Conclusion

Andrej Gogora & Jaroslava Panáková

The collected texts in this volume highlight a deliberate and thoughtful application of contemporary methodological approaches to local and domestic issues. This reflects the evolving and engaging nature of Slovak ethnology and anthropology, disciplines that aim to skillfully integrate innovative research strategies while drawing significant theoretical and methodological insights from the specificities of the Slovak context. The drive for such advancements is often shaped by the pressures of academic internationalization, networking, and the aspiration to align with more developed neighboring countries. However, the irreplaceable significance of the local context remains central to these efforts—the domestic terrain and the complex realities of post-revolutionary Slovakia—which provides a distinctive and valuable lens for scholarly exploration.

The text by Justin Lane and Pavol Kosnáč analyzes the attempted assassination of Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico in the context of Slovakia's socio-political climate. The authors employ a mixed-method approach, combining a quantitative multidimensional and disaggregated dataset (V-DEM Project) to track domestic societal polarization trends with qualitative analysis of media coverage and public sentiment. The study examines the emotional landscape before and after the attack, utilizing data from the CulturePulse ARES tool, which monitors media discourse and emotional tone. Additionally, the research explores how different ideological groups framed the attack, highlighting how pre-existing societal divisions further deepened in the aftermath of the event. The Slovak context is crucial to the analysis, as the research examines the impact of political rhetoric and media narratives on public perception and emotional response to the attempted assassination, underlining the link between political violence and the erosion of social cohesion in Slovakia.

The chapter by Martina Wilsch and Miroslava Hlinčíková explores the housing experiences of Ukrainian refugees in Slovakia within the framework of the country's broader housing challenges and the temporality of refugees' displacement. The authors use a qualitative approach based on semi-structured interviews with Ukrainian refugees and public institution representatives, participant observation, and informal conversations. The study focuses on Bratislava and explores a diverse sample of refugees, including those living in various housing arrangements and experiencing different levels of vulnerability. This methodological approach allows for a nuanced understanding of how refugees navigate housing challenges and make sense of their situation within the specific context of Slovakia, characterized by an expensive private rental market and a lack of affordable, stable housing options, especially for vulnerable populations. By focusing on the local context of Bratislava and examining the lived experiences of refugees, the research sheds light on the interplay between national housing policies, individual vulnerabilities, and refugees' perceptions of temporariness in shaping their housing strategies and overall integration trajectories.

Ľubica Voľanská and Soňa G. Lutherová present an autoethnographic reflection on the complexities of conducting research within their domestic communities. They delve into the ethical and methodological challenges of balancing power dynamics and researcher subjectivity, particularly when pre-existing relationships influence fieldwork. Drawing on their own research on a Bratislava building and visual anthropological projects as case studies, they advocate for more participatory and reflexive approaches, emphasizing the fluid nature of researcher positionality and the importance of open dialogue with informants. The authors challenge conventional anthropological boundaries and promote slower, more thoughtful academic processes. Ultimately, they highlight the need for a constant reevaluation of the researcher's role and a more equitable partnership with research participants. Overall, the sources advocate for a more nuanced and reflexive approach to ethnographic research in Slovakia, one that acknowledges the fluid nature of researcher positionality, prioritizes ethical engagement with informants, and embraces both the challenges and opportunities inherent in conducting research 'at home'.

The text by Vladimír Bahna explores the theoretical perspectives of Marian apparitions and pilgrimages, synthesizing insights from Marian devotion and pilgrimage studies. It connects these perspectives to theories of religion grounded in cognitive and evolutionary sciences, with a particular focus on the concepts of communitas, contestation, costly signaling, and divergent modes of religiosity. The chapter examines how these theories intersect with the dynamics of Marian apparitions, highlighting how pilgrimages and apparitions functionally intertwine to generate religious enthusiasm and emotional experiences. It also investigates how these phenomena serve as arenas for the competition of diverse social, political, and religious discourses, particularly examining the Church's role in regulating and negotiating apparitional events. The chapter proposes an integrated perspective that recognizes pilgrimages and apparitions as powerful forces capable of creating voids in social authority, leading to both egalitarian bonding and opportunities for authority reclamation by various social actors.

Jaroslava Panáková's chapter advocates for the use of sensory methodologies in environmental anthropology, arguing that this approach generates qualitatively distinct knowledge. It opens with a historical overview of the study of senses

in anthropology, noting how senses have been studied across various thematic domains, such as religion, rituals, and linguistics. The author specifically highlights their current research in the Slovak Carpathians, which employs sensory approaches and multispecies ethnography to explore how local ecological knowledge may drive grassland biodiversity. This research integrates both nonverbal observations of interspecies communication and verbal expressions of sensory knowledge shared by farmers. The author contends that in-depth sensory ethnography is largely absent from existing research on Eastern European grasslands and aims to leverage their findings to deliver evidence-based guidelines for the ecological restoration, conservation, and management of this landscape.

The text by Andrej Gogora examines the potential of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI), specifically the ChatGPT model, to enrich metadata in digitally converted ethnographic research collections. The author focuses on the Collection of Research Reports (CRR) at the Institute of Ethnology and Social Anthropology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, a comprehensive archive documenting Slovak folk culture since 1946. The research methodology involves testing ChatGPT's ability to generate and enhance specific metadata elements, including titles, subtitles, keywords, abstracts, and location information, by analyzing a sample of six CRR documents. Framed within the Slovak context of ethnographic research, the study considers the historical attempts to computationally process the CRR and the specific challenges posed by the collection's diverse document types and often incomplete or inconsistently recorded metadata. This approach highlights the potential of GenAI to streamline metadata enrichment while acknowledging the need for careful documentarian oversight and consideration of archival principles, particularly in relation to the integrity of original records.

To conclude, this volume addresses pivotal themes such as social cohesion, migration, political polarization, and the preservation of cultural and environmental heritage, contextualizing Slovakia's unique experiences within broader European and global frameworks. It illustrates how interdisciplinary and methodological collaboration allows Slovak anthropology to offer a compelling counterpoint to dominant Western and Anglocentric paradigms, particularly regarding concepts like tradition, identity, and social cohesion. As the first in a planned series, this volume establishes a strong foundation for future research to integrate contemporary anthropological theories further and develop innovative approaches tailored to the Slovak context. These efforts promise to enhance the discipline's capacity to engage with complex global challenges while advocating for a society that values cultural heritage, fosters social justice, and supports environmental sustainability.