

# Geovisualization in Cultural Research of Borderlands: The Example of the Podlasie Region in Poland

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## Abstract:

In Poland, cultural borderlands are often identified as historical regions shaped by the influences of various cultural groups: ethnic, national, linguistic, or religious. These regions usually form transition zones. Their multicultural character results from complex historical processes such as migrations, border changes, and political and economic expansion. Contemporary cultural diversity is evident in ethnic structures, characteristic intercultural relations, and the identity of the inhabitants. A specific cultural landscape is also created in these borderlands. For this reason, borderlands are a research area for representatives of various disciplines: cultural scientists, historians, sociologists, and geographers.

An example of a borderland that has retained its multicultural character is the Podlasie region in north-eastern Poland. It is a part of a transitional zone where, for centuries, Western (Latin, Catholic) and Eastern (Byzantine, Orthodox) cultures have clashed and penetrated. Religious differences still influence the local uniqueness and identity of the inhabitants. These differences are also clearly visible in the landscape, through religious objects and symbols characteristic of neighbouring communities.

The results of cartographic analyses on the diversity of cultural phenomena in the borderland will be presented at the conference. The research aimed to visualize the spatial distribution of two Christian traditions - Roman Catholic and Orthodox - in the Podlasie region. A cartographic methods (grid) and geoinformatics tools was employed for these analyses. The geographical locations of sacred objects, Orthodox and Catholic temples, were examined. The outcome was a differential map highlighting areas of cultural dominance, the range of each tradition, as well as contact zones and transition areas where cultural influences converge. According to the author, these geovisualizations can aid cultural research in better exploring and understanding the complexities of borderland phenomena.