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# SLOVENSKÝ NÁRODOPIS

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- Z OBSAHU: R. STOLIČNÁ: Alimentárne tabu v svetových náboženských systémoch  
M. MENCEJ: Predstavy o živote po smrti u starých Slovanov  
D. BELKO: Magické predstavy, opatrenia a praktiky v humánnej etnomedicíne  
H. HLÔŠKOVÁ: Kategória minulosti v rozprávačskej stratégii  
D. LUTHER: Research in towns and the formation of urban ethnology in Slovakia

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Preklady Martin Styan

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## BOOKREVIEWS-ANNOTATIONS

## RESEARCH IN TOWNS AND THE FORMATION OF URBAN ETHNOLOGY IN SLOVAKIA

DANIEL LUTHER

*Daniel Luther, CSc., Institute of Ethnology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Jakubovo nám. 12, 813 64 Bratislava, Slovakia*

The ethnography of towns, as we have usually referred to ethnographic research on urban communities, is developing with a search for an adequate thematic orientation and methodological approaches, into an independent sub-discipline of ethnological research. The first work of trained ethnographers originated in the 1960s and was aimed first of all at the environment of "greater Bratislava". The first integrated conception of an ethnographic understanding of the problems of urban settlements, worked out by K. Fojtík on the pages of *Slovenský národopis* in 1965, could be an appropriate theoretical starting point for making more precise the present direction of urban ethnology in Slovakia. An emphasis on research about older periods and the application of historical methods to the interpretation of the objects of study is still characteristic of urban ethnology in Slovakia. The demand to learn about the development of phenomena is emphasized.

The ethnography of towns, as we have usually referred to ethnographic research on urban communities, is gradually developing, with a search for an adequate thematic orientation and methodological approaches, into an independent sub-discipline of ethnological research. This process is perceivable especially in recent years, when the choice of problems researched in the urban environment began to diverge somewhat from the main stream of ethnological research (rural society) in Slovakia. What are the circumstances and causes of this divergence, what is the methodological development of ethnographic research in towns, is the introduction of a new general designation „urban ethnology“ only a technical question of the adaptation or modification of specialist terminology? These are the questions, which we ask when considering the present state of urban ethnology in Slovakia.

If we review the bibliography of Slovak ethnography and folk-lore studies, which records the publications of these disciplines since the beginning of the 20th century, we can make a brief review of the degree of interest of our predecessors and ourselves in urban communities. The number of published works from the environment of the towns or cities is relatively large (unfortunately we do not have a separate bibliography). In the topographical index we find large and small towns from all parts of Slovakia, but with more detailed

tracing of the content of the articles we find that information about settlement and architectural development, various forms of craft production, exhibitions, museums, performances by folk-lore groups and similar subjects predominate. Accounts of thematically defined phenomena which fall into the well established classification systems of ethnographic and folk-lore research occur in smaller numbers. Limitations of the classical thematic orientation and methods of research, which do not enable penetration by well established points of view into the life and culture of the urban environment are clearly seen here. Where there was no typical folk architecture, traditional costume, farm work, self-sufficient type of material culture and self-production of spiritual culture and art, it is as if the object of research is lost. The well-established orientation to the traditional (relatively unchanged, archaic, inherited) and folk (unprofessionalized and collectively preserved) aspects of culture and way of life did not find comparable possibilities for study in the more dynamically developing urban communities. And in addition as M. Leščák emphasized, the rural community as the main bearer of folk traditions, was not sufficiently researched in the period of the professionalization of this scientific discipline. A preference for so-called preserved researches on traditional folk culture in the village environment, which shifted research on towns to the periphery of ethnographic and folk-lore interest was associated with this.<sup>1</sup>

Towns, their history and culture, especially interested collectors of general information about their homeland, who especially collected topographical, archaeological, historical, art-historical, linguistic data, information about the buildings and architectural development of towns and so on. They also collected some ethnographic and folklorist data. They are published mainly in regional publications. There are occasional older monographic works of general information: Detva (1905), Brezno and its surroundings (1928), Kremnica, Nová Baňa and its surroundings (1934), Bardejov and its surroundings (1935).

The content of ethnographic data, collected in these older, but also more recent monographic works, only marginally touch the basic mission, which could be given to urban ethnological research: to do justice to and describe what is characteristic of the life and cultural expressions of people in towns, rather than in the countryside, to give an image of the different professional and social structures, activities of the inhabitants, their life style, the coexistence of these internally differentiated social units and so on. That is to concentrate attention on a different thematic area, than that to which the classical ethnography of smaller rural communities devotes itself.

### **Industrialization – urbanization – urban folk classes**

The circumstances which led to more intensive sociological, social – anthropological and ethnographic interest in urban settlements are illuminated by the work of K. Fojtík and O. Skalníková.<sup>2</sup> The first research of this kind in Europe and the USA comes from the environment of industrial areas, with the working class as representatives of the urban folk classes. They were a result of the social demand to recognize the working and living conditions of this mostly immigrant population, mainly on the periphery of towns, with which many serious social problems were associated. Thus an isolated work about the proletarian population in the urban quarter of Dornkappel originated from the environment of Bratislava between the wars.<sup>3</sup> However these circumstances did not fall within the conception of ethnography in the period between the wars. They researched certain types of culture with an emphasis on archaic forms, and these were mostly not preserved in urban communities.

Ethnographic research on the urban working class and industrial areas was carried out under the influence of changes in the methodological orientation of Czech and Slovak ethnography after 1948. This was connected with the reevaluation (and widening) of the con-

cepts of the folk and folk classes, which at that time represented the recognized, but already questioned, object of ethnographic research. While in Bohemia research was oriented towards the cities and industrial agglomerations, in Slovakia research on the working class began in the environment of the village. Žakerovce, a village with a preserved traditional folk culture was a good model of the formerly widespread overlapping of peasant and working class employment in the Slovak countryside. In the 1960s, the interest of ethnographers shifted from traditional cultural forms to the „present“ of developmental processes. This brought into the foreground the problem of the influence of industrialization on folk culture, in the context of which, the necessity of researching urban forms of life and culture was observed. The result was a study concerning Košice.<sup>4</sup> In the second half of the 1970s, research was carried out on mining areas, and there was specialized research on working class areas in smaller urban and suburban settlements.<sup>5</sup> However research on the working class was not connected with comprehensive research on towns, but was directed towards one social class, towards the special characteristics of its way of life and culture, to the transfer and preservation of traditional, rural cultural models, adoption of urban cultural forms and so on. It is necessary to say that although it was an ideologically preferred theme, it did not acquire a distorted propagandist character in ethnographic works.

### **The Ethnography of Cities**

The first work of trained ethnographers originated in the 1960s and was aimed first of all at the environment of „greater Bratislava“, where especially the marginal villages and quarters represented a traditional research environment (settlement, ethnic composition, craft and wine producing traditions). They continued many older and more recent sources in the historically oriented disciplines and the general history of the city, which also influenced their basic methodological conception.

The scientific research theme of „ethnographic aspects of the modern urban family“ was a new conception, by which the Ethnographic Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences began to formulate a subdiscipline, provisionally named „urban ethnography“ at the beginning of the 1970s. In contrast to his predecessors, its leader, P. Salner aimed especially at the urban core of Bratislava, the city understood as an ethnically and socially many layered whole in a synchronous analytical picture. This meant a change in the well established methodological research.<sup>6</sup> In these years S. Kovčevičová started extensive documentation of the gradually cleared and improved old quarters of Bratislava, as vanishing documents of the folk culture of the city.<sup>7</sup>

When making ethnographic interpretations of research on Bratislava, they began to look for different theoretical starting points for research in the urban environment. For example during the first more detailed analysis of the development of the ethnic structure of the city, the overcoming of historical – demographic descriptions and the uncovering of the problem of ethnic relations is noticeable.<sup>8</sup> In interpretation of the results of research on folk urban quarters, the urbanist and architectural points of view are overlaid by investigation of the social composition and cultural features of urban and non-urban groups, that is the problem of the „folkization“ of the city.<sup>9</sup> In this way a justification was found for wider ethnographic interest in the city environment.

A methodological shift in the ethnographic perception of the urban community appeared in the published studies in two monothematic issues of the periodical „Slovenský národopis“ (1985 and 1987), which are aimed at the Bratislava environment. The first set of studies from 1985 supported the working out of two further significant research projects, which

were then carried out by the Bratislava ethnographic institutions. The first was team research by research workers from the Institute of Ethnography of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, in the new housing estates of Bratislava.<sup>10</sup> The basic scientific problem was to find the connections or differences in the culture of celebrations of the mainly incoming inhabitants of the Bratislava housing estates with their places of origin, and so exactly approach the problem of the integrity of the urban community, adaptation and assimilation in the urban environment and so on.

The second research project was carried out by research workers from the Department of Ethnography and Folk-lore studies of the Philosophy Faculty of Comenius University in the villages of the surroundings of Bratislava. They should be a sort of laboratory for the study of contacts of the city with the village, an environment where it is possible to research the mutual influences so to speak at first hand: „ethnographic research on suburban villages not only studied the folk culture and the way of life of people only from the point of view of its development in the interior of the individual villages, but also from the point of view of the mutual contacts between these villages, and above all from the point of view of the position of the suburban villages in the development of mutual relations between the city and the village“.<sup>11</sup> However the published works contain only partial contributions to a more detailed knowledge of some aspects of the functioning of the urban social organism (the questions of ethnic development, migration for work and others). More of them are oriented towards the internal social and cultural environment of these originally independent villages.

The thematic framework of the whole first set of studies, devoted to the ethnography of Bratislava supplemented the renewed and completed older collections of data concerning the problem of the historical development of the ethnic and settlement structure of the city. The above mentioned three methodologically different groups of articles are a sample of the search for an ethnographic understanding of the problems of a city.

The second set of studies from the environment of Bratislava was published by „Slovenský národopis“ two years later.<sup>12</sup> The stimulus here was the research project: „The life and housing of the urban family in the first half of the 20th century“. Apart from the introductory characteristics of the ethnic and demographic development of Bratislava, it involved a thematically wide approach to the problem of the housing and family life of the inhabitants of the city, the cultural calendar and ceremonies, society activity and the professional orientation of tradesmen. From the methodological point of view, it is possible to describe them as historical analyses of selected (isolated) social and cultural phenomena. The emphasis on the period between the wars arose from the need to learn about the social and cultural environment of the previous historical stage as background information for a better understanding of the following period of development. This was also determined by the relatively clear methodological conception, in the context of which phenomena are understood as processual, changing in the context of the social environment and period.

### **Ethnography of the small town**

A distinction between cities and towns accompanied all attempts at an ethnographic understanding. This caused the formation of two more or less separate currents of urban ethnographic research. This clearly derives from the fact that in the past the urban settlements of Slovakia were mostly small, and it was only in the period of industrial urbanization and the influx of population to the towns that their demographic characteristics changed. For example in 1869, only Bratislava (46,540 inhabitants) and Košice (21,742) could be regarded as large towns or cities of the period, while only a few others had more than 10,000



inhabitants (Banská Štiavnica and Banská Belá, Komárno, Prešov, Nitra, Detva and the surrounding farm settlements).<sup>13</sup> The historically prevailing agricultural character of towns in Slovakia (including the mining towns) also confirmed the relationship with rural settlements. Apart from their agricultural activity, they had the functions of craft and commercial centres. Exclusively craft and commercial centres were relatively rare.<sup>14</sup> Apart from size and economic function points of view, the different historical – legal positions of towns played a role. Small towns behaved outwardly as more homogeneous units, but cities were ethnically, socially and culturally heterogeneous.<sup>15</sup>

Primary importance was attributed to studying the functions of rural towns. This resulted from their close connection with the wider settlement system, from their central importance in the economic, social and cultural life of ethnographic regions, which makes them important factors for understanding the development of traditional folk culture. At the same time the necessity of researching the towns themselves was also emphasized. As V. Frolec emphasized, in a comprehensive look at the historical and legal position of towns, their size, material and spatial form and facilities, specific functions, and also at the town as a social unit and cultural space, „the ethnographic problem of the rural town is closely connected with the historical and sociological aspects“.<sup>16</sup>

The first significant results of this methodological orientation are two volumes of the periodical „Venkovské město“<sup>17</sup> (1986, 1987), where apart from Czech articles, we also find contributions from the environment of the Slovak rural towns. In these, the larger group of authors thematically oriented themselves towards the problem of urban – architectural values, demographic development, social structure and relationships, contacts between the town and village, starting from historical methods. Fewer concerned themselves with synchrononous analysis of contemporary phenomena (customs, free time). The distinctness of these methodological approaches corresponds to the emphasis on the historical – ethnographic or sociological – ethnographic context of the studied phenomenon. In the next volume of this series (Město – prostor, lidé, slavnosti)<sup>18</sup> an orientation to describing the environment of the towns by means of descriptions of phenomena in a certain historical period or in a cross section of their historical development also prevailed.

### **An orientation to urban ethnology**

The publication of „Taká bola Bratislava“ (Bratislava was like that) was a definite turning point in the development of urban ethnography.<sup>19</sup> Its form of expression is usually described as popular – scientific, but from the methodological point of view, by its method of collecting data, the critical evaluation, classification and interpretation of the data, provision of notes and documentary illustrative supplement, it fulfills expert standards. It represents Slovakia's first comprehensive look at the everyday life of the urban community. The choice of thematic areas: the life of the family and community, festivals and everyday life, societies, clubs, cafes, pubs, on the streets and squares and others, also corresponds to this. However a more detailed look shows that it is based on expertly conceived research on the family and housing, ethnic, confessional, professional and interest groups, family and calendar customs, the cultural calendar, activities in free time, traditions of wine production, use of premises in the city and its surroundings, the relationship of the bourgeoisie to the lower social classes (people on the margin of society) and other subjects. A flexible approach was achieved by a combination of ethnological generalization and archive sources with individual evaluations, inclusion of various, frequently also contradictory views and comments (obtained from conversations with informers or extracted from published sources), as

well as by the use only of unavoidable expert terminology. The publication is oriented towards specifically urban phenomena. It shows the internally differentiated social structure of the city in the first half of the 20th century and points to the principle of relatively harmonious coexistence. The approaches applied in preparing it, were also used by researchers in the cities of Brno<sup>20</sup>, Banská Bystrica and Košice<sup>21</sup>.

The publication „Taká bola Bratislava“ began a new stage of ethnographic research in the city environment. The fund of data uncovered various further unsolved scientific problems. The problem of social integration in the environment of Bratislava had already been known for a long time. The rapid growth of the population in the 20th century on its own already pointed to the need to research the processes of adaptation of the incoming population, preservation and interruption of links with places of origin, the creation of new (extra-professional) social relationships, identification and the influence of social institutions, which are decisive in this process. Although the research team was not prepared to solve this problem comprehensively, it at least succeeded in pointing to the difference between the natural undirected adaptation processes in the period of not so rapid growth of the city in the period between the wars, and the results of the unnatural mass immigration in the post war years, when many traditional social mechanisms assisting adaptation and integration into the urban community ceased functioning.<sup>22</sup>

In contrast to the previous general description of different aspects of the material, spiritual and social culture of the city in a limited historical period, here a scientific problem (processes of adaptation) is placed in the foreground. The essence of this problem is analyzed and interpreted on the basis of a selected area of the life of the community. The use of evidence of these processes from different historical periods (the period between the wars, the present, a cross-section of the 20th century) corresponds to the well established tendency to historical, sociological or social – psychological orientations. Therefore it is also possible to consider the adequacy of the methodological approaches to the selected problem, the use of further supplementary research methods and techniques, the qualitative or quantitative basis of the conclusions, the incomplete nature of the theoretical starting points etc.<sup>23</sup>

Similarly, research on towns, carried out since the end of the 1980s in Skalica, Pezinok and Trenčín<sup>24</sup>, as well as more extensive historical – ethnographic research in Liptovský Mikuláš<sup>25</sup> also start from a methodologically different conception. The formerly well established approaches regarded towns either from the point of view of their settlement, historical – legal, demographic and cultural development, or as economic and cultural centres connected with their wider surroundings. In the above mentioned new approaches, the town is approached as a defined internally structured social organism. The conditions and expressions of social differentiation, connections with general social processes, the socio-economic interests of professional, ethnic, confessional, interest and other groups are researched in their historical context. This approach is identified with the conceptions of research in cities. Emphasis on researching the social context of phenomena in the environment of the urban settlement removes the methodological justification for the distinction between cities and towns.

A further scientific problem centred on the actual name of the project „tolerance and intolerance in the cities of Central Europe“.<sup>26</sup> It involved international cooperation in the expectation of data and methodological gains. On the comparative level of the same or similar processes in other cities of the Central European region, it identified the political, economic, social and cultural context of the conflicts between different ethnic, confessional, professional, generational and interest groups in urban communities. It was found that in the

methodological approaches of colleagues from Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary an orientation towards analysis of the historical processes of the studied phenomena prevailed, while Austrian colleagues gave priority to the synchronous method of analysis of the phenomena in the selected time period.

The recently studied problem of the dynamics of social processes in the context of historic social changes also confirmed the changed ethnologically oriented conception of research on urban settlements. Analysis and interpretation of the mutual relationships between the global social processes, which occurred in Central Europe in the 20th century, and the everyday life of the inhabitants of cities is assumed.<sup>27</sup>

The progression from the collection and description of data about certain social or cultural phenomena to their theoretical interpretation suggests that the ethnography of towns and cities is gradually reaching the platform of urban ethnology. Therefore, in the present stage it is important to not only evaluate results, but also to clarify the orientation and methodological procedures of urban ethnological research.

### **The subject matter of urban ethnological research**

The first integrated conception of an ethnographic understanding of the problems of urban settlements, worked out by K. Fojtík on the pages of *Slovenský národopis* in 1965, could be an appropriate theoretical starting point for making more precise the present direction of urban ethnology in Slovakia. This recognized expert on these problems started from wider experience of research in towns and cities at home and abroad, and relatively clearly formulated the probable nature of the „specific character of ethnographic research in towns and cities“ in the collection and interpretation of data from all areas of the everyday and festival life of wide strata of the urban population *with special regard for local specialities, in an orientation to special forms of culture and life.*

The definition of the subject of scientific interest in the area of the everyday and festival life of a wide range of the urban population is too general and also appears in later definitions. P. Salner specified that it concerns the non-professional aspects of life and culture<sup>30</sup>, which more closely approached an ethnographic understanding. Here it is necessary to recall that the subject of interest also includes traditional forms of work and the customs of urban professional groups (e.g. traditional wine production, pottery and others), but the term „non-professional“ obscures this. It is clear that there is an attempt here to distinguish the material and non-material products of schooled (not inherited) professionalized activities and so indirectly leave in the centre of attention unschooled activities, associated with a non-literary tradition. However this narrows the subject of interest, since traditions handed down from one generation to another are only part of the varied life of the participants. A definition of urban ethnological interest in the boundaries of supra-individual (group) and stabilizing elements of the culture and life of the urban population could be a definite starting point. With this we also approach an understanding of a special category.

K. Fojtík specified the stated orientation in the sense that researching special features (distinguishing local traditions of old established communities and the cultural contribution of immigrants) unavoidably assumes „research on the conditions in which the process of long-term acculturation occurred“.<sup>28</sup> In these formulations he considered the demographic structure of modern large industrial cities with extensive representation of immigrant population. With the passage of time and the growth of locally born generations, we do not consider this factor to be decisive, for present needs it concerns a narrow definition of the problem. The ideas up to now confirm that:

a/ the process of influencing of cultures as one of the results of cultural contacts is a significant characteristic of urban societies. Research on the conditions for various forms of cultural changes (acculturation, adaptation, assimilation, diffusion and others) represents only one of the possibilities for understanding the specific cultural diversity of towns and cities;

b/ processes of cultural change occur by means of the contacts of various social groups, within a single social unit and outwardly, which presupposes interpretation of the social organism of towns and cities;

c/ apart from cultural changes, we also record significant signs of cultural stability in the environment of towns and cities. Local traditions, stereotypes of behaviour of social groups and others are examples of this. The study of „special features“ thus presupposes distinguishing of the general dynamic cultural processes and the conditions for preservation of traditional local forms (stabilization processes);

d/ we can also understand „special features“ in the sense that they represent social and cultural phenomena characteristic of the urban rather than the rural environment. By researching them we reveal the principles which are created, applied and spread by urban societies.

It is possible to conclude from this, that study of the special features of urban life and culture is not only an expression of the difference of research on urban rather than rural societies, where the study of general features prevails, but also brings a series of key theoretical problems, falling within the sphere of interest of ethnology. As K. Fojtík emphasized, „by concentrating attention on local elements of culture and way of life and ascertaining their functions in the general present-day life of large parts of the urban population, ethnographic research differs from the research of other social science disciplines“. It emphasizes the experience that it is necessary to research small social groups as basic bearers of traditions, and that it is also necessary to apply the comparative method, respecting the socially differentiated structure of the town or city.<sup>29</sup>

In spite of the stated necessity to research especially urban special characteristics and their function in contemporary society, the first ethnographic works, as is clear from the preceding descriptions, were oriented especially towards the development of the ethnic and social structure of the town or city, the forms and functions of selected phenomena in historically defined stages of development (especially the period of the First Republic), or to phenomena in the process of their historical development with an attempt to arrive at their present forms and functions. On the subject level, in a widely conceived picture, they gave priority to general features of the way of life and culture of the town or city, which has its methodological justification more in rural societies (culturally and socially more homogeneous). We do not consider this inclination as a misunderstanding of the problem, but as an unavoidable acquainting with the basic characteristics of the environment in which the researcher moves. We also find such a demand in the formulations of M. Leščák, which he submitted in the period of the most concentrated interest of ethnographers in research on Bratislava: the role of ethnographic research on the older developmental stages of the city is to trace the share of ethnic and social groups in shaping the special and general features of urban culture and way of life.<sup>31</sup> This orientation is unavoidable in the initial stage of research on the town or city, but historically oriented research with a modified thematic orientation has now reached more advanced stages, and a reorientation to the life and culture of the present day is already assumed.

An emphasis on research about older periods and the application of historical methods to the interpretation of the objects of study is still characteristic of urban ethnology in Slovakia. The demand to learn about the development of phenomena is emphasized. In contrast to this,

as A. Bitušíková observes in an analysis of foreign (American and Western European) urban ethnographic studies, „the historical approach, to which we are accustomed in our research, is relatively rare. The present state and the future is interesting“.<sup>32</sup> The application of some different methods and techniques of research also corresponds to this. Our role in future, apart from productive use of existing approaches, is to come closer to this trend.

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## VÝSKUMY MESTA A FORMOVANIE URBÁNNEJ ETNOLÓGIE NA SLOVENSKU

### *Resumé*

Prehľad etnologickej produkcie ukazuje postupný vývin metodologických prístupov k špecifickému prostrediu veľkých a malých miest. Vo veľkej väčšine starších prác boli v centre pozornosti tradičné (relatívne nemenné, archaické, zdedené) a ľudové (neprofesionalizované a kolektívne uchovávané) prejavy kultúry a spôsobu života. V predmetnej rovine sa uprednostňovali všeobecné javy, čo malo svoje metodické opodstatnenie skôr vo vidieckych spoločenstvách (kultúrne a sociálne homogénnejších). Táto orientácia neposkytovala v diferencovane sa rozvíjajúcich mestských spoločenstvách porovnateľné možnosti štúdia.

V prácach z obdobia systematickejšieho záujmu o mestské prostredie (70.- 80. roky 20. storočia) sa najčastejšie riešila problematika:

- a/ vývinu etnickej a sociálnej štruktúry mesta,
- b/ foriem a funkcií tradičných javov v historicky uzavretých etapách vývoja (najmä obdobie prvej republiky),
- c/ procesualnosti vývoja vybraných javov so snahou dospieť k ich súčasným podobám a funkciám.

Výsledkom je rad cenných poznatkov o historickom vývine etnografických, zriedkavejšie i folklórnych javov, ktoré umožňovali bádateľom oboznámiť sa s východiskovými charakteristikami prostredia.

V novších prístupoch sa mesto vníma ako ohraničený, vnútorne štrukturovaný sociálny organizmus. Skúmajú sa podmienky a prejavy sociálnej diferenciacie, súvislosti so všeobecnými spoločenskými procesmi, so sociálno-ekonomickými záujmami profesných, etnických, konfesionálnych, záujmových a iných skupín v historickom kontexte a pod. Oproti predchádzajúcim

plošným popisom rôznych stránok materiálnej, duchovnej a sociálnej kultúry mesta vo vymedzenom historickom období je v popredí vedecký problém (adaptácie, spoločenskej tolerancie a pod.), podstata ktorého sa analyzuje a interpretuje na podklade vybraných oblastí života spoločnosti. Zhromažďovanie dokladov k uvedeným procesom z historicky rozmanitých období (medzivojnové obdobie – prítomnosť – prierez 20. storočím) zodpovedá zaužívanému príklonu k historickej, sociologickej alebo sociálno-psychologickej orientácii. Tým dochádza k metodologickému priblíženiu k etnologickým koncepciám.

Pre urbánnu etnológiu na Slovensku je zatiaľ charakteristické uprednostňovanie výskumov starších období, ako aj uplatňovanie historickej metódy pri interpretácii skúmaných javov. Zdôrazňuje sa požiadavka spoznávať vývin javov. Pomerne málo skúma súčasný stav, pri ktorom sa v urbánnej etnológii uplatňujú odlišné metódy a techniky výskumu. Oproti všeobecným javom za produktívnejšie považujeme štúdium osobitostí (javy kategórie zvláštného), ktoré výstižnejšie charakterizujú život a kultúru ľudí v meste.

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