethnic minorities, co-creating the region's unique cultural image. It is also an argument for strengthening the position of the borderlands against the center, due to the possessed competencies in building model solutions based on the past experiences of a multicultural society.

The influence of the dominant culture on the socio-cultural processes taking place at the borderlands can also be seen in the sphere of negotiating the identity of national and ethnic minorities. Janusz Mucha treats cultural domination as a type of bidirectional, but unequal social relationship (Mucha, 1999), in which one side deprives the other of "spontaneity, and thus the proper ability to act" (Simmel, 1975, p. 230). The response to contact with the dominant culture involves various strategies of minority groups, pursued in order to search for forms of self-determination in relation to the majority. Among them, the researcher lists: the unconscious realization of one's own cultural practices in areas that are not of interest to the dominant groups; retreating into spaces not yet occupied by the dominant culture; apparent and ritualized participation in some practices of the dominant culture and undisclosed participation in minority practices; articulating criticism of the dominant culture combined with practicing an "inverted world"; striving for social advancement within the dominant culture; creating an alternative culture or recreating the indigenous minority culture while simultaneously seeking to legitimize it; creating countercultural ideologies and gaining support for them (Mucha, 1999, p. 52).

The complexity of cultural practices among ethnic groups, related to their contact with the dominant culture, allows for several observations about immigrants functioning in the Eastern borderlands. It is important to note that the presence of recognized national and ethnic minorities in Poland (primarily Belarusian and Ukrainian) plays a significant role in expressing their cultural identity. These minorities form the existential foundation of their lives in the new environment. These minorities constitute the existential basis of their lives in the new environment. Research I conducted in 2023 among Belarusian immigrants residing in Podlaskie Voivodeship showed that over 45% of respondents identified Polish citizens of Belarusian origin as a group supporting them in the process of settling in (Chabasińska, 2024b). At the same time, the cultural

presence of minorities in the borderlands allows immigrants to extend their cultural practices beyond the private sphere by engaging not only in ritualized forms of participation in the dominant culture but also in the institutionalized cultural life of minorities. Particularly since that last activity can bring benefits to both communities. From the perspective of immigrants, participation in various initiatives of minority organizations provides an opportunity to establish relationships with culturally close residents of the borderlands and enables the building of social networks. On the other hand, for minorities facing the effects of national conversion and depopulation of the borderlands, this is a way to locally strengthen their social position. In this way, such a lasting arrangement, based on ethnic categorization, can contribute to the creation of lasting bonds between members of the same category, and can also be a factor organizing relationships with outsiders.

The shift in thinking about borders in the context of ethnic groups was significantly influenced by the perspective presented by the Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth. It challenged the previous assumptions that maintaining cultural diversity is the result of geographic and social isolation. In Barth's theory, ethnic differences form the platform upon which extensive social systems are built, and the interactions that occur within them do not lead to their elimination; on the contrary, to exposing them (Barth, 2006, pp. 348-349). The continuity of a group thus requires not only the existence of specific criteria and identity markers but also the preservation of an interactional structure that allows for the protection of cultural differences. At the same time, cultural forms that are important to the group and define its boundaries do not constitute a closed catalog and may be subject to change. Their true social significance is determined by how useful they are in inter-ethnic interactions (Eriksen, 2013, p. 66).

Ethnic groups, as social constructs, manipulate their cultural identities by highlighting certain elements while downplaying or even concealing others, depending on their needs. The choice of a specific cultural strategy is often determined by the potential benefits that can be achieved in a given social, political context or due to security issues. It is important to consider the attractiveness of one's ethnic group and how belonging to it influences the possibility of fulfilling individual aspirations and needs. An insufficient level of these factors can lead to the weakening of internal group bonds and encourage individuals to seek alternative identities that compensate for the loss of their previous social position (Chabasińska, 2024b). Among the necessary conditions for success is acquiring cultural competencies that allow for comfortable navigation in the existing environment. These may include, for example, knowledge of the host society's language, acceptance of its core values, and the ability to



function within local social networks. Acquiring cultural competencies is also evident in active participation in the social and cultural life of the host society. In this view, culture becomes a tool for influencing its recipients, creating space to expand cultural horizons, which reflects the attractiveness of the local culture.

In the aforementioned studies conducted in 2023–2024 among citizens of Belarus (Chabasińska, 2024b) and Ukraine (Chabasińska, 2024a) residing in Podlaskie and Lublin Voivodeships, it was observed that despite territorial proximity, respondents identified significant cultural differences between the host and the receiving nations. Both Belarusians and Ukrainians pointed out that history, language, and religion are the categories that most strongly differentiate them. The emphasis on these features highlights their importance for the groups and can be seen as criteria for the durability of a given ethnic group. Interestingly, within both national groups, a relatively low perception of values (such as family, friendship, respect for elders, tolerance, responsibility, solidarity, justice) as criteria for socio-cultural differences was also recorded. This allows for the conclusion that Poles, Belarusians, and Ukrainians operate within similar fundamental principles, accepted across our cultures.

Another important conclusion arises from the characterization of the relationships between Belarusian and Ukrainian immigrants and Poles. The responses from the participants indicate that their personal contacts with members of the local community are sporadic and mainly relate to routine or occasional meetings in public spaces. For example, they are eager to participate in cultural events organized in the vicinity of their place of residence, but express reluctance to engage in the local government affairs of their communities. Thus, it can be presumed that their social aspirations are limited to functioning within a shared physical and symbolic space, primarily through participation in ritualized cultural forms, and they do not perceive themselves as equal members of the local community. Their social practices mainly revolve around sharing the same space, which enables them to fulfill their existential and economic goals.

## 2. BORDERLANDS FROM THE CULTURAL SECURITY PERSPECTIVE

The center–periphery concept can also be applied to the issue of cultural security in borderlands by analyzing how relations between the center and border areas influence the protection and preservation of local cultural identities. In security studies, the concept of cultural security has been defined, among others, by Waldemar Kitler, who argues that “as a domain of national security,

it is a process encompassing various actions (measures) in the field of national security, whose primary goal is to preserve and nurture the values that determine national identity while drawing from the experiences and achievements of other nations, and at the same time counteracting foreign influences that weaken internal cohesion” (Kitler, 2020, p. 57).

In this approach, cultural security and the objectives pursued by the state focus on protecting and fostering the development of the nation in all its aspects. The state is thus the primary entity responsible for cultural security, and its political authority includes mechanisms of cultural dominance. From this perspective, the borderlands are viewed through the lens of the center. It is important to emphasize that the implementation of state objectives in the borderlands is conditioned by its unique characteristics that stem not only from its role in maintaining state sovereignty but also from the accumulation of cultural phenomena and processes that are primarily manifested in this space. As Zbigniew Kurcz observes, “this is a territory where something significant happens, something that is difficult to encounter elsewhere, because it is precisely the demographic, ecological, and economic factors, acting individually or together, that define its uniqueness” (Kurcz, 2020, p. 394).

From the perspective of the modern national state, borders and the surrounding regions are highly significant “symbolic territories of state image and control” (Donnan and Wilson, 2007, p. 29). These are zones where culture is produced, meanings are challenged, and identities are configured. In this context, the cultural heterogeneity of borderland inhabitants gains particular importance as subjects of cultural security. This diversity translates into perceptions and experiences of security that differ from those of the state (the center). Agata Ziętek rightly argues that “the state most often defines cultural security as one dimension of overall security, whereas cultural groups or individuals treat it as an independent entity. In this sense, the absence of threats to the state does not mean the absence of threats to its inhabitants” (Ziętek, 2014, pp. 67-68). In the case of a multicultural borderlands, the state’s objectives, focused on protecting and strengthening sovereignty and cultural homogeneity, may conflict with the interests of social groups representing other identities. This occurs due to the clash between the vision of sovereignty, shaped by national symbolism and mainstream culture, and the cultural reality of the borderland, where “through mutual recognition, interest, cooperation, continuous discovery and self-experience, dialogue, and negotiation, [...] a contemporary multidimensional individual is created constantly developing the skills to function at the intersections of social, cultural, psychological, intellectual, artistic, and political borders”

(Gierszewski et al., 2020, p. 91). Among borderlands inhabitants, this dissonance may lead to more conservative attitudes toward national culture and greater trust in local culture and identity. On the other hand, the state may perceive ambiguous identities as a threat to cultural security. However, local identities do not necessarily compete with national identity or threaten national sovereignty; they may simply be different – distinct in relation to it – due to the values that underlie them.

The possibility of borderland inhabitants perceiving cultural threats differently from the state may stem from the nuances arising from the unique conditions of living in a multicultural environment. As previously mentioned Agata Ziętek states that when defining the subject of cultural security, “it is helpful to consider the varying levels of sensitivity and susceptibility of states and societies to real and potential changes in the cultural environment, as well as their adaptive capacities” (Ziętek, 2014, p. 69). According to the researcher, this sensitivity is shaped by historical, demographic, economic and political circumstances. It also varies depending on the level of analysis. It can be observed that sensitivity is perceived differently at the state level compared to the individual or social group level, particularly among those embedded in the realities of a multicultural borderland. At the state level, this sensitivity is conditioned by migration policy objectives, regulations concerning national and ethnic minorities or security considerations, so measures aimed at maintaining sovereignty and territorial integrity. Historical experiences and current challenges (e.g., the migration crisis) influence how the state perceives and responds to the threats it defines. In such contexts, the state may strive to promote cultural uniformity, viewing it as a stronger guarantee of borderlands stability.

On the other hand, the adaptive capacities of borderlands inhabitants are a product of the socio-cultural process of developing frameworks for ontological security, which rely, among other things, on the routinization of daily life and the adoption of behavioral patterns from others. These processes help to weaken existing fears arising from interactions with culturally different inhabitants. This also happens through the jointly constructed spatial identity, understood as identification with one's immediate surroundings. Through this process, the formation of cohesive social systems becomes possible. This set of competencies enables the development of a sense of community and a certain degree of emotional responsibility for a territorially defined group (Łukowski, 2002, p. 86).

My research conducted in Podlaskie and Lubelskie Voivodeships (Chabasińska 2024a, 2024b) revealed that Belarusian immigrants demonstrated a significantly stronger sense of spatial identification. As many as 87% of respondents

living in Białystok felt part of a territorial community. This group was primarily composed of young individuals who also expressed trust in Poles (Chabasińska, 2024a). In contrast, among Ukrainian immigrants residing in Lubelskie Voivodeship, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict fostered a strong sense of national identification (55%), while only 17% of respondents indicated ties to the local community. It is worth underlining that the strongest national identification was observed in the extreme groups in terms of age – respondents up to 25 years old (60%) and over 65 years old (61%) age groups (Chabasińska, 2024b). In summary, Belarusian and Ukrainian immigrants experience territorial identification with Poles differently. Among Ukrainians, ethnic identity plays a particularly significant role as a differentiating factor. Meanwhile, Belarusians, due to integration processes, largely feel as a part of the local space, although they still maintain a relatively high level of social distance.

#### CONCLUSION

It is difficult to analyze the impact of migration on borderlands without considering the center-periphery perspective. This model of dependency helps to capture the mechanisms of state dominance and the subordination of local communities that interact within the borderlands and also linking them to the role of the dominant culture. The borderlands can be seen as a site of political and cultural struggles resulting from attempts to monopolize the cultural sphere through a dominant national narrative. This phenomenon becomes particularly evident during times of crisis when the state, drawing on national symbolism, interprets ambiguous identities as a threat to its own identity. However, local identities do not necessarily compete with national identity or endanger national sovereignty; they may simply be different, so distinct in relation to it due to the values upon which they are founded.

From the perspective of state needs, maintaining territory, sovereign authority, and the survival of the nation and its identity are crucial. However, it is difficult to ignore the fact that a state's territory rarely aligns with the ethnic composition of its citizens. For this reason, the state's perception of cultural security may not always coincide with how it is viewed by its inhabitants. This issue is particularly pronounced in borderlands, where disregarding the unique characteristics of these regions can weaken emotional ties to the state and lead to the formation of attitudes based on local values. Against the background of that, mass migrations, on the one hand, raise anxieties connected with anticipated

ethnic changes in the borderlands, and on the other, they can serve as a catalyst for local communities, as they can use these changes to strengthen their traditionally peripheral position, drawing on their historical experiences of multiculturalism.

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POGRANICZE WSCHODNIE POLSKI  
W PERSPEKTYWIE ZMIAN KULTUROWYCH  
WYWOŁANYCH PROCESAMI MIGRACYJNYMI  
W DRUGIEJ I TRZECIEJ DEKADZIE XXI WIEKU

Streszczenie

Artykuł przedstawia pogranicze wschodnie w kontekście współczesnych międzynarodowych migracji. W pierwszej części, korzystając z modelu zależności centro-peryferijnych, a także teorii typów kapitału Pierre'a Bourdieu, analizuję specyfikę tego obszaru, która wynika z intensywnych interakcji między rywalizującymi kulturami i tożsamościami. Ta analiza pozwala zrozumieć, w jaki sposób procesy migracyjne wpisują się w kulturowy obraz pogranicza oraz jakie wyzwania i zagrożenia stoją przed jego mieszkańcami. Druga część tekstu została poświęcona bezpieczeństwu kulturowemu pogranicza. Zwracam w niej uwagę na potencjalny dysonans między percepcją bezpieczeństwa kulturowego ze strony państwa a postrzeganiem go przez mieszkańców pogranicza. Uważam, że jest on wynikiem różnej interpretacji zjawisk kulturowych występujących na pograniczu, a także odmiennych wartości leżących u podstaw tożsamości narodowej i tożsamości lokalnej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** migracje; pogranicze wschodnie; bezpieczeństwo kulturowe; koncepcja centrum-peryferia