

Masaryk University
Faculty of Art
Department of European Ethnology

Ethnology for the 21st Century

Bases and Prospects

Marta Botiková & Miroslav Válka et al.

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List of Contents

Foreword	5
Marta Botiková – Miroslav Válka	
Historical Ethnology – a Heritage or a Perspective Research Direction?	11
Miroslav Válka	
Traditional Folk Culture and Ethnology	27
Juraj Janto	
Which Traditions Does the Teaching of Folkloristics at the University in Bratislava Follow?	39
Hana Hlôšková	
The Benefit of Diachronic Research from the Perspective of Folkloristics	55
Jana Pospíšilová	
Etnomusicological Crossroads at the Outset of the 21st Century: Hindsight and Prospects of an Ethnological Sub-Discipline on the Example of Two Workplaces in Brno	65
Klára Císaríková	
The Interest in the Period of Late Socialism: a Historical or a Contemporary Ethnology?	75
Oto Polouček	
The Ways of Association of Town Inhabitants as a Subject-Matter of Brno Ethnology's Research	85
Karel Altman	
Possibilities of Ethnological Research into the City of the 21st Century.	91
Jan Semrád	
The Practical Application of Folkloristics	99
Jana Ambrózová – Zuzana Beňušková – Margita Jágerová	

Ethnology and Busking. The Present and Future Prospects of Research among Street Performers: on the Example of Motivation for Busking	109
Martina Hanáková	
Socio-Economic Migration in Central Europe after 2004. Possibilities of Ethnological Research	117
Joanna Maurer	
Emigration, Integration, Repatriation. On Academic Freedom in Research, and on Practical Applicability of Research Results for State Administration . . .	127
Stanislav Brouček	
Interdisciplinarity in the Teaching of Ethnological Research Methods in Central Europe	137
Helena Tužinská	
The Waiting Room: A Case Study of First Contact with Foreigners at the Department of Border and Alien Police in Bratislava	145
Lenka Koišová – Marta Botiková	
Aesthetics of the Human Body from the Interdisciplinary Perspective	161
Alena Křížová	
Gender Theories in the Teaching of Ethnology: The “Nature vs Nurture” Debate	169
Tatiana Bužeková	
The Evolutionary Approach in Anthropology: A Study of the Body and Corporeality	181
Michal Uhrin	
Prospects for Medical Anthropology	193
Danijela Jerotijević	
Literature and Sources	203
Summary	239
Information about the Authors	249
Index	251

Foreword

The following publication reflects our intention to tackle themes in teaching ethnology, which may, survive the changes of generations as well as social changes on the threshold of the millennium. Our ideas, intentions and uncertainties are concentrated in the vision of themes which are included in the publication “Ethnology for the 21st Century. Bases and Prospects”.

The monograph is compiled as a team work written by university teachers, Ph.D. students and experts from academic institutions, who take part in lecturing, about the future direction in ethnology teaching at universities. We are aware of the fact that it is the university ethnology teaching and the high-quality education of university graduates that guarantee the future development of the discipline and its place among humanities and social sciences. Our major goal is to assess discipline’s position and mission in nowadays society, and to think of the concept of discipline teaching, the teaching methods, the themes that will have to be included in study programmes, and of how to present different concepts of the discipline.

The themes traeted from the field of historical and urban ethnology, folklore and folklorism, study of migrations, and medical anthropology are diverse. Their independent benefit consists in the fact that while studying them we found ourselves both in the rural and the urban environment, and that we, ethnologists from the Czech Republic and from Slovakia, met while working on them. It is not a programme declaration, as a mosaic could only hardly form a common line, but in its diversity it may represent and truly represents the common programme based on traditions and ongoing discourse of the discipline. Another benefit and uniqueness of our approach to the theme is that a single publication space brought together experts with long-years of professional practical experience, our beginning colleagues, and Ph.D. students discovering actual dimensions of our science for them and their audience.

The cohort of senior lecturers and professors, who have been acting as teachers for the longest period of time, includes the generation of people born in the 1950s. They slowly go into retirement, but pay attention to how our discipline has developed and what it can offer to social practice. This generation

grew – in a certain sense of the word – in a setting of privileged education. Not from the perspective of its content, but from the perspective of the time destined for studies, as in the biodromal section of their studies they could concentrate only on their study interests. Society declared that it was heading to “better times”. Although these did not come, it might have been the reason why the will to overcome obstacles developed willingly and resolutely. This generation features delight in political liberation, opened borders and new possibility of getting to know the near and far world. In the realm of additional education, the time came to understand new ways of organization and funding of science, to get computer skills and other new knowledge. While going forward, the view often focuses on the foothold of past phenomena and processes, through which they try to explain many process changes of the present; these are some of the common features.

The colleagues, who are one generation younger and who began their social practice two or three decades later, after the year 1989, had many skills interiorized, and the global outlook and communication was not so unbelievable for them. On the other hand, the life exposed them to many existence insecurities, which were not common earlier. Notwithstanding the forgoing, these people who are middle-aged today look calm but often also exhausted, while following and pursuing their goals.

And who are our young Ph.D. students and our students? Today, they are young people born at the turn of the millennium, for whom it is significant to use internet technologies, with which they are identified, as well as social media, which represent an important portion in their social life. However, many life contexts have caused their feeling of mental imbalance and jeopardy. All of us, moreover filled with our personal stories and experience, meet at one or the other side of teacher’s desk or at round tables. This is also one of the reasons why this team monograph has been written – with the intention to express our mutual understanding, and harmony of possibilities and expectations; and that no group of us would be afraid of accepting modern-day challenges as well as of safeguarding the best results of earlier knowledge.

As resulting from the title “Ethnology for the 21st Century. Bases and Prospects,” our publication tries to summarize the past development when the discipline was understood as a historical discipline, and to outline contemporary development trends, which bring ethnology nearer to sociocultural anthropology and social sciences. We respect this development line when dividing the publication into particular chapters. The “Bases” include chapters

which focus on historiography, while summarizing the hitherto development in different research themes. The two introductory texts contemplate the sense and mission of historical ethnology within contemporary research and lessons for beginners in the discipline (Miroslav Válka, Juraj Janto). Modern-day folkloristics deals with similar issues, even though folkloristics has developed in an independent discipline, however, with close ties to ethnology (ethnography). The chapter about the development of folkloristics in Slovakia and at Comenius University in Bratislava (Hana Hlôšková) shows many common points with the development in the Czech Republic. A similar thesis can be applied in the case of ethnomusicology, which – as a sub-discipline of ethnology – focuses on transformations in ethno-cultural traditions in general, in addition to its traditional music-folkloristic attitude (Klára Císaríková).

The section “Prospects” includes chapters which open up and explain new themes of ethnological investigations in current “post-modern” period. As written above, traditional folk culture as well as phenomena rooted in it and termed “ethno-cultural traditions” should retain their place in discipline teaching. Applied folkloristics required by current social practice can find its place in ethnology teaching at universities, when this is provided by a group of high-quality teachers (Jana Ambrózová, Zuzana Beňušková, Margita Jágerová). Folkloristic investigations open up new themes, such as buskers, street artists (Martina Hanáková), and methodological procedures submitting new knowledge about how tradition works at present; diachronic (repeated) research is one such (Jana Pospíšilová).

In addition to traditional folk culture, Czech and Slovak ethnology (ethnography) committedly focused on the research into working-classes, urban culture and modern-day village (with cooperative farming) after World War II. The ethnological research in socialist era (1948–1989) opens-up a methodological problem whether it is possible to speak about contemporary or historical ethnology (Oto Polouček). The research into urban culture resulted in a lot of high-quality publications at the Brno branch of the Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences. The research into the ways or communication and association of city residents in the Czech Republic has been for many years presented as a specific direction in ethnological investigations, which in last decades are considered to be a partial discipline – urban ethnology (Karel Altman). The contemporary research into city as an independent professional focus within modern-day ethnology is promising and it should have its firm place in teaching the discipline at universities (Jan Semrád).

Migration as a consequence of world globalization processes and war conflicts is a serious societal phenomenon and a political problem which concerns not only the Czech and Slovak Republics, but also other European countries. The above issue can be approached from different angles of view from the perspective of ethnology. We can perceive migration as a socio-economic phenomenon that relates to the formation of the European Union and open labour market, and for this reason it is a lifestyle for a part of the young generation (Joanna Maurer). On the other hand, migration of inhabitants and integration of foreigners arriving from countries with a different culture become a serious problem for state administration. There is a great deal of scope for ethnology and possibilities of using the results of research into foreigners in practice (Stanislav Brouček). Other possibilities of ethnological research are provided by alien police rooms, which – based on communication between foreigners and representatives of state institutions – imply the possibilities of integrating the foreigners into majority society (Marta Botiková, Lenka Koišová). Ethnological research relating to migration and inter-cultural communication requires a specific type of research preparation. Within the lectures and lessons for students, it is necessary to acquire pieces of knowledge that lead to changes in attitudes towards dissimilarity (Helena Tužinská).

The issues of body and corporeality are a multi-disciplinary theme. Ethnological approach in historical context deals with the aesthetics in body expressions, clothing and embellishment alongside the history of culture, as Alena Křížová states. Gender studies are becoming a new and quite frequent research subject-matter. They can be aimed at different directions. In our book, this theme is opened up by a chapter about the lineage theory where the author states that ethnology has dealt with family diversities and family roles since the beginning of its existence, but with focus on relatives and the family itself. Currently, the lineage theory serves for the interpretation of culture and social behaviour. Therefore, the lineage concept should be an obligatory part of ethnology graduates' knowledge (Tatiana Bužeková). Biological aspects of human existence are interrelated with social and cultural forms of human's life. For this reason, students of ethnology would be well-advised to have knowledge from the realm of evolutionary anthropology (Michal Uhrín). In Western Europe and in the United States, medical anthropology is one of well-established anthropological sub-disciplines. Due to a significant dimension of application, it can be used for ethnological research in the environment of socially disadvantaged groups, migrants, etc. (Danijela Jerotijević).

The team monograph “Ethnology for the 21st Century. Bases and Prospects” tries to assess the position and mission of our discipline in the present-day society, and to bring up the concept of ethnology teaching to cover the current discourse and different concepts of the discipline.

Marta Botiková – Miroslav Válka

Historical Ethnology – a Heritage or a Perspective Research Direction?

Miroslav Válka

Even though we speak about Czech ethnology and its theoretical and methodological direction, we must be aware of the fact that the discourse of this scientific discipline has undergone several stages of development, which have been reflected in the discipline's official name used in the university and academic spheres, and in titles of discipline-specific journals,¹ institutions² and organizations.³ On the one hand, the older names, such as *národopis* [≈ a description of the people] and *ethnography*, are often used in journalism like synonyms, on the other hand they show semantic differences in the history of the science and have their historical validity. However, we have to say that the abovementioned changes in the Czech environment reflected the Central-European development which differed from the situation especially in the Anglo-Saxon environment, where the research developed on the basis of anthropology and social sciences (Soukup 1996; 2004). The historical orientation, which defines the beginnings of the discipline, was confronted with other research concepts, and this became most evident upon social-political changes related to the critical years 1918, 1948 and 1989 in Czech history.⁴ If we observe the

1 *Národopisný sborník československý* [Czechoslovak Ethnographic Review] (issued 1895–1906); *Národopisný věstník československý* [Czechoslovak Ethnographic Journal] (founded in 1906, today *Národopisný věstník* [Ethnographic Journal], a press platform of the Czech Ethnological Society); *Československá etnografie* [Czechoslovak Ethnography] (issued 1950–1962); *Národopisné aktuality* [Current Events in Ethnography] (1964–1991) and *Národopisná revue* [Journal of Ethnology] (issued since 1992) as periodicals issued by the National Institute of Folk Culture in Strážnice.

2 Seminar for Ethnography at Charles University in Prague, Departments of Ethnography and Folkloristics in Prague and Brno, Institute of Ethnography and Folkloristics of the CSAS.

3 Czechoslovak Ethnographic Society (founded in 1891), Society of Czechoslovak Ethnographers at the CSAS (established in 1956), today Czech Ethnological Society as a covering organization of Czech ethnologists from the museum, academic and university spheres

4 These data concern the formation of the Czechoslovak Republic (1918), “Victorious February” connected with Communist coup d'état (1948), and “Velvet Revolution” that terminated the era of state socialism and affiliation of Czechoslovakia to the Eastern (Soviet) political bloc (1989).

recent ethnological production, the changes in paradigm are more than obvious (Janeček 2015). Does therefore the discipline's original historical approach have a place and justification in contemporary Czech ethnology?

This question can be answered by recent publications which are outcomes from scientific projects observing Czech ethnology from the methodological and methodical points of view (Pavlásek and Nosková eds. 2013; Doušek et al. 2014; Nosková 2014), or by historiographical texts focused on the situation of the discipline in the 20th century (Kandert 2002; Jančář 2014) or only in the second half of the last century, i.e. in the period of socialism (Woitsch and Jůnová Macková et al. eds. 2016), or by those who deal with teaching the discipline at universities (Válka et al. 2016) and with the situation in academic institutions (Pospíšilová and Nosková eds. 2005; Kiliánová and Zajonc 2016). The possibilities of the historical approach to cultural phenomena in the pre-industrial village, which initiated the Czech ethnography's interest, have been brought up by two recently published publications, one of which has attempted a further synthetic view of the traditional culture of Czech ethnic group with the application of the discipline's well-proven systematics (Tyllner et al. 2014), but the other one chose a debatable approach in categories, such as autochthony, stability, innovation, differentness, and unity (Doušek and Drápala eds. 2016).

Czech ethnography and development of its discourse

It can be roughly said that the Czech term “národopis”⁵ relates to the beginnings of discipline's development in the 19th century and the first half of the last century, even though the use of this term can be seen even later. Like in other Central-European countries, the term has its roots in the interest in folk literature, which was monitored from national-emancipatory, literary and scientific perspectives (Horák 1933); an important role played the oldest history called “antiques” perceived in Slavic contexts as well as cultural specifics of ethnographic groups of residents (the folk), whose regional identity was confronted with created national identity (Jeřábek 1997).

The institutionalizing of the discipline was gradual and the Czechoslovak Ethnographic Society (1891), which was to manage the discipline's research work,

5 An incorrect translation of the German word “Volkskunde”. The corresponding Czech terms “lidopis”, and “lidozpyt” [a description of the folk] occur in professional literature, but they have not been accepted in general.

became its platform (Smrčka 2011: 6). One of its tasks was the organization of the Czechoslavic Ethnographic Exhibition in 1895;⁶ the Exhibition was preceded by regional exhibitions throughout the Czech lands, which led to the development of national movement with emancipatory and ethno-identification features (Brouček 1979), but on the other hand it was marked by the idealization of folk culture and the Czech nationalism (Pargač ed. 1996). The exhibits concentrated in Prague became a basis for the Czechoslavic Ethnographic Museum, founded in 1896; the museum and a periodical issued by it became the major centre of scientific work in the discipline.⁷ The profile of the research work is witnessed by *Český lid* [The Czech Folk], another central discipline-specific journal established in 1891 and edited by the cultural historian Čeněk Zíbrt and the archaeologist Lubor Niederle; the originally intended wide concept of the journal was narrowed down to ethnographic and culture-historical themes represented by Zíbrt and regional researchers (Kunz 1960). The journal focused on domestic Czech material, but it overlooked more general themes as well as theory and methodology of the discipline, for which the critics reproached it. For this reason, this sphere of Czech ethnography was addressed by the *Národopisný sborník československý* [Czechoslavic Ethnographic Review], and from 1906 the *Národopisný věstník československý* [Czechoslavic Ethnographic Journal] edited by the literary scientist and folklorist, university professor Jiří Polívka who elevated the journal to European level (Veselská 2008).

How did the theoretical-methodological basis of the new discipline develop? The widest definition of the discipline's subject-matter required "a universal, complete and scientifically deepened depiction of our nation, all its aspects, all its layers and all its life" (Kovář 1897: 2), but simultaneously it was aware of the fact that the core of the nation is formed by people, and therefore "demography is the most important part and the basis of ethnography" (Kovář 1897: 6). This concept, whose author the cultural historian Emanuel Kovář, one of the central figures of the Czechoslavic Ethnographic Exhibition, was, became the basis for the first ideological suggestion of a proposed encyclopaedia (Kovář 1897). Due to its width, this concept was never implemented, and

6 The term "Czechoslavic" was an opposite of the term "Deutschböhmen", as the Germans living in the Czech lands were called; since the interwar period, the Germans have been called "Sudeten Germans". The term "Czechoslavic" is used in titles of disciplinary periodicals, an ethnographic museum and a society.

7 In 1904, the Czechoslavic Ethnographic Society merged with the Czechoslavic Ethnographic Museum, and as a consequence of this the Society of the Czechoslavic Ethnographic Museum was established (Smrčka 2011: 59).

Karel Chotek's new concept already works – within the Program soupisu národopisného [Programme of Ethnographic Inventory]⁸ – with a narrower approach, which included the traditional culture of “folk classes”, i. e. rural peasant population, in whose way of life Czech national specific features were beheld (Chotek 1914).

As resulting from essays published in journals and books, the discipline aimed at the reconstruction of extinct or disappearing traditional culture of the Czech village. Even though it proceeded from the fieldwork in the past and obtained information at among living respondents, the focus on the past led to the selection of persons among survivors, members of the oldest generations. The clearly historical aiming is obvious especially with Čeněk Zíbrt, a trained cultural historian, editor and publisher of Old-Czech relics and independent works focused on the history of traditional dress, folk costume, annual customs and dance culture (Melzer 2012). Even though the first attempted syntheses, which relate to the Czechoslovak Ethnographic Exhibition (Klusáček et al. 1897) or which concern the bounds between Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia as part of the compendium *Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild* (1896, 1897),⁹ feature historical orientation and try to reconstruct the traditional forms of folk culture, they only describe the latest development stage and do not take into consideration older historical forms.

Zíbrt's culture-historical direction was – together with the philological-historical approach – one of the basic directions in the ethnographic research in many European countries, and it related to researchers' university education. However, the researchers' works are marked by nationalism and ethnic theory, which linked cultural phenomena and their genesis with particular ethnic groups (Frolec 1970–1971). The ethnic theory was also reflected in the Czech environment, where it became a basis to resolve antagonistic Czech-German (German-Slavic) relations. Czech folkloristics, which was more distinctly

8 On the Programme of Ethnographic Inventory worked also Lubor Niederle. Within this Programme, the historical Czech lands (Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia) were divided into regions, where the collected ethnographic materials were to be published in the form of regional monographs and to serve for a planned encyclopaedia of the Czechoslovak people. In Bohemia, the areas were defined in geographical sense, and in Moravia, the zoning was based on existing ethnographic areas (Chotek 1914).

9 The work *Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild* includes – besides natural circumstances, history, economy and stylish art – folk culture of particular lands of the monarchy, treated based on the ethnic principle. As authors in the volume Bohemia are mentioned Alois Jirásek, the ethnographer and archaeologist Lubor Niederle, the musicologist Otakar Hostinský; the ethnographer František Bartoš, the court counsellor Viktor Houdek, and the secondary-school professor Josef Klvaňa are mentioned in the volume Moravian and Silesia.

integrated in the European science, applied specific research methods through its ties to the literary science (Horák 1933).

Czechoslovak ethnography between world wars and its theoretical background

In new political and social conditions after World War I we witnessed further theoretical-methodological shift in the already constituted social discipline in the independent Czechoslovakia. After Karel Chotek had been appointed Professor of general ethnography at Comenius University in Bratislava in 1920, ethnography became a university scientific discipline (Podolák 1991; Paríková ed. 2011). Chotek educated the first generation of Slovak and Moravian graduate ethnographers, and he also conducted fieldwork in Slovakia and elaborated a programme for Slovak ethnographic inventory (Chotek 1924). After he had left for Prague in 1932, he delivered lectures on the discipline at Charles University in Prague and his ethnographic seminar educated the first Czech students and moulded Prague school of ethnography (Petráňová 2016). He also gave lectures on the discipline within relative subjects (Jeřábek 1993; Pavlicová 1993).

Apart from the culture-historical approach, which was represented by Zíbrt's *Český lid* [The Czech Folk], renewed in 1924, the strict historical approach to the phenomena of folk culture, especially folk art and architecture, got to theses about a passive acceptance of higher classes' stylish culture, and to opinions underestimating the creative abilities of folk classes, which was a response to romantic ideas of the age of folk culture's phenomena from the time of the Czechoslovak Ethnographic Exhibition (Mencl 1927). Some researchers, not only for the abovementioned reason, accentuated new theoretical-methodological procedures, which were offered by functional structuralism (Šourek 1942).

The effort to anchor the discipline in terms of theory and methodology is documented by words spoken by Antonín Václavík, a Chotek's student in Bratislava and one of the leading representatives of Czechoslovak ethnography between world wars. Václavík spoke out against artistic-historical methods applied to assess folk art, and against the combination of ethnography with geography; this happened at congresses of Slavic geographers and ethnographers. Václavík characterised the interwar period as a not-anchored and methodologically not clarified from the perspective of theory (Václavík 1952: 142).

Příručka lidopisného pracovníka [Handbook of an Ethnographer] (1936) by Drahomíra Stránská, private senior lecturer and a research fellow from

the Department of Ethnography at the National Museum in Prague, is one of the few works written in the interwar Czechoslovakia. Stránská understood ethnographic research and working with its results as a comprehensive matter, so historical sources were only one part in addition to fieldwork, cartographic method and functional aspect: “In addition to historical reports and typology of contemporary life, an ethnographer should take notice of other aspects. He/she should observe the life not only statically, its current situation, but dynamically, how new phenomena have developed, and he/she should pay attention to their functions, to their role in the life of the people and how the people view it” (Stránská 1936: 17). The work also includes a detailed systematics of folk culture as a basis for its treatment in a monograph, and a throughout bibliography of ethnographic literature.

The scientific rigorous accuracy of interwar ethnography is demonstrated by synthetic works published within the *Československá vlastivěda* [Czechoslovakia in All Its Aspects], which was to represent the science of new democratic state. In the volume *Člověk* [The Human Being] (1933) Jiří Horák brought up the historical development of ethnographic research with focus on folk culture of Czechs and Slovaks, but too much factography caused that assessing judgements and general development trends were suppressed. The volume *Národopis* [Ethnography] (1936) written by Karel Chotek and Drahomíra Stránská dealt with realia of tangible and social culture. It proceeds from the discipline’s traditional systematics, focusing on the traditional phenomena of tangible and social culture in the historical Czech lands, Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia, supplemented with demographic data in the introduction. Because Czechoslovak ethnography adhered to the abovementioned programme’s focus on folk culture of the national community, the concept of European ethnology developed by the Swedish scientist Sigurd Erixon could not find a place here. The concept promoted general comparatistic research into the culture of European continent as a parallel to the research into other continents (Jeřábek 2013: 61).¹⁰

At the end of World War II, the Slovak folklorist Andrej Melicherčík wrote the *Teória národopisu* [The Theory of Ethnography] (1945), which submits well-

10 In the Czech and Central-European environments, this term and interpretation were accepted only in the 1990s, after political changes related to the fall of the Iron Curtain. Even though the term “ethnology” was not unknown in domestic science, it was not accepted on a wider bases, in contrast to e.g. Slovenia, where the central disciplinary journal’s title was *Ethnolog* [The Ethnologist] from 1926. See Slavec Gradišnik, Ingrid. 2000. *Etnologija na Slovenskem. Med čermi narodopisja in antropologije*. Ljubljana: Založba ZRC SAZU.

founded information about intellectual development of the discipline, and transformations in its theoretical-methodological basis, in which the author used the knowledge he gained during his study stay in Leipzig. He remarks to the discipline's theory that "ethnography with its general focus resulting from the nature of material, is not a science of the past, but exclusively a science of living materials of current days" (Melicherčík 1945: 131). For this reason, the ethnographic research addresses the contemporaneity ("synchronous ethnography") and the rural environment is not a sole bearer of ethnographic phenomena, as he says. However, among methods used in ethnography he mentions the historical method, which tries to resolve the theme of age and origin of folk culture's phenomena (Melicherčík 1945: 82). In the work, he also deals with the relation between ethnography and sociology, and ethnography and ethnology, but he does not take into consideration the project of European ethnology.¹¹

Concept of socialistic ethnography as a historical science

A crucial change in the development of Czechoslovak society and discipline, which can be described as discontinuous, happened in connection with the political development in Europe after World War II. The new political-social situation in Czechoslovakia and the affiliation to the Soviet (Eastern) bloc introduced historical-materialist Marxist philosophy as a binding platform into the theory of social sciences. This was accompanied by class-based approach to social issues, and sharp criticism of "bourgeois science". New ideological direction of the discipline was outlined at the 1st and 2nd national conferences of Czechoslovak ethnographers, held in Prague in 1951 and 1952. Otakar Nahodil became the leading figure of Marxist ethnography in Czechoslovakia (Petráňová 2017). The principles of the new ethnographic science, built up on the foundations of historical materialism, were formulated, and the interwar "bourgeois" ethnography was criticized with the focus on Antonín Václavík's and Karel Chotek's outputs (Nahodil 1951: 52).

The terms "ethnography" and "folkloristics" became official names of the discipline for the second half of the last century, which was supposed to develop

11 During the World War II and the existence of the independent Slovak state, volumes devoted to folk culture were published within the work *Slovenská vlastiveda* [Slovakia in All Its Aspects]. The conception of these volumes reflects the period role of the folk and its culture in society. They were written by the ethnographer Rudolf Bednárik (1943) and the folklorist Andrej Melicherčík (1943).

in accordance with the Marxist concept of Soviet science: “The contemporary forward-looking ethnographic science, represented mainly by Soviet ethnographic school, is nothing but part of Marxist-Leninist historical science” (Nahodil 1951: 54). Its methodological principles were explained in works written by the then leading ideologist Otakar Nahodil (1950), or in cooperation with Jaroslav Kramářik (1952). This “looking-forward” programme should be implemented by the *Československá etnografie* [Czechoslovak Ethnography] journal, led by Otakar Nahodil as an editor-in-chief: “For this reasons, one of the principal tasks of the journal will be to equip our workers in the field of ethnography and folkloristics with the most important theoretical knowledge. And this development of work in the realm of theoretical research will undoubtedly be ‘the major force to remove detrimental hangovers from the bourgeois idealistic science, especially the ahistorical trends as well as the influence of cosmopolite, nationalistic and otherwise pernicious ideas’, as mentioned in the Resolution of the 2nd nationwide ethnographic conference” (Nahodil 1953: 1).¹²

The socialist ethnography’s research range was extended by the culture of working classes¹³ and the contemporary (cooperative) village, as this focus met the criterion “of a real science that resolves important and ongoing issues and that is based on the Marxist-Leninist world view” (Nahodil 1953: 1). Although the observation of traditional folk culture’s phenomena continued, its mission was re-defined with the emphasis on looking-forward phenomena (Fojtík 1952). The works published were adapted to the new doctrine (Václavík 1959). The research into phenomena of spiritual culture, i.e. issues of religiosity and belief, underwent a specific development. Due to promoted atheism, the relevant works feature an antireligious character and fought against superstitions and obscurantism (Nahodil and Robek 1959). Despite the mentioned ideological pressure, Antonín Václavík and his students tried to continue the research into traditional folk culture, applying fieldwork methods (Václavík 1959), and this direction, interrelated with historical sources, appeared stimulating (Válka 2010).

Socialist ethnography in Czechoslovakia included a complex historical-comparative discipline, even though in Western Europe, where social and

12 Researchers’ greatest attention should be paid to the study of the contemporary way of life and culture of the Czech and Slovak folks, to Slavic and foreign ethnography, to issues of the history of ethnography and folkloristics, to discussions of methodological nature on serious and questionable issues of everyday scientist work, and to the contemporary methodology of research work (Nahodil 1953).

13 In the beginning he focused on miners, as miners – from the perspective of class-based perception of society – were understood as a vanguard of the working class due to their political awareness.

cultural anthropology developed, ethnography was only a fieldwork method, and collection and systemization of materials. Because the term “ethnology” did not correspond to the ideology, it was replaced by the term “foreign (non-European) ethnography”. The new conception of Czechoslovak ethnography and folkloristics, adapted to Soviet science as to its model, emphasized the research into tangible culture, which was supported both by ideological premises based on the theory of the “base and superstructure”, and by pragmatic reasons resulting from the extinction of the phenomena of traditional culture upon the nationalisation of land.¹⁴ Besides agrarian issues focused on the typology of ploughing tools, yoking the cattle, forms of grain harvest, and viticulture, it was the research into vernacular architecture and folk dress, crowned with syntheses and regional monographs that reached its peak at that time. Karel Chotek tried to justify theoretically the historically-oriented ethnography. He describes the main features of folk culture, and uses particular examples from traditional farming to prove the validity of ethnographic material as a historical source (Chotek 1966).¹⁵ Similarly, Dušan Holý and Václav Frolec, Václavík’s students at the university in Brno, declare ethnography as a science which endeavours to reconstruct the development of culture: “The particularity of ethnography as a science studying folk culture in its historical development consists in the endeavours to discover general trends in the development of individual cultural expressions, and especially in the disclosure of peculiarities – whether of ethnic and regional character – in which folk culture of particular regions or ethnic units differ in many ways” (Frolec and Holý 1964: 2–3). However, they are aware of the fact that “the ethnographic disciplines as historical disciplines will not be history in the common sense of the word“ (ibid: 6).

The research into contemporary rural and urban environments led to the discussion about the relationship between ethnography and sociology, which found a polemic platform on the pages of the *Český lid* [The Czech Folk] journal (Holý and Stuchlík 1964). The work *K teorii etnografie současnosti* [Towards a Theory of the Ethnography of the Present] (1971) by Olga Skalníková and Karel

14 The nationalization (collectivization) of the countryside, thoroughly aligned with Soviet model in Czechoslovakia in the 1950s, was a necessary pre-condition for the construction of the Socialist society. This was accompanied by repressions against “kulaks” – prosperous farmers, who refused to enter agricultural cooperatives, and hitherto village elites (Válka 2011: 102–104).

15 In the book, Karel Chotek mentions one of the definitions of the discipline: “According to an older brief definition of the discipline, ethnography is a science which describes and explains the life and work of rural people in all aspects of tangible and spiritual culture alongside societal relations, both in their space spreading, and time layering.” (Chotek 1966: 271).