

PREFACE

Étienne Balibar in the Alexander von Humboldt Lecture (2004) “Europe as Borderland” said that “there is no “center”, there are only “peripheries”... each region of Europe is or could be considered as a “center” in its own right, because it is made of overlapping peripheries, each of them opens (through “invasions”, “conquests”, “refuges”, “colonizations” and “post-colonial migrations”, etc.) to influences from all other parts of Europe, and from the whole world”.

This issue of *Limes: Cultural Regionalistics*, named “Cultural Images in the Region under Transformation” is fruitful result of the international conference “Cultural Images in the Region under Transformation” which was held on May 28-29, 2009 in Vilnius in Culture, Philosophy and Arts Research Institute (CPHARI) (now Lithuanian Culture Research Institute (LCRI)) brought together researchers from the Baltic Sea area to develop the interdisciplinary research on cultural regionalistics through a focus on the issues of media globalization and identity; to employ theories of cultural studies including phenomenology and sociology of culture in order to understand and interpret the processes of regional transformation.

The international group of researchers examined various intersections (historical, religious, demographical etc.) of region’s identity formation and the ongoing processes of political and cultural globalization as they are filtered through the use of media such as satellite, television, film, video and the Web in the Baltic Sea area. The regional cohesion was analysed through the visible or disappearing border discourse, a role of mass media in the creation of public opinion about processes occurring on borderlands of the Baltic Sea region (language, education and cultural policy, the changing identity of the ethnic majorities/minorities, image of everyday life).

The most participants used interdisciplinary methodologies related to globalization and the media across the disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, including phenomenology, history, cultural geography, comparative cultural studies, film and media studies, and sociology.

In particular, participants had to deal with such subjects and questions as the conflict between the regionality/locality and globality in nowadays region of Europe, consequences of the weakening factor of territorial belonging and mass emigration inside the region, the interactions between the past and the future in the presence of nowadays geographical, religious, cultural, social, political transformations in the region, the interconnections between the national identity and regional identity concerning the processes of European integration and influence of media on national identity transitions.

Most of discussions were concentrated around such subjects as national and regional identities (the cases of Lithuanian, Belarusian and Finnish identities), tolerance boundaries, cultural egalitarianism, the process of construction of new cultural space, region as imagined identity’s background and historical sources of cultural territorialization, disappearance and strengthening of borders and their new functions,

European self-identification, interpersonal communication values, the role of daily life in forming the human and cultural identity in the Baltic region, the case of “connected histories”, the uniqueness and challenge of Lithuanian and Polish cultural link. The authors used different methodological approaches and interdisciplinary research to analyse the phenomenon of cultural image.

Round table “From Borderline to Borderland: New Challenge of Remaking Eastern Borders” which took place in November 19, 2009 in CPHARI, is our first local scientific event of COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) project named “Remaking Eastern Borders in Europe: A Network Exploring Social, Moral and Material Relocation of Europe’s Eastern Peripheries”. This round table was an opportunity to analyse two groups of the bellow described problem and to search methodological ground of its research. The first one is the regionalist aspects of borderland and its socio-political and cultural aspects of everyday life. The second one is global problems which result from changing identity (including European), the creation of a new cultural capital and “new geography”, which should be called cyber-geography or virtual space. We touched the area of developing contradictory processes of disappearance of the borders and strengthening of the Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian borderland (Schengen or non-Schengen zones). The shadows of historical memory and historical retrospective reconstruction of borders were following our discussion.

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Basia Nikiforova