
OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAM OF THE ENGLISH EDITION OF THE JOURNAL OF "URBAN PEOPLE"

Blanka Soukupová

The French anthropologist Marc Augé presented the city (large or small) as one of the three key problems (in his terminology, one of the three new "worlds") of contemporary (postmodern) anthropology. However, whether we call the world a new "field" or, as it is usually called in Czech ethnology, an "organism," this comparison will always contain a certain uniqueness, but, at the same time, mutual dependency and isolation from other worlds or organisms. The city represents a socially attractive, scientifically open topic.

The center of attention of the anthropological-historical international journal **Urban People**, born at the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University in Prague is the city (primarily European and, particularly, Central European) drawn into the process of modernization and post-modernization. **Urban People**, meanwhile, deliberately emphasizes comparative research of modern and pre-modern urban territory. The journal endeavors to analyze turning points in the lives of cities, ask questions about the correspondence of these moments to "great history" and the power-political invasion of urban space, while respecting the individuality of every city. At the same time it presumes a certain universality of continuously reshaped urban space and the common fate of so-called socialistic cities.

The city is considered the basic residential and administrative unit of modern and postmodern society in a certain tension with suburbs or small towns and with villages or satellites that became an important postmodern expression of the volatile relationship of people to the city. The journal answers questions about whether these residential units were and are some sort of unintended by-product of the city and when and under which circumstances they are drawn into urban territory.

Comparative research of changes in the modern and postmodern city is not primarily concentrated on its urban development, on the development of

science and technologies in the cities, on the genesis of literary, musical and artistic directions born in the city, etc., but on the development of the interconnected relationship of the city to its inhabitants. In other words: from our point of view, the city represents a phenomenon that is created by people and, at the same time, that produces a certain type of “urban” person, whereas we expect national and regional, and also social, professional, and age, etc., modifications.

This duality of urban identity comes from the fact that people in a city enter into a sort of dialogue with previous generations that created this space and, at the same time, attempt, by means of plans for further development of the city, to address future generations. This journal analyzes such strategies of communication. In this connection, what seems especially significant to us is relations to traditions that penetrate the present while they may, though they need not, contradict each other. Conscious appropriation can, for example, lead one – in the words of Rudolf Jaworski, the German historian – to ethnic “marking” of territory. Ethnic structuralization of the Central European city is connected with the transformation from national efforts to national movements. The attempt to project ideological-political formation onto space appears the moment one can speak of the modern nation. Borders between different districts are then created primarily by social circumstances. The journal attempts to analyze those somewhat mental maps that function as pillars of identity (national, professional, political, local, etc.). At the same time it investigates how they are strengthened.

But we think of the city not only as a space for intergenerational encounters, but also as a setting for the genesis of new directions of thought, new ideologies and their related institutions, new artistic streams and relationships. The journal analyzes the function of the city during its further formation and its positive and negative impact on the atmosphere of the city. Our aim is to discover the task of time in changing relationships to historical places in the city.

As we understand the city, it is the property of the majority population and of minorities in the sense of handicapped groups of the population. The criteria of “minoritiness” are varied: social status, membership in an ethnic and regional group or in a group with similar feelings, opinions, health problems, age, origin, etc.

In **Urban People**, the “city” means the environment shared and symbolized, to a certain extent autonomous, and pluralistically and individually expe-

rienced. Besides the real city, there also exists the virtual city, a city of fantasies, a dreamlike city that lives in memories (private and commonly shared, reproduced and embellished). The journal analyzes the relation between the city (or its parts) and the municipal authorities on one hand and the home on the other. It asks which attributes a home in the city must have.

The aim of the journal is both a comparative analysis of the development of theoretic-methodological approaches to the city and the recognition of the reasons for the survival of certain “national” traditions in urban anthropology. Through the prism of specific scholarly orientation we hope to come closer to characterizing society (mainly Central European and European) as a whole.

Suggested issues: The city – identity – memory – minorities; The city and myth.