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CZECH URBAN ETHNOLOGY (ANTHROPOLOGY) – BIRTH, SOCIO-POLITICAL AND PROFESSIONALLY SCIENTIFIC STARTING POINT, MAIN TOPICS OF RESEARCH *

Abstract

Urban ethnology comprises one of the most promising subdisciplines of our field. It is possible to date the beginnings of Czech urban ethnology to the first half of the 1990s, while this new specialization was formed in the world in the 1970s.

At the beginning of the 1990s, interethnic relations in the city became the crucial problem in establishing urban ethnology. In the mid '90s Czech urban ethnology broadened research on interethnic relations in the city, which until then had been their main interest, to include other topics. At the threshold of the 21st century, then, a solid view of the city was finally achieved. Symbolism connected with the city, construction of its importance, structured memory of the inhabitants of cities and their role in the creation of urban identities, sacral and profane places in the city, issues linked with myths in cities and about cities became the center of attention of urban ethnologists. Thus, at the threshold of the 21st century, the approach to urban ethnology is holistic.

Key words: Czech urban ethnology, city, inhabitants, symbolism, urban identity

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Urbánní etnologie představuje jednu z nejperspektivnějších subdisciplín našeho oboru. Počátky české urbánní antropologie lze datovat do první poloviny devadesátých let 20. století, zatímco ve světě se tato nová specializace formovala už v sedmdesátých letech minulého století.

Na počátku devadesátých let 20. století se stěžejním problémem etabloující se urbánní etnologie staly mezietnické vztahy ve městě. Od poloviny devadesátých let přibyl problém fungování společenských vazeb v urbánním prostředí, prožívání města konkrétními lidmi a socioprofesionální skupinami, a to i prostředí sídlišť s panelovými domy. Na prahu 21. století se pak konečně prosadil celistvý pohled na město. Do centra pozornosti urbánních antropologů se dostala symbolika spojená s městem, konstrukce jejího významu, strukturovaná paměť obyvatel ve městech a její role při vytváření městských identit, problematika sakrálních a profánních míst ve městě, problematika mýtů ve městech a o městech, problém města žijícího ve vzpomínkách. Na prahu 21. století byl pro českou urbánní etnologii již typický holistický přístup.

Klíčová slova: česká urbánní etnologie (antropologie), mezietnické vztahy, stereotypy a symboly

Motto: “The world of 2000 will be a world of cities...”¹

First attempts at the establishment of urban ethnology (anthropology) in the Czech lands

It is possible to date the beginnings of Czech urban ethnology (anthropology) to the first half of the 1990s, while this new specialization was formed in the world in the 1970s². Interest in the city among anthropologists, however, had already grown from the '50s³ although this was not entirely true. However, as the study of Michèle de la Pradelle clarified, French ethnologists; for example, first “discovered” their cities in the '80s⁴. The cradle of the new subdiscipline – urban anthropology – was the Institute for Ethnography and Folkloristics of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences in Prague and Brno, at that time the most important scientific workplace in the field of ethnography. The first common project of Prague and Brno researchers followed up mainly on the experience of the so-called ethnography of the proletariat and research of small cities (1980s)⁵. The main source was, however, the first subdiscipline (ethnography of the proletariat), which was, before the revolution in 1989 – along with a study of the so-called ethnic processes, the axis of academic research and, at the same time, also the most important subdiscipline of the field which however, in the Czechoslovakia of the time was called, from the middle of the 20th century, ethnography. This term was chosen following the example of Soviet science⁶. The possibility of a new name for the subdiscipline had already appeared at that time in Soviet ethnography. The study of the general and the particular in the way of life of nations, especially in their cultures, was considered the main subject of interest of ethnography⁷. Ethnography was concurrently perceived and carried out as a historical science. In the first half

¹ Musil 1967, p. 40. *This study was supported by the grant project of the GA ČR No. P 410/12/2390.

² This was the time of urbanization and industrialization of the developing countries. The urban way of life reached the country. At the same time unrestrained growth of urban agglomerations was under way (Soukup 1994, p. 583–584). For definitive establishment of urban anthropology in the Anglo-American world, compare the entry *Urban Anthropology* (Levinson, Ember, 1996, p. 1339–1340). For a further comparison, also see the essay *Urban Anthropology – An Overview* by Layla Al-Zubaidi, <http://www.indiana.edu/~wanthro/URBAN.htm>. A view of social and professional sources of urban anthropology, but also an overview of national traditions of research is then given in the work of Slovak anthropologist Alexandra Bitušíková (2003b). The incorporation of contemporary urban history into the context of other urban studies was attempted by the historian Luďa Klusáková (2010). The second volume of “Social Studies” of 2006 was dedicated to the rise of urban research in Czech social studies. Karel Altman (2006) provided an overview of urban ethnological work in the Ethnological Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic in Brno. For research of the Czech city in the Prague academic work place cf. Uhrek 2002, p. 150, *ibid.* references to further specialized literature.

³ Bitušíková 2003b, p. 14.

⁴ de la Pradelle 1996, p. 189.

⁵ In relation to this, cf., e.g., Jančář 1970; Scheufler 1971; Jančář, Souček 1982; Frolec, Šepláková (ed.) 1986; Frolec (ed.) 1987 or Frolec (ed.) 1990. He researched, e.g., the influence of the village on the city, folklorism in the city (including folk songs in the city), celebrations and holidays in the urban space, urban center, culture in the city, associations.

⁶ Until the 1950s, ethnology and folklore studies were fostered under the heading of folklore (národopis) (Brouček 1977, p. 195). Čeněk Zíbrt, one of the founders of “Český lid” (Czech Folk), a pivotal ethnographic journal, called folklore folk science. The object of his interest was to be *farmers* with their co-workers (Zíbrt 1925, p. 39). According to Zíbrt, it was the task of folk science to support tradition, which the village was doing away with under the influence of the city (p. 41).

⁷ Bromlej 1984, p. 3.

of the '80s Julian Vladimirovich Bromley, a Soviet academic, characterized it as an analogy of culturally social anthropology in English speaking lands, as a synonym of ethnology⁸.

A small historic excursion

The internal transformation of ethnography from its beginning as a scientific discipline until the period before 1989 was related to the then-definitions of a nation and the so-called folk, like the picture postcards of the time. In the beginnings of Czech national struggles, the Czech-speaking farmer was considered the core of the Czech nation. This conviction originated in the opinion of Josef Jungmann, the creator of standard Czech⁹. It was precisely the Czech-speaking farmer (or his representative symbols: peasant farmhouse, cottage with a thatched roof) allegedly kept the Czech nation from extinction. His social importance was intentionally emphasized. Let's mention one example. They believed, that is, that they were thus studying the roots and core of the nation¹⁰.

In the 1860s – at a time of searching for Czech national attributes – the main symbol of the Czech nation was – besides the Czech language – song¹¹. The success of this constructed originated in the fact which was repeatedly also mentioned by Czech musicologists in the Czech musicality of those times. The farmer and song thus merged in national thinking like two cores of Czechness. Folklorists of that time found their field in villages where one of their main interests became the folk song.

The standpoint that the folk are the basis of a nation was defended in the 1890s by the founders of scientific ethnography, e.g., the philologist Emanuel Kovář in a lecture for the Czechoslovak Ethnographic Society in 1897¹². Kovář, like folklorist Václav Tille, a critical researcher in the circle around T. G. Masaryk, one of the founders of “Český lid” (Czech Folk), was, however, an advocate of differentiation between the terms nation and folk. At the same time he pointed out that some researchers understood by the term folklore (národopis) only research of the folk; the other classes of the nation were to be researched by cultural history¹³. Kovář held the opposite view: “národopis” must research all classes of the nation, including those which arose as a consequence of the splitting of individual social classes in connection with migrations of village populations to cities. Despite this, however, even he regarded the most important element of “národopis” (synonymously, ethnology), “lidopis”, the study of the core of the nation which, however could develop¹⁴. Allegedly closest to the people stood the

⁸ Bromlej 1984, p. 4.

⁹ Kutnar 1948, p. 90; Hroch 1999, p. 56.

¹⁰ Brouček 1977, p. 195.

¹¹ Barák, Přerhof, Vilímek (eds.) 1861, Předslav. Cf. also the song *Náš zpěv* (*Our Singing*) (H. Palla, V. Hálek), in which the ability to sing is called the chief Czech advantage over foreign countries (Barák, Přerhof, Vilímek (eds.) 1861, p. 97).

¹² Kovář 1897, p. 3.

¹³ Kovář 1897, p. 4.

¹⁴ Kovář 1897, p. 5–6. When Kovář mentioned, anthropology, he had in mind physical and psychical anthropology (Kovář 1897, p. 6). At the same time anthropology was already defined as a science of man and civilization (Tylor 1897, p. 1), while the author of this definition, Eduard B. Tylor, believed in the progressive development of humanity (going through phases of stagnation and retardation). The duty of the researcher was to work for a “better world” (Tylor 1897, p. 487, p. 488). Anthropology was also perceived as a biological science in 1929 by Vojtěch Suk (Suk 1929, p. 14).

craftsmen¹⁵. Even in the '90s the cult of the folk persisted urban dynamics, the complexity of the city and the conflicts played out on city soil were in harsh conflict with the ideas of ethnographic terrain¹⁶.

Urban people (workers, miners, people living on city outskirts) became a subject of ethnography as a science of people until the end of the 1940s¹⁷, in connection with the Communist February Revolution of 1948¹⁸. Marxist ideology called workers the most advanced group in the nation¹⁹. Of course, research of the middle class was not realized. This fact corresponded to intentional neglect of its importance. The process of forming their lifestyle and specific cultures then primarily interested Marxist ethnography. Research turned toward the study of the functioning of society and its structures, toward the integration of cultural manifestations, toward the absorption of non-regional impulses. What was new was the realization that even the city could help in the creation of a new culture and this culture could be the core of a new identity. While in the '50s and '60s, a time of extensive development of heavy industry, research concentrated on mining and mining areas (mainly the area around Kladno and in Rosicko-Oslavansko) in the 1970s and at the beginning of the 1980s, the "proletariat" of Prague was studied. The main result of intensive research was presented – under the influence of Soviet ethnography – in the form of a historic²⁰ – ethnographic monograph²¹ about the material and spiritual culture of the proletariat as an ideologically homogeneous class [*Kladensko* (published in 1959), *Rosicko-Oslavansko* (published in 1961), *Stará dělnická Praha (Old Workers Prague)* (published in 1981)] with chapters about miners' (workers') singing and bands²². Within the framework of ethnography groundbreaking work about the lifestyle of Kladno miners concentrated on the development of the mining area, employment in the mines and in the "traditional" ethnographic field of research (housing, clothing, alimentation, family, social life, schooling). Rosicko-Oslavansko was typical in that it was about the agricultural area which quickly changed into an industrial one while, however, it remained relatively closed. In his own treatment Fojtík was inspired by Polish and Soviet ethnography whereas he combined historic method and fieldwork. He also assessed the lifestyle of the local workforce in connection with socialization factors, with the help of already proven indicators (housing, alimentation, clothing, family, club activities). At the same time, however, he dealt with changes of the mentality of workers (the growth of professional self-confidence). The same fields of research, including changes from the village to the urban way of life was also chosen by researchers, e.g., in the case of Prague. However following the integration of the workforce into national life was an innovation.

¹⁵ Kovář 1897, p. 12.

¹⁶ Soukupová 2010a, p. 253.

¹⁷ Already in 1944 Andrej Melicherčík asserted that ethnography matured to its third stage when it also had to begin to research ethnographic phenomena beyond villages (Melicherčík 1945, p. 10) where almost a third of the population lived (op. cit., p.79).

¹⁸ Soukupová 2010a, p. 255.

¹⁹ Soukupová 2010a, p. 256.

²⁰ Soviet professor S. P. Tolstov felt that ethnography was a branch of history (Nahodil 1950, p. 27).

²¹ Nahodil 1950, p. 43.

²² Soukupová 2010a, p. 256–257, 258–260.

The sources for these monographs were, on one hand, in archives and, on the other hand, in fieldwork. The pioneer of modern urban ethnographic research was the Brno scholar Karel Fojtík, whose work was inspired by sociology²³.

In the second half of the '80s works about the adaptation of a specific ethnic – Roma of the Kladno area and workers' lifestyle in Brno – were published²⁴. The research on Roma in the urban space, realized in the framework of ethnic studies, was focused on their number and characteristic features in Prague (Tomáš Haišman, Renata Weinerová)²⁵. In 1953 Fojtík was already dealing with material culture (workers' homes, clothing, alimentation) in the oldest workers' colony in Austria: in Červená ulička (Red Lane) and in Mezírka. He connected the change in the way of living with the living conditions of its inhabitants. At the same time he proved that this social group continued with the material culture of a village²⁶. He followed up on this research in 1974 when he mapped the development of culture and the lifestyle of inhabitants of the Brno suburb of Husovice in the dynamic 19th and 20th centuries. In this study he connected the quality of local consciousness with a type of the rise of a part of the city (a suburban quarter). At the same time he also pointed out the contemporary question of the relations between the original inhabitants and the newcomers²⁷ and the role of institutions (corporations) in the integration of the population. It is then possible to consider the study of Karel Fojtík and Olga Skalníková *On the Theory of the Ethnography of Current Times* as a basic work in the field of methodic ethnographic research of the city (questionnaire, interview, observation, monograph of an individual case²⁸). At the same time "current times" were perceived as the period from the turn of the 20th century²⁹. This work dealt with the culture of locally anchored social groups (family, friends, neighbors)³⁰. The city itself was characterized as the center of administration, shopping and culture³¹. The inspiration of sociology was also obvious in the choice of samples (representative samples). In contrast to sociology, however, the ethnography emphasized the role of the key informant.

Interethnic relations as a main problem at the beginning of Czech urban ethnology (anthropology)

At the beginning of the 1990s, interethnic relations in the city became the crucial problem of establishing urban ethnology (anthropology). The subject of research reacted unambiguously to the socio-political request of the time. The "return" of the Czech lands to Europe like to their father's house from which Czech society had, according to Czech public opinion, been expelled

²³ Fojtík 1953, 1959, 1963, 1966, 1974, 1977; Fojtík, Sirovátka 1961. For an evaluation of the personality of Karel Fojtík, cf. Pospíšilová 2000, p. 15–16, 18–19.

²⁴ Soukupová 2010a, p. 260–261.

²⁵ For example Haišman 1987 and Haišman, Weinerová 1989.

²⁶ Fojtík 1953, p. 226.

²⁷ Fojtík 1974, p. 21; also see Fojtík 1977, p. 189.

²⁸ Moravcová 2012, p. 164.

²⁹ Skalníková, Fojtík 1971, p. 7.

³⁰ Skalníková, Fojtík 1971, p. 371.

³¹ Skalníková, Fojtík 1971, p. 41.

because of the political situation after the Yalta conference (1945)³², and the subsequent division of Europe into the East, ostensibly non-European and backward, and the West, allegedly European and prospering, found its echo in the effort to devote research to the phenomenon that was considered by Czech and Slovak intellectuals as the most important Central-European given before the Second World War: multiethnicity and multiculturalism. The First Republic (1918-1939) of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk about whose return intellectuals speculated after the so-called Velvet Revolution, was existentially connected to the political configuration of post-World-War-I Europe and with the maintenance of the European democracy of the time. Europeanness had already asserted itself as a high value in the period between the two world wars although one rarely comes to realize today that it was a question not of supranational, but of essentially national worth³³. For this reason also, Czech intellectual thought after the so-called Velvet Revolution (1989), directed Czech culture at the supposedly mature European West and the American West, which were connected, in public opinion, with prosperity. For the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University, e.g., this fact meant the adoption of the Anglo-American concept of anthropology under which they were now to get clearly shaped traditional disciplines such as archeology and linguistics in the Czech lands. What was new was the possibility to study so-called physical anthropology. Some other institutions continued to pursue the previous development; others came with innovations, the results of which were, e.g., anthropologized archeology.

At the same time, however, a number of scholars again began to think about the existence of a hierarchy among the terms ethnography, ethnology and anthropology, to discredit ethnography as only description³⁴, to discredit (or, on the contrary, to defend³⁵) ethnology, to separate so-called social and cultural anthropology from other socio-scientific disciplines, mainly against sociology³⁶. Contacts of sociology and anthropology developed with mutual delimitations of both disciplines. The tradition of Czech ethnography itself was explained by some scholars as national egocentrism. This concept, however, had one basic catch: it did not take into account (with the exception of symmetric criticism of egocentric Czech-German ethnography) the development of the discipline in other European societies and this

³² British scholar of Czech-Jewish origin, Ernst Gellner, compared Yalta to the Peace of Westphalia (Gellner 1994, p. 89).

³³ Soukupová 2001, p. 32.

³⁴ In the second half of the 1930s, Jiří Horák, one of the great folk-song experts, leaned toward the opinion that ethnography is a description while Karel Chotek, another of the key personalities of Czech ethnography of the inter-war period (from 1912, assistant professor of general ethnography) identified ethnology with foreign ethnography (Vařeka 2005, p. 182). Josef Vařeka, a specialist in folk architecture and coordinator of ethnocartographic work who then worked with the terms ethnology/ethnography (European ethnology), whose subject is both the traditional village as well as the people of the contemporary city and the provinces (Vařeka 2005, p. 187), European ethnography (museums, homeland study) and cultural/social anthropology.

³⁵ Vařeka 2005.

³⁶ This attempt also stretched out like a red thread through the controversial paper of Zdeněk R. Nešpor and Marek Jakoubek (Nešpor, Jakoubek 2004), representatives of the young generation, freely tying in provocative reflections about the fundamentals of the discipline from 1964 (Holý, Stuchlík 1964). The attempt to stimulate the discussion was praiseworthy although neither author showed too much orientation in the history of Czech ethnography and its terminology in the history of European ethnology and in Czech research of the time of normalization. They themselves considered as a sign of cultural/social anthropology, stationary field research, a holistic approach, interdisciplinarity and differentiation of emic and ethic approaches (Nešpor, Jakoubek 2004, p. 66-69).

depending on the developing phases of their national (minority) movements³⁷. In postwar (or normalization) ethnography, then, some saw the discipline, which was oriented only at the service³⁸ of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia³⁹. In other words: the shaping of urban anthropology was played out in an atmosphere of searching for or rather challenging of the identity of Czech ethnology (anthropology). At the same time, the crystallization of a new discipline clashed with the opinion of traditionalists according to whom the anthropologist may research only the present (that is, do fieldwork), while the past reconstructed from archival data should remain in the domain of history⁴⁰. Czech ethnography, however, always combined archival historical and field research.

What was the nature of urban studies at that time? Research of interethnic relations in the city was realized in the 1990s in the framework of large cities⁴¹, in which coexistence was the most intensively realized and, above all, with the most important socio-political results. Priority was given to an attempt to follow interethnicity in the context of the historic and social milieu as a component of national history. Discussion of the time about the relations between Czechs and Germans around the preparations for the German-Czech Declaration on Mutual Relations (1992, 1997, 2001), later also discussions about the preparation of the *Center against Expulsions* in Berlin, mainly with the oldest generation always a strong factor of negative historic experience with the Germans, different historic memory of the Czechs and Czech (Sudeten) Germans, but also migration to the Czech lands after the postwar displacement of the autochthonic German population, a virtually homogeneous region, from the former Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union, from Asia and North America and from the former Western Europe, the stressed importance of the study of such phenomena as ethnic break-up, cultural separation and delimitations toward others, ethnic tolerance and intolerance, cooperation and conflict, ethnic (self)images, (self)stereotypes and (self)prejudices. At the same time the tradition of research of Czech-South Slavic contacts continued. In the framework of ethnic studies, the research of

³⁷ It is not necessary to add that it concerned a coarse aberrance against a historic method. On the contrary, very useful for the understanding of traditions of ethnography were studies written by historians. For example, Stanislav Brouček explained the reasons why, until the middle of the 20th century, the opinion that ethnographic work should build and strengthen national identity prevailed in Czech society (Brouček 1995, p. 49).

³⁸ Hubinger 1998, p. 105; Wolf 1996, p. 5–6.

³⁹ In no case did I doubt that the choice of main problems of the ethnography of the time was determined (or dictated) by socio-political interest. I do not imagine, however, that in other times it was different. Nor do I imagine that the reigning ideological framework of the study prevented the rise of a number of quality empirical works.

⁴⁰ Alena Šimůnková, for example, called attention to the maintenance of this position (Šimůnková 1995, p. 99).

⁴¹ Cf., e.g., the collections of *Ethnokulturelle Prozesse in Großstädten Mitteleuropas (Ethnocultural Processes in Central European Metropolises)* (1992); *Leute in der Großstadt (People in the Metropolis)* (1992); and studies of the Brno folklorist Oldřich Sirovátka on types of so-called interethnic situations in the city (Sirovátka 1992), the study of Zdeněk Uherek (Uherek (ed.) 1993). Sirovátka considered the interethnic situation of mixing, which manifested itself on the basis of the commonly shared space of the city, mixed marriages and typical linguistic communication, joint celebrations and collective folklore, to be most important. Brno researchers also paid attention to the Czech minority in Vienna (Brouček 1996, p. 179, p. 181); similar research was also realized by the Viennese scholar of Czech origin Vera Mayer (Valášková 1998, p. 172). Then from 1992 the anthology later magazine “Lidé města” (Urban People) began to be published. The first volume was partially dedicated to interethnicity in the cities [Pražané jiní – druzí – cizí (Praguers different – others – foreign) 1992] and further, Vol. 5 [Společnost – postoj – konflikt (Society – Attitude – Conflict) 1994], and Vol. 6 *Město a jeho kultura (The City and its Culture)* 1994].

the Romani minority was realized. It focused mainly on the development of state institutions and their relations towards the minority, especially after World War II.

The call for the return to its European home, however, also updated the problem of national and minority identity⁴², which was perceived, in the unification of Europe with its leveling pressures of post-modernity, as a delicate and unusually endangered value. The quite logical reduction of urban ethnology (anthropology) to research of interethnicity, later repeatedly and historically criticized⁴³, was, however, clearly rather than an expression of the high politico-social involvement of researchers, an attempt to prove the social importance of the discipline itself and generally also the importance of the social sciences in the first post-revolution years disputed for their above-mentioned supposed service to the former regime.

Research of the city came, on one hand, from archival material, from data of contemporary periodicals, from literature and memoirs and as well as from empirical research. However, what was striking was – actually in regard to their crucial topic – multiethnicity – their concentration on the time between the two world wars and the time of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. In connection with the reigning social atmosphere, ethnographers, now calling themselves ethnologists or anthropologists, emphasized positive features of multiethnic coexistence, expressions of interethnic penetration (language exchanges), urban institutions shared by all nationalities, rituals and festivities. Central topics of researchers were, however, the alleged ability of metropolises to tone down interethnic tensions. In Brno, a Moravian metropolis, conflicts were to be attenuated as a result of traditional neighboring ties; in Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, in consequence of the balanced coexistence of four nationalities: Slovaks, Hungarians, Germans and Jews⁴⁴. The idyllic picture of Bratislava's co-existence was already disputed in 1993 when studies of Peter Salner and Daniel Luther, Bratislava ethnologists, about post-revolutionary Bratislava were published⁴⁵. Prague interethnic relations also became a synonym for pragmatic ethnic cooperation. The particularity of Brno research was a greater concentration on the importance of language in the city (the characteristic became Brno bilingualism), greater emphasis on the study of urban folklore and the diffusion of village folk culture to urban culture⁴⁶. Together with the new topic of ethnicity in the cities and the already traditional topic of urban festivities and their time shifts, the topic of the formations of urban traditions came up⁴⁷. Further, Prague and Brno ethnologists (anthropologists) began to follow other groups who, until then, had been completely or nearly ignored: children and students⁴⁸

⁴² The conception of the fundamentals of scientific work of the Institute for Ethnography and Folklore Studies of 1990 counted on the project *Etnická a kulturní identita českého města jako součásti středoevropského prostoru* (*Ethnic and cultural identity of the Czech city as a component of Central European space*) (Brouček 1996, p. 178).

⁴³ E.g., in 2000 at an anthropological symposium in Nečtiny by Zdeněk Uherek (Valášková, Weínerová 2001, p. 79).

⁴⁴ Not long ago, Slovak urban anthropologist Daniel Luther defended this thesis again (Luther 2009).

⁴⁵ Salner 1993; Luther 1993.

⁴⁶ The distinctions of the metropolis milieu of Brno was also documented in the anthology *Národopisné studie o Brně* (*Ethnological study of Brno*) (1990) and the monograph *Město pod Špilberkem* (*City beneath Špilberk*) (1993). The function of lessening of tensions and antagonisms in city life was ascribed to folklore (Sirovátka 1992, p. 29).

⁴⁷ Svobodová 1994, p. 71.

⁴⁸ Let us recall, e.g., "Lide města", Vol. 3 [*Děti, studenti, pedagogové* (*Children, Students, Teachers*) 1993], project of the Brno scholar Jana Pospíšilová *Kultura dnešních dětí a mládeže se zvláštním zřetelem k folklorním projevům* (*Culture of today's children and youth with special regard to folklore expression*) (from 1996), and the 13th Strážnice symposium *Společensví dětí a kultura* (*Society of children and culture*) in 1997 when, e.g., a lecture about tramping or a gift in a

(until then, only families of workers' children had been written about), non-conformist youth, women of the middle class, but also of lower social classes⁴⁹. Objects of interest were their corporations, their social self-realization, generally then their intellectual world and also their involvement with national-political (including ethnological) or party movements. In contrast to the development before 1989, all social strata of urban population were investigated, including marginalized groups – without a priori ideologization. The main topic became the earlier marginalized ethnicity of the city. In the case of Romani research, the new status of Roma (status of national minority) as well as Romani emancipatory attempts were taken into account.

Czech urban ethnology (anthropology) from the middle of the '90s

In the mid '90s Czech urban ethnology (anthropology) broadened research on interethnic relations in the city, which until then had been their main interest, to include other topics⁵⁰.

In an atmosphere of the progressing individualization of Czech society, it was actually the city that became the space in which researchers looked ever more intensely into functioning social ties. The book of Karel Altman *Krčemné Brno (Taverns in Brno)* (Brno 1993), in which the author introduced tavern hospitality in Brno and its suburbs from the mid 19th to the mid 20th centuries, became some kind of transition to this new orientation⁵¹. However, this monograph also evaluated the relations between German and Czech Brno⁵². In other words: postsocialist society broke free of the ever-present collective which oppressed it with the armor of uniformity, but at the same time began to experience a crisis of postmodern (supramodern) society. Urban ethnology (anthropology) answered it immediately with research of “happy times”, of oversaturated possibilities of spontaneous communication.

At the *Ethnographic Exhibition* of 1995 in Prague, which intended to present the contemporary attitude toward so-called folk art (art of the village) the city was, however, presented as a milieu that radiated its cultivating, but leveling influences on its surroundings⁵³, thus again in relation to the village.

Further, urban ethnology (anthropology) directed its research at an analysis of the experience of a city by concrete people and socio-professional groups. Ethnology (anthropology) also began to experience the conjuncture of memory, the reversal of interest from collective to individual destiny, supposedly unique. One of the notebooks of the *French Institute for Research in the Social*

children's environment was given.

⁴⁹ Cf., e.g., “Lidé města”, Vol. 4 [*Žena ve městě (Women in the city)* 1994].

⁵⁰ The problem of ethnicity, ethnic stereotypes, national identity in the city, but, understandably, from the point of view of researchers has not disappeared, even in the 21st century. Cf., e.g., Uherek (ed.) 1998; “Lidé města”, Vol. 9 [*Mezietnické dialogy (Interethnic dialogues)* 1996]; Vol. 10 [*Česko-jihoslovanský dialog (Czech-South Slavic dialogue)* 1996]; Vol. 11 [*Česká společnost a etnické skupiny (Czech society and ethnic groups)* 1996]; Vol. 12 [*Stereotypy a symboly (Stereotypes and symbols)* 1998]; and Slovak-Czech anthology by P. Salner, D. Luther, *Etnicita a mesto (Ethnicity and the city)*, Bratislava 2001; and the Czech-Polish anthology by B. Soukupová, A. Stawarz, Z. Jurková, H. Novotná *The Central European City as a Space for Dialogue? (Examples: Prague and Warsaw)*, Bratislava 2006.

⁵¹ Further cf. Slovak-Czech anthology by Z. Beňušková, P. Salner, *Stabilität und Wandel in der Großstadt (Stability and Change in the Metropolis)* Bratislava 1995.

⁵² Altman 1993.

⁵³ Langhammerová 1996, p. 156–157.

Sciences caused Pierre Nora to think about *commemorative places* (Město 1996). However, thanks to the initiative of French anthropologist Laurent Bazac-Billaud, attention was paid to the space of prefabricated housing developments, which became one of the phenomena of socialist uniformity, but also generally in the Czech Lands usual egalitarianism⁵⁴. It is a pity that this research did not continue.

In connection with the international research program of UNESCO – MOST *Slova města* (in Central Europe from 1997), working with the results of linguistics (the project understood words as social beings), came up with the question, “What does an anthropologist mean when speaking of a city?”⁵⁵. What is the city from the point of view of other scientific branches? What would the results of a comparison of language lists in various parts of the world be like⁵⁶? The word *city* and the word *promenade* became the main topics of a Czech-Slovak interdisciplinary team [comparative linguistics (Renata Blatná), urban anthropology (Alexandra Bitušíková, Jolana Darulová, Daniel Luther, Jakub Grygar), urban history (Luda Klusáková)] participating in this project. At the same time urban ethnologists (anthropologists) came up with a definition of the city as a space which they defined in contrast to a village (a city was characterized as a larger expanse of agglomeration, a larger number of inhabitants, their complete social composition, complexity of social relations⁵⁷). As anthropologists they considered most important the question of a city’s inhabitants forming their own picture of it⁵⁸, while they concentrated their research on the small city and on Bratislava⁵⁹. Objects of the researchers’ interests were also, however, urban folklore⁶⁰, children and youth, and minority identity⁶¹.

Urban ethnology (anthropology) at the turn of the new century

At the threshold of the 21st century, then, a solid view of the city was finally achieved. Symbolism connected with the city, construction of its importance, structured memory of the inhabitants of cities and their role in the creation of urban identities⁶², sacral and profane places in the city⁶³, the problematics of myths in cities and about cities became the center of attention of urban ethnologists (anthropologists). These myths were then interpreted mostly

⁵⁴ For example, in autumn 1994 there was a round table on the topic *Prague and its new quarters* (Uherek 1994, p. 245). Further cf. Valášková 1998, p. 172.

⁵⁵ In Czech anthropology Oldřich Sirovátka, for example, defined the city. The main characteristic of a city, according to him, is a broad and complex social composition (Sirovátka 1993, p. 89). The Bratislava scholar Peter Salner rejected a static understanding of the concept of a metropolis (Svobodová 1994, p. 70).

⁵⁶ Uherek, Balzac-Billaud (ed.) 2000; Uherek 2003, p. 209.

⁵⁷ Bitušíková 2003a, p. 217.

⁵⁸ Bitušíková 2003a.

⁵⁹ Here the promenade disappeared only at the beginning of normalization (Luther 2003, p. 257).

⁶⁰ “Lidé města” Vol. 8 [*Město a jeho folklór (The city and its folklore)* 1996].

⁶¹ Cf. Vol. 3 of the journal “Lidé města” (2000) from the *Minorities in the City* conference.

⁶² Cf. the first and second numbers of the magazine “Urban people”, *The City - Identity - Memory* (2007) and *The City. Identity - Memory - Minorities* (2008), the monograph by B. Soukupova, H. Novotna, Z. Jurkova, A. Stawarz, *Město - identita - pamět (The City - Identity - Memory)* (2007), the monograph by B. Soukupova, *Neklidná krajina vzpomínání (Restless Landscape of Recollections)* (2010), Czech-Slovak monograph on the memory of the city (Ferencová, Nosková 2009).

⁶³ Soukupová 2005.

as ideological-political constructs⁶⁴. In their interpretations, anthropologists were inspired by works of British functionalist of Polish origin, Bronislaw Malinowski, French philologist Roland Barthes and French religionist of Romanian origin Mircea Eliade. Attention was also paid, under the influence of Polish urban anthropology, to meeting places: promenades⁶⁵, coffee houses⁶⁶, swimming pools and parks⁶⁷, and the functions of rivers in cities⁶⁸. In this research, the inspiration by the work of French ethnologist Marc Augé appeared. At the same time, research of the city living in memories starts (e.g., long-term research of memories of expelled Germans from Brno provided by Jana Nosková⁶⁹). With a certain delay compared to Slovak ethnology (anthropology) (*Premeny Bratislavy 1939–1993* by Peter Salner) research of the city and research of the time and so-called totalitarianism and research of continuities and discontinuities in the city began. Researchers had nevertheless to ascertain the “admirable” ability of people in the cities to adjust to the reigning regime. Research of the changes in the city varied indecisively after 1989 (demographic situations, ethnic composition, but also ownership of flats)⁷⁰. Ethnologists (anthropologists) enter into contact with sociologists of the city, with geographers and with architects who are interested in the quality of city space (including public space), of living from the viewpoint of different groups of inhabitants, time-space rhythms of the city... And finally: attention also began to be paid to so-called urban folklore (folk) songs⁷¹ and the performance of music in public spaces of the city. Parallely, however, ethnomusicological research was established as an independent discipline; the research of music in relation to ethnicity is however, predominantly bound to the urban milieu. With the progressive individualization of society the interest of researchers in the most varied subcultures (e.g., in the Brno Stetl from the 1960s to the 1980s also persisted⁷²). The postmodern concept of anthropology, when the researcher walking through the city describes his subjective impressions from his experiencing urban space, completely newly appears, mainly in the research of the urban landscape (young anthropologists Petr Gibas, Karolina Pauknerová).

Urban studies concerning the Romani minority are focused on education as a value for Roma (anthropological pedagogical project “Education and its values from Romani perspectives”), on construction of ethnic identity in cities with a high concentration of Roma⁷³.

⁶⁴ Cf. the second number of the magazine “Urban People” [*Myths and “reality” of Central-European Cities* (2009)]; the monograph by B. Soukupová, H. Novotná, Z. Jurkova, A. Stawarz, *The European City, Identity, Symbol, Myth* (2010); Soukupová 2008.

⁶⁵ Soukupová 2010c.

⁶⁶ Soukupová, Novotná 2006.

⁶⁷ Soukupová 2010b.

⁶⁸ Soukupová 2007.

⁶⁹ Nosková 2010.

⁷⁰ In 2007 this subject was established by, e.g., Jana Pospíšilová on the example of Brno and researcher A. Steinführer of Leipzig at the conference *Město: (ne)proměnlivá samozřejmost* (*The city: (un)changing self-evidence*). Not less interesting is the topic of revitalization of the city which was presented by Lenka Šolcová on the example of Milovice, a former military space. Publication of the conference was tied in to the publication of *Město* (*Sociální studia* 2006, Vol. 2).

⁷¹ Traxler 2001. Already at the first folklorist seminar in Prague a request for research of the genre of folk music was heard (*First Folklorist Seminar in Prague, “Český lid”*, Vol. 79, 1992).

⁷² Nosková 2009.

⁷³ Cf. Bittnerová, Moravcová (ed.) 2005. It also includes research of other national minorities in Prague and Jihlava.

Conclusion

For Czech urban ethnology (anthropology), interest in Czech cities, primarily metropolises, rising from the ethnography of the workforce⁷⁴, but also close cooperation with Slovak and also, in the past decade, with Polish urban anthropologists was typical. Of foreign influences, French impulses have dominated. At the time of the establishment of Czech urban ethnology (anthropology), ethnology (anthropology) in the city – research of interethnic relations in this complex milieu – has prevailed. Research of students, youths, children and women in the city has started well. Since the middle of the '90s the sphere of problems of Czech urban anthropology has broadened to the research of places of communication as socially integrative factors in the modern city. At the threshold of the 21st century the holistic approach and the beginning attempt at the comparison of Czech and other Central European cities have already been typical for Czech urban ethnology (anthropology). Corresponding to this are new topics coming from concepts of the city as an object of visions, of symbolized space: symbols and myths connected with the city, memory of the city. In all the stages of post-November research the same relevance was attributed to archival historical and field research. Methods of semi-structured interviews, non-structured interviews, field notes, etc. are used.

⁷⁴ Uherek (ed.) 1993.

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