

NEWSLETTER 10

of the IUAES

COMMISSION ON URBAN ANTHROPOLOGY

June 1999

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Editorial

When I was invited to become the new secretary of the IUAES Commission on Urban Anthropology, I had serious doubts at first. Not only because it is difficult to replace Dr. Peter Nas, but also because it seemed an enormous lot of work. But an unforeseen and very positive aspect of the job has been the warmth and encouragement from the members. I have also received much support from Professor Ghaus Ansari, chairman, and Peter Nas, former secretary. Thank you, thank you!

► The deadline for the next Newsletter is 31 December 1999. The main aim of the Newsletters is to facilitate communication between the Commission's members. Therefore, starting with Newsletter # 11, I will mention the address of every person who sends in an article, review or brief news item. If you do not wish your address made public, please state that clearly and explicitly to me.

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News from the Commission on Urban Anthropology

ANNUAL REPORT: COMMISSION ON URBAN ANHTROPOLOGY

Ghaus Ansari

XIV International Congress of Anthropological & Ethnological Sciences (I.C.A.E.S.) at Williamsburg, Virginia (U.S.A.): July-August, 1998. Sessions of the Commission on Urban Anthropology

With the agreement of the ICAES organizing committee, the Commission on Urban Anthropology had scheduled to hold three symposia in Williamsburg during the Congress: (i) the Future of Urban Anthropology, (ii) Urban Anthropology of Industrial Societies, and (iii) Urban Anthropology in General Perspective. While organizing the Congress programme, the organizers suggested to reschedule the session on the Future of Urban Anthropology into a full scale Plenary Session, entitled Future of the City. (In all only three Plenary Sessions were finally planned.) Our Plenary Session was chaired by Ghaus Ansari, who in his address from the chair, outlined the emerging realities of the worldwide urbanization, emphasising the changes in theoretical articulation and conceptual modifications in the future studies of urban anthropology. He was followed by an address by the guest speaker, the mayor of Williamsburg, Hon'able (Mrs.) Jeanne Zeidler, who gave an elaborate insight into the administration of the city of Williamsburg, outlining the history of the growth as well as the future perspective of development of the city. Initially five speakers were scheduled to present their ongoing researches in the Plenary Session: Giuliana Prato (Kent University, U.K.), Amalia Signorelli (Milan University, Italy), C.J.M.R. Gullick (Durham University, U.K.), Linda Kaljee (University of Maryland, U.S.A.), and Sumita Chaudhuri (Calcutta University, India). Later, however, Giuliana Prato and Amalia Signorelli informed their inability to attend the Congress. Thus three elaborate papers were presented, each followed by brief discussion. Sumita Chaudhuri presented her graphic research on urbanization and identity, relevant to the emerging situation in India. C.J.M.R. Gullick spoke about business in European cities, subtitled urban anthropology and/or business anthropology. Finally, Linda Kaljee gave her illustrated talk on Negro removal and displaced citizens as manifested in urban renewal and the redevelopment of public housing in Baltimore City.

The session on Urban Anthropology in General Perspective was primarily aimed at examining the scope of urban anthropology, as it has been developing through the past four decades, which has reflected the multi-dimensional approaches. The aim was reflected in the presentation of papers on varied themes. Often it has been assumed that the multi-dimensional approach would eventually lead to the emergence of "macro" urban anthropology. The session was, however, focused on "micro" themes pertaining to the network of the dynamics of urban studies within anthropological perspective. The papers presented in this session were: (i) Ghaus Ansari (Austria): the Oldest Profession - a latent subculture; (ii) Swetlana Czerwonnaja (Russia): Muslim Town in Russia; (iii) Sulayman Khalaf (U.A.E.): The Oil-Rich Gulf City - towards the construction of their collective identity; (iv) Virginia Molina (Mexico): The Challenges of Mexican Urban Anthropology in the Near Future; (v) Peter Nas (the Netherlands): Castell's Network Society - Urban Network Society, Indonesia; (vi) Lale Yalcin-Heckmann (Germany):

Turkish Labour Migrants in Europe and the Construction of their Collective Identity; (vii) Soheila Shahshahani (Iran): Tehran; (viii) Chen Yanchao (China): The Maintenance of Ethnic Cultural Heritage in Guangzhou; (ix) Geert A. Banck (The Netherlands).

The session on Urban Anthropology of Industrial Societies (chaired by M. Estellie Smith) was brief due to lack of volunteered papers. However, Eveline Dürr's elaborate, illustrated talk on Ethnic Identity and Urban Space in New Mexico dominated the session ensuing prolonged discussion on both the housing and social patterns of the lifestyle in New Mexico.

Finally, in the business session of the Commission the future programme of the activities and symposia were discussed. The schedule of proposed meetings, as agreed, is listed in the next section.

Schedule of meetings and symposia during the next two years

The China Urban Anthropology Association (CUAA) was represented in the Williamsburg Congress by a sizeable delegation, headed by Thudop Dorji (Deputy Federal Minister of Nationalities Affairs). The delegation had brought an official invitation to hold the next Inter-Congress in Beijing in the year 2000. The general assembly in its open session accepted the invitation with the proposed theme of "Metropolitan Culture" Since the theme is closely relevant to urban anthropology and the sponsors of the Inter-Congress are the CUAA, the Chinese delegation invited close collaboration of the Commission on Urban Anthropology. The Secretariat of the Commission is in touch with the Sponsors soliciting basic information, the available information will be sent out to our active participants when received from Beijing. It is expected that the Commission will hold several sessions during the Beijing Inter-Congress.

Virginia Molina (Mexico) extended tentative invitation to hold a full-scale symposium in Mexico City in 2001. It is expected that a large number of participants will come from Latin American countries. The Latin American urbanization with its multiple problems is indeed to be focused with in-depth researches. Much has already been done by the urban anthropologists of the region, which needs wider circulation of results. It is hoped that the proposed symposium in Mexico City will be fruitful and productive.

A second Inter-Congress in 2002 was agreed by the IUAES General Assembly in Williamsburg to be held in Göttingen (Germany); the theme of this Inter-Congress is yet to be announced by the sponsors. This information will also be circulated by the Commission's Secretariat in due course of time.

The XVth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences is scheduled in 2003 in Florence (Italy). So far we have not received any preliminaries about it.

The New Executive Secretary of the Commission

At the Williamsburg Congress, the Executive Secretary of the Commission on Urban Anthropology, Peter Nas, was deservedly elected the Secretary-General of the parent organization - IUAES. Peter Nas succeeded Eric Sunderland, who held this office for twenty years providing the organization its existing prestigious status. In recognition of this contribution, Eric Sunderland was elected to become the president of the IUAES.

The election of Peter Nas to become General-Secretary is a gain to our parent organization, but a loss to the Commission. For almost eighteen years, right from the formation of the Commission in 1981, Peter Nas functioned as its Executive Secretary helping to build it up to its international standing. For me, in my capacity as the Chairman of the Commission, it was not an easy task to find an equally capable person to succeed Peter Nas. After intensive consultations, I invited Freek Colombijn, who had previously actively participated in several symposia of the Commission. His acceptance of the position has also secured the continuity of the Secretariat in Leiden. The task for both of us ahead are enormous, but we are certain that with the continued co-operation and participation of our members we will be able to proceed forward.

Urban anthropology in China

Peter J.M. Nas

Urban anthropology of and in China is new. In December 1989/January 1990 urban anthropologists in the IUAES, in co-operation with the IUAES Commission on Urban Anthropology, used the liberalizing climate in China to introduce urban anthropology and to make Chinese anthropologists conscious of urban social settings, urban minorities and problems of mega-urbanization. Chinese scholars became very enthusiastic about urban research and founded the China Urban Anthropology Association (CUAA) in 1992, which has more than 400 members.

The CUAA is very eager to continue and extent its relationships with the world community of anthropological scholars, to keep in touch with new developments and to have results of Chinese research diffused to the world community. This is of strong scientific importance, but also has political relevance, fostering the openness of the Chinese scientific community.

Therefore the IUAES considers it very valuable to support the CUAA in organizing the next 4-5 days IUAES Inter-Congress in Beijing within the 21-31 July period in the year 2000, a decade after the first co-operation. The title of the Inter-Congress will be: *Metropolitan Ethnic Cultures; Maintenance and Interaction*. The CUAA will be responsible for the organization and all related aspects. About 300-400 scholars from China and abroad are expected to participate and present papers. A high level of foreign participation particularly from developing countries and Eastern Europe is envisaged.

Information: Professor Ruan Xihu, Vice-President of the China Urban Anthropology Association; Institute of Ethnic Studies; Chinese Academy of Sciences; 27 Bai Shi Qiao Road; Beijing 100081; People's Republic of China.

Research projects

EL CAMBIO MORFOLOGICO PRODUCIDO EN LA DECADA DEL 90 EN LA CAPITAL FEDERAL DE LA REPUBLICA ARGENTINA

Arq. Dardo Arbide, Profesor Titular y Arq. Patricia Mariñelarena, Profesor Adjunto

Desde 1947 la Capital Federal mantiene, aproximadamente, la misma población, 2.850.000 habitantes; simultáneamente, el proceso de renovación y crecimiento del parque habitacional, aunque con altibajos, se mantiene constante. Este hecho hace suponer una mejora en el parque habitacional y un desplazamiento de población; a este desplazamiento contribuye la construcción de vías rápidas que facilitan la migración hacia la periferia de los sectores de mayor nivel socio económico.

En la Capital Federal las áreas residenciales renovadas muestran una mayor densidad de edificación de viviendas, esto implica una mayor densidad de población y, por consiguiente, un uso más intenso de los servicios disponibles así como la demanda de otros nuevos.

Sobre la base de estadísticas de la construcción de viviendas se aborda un estudio morfológico tendiente a identificar los cambios físicos, una evaluación cualitativa del fenómeno que las estadísticas reflejan. Para alcanzar este objetivo clasificamos los barrios según el volumen de construcción de viviendas sea alto, medio o bajo, y elegimos uno de cada categoría para realizar el trabajo de campo: los barrios de Palermo, Villa del Parque y San Telmo, respectivamente.

Como método de lectura para realizar una descripción de cada barrio que nos permita posteriormente compararlos optamos por el Lenguaje de Patrones de Christopher Alexander. Así el estudio morfológico se realiza en dos etapas: primero se identifican los patrones más representativos; luego se describen los elementos urbanos que dan forma a cada patrón identificado.

En el trabajo de campo realizamos una lectura parcial de los cambios morfológicos en marcha: consolidación del proceso de renovación, cambios de uso de sectores urbanos y de inmuebles, y la sustitución de un tipo de vivienda y de edificio por otros que definen una nueva población con diferentes modos de vida, de estatus, de poder adquisitivo, etc., que, a su vez, demandan la aparición de nuevas actividades con nuevos programas arquitectónicos.

En este momento estamos abocados a la observación y análisis de los cambios culturales que derivan de las transformaciones observadas.

En síntesis el trabajo se propone una lectura global del comportamiento de la construcción de viviendas en la ciudad, de los cambios morfológicos que inciden necesariamente en las tendencias demográficas y de la forma en que estas tendencias moldean la demanda de nuevos productos y servicios urbanos..

Nuestra intención última es definir futuros escenarios y desarrollar un modelo predictivo que permita anticiparse a los futuros conflictos que puedan sucederse en estos escenarios futuros.

Arq. Dardo Arbide, Profesor Titular y Arq. Patricia Mariñelarena, Profesor Adjunto Investigadores CONICET. Cátedra de Metodología de la Investigación I; Facultad de Arquitectura y Urbanismo; Universidad de Belgrano; Argentina.

On Urban Rationality in Eastern Indonesia: Study Finished

Christoph Antweiler

A long-term study of action-oriented urban rationality has been conducted in Indonesia. The theoretical orientation has been based on an intersection of cognitive anthropology, migration research and rational choice research. The research site was the regional/provincial city of Ujung Pandang in the province of Sulawesi Selatan in Indonesia. The empirical basis was a one-year field study plus several shorter visits covering a period of ten years. The city is extremely multiethnic and shows small and lessening degrees of ethnic segregation. The empirical research focus was on intra-urban residential moves of individuals and households. Factors relevant are urbanization, urban images, social upward mobility, migration traditions and an emerging transethnic/regional/provincial collective identity in a nation frame. Preliminary results are reported in the publications listed at the end of this Newsletter. Final results will be published in a 550-pages monograph in the next year

Ethnological Study of Bratislava

Lubica Faltánová

The Institute of Ethnology has realized the ethnological study of Bratislava – the capital of Slovakia – since the seventies of the twentieth century. During this period Dr. Peter Salner was leading several research projects. The results were published in many publications, which presented various aspects of the way of life of Bratislava's citizens. The Institute of Ethnology organized several conferences and symposiums focused on the urban-ethnological problems with participants from Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Switzerland, Austria, etc.

From 1999 to 2001 research will be continued in the research project „ Ethnicity as a Factor of Polarization in Slovakia in the 20th Century“. Bratislava has very good conditions for the study of questions of ethnicity, because of its multi-ethnic structure, which has remained typical up today. Slovaks, Germans, Hungarians, Czechs, Jews and small groups of other nations have lived in the city. The overall scientific goal of the project is: to analyze functions of ethnic contacts and conflicts in the process of polarization of urban population during the period of discontinuous political changes in the 20th century. The analysis is based on ethnological and historical research. The question regards consequences of political changes both on the urban ethnic structure and on the lives of Bratislava's inhabitants. These changes have also been intensively reflected in subjective phenomena such as identity, family and social life of a man. The population adjusts to the above changes not only in public but also in the private spheres of life. The role of ethnology is justified precisely in studying these issues.

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Institutional News

New anthropological association founded

Jakub Kaspar, member of the Executive Council of Pro Civitate

In the beginning of March 1999 some students of Cultural Anthropology at the Charles University in Prague have founded a new association for research and consulting in the field of cultural and social anthropology – “Pro Civitate”. Pro Civitate is a non-profit civic association.

Some projects, prepared by the people of Pro Civitate, could be interesting for the members of the Commission on Urban Anthropology. First, we prepare a research project (scheduled to start in November 1999) focused on satellite blocks of houses, growing in the last ten years in the neighborhood of Czech cities (like Pruhonice or Vinor near Prague). The researchers of this project will observe the ways of communication between new migrants (and also their social role and stratification) and old and traditional inhabitants, their electoral preferences, their market behavior, et cetera.

We prepare two more projects this year: a survey on the influence of various kinds of mass media (from newspaper, TV to Internet) to the level of people’s civic activity. The second project is entitled „The places in the landscape and in memory“ and is focused on the little architectonic objects and their interference with Czech landscape and with people’s memory (tales, poetry, ballads, myths, and so on).

One more interesting project, which we prepare for the end of October 1999, is a conference „Space and time reflection in social and human sciences – Theory and methodology of social research”. This one day conference will be dedicated to the ten years’ anniversary of the Czech turn to democracy in November 1989.

Further information is available at: Mgr. Jakub Grygar, Pro Civitate chairman, tel.: 00420 603 914335, e-mail: jakub.grygar@seznam.cz.

Bc. Jakub Kaspar, Pro Civitate, address: Rudna 125/65, 25219 Rudna u Prahy, Czech Republic, tel.: 00420 2 377425 or 00420 603 373007, e-mail: jakub.kaspar@ecn.cz.

Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on Ethnolinguistic, Anthropological and Social Sciences (CICEA)

Héctor Vázquez

The Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on Ethnolinguistic, Anthropological and Social Sciences (CICEA) is a part of the Humanities and Arts School of de National University of Rosario (UNR), Argentina. The CICEA publishes the Journal *Papeles de trabajo*. General Coordinator of the Centre is Héctor Vázquez.

As the name of CICEA already indicates, one of the primary aims of the Centre is to develop interdisciplinary research programmes. The Centre covers the following areas:

- 1.-Ethnolinguistic (coordinator Professor Margot Bigot);
- 2.-Legal Anthropology (coordinator Lic. Graciela Rodríguez);

- 3.-Medical Anthropology (coordinator Lic. María Susana Azcona);
- 4.-Sociocultural Anthropology (coordinator Héctor Vázquez);
- 5.-Anthropology of Knowledge (coordinator Héctor Vázquez).

Each of these areas is a node of interdisciplinary convergence.

At the present the Centre focuses its research on the PIB CONICET n° 427, Resolution N° 0509 of March 7, 1997. The name of this project is: "A redefinition of the interethnic field and new ethnopolitical strategies deployed by the Toba families settled in the city of Rosario; human rights, legal pluralism and the ethnic question; representations and practices related to health, the Toba language and bilingual and intercultural education." Director of the project is Dr. Héctor Vázquez.

General objectives of the research project are:

1. To describe the process of redefinition of the structure of the socioethnic interaction fields in the city of Rosario, Argentina.
2. To describe the new organizational strategies developed by the toba families, their modalities and operative characteristics.
3. To describe the process of the building up of a new ethnic urban space (both at symbolic and organizational levels).
4. To determine the degrees and character of the lability of the frontiers dividing public space from private space.
5. To comparatively analyse the above mentioned items in the new migrants of urban origin and migrants of rural origin.

In the Area of Medical Anthropology the objectives are:

1. To describe the health care model of health effectors (medical and odontological services) pertaining to the municipality of Rosario and the province of Santa Fe and operating within the limits of the different socio-ethnics interaction fields in Rosario.
2. To describe the selective criteria of the toba and the "criollos" populations when demanding health care.
3. To diagnose the modalities of implementation of the primary Care Strategy addressed to these segments of the population (toba and "criollos").

In the Area of Ethnolinguistics the objectives are:

1. To continue with the grammato-semantic toba (qom) language.
2. Lexical level: in connection with aspects related to ethnomedicine.
3. Oral texts.
4. Bilingual and intercultural education.

In the Area of Legal Anthropology the objectives are:

1. A critical review of the concept of "subject of rights" in Latin –American states and in Argentina in relation to the problem of cultural diversity in a context of socio-ethnic relationships.
2. A description of the relationships taking place between the legal order and the system of attitudes and values of the Argentine indigenous toba.
3. A description of the significance of the legal approaches in the processes of the building up of ethnic identity.
4. A description of the significance and limits of the normative "corpus" of international Human Rights in what concerns the latin –American indigenous population.

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The XVth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences is scheduled in Florence in 2003. This drawing was made by Giuseppe Zocchi in the eighteenth century and engraved by Giuseppe Vasi.

Short News

Lamis A.W. Amin (London) has a new research project titled "Varieties of Islamic experiences". It is a sociological comparison of Islamic themes as interpreted and practised in different contemporary cultural contexts. The project entails, among other things, a comparative analysis between Islamic universalism and cultural particularism in selected Islamic societies.

Christoph Antweiler is completing a book about mobility-decisions as a methodological window on urban rationality in Ujung Pandang (South Sulawesi, Indonesia). The book is in German, will have approximately 500 pages and will be published by Dietrich Reimer Verlag in Berlin.

Deepak Kumar Behera edited "Children and childhood in our contemporary societies" (Delhi: Kamla-Raj, 1998). The seventeen articles in this book argue that the construction of childhood is the monopoly of adults. This volume highlights the basic disagreement between children's perspectives on their own lives and that of the adults on children's lives. Children must be regarded as social actors and their rights must be based on the views they themselves have on various issues.

Borut Brumen is working on a new small project in the coastal town of Piran (Slovenia). He reports that the book from the Commission on Urban Anthropology Symposium in Ljubljana (1997) can be expected soon.

Yoram Carmeli has an ongoing project on an Israeli mall and Israeli consumerism.

Sumita Chaudhuri (Calcutta) is completing her project on Migration, Urbanization and Ethnicity. Her next study will be on urban agriculture.

Angelina Pollack-Eltz has prepared a manuscript about Pentecostalism in the urban setting of Venezuelan cities, mainly Caracas. She is now working for the postgraduate programme of the Department of History of her university, and also offers pre-graduate seminars.

Hermann Fetz started teaching at a Fachhochschule for multimedia-design at Dornbirn, Switzerland, last year. He is finishing a town inventory of Dornbirn and preparing a publication about an excavation in the medieval town of Solothurn.

Josef Gugler is preparing an edited volume "World cities in poor countries". The volume is intended to cover Seoul, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Manila, Jakarta, Singapore, Bangkok, Mumbai, Moscow, Cairo, Lagos, Johannesburg, São Paulo, and Mexico City. Each contribution will narrate the history of a city and analyze it in terms of the city's role in its country, in its region, and across the globe. Prospective contributors will meet at a workshop in Washington in October 1999.

Dr. Anna Hohenwart-Gerlachstein reports from the IUAES Commission on Urgent Anthropology that the Newsletter 13 (1999) is in preparation. The Bulletin 39 (spring 1999) has 16 articles by different authors.

Dr. Soheila Shahshahani is establishing a new journal called "Anthropology", pure and simple. The journal is in Persian with English abstracts. The first issue will contain an interview with Peter Nas. Any information on anthropology, urban or otherwise, is welcome for the section on the "practice of anthropology in other countries".

For contributions and subscriptions, please contact Dr. Soheila Shahshahani; B.P. 19585-193; Tehran 19; Iran; e-mail soheila@vax.ipm.ac.ir.

Mieczysław Trojan was so kind to send to the secretariat an issue of "Wielonarodowy Wrocław" ("Multicultural Wrocław", a Polish urban newsletter). He also sent a booklet called "Tradycyjne stroje dolnośląskie", written by Barbara Bazielić, with charming pictures of traditional costumes.

Wladimir Tolstoj has edited "Chudozhestwennyje modeli mirozdaniija" [Images of the universe]. The two volumes discuss the coexistence of different kinds of artistic activity in space; they deal with the mutual impact of architecture, town-planning, garden art and interior design.

Swetlana Tschervonnaja has published two books: "Wse naschi bogi s nami i sa nas" [All our Gods with us and for us], and "Litovskaja chudozhestwennaja emigracija (1945 - 1985)" [Emigration of Litvonian art, 1945-1985]. Both books are illustrated. The first one treats, among other things, the role of sacral places, tombstones and memorial statues in capitals of the states from the former Soviet Union. It also discusses the moral climate of the modern city. The second book deals with Litvonian artists in exile.

Héctor Vázquez is working on a redefinition of the socio-ethnic interaction fields and building-up of the ethnical identity processes among the Qom -Toba- settled in the city of Rosario, Argentina.

Toshinao Yoneyama has organized a team of urban anthropologists, historians and literature specialists to study the Ebisu (a deity of fortune) cult. There are more than 3000 Ebisu shrines in Japan and tens of thousands worshippers gather for a big festival on 19 January.

Zhu Zai Xian has become Managing Director of the "Chinese Research Institute of Policy Towards Nationalities" in Changchun. He is general editor of the "Journal of Northern Nationalities" (in Chinese). He received a reward for outstanding social science research from Jilin Province, for his book "General introduction to and policies of nationalities" (in Chinese). He is heading several research projects all dealing with Koreans in the People's Republic of China.

Conferences

Conference "Differentiation of Urban Society in Everyday Life" at Bratislava, Slovakia, 12-13 October 1998

Alexandra Bitušíková

Following earlier activities and conferences held regularly each year since 1981 in different Central European cities, urban anthropologists from Slovakia, Czech Republic and Poland met in Bratislava, Slovakia on 12-13 October 1998. The conference "Differentiation of Urban Society in Everyday Life" was organised by Peter Salner from the Institute of Ethnology in Bratislava. Peter Salner and his colleagues created a warm and friendly atmosphere that provided an opportunity to all participants to discuss openly various issues of differentiated urban society. Over two days 15 papers were presented and discussed. The participants reported about their own societies. They presented research results on various Central European cities and towns in historical perspective, but a number of papers were focused on sociocultural changes in urban society in the period of post-communist transformation.

After an evening discussion on further development of urban anthropological research, the participants have agreed on establishing an "Urban Anthropology Association in Central Europe". It is an informal professional organisation where the membership is free, but it requires an active participation in conferences organised alternately in Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland. The conference papers are published in special volumes or in the *Journal of Urban Ethnology* (the scientific periodical which deals with the problems of European urban ethnology, published by the Museum of Independence, Warsaw, Poland). The next conference, on the problems and perspectives of urban anthropology in Central Europe, is planned in Prague for October 1999.

For more information, please contact: Peter Salner, Institute of Ethnology, Jaubovo 12, 813 64 Bratislava, Slovakia; Alexandra Bitušíková, Faculty of Humanities, Matej Bel University, Tajovského 40, 97400 Banská Bystrica, Slovakia, e-mail: bitusikova@fhv.sk or bitusik@bb.sanet.sk.

XIV International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences at Williamsburg, July-August 1998

For a conference report, see the annual report by Professor Ghaus Ansari on page 2.

Reviews

Narysy ukrain's'koji populiarnoji kultury [Sketches of Ukrainian Popular Culture]. O.Hrytsenka (ed.). Kyiv: UCKD, 1998. 760 pp.

Reviewed by Eleonora Havrylyuk

This is a collective monograph in which for the first time the attempt of description of Ukrainian popular culture (including the phenomenon of the urban culture of Ukraine) is presented. The investigation consists of analytical sketches (40 chapters) devoted to the Ukrainian popular culture's phenomena. The phenomena were selected according to the criteria: long period of existence and significance of a phenomenon in the Ukrainian social-cultural context, specificity of the phenomenon in the Ukrainian culture and its important influence on the Ukrainian mentality and cultural identity. Such an approach was successfully applied before – the same scheme was used by the authors of numerous analytical-reference works on popular culture, such as the 3-volumed “Handbook of American popular culture” (Thomas Ph.Inge, editor, New York, 1989).

Sketches of the book are based on the rich “raw data” collected by generations of Ukrainian ethnologists and culturologists. The authors made an effort to rethink the material from the modern theoretical positions, using up-to-date methodological approaches and ideas about popular culture. But a certain unevenness of the book is apparent: in contrast to the innovatory style of analysis of most issues, some topics seem to be treated in a too traditional way (“Ideal woman”, “Erotica”, “Anecdote”). Sometimes a lack of contemporary data on modern urban culture of Ukrainian cities is all too noticeable; certain important issues are not highlighted at all (cloth, professions, authority and politics). However, the collective work gives a complex, though unavoidably simplified, picture of the processes and phenomena taking place in the field of contemporary Ukrainian popular culture, including its “urban variant”.

Ethnic studies and the urbanized space in social anthropological reflections. Zdeněk Uherek (ed.). Praha: Institute of Ethnology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, 1998. (Prague Occasional Papers in Ethnology 5), 143 pp.

Reviewed by Freek Colombijn

The woolly language of the title made me fear the worst when I started reading this book. My fear was, however, not justified. The book contains nineteen brief chapters with clearly written case studies of ethnicity in Central Europe. The chapters can roughly be divided into two categories. The first group, taking up a little more than the first half of the volume, is about ethnic minorities in Czech and Slovakian cities, dealing not only with, for instance, Bulgarians, Jews and Roma, but also with less-known groups, such as Sorbs (*sic*) and Rusyns. The second half of the book is about Czechs living abroad, for instance in Bratislava, Kazakhstan, and Vienna. Whereas the first group of articles is predominantly about matters of ethnic identity (defined by people themselves and defined by outsiders), the second group describes the strategies to cope with a foreign

environment. Examples of the second group are chapters on Czech club life in Sarajevo (an article by Zdeněk Uherek himself) and the fate of Czech women who followed their Lebanese husbands to the Middle East. Two articles about ethnic conflict in Central Asia and the use of videorecording as field technique are out of place, and perhaps should better have been published elsewhere.

The common denominator of all articles is the lack of extensive theoretical discursions. This is not to say that the articles are purely descriptive. There are theoretical insights, and Peter Salner, for example, without wasting words makes the distinction between compact identity, declared identity, forced identity, and suppressed identity.

Another common denominator is the diachronic perspective: every situation is explained as the outcome of a long-term process. This historical approach is well-chosen, because, first, at an objective level, the presence of certain groups at certain places can only be explained by past migrations, and, second, at a subjective level, people use historical arguments to define ethnic categories and to draw boundaries between them. A negative side of this historical approach is that many authors pussyfoot around the sensitive, but important subject of ethnic relations today. There are exceptions, however, for instance the discussions of the role of mass media and popular music. The quotes of stereotypes recorded by Alexandra Bitušiková are also telling: "No Jew can be a real Slovak" (p. 73), and (taken a bishop): "Our people [Roman Catholics] often are not bright and broad-minded enough to love the Jews. [...] There is a high IQ here, but we fail in ethics." (p. 74). For the historical analyses, one has used many sources, including archives, newspapers, photoalbums, diaries, housekeeping books, and oral history. The latter source can produce funny stories, like the World Ice-Hockey Championship in Prague (1947), analyzed by Jana Pospíšilová as a defining moment in the Czech-Austrian relationship. The chances of the hosts seemed nil after the Czech team lost to the Swedish team, but then, the Swedes, after prematurely celebrating with lots of liquor, lost to the Austrian outsiders, so that the Czechs became champion after all. While the radio report of the Austrian-Swedish match progressed, enthusiastic Czechs gradually filled the originally empty stadium. As a sign of gratitude the Czechs promised a wagon-load of sugar to Austria (still in a dire condition immediately after WW II), but this present never materialized. The affair improved the Czech image of the Austrians, but diminished the Austrian image of the Czechs.

By publishing in English, the book is potentially available to a wide readership. I hope it will be distributed beyond Central Europe, for it deserves wide circulation.

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