III. NOWADAYS IDENTITY DISCOURSE

ETHNIC IDENTITY IN CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES: VARIOUS WAYS TO READ A SOCIETY

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"Borderland is an area of half-shadow, the space of filtering in and intermingling different human communities and their cultures", writes Grzegorz Babinski (Babinski 1998a: 49).

Nationality, ethnicity, ethnic minorities, ethnic identity, borderland, etc. – all these concepts have been essential in a long tradition of research concerning sociology of nation or sociology of borderland. However, none of them is understood in one definite way – it is, partly, the result of different kinds of experience on particular continents or in different periods in history, but it also results from the fact that sociology itself has not worked out one paradigm. The aim of this paper is to present certain problems that the researcher might be coping with as well as show new certain theoretical possibilities.

Numerous theories: the nightmares or the assets?

Sociologists have been interested in the problem of borderland for many years. They focus on ethnic relations, culture domination relations, situation of minorities or national identity of individuals. This research is conducted while applying different theoretical contexts. It is difficult to imagine research being done without theoretical reflection preceding it. This theory allows us to define the subject of research itself through its ontological dimension as well as indicate the scope and the method of the research. In other words, it is the theory that defines what the world is and where the possibilities to examine it begin and end. There are many paradigms in sociology, within which there are many different theories which are often contradictory to each another. The consequence of this fact is the presence of many problematic questions relating the lack of precise definitions; if anybody wanted to determine how many definitions of any sociological concept exist they would soon realize it is impossible to do[1]. This fact

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[1] It needs to be said that such attempts are made by some researchers, e.g. Isajiw, W. 1974. "Definitions of Ethnicity", in *Ethnicity*.

of many paradigms existing in sociology evokes many controversies and discussions among sociologists, the example of which can be the argument between adherents of positivist and humanist approach in sociology.

Functional perspective has been strongly criticized since the 1970s. It seemed to be an ideal theory after the World War II as it presented the society as a specifically configurated system. This concept, especially formulated by Talcott Parsons, appeared to be a universal theory, possible to analyze each society, which allowed sociology to be perceived as strongly academic field. However, the theory, which was supposed to "suit" every society, turned out to be the one inadequate to any of them. Pitrim Sorokin, strongly criticizing Parsons, compared his concept to the fishing net with the meshes that are too big; so all the fish can swim away. This metaphor is a perfect illustration of the biggest fault of functional approach – this theory is supposed to examine society in every socio-cultural aspect and due to this fact it loses local specifics of particular societies. One can criticize all theoretical approaches in this way; the only difference is particular charges.

However, here one can ask a question whether knowledge that has not worked out one paradigm could defend itself. I reckon it can; I would even argue this situation gives sociology a specific asset. What is society? Every theoretical approach tries to answer this question in different ways, none of which can be explicitly rejected. Bronislaw Misztal made a review of definitions of society in order to present certain contemporary tendency to define what it is (Misztal 2000: 77). It is quite a specific review, quite selective and neglecting many theoretical approaches worked out so far. However, it can be a symbol of a condition of contemporary sociology. This is well presented in Aleksander Manterys' works: "Classical Idea of Definitions of Situation" or "Multitude of Realities in Sociological Theories" (Manterys 1997, 2000). These works make the reader realize how the subject of research can be different according to the theoretical approach being chosen as a starting point. In other words, there is not and there will not probably be an ideal sociological theory. Each approach has a different perspective, making the same facts be interpreted in different ways. Facing such an impressive multitude of theories in sociology scholars feel the dilemma which of these approaches should be applied in their own empirical work. Some are fascinated with one particular theoretical approach which can have a negative effect on the novelty of their research attitude in longer perspective. Others reject any theories which might be seen as a nonchalant and risky attitude. It is difficult to imagine rejecting any theories since, as it was mentioned before, the theory defines what the subject of our research is and it affects the point of view, a point of perception of society. The points I mention are the subject of interest of reflexive sociology, for example reflexive sociology postulates by Pierre Bourdieu.

Theoretical disputes and sociology of borderland

Theoretical disputes within sociology affect particular sub-disciplines, such as sociology of borderland. There are both philosophically-methodological and ideological disputes, the result of which is the fact that particular theories are dominating. It is

clearly seen while following the history of research in ethnicity and national relations. Assimilation approach and belief in the irreversibility in this process dominated until the 1960s; later – with the development of critical trend and emancipation movements and ethnic revival – pluralization started to be taken into account. It was undoubtedly connected with a developing idea of democratization (liberties, the right to be different, etc). Later, the focus changes – it is cultural dominance which is examined, with its relation of dominance and submission.

The first theoretical approach concerning ethnicity and ethnic relations can be called generally a theory /theories of assimilation. These theories were strongly connected with the ideas of Anglo-conformism and aimed to explain the process of settling ethnic groups other than Anglo-Saxon into American society (or rather WASP society). Discussions concerning ethnic relations were worked out on the basis of American descriptive sociology, particularly within Chicago school. Robert E. Park assumed that racial and ethnic relations are irreversible and there are certain stages that can be distinguished: contact through migration, competition (conflict), accommodation and assimilation that is a final stage (Park, Burgess 1971: 116–129). Criticism that his theory was subjected to resulted from his assumption of irreversibility of these processes. However, he was not the only one who believed that assimilation processes are one-track processes. Babinski claims that

> The vast majority of research concerning ethnic problems, particularly research done until the 1970s was based, and in some way is still based, on a general paradigm of ethnicity studies which took it as a proved and obvious fact that ethnic processes are in general one-direction ones. This was to be proved by forming entire and more internally homogenous nations and the inevitability of assimilation processes of all ethnic minorities with those nations. In fact, the subject of numerous studies was the pace of integration and assimilation processes, their consecutive stages and the conditions of the course of these phenomena, particularly various disrupting factors. (Babinski 1998a: 16).

Assimilation theory was not the only way to handle ethnic relations; there were also conflict concepts, "melting pot" theory (see Babinski 1995, 1998a, b). Assimilation theory was the dominant approach. Together with "assimilation course" there also were pluralistic concepts. They have been developing since the beginning of the XX century but they became particularly popular in the 1970s, when the revival of ethnicity within previously assimilated groups was observed. In 1971 Michael Novak published his book "The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics", concerning the revival of ethnicity (Polish edition in 1985). The idea of cultural pluralism was related to the assumption that American society, as a society still integrating and acquiring immigrants, cannot create its homogenous culture (Novak 1997: 78). Horace M. Kallen first mentioned cultural pluralism in 1915. Aleksander Posern-Zielinski, while discussing his concept, pays attention that

> it accepted the presence of ethnic cultures as sub-cultures of American civilization. As a matter of fact, this idea accepted certain elements of both Anglo-conformism and the ideology of ethnic melting pot. It assumed that American civilization has an Anglo-Saxon stem which, enriched with immigrants' culture elements, became a new

culture value a homogenous American civilization on a macroscale and a pluralistic mosaic of sub-cultures on microscale (Posern-Zielinski 1982: 47).

Contemporarily, the research and the attempts to explain what happens in ethnic processes go slightly in another direction. The reality in which these processes happen has also changed. Peter Kivisto, whose subject of interest is contemporary ethnic problems in Great Britain, proves that ethnic and racial theories assuming gradual assimilation failed to be right (Kivisto 1997: 79). The assimilation approach was replaced by the theories assuming pluralism which were to explain the revival of ethnics, which was described by Novak (1997: 104–105). Within contemporary sociology considering ethnic relations there are theories of multiculturalism under development.

Numerous theoretical discussions concerning multiculturalism are placed in the context of the democratization of life and globalization. Democratization of both political and social life vastly refers to European experience in the second half of the XX century. It made it possible for different minorities (not only ethnic ones) to become subjects and it moved the focus in state policy from assimilation to shaping other patterns of inter-ethnic relations. Although there were many differences in this experience in different countries, the researchers point out certain similarities. Babinski and Wladyslaw Miodunka insist that most of European nations still cope with the problem of national identity. Not only does this problem refer to post-Soviet countries, it concerns all Europe; in many countries there appear ethnic and regional movements, the status of minorities becomes standardized in legal sense, in particular European countries there is bigger cultural exchange in borderlands, which is affected by the policy of particular countries (see Babinski 1995, Miodunka 1995, Sadowski 1995 and others).

Andrzej Sadowski stresses the fact that while analyzing ethnic relations nowadays one has to consider different varieties of these relations. He mentions vertical relations, based on dominance and submission, horizontal relations, based on partnership, and the relations of ethnic ties and distances, being conditioned psycho-socially (Sadowski 2001: 17–18).

Ethnicity and borderland

Ethnic identity is one of the most meaningful kinds of identity. For a long time it was treated as something that is formed until certain moment, and then it is something unchangeable in human life. In contemporary discussions concerning identity its impermanence, changeability and constant negotiating are stressed. Although identity has been a subject of research for many years there are still many questions and doubts. Some suggest that analyzing identity might be a certain trap for sociology. Paul Zawadzki mentions that, in his opinion, social science took too much to this notion. He accuses the concept of identity of being too connected with political ideologies, lack of operational strength and difficulties to define it precisely (Zawadzki 2003: 5).

Ethnicity is also a concept which has been used in social science for a long time, yet it is still unclear and ambiguous. Ethnicity has always caused discussions trying to work out its precise definition. Babinski presents four different contemporary ways to understand the concept of ethnicity:

1. Ethnicity understood as an ethnic group – in this meaning ethnicity is perceived as a set of features of ethnic group;
2. Ethnicity – ethnic identification – members of an ethnic group are aware of their distinction; they may feel pride or aversion due to this fact;
3. Ethnicity as a social movement, ethnicity as social activity undertaken in order to achieve the goals of the ethnic group; these activities can be deliberate or not;

Ethnicity as a social bond quoting Babinski: "It is all about such a bond which is defined as a primordial tie. <…> It is a concept of ethnicity as a bond or, rather, certain ties among members of the ethnic community, often based on extended kinship, "given" to the communities sharing the same religion, language, origin. Such bond is given to the group; it is inherited and still present, although in certain conditions it can be seen in more or less clear way (Babinski 1998a: 193).

Babinski presents his suggestion of the definition, according to which ethnicity is a set of group features.

These features must be a kind of a bond, although not necessarily primordial bond; it is also realizing the shared origin and cultural community and – based on this awareness – the sense of "us", separating this group from other ethnic groups, and also, to certain extent, from the 'rest of the world' (1998b: 193).

Beatrice Drury while defining *ethnicity* and *ethnic group* refers to the fact that it is a group of people who share certain patterns and norms of behavior included in the shared culture, religion, language; who identify with the same socio-cultural features and are identified by others in the same way, but at the same time they are also the part of bigger population and the more extended social system (Drury 1994: 13). Drury stresses not only ties and self-identification, but also the fact others perceive the group as the different one.

Richard Jenkins distinguishes four elements the model of ethnicity consists of. He writes that *ethnicity* is the basis of cultural variety, since identification is always based on dialectic linking of similarity and difference; secondly, *ethnicity* is a culture sharing the same meanings and established by people interacting with one another; thirdly, *ethnicity* is a concept which is constantly reconstructed and changed; finally *ethnicity* is a social identification both for groups and individuals, both external and internal (Jenkins 1998: 40). This division into constitutive elements of *ethnicity* proves it can be understood in many ways when taken into one of these dimensions. Slawomir Lodzinski mentions one more way to understand ethnicity as a kind of "symbolic capital" (Lodzinski 2000: 51). In my opinion, this way of understanding ethnicity underlines the questions connected with cultural dominance, privilege or submission of certain cultural groups.[2]

Returning to the problem of ethnic identity – it can be directly understood as a self-definition of an individual or social group through stressing their belonging to a particular ethnic group. However, as it can be concluded from above reflections, neither the concept of identity nor ethnicity is unambiguous. Thus, it is obvious that the concept of ethnic identity raises numerous difficulties.

The idea of individual's identity is present in sociology thanks to the work of social psychologists, particularly Erik Erikson. Erikson perceived identity as a relatively stable

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[2] See more concerning this subject: Turner (2004).

self-definition of an individual. George Mead and William James are particularly important working out the concept of individual identity. They and their followers attracted sociologists' attention to individual's self, showing complex relations appearing between individual self and the society.

Jean-Claude Kaufmann insists that

The concept of identity is particularly difficult to define. Its content, defining either group identities or an individual and their specific features referring to socialization frames or mental creation, is constantly changing. <…> However it is operational and that is why it is widely used, although it is not defined clearly. It allows <…> making an attempt to introduce subjectivity to sociological analysis, moving towards wiping out the border separating sociology and psychology (Kaufmann 2004: 217).

Although there are critical opinions and objections, identity is a concept that has been present in sociology for a long time yet formulated in different ways. It is not concerned to be a constant self-definition. Now such its features as changeability and narration are focused on which is the result of contemporary discussions concerning modern society. It stresses that this society experiences numerous changes, being unclear, without any defined authorities, vague. Society itself is now considered as a process, not something stable; in this process social structures and individuals mutually affect each other.

What is an essential feature of modern societies is the phenomenon of multiculturalism. Wojciech Kalega takes note of the relations between multiculturalism and identity.

Multiculturalism, as a civilization phenomenon, causes not only political and social consequences, but it also imposes the modification of thinking categories concerning an individual subject involved in unclear situations, unpredictable choices, localizations in many places concurrently. There is no longer a relative, although not always transparent, unambiguity and transparency in the relations with others. It is true even for me-others relation within the closest community, as it seems that the attempt to give the particular community specific rights in order to strengthen its group identity interferes with individual's rights, and consequently with their individual identity (Kalega 2004: 7).

Zygmunt Bauman wrote that thinking about identity might mean we have a certain problem with it. "Identity is an antagonistic concept; when it is discussed it is likely to mean that someone, somewhere, sometime, is not satisfied with the place they chose or were given. Identity is a protest against *status quo* and a challenge issued to the *status quo*" (Bauman 2004: 36).

Identity is a concept interpreted on numerous levels. There is national and ethnic identity, religious identity, sexual identity, body identity, etc. It shows that our individual identity can be fragmented in many ways or it can be assumed that it is rather a conglomerate of many identities than one identity.

In works of contemporary symbolic interactionists, such as Sheldon Stryker or Peter Burke, identity is understood as something that develops and has to develop as a relation between an individual and a social structure. Stryker writes about identities, about the hierarchy of its accentuations. He insists that an individual is equipped with many identities which are grouped in hierarchies of accentuations. Stryker focuses on the importance of an individual's

involvement in particular identities. McCall and Simmons stress the identity of a role; they do not link identity with the structures an individual acts in as much as Stryker does[3].

Nowadays a modernist border of identity, deciding which one is or is not allowed to be, has been rejected. Identity can be created through consumer's choices. Everything can be practically consumed, every aspect of social reality can be taken by market and, in appropriate package, and it can reach the individuals. Marek Krajewski while proving that consumption is an analytical model makes it clear that consumption is superficial, it does not get inside the society – it moves on its surface, assuming that there might be nothing inside; normally when we use such analytical categories as culture, structure, personality, we use them as manifestation of something that is the essence of society (Krajewski 1997: 82).

Bauman declares that the question "what is the world like?" is to be replaced by the question "which of the worlds is it?" There is no one world any longer; there is no one truth, shared purposes, etc. We live our lives in different worlds, in different manners, with identity that keeps changing. He also writes about "identity offers" that are provided for individuals by market, advertising, consumption. "We need to remember that breaking the ties which used to attach people to their position in society or corporation that happens contemporarily, made an individual face the necessity to construct their social identity. Everyone has to answer their question – who am I?" (Bauman 1995: 76). Bauman claims that the individual is offered help by market. It gives them possibility to create their identities through participation in its (market's) offer. "Market method builds *me* through images. Identity is equaled with a certain visual hint-signal that can be seen by others and the meaning of which can be recognized according to a sender's intention" (Bauman 1995: 77). Zbyszko Melosik and Tadeusz Szkudlarek suggest specific typology of identity. They focus their attention on postmodern identity, proving that in previous periods there was one clearly distinguished dominant identity, which was universalistic. They mention that certain kind of discipline of identity, typical for modern society, was rejected due to the offer made by the market. They name several types of identity but the fact that one individual can make constant changes of their identity seems to be particularly interesting. (See Melosik and Szkudlarek 1998: 56–66).

Regardless of the fact in which frames the identity is closed (consumption, market, postmodernism and others), these are changeability, flexibility, impermanence and individual's freedom to construct themselves that are focused on. "Individuals are released from the imposed group ties and obligations, granted inalienable rights, not only as a citizen or a member of society but also as a human being, deciding on their life, having numerous patterns of life or a career, being responsible for all their successes or failures" (Sztompka 2002: 563). This freedom, however, is, in my opinion, illusionary – it is only the freedom to make choices between particular offers, patterns, strategies, etc. It is strongly believed that this is an individual that has the biggest influence on creating their identity.

Anthony Giddens describes contemporary society as a society of risk, in which our own identity and the narration of our biography are constantly constructed in order

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[3] The problems of relations between language and identity in borderland are presented in the work Language and identity in culture borderland by E. Smułkowa and A. Engelsking (2000).

to achieve ontological security. He shows one of the reasons of this contemporary risk – the lack of tradition regulating social life and making the sense of durability (2001: 68–69). Giddens claims that individual's life is making choices constantly in the ocean of possibilities to create one's own narration; identity is, according to Giddens, a constant narration of self.

Irena Machaj, who examines contemporary Polish social identity, pays a particular attention at an impact of cultural trauma. Trauma is the kind of event in the life of a group that makes individuals make a reflection of self-definition. This self-definition is a process.

> However, it is neither "reflecting" nor accepting the divisions and cultural criteria of diversity mechanically by an individual. Contemporarily these are individuals as subjects that observe themselves in the socio-cultural world and make choices and classification placing themselves in the chosen classes of belonging and similarity. The divisions and socio-cultural distances occurring in society in real are only a kind of a palette from which an individual takes but also introduces their own categories of social affiliations (Machaj 2005: 22).

Machaj emphasizes that the identity of an individual is created in two dimensions: diachronic, focusing on maintaining the sense of time continuum, and synchronic, locating individual's considerations concerning him/her in the context of relations with others and environment.

Ethnic identity of individual – majority discourse, minority discourse

Ethnic identity exists on the basis of opposition between "ours" and "strangers". Although the category of "alien", "stranger" always appears in identity context, it is particularly important while discussing ethnic identity. In this way belonging to a particular ethnic group and, at the same time, separating from other groups is stressed. This identification results in another kind of identification – with particular culture (Holy 1992). Katarzyna Warminska suggests that "On the one hand, ethnicity may serve pragmatic or political purpose; on the other one it serves a mental need of belonging and proves the point of human existence" (Warminska 1999: 22–23). Ethnic identity gets a specific meaning in the context of borderland. Not only is borderland a real but, most of all, a symbolic space, where approaching "strangers" is constant. Concerning this fact, referring to Stryker's or Burke's concepts described above, we experience constant emphasizing on ethnic identity. Individual keeps involving in interactions with others who are determined by their ethnicity. It is worth paying attention at the specifics of ethnic relations in certain borderland. In borderland there are different ethnic groups co-existing with each other and the relations between them can be complex. There is, usually, one group being culturally dominant and the group or groups depending on it. The hierarchy of ethnic groups may be of different kinds so; consequently, ethnic identity of individuals could be valued. Ethnicity is a specific symbolic capital that may be valued by individuals in different ways. Language is a specific element of this capital, tightly connected with identity. In borderland, language is not only a symbolic

system allowing verbal communication. It allows demonstrating people's own ethnic identification and showing ethnic stratification[4].

While observing the tradition of research concerning ethnic minorities, it is quite clearly seen that these are majorities and dominant groups that are interested in this kind of research. It could be stated that it is a majority discourse. These are dominant groups that determine the scope and purpose of the research and the method that is used. This is their perspective that society, ethnic minorities, borderlands, normative identities are described and evaluated from. Then, it may be necessary to ask a question what we can find out from the research done by culturally dominant majority. Is there any difference between the research done from the perspective of majority and the research done from the perspective of minority? These controversies appeared in critical sociology but it was postmodernism and numerous post-constructivists who emphasized on them. Each of these approaches calls into question the objectivity of research done by these who are dominant. Critical sociology, particularly this connected with the New Left, calls into question the primacy of assimilation and neglecting the problems of minorities. Postmodernism, generally, is skeptical concerning science, but what is important to me is that it rejects the conviction of things being worth or not analyzed by researchers. As Jean Baudrillard expressed it we have to "play with the remaining" – we need to become interested in things which have been beyond academic interest so far. It also means a change in examining the problems of minorities – it is more often noticed that a society observed from the perspective of minority could be seen in a different way, other things may appear to be meaningful and need to be stressed. Although postmodernism has been discarded it should not be said it did not bring any essential ideas. It influenced numerous contemporary theories, both those inspired by postmodernism directly and those rejecting it, by criticism of certain bases of scientific approach. What I call majority discourse is that it is taken for granted that the dominant group examines others from its privileged position, forcing their own definition of reality included in theories they came up with. Minority discourse might be reversing this approach and declaring that "the same reality" seems to be different defined and evaluated by minority (what one group defines to be an invitation to assimilation could be understood as forced assimilation by the other group). This type of research is not popular. The example of such an undertaking was done by prof. Janusz Mucha and his research project, the result of which is the book *Dominant Culture as Other Culture. Cultural minorities and the Dominant Group in Poland* published in 1999.

There are at least several obstacles in creating theoretical minority discourse. Firstly, all methodology has been created by majority and while doing subsequent research it is necessary to know it and follow its rules. Secondly, and it seems even more important, the researchers calling themselves to be representatives of minority may be accused of the lack of objectivity, which discredits the researcher. However, it is worth juxtaposing Weber's postulate of researcher's objectivity with Bourdieu project of reflexive sociology. Weber postulates that a researcher suspends her/his own opinions whereas Bourdieu focuses on the fact that it is impossible to abandon our own sex or race. Researcher's objectivity is a myth. Bourdieu reminds us that we will always describe

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[4] This theory developed in the1980s of the XX century.

society from a certain perspective and there is nothing wrong in it providing we realize this fact (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2001).

Representatives of majority are seldom accused of the lack of objectivity, although postmodernism, feminism and queer theory undoubtedly show it.

Feminism and queer in borderland

Feminist and queer theories are the ones that have often been accused of the lack of objectivity due to the fact they are developed by the representatives of minority. What is common between them is the fact they are created by those who they describe. Even though these two approaches (especially feminism) have had quite a long history they are rarely appreciated in Poland and, as I suppose, in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In the 1990s these were political and economic changes in post-Soviet countries which were the subject of interest of academic research. Numerous important processes that these societies were coping with were described. The subjects of analysis were democratization, changes in social structure, socio-cultural transformation, labour market and unemployment. Feminism, which has achieved a position of an acknowledged theoretical perspective in Western countries, was not treated seriously here. Problems of women were mentioned but feminism itself was rather neglected. Queer theory has been applied in Central Europe for only several years. It can be said that post-Soviet societies do not understand the division into "the ours" and "the others" only in a political context any longer but they realize the existence of many other divisions within the society. The myth of a homogenous society – homogenous in both ethnic and religious sense as well as in the sense of individual sexual identities – is collapsing, which is connected with violating numerous taboos.

What do borderland sociology, feminism and queer theory have in common? Ethnicity and gender are often talked about together in academic debates in the West. It is the result of internal criticism of so called First Wave of feminism. In the Second Wave of feminism it started to be mentioned that different kinds of female experience depend on different ethnic or racial backgrounds. It led to a broader way of treating problems of women regarding ethnic problems. Besides, we talk about minorities and their image of reality here. Queer theory, being the newest[5] and the most controversial is this kind of approach that focuses on minority. It demonstrates how homosexual community uses ethnic/minority model in order to build their identity. It proves that this model rejects those who do not suit the image of a white middle-class gay. In other words, queer theory undermines assimilation model. It deconstructs all previous theoretical approaches accusing them of submitting to majority discourse. Queer rejects reasonableness of all legally valid norms which allow putting members of society into certain categories and locating them in ready/convenient/politically correct places. Although queer theory originated in homosexual environment, it gradually started to be applied to sexual minorities understood in a broader way. Contemporarily, it is admitted that this perspective is valuable while examining society in general. The

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[5] See more concerning this subject (Callender, Kochems 1983; Baer 2004).

advantage of queer theory is that it rejects all obvious opinions that are treated as natural ones. It criticizes, in a specific sense, the obligation to have the identity. This obligation is the consequence of the necessity to decide who we are and who we are not to act in a binary system "the ours" and "the other". This binary division is the reason why one loses the ability to see the whole range of possibilities that exist beyond this type of division. When the binary sexual division is questioned, the anthropological and sociological research in third (or even fourth) sex is referred to[6].

> One of the dilemmas of sexual (it means relating to minority – M. B. P.) citizenship is demanding the rights within existing structures, looking for protection in law that always rejected and treated marginally sexual minorities being responsible for the acts of violence they were victims of. As many queer theoreticians claim, the norms were never questioned. <…> According to Sabine Hark (1998) not only is the law a medium to achieve something, it is also involved in tradition and serves the interests of a clearly defined "majority" (Mizielińska 2006: 149).

It is worth mentioning certain difficulties related to using queer methodology. They result from the fact this approach is interdisciplinary. Judith Halberstam concludes that each method specific for a certain discipline contains a certain mistake trap; mistake that we can make. The commitment to a certain discipline, theory or method makes us pass over anything different or new.

> A queer methodology, in a way, is a scavenger methodology that uses different methods to collect and produce information on subjects that have been deliberately or accidentally excluded from traditional studies of human behaviour. The queer methodology attempts to combine methods that are often cast as being at odds with each other and it refuses the academic compulsion towards disciplinary coherences (Halberstam 1998: 13).

Conclusions

I believe that applying the knowledge resulting from feminist or queer research to borderland sociology will allow looking into certain categories of ethnic or national identity, which have been treated in the perspective of evolutionism so far as temporary or immature forms, I mean categories such as "local" or mixed forms, such as Polish-Belarusian identity, etc. They obtain another dimension from the queer perspective; the expression "local" is not any longer any immature form of identity, and it calls into question the necessity to identify with a particular ethnic group. "Local" is above/beyond national divisions which can lead to different, often unpleasant, consequences.

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[6] "Local" is a usual way to answer the question of national identity in Eastern Poland.

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ETNINIS TAPATUMAS ŠIUOLAIKINIŲ TYRINĖJIMŲ PERSPEKTYVOJE: ĮVAIRŪS BŪDAI AIŠKINTI VISUOMENĘ

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Santrauka

Nacionalumas, etniškumas, etninės mažumos, pasienio ruožai – visos šios sąvokos yra esmingai svarbios giliai sociologinių tyrinėjimų tradicijai ir pasienio ruožų sociologijai. Nepaisant to, vargu ar bent vieną iš jų būtų paprasta aiškiai apibrėžti. Iš dalies taip yra dėl neredukuojamos viena į kitą skirtinguose kontinentuose ir skirtingomis istorinėmis epochomis atsirandančių patirčių įvairovės, iš dalies dėl to, kad pati sociologija nepateikia bent vienos konkrečios paradigmos. Šiame straipsnyje siekiama pristatyti pagrindines šiuolaikiniams tyrinėtojams kylančias problemas ir aptarti naujas teorines galimybes.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: pasienio ruožas, etninis tapatumas, etninės mažumos, etniškumas, nacionalumas.