

ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE CITY: A SOCIAL VIEWPOINT, MAIN TENDENCIES, PERSPECTIVES AND NATIONAL TRADITIONS OF RESEARCH.

An Example of Czech Urban Anthropology¹

Blanka Soukupová

Abstract: The text presents a brief outline of the development of Czech urban anthropology from its beginning in the 1950s until the present. It follows the viewpoints of this highly promising discipline and its individual stages of development. It focuses particular attention on the situation after 1989. While in the first decade after the Velvet Revolution research on multiethnicity and multiculturalism in the city prevailed, today anthropologists have proceeded to try to explain the city as a whole. At the same time the text illustrates how the birth of urban anthropology was related to a change in the understanding of the key concept of Czech ethnography – folk – and to a change of point of view of researches on the city. From the '50s until the '80s the proletariat was regarded for ideological reasons as the core of urbanized space; urban anthropology thus coincided with workers' ethnography.

Keywords: *Czech urban anthropology; city; folk; proletariat*

Marc Augé, a French anthropologist, spiritual father of the thesis about the present as continually changing individual worlds which mutually communicate with each other (Augé 1999: 91) proposed in his “manifesto” (1994) as one of the three main research problems of the present [alongside individual and religious phenomena (Augé 1999: 114) the city (Augé 1999: 94)]. Without question it happened that way because the spreading of cities is also, according to him, one of the phenomena that mold the present (Augé 1999: 92-93). Already at first glance, however, in the framework of our field there was a change in the scientific climate.

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Basic Premises of Czech Urban Anthropology

The aim of this text is, however, to answer the question of what the situation in Czech ethnography and later anthropology (ethnology) was like. In introduction only a few statements that will help to clarify the problem better: 1. Augé's postulates of the concept of anthropology were not entirely new in the Czech environment; 2. Czech ethnography did not experience a phase of frustration from an insufficiency of the exotic: the present state of distant cold societies was never their main topic; 3. so-called urgent ethnography was cultivated during the First Republic, mainly in relation to the so-called folk costume, so-called folk art, etc., relics of which were found by the involvement of researchers in the village; 4. Czech science had to react very quickly to the wide-spread political and social revolution of February 1948, when Czechoslovakia forcibly and voluntarily embarked on the road to the building of radical socialism.

Beginnings of Specialization: Marxist Methodology, Redefinition of the Term "Folk," a New View of the City

The beginnings of urban anthropology in the Czech Lands, which were inseparable from Slovak anthropology, the developments of which are being dealt with in this issue of *Urban People* by Alexandra Bitušíková, a Slovak ethnologist (also cf. Popelková – Salner 2002), can already be placed in the period around the beginning of the 1950s. The methodological framework of the research of the time was created by Marxism, which saw people as the creators of history, however creators who are dependent on contemporary socio-political conditions and on the heritage of tradition. The first phase of urban research was, therefore, connected primarily with the redefinition of the term *folk*, the most important term of ethnography and folklore studies at the time, and with the change of view of Czech ethnographers of the city. From the rise of ethnography as a science² the term *folk* had a decidedly *positive* connotation and was constructed from the class of *village peasants*. This was also the case of European ethnology of the 19th and first quarter of the 20th centuries as a science about national specifics in general (Karbusický – Scheufler 1968: 20). When in

² Otakar Nahodil and Jaroslav Kramářik, Marxist ethnographers, placed the beginnings of ethnography as an independent scientific discipline at the turn of the 19th century (Nahodil & Kramářik 1952: 10, 81).

September 1891, during the foundation of *Český lid* (Czech Folk), an anthology devoted to the study of the Czech folk in Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia and Slovakia, a pivotal ethnographic journal, the editors Lubor Niederle (1865-1944), an assistant professor of anthropology, and Čeněk Zíbrt (1864-1932), an assistant professor of cultural history, called out, “*Let us know the Czech folk while there is still time!*”³ they had in mind the study of the traditional village. Ethnography (so-called “*lidověda*” – folk science) was in their concept constructed as a science of national differences and specificities. In the currents of modernization, however, this individuality allegedly disappeared.⁴ The importance of urgent ethnography of the Czech folk thus corresponded to the fact that it was really supposed to be the folk who represented the whole nation.⁵

Intellectual Circle around T. G. Masaryk and Their Original View of the Folk

Czech intellectuals concentrated around the personality of T.G. Masaryk and the young Czech university, so-called realists, had already used the term *folk* in the 1890s, however, as a synonym for the non-reigning Czech nation (with the exception of the privileged and nationally unreliable presumably homogeneous Czech historic nobles who for the first time were to “make themselves into folk”)⁶: for peasants, small tradesmen and for workers, “*The folk are not only farmers and craftsmen, but also Czech workers,*” wrote the magazine of realists *Čas* (Time) in 1894, at a time of rising influence of the social democratic movement.⁷ In an atmosphere of enthusiastic reactions to the Ethnographic Exposition of Czechoslovakia in Prague in 1895, where modern concepts of the nation were asserted (mainly, however, interest was concentrated on so-called village folk⁸; their way of living, dressing, customary traditions, written and oral production, employment (Main catalogue and guide, 1895: 55), which included all classes of society, the realists then rose up against ideali-

³ (1892). *Český lid*, 1: 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁶ The evaluation by the realists of Czech and Moravian aristocracy corresponded primarily to its relation to Czech interests (Soukupová, 2000: 53-54).

⁷ (1894). *Čas*, 8, 17, 28.4., p. 257.

⁸ Otakar Hostinský, the author of chapter 5. *oddělení: Lidová píseň, hudba, tanec* (5th division: *Folk songs, music, dance*) reproduced the opinion that the source of the national movement were Czech speaking “*country folk*” and their song (*Hlavní katalog a průvodce*, 1895, p. 154).

zation of some ethnological regions (Moravian Slovácko). Czech ethnography of the time was, according to them, only an unsystematic collection that captured a few phenomena of folk life at five minutes before twelve, but it did not bring an undivided shape of life in the context of historic times (Soukupová 2000: 70). “*The intellectual revolution*” of the intellectuals however also, in that regard, got ahead of its time and was, in its time, refused as un-Czech (Soukupová 2000: 70-72; Kořalka, 1996: 20-121). Masaryk’s thesis about the Czechs as a plebeian (folk) nation or a nation of work maintained great importance. From it was derived the thesis of the alleged meaning (we would say, rather, the importance) of Czech history, of the fight for humanity (Soukupová 2000: 54-56). This thesis was successfully used for post-war communistic propaganda.

Rural Folk – Basis of the Modern Czech Nation?

The premise of ethnographers that the folk live and create in the village arose from the opinion of Josef Jungmann, the creator of written Czech, that the peasantry – the most numerous class of the Czech ethnic, the class that speaks Czech – became the basis of the modern Czech nation. Jungmann and his followers, however, projected onto the peasantry his idea of the model core (Kutnar 1948: 90, Hroch, 1999: 56); therefore they edited the folk production and got rid of its vulgarity and its frequent erotic expressions and allegories.⁹ The folk were namely the ideal projection, a perspective which, of course, did not correspond to the real situation. At the same time, Jungmann introduced into Czech thinking one of the most influential Czech myths: the myth of the poor Czech village cottage from which allegedly came the first Czech patriots (Hroch 1999: 256). This cottage repeatedly saved the Czech nation. The myth survived decades and also survived the results of scientific research of Czech historians who, around the beginning of the 1960s, presented the true cradle of the first Czech activists – the urban cottage. (Hroch 1999: 256, 257; Hroch – Veverka 1957). Its role in the identification of village folk with the nation, however, in ethnographic projections in the 1890s could also be played by the image of the city of that time. Large, but also small, cities proliferated and modernized (Machačová – Matějček 2009: 34-36, 39-42).

⁹ Not only did František Ladislav Čelakovský neglect ethnographic accuracy, but also, e.g., Percy (Horák 1933: 324) did.

View of Czech Society on the City in the 1890s

For ethnographers it did not present an object of research because of its volatility and omnipresent motion, for its imagined inability to be captured with traditional ethnographic methods. In addition, the space of large industrial cities with nationalized city halls [the most distinctive being Prague as a Czech center (Soukupová 2009: 277-278) and Liberec as a city which had the ambition to become a Czech-German center (Melanová 1997, Novotný 1997)] became at this time a ground for national and social conflicts. A metropolis with a mass of industrial workers and with international capital changed into a metaphor of cosmopolitanism or Americanism, but also Europeanism (Prague was presented on the model of Nuremberg, Paris and London, the largest city in the world (Soukupová 2009: 282), that is, foreignness, uniformity, lack of history, lack of originality, anonymity,¹⁰ and/or non-nationality, non-Czechness (Soukupová 2009: 284, 289). Its role in the lack of interest in the city of the ethnographers of the time may have had to do with the fact that most of the inhabitants of the Czech Lands lived in settlements of under 2,000 inhabitants.¹¹ In addition, traditional celebrations and folk forms of entertainment, which researchers could capture, quickly disappeared from the city. (Soukupová 2009: 289-290). Therefore the city captivated only writers of the time who wanted to describe its influence on the social life of the inhabitants. However, these also, in their novels, depicted negative features of the city: the frustrated, unfriendly, asocial environment of the metropolis (Hodrová 1983), in which the struggle for life and death reigns. In 1903 Mrštík's *Santa Lucia* was published. It was the story of a poor Brno student, Jordán, whose dream of a poetic Prague changed into harsh reality (Mrštík 1903). Such an uprooted and aggressive space did not mean anything to Czech ethnographers. And plans of urban revitalization with the help of folk culture, which some intellectuals, primarily Vilém Mrštík, invented at that time (Soukupová 2009: 284), turned out to be extremely short-lived.

¹⁰ Let us add, by the way, that the city as outlined above and its social life were already recorded by Anthony Giddens as existing in the 18th century. (Giddens 1999: 447).

¹¹ In settlements with over 2000 inhabitants, 31.8% of the population lived in Bohemia, 32.7% in Moravia and 39.5% in Silesia (*Hlavní katalog a průvodce*, 1895: 41)

The Village as Main Object of Interest of Inter-War Ethnography

Also after the rise of the Czechoslovak Republic, the interest of ethnographers returned to the village because of the connection of Slovakia and to Slovak and Balkan villages. In these economically backward areas enthusiastic ethnographers still found relics of folk culture. Thus, the agrarian party,¹² the strongest Czech interwar political party, stimulated interest of the time in the village. Agrarian ethnography, however, was aimed primarily at a certain side of life of the village (neighbor relations, family, customs, mentality of the villager) which it idealized. Its theory of the destructive influence of the city on the village (Chotek 1937: 34) was also influential. But the city also changed: so-called old crafts and the individuality connected to them gave way to factory production (Chotek 1937: 34). There is clear nostalgia from the ethnographic work of the time; on the other hand sociology of the city, which was developed in Chicago University in the 1920s and 1930s, in no way influenced Czech ethnography.

Ethnography, Its Function and Its Key Term “Folk” after the Communist Revolution (1948)

During the Second World War the historian František Kutnar pointed out the revivalist concept that would enable the study of the city; unfortunately it was not used. The folk were defined in it as petite bourgeoisie, the farmer class, farm laborers, landless people, and workers (Kutnar 1940: 10). The appreciation of the farmer class as the first class occurred during the era of Joseph II (Kutnar 1940: 10). The farmer began to fulfill the role of the healthy and unspoiled core of the Czech nation (Kutnar 1948: 57). In the profile of the personality of the rural patriot František Jan Vavák and then Kutnar clarified the hostile relation of the village to the city (Kutnar 1941: 108). The ethnographer Karel Chotek (1881-1967) also included country and urban inhabitants in the term folk (Chotek 1949: 20); as the core of folk culture [and the main platform of ethnology (Chotek 1949: 21)], however, he understood peasant culture

¹² e.g., Karel Chotek's book (*Lidová kultura a kroje v Československu (Folk Culture and Costumes in Czechoslovakia)*) (Prague: NOVINA, quotation p. 7) was published in 1937 as a memoir “for the dear time of the republican youth manifestation convention of the Czechoslovak country.” Its aim was to show “the value of folk culture and the beauty of the costumes,” of the economic and cultural importance of the “Czechoslovak peasant.”

(Chotek 1937: 25).¹³ The communist revolution, however, changed the opinion about ethnography, people and the city. Ethnography was pronounced not only the science of the folk, but also the science that was to help form a new culture with socialist contents (Nahodil – Kramařík 1952: 92); its ideologization was already quite open. In the village ethnographers were to capture the development of new social conditions (Štěpánek 1963: 20). In 1949, E. F. Burian, a famous dramaturgist, broadened the category of folk by adding the worker, the miner, and people living on the outskirts of cities and working in factories (the factory folk) (Burian 1949: 63).

Changes of the City in Socialist Czechoslovakia

After the Second World War, the Sovietized metropolis (by the term Sovietization I understand the change of functioning and appearance of cities: ways of governing the city according to the Soviet example, as well as symbolic domination of the city with Soviet emblems) was characterized primarily by the fall of the center and the expansion of the suburbs. Something similar – even if basically on a larger scale – was experienced by other European and American cities (Giddens 1999: 457). In socialist Czechoslovakia, however, the fall of the center had ideological causes, although in the interwar period the center was not the only place for prestigious housing in the metropolis (e.g., Prague Germans, whose number grew with newcomers, particularly liked Bubeneč, where so-called Little Berlin arose). The center of the city, that is, was inhabited by the former elites. For the lower underprivileged classes it was simply unattainable. Their social degradation, often multiplied by nationalism (those elites were Germans, Jews) and was now brought to the perception of the city. The new political team officially strove to equalize the pampered center and the despised and dispossessed outskirts, to bring nearer the residences and work places, to raise the share of the labor force to the whole number of inhabitants in cities, to remove the difference between the city and the country, to build exemplary cities for workers, but also to equalize urban institutions and the inhabitants of the city despite their different needs. City centers, as a consequence of the Holocaust and postwar expulsion of the Germans, were emptied. The most important parts of the cities were intended to become factories. Traditional workers' quarters functioned as a metaphor of capitalistic greed (Soukupová 2010: 41).

¹³ Chotek called the present the last stage of traditional village culture (Chotek 1937: 15).

New Construct of a Nation and a New Core of the Socialist City (Workers)

Interest of ethnographers again turned toward workers as the supposedly most progressive group of the nation and the core of urbanized space (Skalníková, 1959: 584). In Sovietized society only three large groups were supposed to exist: laborers, farm cooperatives and working intellectuals. The aim of ethnographic research was to become a process of formation of the way of life of laborers (Fojtík, 1958: 2). However, for four decades urban society was thus, in scientific research, reduced to a single group. Ethnography with its scientific aim, meanwhile, undoubtedly took part in the formation of new historic traditions. If society was, according to communist ideology, based on the labor force, it was, however, necessary to research the city primarily since it was really blue collar. This interest also corresponded to the state's aim – to the extensive development of heavy industry, which did not need a too-highly qualified work force.

Beginning Phase of Czech Urban Anthropology: Research of Mining and Metallurgical Regions

The capital of Czechoslovakia, Prague, like Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, despite new socialist symbols whose adroit communist campaign pervaded the whole city (Soukupová 2009: 268-270), despite the forced resettlement of the politically unacceptable population at the beginning of the fifties (their apartments were distributed to army officers, members of the secret police and high communist functionaries) (Soukupová 2010: 43), was not a model worker's city. Its actual importance shrank through the creation of new administrative districts and investments in agrarian Slovakia, in border areas and industrial regions. Therefore the interest of Czech ethnographers unequivocally politicized turned in Bohemia toward the areas around Žďár and Kladno and, in Moravia, around Rosice-Oslavany (the monograph *Rosicko-Oslavansko* was published in 1956), the region around Ostrava, in Slovakia the mining village of Žakarovce (the monograph *Banická dedina Žakarovce* was published in 1956). *"The subject of ethnography became the study of traditional culture in a workers' environment or an adaptation of older culture in new circumstances; the method of work became historic-ethnographic monographs,"* was how Marxist ethnographer Antonín Robek (Robek 1982: 7) evaluated this phase of research. The

choice of mining and metallurgic regions corresponded to the fact that in the first years after the communist revolution the economy was subjected to the *concept of iron and steel* (Renner – Samson 1993: 33).

The thematization of the Kladno region itself and the chosen methods of research, however, corresponded to existing village research. The methodical guidepost was Soviet and Polish ethnography [K. Dobrowolska (Fojtík 1957: 7) with its emphasis on the monographic treatment of the mining region]. In the historic-ethnographic monograph of the Kladno region ethnography remained defined as a material and spiritual culture of the folk, now primarily of miners. Ethnographers, in the framework of this ethnically homogeneous (Czech) industrial region which arose in the 1850s and 1860s, directed their research toward its development, particularly in the 1890s and the beginning of the 20th century. In the traditional way they described the work in the mines, the life of mining families (their way of living, their clothing, food, relations within the family), the social life of miners (mainly annual customs) and mining folklore (tales, humor, songs, miners' bands). The region around Kladno was presented as a left-wing bastion [so-called Red Kladno (Skalníková 1959: 11)], the laborer's family idealized as a family with healthy and pure relationships, unburdened by property, miners portrayed as those who turned to progressive national culture. Despite the ideological stress of the time, the monograph brought an enormous sum of material [the research covered 150 families and included 2000 narrations (Skalníková 1959: 9, 98)]. What was positive was also a combination of archival and field research. The year 1959, when the monograph was published, became indisputably, within the framework of our discipline, a crucial year [similarly, a draft of a monograph of the Ostrava region remained only in manuscript form (Skalníková 1999:134-135)]. The area of Rosice-Oslavany was then selected as relatively closed, isolated from the industrial Brno region. At the end of the 18th century, it was an agricultural area which, however, over a few decades, turned into an industrial region (Fojtík 1957: 4, 3).

The 1960s: Balcony-Access Houses as a New Field of Research

In the relaxed atmosphere of the '60s, Brno took the initiative. *House in the Suburbs (Dům na předměstí)* by the Brno researcher Karel Fojtík [(b. 1918) (Brno in the Past and Today, 1963)], a classic study of the period comparing the developmental stages in the life of the inhabitants of an apartment house in Brno clearly documented the increasing influence of sociology and the return

to an isolated unit of research which could be captured by ethnographic methods: to an apartment house which became a subject of a monographic work. A further domain of Fojtík became the study of the life of traditional culture in an industrial city (Fojtík 1960). In *Československá vlastivěda*, published in 1968, the ethnographers Vladimír Karbusický and Vladimír Scheufler stated that the subject of ethnography does not completely overlap with the term folk culture. The object of their research was traditional groups and local groups in an industrial civilization (Karbusický – Scheufler 1968: 19).

The End of the '70s and the Beginning of the '80s: Research of Blue-Collar Prague

In the course of the '70s and at the beginning of the '80s Prague was finally researched and had already begun to function, in communist rhetoric, as the most western socialist metropolis (research of the metropolis began in the '70s)¹⁴ (Soukupová 2010: 39). Research of the non-workers' classes was not so preferred (Jech – Skalníková 1971: 7). And in this case, however, the result was the Marxist monograph of the life style of one group of the city – the work force in the period of the Austrian state, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the First Republic. To date, the appreciated *Stará dělnická Praha* was to analyze

¹⁴ Mirjam Moravcová summarized the point of departure of this research (Moravcová 1974: 129-138). In 1975 the Institute for Ethnography and Folklore Studies of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences of Prague published *Etnografie pražského dělnictva a proces jeho sociální emancipace (Ethnology of the Prague labor force and the process of its social emancipation)*, vol. I by Antonín Robek and *Proletářské město Žižkov (The proletarian town of Žižkov)* by František Vančík, *Společenský život pražského dělnictva 1850-1938 (The social life of the Prague work force 1850-1938)* by Olga Skalníková and the chapter *Rodina a rodinné vztahy pražského průmyslového dělnictva (Family and family relations of the Prague industrial labor force)* by Jiřina Svobodová, part resulting from the study of a worker colony in Mrázovka in Smíchov and in the peripheral parts of Prague), vol. II [*Pražské děti (Prague children)* by Vladimír Scheufler and *Dělnický folklor (Workers' folklore)* by Jaroslav Markl (singing) and Dagmar Klímová (memoirs) and vol. III [způsob bydlení a bytová kultura (Way of life and housing culture) by Josef Vařeka, způsoby stravování (Alimentation) by Jarmila Šťastná and způsoby oblékání (Ways of dressing) by Mirjam Moravcová]. The Brno researcher Karel Fojtík mapped the rise of Brno suburbs. (Fojtík 1974). *Ethnographic aspects of the formation of Brno suburbs, Český lid*, 61, 1974: 17-32. – In the years 1974-1987 twelve volumes of The Ethnography of the labor force were published. The working class was researched in it as an “integrating element of various ways of life and culture of the social classes” (Robek 1974: 3). Anthologies dealt with the Prague (from the tenth volume, Czech) labor force: their traditional customs, folklore, social relations, children's culture, clothing, housing, workers' exhibitions, expressions of early national consciousness, social and family institutions (mainly associations), workers' manuscripts, celebrations and entertainment, in general, sources for the study of the work force.

the transformation of the work force into the proletariat and/or the rise of the specific worker culture (Robek – Moravcová – Šťastná 1981: 6). “Ethnography thus transformed from a study of anachronisms to the study of the life of the work force as a whole, in all fields of material, social and spiritual culture, whereas this material was studied on the whole in the process of change of the work force into the worker class of a capitalistic society,” as the research strategy of the time was clarified by Antonín Robek (Robek 1982: 8), emphasizing the possibility of ethnographic research of the present, research separated from sociology (Robek 1982: 10). The Prague working class was called a class that gave Prague its character (Robek 1974: 4), a true representative of the *Czech folk* (Robek 1977: 6). While parts about the development of Prague industry, democratic development, the distribution and social structure of the work force, chapters on worker housing, alimentation, clothing, folklore, specific worker social and family institutions and partly also about the family, belong to date to the best of postwar Middle European ethnography, it is not possible to say this about chapters concerning social life and culture. These parts were defined as very superficial work with material, an unmastered historic method and excessive ideologization. It was precisely in these chapters that there was no recognized heterogeneity of the work force, first, social and, later, also political (the work force was identified with adherents of social democracy). Credit must be given to Prague research in that it mapped out, at five minutes before twelve, the life style and “architecture” of workers’ colonies which, as hangovers from capitalist poverty, were fiercely liquidated. In the framework of research of workers’ Prague, however, a group was also discovered with which western sociology (H. Gans) had already worked: the so-called provincial urban villagers (Gans 1962). Research proved that it is possible to break the city down into certain small islands which ethnographers can penetrate. Methodically an extraordinary benefit was predominant respect for the social and political heterogeneity of the working class (mainly in chapters dealing with material culture) like an attempt to research two generations of a family, to introduce the gender point of view. Workers’ children became an object of research. A follow-up synthesis was to record the life style and culture of the Czech work force from 1848 to 1939, mainly in the inter-war period, both in large and in small towns. As a gauge, alimentation and the clothing culture in its dynamic development were chosen in connection with the region and socio-professional status (Moravcová 1986: 1), further, the family as a synthesis of tradition and of the consequences of historical change and

housing. Considerable attention was given to the symbolics of clothing as an expression of self-esteem of this class, in the case of the family, then, the conflict between traditional morality and modern phenomena (and this up to the present). Further, research mainly on celebrations in general and events in the city was realized (Frolec 1990), which is also an ethnographically traditional and an unusually rewarding topic. Associations and education of adults and children, as well as literature for the work force, theater and workers' folklore also attracted attention.¹⁵

The '80s: New Research of Kladno and Brno

Research also spilled over to the suburban area of Prague. Kladno, as well as other cities, began to be studied in the 1980s mostly as space of adaptation of Roma in the Czech majority society. As a gauge of the adaptation, alimentation, family life (birth, partnership), folklore and success of Romani children in schools were used.¹⁶ In Prague socio-demographic characteristics of the Roma were followed (Haišman – Weinerová 1989: 11-23). The problem of the difference in the way of life of the *Romani ethnic* (understood as the results of their lower social and educational level) was one of the most important objectives of the state research plan which was to help the creation of one (the majority) culture (Robek 1988: 4). Research of Brno urban ethnographers vis-à-vis the character of Brno and the Brno region – concentrated on an analysis of the meaning of traditional rural and urban folk culture (Navrátilová 1988: 68). Workers' life style was researched in traditional gauges of material (housing, clothing, alimentation) and spiritual culture [social life, family, folklore (Navrátilová 1988: 70)].¹⁷ Brno represented, in the period from 1848 to 1939,

¹⁵ In 1988 *České dělnictvo, III. Společenský život v dělnických organizacích a spolcích (The Czech work force, III. Social life in workers' organizations and associations)* (Klvetová, V. – Todorová, J. (eds.). 1988 was published. Zpravodaj koordinované sítě vědeckých informací, 1988, 4); in 1989 *České dělnictvo, V. Kulturní zájmy dělnictva*, I. and part II (Vaněčková, Z. 1989. Zpravodaj koordinované sítě vědeckých informací, 1989, 2).

¹⁶ In 1988 three volumes of the anthology *Cikáni v průmyslovém městě (problematika adaptace a asimilace)*. [Gypsies in an industrial city (Problematics of adaptation and assimilation)]. Material for the problematics of ethnic groups in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, vols. 10, 11, 12. Zpravodaj koordinované sítě vědeckých informací, 1988. 11, 12, 13.

¹⁷ Cf. the second volume of *Český lid* of 1988, which dealt with the topic of social organizations (Karel Fojtík), folk costumes (Vlasta Svobodová), narrations (Marta Šrámková), singing styles (Marta Toncová), holiday food (Helena Bočková), Czech-German marriages (Marie Makariusová), and nurseries (Jana Pospíšilová).

a nationally mixed city, surrounded by Czech communities, until 1918 with a German city hall. From the middle of the 19th century industry dynamically developed here (Navrátilová 1988: 68).

Period after the Velvet Revolution: Furtherance of Urban Anthropology as an Independent Subdiscipline

A new phase of ethnology (anthropology) of the city was started by the Velvet Revolution. Neither at that time, however, did the city become an object of study as a whole. Internal transformation of the discipline did not come about under the pressure of urbanization [Prague itself had acquired 1,215,000 inhabitants in 1990 (Hlavní a milionová města, 1990: 21)],¹⁸ but under the pressure of total-societal discussion. Even in Western Europe from the '80s, however, urban anthropology had difficulty asserting itself as its own sub-discipline. The establishing of a department of urban studies came about only during the '80s. The cause was, from then on, the persisting opinion that the field of anthropology is a small, closed world. The discovery of a new sphere of research proved to be very timely until after the depression, which reached cities and their socially excluded and high-risk suburbs. Where sociology failed, anthropology with its field research of small worlds made its appearance (de la Pradelle 1996: 190). In the case of Czech anthropology research that we can call, according to urban anthropologist Ulf Hannerz, research in an urban environment (Hannerz 1980: 20) preponderated at first. It was suggested to ethnologists that they begin to uncover the city through the study of individual communities of the urban organism (Zajonc 2003: 179). Only in the 21st century – after the phase of studies of interaction in the city – did they begin to promote research whose subject was the city and urban culture as a whole.

First Phase of Urban Anthropology after 1989: Research of Multiethnicity and Multiculturality

In the first years after the Velvet Revolution research of multi-ethnicity and multi-culturality and/or a wide range of mutual relations among Czechs, Germans and Jews in the Czech Lands and Slovaks, Germans, Hungarians,

¹⁸ The historian Elisabeth Lichtenberger called it a representative of European urban culture (Lichtenberger 1993: 11).

Jews and Czechs in Slovakia seemed to be politically and professionally correct. These very phenomena (so-called ethno-cultural processes) allegedly characterized the Central-European city before the Second World War most emphatically. The beginning of the '90s saw the realization of the *Ethnic and cultural identity of the Czech city. Tradition, co-existence, intolerance* grant. [This was begun in 1991; the head was Prague ethnologist Mirjam Moravcová (b. 1931) and the Brno folklorist and literary head was Oldřich Sirovátka (1925-1992)].¹⁹ Research of ethnicity of the city was also carried out (at first in the framework of the Moravcová team) by Zdeněk Uherek (Uherek 1993; 1998). The identity of the Czech city in the 1860s was researched, e.g., through Czech national clothing (Moravcová – Svobodová 1993). The alleged individuality of urban space of the Czech Lands; the ethnic variety was studied as a gauge of celebrations, holidays, associations, families, neighborhoods, children's folklore.²⁰ The identity of ethnic minorities in the city, including adaptation and inte-

¹⁹ In Slovakia urban research was concentrated around the project *Ethno-cultural processes in an urban environment. (Tolerance and intolerance in big cities of Central Europe)*. In 1991 a work conference of the same name was organized in Bratislava. In that same year the monograph *Taká bola Bratislava (Bratislava was like that)* by Peter Salner and others was published. In May 1992 the seminar *The metropolis as a multiethnic and multicultural space* took place in Brno; this seminar focused on a range of forms of inter-ethnic co-existence, including its impact on language and language education and on folklore ((Soukupová – Turková 1993: 156-157). Jana Pospíšilová a Karel Altman published the anthology *Leute in der Großstadt* (People in the Metropolis) (Brno 1992) of this seminar. One year later in Liblice u Mělníka an inter-disciplinary conference *The Metropolis – space of social and cultural innovations* was held; it dealt with changes in the social and ethnic climate in Central-European cities (Prague, Bratislava, Brno, Opava, Munich, Vienna), mainly in the 19th and 20th centuries. In later years urban research was not a priority of the research aims of the Ethnological Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. However, in 1994 Brno researcher Jana Pospíšilová started working on the project *Ethnographic research of the Czech minority in Vienna* and in 1996 on *The culture of today's children and youth with particular attention to manifestations of folklore*. For the list of grants, viz Tyllner 2001: 5-9.

²⁰ In 1991, Brno ethnographer Jana Pospíšilová and Brno historian Karel Altman listed this main field of research: customs, children's life and folklore, family and club life, expressions of social culture in the city (Pospíšilová – Altman 1991: 196). The anthology *Národopisné studie o Brně* (Ethnological studies of Brno) was similarly conceived. Toncrová, M. (ed.). (1990). Brno: Institute for Ethnology and Folklore Studies of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. The same problems, but also economic and socio-demographic development of the city, markets, pubs and taverns, Brno as a center of ethnography – all this was analyzed in a representative collective monograph. Sirovátka, O. (ed.). 1993. *Město pod Špilberkem. O lidové kultuře, tradicích v životě lidí v Brně a okolí.* (The city under the Špilberk. About folk culture, traditions in the life of the people in Brno and surroundings). Brno: Doplněk. The historian Karel Altman then developed in an independent monograph the problem of pub rooms in Brno. Altman, K. (1993). *Krčenné Brno. O hostincích, kavárnách, hotelech, ale také o hospodách, výčepch a putykách v moravské metropoli.* (Taverns in Brno. About pubs, coffee houses, hotels, but also about taverns and bars in the Moravian metropolis).

gration processes of the working other-ethnic migrations attracted attention. Some work was devoted to the development of city centers which in post-communist states were revitalized and to the development of urban institutions (clubs, pubs, promenades,²¹ and coffee houses). Research of the promenade was part of the international project *Slova města* (Words of the City), a project carried out by the Ethnological Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic and CEFRES.. The city was primarily envisaged as a certain type of social and ethnic ties, as a world of continuous social relations, as a catalyzer of intellectual and social movement, as a space for cooperation, dialogue²² and conflict,²³ as a place of the creation of collective identities. To the urban context of the Czech city (Prague, but mainly Brno and, in Slovakia, Bratislava) was attributed the ability to defuse inter-ethnic tension. It was politically and, at the same time, professionally correct to write about tolerant Pragueness and neighborly Brno. This concept was probably reflected in the most concentrated form in the thirteenth volume of the journal *Lidé města*, the predecessor of today's journal. (It was published between 1992 and 1999.) Individual volumes were devoted to Prague club and free-time activities, the value orientation of the Praguers, urban folklore, the relation to other ethnic minorities, the family in Prague's suburban regions, Prague children, students and pedagogues, the role of women in the social life of the city and, at the same time, the building of women's identity, inter-ethnic relations among traditional neighbors, pictures of the other and conflict in the city, marginal groups, celebrations and exhibitions. A certain handicap was the concentration of researchers on the modern and postmodern city.²⁴ The first work about inter-war Bratislava also had a similar tone, a work that relied primarily on testimonies of informers and memoirs

²¹ The Prague historian Luďa Klusáková (Klusáková 2003) studied the character, development and functions of urban and spa promenades as elements of the rhythm of everydayness in the small and medium-sized town as well as its reflections in the minds of its users.

²² Cf. the Czech-Polish anthology by Soukupová, B. – Stawarz, A. – Jurková, Z. – Novotná, H. (eds.). 2006. *The Central European City as a Space for Dialogue? (Examples Prague and Warsaw)*. Bratislava: ZING PRINT.

²³ In the case of Brno, Oldřich Sirovátka thought about several types of conflicts: the Czech-German conflict, the conflict between the center and the suburbs, the conflict between the original inhabitants and the newcomers, but also social, occupational, religious, generational, etc., conflicts (Sirovátka 1992: 27-28).

²⁴ The magazine, which took the same name [*Lidé města* (Urban People)], also mainly dealt with social layers and religious and ethnic minorities in urban society. Yet it constantly also opened more clearly other sub-disciplines of anthropology. The city as a problem retreated into the background (Nešpor – Moravcová 2008: 12).

(Luther 2001: 380). Slovak research also emphasized the importance of Czech newcomers to the Slovak capital and their intervention in the traditional hierarchy of the local urban society (Luther 2003: 390). The anthologies *Stabilität und Wandel in der Großstadt* (Bratislava 1995) and *Etnicita a mesto* (Bratislava 2001), both having a contribution by the Warsaw ethnologist Andrzej Stawarz, were among the important collective Slovak-Czech works of that period. At first the attention of researchers concentrated on metropolises (Prague, Brno and Bratislava); later, however, it was drawn to small towns. Research covered the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. The central categories of analysis of cities were cultural diffusion, cooperation, tolerance and pluralism, intolerance and totalitarianism, differentiation, religious extremism arising in the city (anti-Semitism, neofascism), conflict, later diversity. Favored subjects of study first became formerly neglected (marginalized) groups: beside ethnic minorities, their points of view (for Brno, e.g., Pospíšilová – Fischer 2004), children and students, women, beggars, prostitutes..., in Slovak urban anthropology also the former elites of the city, social groups (tradesmen). It was also part of the societal-political context with its rehabilitation of minorities in the meaning of the (actually or mentally) handicapped groups.

Second Phase of Urban Anthropology after 1989: Research of the City as a Whole

In the last years, beside this research, research of the memory of the city and places of memory has been carried out,²⁵ as presented by French researcher Pierre Nora (Nora 1984), the sacred and the profane,²⁶ of myths bound to the city²⁷ and images of the city.²⁸ During the search for new models of interpretations Czech anthropology looks at theories of memory and globalization.

²⁵ On memory and identity, cf. *The City – Identity – Memory*. Urban People, 20, 2007, 1; *The City – Identity – Memory – Minorities*. Urban people, 10, 2008, 2. Further, viz Soukupová, B. – Novotná, H. – Jurková, Z. – Stawarz, A. 2007. *Město – Identita – Paměť*. Bratislava: ZING PRINT.

²⁶ Cf. the Polish-Slovak-Czech journal *Sfera sacrum i profanum w kulturze współczesnych miast Europy środkowej*. Koseski, A. – Stawarz, A. (eds.). 2004. Warszawa – Pułtusk: Polskie Towarzystwo Etnologii Miasta.

²⁷ Cf. thematic issue: *Myth and “Reality” of Central-European Cities*. Urban people, 11, 2009, 2. Further, viz Soukupová, B. – Novotná, H. – Jurková, Z. – Stawarz, A. (eds.). 2010. *Evropské město. Identita, symbol, mýtus*. Bratislava: ZING PRINT.

²⁸ On images and myths of cities, cf. Polish-Slovak-Czech journal by Godula-Węclawowicz, R. 2008. *Miasto w obrazie, legendzie, opowieści ...* Wrocław – Kraków: Polskie Towarzystwo ludoznawcze; Uniwersytet Wrocławski.

Postmodern anthropologists found their terrain in the spaces of the subway, in stations, in shopping centers, but also again in apartment houses. They are inspired by the theory of places and non-places (Augé 1999: 109-110), but also the theory of the decentralization of cities (Fishman 1987).

Importance of Urban Anthropology Today

Conclusion. If today (urban) anthropology has some importance, it lies in its ability to explain historical change and/or the social logic in cities. Historization was always a strength of Czech ethnography and, later, anthropology. The identity of today's discipline does not now originate in negotiations with the otherness of the village. The field is a result of the intellectual process of contemporary individualized Czech society, its own traditions (whether they are denied or, on the contrary, accepted) and a certain inter-disciplinary discussion. The contemporary sociology of the city aims its interest at urbanization and suburbanization, at socially excluded inhabitants of the city (Roma, pensioners), at institutions of city and civic politics, the study of communities, the life style in suburban satellites, at the sociology of housing, interaction in public space, urban rhythms, and neighborhoods.²⁹ Contemporary urban history is oriented toward the rising development of cities (model famous work about the urbanization of the Czech Lands as a component part of European space *Zrod velkoměsta* (by Pavla Horská, a historical sociologist, Eduard Maur, a social historian, and Jiří Musil, a sociologist, 2002; Jiří Musil has already published in 1977 a book about the process of urbanization in socialist countries; three years later it appeared in English),³⁰ toward certain historic periods, toward urban events, towards corporative life in cities from the Middle Ages to the present, their influence on the life of cities, on communal and state politics, toward minorities (including national minorities and women) toward marginalized inhabitants, the functions of the metropolis (including the distribution of news), the problem of the center and the outskirts, borders and identities. The connection of the field with international research structures, however, is presented in this issue by the historian Luďa Klusáková of

²⁹ The development of the theory of American and European urban sociology in the years 1950-2000 was dealt with by Jiří Musil (Musil 2003: 137-167).

³⁰ Further, viz, e.g., Pešek, J. 1999. *Od aglomerace k velkoměstu. Praha a středoevropské metropole 1850-1920* (From agglomeration to metropolis: Prague and a Central-European metropolis.. Praha: SCRIPTORIUM.

the Philosophical Faculty of Charles University (Seminar of general and comparative history in Prague).

Contemporary urban anthropology, the relatively strong direction of contemporary Czech anthropology, then attempted to explain the city as a whole: by means of its relation to memory, its pictures, images, myths, as a collective abstraction. It became discursive anthropology. It relies on the thesis of Augé concerning the city as a closed symbolized space with its own signs, symbols, and myths (Augé 1999: 110) and Langenohl's theory of the mythologization of the present in totalitarian regimes. It began to research the post-socialist city.³¹ In accordance with western trends, it also worked on the importance of natural formations – rivers – in a city.³² The last anthropological conferences stood on these pillars: the city – memory – identity and the city – the minority – plurality landscape of memory. Large reserves of our subdiscipline are, however, still constantly in interdisciplinarity although many subjects present contiguous areas of interest of historians, sociologists, anthropologists, demographers, but also geographers, above all in comparative views. Because of this, the project conDENSE 2006-2009 [The social and special consequences of demographic changes in metropolises of Central-European Europe, sociological, geographic and ethnological research of Brno, Ostrava, Lodz, and Gdansk (Pospíšilová – Vaishar – Steinführer 2009)] is welcome. But research of Central-European cities was, until now, mostly realized parallelly. We know about the mutual interconnection of cultures in Central Europe, but we do not carry out research of the causes of its similarities and differences. The only thing to do is to found something like a Central-European institute of comparative urban studies, which would help understand the entirety and, at the same time, diversity of individual cultures. Cities as worlds about themselves and, at the same time, worlds for themselves are capable of repeatedly absorbing complex social change, of reproducing again and again the main tendencies of social movement, of “repeating the fabric of the world” (Augé 1999: 121), and therefore quite certainly deserve our attention. Cities are not only full-fledged, but also unique indicators of the explanation of the development of the whole of society. At the same time, however, it is necessary to emphasize that the project of

³¹ This is how one generally has indicated the city of the so-called Eastern Bloc since the fall of the regime (Stenning 2005).

³² Cf. The Polish-Czech-Slovak journal *Miasto po obu brzegach rzeki – Różne oblicza kultury*. Stawarz, A. (eds.). 2007. Warszawa: Polskie Towarzystwo Etnologii Miasta, Muzeum historyczne m.st. Warszawy, Muzeum niepodległości w Warszawie.

anthropology of urban worlds is today indefensible. Perhaps we will gradually ripen to the realization that we cannot go alone on the road of anthropology, history, sociology, geography, etc., but only on a road together. The rigid borders between individual disciplines could gradually dissolve. Meetings not only of several disciplines, but also various national scientific traditions are then necessary to accept as a new challenge and hope for rapid formation and establishment of urban studies.

Doc. PhDr. **BLANKA SOUKUPOVÁ**, CSc., was born in 1965. She is a researcher and teacher at the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University in Prague. In 2008 she became associate professor at the Philosophical Faculty of Charles University, Department of Economics and Social Studies. Her specializations are collective identity, the Central European city, and anti-Semitism. Her publications include: *Modernizace, identita, stereotyp, konflikt. Společnost po hilsneriádě* [Modernization, Identity, Stereotype, Conflict. Society after the Hilsner Affair], Bratislava 2004 (with Peter Salner); *Velké a malé českožidovské příběhy z doby intenzivní naděje* [Great and Petty Czech-Jewish Stories: from the Days of Intense Hope], Bratislava 2005; *The Central European City as a Space for Dialogue? (Examples: Prague and Warsaw)*, Bratislava 2006 (with A. Stawarz, Z. Jurková and H. Novotná); *Město, identita, paměť* [City, Identity, Memory], Bratislava 2007 (with H. Novotná, Z. Jurková and A. Stawarz); *Židovská menšina za druhé republiky* [Jewish Minority during the Second Republic], Praha 2007 (with M. Pojar and M. Zahradníková); *Židovská menšina v Československu po druhé světové válce* [Jewish Minority after the Second World War], Praha 2009 (with P. Salner and M. Ludvíková); *Evropské město: Identita, symbol, mýtus* [European City: Identity, Symbol, Myth], Bratislava 2010 (with H. Novotná and Z. Jurková).

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