

E. Opiłowska, M. Dębicki, K. Dolińska, J. Kajta, Z. Kurcz, J. Makaro, N. Niedźwiedzka-Iwańczak (editors): Border and Borderlands Studies. A Lexicon [Studia nad granicami i pograniczami. Leksykon], 2020, Warsaw, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar (review)

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Border and Borderlands Studies. Lexicon is the first book of this kind on the Polish publishing market. It should be added that this type of study has been a necessity. The interdisciplinary research field of border studies has already been represented in Poland by a large and well-integrated academic community. Its representatives, more than 50 authors of the lexicon, decided to bring the accomplishments in the area of border studies, available largely in English, closer to the Polish reader. It will certainly be a useful reading for didactic, popularization, and academic purposes.

Why do I think the publication of the Lexicon has been necessary? For over twenty years a renaissance of interest in the issues of borders and borderlands has been witnessed in Poland. Considerable services in this field have been rendered especially by two initiatives: the establishment of the academic journal *Pogranicze. Studia Społeczne* [Borderland. Social Studies] by Andrzej Sadowski in the Institute of Sociology of the University of Białystok (1992) and the establishment of the Department of Borderland Sociology by Zbigniew Kurcz at the University of Wrocław (1997). Most of the research and publishing activities were conducted in these two centres, which were gradually attracting the attention of

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a growing number of researchers in the following years. These researchers were not only sociologists but also geographers (Universities of Łódź and Wrocław), political scientists (University of Opole, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw), economists, and management specialists (University of Gdańsk, University of Economics in Katowice, WSB in Dąbrowa Górnicza). These centres do not exhaust the “settlement structure” of Polish border and borderland researchers, but they illustrate the significance of borders as a research topic today. This is evidenced by both the establishment of The Centre for Regional and Borderlands Studies (Polish abbreviation: OBROP) in Wrocław, whose team is responsible for the academic editing of the lexicon, and the number of Polish academics participating in European and world congresses of the Association for Borderlands Studies.

The Lexicon is therefore a natural consequence of the processes that have taken place for a long time, not only in Poland. Similar initiatives have already been implemented by Doris Wastl-Walter (2011) in cooperation with Routledge and Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan (2012) in cooperation with Wiley Blackwell. Incidentally, the international border scholars’ community aspires to emerge as an original, interdisciplinary research field (and even a research perspective in the social sciences), strongly institutionalized, with its own academic journal (*Journal of Borderlands Studies*), a thriving organisation (the Association for Borderlands Studies), and a network of several dozen centres, institutes and organisations with a regional reach on each continent (Kolossoff and Scott 2013), with its own conceptual framework and its own border theories developed in the spirit of different paradigms (Scott 2016, Jańczak 2013a, Parker and Vaughan-Williams 2009, Brambilla 2015, Paasi 2012). Also in Poland, in the sense of its national theoretical output in the field of border research, this work has not been created “in the middle of nowhere”. The conceptual framework related to borders and borderlands as well as the processes taking place there have been developed and ordered, for instance, by Jarosław Jańczak (2013b), Zbigniew Kurcz (2008), Anna Moraczewska (2008), Wojciech Opióła (2014) Andrzej Sadowski (2008), Dariusz Wojakowski (2013), and Radosław Zenderowski (2014).

It also seems that there is no better centre that could initiate this type of undertaking. OBROP, established in Wrocław on the foundations of the Department of Borderland Sociology, is not only a research centre, but also – and I dare to present this interpretation based on my personal experience – a group of friends that enjoy working together and at the same time are open to interdisciplinary cooperation among various research centres. Anyone with experience in “recruiting” authors for a collective monograph, a special issue of a journal or an

encyclopaedia knows what a task it is to bring together fifty-four renowned authors with well-established accomplishments in their respective fields of research to collaborate on one book.

The diversity of the authors of the lexicon entries is significant, both in terms of the disciplines and the academic centres they represent. It seems that the basic key to the selection was – and rightly so – their expertise. Let me mention a few numbers: 54 authors from 26 academic centres, including nine researchers from abroad, representing ten academic disciplines. The dominant perspective is sociology (exactly half of the authors can be qualified as representatives of this discipline), but the theoretical achievements of other disciplines, especially political science, geography, and anthropology are evident as well. This is another example of the powerful positive influence of the Wrocław team on the Polish community of border scholars.

Speaking of the team responsible for the publication of the lexicon, it is worth adding a few more sentences to their characterization. The team is comprised of academics employed by the The Centre for Regional and Borderlands Studies at the University of Wrocław and, simultaneously, the Institute of Sociology at the University: Elżbieta Opiłowska, Marcin Dębicki, Kamilla Dolińska, Justyna Kajta, Zbigniew Kurcz, Julita Makaro, Natalia Niedźwiedzka-Iwańczak. The fact that E. Opiłowska is listed in first place, against the alphabetical order, proves her leading role in the lexicon project (Opiłowska is also the head of OBROP). All the editors' academic accomplishments include works connected with border or borderlands studies, specifically with cross-border issues (Kurcz), multiculturalism (Dolińska, Kajta, Makaro), cross-border twin cities (Opiłowska, Makaro, Dębicki, Dolińska, Niedźwiedzka-Iwańczak), Polish borderlands (Dębicki), cross-border cooperation (Opiłowska), and national minorities (Kurcz). The lexicon was published in cooperation with the Scholar Academic Publishing House in late spring of 2020, and the actual work on it (assembling the authors, preparing and editing entries, etc.) had begun at the turn of 2018 and 2019. The pace of work was impressive and had no negative impact on the quality of the final work. The main text, footnotes, and references have been carefully edited. The publication also includes an index of names and biographical notes about the authors. It is worth mentioning that the lexicon will also be available in an online version, which seems to be a perfectly justified decision. Moreover, it is the intention of the editors to supplement the electronic version with new entries. The lexicon has been reviewed by two researchers whose presence as evaluators is not accidental: Wojciech Józef Burszta, a cultural anthropologist, and Maria Szmeja, a specialist in the multiculturalism of Opole Silesia.

The lexicon is comprised of 56 entries, each of them quite extensive (5-10 pages) and accompanied by a bibliography and – in some cases – a list of recommended literature. The selection of entries for the lexicon is interesting and innovative. There are four main categories of terms described in the lexicon:

- analytical categories related to border and borderlands studies, e.g. borderland, border, border regime, trans-culturalism, borderscapes,
- institutions connected with living in borderlands and crossing borders, and social structures characteristic of such areas, e.g. Euroregion, Eurocity, divided city, Schengen,
- social phenomena and processes characteristic of borderland areas, e.g. neighbourhood, cross-border cooperation, delimitation,
- universal categories analysed from the perspective of the border researcher, e.g. multiculturalism, methodological nationalism, paradiplomacy, regionalism.

It is worth noting that in the lexicon we can find descriptions of concepts whose theories are rooted in social sciences (e.g. borderland) and relatively new concepts, such as those on which research has basically started in the 21st century, e.g. borderscapes (cf. Brambilla 2015) or the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (which is itself a new institution).

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