

**The Centre of Applied Anthropology
Research Institute of Ukrainian Studies**

Call for Papers

Second International Interdisciplinary Workshop

Imaginary Borderlands: ‘Othering’ and ‘Domestic Others’ on Post-Soviet Frontiers

KYIV, June 21 – 22, 2018

Theme:

Social anthropology interprets the notion of ‘border’ and ‘borderlands’ as some physical space; it suggests something located ‘between’, in a contact area; a territory where the discontinuity becomes a little out of focus (Herzfeld 2001). Interdisciplinary research of ‘border studies’ in Eastern Europe reflects the internal complexity and dynamics of social-cultural changes in a region that has constantly faced political, social and economic challenges, including shifting borders and massive in and out migrations. The category of ‘*borderland*’ acquires a new urgency in the current context of social and political change and instability in Eastern Europe, especially in post-Soviet areas. Nowadays we witness how unprotected and flexible state borders are. Political elites use the idea of ‘common cultural heritage’ or ‘common history’ to revise the borders of another state.

The western border of Ukraine can be considered a border of post trauma, while the eastern border is one of actual traumatic experience. However, current painful changes on Ukrainian eastern borderlands, including new ‘borders’ with the unrecognized republics of ‘LPR’ and ‘DPR’, the huge dimension of displaced people and migrations abroad evoked conflicts of memory between neighbours on its western borderlands, which include the former boundaries of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Poland and Romania. Thus, the ongoing crisis in Ukraine has already exacerbated existing conflicts among various social groups, reducing the general level of social trust and tolerance. Therefore, we urgently need to enhance understanding among various culture agents and encourage different social groups to look for strategies to understand their neighbours and ‘*domestic others*’. For this purpose, we suggest to discuss the multiplicity of *imaginary borders* that occurs when hidden wounds, traumas and stereotypes dominate the experience of real communication. The discourse of ‘imaginary borders’ coincides with the process of ‘othering’ and divides social groups from each other.

The case of Ukrainian society reflects the problems and challenges of post-socialist and post-Soviet states on its local level. We encourage young scholars, representing various disciplines, to reflect upon the following questions: what does the process of ‘othering’ mean for Ukrainian society and societies in the post-Soviet space; who are those ‘*domestic others*’ living nearby; how to avoid the stigmatization of ‘others’ on a social and political level; is ‘multicultural tolerance’ is a myth created by scholars, journalists and ‘opinion makers’; how can post-colonial theories be applied to the processes of ‘othering’ on post-Soviet frontiers; how should we perceive the notion of ‘frontier’ given the ongoing political challenges and shifting borders in Eastern Europe, etc.

The workshop will offer debates on the ‘border studies’ as a scholarly field, on the multi-sited perceptions of ‘other’; on the narratives of East and West in Ukraine, and broader – on Post-

Soviet space, and on the institutions that conserve the past or construct new horizons of expectations and identities. We focus not on ‘real’ history, but on images that can be seen through articulations of a local point of view, stressing on the experiences and perceptions of the ‘Other’.

We seek proposals for presentations, based on qualitative research methods, which explore demarcations, experiences, and imaginings of ‘*domestic others*’ on post-Soviet frontiers. Focused predominantly on Ukraine, but also on the whole post-Soviet space, papers may be theoretical in nature or may assess the meanings of these ideas within specific ethnographic cases and local communities.

Expected results of the Workshop

- pursuing critical reflection on the history and nature of ‘border studies’ as a scholarly field, and on the narratives of ‘borders’, ‘borderlands’ and ‘frontiers’ in the region;
- enhancing an understanding of the ‘othering’ problem for the present discourse of the post-Soviet frontiers;
- debating ethical issues of ethnographic fieldwork in stigmatized communities and among ‘domestic others’;
- developing cooperation among NGO actors, volunteers and researches;
- building a sustainable network by encouraging an epistemic community in the region on the theme of the workshop.

Format:

The target group encompasses young scholars (those under 35 years of age on February 20, 2018). The event envisages 4 panels (**12 participants**), 4 discussants and 2 lecturers-key-note speakers.

All papers will be pre-circulated to participants to facilitate fruitful discussion. Each participant will give a 20-minute presentation (PowerPoint or Prezi presentation is obligatory), followed by commentary by an invited discussant (20 minutes) and open discussion (30 minutes for questions and answers).

The working language of the workshop is English.

Logistics: The organizers are currently working on covering the costs of travel to Kyiv and three nights’ accommodation for the participants.

Proposals: Please submit a brief CV with your contact details (max. 3 pages) and a **300-word proposal** to e-mail: imaginary.borderlands2018@gmail.com by **20 February 2018**. Notification of acceptance will be given by **10 March 2018**. All documents should be submitted in English, preferably as a single PDF file. Please, note that partial participation is not possible. Those, who will send their applications after the deadline, won’t be considered.

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