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Active citizenship is one of the key indicators of sustainability according to the The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development and, in the national context, to the National Strategy for Sustainable Development in the Slovak Republic (2001). The reason is obvious: civic activities that aim at improving biological, environmental, material, cultural, spiritual and social needs and interests of local citizens contribute significantly to strengthening civil society at local or regional levels. The range of these activities is broad and it includes environmentally-oriented actions; human rights support and advocacy (ethnic, religious, gender, social and other); preservation, revitalisation and promotion of urban heritage and identity; civic participation in urban decision-making and governance, local solidarity and assistance, community life, etc. The engagement and active participation of citizens in urban life has been an object of social sciences and humanities research for a long time. Many authors (quoted in the studies presented in this issue) confirm that sustainable development of local (urban) communities depends significantly on the way how they develop and support their own social and cultural potential and capital.

The Institute of Ethnology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences has been the coordinator of the project “Civic Activities as a Determinant of Sustainable City Development (An Ethnological View)”. The key field research destination has been Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia (combined with some comparative research in other Slovak cities). It is understandable that a small project cannot cover all forms of formal activism (non-governmental organisations) and non-formal activism (civic initiatives) that have been observed and studied in recent years. The main objective of the project has been mapping and analysing selected individual and group activities in the field of preservation and reconstruction of historical and cultural values; implementation of ecological concepts into urban strategies; advocacy of minority groups’ interests and rights; and community life revitalisation. We presume that civic activism in Bratislava focuses primarily on problems related to local government and governance, social issues, urban heritage, social communication, and environment. The ethnological analysis of these activities can contribute to better understanding of social processes in the post-socialist city.

The papers in this issue of Slovak Ethnology offer and demonstrate diverse approaches towards the study of urban activism. Alexandra Bitušíková in her introductory study presents a general overview of theoretical approaches to the study of urban
movements and activism. She studies activism within the framework of civil society and social movements in the region of Central and Eastern Europe. She challenges older academic writings that describe civil society in Central and Eastern Europe as underdeveloped and weak, and presents research findings of a number of social scientists (including social anthropologists) that emphasize a specific nature of activism in the countries of the region. She demonstrates that even after more than two decades since the fall of communism it is still important to take different historic, political, economic, social and cultural contexts into account when comparing urban movements and activism within Europe.

Natália Blahová focuses on corporate volunteering as one of the forms of collaboration between the non-profit and the private sectors seeking solutions to social problems and community development in the city. Volunteering is part of the philanthropic strategy of companies which want to present themselves as entities responsible towards the environment in which they run their business, and towards their employees, partners and customers. The author presents engaged anthropology and its methodological tools (such as a community-based participatory research) as a new approach to study corporate volunteering. This kind of engaged research includes all partners on an equal basis and identifies their unique contribution to problem solution and community development.

Daniel Luther presents a specific case related to the transformation of urban space in Bratislava considered as historically important by urban inhabitants. He discusses civic activism in the context of preservation of the historical identity of the city. The author seeks to grasp the issues of active citizenship through motivations and reasons, particular areas of interest, actual results, and effectiveness of civil activism. He concludes that interventions to preserve the historical identity of urban spaces have strongly mobilized part of the public and have become one of the incentives of growing civil engagement in the post-socialist period.

Peter Salner focuses on civic activities aimed at preserving the Jewish minority culture in Bratislava. He follows a complicated process of the establishment of the Jewish Community Museum that started before the WWII, but could not be realized and implemented until the end of the communist rule. The author presents long-term efforts of individuals and the Bratislava Jewish Community leadership in establishing their own museum. The role of this new institution is to present the history and the current status of the largest Jewish community in Slovakia. The creation of the Jewish Community Museum is a manifestation of activism of several individuals and of their vision being accepted by the leadership of the religious institution. The result is a new impetus for the development of the community, but also for improving the Jewish–Gentile relations and thus for a step forward to sustainable development in Bratislava.

The papers in this issue show different perspectives on urban activism in Slovakia that contribute to deeper understanding of specific problems of post-socialist cities in Central and Eastern Europe.

DANIEL LUTHER,
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The study brings an overview of selected transdisciplinary theoretical approaches to the study of urban movements and activism placed within the framework of civil society and social movements, focused on the region of Central and Eastern Europe, and seen from a social anthropological perspective. It attempts to challenge older academic writings that described civil society in Central and Eastern Europe as underdeveloped and weak, and presents research that points out a specific nature of activism in the countries of the region. It builds primarily on the concepts of civil society, social movements, urban movements and urban activism as presented by scholars both from “Western” and “Central and Eastern” European countries and demonstrates that after more than two decades since the fall of communism it is still important to take different historic, political, economic, social and cultural contexts into account when comparing urban movements and activism within Europe.

Key words: civil society, social movements, urban movements, urban activism, Central and Eastern Europe

INTRODUCTION

“You may never know what results come of your actions, but if you do nothing, there will be no results.” Mahatma Gandhi

The interest in urban activism within a broader concept of civil society and social urban movements has been growing steadily in many disciplines (sociology, human geography, political science, history, women’s studies, ecology and recently also social anthropology). It is a consequence of the emergence of different kinds of activism in many urban settings across the globe: grassroots community- or neighbourhood-based organisations, interest groups, politically or culturally oriented pressure groups, housing organisations, mobilisations against globalisation and neo-liberalisation of urban policies or for environmental and social justice, anti-consumerism...
groups, and many others. Urban activism has been increasingly considered an important part of urban governance processes as local activists participate in urban politics and influence decision-making through numerous participatory practices and tools. Citizen’s involvement, participation and representation in governance is seen as one of the crucial factors and indicators of sustainable and smart urban development.

This paper looks at transdisciplinary theoretical approaches to the study of urban movements and activism placed within the framework of civil society and social movements with a specific focus on the region of Central and Eastern Europe and seen primarily from a social anthropological perspective. Its objective is to challenge older scholarly writings that underestimate the strength of civil mobilisations in Central and Eastern Europe and to point out a specific nature of activism in the countries of the region.

WEAK CIVIL SOCIETY?

The collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe roused high expectations about a rapid revival of civil society that is recognised as a key factor in the processes of democratisation. A number of scholars made post-communist civil society the new object of their study. Early publications, however, brought a rather pessimistic view of the development of civil society in Central and Eastern Europe (e.g. Rose 1993; Rose, Mishler, Haerpfer, 1997; Rose-Ackerman, 2001; Howard, 2003). They were based mainly on opinion polls and surveys; they used a limited number of indicators and did not take into account a multidimensional character of civil society. Marc Howard, for example, understood civil society as part of public space between the state and the family, and embodied in voluntary organisations (Howard, 2003: 1). Most statements on the weakness and underdevelopment of civil society in the countries of post-communist Europe were built on indicators such as low civic membership and low employment in voluntary organisations, weak social and political institutions and high level of mistrust of these institutions – factors being seen as obvious communist legacies. On the basis of these findings, some scholars even questioned prospects for democratic stability in the region. None of these early works mentioned an enormous and rapid growth of registered civil society organisations in Central and Eastern Europe. For instance, in Poland, the number of registered NGOs grew by 400 percent from 1989 to 1994 (Ekiert, 2012), in Slovakia by more than 500 percent (from 158 in 1990 to over 1000 in 1994; more than 40,000 in 2015). These numbers show phenomenal mobilisations of citizens already at the beginning of the 1990s, however, they were not based on formal membership due to the legacy of mistrust of former communist membership organisations. As Grzegorz Ekiert notes, civil society organisations in Central and Eastern Europe were very supportive of political and economic transformations in the initial years of transition, and in the second decade of transformations they significantly contributed to the renewal of liberal commitments and policies (Ekiert, 2012: 71). This was the case of the Slovak OK ‘98 campaign (Civic campaign ‘98) launched by a platform of non-governmental organisations in order to mobilise the electorate. The campaign contributed to a record 84 percent turnout, to the defeat of the non-democratic rule of Vladimír Mečiar’s party and to the total victory of pro-democratic forces that came to power and brought Slovakia to the European Union (Bútor, Bútorová, Strečanský, 2012: 21).

Social anthropologists (e.g. Hann, 1992; 2003; Hann, Dunn, 1996; Buchowski, 1996; 2001; Torsello 2012a) criticised another notion presented by several Central European dissidents as well as Western scholars that civil society was totally absent in the communist countries of the region, and therefore, there was nothing to build on. Chris Hann argues that in fact there was a continuous movement and a great diversity of social activities in these countries (Hann, 1996: 7). He demonstrates a number of voluntary associations in Hungary well before 1989 (Hann, 2003: 62). Michal Buchowski describes two types of civil society in communist Poland: first, official associations and corporations created and licensed by the state, and second, unofficial civil society that took various forms, including kin groups and informal interest groups (Buchowski, 1996: 83–84; 2001: 123–124). Davide Torsello talks about a parallel “civil society” that supported “semiformal and informal networks, circles, associations, foundations, which were not necessarily of a political nature”. He continues that these forms have been partly used as matrixes on which new civil society was built (Torsello, 2012a: 182). According to Hann, the anthropological study of civil society in Central and Eastern Europe should not focus on Western notions of civil society that privilege the world of formal nongovernmental organisations or topics of citizenship, trust, etc. that have been debated by other disciplines. Anthopology should distinguish itself from other disciplines by investigating “those alternative local models of civil society, which look quite different from those of Tocqueville and Putnam, and are overlooked in the more abstract theorising of Ernest Gellner” (Hann, 2003: 70–71).

**URBAN (SOCIAL) MOVEMENTS**

*Social movements* have attracted the attention of social scientists for several decades and have been redefined many times. The key and broader characteristics of social movements are that they are formed by a group of people engaged in a collective action with the objective of accomplishing their goals (Jacobsson, Saxonberg, 2013: 255). They often aim at implementing or resisting social change and in order to do so, they use a range of different strategies such as campaigns, petitions, public meetings, demonstrations, rallies, public statements etc. The beginnings of social movements date back to the 18th – 19th centuries and are connected with industrialisation, urbanisation, the growth of working class and the fight for their rights. These movements are known as old social movements. New social movements, the concept developed by Alain Touraine (1985) and Alberto Melucci (1980; 1985), go beyond the class contradiction and reflect the transition to a new, post-industrial or information (programmed) society (Salman, Assies, 2007: 222). Examples include feminist move-

2 Ernest Gellner, one of the first anthropologists writing about civil society, also argued against the narrow notion of civil society based on non-governmental organisations as a counterbalance to the state and preferred to see civil society as social order without any ideological or institutional monopoly (Gellner, 1994, quoted by Torsello, 2012a: 180).

3 Alexis de Tocqueville (2000) emphasised the important role of associations in the creation of American democracy. Robert Putnam (1993a, b) with his social capital theory measured a good and prosperous civil society by civic engagement in associations and networks and membership in non-governmental organisations. Ernest Gellner was convinced of a superiority of Western model of civil society and almost no possibility of any citizen’s engagement in countries under socialism. He argued against the narrow notion of civil society based on non-governmental organisations and preferred to see civil society as social order without any ideological or institutional monopoly.
ments, civil rights movements, peace movements, environmental/green movements, anti-globalisation movements etc.

A new category of social movements, *urban social movement* was introduced by Manuel Castells in his book *The Urban Question* (1977) and later redefined in *The City and the Grassroots* (1983). His definition of urban social movements as “urban-orientated mobilisations that influence structural social change and transform the urban meanings” (Castells, 1983: 305) has been quoted many times. According to Chris Pickvance, in this latter book Castells describes urban social movements as those combining “collective consumption, trade unionism, cultural identity and demands for increased citizen rights”, and argues that these movements “have lost the ability to bring about structural change in power relations in conjunction with other groups” (Pickvance, 2003: 103). Castells used the term urban social movement in two senses – the restrictive and the generic. In the restrictive sense, he believed that citizen action could have one of three levels of urban and political effect: participation (lowest), protest (intermediate) and urban social movement (highest) (Castells, 1977). Pickvance considers the restrictive use of the term *urban social movement* as abandoned by many scholars in recent periods and he proposes the generic usage of the term, which avoids assessments of the actual effects of urban movements (Pickvance, 2003: 103). Another theoretician of social movements, Margit Mayer suggests that since the times of Castells’s early statements, urban mobilisations have expanded, differentiated and fragmented in many different ways (Mayer, 2006a: 202) and the narrow definition of Castells’ urban movements had to be replaced by less normative definitions of urban activism (Mayer, Boudreau, 2012: 275). In her works on urban social movements in the era of globalisation (Mayer, 2006b, 2007; Mayer, Boudreau, 2012), Mayer has focused mainly on the influence of new forms of neo-liberal urban governance (entrepreneurialised, market-oriented, public-private partnership based, and emphasising economic efficiency, individual responsibility, etc.) on the dynamics of urban mobilisations. She recognised three main trends in urban governance:

- the new contemporary forms of urban growth (efforts of cities to win international investments and services, mega projects, restructuring public spaces at the expense of old neighbourhoods etc.),
- the erosion of traditional welfare rights (new poverty caused by global processes)
- the change of the urban political system described as a shift from government to governance (Mayer, 2006b).

Urban social movements that have been founded as a reaction to neoliberal urban policies run by urban politicians, planners and developers are recognised as movements covered under the umbrella of the multifaceted *right to the city* demands. According to David Harvey, the key proponent of the idea, *the right to the city* is “... right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights” (Harvey 2008: 23). Protesting against numerous commercialisation projects (such as public space revitalisations and privatisations, new development plans leading to gentrification and gated communities or investors’ plans to build new neighbourhoods at the expense of urban heritage), *the right to the city* groups emerge in many countries (mainly Europe, North America and Latin America) under various
names and various claims. These groups, often consisting of the people of lower income and opposed to the rich and powerful, have been losing their civil, economic, social or political rights due to unequal and exploitative systems in urban decision-making processes (Mayer, Boudreau, 2012: 70). The right to the city movements, groups and initiatives use diverse tools and perform different actions: petitions, demonstrations, exhibitions, workshops, public debates and other creative ways of protests. They successfully operate both at local and global levels and are organised either in formal ways (non-governmental and non-profit organisations, agencies and advocacies) or informal ways (local ad hoc and informal non-membership and voluntary initiatives or various community activities).

The changing character of urban social movements in the global world has led to re-defining or refining the key concepts. Margit Mayer and Julie-Anne Boudreau see a distinction between social movements and urban movements and suggest that while social movements involve collective actors that mobilise and intervene in processes of social and/ or political change, “goals and activities of urban movements concern the city and its decision-making structures and processes” (Mayer, Boudreau, 2012: 276–277). They stress that urban movements have undergone significant changes and particularly “urban movements in the so-called transformation societies follow different patterns from those challenging the urbanism of Western democracies” (ibid.: 277). Urban movements in Central and Eastern Europe have become an object of scientific study only in the last two decades. After early studies written by Western scholars and focused on civil society in Central and Eastern Europe (as mentioned before), the later attention turned to mobilisations and activism, and particularly to the study of specificities of activism in the countries of the region.

**URBAN ACTIVISM**

Activism in this study is understood in a very broad sense as a range of actions that lead to social, cultural, political, economic or environmental change and are performed by individuals, groups or movements. The meaning of the term urban activism is more specified. The aim of urban activism is to focus on improving the quality of the urban environment and space, urban society, and urban life. That means that urban activism is not just any activism performed in an urban setting, but it is collective action oriented towards the city and its decision-making processes. In order to focus on urban activism in Central and Eastern Europe, it is important to start with scholarly debates on activism generally.

Tsveta Petrova and Sydney Tarrow (2007) were among the first authors who challenged earlier sceptical writings on weak civil society and lack of activism in Central and Eastern Europe. By reviewing findings from the literature on citizen participation in Central and Eastern Europe and presenting results of their research in Hungary and other countries in the region, they argue that early studies on civil society in Central and Eastern Europe focused only on surveys of individual citizens’ capacity and participation (whether people vote, join voluntary associations, turn out for demonstrations or protest meetings) and ignored other, relational dimensions of activism. They propose a new notion of activism – transactional activism that is based more on relational aspects of activism than on individual participation. By transactional activism they mean “the ties – enduring and temporary – among organised non-state ac-
tors and between them and political parties, power holders, and other institutions” (Petrova, Tarrow, 2007: 79). They distinguish transactional activism from participatory activism, which they define as “the potential and actual magnitude of individual and group participation in civic life, interest group activities, voting, and elections” (ibid: 79). Petrova and Tarrow focused on activism in a broad perspective (including urban activism) and they provoked new research in the field of civil mobilisations and activism in Central and Eastern Europe.

Ondřej Císař, the Czech political scientist and sociologist who writes about different kinds of local activism (political, feminist, environmental, etc.) in the Czech Republic within a broader Central and Eastern European context, has developed Petrova and Tarrow’s theories further and suggested five specific modes of political activism in the region that could be applicable also for other types of activism (including urban activism):

- participatory activism based on membership organisations (few events, many participants),
- transactional activism based on small advocacy organisations (many events, few participants),
- radical activism based usually on loose organisational platforms and on individual activists (few participants, militant strategies),
- civic self-organisation based on individual organisational effect (many events, no organisations and few participants),
- episodic mass mobilisation based on short-term events (many participants, no organisations and very few events) (Císař, 2013a: 143).

According to Císař, civic self-organisation that is based on collective action without the involvement of an organisation constitutes one of the common types of activism in Central and Eastern Europe. He brings evidence of this type of activism in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Bulgaria where “collective mobilisations of this type tend to be numerous and at the same time small in size. The action repertoire seems to be dominated by petition and non-violent demonstration...” (Císař, 2013b). Other Czech scholars, Navrátil and Pospíšil support Císař’s points and state that despite low membership in civil society organisations in the Czech Republic, there are a large number of active civil society organisations and a considerable share of citizens that contribute individually to various civic campaigns (Navrátil, Pospíšil, 2013). Navrátil stresses the importance of “soft” factors in shaping the extent and character of civil participation (Almond, 1983, quoted in Navrátil 2013).

Research on urban activism from Slovakia supports the same arguments (Bitušíková, 2015) showing evidence of a variety of forms of urban activism – smaller or larger, visible and less visible, formal and informal or local and global. These smaller mobilisations are often overlooked by social scientists that prefer studying activities of formally established organisations (such as non-governmental and non-profit organisations or agencies). However, in recent years, some examples of growing civic urban activism have been presented by a number of Slovak social scientists, using qualitative approaches and methods (e. g. Lukšík, 2010, Šuška, 2014).

Publications edited by Kerstin Jacobsson and Steven Saxonberg (2013) and Kerstin Jacobsson (2015) can be considered the most significant and holistic recent contributions to understanding the specificities of grassroots mobilisations and activism in Central and Eastern Europe. They bring numerous empirical findings from Central and
Eastern European countries that take into account the specific nature of the societal contexts and do not treat these countries as one homogenised region as many early writings did (Jacobsson, Saxonberg, 2013: 2). They stress that previous research was focused too much on formal organisations and overlooked considerable differences among the countries in the region reflecting a broad range of strategies used by activist groups. Jacobsson in her Introduction to the publication Urban Grassroots Movements in Central and Eastern Europe (2015) brings social movement theories closer to urban studies and presents examples of complex urban grassroots activism in the region that show different features to mobilisations and movements in older democracies (partly because of still existing post-socialist legacies). She calls for “a new research agenda” that should focus on urban grassroots movements and activism in Central and Eastern Europe. From case studies published in the book it is obvious that a significant if not the dominant form of contemporary urban activism in Central and Eastern Europe is the one of grassroots nature, local, small-scale, low-key and domestically-funded (Jacobsson, 2015: 275). Jacobsson, among other things, stresses the importance of studying the role of alliance-building in urban mobilisations and the increasing participation of urban activist groups in urban decision-making and governance.

**URBAN (SOCIAL) MOVEMENTS AND ACTIVISM IN SOCIO-ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH**

Compared to other social sciences, social anthropology has paid only limited attention to the study of urban social movements and grassroots activism and has been rather absent especially from theoretical and conceptual debates. Arturo Escobar was one of the first anthropologists who wrote a critical reflection on the “invisibility” of social movements in anthropology and the relevance of social movements for anthropological research (Escobar, 1992). He understood social movements as “symbols of resistance to the dominant politics of knowledge and organisation of the world” (Escobar, 1992: 421). He stressed the importance of studying the micro-level of everyday practices within “larger processes of development, patriarchy, capital and the State” and wanted to see how these forces find their way into people’s lives and how they affect peoples’ identity and social relations. He proposed close engagement and reading of popular actions as a way of studying these processes, and discussed positioning of researchers, activists and collective actors in this kind of research (Escobar, 1992: 420–421).

Since Escobar, a number of anthropologists have begun studying practices and processes of collective action – social movements, activism or other kinds of mobilisation; however, research focused on collective action in the urban environment is rather rare. When reviewing anthropological literature, it is obvious that anthropologists have contributed to the study of various forms of collective action against inequalities concerning indigenous people, women or the urban poor; environmental, religious, peace, anti-globalisation or identity-based movements; mobilisations against neo-liberal policies or recently also digital activism or CSSM – computer-supported social movements. June Nash in Social Movements – An Anthropological Reader (2004) notes that today anthropologists are the important observers of social movements and they are able to present new research directions (Nash, 2004). According to Yarimar Bonilla, the key contribution of anthropology has been “to expand the definition of collective resistance beyond the scope of formalised protest to encompass everyday forms of resistance”
and to examine also lived experience of actors, not only outcomes of strategies (Bonilla, 2012). The common feature of most anthropological studies is that they analyse actions, motivations, practices and strategies of activists and activist groups at both local and global levels within the theoretical debate on transnationalism, globalisation and/or civil society. Yet, the contribution of social anthropology to the theoretical discourse on social movements and activism has not been clearly articulated although it should not be underestimated – mainly because anthropology uses its own specific qualitative methodologies and approaches that can reveal local answers to global problems and help us to understand informal mobilisations and activism that are often overlooked by other disciplines.

Ton Salman and Willem Assies in their publication Anthropology and the Study of Social Movements (2007) attempt to contribute to theorisation of social movements in anthropology. They emphasise “culture” and “cultural dimensions” as crucial concepts for framing and theorising social movements that should include collective memories and identities, habits, narratives etc. (Salman, Assies, 2007: 207). They criticise the focus on movements as the main units of analysis and instead call for anthropological research of motivations, aspirations, beliefs, actions or attitudes of the actors and participants that make the movements. They also argue that local cultural perspectives, traditions, narratives etc. must be taken into account if we want to understand transnational or trans-local character of collective actions – and it is particularly anthropology that can do it (ibid., 2007: 258).

When looking specifically at urban movements, activism and mobilisations, the British anthropologist Sarah Pink has emphasised the importance of the study of urban activism and movements particularly in small urban contexts. She criticises the research preference of big cities in relations to urban social movements and activism and sees also small towns and cities relevant for the study, especially in the context of the local-global nexus (Pink, 2009: 452). On the example of the Slow City movement, she suggests studying the interconnections between national or transnational networks with local activist groups, which strongly influence local policies and may have a role even in global processes (Pink, 2009: 463). She tries to redefine contemporary activism by using the term “local socialities” understood as different kinds of face-to-face social relationships that develop around different activities (Pink, 2008: 172). These ‘socialities’ characterised by engagements with others, social interrelatedness, sense of belonging and being together can be regarded as indirect activism that might lead to “the production of human agency to bring about urban change” (ibid.: 184).

Anthropological research on urban (social) movements and activism in the region of Central and Eastern Europe has been still rather rare. Italian anthropologist Davide Torsello has been studying civil society, social exchange, social networks, movements (especially environmental movements) and activism in Central and Eastern European cities (in Slovakia and Hungary) for several years (e.g. 2011, 2012a, 2012b). He stresses the changing nature of activism in the region (especially environmental activism opposing development projects) that is becoming increasingly an arena of political action strongly influenced by “Brussels”. He also suggests that it still makes sense to take into account the peculiar conditions of the post-socialist and EU enlargement experiences and to test whether changing historical and geographical conditions affect the relationship between the state and society (Torsello, 2011: 58). In Jacobsson’s publication of 2015, there are also several anthropological contributions on grassroots urban activism in Central and Eastern Europe (Bitušíková, 2015; Kopf,
2015; Lindqvist, 2015) that bring evidence on the changing nature of contemporary activism in the region. And not to forget the recent Slovak anthropological production, several scholars have been writing about different kinds of urban activism and mobilisations in the country (e.g. Darulová 2010; Janto 2007; 2012; 2013; Koštialová 2014; Luther 2010).

The critical point and question to be discussed is the particular challenge of engaged anthropology as a way to better understand the dynamics of movements, activism and mobilisations. Many anthropologists who study local activism have become increasingly engaged in practices and processes of urban movements and initiatives related to social issues, decision-making and power relations within communities, providing empirical experience to social assessment and ethical practice and linking anthropological knowledge, theory and practice to create new solutions and innovations (Low, Merry, 2010: 204). Engaged anthropology that can be considered part of applied anthropology has become an accepted, vibrant and diverse sub-discipline of anthropology. According to Low and Merry, there are several forms of engagement: (1) sharing and support, (2) teaching and public education, (3) social critique, (4) collaboration, (5) advocacy, and (6) activism. The engagement takes place during the fieldwork or is part of the fieldwork (Low, Merry, 2010: 204), however, it opens a number of ethical dilemmas such as the extent of engagement, power relations and possibilities to misuse anthropological methodology (for instance, by offering the expertise to those who can make decisions against marginalised communities or minorities etc.). As Low and Merry stress, there is the porosity of borders between academic and activist work, and the dilemmas, but also barriers to engagement are numerous (Low, Merry, 2010: 211–212). Research integrity of the researcher engaged in practice remains the key element of applied research. Types of research engagement that can be urban social movements and activism related, include policy research, evaluation research, cultural intervention research, advocacy or action research, and participatory action research (Trotter, Schensul, 1998: 692–694). Despite existing challenges, dilemmas and barriers, engaged anthropology plays a very important (and growing) role in research of urban movements and grassroots activism in Central and Eastern Europe (and elsewhere). From my personal observations in Slovakia, a number of young scholars use their anthropological knowledge, expertise and methodology in order to help non-governmental organisations and informal activist groups and initiatives to develop their agendas and arguments, especially the ones protecting human rights or fighting neo-liberal policies and nationalistic rhetoric. They connect their scientific anthropological expertise with local practice in order to fight against societal inequalities and local injustice, while trying to keep ethical rules of anthropological research. Despite all dilemmas, the future of social anthropology is (or should be?) closely connected with numerous forms of anthropological engagements.

CONCLUSION

In this paper I attempted to present a range of selected transdisciplinary theoretical approaches to the study of urban (social) movements and activism seen from a social anthropological perspective with a specific focus on the region of Central and Eastern Europe. By challenging earlier studies that emphasised weak civil societies in post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe, the paper brings a brief overview of evidence
about civil society in the region that shows different features from the one in “Western Europe”. It suggests using a more complex range of indicators that evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of civil society. The evidence from empirical research in Central and Eastern Europe demonstrates that there are numerous, often small-scale and informal initiatives and mobilisations taking place in the region, which are often overlooked by other social sciences that focus primarily on formalised collective action.

An overview of anthropological research on urban (social) movements and activism in the paper shows that scholarly anthropological literature on the topic is still rather limited and does not contribute significantly to theoretical and conceptual debates concerning new urban social movements and grassroots activism. Yet, existing anthropological studies (including those from Central and Eastern Europe) offer important empirical knowledge on urban movements and activism and bring different, mostly bottom-up local perspectives on people’s lived experience within civic mobilisations in global contexts. This deep empirical knowledge and experience based on well-developed fieldwork methodologies and engagement is an important basis for any theoretical concept on urban (social) movements and activism and should not be overlooked and underestimated in the broad context of social sciences.

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The aim of this paper is to present engaged anthropology and its methodological tools with a specific perspective of the research field and the position of the researcher with regard to research subjects.

The study focuses on corporate volunteering as one of the forms of collaboration between the non-profit and the private sectors seeking solutions to social problems and community development. Volunteering projects contribute to the interlinking of the knowledge, skills, experience and resources of corporate employees and the representatives of the non-profit or the public sector. It is a part of the philanthropic strategy of companies which are willing to present themselves as entities responsible towards the environment in which they run their business, and towards their employees, partners and customers.

Engaged anthropology can bring, through its methodological tools, a new perspective of corporate volunteering. Community-based participatory research on the process of knowledge creation includes all partners on an equal basis and identifies their unique contribution to problem solution and community development.

**Key words:** engaged anthropology, community-based participatory research, volunteering, corporate volunteering, corporate social responsibility

**INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this paper is to present engaged anthropology and to provide an overview of the possibilities of corporate volunteering research through methodological instruments offered by this branch of anthropology. Corporate volunteering represents one of the possible forms of inter-sectoral collaboration used to form relations and create social networks between the representatives of the private, public and non-governmental non-profit sectors. It is an institutional form of volunteering entailing the involvement of companies and their employees in voluntary activities carried out by non-governmental non-profit organisations. Volunteering activities provide an opportunity for the sharing of different types of experience, knowledge and resources (time, per-
sonnel and finance) with the aim of facilitating community development. Community development means the enhancement of human resources, the raising of awareness about problems in a community, and the ability to solve them by the very citizens.

Through its specific relation to the research subjects and the methodology used, engaged research enables involvement in the process of inter-sectoral collaboration and facilitation of the setting of its model for the purposes of community development. This manner of academic engagement and the specific position of all stakeholders (researching and researched ones), however, brings ethical dilemmas which must be constantly reflected on during research.

This paper does not present a concrete application of this type of research, but seeks to discuss the possibilities of its use through a concrete example of inter-sectoral collaboration. Besides research possibilities, the paper also discusses their possible impacts and ethical dilemmas related to the engagement of the researcher.

In the first part, the paper presents engaged anthropology as a branch of anthropology, the importance of which implies the need of active engagement of the researcher in public affairs with the aim of contributing through his/her research and knowledge creation to an active resolution of social problems. The paper continues with the presentation of community-based participatory research, the essence of which is based on equal involvement of all stakeholders, the interconnection of knowledge and experience, and their application in addressing particular problems.

The next part deals with volunteering. Several authors point out the vague character and unclear definition of this concept, which does not take into consideration the development changes in the forms of voluntary engagement, volunteers’ motivations and barriers or in the development of the non-profit sector and the types of inter-sectoral collaboration. Through an example of one of its forms – corporate volunteering happening through collaboration between the non-profit, private and, in some cases, also public sectors – I discuss the possibilities of engaged research with the aim of defining an effective form of inter-sectoral collaboration meeting the needs of the community. I use data from participant observation conducted in Bratislava during the biggest corporate volunteering event Naše Mesto (Our Town) in Slovakia and from my own experience as coordinator of this event and as a part of the organizing team. Some of the data I obtained by informal interviews with corporate volunteers who participate in this corporate volunteering event. As an additional source I use information from an online survey which was a part of the evaluation process after the previous year of this volunteering occasion.

**ENGAGED ANTHROPOLOGY**

The term engaged anthropology is slowly becoming a part of our vocabulary, though we can find among Slovak ethnologists and anthropologists several examples of research and outputs which are at certain points interlinked with different forms of engaged research (e.g. in the field of human resources comprising old and new minorities, in education or community development).

As noted by S. M. Low and S. E. Merry (2010) in their study on diversity and dilemmas concerning engaged anthropology, the growing engagement of anthropology is accompanied by its ever increasing visibility in public (through the example of the U. S.). According to some authors, *engagement* constitutes an integral part of anthropology pred-
estined to address social problems (Low, Merry 2010: 203, according to Bennet 1996; Rylko-Bauer, Singer, van Willigen, 2006). S. M. Low and S. E. Merry (2010) point out examples from the history of this discipline in the U. S. environment, e.g. the period of colonialism, the addressing of the issue of the native population of North America, the world wars and the research on “national characters”; at present, it tackles human rights, public health, education or different kinds of social movements.

In the Slovak context, we can observe different kinds and degrees of engagement throughout the history of science. In different historic periods, various ethnographic methods were used in an effort to achieve economic development and social progress before the establishment of ethnology as a science. The practical focus of ethnology can be observed in the period of national revival, industrialisation and collectivisation (folk culture documentation, research on workers’ environment, collective management, etc.). After 1989, research with an application nature targeted, for example, the processes of Roma integration, inter-ethnic relations, poverty, social exclusion or regional development. Similar to the U. S. environment, Slovak ethnology was to a certain degree also under the yoke of the state ideology in different historic contexts (Janto, 2013). For example at the beginning of the second half of the last century, there were political authorities who made the key decisions and researchers who had to make compromises. Implementation of the political tasks depended on the ability of researchers to find a balance between political directives and the role of science. At that time two main research focuses were held, research on culture and way of life in the collectivized village and the main goal of the second one was to highlight the role of the working class on the creation of national culture (Beňušková, Jágerová, Nádaská, 2013: 39). S. M. Low and S. E. Merry (2010) appeal for the need to get rid of negative deposits which our science acquired during its development – not only by reviewing its research methods but mainly by changing from a hierarchical approach to the object to cooperation. In engaged research, it is also necessary to act cautiously and in a self-reflective way towards donors or sponsors (public administration, private sector), as well, mainly with a view to the possible misuse of obtained data or a possible slide of the researcher to satisfy the expectations of the sponsor.

With her study on the social responsibility of anthropology, B. R. Johnston (2010) tackles the issues of division of power in the research field. She points out the need for a joint participatory research focusing in a single moment of the research problem and on the possibility of identifying and implementing a remedy to such problem. The relationship between the researcher and the research object is not hierarchical, and the common interest of the researcher and of the representatives of the given community is not to work within the community, but to understand and identify the problem.

In the engaged research process, researchers find themselves in a new position. B. R. Johnston talks about anthropological citizens who document injustice, give advice and defend, take over responsibility for the potential consequences of knowledge that they produce about people, and contribute to the decolonisation of the relationship between researchers and the object of research (Low, Merry 2010: 211; quoted according to Speed, 2006: 67). This is inevitably accompanied by reflections on such a position and by the realisation of the extent of intervention in the everyday reality of the objects of research of which the researcher becomes a part. The position of the objects in a research field is also reflected by the methodology related to engaged research.
COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

In this branch, authors differentiate between various degrees of engagement, from support through public education, social criticism, co-operation, advocacy, up to activism.

An appropriate level of “collaboration” seems to be suitable for research on the process of defining strategies of corporate volunteering which aim to increase its impact on community development either on the basis of preferences, motivations and expectations of employees and employers, or those resulting from and responding to community needs. This is linked to a concrete type of research with its particular methods, called community-based participatory research.

As far as community-based participatory research (or community-oriented research) is concerned, several authors offer different definitions, which is also due to its possible application in various fields of research. According to M. Minkler and N. Wallerstein (2003: 4), it is a collaborative approach which involves all partners in the research process equally and identifies the unique contribution of each of them.

Community is characterised by a sense of identification and emotional links between members, and the sharing of common symbolic systems, values and standards, interests and commitments towards shared needs (Israel, Shulz, Parker, Becker, 1998). A community does not have to be necessarily geographically demarcated; it can be dispersed individuals who share the same interest, topic or problem which they want to tackle.

At the beginning, it is necessary to define the topic of research that is important for the community. A combination of different kinds of knowledge and activities can be used to attain a certain social change aimed at supporting and developing the community. Community development in this context means the enhancement of human resources as a part of local development entailing economic, environmental and political-administrative progress (Janto, 2013: 18).

An important feature of research is mainly collaboration between partners and the contribution of their expertise to a comprehensive understanding of the problems of everyday life and to proposing solutions and the integration of the acquired knowledge for the benefit of the community with the aim of educating and changing (Israel, Shulz, Parker, Becker, 1998).

The position between the researcher and the research object acquires a new quality. As mentioned above, Low and Merry propose the need to get rid of the hierarchical approach toward the research object and to replace it with equality, reciprocity and responsibility. Participatory research breaks the difference between researchers and research objects. The subject and object of produced knowledge are involved in the process of acquiring and creating such knowledge through participation. Research is not only a process of creating knowledge, but also represents a form of education, development of awareness, and mobilisation to some kind of activity (Gaventa, 1988: 18). This position requires constant reflections on the position of individual actors of the research process, clear definition of the relations, discussions and clarification of their functions and roles, and also ideas about future steps or proposed solutions.

RESEARCH ON CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING

The engagement of social scientists outside the academic sphere has been observed in the history of our science for a long time. The development of society is constantly
accompanied by new opportunities, areas and topics which provide space for the application of new methodological approaches. One of the areas where an anthropologist is active outside the academic sphere is the corporate environment. Scientific methods and procedures can be applied, for example, in employee satisfaction surveys, but also in the field of customer-oriented marketing.

In the recent years, the private sector in Slovakia has focused to an increased extent on the social responsibility of companies and on their role as “fair market players” responsible for their conduct with regard to employees, suppliers, customers and their environment. This topic is detailed mainly in the field of economic sciences, management, marketing or human resources. It is mostly viewed from the perspective of the company and the possibilities of its development and prosperity which entail, besides other factors, also satisfied employees\(^1\). The growing degree of employees’ loyalty towards the employer is also stressed, which enables involvement in volunteering projects, improvement of the corporate image as a company responsible towards its environment, and professional and personal development of the participants. These outputs are also mentioned by employees in the evaluation survey of a researched corporate volunteering event. They are proud of their employers who are engaged in these kinds of events and who have corporate volunteering implemented in their strategies.

Volunteering projects include a wide range of activities from simple manual work, such as painting, planting, management of green zones and public spaces through the accompanying of disabled people on outdoor trips or to cultural events up to the use of professional skills and knowledge contributing to strategic solutions to specific social problems, such as legislative proposals addressing the problem of homelessness\(^2\). According to research data, one of the main benefits for volunteers from this participation are the good feeling that they could help, the possibility to spend even a few hours out of the daily work stereotype and meaningfulness of this spent time. They also recognize that due to this engagement their social awareness is growing.

In this context, we also encounter terms, such as good or responsible community partner. During the implementation of volunteering activities, it is often necessary to establish co-operation with non-profit organisations which play the role of recipients of voluntary help. According to O. Samuel, P. Wolf and A. Schilling “corporate volunteering is almost exclusively studied from the point of view of companies, while the perspectives of non-profit organizations are neglected” (Samuel, Wolf, Schilling, 2013: 163).

During the past decades, the non-profit sector became the centre of attention mainly in connection with the development of the civil society with research concentrating on the functioning of organisations, setting of relations with other sectors (private and public) and their function in the changing political and social environments. According to M. Bútora, they represent an institutional response to the deficiencies of the state and the market, fulfil the role of intermediaries between them, provide services and public goods which are usually not ensured by the state or the market, encourage in people leadership, creativity and individual responsibility, shape and present their ideas, develop co-operation between themselves, seek to contribute to conflict prevention and control the functioning of the state and compliance with rules in society (Bútora, Majchrák, Strečanský, 2004: 12–13).

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Non-profit organisations often face problems which prevent their development and, in many cases, the efforts to satisfy the elementary needs complicate the achievement of the objectives of their mission. According to D. Ondrušek et al. (2012), inter-sectoral collaboration represents a key role in their institutional development. Collaboration, however, does not always occur on the basis of equal positions of partners, mainly in the complex relationship between donors and recipients, whether it comes to financial assistance or support in the form of implementation of volunteering projects. Yet, support does not always conform to the local context and ideas about resolving specific problems. As noted by W. Fischer, an unbalanced relationship gives rise to dependency on the donor, as a result of which non-profit organisations may shift away from their target group and would place greater emphasis on meeting the donor’s conditions (Fischer, 1997: 454). The conditions of collaboration should be set so as to constantly reflect the equality of the positions, the acceptance of benefits and the taking over of responsibility for the conduct of individual parties. R. Tandon (1991) focuses in his study on the deconstruction and revaluation of the roles of individual sectors and their mutual relations. He observes certain trends, such as ways non-profit organisations are perceived by donors (representatives of the public or private sectors) as transition service agencies with limited competences. He points out the growing politicisation and bureaucratisation of the relations between the donor and the recipient which often do not act as equal partners. The support to non-governmental organisations also brings a certain level of management and control which can be manifested in the set conditions of granting financial subsidies or at training seminars (selection of teammates, main topics, language of the donor, etc.) (Ishkanian, 2004).

Corporate volunteering contributes to the creation of the identity of the private sector and of its individual actors. The company produces an image of being a responsible partner to the community. The interests and the motivations behind such form of engagement, however, are often questioned. What is in the centre is the company’s reputation, the defence of its own interests and the achievement of success. Corporate social responsibility, as an umbrella strategy of companies, including corporate volunteering as one of possible form of this responsibility has become an integral, albeit controversial, part of business practice (Muthuri, Matten, Moon, 2009, quoted according to The Economist 2005: 18).

CONCEPT OF CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING

Different authors have different opinions on what can be considered volunteering and what is beyond its limits. Many of them point out that there is no single definition and even that the existing definitions are vague, as they do not cover the complexity and variability of this phenomenon.

As noted by K. McAllum (2014) in her work on the meanings of volunteering, its conceptual limits are very vague despite a multi-disciplinary focus which views volunteering from various perspectives (McAllum, 2014: 84–85).

Many of these definitions suggest three recurrent features which characterise volunteering: people’s engagement of their own will (voluntarily, not obligatorily), without claiming a reward (unpaid) and for the benefit of others (outside own family or household). Each of these features, however, can be interpreted in different ways or can be completely negated, as the collision of the different features is often not taken into con-
sideration. On the other hand, some definitions are based on what is not volunteering, placing it in opposition to full-time paid work, household work, spare-time activities and also spontaneous help (e.g. in the case of natural disasters). According to L. A. Penn, “volunteerism involves long-term, planned, prosocial behaviours that benefit strangers, and usually occur in an organizational setting” (Penn, 2002: 447).

The definition of volunteering excludes help to family and household members, others also add closest friends and even help provided to an organisation of which the provider of voluntary help is a member. They appeal on the high degree of obligation and commitment which is contrary to voluntariness and one’s own will (Frič, Pospíšilová, a kol. 2010).

K. McAllum notes that one of the causes of such inaccuracies is the fact that the definition of volunteering should include a more and more diverse group of individuals engaged in a wide range of activities within formal and informal structures. The non-profit sector thus becomes more complex, as well (McAllum, 2014: 85, quoted according to Van Til, 2009), with the growing number of partnerships with the private and the public sectors (McAllum, 2014: 85, quoted according to Eisenberg, Eschenfelder, 2009) and with new forms of community participation supported by social media, new technologies and a mobile life style (McAllum, 2014: 85, quoted according to Bimber, Flanagan, Stohl, 2012).

The common volunteering patterns are changing, the definitions stop being valid, and the basic characteristics are replaced with new ones. Some authors point out the turn of the millennium as the period of many changes, not excluding volunteering, when in addition to the traditional model a “modern”, institutional model arises through organisations offering volunteering opportunities in which people can engage, or organisations acting as platforms for the offers of different non-profit organisations and associations seeking voluntary help (Frič, Pospíšilová, et al. 2010).

Employees’ participation in voluntary activities mediated by their employers is an example of questioning the characteristics mentioned above. As A. M. Grant points out, organizational scholars explain corporate volunteering as a form of corporate social responsibility, “these programmes are thought to be strategic responses to community, institutional, and normative pressures for an organization to create and maintain a reputation as a good corporate citizen” (Grant, 2012: 590, quoted according to Marquis et al., 2007).

In their corporate philanthropy strategies, companies define the basic principles of why they are engaged and what their priorities are. The form and size of support provided to community projects are defined in their budget through the number of volunteering hours or the number of employees engaged throughout the year. The type and the topic of volunteering activities is often chosen according to their strategic priorities (beautification of public spaces, environment protection, preservation of historic monuments, socially excluded communities, disabled people, education, etc.). Specific topics receiving support relate in many cases to the field of the corporate donor’s business activities.

The engagement initiative does not always come from employees. In some cases, companies do not provide employees with the opportunity to freely choose the area in which they want to be voluntarily involved, the time of involvement, and whether they want to be involved at all. As one of the participants at the corporate volunteering event said: The activity which is chose by the company I work for does not correspond with my preferences. Or another one pointed out: Our company chose activities and it was good
choice, but there was no place for me, because of the limited number of available places. There are also companies which choose different kind of activities to be sure that everybody will find something suitable (external and internal activity, in natural environment and also connected with some social interaction, in bigger and smaller groups of volunteers). Engaged companies have their own individual volunteering programmes and established contacts with non-profit organisations, or their employees participate in major corporate volunteering events. And even in the case such initiative is supported by the company, managers can prevent their employees, at their discretion, from participating in it according to their employees’ duties.

Another characteristic feature which can also be put in doubt is the rewarding of volunteers. A common question is whether working for consideration, for example, in the form of food or reimbursement of expenses (travel, accommodation, etc.) can be considered volunteering. Organisations in which volunteers help often offer some souvenirs; for example, if the organisation includes a protected workshop, volunteers’ work can be remunerated by clients’ products.

Employees are involved in voluntary activities during their work time for which they get regular pay. The employer allocates a certain number of hours during a year (a day, for example), during which employees can focus on voluntary activity (perceived as a form of employee benefit). In some companies, this works on a half-half basis, which means that employees use, for example, two or three hours of their work time for voluntary activities and the rest is invested from their spare time. In addition, the employer may provide them with further benefits, from refreshments, transfer (in case it is necessary to travel to the venue of the activity), or a reward (if it serves to encourage employees to get involved, such as a competition for the most active volunteer). Each company is specific in this regard. The models of their volunteering programmes are set individually, according to the area of their business, the number of employees, their time capacities and the work load.

The definition of volunteering does not reflect the specific features of corporate volunteering. As mentioned above, studies dealing with corporate volunteering are mainly on management, human resources or marketing. They focus on the benefits of this form of volunteering for the employer and the employee, such as development of employees’ skills (in particular soft skills, such as communication, conflict resolution, team management, co-operation), as well as enhancing pride about the company and loyalty towards the employer engaged in community development. Emphasis is placed on having a good feeling from helping where needed, the meaningfulness of the time invested, knowing new people and consolidation of the work team.

The definition of corporate volunteering must take into consideration the individual approach of the representatives of the private sector. Hence, it is defined through its tools and objectives, such as time, knowledge and professional skills dedicated to community support. The flow of resources is bidirectional. It is not only companies and their employees who dispose of resources. Different kinds of experience, knowledge and resources (time, human resources, and finance) are interlinked and exchanged between corporate employees and non-profit organisations.
In my work, I have used the information obtained from informal interviews with the representatives of the non-profit and also corporate environments who attended the corporate volunteering event *Naše Mesto* (Our City) and also from participatory observation of this two-day event held in the middle of June. This 9th year of *Naše Mesto* took place in 28 different towns around Slovakia, including Bratislava, where my research was conducted. It is the biggest corporate volunteering event in Slovakia, where 80 companies and more than 200 non-profit organizations participate.

During these two days I participated in this event, I monitored some of the nine activities that took place in Bratislava. These activities were organized by different non-profit organizations or municipalities around Bratislava and corporate volunteers from different corporations participated. At each activity I interviewed the organizer of the activity and some of the volunteers who were available, that means they were not working at that moment and wanted to talk to me about their experience. Sometimes people who I asked for some information recommended me to ask another volunteer who was a coordinator of their company group. In two cases I was talking to groups of volunteers after their activity and shooting group photos. As an additional source I use some of analysed data from evaluation of this event from the previous year which was conducted through online questionnaires with corporate volunteers and also representatives of non-profit organizations immediately after the event.

According to the organizers, the main idea of *Naše Mesto* is not only to connect corporate and non-profit sector and to build relationships but mainly try to find solutions of different kind of social problems through these interconnections. The Pontis Foundation was the first organization which systematically started to develop programmes of corporate volunteering, building partnerships with corporations and non-profit organizations. The first opportunity occurred after the calamity in the High Tatras in 2007, after which some corporations offered not only financial support for restoration of natural environment but their employees also participated through several volunteer activities organized by Pontis Foundation which is the umbrella organization and intermediary in communication and connection between non-profit organizations and companies (to a lesser extent also municipalities) which want to develop the idea of corporate volunteering as a possible tool for solving particular social problems.

I was a member of the organization team for three years, responsible for communication with municipalities, non-profit organizations and companies - especially from towns in Western Slovakia. For two previous years I monitored volunteer activities in towns from this region. This year I stayed in Bratislava because of my research interests. As a member of the organizational team I was in touch with many of participants and representatives of non-profit and corporate organizations and from municipalities. I was fully involved in the process of preparation, organization, development, communication and evaluation.

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3 *Naše Mesto* is organized by Pontis Foundation which is the umbrella organization and intermediary in communication and connection between non-profit organizations and companies (to a lesser extent also municipalities) which want to develop the idea of corporate volunteering as a possible tool for solving particular social problems.


5 An online questionnaire was distributed by organizational team to the addresses of volunteer coordinators from each company who sent it to their corporate volunteers. The questionnaire contained questions connected with the motivation of volunteers to participate in, barriers, expectations and experience with the volunteer activity and cooperation with particular non-profit organization. Final number of volunteers who participated in *Naše Mesto* was 8 532. Last year this number was more than 6000 volunteers. During the evaluation the organizational team of *Naše Mesto* obtained 573 filled questionnaires.
events. These companies wanted to continue developing their corporate volunteering engagement which led to the first year of Naše Mesto in Bratislava in 2009. Year after year more corporations, non-profit organizations and municipalities are involved. It is connected with increasing expectations from companies not only to be profit-oriented but also community oriented, take responsibility for their actions, and behave according to social and ecological standards (Samuel, Wolf, Schilling, 2013: 164, according to Carroll, 1991; Habisch, Schmidpeter, 2003; Windsor 2001).

The process of preparation starts with collecting of projects from non-profit organizations which contain the detailed description of volunteer activity (meeting place and time, duration, number of volunteers needed, type of activity, description of activity, what is necessary to bring, to wear, type of refreshments, what to do in a case of bad weather, and photo of the place). These projects are financially supported by small grants to cover basic expenses. The main conditions of supporting projects are their necessity, public benefit and clearly described plan and goals.

According to evaluation research, for many corporate volunteers, participation in these activities represents their first experience with volunteering. One of the main expectations is that volunteer activity is really needed, that they, as volunteers, are an essential part of the solution to the problem, and their help is necessary. If these expectations are not fulfilled, and the first experience is negative, the corporate employee may not participate in any other activities. As one of the organizers of volunteer activity from non-profit organization working with socially excluded persons pointed out: "we have learned from our previous experience that it is important to say not only what the volunteers will do during the activity, that they will paint or plant... We have to explain the idea of our work and the situation, why we need these volunteers and how will it help our clients".

While non-profit organizations are working on their projects, companies are actively reaching out to participate. Companies are from different areas of business activity (lawyers, consultants, financials, factories, trading companies, communications...), different size and amount of employees, national and international. They have to pay for this volunteer engagement for each employee involved. This financial support is distributed between non-profit organizations to cover their basic expenses and to organizers to finance the printing of T-shirts which are the symbol of this event. These T-shirts are for every volunteer who participate, from companies, from non-profit organizations and also for some active citizens who want to be part of this event. According to the organizers, it supports the common identity and the sense of common purpose of this event. It is forbidden to have specific companies branding t-shirts.

A few weeks before the event employees from registered companies can register for particular activities proposed by non-profit organisations which they can choose on the website of this event (www.nasemesto.sk). They can select by place (towns, villages), whether it is external or internal activity, area of support (social area, public

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6 It is really individual what kind of expenses is covered by grant. Every project is different. It depends on the kind of activity. Non-profit organizations can buy paints, paint brushes, garden tools in the case of manual activity. If the main activity is a walk with seniors, disabled people, non-profit organization can ask for money to buy coffee, cakes, bus tickets or tickets to museums, in the case of some skill-based activity such as workshops at schools or organizations they can buy some office supplies.

7 This statement is supported also by research and many studies focusing on motivation and sustainability of volunteering. E.g. Grant, A. M. (2012), McAllum, K. (2014), see also another researches: http://fi.fudwaca.com/mi/files/2015/07/2015-MillennialImpactReport.pdf;
spaces, nature environment, workshops and education), the time and duration of activity and organizer.

During these activities, actual assistance is provided to concrete organisations, either in the form of manual work or through the transfer of knowledge and skills in particular areas promoting the development and improvement of personal, social and professional skills of participants. As J. N. Muthuri, D. Matten and J. Moon point out, non-profit organizations are motivated by their resource dependence which can be addressed with relationships with corporations. For companies, the main motivation “in the terms of corporate social responsibility agenda (we are involved as a way to put something back to into the community) and business development and performance objects (licence to operate, reputation and image building, staff development)” (Muthuri, Matten, Moon, 2009: 81).

According to organizers and what respondents confirm during the informal interviews, the aim of such events is not only to personally cover the activities which the given organisations are unable to cover with their own capacities, but also to support the establishing of volunteers’ links to the location, the taking over of corporate responsibility for the environment in which the companies run their activities, or to support citizen engagement in what happens in their surroundings.

These events represent an opportunity for establishing contacts and developing cooperation between representatives of self-governments, private businesses and non-profit organisations. As one representative of a non-profit organization working with children mentioned: “It is hard to find a story behind painting a fence or bench. But I think there has to be something more because we join this event another year again. It is not just because of the financial support. We need to find also other financial sources to prepare this volunteer activity. But we managed to do a lot with support from volunteers. And besides more beautiful seating and space for children we strengthened the mutual relations and trust.”

ENGAGED RESEARCH ON CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING

The aim of engaged research is, in collaboration with partners from the private and non-profit sectors and often with the participation of public authorities (e.g. permission for activities in public spaces, legislative obstacles), to set up a model of the corporate volunteering strategy for effective use of employee capacities for the benefit of community development, while reflecting its actual needs.

Long-term qualitative research based on participation and collaboration between different stakeholders and the engaged researcher may bring a new perspective of the involvement of companies and their employees in volunteering activities in other areas, as well.

D. Ondrušek et al. distinguish between the perception of collaboration as a relationship and as a process. Collaboration as a relationship requires the sharing of common values, the perception of responsibility as an identical problem, where such a relationship is equally beneficial for all stakeholders and leads to common achievement of the objectives. On the other hand, when we talk about collaboration as a process,

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8 The duration of activities is normally 3-4 hours, in the morning and in the afternoon on Friday, and 3 hours in the morning on Saturday.
common interests and objectives are shaped during discussions in which each stakeholder proposes its own alternative to problem resolution. All collaborating parties learn from each other, create relationships and build mutual respect (Ondrušek et al., 2012: 17-20).

My reflections on inter-sectoral collaboration are also based on my experience as coordinator of corporate volunteering projects (including Naše Mesto) in an organisation which creates links between the non-profit and corporate sectors with the aim of supporting responsible entrepreneurship and companies’ responsible approach, among others, to the community in which they are active.

On a daily basis non-profit organisations face a certain lack of capacities, financial, time-related, personal and organisational problems, the need for legal assistance or increased visibility, and many other minor or major problems. The creation of links between them aimed not only to engage employees, but also to build capacities of non-profit organisations, thus increasing the impacts and the effect of their activities.

The corporate and the non-profit sectors are often considered two different worlds, cultures and differences in the manner of communication, perception of time and responsibility. This relationship of theirs cannot be generalised, but one of the main factors characterising their position is the relationship between donors and recipients, whether it comes to financial support or support in the form of employees’ volunteering.

For a researcher it is important to reflect not only upon his/her position, but to also perceive the relations of their research partners. The company provides its resources – finance, time and personnel, but also its knowledge and skills. The non-profit organisation is the beneficiary which, however, also offers its resources, just like the company does.

According to A. Pollard, non-profit organisations have close and intimate relationships with the local community in which they are active. They build their professional reputation on the basis of knowing the local context, interests and needs of the community (Pollard, 2004: 1). Hence, they represent an important local community partner which knows the environment and mediates relevant projects in which companies and their employees can be involved and invest their resources.

Research can focus, for example, on establishing a relationship to a public space, location or town through volunteering activities. A corporate volunteer is not only in the position of an employee, but is also a community member. Corporate volunteers identified as one of their clearest preferences in the choice of activity the location in which the activity is carried out – the place of residence or workplace. Their common motivation is the possibility to contribute to a change which is visible and can become a part of the space in which the volunteer is present on a daily basis.

Moreover, engagement in this type of activities contributes to the taking over of responsibility for the surroundings, educates and increases the sensitivity of employees towards social problems concerning people with social or health handicaps, public spaces, the environment, animal protection or cultural heritage.

Corporate volunteering contributes not only to the enhancement and mobilisation of local human resources and capacity building of the non-profit sector, but also develops the responsibility of private sector representatives towards their environment, increasing the sensitivity of employees to social problems and, hence, to greater openness and empathy. However, many issues and ethical dilemmas arise not only in the reality subject to research and in the relations established between the stakeholders.
Ethical issues influence the position and the conduct of a researcher acting as engaged anthropologist actively involved in the process of interconnecting the private and the non-profit sectors with the aim of addressing community problems.

One such source of ethical dilemmas is research conducted in a corporate environment. On one hand, it is necessary to keep a high degree of anonymity. Employees may feel distrust against a type of research in which they are expected to present their experience in implementing their employer’s volunteering programme. Fears from possible leak and misuse of data can influence their statements or discourage them from joining the research. Entry into the corporate environment, the establishing of trust and access to necessary information are influenced by multi-level decision-making processes.

The way of functioning of a non-profit organisation includes increased flexibility, the willingness to provide information to make its activities more effective, simpler personnel structure and a less hierarchical environment. The researcher may face from both sides certain expectations and ideas about the research setting, objectives and concrete proposals for problem resolution. Throughout the research, the mutual positions, responsibilities and expectations need to be clarified.

The hierarchical position resulting from the donor vs. beneficiary relationship is also a source of ethical dilemmas. The researcher must reflect not only on its position, but also on the mutual relations between his/her partners and the representatives of the non-profit and private sectors. As part of his/her self-reflection, the researcher has also to cope with potential emotional engagement, especially in the case of sensitive topics.

The participatory engaged type of research represents a certain form of intervention into the environment with an aim of achieving change (for example, in the form of defining the manner of collaboration, resolution of particular problems, or support to community development). This requires continuous communication with the representatives of the community, individual sectors and partners.

Another one could be the interests of the different parties – the company and the non-profit organisation which may, as an entity which knows the environment or is specialised in the particular topic or issue, claim its right to decide on the suitability or unsuitability of specific procedures and interventions. In such form of engagement, the representatives of the corporate environment can see an effective tool for self-presentation as a responsible company, while seeking their own interests and the fulfilment of the strategic objectives which would overshadow the actual needs of the community. For example if there is a company’s request to participate in volunteer activity with a group of more corporate volunteers than is required from an organizer, the non-profit organization tries to regulate a prepared activity and add some other activities which are not so necessary at that time. There can be a problem with excess volunteers who have nothing to do during the activity or the organizer does not have sufficient number of tools.

A lack of commitment is highlighted by some authors. Strong commitments are necessary for strategic cooperation and partnership (Samuel, Wolf, Schilling, 2013: 165). In some cases some amount of volunteers is registered but only a few of them or nobody comes on the volunteer activity. Organizers spent money and time to prepare everything necessary and they counted on this aid. There is no compensation.

The question for the researcher is how he or she could step into the discussion bet-
ween partners to avoid any conflict situation and position themselves within the relationship and different expectations of each partner.

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this paper was to provide an overview of collaboration between the private and the non-profit sectors through corporate volunteering. It is an institutional form of volunteering which, however, is beyond the definition of volunteering due to its characteristics and specific features. With its course, form and type of participants and involved actors it undermines the basic features of volunteering. The approach by the representatives of the private and the non-profit sectors is individual, which would hardly be covered by a single definition. Corporate volunteering can therefore be defined through the objectives and tools used for this purpose, such as employees’ time, knowledge and professional skills dedicated to community development. In the background of this process, non-profit organisations are granted assistance and are helped with the building of their professional capacities, which can increase the effects of their activities and help achieve their objectives. The representatives of the non-profit and the private sectors should act in this as equal partners jointly involved in the addressing of social problems. On one hand, there is a non-profit organisation acting as an expert in the particular topic or environment, on the other hand there is a company which provides the missing resources and which can obtain benefits through professional and personal development of its employees, building of the identity of a responsible partner and the promotion of the loyalty of its employees.

The position of the researcher in community-based participatory research acquires a new quality. Such a researcher becomes an equal partner to the research subjects who act as project partners sharing knowledge about the research topic and proposals for solutions. The research subjects thus become the co-creators of knowledge about themselves. What are essential are constant reflections of the researcher on his/her position in the research field and towards the research objects and their mutual relation. It is essential to clarify the power relations, ideas, expectations of the different partners and their responsibilities.

Engaged anthropological research which includes the representatives of all stakeholders in the process of creating knowledge can represent a tool for setting up an effective form of co-operation between the private and the non-profit sectors.

The paper is an outcome of the project VEGA 2/0024/14 Občianske aktivity ako determinant udržateľného rozvoja mesta (etnologický pohľad) [Citizen activities as determinants of sustainable urban development (ethnological perspective)].
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**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Natália Blahová (*1986) is currently a PhD student of the Institute of Ethnology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. In the framework of the VEGA project Civic activities as a determining factor of the sustainable development of cities (an ethnological perspective), she deals with issues of corporate volunteering and inter-sectoral collaboration. In her dissertation work, she focuses on institutions and their representations of compatriotism through the example of compatriot organisations of foreign Slovaks living in Romania.
Social changes after the fall of the Communist regime in 1989 and the emergence of foreign companies, investors and development groups led to the rapid building development of the city, which offers an opportunity for an urban-ethnological analysis of the transformation of urban spaces. The author of this paper studied a case related to the transformation of a space considered by the city inhabitants as historically important. He discusses the issues of civic activism in the context of preservation of the historical identity of the city. He seeks answers to the following questions – What kind of processes are in conflict at the macro-level? What is the role of cultural aspects in these processes? What kind of collective identity do active members of a civic group share and demonstrate? The author seeks to grasp the issues of active citizenship through motivations and reasons, particular areas of interest, actual results, and effectiveness of civil activism. He concludes that interventions to preserve the historical identity of urban spaces have mobilised a part of the public and have become one of the incentives of growing civil engagement in the post-socialist period.

Key words: city, space, memory place, civic activities, new social movements

Common issues of people’s interest in urban spaces include the quality of residential areas, the preservation and revival of historic, cultural and architectonic values, increased attractiveness and functionality of public spaces, and the protection of public areas (parks, squares, children’s playgrounds, etc.). Such citizen activities require communication with the local authorities, and are often confronted with investors’ and developers’ interests, as well as decisions of competent authorities. This study aims to summarise individual and group activities related to the protection and renewal of the historic values of the city. Through an example of a particular urban space, this paper reveals the social reflections of the processes which have accompanied the development of the city during the post-socialist period.

The topic of this paper is based on the processes induced by social changes after the fall of the Communist regime after 1989. Bratislava, just like other Slovak cities and towns, went through a complex post-socialist transformation in all areas of the
organisation of the society – political and economic system, legislation, property-related issues, self-governing institutions, civil society, etc. This transformation process also entailed extensive privatisation of state properties. Many industrial, production and business facilities, buildings, flats and lands within the city were privatised. Older buildings built before the beginning of the socialist development of the city (1948) returned to their original owners or their heirs through restitutions. Buildings with major or minor historical value were thus transferred into private ownership. The general lack of funds led people who were restituted to sell their assets or to seek investors or new functions for their buildings. Strong domestic investment groups also joined these processes, yet the majority of privatised companies and their assets were sold to foreign businesses. Bratislava became a part of the global market.

The emergence of foreign businesses, investors and development groups was accompanied by fast building development of the city, offering an opportunity for an urban ethnological analysis of the transformation of urban spaces. In this study, I focus on a particular case related to the transformation of space considered by the city inhabitants to be historically important. The activities of investors and developers raised citizens’ reactions. One group considered them a contribution to the modernisation of the city, the other one was formed by citizens protesting in public. The civil activities of the latter group can be viewed as a form of a social movement with a common objective – to preserve and revive the historical identity of the city.
In general, social movements are defined as groups of people involved in different types of collective activity with the aim of accomplishing their objectives. Through these objectives, they can influence local policies or the identities and opinions of their supporters, or both (Jacobsson, Saxonberg, 2013: 1). Following this definition, activities aimed at preserving the historical values of cities represent new social movements. J. Habermas designated them defensive and described them as alternative forms of cooperation and community life by means of which they “fight against the aggression of money and power of the economic, political and administrative subsystem” (HaAbermas, 1981, quoted by Znebejánek, 1997: 57). The aim of new movements is to manifest an attitude towards commonly perceived problems concerning the quality of life and to emphasise the importance of culture. The ideological framework is direct democracy where citizens demand major participation in matters concerning their life. The organisational structures of such movements are not complicated, and are based on weak formal relations (network, non-hierarchised supporters) and stay outside the institutionalised policy framework (Znebejánek, 1997: 38–39).

A. Pichardo (1997: 411, 425) states that the theory of new social movements puts emphasis on macro- and micro-historical elements. At the macro-level, he focuses on the relation between the expansion of current social movements and major economic structures and on the role of culture in such movements. At the micro-level, he analyses the links between identity and personal conduct within a social movement.
sees the main benefits of new social movements in emphasising the identity, culture and role of the civic sphere.

These formulations form the basis for issues that I seek to analyse with regard to civic activism and historical identity of cities: what processes are conflicting at the macro-level, what role is played by the aspect of culture, and what common identity is manifested by engaged members of a civic group. The issue of active citizenship can be grasped through motivations and reasons, actual areas of interest, and actual results and effectiveness of civic engagement (Višňovský, 2010: 56).

THE PLACE OF MEMORY AND LOCAL IDENTITY

The willingness to preserve the historic form of urban spaces can be derived from the local attachment of one’s identity. It is formed since early childhood by gradual identification with the spaces of the house, backyard, street, neighbourhood, etc. in which people grow up and establish social links. Each neighbourhood speaks its own language of symbols which entail the composition and toponymy of space, important buildings (sacral, public, residential or factory buildings), their architectonic style and aesthetic look, memorials, cemeteries, parks or playgrounds... The character of space is shaped by its inhabitants, perceiving its social and cultural characteristics, habits, life-style, street life, verbal and non-verbal communication, noises and the rush of the city. What we perceive is the local identity of space. As highlighted by Margaret C. Rodman, place is a unique reality for each inhabitant the importance of which is shared with other people (Rodman, 2003: 208). D. Lawrence defines place as a space which acquires meaningfulness through human acts or adoption, and represents a certain cultural concept which is essential for describing the existential relationship of people with their environment. How and why individuals and groups bring emotionality and emotional meanings into space and how a certain place evokes feelings is manifested in the awareness of identity (Lawrence, 2008: 360–361).

In the case of the transformation of urban space, every new element is confronted with the identity of the given space and with the identity of the inhabitants living in it. Modernisation activities raise traditionalist reactions, which are considered a clash of the on-going globalisation of the city and of local identity. It is represented by local symbolism, but also by the local identity of inhabitants and historically created identity of the space, usually called genius loci. In urban ethnology, it is viewed as a place of memory in which history meets memory, and the past meets the present (Nora, 1984/1996: 64). Places of memory are unquestionable objects of history, but also common places – preserved, changed or completely removed objects present in the recollections of inhabitants.

OBNOVME PODHRADIE CIVIC INITIATIVE

One of the examples of history oriented civic activism in Bratislava is the initiative Obnovme Podhradie (Let Us Restore Podhradie). Podhradie is an area under the Bratislava castle built on a hill, the city landmark. Historically this area comprised of independent settlements of Zuckermandel, Vydrica and Schlossgrunt (former Jewish ghetto). In 1850, these settlements became part of the city and were integrated into
the Theresienstadt neighbourhood, which later got the Slovak name Podhradie. In 1948, the Danube riverbank started to be rebuilt into a four-lane road, which resulted in the demolition of many buildings. At the turn of the 1960s and 1970s, during the building of a new bridge over the Danube River, most remaining buildings in Podhradie were also demolished.\(^1\) Several buildings with the highest historical value in the western part were preserved, but the rest of the area remained undeveloped. Yet, the picturesque character of the former Rybné námestie (Fish Square) with a neologic synagogue, small streets and recesses of the former neighbourhood left their traits in the memory of the city’s inhabitants. These memories are still intensive, nurtured not only by local press, but also by various civic activities. The pictures of the old Podhradie on postcards, photos, drawings or paintings provide a good background for interiors of bars and restaurants or in advertising and tourist brochures. They are widely shared on the internet and maintain the picture of the former city neighbourhood.

Official plans to restore the historic buildings emerged right after the change of the regime in 1989. The author of the urban study of Bratislava–Podhradie Alexander Németh stated: “After the Velvet Revolution, the restoration of Podhradie became a programme for the local self-government. The public which cared about how Bratislava looked like... also welcomed the nascent programme of restoration of Podhradie.”\(^2\)

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\(^1\) In 1967, 112 houses, the synagogue, a conservatory, public library, brewery and other buildings were identified for demolition (Bútora, 2011: 192).

\(^2\) Source: http://www.old.bapodhradie.sk/.
The interest of environment, culture and history oriented civic activists arose after calling an architects’ competition for the development of this area, the results of which were presented by the city management in 2002. The winning design comprised modernist buildings without any links to the historic structure of the space. As a response, the civic initiative Obnovme Podhradie was founded with the aim of convincing local authorities, with public support, to give the “Lost Town” back to citizens through the reconstruction of Baroque palaces, historic landmarks and original streets and through the restoration of the overall look of Podhradie. They launched a civic campaign, having organised public discussions with the representatives of the self-government and inhabitants; together with the Bratislava Community Foundation, they created a financial fund and ran a massive media campaign using their own website, billboards, newspaper articles, posters, interviews and exhibitions, and organised a petition and a discussion forum for citizens. In their call they highlighted the essence of the problem: “They intend to build a mega-complex within an area with high historical value, similar to the monolithic buildings of the socialist period”; “how come that our experts do not have a sense of genius loci”? “they systematically destroy the atmosphere of the old Bratislava which now only lives through old photos” (Vagač, 2013). The new building plans became a public cause and led to the cancellation of the result of the public competition.

In the meantime, the city management unexpectedly sold a part of the lands in Podhradie to a private investor. The civic initiative Obnovme Podhradie asked to consult the sale contract, but the city management refused to disclose it. The suspicions
about the city management and the mayor acting in a non-transparent way for the benefit of the investor grew. In addition to the campaign, the activists also focused on controlling the activities of the local authorities. They raised their comments on the new zoning plan and filed a petition signed by 2,500 inhabitants (Huba, 2003). The building plans in Podhradie were also discussed by the Municipal Committee of the Slovak Association of Nature and Landscape Protection, the Sustainable Development Society and by other civic associations, but the city management did not invite them to cooperate more closely.

The results of the second public competition for the Vydrica zone were published in 2007. In this competition, foreign architectural teams (Italy, Poland) were more successful than the domestic ones. None of the winning projects considered the historical context, and all of them contained a modern design. The results of electronic voting of citizens contrasted with the architects’ visions. According to Mikuláš Huba, member of the civic association Obnovme Podhradie, around 93 percent of respondents who joined their survey (Huba, 2003; Vagač, 2006) favoured construction in a historical style: “This is a proof of how they go blindly against the majority will of the citizens. I consider it terrorism by developers.”

The massive public discussion showed how collective memory influences the attitudes of the persons involved in the debates. The negative opinions of experts (architects, urban planners and others) and the public published by the media suggested

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that the majority of the citizens were against the plans of the investor and of the self-government:

“In my opinion, modern-style construction would desecrate the overall atmosphere around the castle.”

“The castle and the area under the castle in Bratislava is a place, the core of the city, where Bratislava always was. This was the genius loci of the city. We have more than enough of sterile modern glass facades with window washers embarrassingly waddling on ropes. This needs to be preserved or restored.”

Most people who joined the debate argued for historical-style buildings, providing examples of European cities where it was possible to sensitively reconstruct buildings, squares or entire neighbourhoods destroyed by wars. But then the chief architect of Bratislava Štefan Šlachta declared in public that the future look of Vydrica in Podhradie could not be historical anymore because it was not possible return to the past. The citizens active in the debate took the view that the investor and the city council acted against the interests of most inhabitants and that architects did not consider local history important because they were not born in Bratislava, for which the chief architect was blamed to the largest extent. In discussions, the identity of the inhabitants of Bratislava became part of the argumentation.

In 2010, the investor group presented another project in which, according to its statements for the mass media, the historic space was respected by partly preserving the street structure and by the building material used (stone). The reaction of the civic initiative was represented by the appeal: “We can’t tolerate it!” The next construction project was presented to the public in 2012. The city council with a new leadership organised a public discussion on the project, in which civic activists argued again for a replica of the former Vydrica, with no success. Most participants, however, agreed at least about the fact that the new construction should resemble the former neighbourhood. The project was also published in the mass media and raised a broad public discussion, the content of which can shortly be described with the following statements:

“We haven’t come to any conclusion throughout all these years. It’s the same story all the time.”

“Again, it’s just about cubes and blocks. Bleak, boring and without life....”

“I think buildings should be primarily constructed for people living in the city, and just then for the jury of some kind of architects’ competition.”

“It’s embarrassing how stubbornly the ‘competent ones’ reject the idea of replicas of the original buildings that used to stay there... Yet, I don’t demand the building of replicas of all houses...”

“I’m glad that most Bratislava inhabitants are against modern-style buildings. And we must do everything possible to prevent having just cubes there. Just let them remember forever that cubes do not belong to the centre and to conservation areas. And absolutely not under the castle. There are other neighbourhoods where they can build them.”

People’s reactions that I have collected from 2002 until the present show that the look of the former Vydrica is deeply rooted in the historical awareness of Bratislava citizens. The efforts to restore the original buildings met mostly with sympathies of the

5 Source: http://bratislava.sme.sk./c/.
6 Source: http://bratislava.sme.sk/diskusie/.
citizens who joined the public discourse. They expressed their positive attitudes also towards the activities of the civic activists:

“I’m happy about the activities of the civic initiative Obnovme Podhradie for two reasons: firstly, this activity can help improve the aesthetic and functional look of Bratislava; and secondly, because it is one more informal platform which points out the lack of transparency in decision-making on public affairs – not only in our city.”

The activists of the initiative Obnovme Podhradie managed to highlight the conflict between the commercial interests of developers, allied architects and city officials on one hand and the citizens’ cultural interest in preserving the historic values of the city on the other hand. They mobilised part of the public by engaging them in several protest activities, promoted their common interest in preserving the historical identity of Podhradie, and demanded that the citizens’ opinion is respected. The public opinion forced the developer to modify the project which, however, has not been implemented to date.

**ACTORS’ COLLECTIVE IDENTITY**

The text above suggests that the cultural value of the urban space played a unifying role in this movement. It forms the core of the actors’ collective identity and became a part of their consciousness, and was also perceived by the surrounding social environment (Diani, 1992: 9, quoted by Znebejánek, 1997: 28). Such view draws attention not to the entire virtual group of supporters of the idea of restoring the historical values of the space, but to the small group of civic activists. Their motivations, reasons and objectives brought together an informal community which demonstrated its feelings of belonging.

The group of culture, history and environment oriented activists in Bratislava dealt also with other cases which they considered detrimental to cultural values or environment of the city. According to Matej Vagač, an activist from Obnovme Podhradie, had dealt with so many Bratislava cases that he considered activism as his life stance. In the municipal elections of 2006, fourteen civic activists decided to run for the city council and councils of city districts under a common name Bratislava Otvorene initiative (Bratislava Openly). They explained the decision to enter municipal politics with words describing their motivations and objectives, as well as decision making at the municipal level: municipal deputies did not represent citizens’ interests and needs, but those of parties and groups; gave in to financial pressures of investors; self-governments were non-transparent, did not accept petitions and citizens’ expert opinions. They presented to the public a picture of the powers of the city self-governing bodies and emphasised the need for civic participation. In the next municipal elections (2010), eleven activists from Bratislava Otvorene initiative ran for offices. In their civic view, the municipal politics did not change at all: party deputies do not meet and do not communicate with citizens; they do not explain their often anti-civic attitudes when voting at municipal council meetings; they give in to investors’ pressures; and ignore the public opinion. In their programme, they also mentioned the need to preserve monuments and public spaces of the city in the interest of the city inhabitants. Eight allied activists ran in the last municipal elections (2014) “with a common vision of open and transparent politics on the basis of clear and observed rules, implemen-

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7 Source: http://www.old.bapodhradie.sk/.
8 Source: http://www.bao.sk/.
ted not only for the benefit of citizens, but also with their active involvement”. This vision is an expression of their collective identity.

**SUMMARY**

The building of a new neighbourhood within the area under the Bratislava Castle manifested a conflict between the interests of business and allied political circles and the civic community which was enthusiastic about the idea of restoration and preservation of the historical values of the city. Many other similar cases (e.g. demolition of former industrial buildings because of planned building projects) raised a preservationist reaction of civic activists. In a confrontation with the new owners of the buildings and lands, they highlighted the unlimited power of development groups, the failure or inactivity of competent institutions, the lack of transparency in the work of municipal authorities, the subordination of political parties to financial groups, and the unwillingness of the city management to respect the public opinion. These opinions became a part of criticism of the uncoordinated architectural development of the city the rapid growth of which was due to the social changes after the fall of the Communist regime in 1989. The interventions for preserving the historical identity of urban spaces mobilised a part of the public and became one of the incentives for growing civic engagement in the post-socialist period.

The paper is an outcome of the project VEGA 2/0024/14 Občianske aktivity ako determinant udržateľného rozvoja mesta (etnologický pohľad) [Citizen activities as determinants of sustainable urban development (ethnological perspective)].

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9 Source: http://www.sm5.sk/.
According to the 1930 census, 14,882 people (12.0% of Bratislava residents) reported to have Jewish religion and 4747, i.e. 4.1% to be of Jewish nationality (Hromádka, 1932: 195; 193). In the text I pay special attention to the activities of the Jewish Religious Community.

The study focuses on circumstances under which the Jewish Community Museum was established and officially opened in the Bratislava synagogue in 2012. Already prior to WWII, a respected architect and collector Eugen Barkány came with the idea of opening a museum consisting of Slovak judaica. He followed up his project after the liberation, too. In the second half of the sixties, it seemed that thanks to the Jewish Religious Community (JCR/ŽNO) Bratislava support there would be created a Slovak branch of the Prague Jewish Museum within the premises of the Neolog Bratislava synagogue. However, the project implementation had to be postponed for many years to come: first of all due to Bárány’s death (1967), demolition of the synagogue giving place to the construction of a new bridge, and the occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

In the beginning of the next millenium, it was Maroš Borský, Art historian and Judaist, who undertook this project. He persuaded the board members of the JCR (ŽNO) Bratislava to vacate the already abandoned female gallery of the only preserved synagogue for presentation of Barkány’s collection. Apart from the permanent exhibition, the museum already offered three exhibits entitled: The Shadow of the Past (2013); We Are Here (2014); and Engerau – a Forgotten Story of Petržalka in 2015.

Key words: The Jewish Community Museum, E. Bárány, ŽNO Bratislava (JRC Bratislava), synagogue, civic activities, M. Borský

The prerequisites for sustainable development of the urban environment include interpersonal relationships between individuals, but also between ethnic or religious groups. Civic activities aimed at maintaining the culture of minority segments of the society play an important role in how they are formed and how they develop. One example of this is the process of creating the Jewish Community Museum in Bratislava.

In Bratislava the Jews have traditionally constituted a major city-shaping layer. In the past they accounted for more than 10% of the population. Following the historic census, 14,882 people (12.0% of Bratislava residents) reported to have Jewish religion and 4747, i.e. 4.1% to be of Jewish nationality (Hromádka, 1932: 195; 193). In the text I pay special attention to the activities of the Jewish Religious Community.
events of the 20th century (the Holocaust, emigration waves in the years 1945 to 1949 and the fear of reprisals after August 1968) the number of active members of the community and the scope of their activities in Bratislava decreased significantly. Nevertheless, after November 1989 the community and its umbrella Jewish Religious Community (ŽNO) have participated in the life of the city. It seeks to revitalize traditional values, which in the past formed a natural part of Bratislava, but today it is “a great unknown” for some in the majority population. As a consequence, old prejudices persist, as do fears of the Jews from the response of the public.

Knowledge of facts and the return (at least partial) of traditional functions may be considered important determinants of sustainable development of the capital of Slovakia. Museums and educational institutions play an important role in this process. As part of the project VEGA 2/0024/14 Citizen activities as determinants of sustainable urban development (ethnological perspective) I will try to present the long-term efforts of individuals and the Bratislava Jewish Community leadership in establishing their own museum. The role of the new institution is to present to the public (as well as to the community members) the principles of Judaism, in particular the history and the current status of the largest Jewish community in Slovakia. In my paper I pay attention to attempts of individuals to preserve cultural heritage, which used to be the property of the Jewish community in Bratislava and the approach the community leadership took to these efforts.

The first steps towards the creation of the museum date back to 1950s and the whole process successfully culminated in June 2012. The Jewish Community Museum was then officially opened on the premises of Bratislava’s only preserved synagogue. The leading role and the main implementation in this successful project were taken up by the director of the new institution Maroš Borský. However, he did not start at

2 Based on data from the 2011 census, in Bratislava the Jewish religion was reported by 675 persons and Jewish nationality was reported by 228 persons. In both cases, they are much smaller than one percent of the total population of the city.

3 Given the focus of this paper, I rely mostly on materials from the archives of the Jewish Religious Community Bratislava (especially the minutes of the Board of Directors of the community), showing the positions of the leadership of the community.

4 The official date of the founding statute is 27th September 2012 and as of 3rd December 2012, the Museum was entered in the Register of Museums and Galleries under No. RM 103/2012.
“point zero” because his was not the first attempt to create an exposition of historically valuable religious objects owned by the community.

The foundations of the collection were put together as early as 1950s by Eugen Bárány (28th Aug. 1885 in Prešov – 3rd November 1967 in Bratislava). He was a civil engineer and an enthusiastic collector of Judaica who – as early as 1928 – founded the Jewish Museum in Prešov and managed it until 1940 (Švantnerová, 2012: 19). During the Holocaust he fled to Hungary, where he lived with forged documents. Yet, his existential problems continued even after the liberation of Czechoslovakia. In early 1950s he had to move from Prešov to Meretice village and later to Smolník as part of the initiative called ‘Action B’. In 1952 Bárány received help in a difficult situation by the Ethnographic Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. He was employed to document folk architecture buildings. (One part of his extensive research work is now documented at the Documentation Department of the Slovak Academy of Sciences Institute of Ethnology.) Bárány continuously collected also evidence of material culture of the Jews, and worked together with his wife (Plávková, 2010: 5). Even though he never managed to summarize the facts into a synthesized work, they have not been lost.

In 1955 Eugen Bárány retired and moved with his wife to Bratislava. Almost symbolically he was offered by the Jewish Religious Community to stay in the historic building of the then mikveh (ritual bath) in Baštová street (Švantnerová, 2012: 21).

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5 In a difficult situation, Eugen Bárány was given help also by the State Jewish Museum in Prague. It commissioned him to write a short historical study for every Jewish religious community in Slovakia focusing on synagogues, cemeteries etc. (Veselská, 2013: 189).

6 Bárány’s knowledge was summarized and extended by Ľ. Dojč in the publication Bárány, Dojč (1991) which still represents the key literature for the study of Jews in Slovakia.

7 Today the building houses the Austrian Cultural Institute. From the original building of the bath, only the chimney remained, which the new owner had renovated.
In the new setting Bárkány continued his collecting activities related to the museum and took care of Judaica of the Jewish Religious Community. As documented in photos in the Hungarian magazine Múlt és Jövő, some of these items can be traced back as property of the Jewish community back to 1913 (Švantnerová, 2012: 20). Gradually he added other items which he managed to preserve. In early 1960’s (when he was a student shortly after finishing secondary school) the historian Štefan Holčík helped him in his work. He mentioned how he and Bárkány collected old artefacts in Bratislava which did not have an owner or whose owners were willing to donate them: “Objects were given to us not only by the Jews, but also by Christians such as the architect Szönyi. When Betstube was being demolished in Klariská Street, we took out books and furniture from there, as well as a tablet always showing with electric light bulbs (as eternal light) whose death anniversary it was, and for whom to pray. Then a tailor shop was set up in the place. We moved many artefacts from the warehouse behind the shochet (religious slaughterer) dwelling (designed by architect Szalatnai). It was just such a wooden shack under a support slope-wall made of stone, from which we removed, for example, a wooden model of the Tabernacle from the Great Synagogue (Grosse Schul) in Zámocká Street, and a sort of bars – as if demolished al-memor – which was, however, from another building (perhaps from a small prayer room in Zochova Street). There were a lot of books, but they were already moldy or rotten. They were thrown out. On the covers of some of the nicely bound ones (individual volumes of the Bible, published at the beginning of the 19th century, most likely in Vienna), the owner’s name Grünhut (I can no longer remember his first name) was printed. We moved many objects from some kind of warehouse in a recessed basement of a house in Kozia Street (Šmeralova). The keys were with a certain ‘Mr. Žaki’ who worked there as a kind of servant (when it was the anniversary of architect Szalatnai’s death, this gentleman ‘Žaki’ prayed for him,
because Szalatnai had no son. Ms. Slatinská always gave him a reward for it. I do not know whether it was the corner house of the Union of Jewish Communities, or the one next to it – perhaps I could identify it. Various objects were thrown in a chest there, not looking like property of the community, but rather as items from various households.”

The obtained objects were placed neatly in a large hall on the first floor the Neolog Synagogue in Rybné Square. Originally, it was a kind of ceremonial hall with many large windows to the west, to the Vydrica Street. A separate staircase was built to the left of the synagogue (from the same period!). Photographs of the synagogue show large windows above the main entrance. The hall was at the same level as women’s choir (in the Neolog synagogue there was also an organ). Perhaps originally a door connected the hall and the choir, but I no longer remember this, the door may have been walled up. Various embroidered Torah blankets were hung on the southern wall of the room, which might have covered the original door. Somewhere there is a photograph of this room cluttered with collected objects.”

Bárkány believed that it was in this building that a permanent exhibition would later be placed. He was then assisted by historian Ivan Kamenec. As stated, the museum opening was planned for 1st January 1966 (Kamenec, 1966: 18). Eugen Bárkány was actively involved also in the activities of the Jewish community in Bratislava. Until his death, he was a member of the Jewish Religious Community Committee. He had a chance to promote at this forum his vision of the Jewish Museum and he used the space offered to him. The Board of Directors embraced

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8 J. Švantnerová (2012: 22) writes that the collection “was stored in the loft area of the Neolog Synagogue...”
9 Memories of Štefan Holčík sent by mail.
10 Quoted from Švantnerová 2012: 21.
his vision to establish a permanent museum exposition. As an argument in negotiations with the authorities they used the existence of the Jewish Museum in Prague.

Some minutes from the meetings of the Jewish Religious Community Committee from 1964–1969 are available (the rest, as far as I know, were lost during any of the numerous transfers of the community’s documentation). In this short period the board repeatedly addressed the difficulties connected to the implementation of the project.

The first preserved piece of information appears in the “Minutes of a meeting of the Board of the Jewish Religious Community in Bratislava” from December 1964. The context makes it clear, however, that this issue had been addressed previously: “The archive collection, put together so selflessly by Eugen Bárány must be inspected also by members of the committee and therefore Mr. Valent proposes a joint visit to the rooms in the church at Rybné Square, in which the collection is placed. The committee unanimously approves the proposal and sets the time for the visit on 10th January 1965 at 10 am.” (dated 13th December 1964).

Those who made the visit were likely satisfied with the results of the inspection. This is evidenced by the fact that at the February meeting, Mr. Valent “… read the letter from the Jewish State Museum in Prague addressed to the Slovak National Museum, dated 23rd January 1965, saying the Prague Jewish Museum intended to establish its Bratislava branch made up of our collections placed in the former Neolog church. The Board would very much approve of implementing such a proposal, be-

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11 Only the minutes from the years 1945–1955 and 1963–1969 have been preserved; however even those are not complete.

12 In the text below, such data are labelled by ‘Z’ (standing for ‘Minutes’), followed by the date of the meeting.
cause the collection would be in professional hands.” The Board approved the proposal unanimously and also asked Eugen Bárkány to submit “a complete inventory of the exhibits so we know which museum objects are included” (dated 7th February 1965). Other minutes mention that the Slovak National Museum (SNM, which likely acted as a state guarantor) announced the collection “would be taken over by the Jewish State Museum in Prague, specifically its Bratislava branch, from 1st January 1966. To this end, representatives of the Jewish State Museum made a commitment to arrange in appropriate places that the former synagogue in Rybné Square would be made available for this purpose and modified appropriately.” (dated 2nd May 1965). Another piece of information confirms that the community had been taking specific steps to secure the synagogue building for the museum. At that time it was used as a warehouse by the Czechoslovak Television (dated 17th October 1965).

Optimistic plans did not materialize. As shown in a report from a meeting almost exactly a year later (i.e. long after the announced date of 1st January 1966), the problems included the fact that community leaders and management of the Slovak National Museum had different views on the future of the collection: “A letter from the Slovak National Museum in Bratislava no. 2493/66 of 23rd August 1966 was read in which we were informed that they are ready to take our collection as a long-term deposit. They would take care of its preservation, professional processing and safekeeping. The Board does not agree with this proposal and requests that a State Jewish Museum be established here, similarly as in Prague.” The following paragraph of the minutes reported on a letter in which City Roads Administration announced in August 1966 that due to the planned construction of a bridge in the area of Rybné Square, the synagogue would need to be demolished “or at our cost moved about 20 meters eastward.” (dated 11th Sept. 1966).

At the October meeting, Board members searched for a way out of crisis. The then Chairman of the Jewish Religious Community saw the solution in accepting the conditions of SNM and requested that the Board change its resolution “not to submit our collections to SNM for a long-term deposit, but rather attempt to establish a State Jewish Museum just like in Prague, because we do not have suitable rooms or a specialist for it.” Most of those present, however, were opposed to submitting the collections to SNM: “The Board has resolved to thank the SNM in Bratislava for their interest and willingness, but also to inform them that our collections would not be submitted to them but rather provisionally stored in our own rooms” (dated 23rd October 1966).

The community leadership continued to pay attention to the issue of the museum. As early as January 1967 Eugen Bárkány announced that due to his old age “he can no longer run our museum and asks whether under the previous resolution, we are to

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13 The date mentioned is also used by Ivan Kamenec in the cited paper (see note 2).
14 The planned demolition of the Neolog Synagogue sparked protests not only from members of the Jewish community, but also from the public. The building did not fulfill the original religious purpose for some time. It was used as a warehouse, but thanks to its location near the St. Martin’s Cathedral it remained a symbol of tolerance in Bratislava. The cultural and historical values must also be mentioned. For further details on this topic, see Bončo, Čomaj (2010) but especially Bútora (2011).
15 I cannot refrain from making a personal comment on the cited text: I personally knew most members of the then Board of Directors (including my father), but I had no knowledge of those facts. I saw them as elder gentlemen dealing exclusively with religious and economic issues. I was surprised by my father’s level of involvement in this matter, but also the straightforward decision of the committee to leave the objects in the ownership of the community despite the difficulties and risks. Apparently, this commitment to ancestral heritage persisted after November 1989.
run the museum ourselves or submit the collection to deposits of SNM. After a long
debate, the leadership decided that the collections would be managed by the worship
commission of the Jewish Religious Community” (dated 8th January 1967). In May
1967, the community leadership discussed information according to which “Mr. Eu-
gen Bárkány without our knowledge or our consent has already submitted some col-
lections of this museum to the State Museum”16 (dated 14th May 1967). The agenda of
that meeting included also “former Neolog church”.

Information was presented from state authorities which confirmed the decision to
demolish the synagogue because of bridge construction (dated 14th May 1967). The fi-
nal obituary for this important building (and any hope to place in the Jewish Museum
in it) came two years later: “The Chairman informed the Board of the decision of the
National Committee to demolish the former Neolog church, which had happened in
the meantime. Under the authority of the Board from 16th February 1969, Mr. Ehrental
and Mr. Reichenberg managed to sell the available construction materials for 41,000
Czechoslovak crowns to be used exclusively for making changes to the church in Hey-
dukova Street” (dated 15th June 1969).17

As it turned out, the demolition of the synagogue did not mean the end of hope for
the Jewish Museum, because SNM showed continued willingness to take over the Ju-
daica collection. At the meeting in September, the community chairman “... explai-
ned that we are unable to keep these collections for reasons related to physical and
human resources, because we do not have the appropriate resources. After a brief de-

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16 In a personal conversation, Štefan Holčík said that in his opinion such action was motivated by the se-
rious medical condition of Eugen Bárkány and the fear of what would happen to the collection after
his death. He viewed the museum as a guarantee of the collection’s preservation. From the context it
is not clear whether it was the State Jewish Museum in Prague, or the Slovak National Museum in Brat-
islava. Based on indirect information given below, personally I am inclined to think it was the “Brati-
slava” alternative.

17 Of the building, only two stone tablets with the Ten Commandments were preserved, which had been
placed on the roof of the synagogue (look at the picture on p. 367). It is said that once two elderly men
brought them into the synagogue on Heydukova Street, leaving them in the community for a bottle of
kosher wine. Today these tablets are included in the community museum exposition.
bate, the Board has unanimously decided that our collection – which we had in the former Neolog church and which was transported to the castle – would be submitted to SŠM (Slovenské štátne múzeum – Slovak State Museum) into a long-term deposit with the following conditions: Objects of silver placed in glass cases in our office will remain with us and will not be transferred anywhere. The collection will continue to remain our property and will only go into long-term deposit. We are going to make a request that SŠM employs one capable Jew or Jewess who would help process this special collection” (dated 3rd September 1967).

The Board considered the issue of the collection’s future also on 12th November 1967. The meeting opened with the news of the sudden death of Eugen Bárkány. The museum was to be dealt with as a separate item on the agenda. The chairman reported about a meeting with the director of the Slovak National Museum, “... who informed us that the collections are provisionally stored in the castle, and an accurate inventory was developed. The objects have been repaired, cleaned up and preserved. He informed us also that if the former Neolog church would not be demolished, the Jewish Museum would be placed there. In case the church is pulled down after all, the museum would be located in the street on the opposite side.” (dated 12th November 1967).

The last time the museum was mentioned in the minutes was a few days prior to the occupation of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. In the item museum, it was mentioned that the collection was moved to the premises of the Slovak National Museum at the castle (dated 18th August 1968).

The death of Eugen Bárkány, the demolition of Neolog synagogue, but especially the occupation of Czechoslovakia and the subsequent emigration of many members of the community, and attitudes to the Jewish community in the normalization period pushed the idea of building a dedicated Jewish Museum into the background for a long time. Bárkány’s collection was stored in the depository of SNM and was given back to the Jewish Religious Community Bratislava in the mid-eighties. On 22nd April 1990, the offices of the community (then at 21 Kozia Street) were broken into by unknown (obviously professional) burglars who stole the most valuable artefacts (Švantnerová, 2012: 23). In 1992, the rest of the collection was moved again to the depository of SNM and after the establishment of the specialized Museum of Jewish Culture of SNM, the objects were submitted to be managed by this institution. The museum management wished to purchase the items, or otherwise wanted to return them to the community. The board members responded just as their predecessors did a quarter century earlier: “We have agreed that emotionally speaking, their cultural and historical value is priceless. We intend to continue to exhibit the items in the future (after they are repaired). Step by step we are going to repair them and preserve the cultural heritage for future generations” (dated 9th January 1995). The community finally took over the objects in 2002. In the absence of other options they were provisionally stored in less than satisfactory premises. However, a nicer chapter in the history of this valuable collection started to be written in 2008...

In the first decade of the new millennium, the community once again attempted to establish an institution focused on the history and present of Jewish Bratislava. These efforts were driven especially by the personal initiative of Maroš Borský. He studied art history at the Faculty of Philosophy at the Comenius University in Bratislava, completed a study stay with specialization in art history in Regensburg, Germany, and la-

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18 As you can see, there is again interest to expose these exhibits.
Petra focused on Jewish Studies at Leo Baeck College in London. He spent two years at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He completed his PhD at the well-known Hochschule für Jüdische Studien in Heidelberg. Even during his studies he worked at the Slovak National Museum – Museum of Jewish Culture, where he launched and led the documentation project *Synagoga Slovaca*. He summarized the results of his long-term research in the monograph Synagogue Architecture in Slovakia: A Memorial Landscape of a Lost Community (2007). He also worked at the Institute of Jewish Studies at the Comenius University.

Similarly as Eugen Bárány, also Maroš Borský has been a longtime member of the Board of the Jewish Religious Community and currently holds the position of vice chairman. He initiated the reconstruction of the synagogue in Bratislava (since 2006) and the house of mourning at the Orthodox cemetery. (Both buildings are cultural monuments.) Thanks to his activities, he managed to win support in the Jewish Religious Community for the idea of the museum from its leadership as well as understanding from a large part of the community.

He shared his view of the process of creating the museum in a catalog published on the occasion of the exposition opening: “The Jewish community museum is the result of a long-term policy of the Jewish Religious Community in Bratislava to protect its precious monuments. The first project was the construction of Chatam Sofer Memorial, completed in 2002. Subsequently, in 2006, gradual repairs of the synagogue in Heydukova Street started, as well as renovation of the ceremonial hall in the New Orthodox Cemetery. In 2008, we took over the care of the collection of Judaica from Eugen Bárány. Ever since it has been returned by the Slovak National Museum – the Museum of Jewish Culture, it was stored for several years in boxes in unsuitable conditions. Yet, it was a long way to the opening of the Museum, which now presents to its visitors the rich cultural heritage of Bratislava Jews. The key persons behind the project’s implementation are the curator of the collection Jana Švantnerová, the experienced documentary photographer Viera Kamenická and the project manager Maroš Borský” (Borský, 2012: 27).

The permanent exhibition is housed in the former women’s gallery. This run-down space on the first floor of the synagogue served for years as a warehouse. Seasonal exhibitions are now housed in the small prayer room, unused in winter. Important moments from the history of the community are presented on the walls along the staircase. Even though this part of the building was unused for many years, situating the museum in a functional synagogue raised controversy among regular worshippers. As Borský said, “we faced the dilemma of whether or not to make access to the synagogue possible for the general public and whether or not this place with active Jewish religious services would be fitting for meeting cultural interest of visitors from outside of our community. Some members have asked whether it is fitting to place a museum in the synagogue.” (Borský, 2013: 13). There were also security concerns, as well as concerns of possible disruption of worship by the visitors. During the last three seasons that the museum has been open, these fears have not been confirmed. The opening hours (open on Fridays and Sundays from 10 am to 4 pm from May to

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19 Work was divided into three stages. In 2008–2009, 1,122 objects were processed, documented, recorded and given professional treatment. In 2010, detailed research of objects was conducted and a curatorial concept was developed. Finally (in 2011) the construction and technical modifications of future premises were carried out (Borský, 2012: 27).
October and closed during Jewish holidays) limit the possibility of conflict to a minimum.

As Borský stresses repeatedly, the aim of the project is not to secularize the building, or to make show of worship services or to turn worshippers into museum exhibits. He argues that museums operate successfully in synagogue buildings in many European cities. The helpful attitude of Rabbi Baruch Myers was also very important. At his concerts of Chassidic music, he repeatedly comes into contact with non-Jewish public, and perhaps that is why he sees more positives than problems in the revival of the synagogue.

The search for pros and cons of museum activities in the synagogue manifests the long-term strategic dispute within the community. While some members are interested in opening the synagogue (and the community) more widely to the public, others for various reasons prefer isolation from the surrounding environment. It appears that most people feel positively about the museum’s existence. Most people realize that the museum (just like the state-run Museum of Jewish Culture of SNM) opens up the community through its activities and helps dissolve the myth of “mysteriousness of the Jews” which is still shared by part of the public. Also important is the fact that the Jewish Community Museum focuses on specific manifestations of Jewish life in Bratislava. Community members show their understanding for the museum which can be seen by the extensive list of donors who gave donations to help establish this institution. Plaques with their names now welcome visitors at the entrance to the museum in the synagogue. The museum was welcomed with great interest among both the lay and professional public. The Annual Award by the magazine Pamiatky a múzeá (Monuments and Museums) given in 2012 in the Exposition category testifies to the high standard that the museum has achieved.

In addition to the permanent exhibition, short-term exhibitions and educational events prepared by the Jewish Community Museum also fulfill important function. Two exhibitions were installed in the Museum in its short history. Both elicited response from the public and from community members. Especially the first one, entitled *Shadows of the Past*, had a profound impact because it dealt with a less comfortable topic of the not so distant past. Visitors could see paintings which were aryanised from Jewish owners and (because the original owners could no longer be identified) which are today the property of the Slovak National Gallery (SNG). The curator Jana Švantnerová has for some time dealt with the fortune of the nationalized works and has now published the most comprehensive list yet of such works (Švantnerová, 2010).

At the opening of the exhibition, SNG Director Alexandra Kusá underlined, “... it is necessary to speak (exhibit, publish, lecture) also about the less positive parts of our history.” She further said she was pleased that “the Slovak National Gallery contributed to research into the confiscation by the state of art objects from Jewish property during the period of the Slovak State. The concerns about reputational risks clearly must yield to scientific approach, information sharing but also of taking responsibility. As is apparent from the text of Jana Švantnerová, an exhibition like this also raises very important issues related to the boundaries of professional ethics and concessi-

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20 According to the author “this paper is the first attempt at a systematic treatment of the issue of nationalization of Jewish movable property, its gathering, expert valuation and subsequent transfer to state collections” (Švantnerová, 2010: 1).
ons to lesser evil.” (Kusá, 2013: 6). The controversial topic was not received unanimously. It elicited positive response and great interest from the media and visitors, but also led to some uneasiness or open refusal.

At the time of writing of this article the museum houses the exhibition We Are Here! Through photographs it attempts to present to the public the activities of the community after November 1989. Pictures (typically documentary photos made by photographer Viera Kamenická) and the accompanying text fulfill an important function. They aim to explain the nature of the illustrated event in life or annual cycle, but also the current position of the Jewish minority in Slovak society. The complexity of the issues was formulated by Maroš Borský when he searched for an answer to the question whether the identity of Slovak Jews was ethnic, cultural or religious: “Our exhibition and accompanying catalog are trying to provide the answer by showing contemporary life of the community. We see that it is deeply rooted in religious tradition, the historical events captured in the Bible. Overall, this makes us a religious ethnic group with a specific culture which maintains its traditional community structures. We are fully integrated into society. We are loyal citizens of the Slovak Republic, but we are proud of our past. We maintain emotional ties, lasting centuries, with the Holy Land and the modern State of Israel, where many of us have friends and relatives” (Borský, 2014: 7). He also expressed hope that this project would contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the culture and community life of Jews in Slovakia (Borský, 2014: 9).

The lecture series Opening Doors, subtitled Education Program in the Synagogue, was also well received. Its very name expresses symbolically that this event fits the concept of the museum exposition and seasonal exhibitions. The aim is to present to the public the Jewish community, to show the synagogue, explain the principles of Judaism and current activities of the Jewish Religious Community. In the opening lecture, Rabbi Baruch Myers reflected on the two decades of his activities in Bratislava. Then followed Slovak and foreign experts who shared their knowledge of Jewish identity, Slovak-Jewish relations and other current issues. The European Day of Jewish Culture was included in the series as well. The second year started with a lecture by Jewish Religious Community Chairman Egon Gál on the Jewish Community Today. The emphasis, however, remains on religious issues and rabbinical authorities. Lectures were given by Tom Kučera from Munich (on the concept of free will in Judaism), Andrew Goldstein from London (Temple and Synagogue), Mikhail Kapustin from Bratislava (Jewish Resistance from the Perspective of Halacha) and Baruch Myers, also from Bratislava (Jewish Month Tishrei and its Holidays). The series this year was concluded by the coordinator of the event Maroš Borský with his lecture We Are Here!

Another important activity is the educational program Jewish Cultural Heritage in Bratislava. It is designed for high school students in Bratislava and the Museum implements it together with the Department of Education, Youth and Sports of the Bratislava Higher Territorial Unit for Bratislava high school students.\(^\text{21}\) To the question of what is the essence and reason for creating an independent Jewish Community Museum, Maroš Borský highlighted his four main points:\(^\text{22}\)

1. The very existence of the museum and its placement in the synagogue. It is linked with “opening the doors”, but there is also the long-term strategy for the preser-
ervation of the synagogue building. Also this approach helps the Jewish Religious Community to raise grant funds;

2. I am convinced that care for cultural heritage must be on the agenda of religious communities – whether they are listed buildings where worship services still take place or ritual objects. In Western Europe, it is common to see diocesan museums, in which the church manages a museum collection of rare liturgical objects, altarpieces and sculptures etc. In our country, in view of the historical context, this kind of museums is just starting;

3. Another important argument is related to point 2 above. In Slovakia the model remains in place of culture financed but also managed by the state (or region or city, etc.). Such exclusivity is no longer a functional model in the west. On the contrary, many institutions are independent.

4. Connected to point 3 above is the question of whether Jewish culture should be cared for only by the state-run Museum of Jewish Culture or the community has the right to formulate its own cultural policy. Naturally, as a state-run institution, the Museum of Jewish Culture fulfills functions prescribed by the state. This is clear particularly in how international commitments of the Slovak Republic are being fulfilled in the field of education and research of the Holocaust (administration of the Holocaust Memorial, the National Holocaust Exposition in Nitra, the construction of a museum in war-time labor and concentration camp Sereď, organization of Holocaust remembrance events in Bratislava and Poprad), Holocaust education, publications (I will mention translations of works by Arnošt Lustig, publishing the Slovak version of the so-called Pinkas hakehilot by Yad Vashem Museum in Israel)… The Jewish Community Museum aims, among its other goals, to present the Jewish culture. The Holocaust is a tragic historical event that affected the further development of the Jewish community and should therefore be remembered but it is not an expression of our culture!

The creation of the Jewish Community Museum is a manifestation of civic activism of individuals and understanding of their vision by the leadership of the religious institution. The result is a new impetus for development of the community, but also for improving the Jewish – Gentile relations and thus sustainable development of Bratislava.

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REFERENCES


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PETER SALNER (*1951) - researcher of the Institute of Ethnology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, graduate from ethnographic studies at the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University, Bratislava(1974). He specialises in urban ethnology with a focus on the Bratislava environment and the social culture of the Jewish community in the 20th and 21st centuries. He has published 12 monographs in total, from Taká bola Bratislava (1991) to The Jewish Identity in Slovakia after the Shoah (2013). In cooperation with Martin Kvasnica, he wrote the book Chatam Sofer Memorial (2002, 2012), edited several collective volumes and books (for example, Menšiny v meste - 2004 with Daniel Luther, or Reflexie holocaustu - 2010 with Monika Vrzgulová), and published many scientific studies and chapters in various publications.
IN MEMORIAM PROF. MARKUS CERMAN

A few days ago we learned of sad news. Our colleague and friend, Professor Markus Cerman from the Institute for Economic and Social History at Vienna University passed away at the age of 48 years.

I had met Markus Cerman as a young assistant of professor Michael Mitterauer in Budapest in May 1994 during an international conference, which was entitled a bit provocatively – Where Europe ends? At this international forum for family researchers, where professors Rudolf Andorka, Peter Laslett or the already mentioned Michael Mitterauer were engaged also we, the younger generation, some of them already known or in the future “start-up” scholars such as Jasna Čapo-Žmegač, Mojca Ravnik and Jože Hudales, Tamás Faragó, and others, we discussed the European model of family structure and ecotypes – approaches which led to understanding family characteristics and the forming the thinking on its research. For me Markus stood as an allied person. He was kind and friendly, the one who never put forward his knowledge or personality, although his expertise was highly appreciated by us at that time. After all, it was only a few years after the change of the regime in Czechoslovakia and we found ourselves still in overlapping that obscure knowledge-based, but also the methodological gap in the development of our disciplines on the other sides of the iron curtain. Markus gave his advice about things which, at that time were not known in Slovakia, journals, economic theories and scientific discussions, which he also applied innovatively and productively in his own research.

Not more than a year passed and Professor Mitterauer with Markus Cerman accepted our invitations to Bratislava. The neighbours from Vienna came to our meeting, a seminar organized by the Department of Ethnology at Comenius University. I guess it used to be normal in the free/opened/liberal world, but for us it seemed simply amazing – and what’s more, we were pleased that we were able to publish the contributions of this seminar, where we asked Markus Cerman to prepare an overview study on the issue of protoindustry and its reflection in family life (Cerman, M.: The protoindustrial family economy. In: J. Michálek (Ed.), Central European Contexts of Folk Culture in Slovakia. Bratislava: Stimul, 1995).

I was lucky to meet Markus Cerman in summer 1997 in England, in The Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure. Here again, I felt his collegial friendship, assistance in networking with colleagues, whom he had met earlier. In Cambridge I met his then girlfriend and later wife Dana Štefanová. Dana was so kind that together with Markus they organized a presentation of our book on Slovak family traditions in Vienna at the Faculty for Interdisciplinary Research and Continuing Education in May 2001 in Vienna.

Our collaboration lasted, although the meetings may have been less regular, those occasions always brought interesting content and have been rewarding also for our
students. In 1998, I invited Markus and he came and lectured on protoindustrialization for our students within the course of ethnocultural aspects of the family studies. In the spring of 2003 we managed to organize an international (mostly) student and doctoral research seminar on gender and family (New perspectives in social science and historical anthropology. Kolloquium. Bratislava, 20. – 21. 3. 2003). This time again the two inspiring souls of the meeting fiercely commenting on the contributions of young scholars were Dana Štefanová Cerman and Markus Cerman. Students from the University of Vienna visited Bratislava and participated in this seminar together with our students and PhD students of the Institute of Ethnology and the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences.

Markus Cerman graduated at the Vienna University, where he obtained his PhD. degree and worked from 1993 as an assistant, and from 2001 in the position of associated professor and professor.

Although the University of Vienna was his Alma mater, his personality and the scientific activity could be characterized by interest in international affairs. From 1990 on he spent several research stays at the world’s top universities, for example the University of Cambridge, or the Charles University in Prague, a research stay at the famous Birkbeck College, University of London in 2003 – 2004, to complete his education with the title Master of Economics. He worked at the Humboldt University of Berlin as a researcher in the year 2000, and again as a Humboldt Fellow in 2005 – 2006.

Markus Cerman contributed through his study topics to many international research discussions related to economic and social history. His main interest was researching the long-term socio-economic transformation from the late Middle Ages to the Industrial revolution, comparing the regions across the whole of Europe. From the end of the 1990-ies, he worked on the theme of the transformation of rural communities. He was the central figure in a large and long-term research project concerning on the organisation of social structures in Bohemia, which was based on the cooperation with Czech universities and archives, Collegium Carolinum in Munich and the
On 3–4 November 2015, the conference “Civil Activities and Engaged Research” was held in Impact Hub, Bratislava. The event was organised as part of project VEGA 2/0024/14 Civic activities as a determining factor of sustainable development of cities (an ethnological perspective) carried out by the Institute of Ethnology SAS (IE SAS).

WHAT SHOULD ENGAGED SCIENCE BE LIKE?¹
THE CONFERENCE Civil Activities and Engaged Research (3–4 November 2015, Bratislava)

¹ This report was originally published online on the website of the Institute of Ethnology SAS www.uet.sav.sk.
17 papers in total were presented at the conference by various academic departments, non-governmental organisations and practitioners. The conference was interdisciplinary in the full sense of the word, gathering academics and activists, experts in ethnology and anthropology, sociology, human geography, as well as linguistics. What was common to them was primarily their interest in applied research. Most papers focused on the ethical and methodological dilemmas of researchers. One of the specific features of applied research is its emphasis on outputs which often aim to enhance the knowledge of the general public or to policies or the development of the communities subject to research. Researchers therefore often face the problem of how to approach their communicators, to what degree to intervene in the given environment, and how to synchronise their different roles in the field (research and activism).

The first conference panel called “Beyond the Borders of Academy” dealt with a wider understanding of engaged anthropology in different research. The conference was opened by Eva Riečanská with a paper on applied and engaged research through the work of non-governmental organisations in Slovakia. Alexander Mušinka (Institute of Roma Studies of the University of Prešov) offered his own perspective of engaged research on Roma topics, and Monika Vrzgulová (IE SAS) talked about her long term experience in the research of the Holocaust in Slovakia. The second conference panel dealt with the application of research. Linguists Lucia Satinská (Linguistic Institute of Ludovít Štúr in Bratislava) and Boglárka Bílsz (Department of Hungarian Language and Literature of the Faculty of Arts, Comenius University) presented their own research and the education and popularisation activities of the S(z)lo-marát civic association dealing with the development of multilingual Slovak-Hungarian communities in Slovakia. The next two papers came from CVEK non-governmental organisation (Centre for the Research of Ethnicity and Culture). Tina Gažovičová and Ivana Rapošová presented their research on cultural sensitivity of foster home staff and the follow-up project of trans-cultural approach training. The third panel dealt with ethical and methodological dilemmas in research practice. Kamila Beňová from Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica reflected upon the demarcation of borders between the researcher, communicators, the society and relevant institutions. Oto Polouček from the Institute of European Ethnology in Brno talked about the problem of being an insider/outsider in his own research among tramps. The panel was closed by Juraj Podoba from the Faculty of Social and Economic
Participants to the conference Civil Activities and Engaged Research and poster. Photo: Soňa G. Lutherová.
The Institute of Ethnology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (IE SAS) actively joined the Science and Technology Week in Slovakia this year again. On 11–13 November, the Institute organised, in co-operation with the Representation of the European Commission in Slovakia and the Office of Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities, a conference with a Roma language workshop for an expert audience under the title Academy of Roma Studies. This event was one of the outcomes of the academic project VEGA 2/0099/15 The “Roma” label – emic and ethical reflections and their social impacts, carried out by the Institute of Ethnology SAS.

The Academy of Roma Studies, held in the SAS premises at Klemensova 19, Bratislava

THE ACADEMY OF ROMA STUDIES ACCOMPANIED BY CONVERSATIONS IN ROMA LANGUAGE (11–13 November 2015, Bratislava)
Participants to the Academy of Roma Studies. Photo: Ivana Šusterová.

Conversations in Roma language by the participants of Roma language lessons. Photo: Ivana Šusterová.
va, was opened by Tatiana Podolinská, Director of the IE SAS. Her introductory words were followed by speeches by Mária Kadrliaková (Representation of the European Commission in Slovakia) and Peter Pollák, Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities. Four experts in Roma studies from Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Finland subsequently presented their research. The first day of the Academy aimed to present the most recent trends in Roma studies in the European context.

The introductory paper of the Academy was titled “Roma still unknown. A short history of Roma”. Arne Mann presented to the public many facts from Roma history. In her paper “The possibilities of Roma inclusion – the results of recent research of the IE SAS”, Tatiana Podolinská focused on the current state of Roma studies in the context of the Institute of Ethnology. She presented specific projects and their results concerning various aspects of life of Roma people.

The next part included papers with a linguistic context by foreign guests – Kimmo Granqvist from the University of Helsinki, Finland, and Viktor Elšík from Charles University, Prague. The former described the history and dialectology of the Roma language. On the basis of his long-term research, V. Elšík talked about the diversity of Roma dialects in Slovakia, providing concrete examples displayed on maps. The lecturers opened a lively inter-disciplinary discussion about the newest trends in Roma studies with an audience of around 50 participants.

Another important aim of the Academy was to launch a regular course (once a year) of Roma language for the public. During two days (12–13 November 2015), the Roma course participants, registered in advance, moved to the premises of the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities (Vajnorská 25, Bratislava), where the course was held under the leadership of three lecturers experienced in Roma language teaching: Pavel Kubaník (working at the Seminar of Roma Studies of Charles University in Prague, which is the only university department focusing on the study of the Roma language, history and culture of Roma in the Czech Republic and Slovakia), Anna Koptová (among other things, co-author of the Slovak-Roma and Roma-Slovak dictionary), and David Tišer, Roma activist and

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*Teachers of Roma language (from left to right): Pavel Kubaník, Anna Koptová and David Tišer during the Academy of Roma Studies. Photo: Ivana Šusterová.*
graduate from the Seminar of Roma Studies in Prague. The lecturers complemented each other in an excellent manner. The course was full of different activities related to Roma language teaching, including socio-cultural aspects, which will undoubtedly facilitate further contact of the course participants with Roma people. The fifteen course participants were mostly persons coming into contact with Roma within their professional work. They demonstrated their sincere interest in understanding Roma and in improving communication with them. The motivation to organise this course was based on the fact that most professionals (academic sphere, the third sector, staff of the decision-making sector) dealing with Roma studies in Slovakia do not speak Roma, though the knowledge of this language is one of the key determinants of a deeper understanding of this target group.

Even though two days might have seemed to be too little for learning a foreign language, the positive feedback from the course participants proves that it was worth organising this type of event. This opinion was supported by Pavel Kubanik, one of the lecturers: “In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, we sometimes hear opinions from even educated people that the Roma language is just a mixture of other languages or a hidden language with limited functions. We cannot expect that students would learn Roma in two days. But I expect that what they learn during these two days is the awareness that Roma is a fully-fledged language with a clear structure. And, just like any other language, it forms part of a culture about which one can learn more by speaking the language.”

The organisers wish to organise the course again next year. Besides the knowledge and materials obtained by the course participants, they would have the opportunity to continue promoting their knowledge of the Roma language. In addition to that, there is a plan to open a course again for beginners for all those interested. We are looking forward to our next meeting!

IVANA ŠUSTEROVÁ, Institute of Ethnology SAS in Bratislava
This year’s edition of WOMEX (World Music Expo) was the 21st in its history, but for the first time held in a former East European country – in Budapest, the capital of Hungary. It was attended by more than 2500 delegates representing about 1500 companies from 90 countries. Among 680 exhibiting companies from 54 countries at the trade fair there were also some newcomers such as Kosovo, Tunisia, Chile and – finally, Slovakia.

WOMEX 15 was organised by German company Piranha Arts and Hangvető, a common platform of Hungarian independent artists and labels. The effort of local organisers caused a big influx of artists, exhibitors and other participants not only from Hungary, but also from the wider East and Central European region. As Balázs Weyer, programming director of Hangvető, said in one of the press conferences: “As the first hosts in Central Eastern Europe, our main goal was to open the doors of the world music community to new friends from the wider region. The astonishing number of newcomers to this WOMEX edition proves that the efforts that we have put into this have not been in vain. We are proud to provide the scene new professional encounters and hopefully lasting friendships.”

WOMEX has many faces, but none are ugly. First of all, it is a big three day trade fair – this year it was held in the futuristically reconstructed building on the bank of the river Danube called Bálna (The Whale). During WOMEX 15 it was full of buzzing, humming, singing and playing – there were also some daily showcase concerts taking place in the same building – and talking about business, but above all about so-called world music. Never mind that this term is still not fully accepted by all people from the community – some of them call it folk, traditional music, ethno, cross-cultural, etc. There were also special film screenings, conference sessions, network meetings, one-to-one mentoring, round-table mentoring and speed-dating. The topics of the conference sessions were rather global than local – themes like Nationalism and Traditional Music, Cross-Cultural Musical Collaborations, Crossing the Border, Latinos and the Global Music Industry or Music Bridging Communities in Post-Conflict Environments were clearly defined by their titles. Some of the sessions were dedicated to such problems as getting a visa for artists from certain regions, using marketing tools in world music or managing “Artist and Repertoire”. Despite all of these exact scientific methods and marketing tools sometimes really funny situations occurred – for example if speakers in two different conference sessions (Introduction to the Music Scene in India and Touring the Balkans) were using the same arguments to support their opinion – something like: “it is very good to tour in these regions because you could find a cheap hotels, cheap food and a lot of faithful fans there”.

The main part of the evening programme was so-called showcase concerts at a local venue called Müpa. The grand building of the theatre and concert hall named after the famous composer Béla Bartók on the Danube river bank was supplemented by a big tent with two stages and a special DJ summit stage at the ship A38 Hajó anchored at the Danube. During three days of trade fair there were 60 concerts (not including the opening programme Gypsy Heartbeats on 21st October and the performance of WOMEX Award winner Cheikh Lo from Senegal on 25th of October) with over 280 artists from 50 countries on 7 stages. One of these stages was called Club Duna and its programme included artists from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe: Hungary, Austria, Czech Republic, Poland, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Latvia and Slovakia. The first Slovak band playing at WOMEX in its history was Pacora Trio – their performance became a great success with their typical witty and
The building of Bálna (The Whale) in Budapest where Trade Fair took its place. Photo: Vladimír Potančok.

Pacora Trio (Stano Palúch, Robo Ragan and Marcel Commendant) on Duna Club stage during WOMEX 15 in Budapest. Photo: Vladimír Potančok.
pretty combination of swing and Slovakian and Moldavian folklore.

But Slovakia arrived at WOMEX 15 not only with a band, but also with a stand. The main coordinator of Slovak activities on this year’s WOMEX was Musical Centre in Bratislava, but there were also people from the World Music From Slovakia initiative, recording labels and other institutions. This official stand was a part of the so-called Central European Music Square, a common place for representatives of the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary. This approach was similar to other countries and regions – you could find there also neighbouring stands of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland (not so surprising), Germany (at previous WOMEX trade fairs scattered at many singular places), Nordic countries (Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark side by side), Benelux or France. But at the same time there were independent exhibitors from Catalonia, Galicia, Basque Country, Bretagne, Rhone-Alps, Apulia and some other regions from Europe, who feel themselves culturally different to their “motherlands”. Some of the national representations were directly organised by ministries of culture or cultural centres as some kind of cultural export e.g. Azerbaijan, South Korea, Lithuania and other countries, other exhibition stands were a combination of state agencies and private entrepreneurs e.g. Austria, Switzerland, Spain, the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, etc. Of course, some of the booking agencies, festivals, promoters, recording labels or musical magazines were able to organize a stand of their own without collaborating with anybody else.

The hot topic of this year’s WOMEX 15 was the unpleasant situation with immigrants flowing into Europe from war regions of the Near East. It looks like the irony of fate that this festival of tolerance in music and culture takes place in the country which as the first one started to build fences on its borders to prevent this influx. WOMEX 15 was not cancelled (in spite of such suggestions from some of its participants on internet), on the contrary, there were many signs of solidarity and empathy with refugees by WOMEX participants. You could see t-shirts and stickers with inscriptions like No Human
Being Is Illegal (even with a home-made password I love Budapest, but I hate Orbán), people were discussing these topics everywhere, because crossing cultures is their everyday job and they are very sensitive to all these matters. Delegates of WOMEX 15 supported also various NGOs and aid organisations helping refugees and they took a group photo in front of the Bálna building as a form of solidarity with these people trapped between two worlds. Also the opening concert by Gypsy Heartbeats was built on the idea of Gypsies like “useful immigrants” who are preserving during centuries not only their own musical traditions, but also traditional music of countries in which they settled.
The next edition of WOMEX will take place in Santiago de Compostela, Galicia, Spain, from 19th till 23rd October 2016 and we hope that its participants will learn once again much more about each other’s musical (and not only musical) traditions and cultures.

VLADIMÍR POTANČOK,
Institute of Ethnology of SAS in Bratislava

AWARDS FOR RESEARCHERS OF THE INSTITUTE OF ETHNOLOGY SAS IN 2015

The most recent publication by our colleague Oľga Danglová with the title Modrotlač na Slovensku (Blueprint in Slovakia) won the Literary Fund Prize 2014 in the category of social sciences. This bilingual Slovak-English publication offers an overview of blueprint as a phenomenon which played an important role both in the Slovak and European textile traditions. A review of the book was published in SN1/2015 (pp. 91–92) in Slovak and in SN2/2015 in English (pp. 178–179).

On 24 April 2015, the traditional Mayor’s Prize was awarded under the 12th year of the “Bratislava for All” event, held in the Hall of Mirrors of the Mayor’s Palace in Bratislava. The laureates received a bronze statue of Knight Roland, defender of city rights and privileges, from Ivo Nesrovnal the Mayor of Bratislava. One of the awardees was our colleague Peter Salner who received this prize for his long-term work in propagating the Jewish community in Bratislava and for his outstanding contribution to tolerance and understanding between people.

Our colleagues Arne Mann, Mirka Hlinčíková and Tomáš Hrustič appeared on the map of social innovators, published on the Pontis Foundation website in November. This map includes 945 names of people who have contributed over the past years to the development of the Slovak society in the field of education, social inclusion, active citizenship and promotion of democracy and community development, and are thus considered actors of social change.

Congratulations to all our awarded colleagues!

VLADIMÍR POTANČOK,
Institute of Ethnology SAS in Bratislava
In the first half of the year, photographer Ľubo Stacho published a unique publication Obchodná 1984 – 2014. The book contains 500 photographs of shops and their windows as well as random situations captured on the Obchodná Street in Bratislava during the last 30 years. In the end of the book, there is a theoretical chapter included, with four essays by authors from various academic fields; curators and art theorists Aurel Hrabušický and Petra Hanáková, sociologist Miroslav Tížik and historian and theorist of architecture Henrieta Moravčíková. The book presents itself in an attractive but simple design provided by Boris Meluš.

Stacho’s project represents a consistent visual-anthropological concept. It’s a longitudinal study, that uncovers broader socio-cultural contexts and the changes of society in time. As Miroslav Tížik reflects in his essay, the photographer provides us with a close perspective of the pedestrian as opposed to the distant or – as David Harvey puts it – in a way impersonal from a skyscraper like view of the sociologist (Harvey, 1989). Consequently, Stacho’s effort resembles more a qualitative approach of the (visual) anthropologist. He is walking on a single street, enabling us to abstract the whole picture from the set of singularities.

In most of the photographs, people are presented as mere extras, random bystanders or passers-by. Mostly, we perceive them as blurred contours, flashing by the main protagonists of the story. Although, on some of the photographs, a person is the main subject, an epicentre of the situation captured. A man, standing in front of the winery, curiously looking into the objective of the camera, with a straw hat clutched in his hands. A shopkeeper in front of his shop, with his hands crossed on his chest, covering our view of the shop’s window. A young woman, looking up at the tram, waiting at the tram stop. When looking at these particular photographs, one becomes fully aware of the absence of the human factor in other pictures in this publication. Nevertheless, when we take a look at the specific person, we cannot help but wonder: what is their individual story? How do they feel in that captured moment in time? In what way do they perceive the society they live in and how does it treat them? Therefore, the photographer’s (intuitive) focus on material culture is a carefully and well-chosen one. It shifts the reader’s interest from the individual stories to the broader contexts. Hence, in singularities they look for the generalities. Simultaneously, as formulated by Tížik, the pedestrian’s perspective “gives us a way to identify with the space, and remove the distance customarily within the photographic image” (p. 334). According to him, this helps us to perceive the substance of urban life and understand its spirit.

The publication clearly shows that visual representations may be worth more than hundred words. The material environment and things reflect different times and regimes of the society before and after the
fall of the socialist regime in 1989. The pictures are assembled chronologically. A reader takes a virtual tour through the street building by building, while examining them in the flow of time. The peculiar but also distinctive commodity deprivation during socialism, often combined with visual representations of ever present political ideology – posters and signs related to various political events and occasions (anniversaries, celebrations or commemorations). Exactly this tension between the mundane context of commerce in combination with the visual representations of (in)authentic and obligatory political devotion gave Stacho the initial impulse to capture the shop windows in the long term: “When Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev died in 1982, ‘normalization’ was running full steam ahead. The shops windows on the street named Obchodná [Eng.: “Shopping Street”, the actual name of the street] all displayed his photograph, but I didn’t have nerve to put it all on film. Then 6 months later it all repeated on the February 9th 1984, when the next comrade, General Secretary Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov, passed away. Once more the whole street was awash with portraits. This was what initiated my Obchodná documentation,” (in the book pretext). In regard to this, Hrabušický writes about a paradox when the shop window as “a place to assemble the best goods available, as a means to lure and entice consumption, simultaneously become(s) a place of political manipulation and ideological subordination” (p. 317). However, this combination comes to me as a quite natural one: one illusion wed with another one. The siren call of consumption is an ideology in itself; it could be as two-faced and deceiving as the political one. A sort of the meantime or a non-time was represented by the short period of authentic expressions of folk creativity during the revolutionary months of 1989. The street with its shops and their windows became a setting or a theatre stage for what Hrabušický calls “the political graffiti” (p. 319), just to be succeeded by a contrasting overflow of commodities and influx of visual represen-
tations, characteristic for early capitalism. At that time, Stacho was considering concluding the project, but “capitalism hit Obchodná harder than the creeping of state socialism”. Therefore, according to him, the things got “once again interesting” (in the book pretext). From today’s perspective, it is obvious that his decision was the right one. Stacho’s longitudinal approach, which covers both regimes, the old and the new one, brings out specific dilemmas and contradictions of the societal change, reflected in material culture.

In regard to this, the authors of the theoretical essays in the publication also tend to analyse the shift of regimes through a set of paradoxes. For example, Hrabušický writes about the inner tension of visual representations as seen in the shop windows during socialism. He understands it as a result of two contradictory activities: conscious effort and unconscious displacement (p. 319). According to him, almost all new photographs are lacking this paradox. Also the other authors perceive the visual representations in socialism and postsocialism as full of contradictions. Hanáková writes about socialist uniformity and capitalist neglect, when shops of items (clothing, drugstore, pharmacy…) gave way to shops of brands (Turnanova, DM, Dr. Max…) (p. 324). According to her, in a sense a self-sufficient world was exchanged for a second-class space: without meaning and integrity. However, a reviewer in the role of the devil’s advocate may also look for the traits of Ostalgie in her own words, looking for a deeper meaning and substance in the time past while being unable to see one today. In the end of her essay, she perceives the street as an “unassailable proof” of how “we the citizens of Bratislava are still the same old… bumpkins” (p. 325), as she bluntly (but perhaps not without a speck of sentiment) puts it. In regard to this, I am more in agreement with Tížík’s perspective of Obchodná Street as a piece of wilderness and “sanctuary of real diversity” (p. 338) in the periphery of the somewhat sterile Potemkin centre of Bratislava. In the changes of time, what persists is the street’s lasting spirit. In the end, this is also reflected in Stacho’s photographs. Indeed, the ever changing street always remains the same.

A small world existing for its own, yet reflecting the wider contradictions and dilemmas of society.

SÓŇA G. LUTHEROVÁ, Institute of Ethnology of the SAS in Bratislava

Bibliography


PETER SALNER:
Požehnaný spravodlivý sudca: Súčasné formy židovského pohrebu
(Blessed Fair Judge: The Current Forms of Jewish Funeral)

For over two decades, the books and studies by Peter Salner have provided a great deal of empirical knowledge about the present and past life of the Jewish community in Slovakia and about the different aspects of change in the daily and holiday cultures and identity of its members. The fact that the author focused in the reviewed publication on the current forms of Jewish funerals (as there is more than one such form) is highly welcome. I understand the reasons of Peter Salner for avoiding this topic in the past, as described in his Introduction for the Reader. It is indeed a difficult task to study funeral rituals, as it can strongly affect both the respondents and the researcher. Participatory observation of a funeral ritual may also become emotionally exhausting and arduous for the researcher and for other participants, too, which is one more reason to appreciate this publication. I welcome this book also because this type of work was absent in the Slovak ethnological literature. With the exception of the study by Marta Kernátsková (1990), experts did not dispose of sufficient information about Jewish funerals in Slovakia in the past and the present. This situation thus limited the possi-
bilities of studying the image of culture in Slovakia from various confessional and ethnic perspectives.

The aim of this publication is to respond to several questions: What are the forms of Jewish funerals at present? In what ways are the changes in the forms of funerals expressed and what are the factors influencing such changes? In what way do funerals reflect the relationship (of the deceased and the survivors) to Judaism, tradition, the general population and (political) power? What can be said about the Jewish community in Slovakia and Bratislava and about the identity of its members through the example of funerals?

As a member of the Jewish Religious Community in Bratislava (JRC), the author has participated in over 200 funerals since 1990, and conducted a focused ethnological research of this topic at the turn of the years 2012/2013. Besides ethnographic interviews and observations, he also used archive official documents of the JRC in Bratislava and of the Central Union of Jewish Religious Communities in his publication, as well as secondary literature. It can be affirmed right at the beginning that Peter Salner has collected a great deal of empirical knowledge about the studied cultural phenomenon from the past and the present. His publication is easily read thanks to attractive information, its excellent interpretation and, last but not least, cultivated language and style.

The book opens with information about the Jewish community in Bratislava, including the JRC. The author focuses on the post-Holocaust period after 1945 and the transition period from 1990 until the present. In justified cases, he returns to the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century for explanation, for example, of the reasons and the course of the split of the religious community into the Orthodox and the Neolog currents. In this context, the reader can better understand what “unity” meant for the Jewish community, as established by Decree of the Slovak National Council No. 231 of 1945. This decree requested the creation of united Jewish religious communities in each town and their regulation and organisation through a single Central Union of Jewish Religious Communities (CU JRC) in Slovakia. It is interesting, though, that for rational reasons the CU JRC did not divide the Jewish religious communities into Orthodox and Neolog ones after 1989 and preserved the principles of a single JRC in each town. The reason behind this was the undesirable split of the communities and subsequent possible property disputes.

Peter Salner begins his study on Jewish funeral rituals with a chapter on cemeteries. He explains to the readers the relationship of Judaism to the dead which entails great respect to the deceased ones and untouchability of their remains. This has further consequences: except for extraordinary reasons, the exhumation of remains is prohibited, and the cancellation of graves or entire cemeteries is impossible. This chapter also contains an interesting and important part on Jews’ relationship to cemeteries. The author demonstrates it on the basis of testimonies – e-mails from the website Stretnutie (later Sveto). Peter Salner, however, describes the testimonies of only those respondents who come from Slovakia but have been living in emigration for longer periods of time. The readers thus lack information about the relationship to cemeteries of re-
spondents currently living in Bratislava or Slovakia, about their opinions on what needs or should not be done, how cemeteries should or should not be maintained, preserved, etc.

The next sub-chapter about JRC-managed cemeteries in Bratislava brings detailed information about the old and the new Orthodox and Neolog cemeteries, about their roles and changes. Especially valuable is information about the use of cemeteries by also “those alive”, for example, as a refuge during the Shoah. In this context, it is interesting to read the short note about what other functions a cemetery could play in its “role of the saviour” – for example, as a place for engagement or the wedding ceremony to prevent the spread of epidemics. It is a pity, however, that the author does not inform the reader about where such phenomenon was recorded. As he notes, no such cases are known in Bratislava. Is it information from the nearby territories?

The relationship of Judaism to death and graves is very well illustrated with the preservation of an old Orthodox cemetery in a rabbi district and the exhumation and transfer of other graves to a new Orthodox cemetery in 1942 – 1943. From the point of view of an ethnologist, an equally fascinating expert topic is the restoration of this place as Chatam Sofer Memorial at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries. The author analyses thoroughly and in detail the circumstances of the cancellation of the old unused cemetery in the World War II period, overcoming the presumption that the enormous efforts exerted by Jews related exclusively or mainly to the preservation of the rabbi district. The author's arguments are convincing. The reader, however, can raise certain questions with regard to the threat to the historic Jewish cemetery in Prague which was used by the author to support his deductions according to which the rescue of the cemetery in Bratislava concerned also “ordinary”, not only “rabbi” graves. Why did he use the example from the Czech Republic so obviously? Is it because it was one state with single legislation, with interconnected Jewish religious communities in Slovakia and the Czech lands? Or is it simply an argument from two communities of the same faith? The reader would need a closer explanation of this issue. In the summary, the author observes the common features and differences between the Orthodox and the Neolog cemeteries in Bratislava. The final demonstrations of epitaphs from the graves of the old Orthodox cemetery provide the reader with a certain idea about these special texts.

The sub-chapter Maintenance of Cemeteries brings information about the management of cemeteries by the JRC and about the opinions on this field of activities by the members of the community. As demonstrated by the author on the basis of correspondence, reports and other official documents of the JRC from the end of the 1940s, this topic met with great interest throughout many years and formed a closely observed area of activities of the community. The documents quoted by the author end in the 1980s. The question which automatically emerges is: what is the situation today and what are the current opinions of the members of the Jewish community about care for cemeteries?

For obvious reasons, the chapter Funeral forms the core and the largest text of the book. Peter Salner starts this chapter with an explanation of the funeral brotherhood Chevra Kadisha. It was a society which had certain functions related to funeral rituals and the maintenance of cemeteries. Its members, however, had many other duties: they cared for sick people, prayed by the dying ones, and gave consolation to survivors. As the author notes, thanks to these activities the members of the funeral brotherhood enjoyed respect in the Jewish community. What is interesting is the fact that the brotherhood “thanks to its own funding, often formed the opposite pole to the decision-making structures of the community” (p. 75). This opened for the author another field of research, observing the power relations within the community, potential tensions, and the possibilities of solving them. The next part provides a picture of the funeral brotherhood from 1945 until the political changes in 1989 on the basis of archive materials: gradual cancellation of the society as an independent legal entity in the 1950s, and efforts to restore it in the 1960s. The author also explains that the fu-
general brotherhood worked during the respective period, but was subject to the community’s competences, which was, certainly, reflected in its activities and the resolution of disputes. The situation remained unchanged after 1989. This means that several individuals – men and women – fulfil certain tasks which used to be carried out by the members of the funeral brotherhood during funeral rituals in the past.

In the sub-chapter *Dying and Death*, the author describes the principles of Judaism with respect to death, belief in the after-life and resurrection, as well as the rules for relatives and close ones on how to behave in the presence of a dying person. The information based on the publications by Frieder (1941) and other authors is completed with information about the execution or non-execution of acts and the observation of the rules of behaviour in Bratislava at present to a limited extent. The reader is thus not always able to distinguish whether certain acts and models of behaviour still exist or not, or what their form in the present.

In the sub-chapter on preparations for the funeral, the author provides short information on how a certain phase of the ritual looked like in a traditional Jewish community, i.e. staying with the dead body and praying until the funeral. Peter Salner explains the changes in this part of the ritual with the start of use of cooling boxes by undertakers and hospitals. The corpse of the deceased no longer stays at home or in a morgue, but is placed in a cooling box. The author’s information corresponds to the outcomes of my own research on funerals among Roman-Catholic believers, where the decline of praying and guarding of the deceased was due to the same reason: the body was supposed to be placed in a cooling box (Kiliánová, 2007). However, as I learnt in my research location, there was a certain transition phase of this part of the ritual which lasted for several years. The survivors let the body be brought home one or two hours before the funeral to be able to pray and take leave of the deceased. This finding points out the efforts to preserve all the phases of the funeral ritual and resistance to changes. In the west-Slovak municipalities in which I conducted my research, this transition period occurred at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s. When did this situation occur with respect to the Jewish community in Bratislava?

The author’s detailed descriptions of the next preparation phases of the funeral (washing the body, dressing the death, etc.) are highly valuable, as well as information about the actors of the ritual: who performs the ritual, what is the role of the JRC at present, etc. Peter Salner describes in detail the funeral as such: the carrying of the dead to the cemetery and to the grave pit, and its ritual placement in the grave. He also focused on the difficulties faced by the Jewish community today with regard to its efforts to ensure decent funerals. The descriptions of the burial seem to concern, in particular, rituals for deceased men. With the exception of a short note on page 108, the reader would not learn whether there were any differences in this part of the ritual between men and women, younger and older ones, single and married ones, etc. As evidenced in numerous sources of ethnological literature both from European and non-European cultures, there used to be differences on the basis of gender, age, status and possibly other criteria in funeral rituals.

I highly appreciate the parts on exhumation within the environment of a Jewish community and about cremation as a modern phenomenon after 1945. Peter Salner establishes a justified link to the changes in the values of Jews after the Holocaust. He concisely describes the actions by the JRC when dealing with the question whether it is possible or not to place burial urns with ashes in cemeteries. Finally, he focuses on the building of a columbarium for these purposes at the Neolog cemetery. The author demonstrates through concrete cases how cremation and the placement of urns cause different tensions and conflicts even today and how the JRC seeks to deal with these issues. The last part of this chapter presents religious holidays accompanied by recollections of the deceased, as well as other commemoration ceremonies of the Jewish community in Bratislava and in Slovakia.

In the *Conclusion*, Peter Salner summarises the knowledge about the different forms of present-day Jewish funerals which oscil-
late from traditional Orthodox through Neolog up to civil forms with some traditional elements or even without any links to tradition. This picture is completed with forms which fully contradict the principles of Judaism, such as cremation. On the other hand, this modern form became for some members of today’s Jewish community an expression of their relationship to their predecessors who died during the Holocaust or were burnt. On the basis of his research, the author affirms that funeral rituals demonstrate both the diversity of the Jewish community culture and tensions between the religious and secular parts of the identity of its members. He also believes that the community finds itself in the process of changes, but presumably not in a process of extinction.

The book is enriched with numerous, carefully chosen photos. They serve not only for illustration, but, as a medium of same importance, they complement and expand the information contained in the text. The book by Peter Salner is a very good study about Jewish funeral rituals at present. The author handled the unenviable task of the first-climber. He could not use any previous ethnological works from Slovakia, with the exception of the above-mentioned study by M. Kernátsová. In spite of that, he provides an overall picture of Jewish funeral rituals from the moment of death until burial. He did not leave out information about the period of mourning of survivors and about cyclical religious and other commemorative services. He points out a link between funeral rituals and changes in the Jewish community as a religious and secular group, and shows ritual as a social activity which relates to the value system of the community, is subject to changes, represents an arena of power and other disputes, and last but not least, it is a fundamental human service provided by the human community to the deceased and survivors.

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AKTUÁLNE METODOLOGICKÉ PRÍSTUPY A TÉMY V ETNOLOGICKOM/ANTROPOLOGICKOM BÁDANÍ

Hostujúce redaktorky: Miroslava Hlinčíková a Soňa G. Lutherová

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• klasické metódy etnografického výskumu a nové metodologické inšpirácie,
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