
EDITORIAL

The current volume of *Etnologia Slovaca et Slavica* brings a collection of articles on topics which resonate in broader public discourse in Central Europe. The studies which we present here are related to the two basic categories: the body and health issues, which recently have become an important research theme; and the questions of identity, which have long been an object of attention in the social sciences and humanities. At the same time, the articles display a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches and thus manifest in what ways different disciplines deal with the important questions of contemporary society.

The results of ethnographic research conducted by Vihra Baeva in the Balkans and Central Europe refer to the healing rituals and practices at Christian sacred places. The author relies on the approaches of cultural anthropology, symbolic anthropology, and semiotics; she describes the processes of meaning-making, in which representations of the body and health appear as depending on a cultural, in particular religious, context. Katarína Pekařová's article addresses another aspect of health issues: she investigates how women and children are represented in Slovak public health literature in the nineteenth century. She applies historical approach and describes different socio-historical settings; but her results point to the same general link between culture and representations of the body and health. Culture appear again as a vital factor in Tatiana Bužeková's analysis of autobiographical narratives, collected during an ethnographic research in Slovak countryside. In her study, the author uses the concepts of cultural psychology and demonstrates that representations of one's self could not be separated from a cultural and social milieu.

The questions of identity, but also otherness, are central for Sebastian Kurtenbach's study on transnational social spaces, in which he describes transmigrants from Romania and Bulgaria in the Nordstadt district of Dortmund. Anja Mlakar also addresses otherness: she discusses the image of the Jews as they are portrayed in Slovene folklore and denotes a long-established picture of their distinctiveness in the context of a wider European imagery. The two studies employ different methodological approaches: while Mlakar's analysis

falls into the field of folkloristics, Kurtenbach investigates social processes from the perspective of urban studies. Yet both authors' accounts refer to a similar idea: how profoundly the notion of otherness influences social life.

The present volume also brings Michal Uhrin's interview with a renowned anthropologist John Eade who have done extensive research on politics of religion in Eastern Europe. In his studies, he focused on global migration, urban ethnicity and anthropology of pilgrimage. The interview addresses several important issues related to John Eade's research and brings insights of the leading anthropologist into the questions of identity, religion, and politics.

Reviews of publications on multilingualism in Bratislava, ethnological research on childhood, and geographical variability in life strategies in Slovak society close the list of contributions. Last but not least, the present volume brings congratulations to Magda Pariková, the former executive editor of *Etnologia Slovaca et Slavica*, to her 70th anniversary.

The present volume offers a mosaic of texts demonstrating fruitfulness of interdisciplinary discussion. We believe that these studies will contribute to investigating the cultural meanings and to better understanding contemporary social processes in Central Europe.

Tatiana Bužeková