

Forum 12: City Culture, Urban Culture

Vladimir Abashev (Perm State University)

Mikhail Alekseevsky (State Republican Centre of Russian Folklore,
Moscow)

Maria Akhmetova (*Zhivaya starina* journal, Moscow)

Stephen V. Bittner (Sonoma State University)

Anatoly Breslavsky (Institute of Mongol, Buddhist, and Tibetan
Studies, Siberian Department of the Russian Academy of Sciences,
Ulan-Ude)

Benjamin Cope (European University of the Humanities, Vilnius /
Galerija Zachęta, Warsaw)

Heather Dehaan (Binghamton University, USA)

Megan Dixon (College of Idaho)

Dmitry Gromov (State Republican Centre of Russian Folklore, Moscow
/ Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Russian Academy of
Sciences, Moscow)

Natalya Kosmarskaya (Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian
Academy of Sciences, Moscow)

Mikhail Lurye (European University at St Petersburg)

Kirill Maslinsky (St Petersburg State University)

Mikhail Matlin (Ulyanovsk State Pedagogical University)

György Péteri (Norwegian University of Science & Technology)

Vladimir Poddubikov (Kemerovo State University)

Robert Pyrah (St. Antony's College, University of Oxford)

Irina Razumova (Centre of Humanitarian Problems, Barents Region,
Kola Peninsula Scientific Centre of the Russian Academy of
Sciences, Apatity)

Tanya Richardson (Wilfrid Laurier University)

Monica Rüthers (University of Hamburg)

Alexander Sadovoi (Sochi Research Centre, Russian Academy
of Science)

Mikhail Stroganov (Tver State University)

City Culture, Urban Culture

In the present 'Forum', we did not circulate a detailed questionnaire, but instead asked participants

- 1 to comment on the state of urban studies in their particular discipline, and
- 2 to identify what they saw as the most pressing issues for further study.

The comments that resulted appear below.

VLADIMIR ABASHEV**The Intangible Body of the City:
Working with Meaning**

Any historical city is effectively a memory storage device; it accumulates memory of a personal, historical, literary, mythological nature. The city is memory, the city is meaning. I will be talking specifically about this aspect of the city and the cultural practices associated with working with the memory of the city, with the semantic structures of memory. In the context of any discussion of the current methods of working with urban space (public art, flashmobs, and so on), what I am going to talk about will perhaps seem banal, especially as I will begin by pondering the city guided tour.

I think that for most people the term ‘guided tour’ automatically reminds them of their school days; something instructive and boring. ‘Boys and girls, we are now looking at a typical urban detached house of the first third of the nineteenth century, built in the style of classicism by the architect I. I. Sviyazev’, or something like that. Nevertheless, we will take the risk of reflecting on this traditional, almost museum-like, and retrospection-oriented, cultural practice, on the technique of familiarising oneself with urban space, and not so much in general terms but specifically in respect of Perm.

I was pushed in the direction of this subject by my personal, albeit brief, experience as a tour guide. On several occasions in 2008 I ended up having to show Perm to the most diverse groups of guests who were visiting from some of Russia's other cities, and also people from Great Britain, Switzerland, Holland, and even Brazil. And it was then that, for the first time, I encountered in practice a problem with which, until then, I had only been familiar from a theoretical point of view. What should I show them?

Whilst attempting to answer this question I propose we go on a brief excursion into the history and symbolism of our city.

Somewhere on the banks of the Kama, on the site of the Motovilikha factories, a grandiose artefact, a monument of the era of industrialism, lies hiding underground. It is a truncated cast-iron pyramid, 4 m in height and with a 5x5 m base. 630 tonnes of black cast iron weigh down on a base made of slabs of stone. The foundation, like a mighty pillar, descends to a depth of 12 metres, stretching down far beneath the level of the nearby river. This underground cast-iron pyramid resting on a stone pillar is an anvil block, or the block of a steam hammer. This gigantic hammer, with a force of 150 tonnes, was made for forging steel bars for large-calibre cannon barrels. At one stage it was the most powerful one of its kind in the world. It was designed and built by the mining engineer Nikolai Vorontsov, the first director of Perm's cannon factories. At the turn of the twentieth century, everyone who came to Perm from afar considered it their duty to go to Motovilikha and see the celebrated hammer. There was nothing else to see.

Generally speaking one can consider the construction of the hammer (it was put into operation in 1875) as a turning point in the city's history — a turning point both historically and symbolically. Under the blows of this wondrous hammer, the quiet, dozing provincial centre, almost devoid of any industry, and, unlike Yekaterinburg, having only administrative significance, started to turn into an industrial city, and, bit by bit, acquired the character and appearance that it currently possesses. In a certain sense Perm had already turned into Molotov by then, and the fact that it was officially renamed in 1940 does not appear random from a symbolic point of view. What was more random was the fact that a certain V. M. Molotov turned up just at the right moment, as a reason for its new name.¹

And here's something else that is important. In the fragile environment of the Perm community, which consisted of officials and members of the *meshchanstvo*,² this hammer forged a social activist

¹ *Molot* is the Russian for 'hammer', from which the surname Molotov (real name Vyacheslav Skryabin) was derived. [Editor].

² i.e. the free, urban lower classes. The point is that the inhabitants of Perm were divided into two distinct social estates, the other being the service gentry. [Editor].

group — the Motovilikha workers. In 1905 they were building barricades, and in 1917 they started building a new world. Incidentally, they took this hammer of theirs with them into this new world. In 1920 the Motovilikhites erected a monument on Gora Vyshka in honour of the fighters of the revolution. The monument reproduced the outlines of the famous hammer; that is to say it essentially became a copy of it. The people who built it buried in the body of the hammer an artillery shell with the remains of Stepan Zvonaryov, a participant of the uprising of 1905. Right up until 1975 they buried the participants of the Motovilikha uprising, as these passed away one after the other, by the foot of the monument. This memorial, with the cast of a hammer at its centre, became a sacral place in Soviet Perm. On its site, schoolchildren were ceremonially received into the Pioneers and the Komsomol and ceremonial mass meetings on days of significance took place. In 1969, the outlines of the hammer were put on the coat of arms of Soviet Perm. Thus, the Motovilikha hammer became the main, potent symbol of the city in its Soviet incarnation.

Meanwhile the original hammer had been dismantled back at the start of the 1920s, having been replaced by the replica — the monument on Gora Vyshka. The only original part — the cast-iron anvil block on the stone pillar — remained underground (due to the fact that it was too heavy to extract). One can imagine this incredible product of structural engineering slowly, by one centimetre per year, sinking into the bowels of the earth — a spell-binding picture.

I dare say that the underground cast-iron pyramid is one of the main sights Perm has to offer. A monument of the industrial era, with its pull towards mechanical cyclopism, and its peaks like the Eiffel tower and the grandiose Golden Gate Bridge. But the peculiarity of the Perm monument lies in the fact that no one has ever seen it. As an artefact it exists, but one cannot show it to people. In just the same way, one cannot show anyone the Permian period or even the Perm animal style.¹ The visual side of things is not nearly as rich as its meaning.

In a word, the situation with the pyramid can be seen as typical for Perm: a faintness of expression at variance with a wealth of content and meaning. When you end up having to play the role of tour guide you immediately come up against the question of what to show, and it transpires that there is nothing really that can be shown. In Perm, for example, there is not a single architectural structure or ensemble that could speak for itself, whose visuality would be self-sufficient and self-evidently expressive — look and be amazed. It is as if all the

¹ The Perm Animal Style refers to a manner of ornamentation used in the Bronze Age and early Iron Age for items such as combs, pins, etc.; the metalworkers who created these objects are thought to have been women, because smelting items have been found in women's graves. The animal decorations resemble those of the more famous Scythian metalworkers, a notable influence on them. [Editor].

architectural styles are represented, but as faded, secondary, and almost depersonalised replicas. You have classicism, you have eclecticism, you have the modernist style, there is constructivism, but all of this is presented (how can I put this?) in a very economical and reductive manner. It turns out that the most visually impressive component of the city is not so much the urban as the natural. The view of the Kama from Sobornaya Ploschad. Or the river valleys and wild ravines of the Yegoshikha and Danilikha.

However, while there is nothing to be shown in Perm, many things can be said about it and, if one possesses the appropriate set of skills, one can beguile and grip one's listener. One could say that this is not something unique to Perm. One could cite the general visual faded nature of many other provincial cities. This is true in part. But this is a matter of the extent to which this inconsistency between content and expression is expressed, between the appearance and meaning of a city. When it comes to Yekaterinburg, for example, one cannot say that there is nothing to be shown there.

As for Perm, it turns out to be more of a verbal city than a visual one. Perm needs to be told as a story, and this is its essential peculiarity. In one way or another, certainly in terms of the quality and quantity of the self-descriptions, Perm truly stands out from other provincial cities. Back at the start of the nineteenth century, in the context of a project initiated by the Imperial Free Economic Society, the director of the Perm classical high school, N.S. Popov, offered a description of the Perm province that was widely regarded as superior to descriptions of other provinces in terms of quality and completeness. In 1809, in the foreword of the second edition of Popov's work, it was specifically noted that in comparison to the previously published descriptions of the Astrakhan and Caucasus provinces the description of the province of Perm appears 'significantly more extensive' [Khozyaystvennoe Opisanie 1811: 3]. Almost 200 years later, a 12-volume series of books is now being published in Perm with the distinctive title 'Perm as a Text'. And this publication promises to be unique in its own way, in terms of the idea behind it. This library of books about Perm is thought of as the 'most extensive' study of the meaning of Perm, of Perm-ness.

In the foreword of Popov's work there is a remarkable, unique description of the province of Perm. 'In terms of its location' it 'does not offer those pleasant, fertile places and objects, in the usual vernal attire, which are *visible*' [here and below the italics are mine — A.V.] in the 'southern' provinces of Astrakhan and the Caucasus. However, 'in terms of the wealth of its products and the importance of its industry it is much more *absorbing*, and in terms of the majestic products of its hardly penetrable treasures, hidden behind an uninterrupted line of mountains, and in terms of [its] vast forests

which abound in useful wild animals, *it has an incomparably greater impact on one's intellect and imagination alike*' [Khozyaystvennoe opisaniie 1811: 3].

It is remarkable that what we are talking about now was distinctly recorded in the above text: the contrast between visual fullness (*visible*) and that which is hidden (*hardly penetrable*) in a thicket of riches. A long time ago authors were already talking about Perm in terms of a narrative: Perm is striking for the mind and the imagination and makes for a fascinating story. Spot on.

It is for this reason that an actual encounter with Perm, when not the subject of one's imagination or a story, often leads to disappointment. That which has been imagined about Perm turns out to be incomparably richer than the meagre and faded texture that greets the eye. Of course, this is a well-known and nationwide phenomenon: 'The foreigner's haughty gaze / will not understand or notice / that which shines dimly and mysteriously / through your humble beauty.'¹ But this is a matter of the extent to which the contrast between the visible and the concealed, the surface and what lies beneath, is expressed and concentrated. In the case of Perm, it is starting to constitute the entire nature of the city. And we can comprehend the unique operating mechanism of this inconsistency. It is rooted in the act of the city being given its name. The newly-born city was given an ancient name with a rich history and mythology, the name of a vast land, and the city adopted the mythology and history of this name. From there stems the development of the tense relationship between the visible and the concealed in the city space that is so typical of Perm.

It is precisely for this reason that the excursion is so topical for our city, as a unique cultural practice that combines verbal narrative with physical action — moving about the city's space. Perm needs to be recounted, exposed in words and played out in one's movements about the city. The city tour is, in terms of its audience, one of the most democratic and wide-reaching cultural practices not only of mastering the city space, but also reconstructing its meaning. But in order for the excursion to fulfil its creative potential the tour and the tour business need a new ideology and technique.

As regards ideology, I can see some of the following elements that need to be worked on.

Firstly, the approach to determining the audiences of the excursion needs to be re-examined. Today the city tour is viewed primarily as a product for guests; for people who come to the city from other places and need to be generally acquainted with it. But the city's

¹ Variation of an 1855 poem by F. I. Tyutchev that begins 'These poor villages...' [Trans.].

inhabitants should also become important addressees of tours, requiring special attention. The potential of the audience of a tour directed at city-dwellers is huge, from secondary school students to a family enjoying a relaxing Sunday. In this segment of users, the tour could become a substantial factor in consolidating the city community on the basis of the knowledge and understanding of the place where they live. And, of course, the tour, understood as a practical guide to the city, should also become a teaching tool in the school education system.

Secondly, the subject itself of the tour needs to be re-examined. What is the tour about? And here there needs to be a transition from fact to meaning, from stating and labelling things to free interpretation, from traditional local history to urban hermeneutics, from the poor surface into the meaningful depths. A tour organised for city-dwellers, for those people for whom the city is the habitual environment of their day-to-day existence, should reveal unknown and fascinating things in what they have grown accustomed to and seems very ordinary. The purpose of a tour when it is understood in this way is to reveal entertaining stories and deep meanings in the ordinary and familiar, to turn a known space into something enigmatic. A tour understood in this way is an adventure and a foray into the city's semantic space. It is an act of collective reading of an enthralling city novel.

Here is just one illustration of this. The so-called House of the Cheka Agents [Dom Chekistov] (built in 1934) on Sibirskaya Ulitsa does not offer much from an architectural point of view. A decent specimen of constructivism, but there are much better ones to be found elsewhere. What is more, a conversation about constructivism is interesting only for a select audience. But what an amazing trip into history presents itself to the average inhabitant of the city if he imagines the history of this Perm 'house on the embankment'.¹ How in October 1941, in a five-bedroom apartment on the top floor, at three in the morning, a telephone rang. How the secretary of the Molotov Regional Party Committee, having stood to attention, listened to a familiar, somewhat muffled voice: 'Comrade Gusarov, Moscow's fate lies in your hands'. How, unable to sleep, the first secretary wandered around his vast room all night, repeating this phrase he had heard as if it were a prayer. And how Perm's military factories got to work after the conversation on that night.

Thirdly, it is important to fully exploit the performative potential of a tour that is stored in its structural features. In its own way, a tour is truly unique as a cultural practice of mastering the city space. A tour

¹ The popular name for a famous apartment block in Moscow, built in the Stalin era, that was the home of leading Party officials. [Editor].

organically unites a tactile, physical experience of the city with its intellectual study; it combines an account of the city and physical movement in the city space. In a certain sense any tour is a concerted action, a show, a performance, and the tour guide is the director of the action which constantly develops, sometimes unpredictably. The active nature of the tour determines the precise nature of the tour narrative. It has performative potential. To put it another way, a tour not only reveals the semantic reality of a city but also creates it, building new structures of meaning.

References

Khozyaistvennoe opisanie Permskoi gubernii po grazhdanskomu i estestvennomu eya sostoyaniyu v otnoshenii k zemledeliyu, mnogochislennym rudnym zavodam, promyshlennosti i domovodstvu, sochinennoe po nachertaniyu Imperatorskogo Volnogo Ekonomicheskogo obschestva vysochaishe odobrennomu i Tschaniem i izhdeveniem onogo obschestva izdannoe. [An Economic Description of Perm Province, Dealing with Its Civic and Natural Condition with Reference to Agriculture, Mineworking, Industry, and Home Management, Written to the Plan Drawn Up by the Imperial Free Economic Society by Royal Approval, and Published by the Efforts and at the Expense of that Society]. SPb.: v Imperatorskoi tipografii, 1811. Ch.1.

MIKHAIL ALEKSEEVSKY, MARIA AKHMETOVA, MIKHAIL LURYE

1
2

In the anthropological disciplines there has always been a dual perception of the study of urban culture.¹

It has been understood firstly as the study of those cultural phenomena that do not originate or primarily operate within the traditions of the rural population or peasantry. In other words, *urban* in this context should be understood as ‘non-rural’. This division of the object of folkloristic and ethnographic research into two opposing spheres (only one component of the opposition being marked) is connected with the history of the disciplines: as is well known, they were from the beginning oriented towards the description and study either of exotic and ‘primitive’ cultures, or else that of the ‘common people’ (i.e., above all, the peasantry) of the

Mikhail Alekseevsky

State Republican Centre
of Russian Folklore,
Moscow
alekseevsky@yandex.ru

Maria Akhmetova

Zhivaya starina journal,
Moscow
malinxi@rambler.ru

Mikhail Lurye

European University
at St Petersburg
mlurie@inbox.ru

¹ The more concise and convenient expression *urban studies* is traditionally applied to sociological investigations.

nation. Therefore, when the gates of liberty were thrown open to the humanities in our country in the late 1980s and early 1990s, this dimension too was reprioritised, so that the study of urban cultural phenomena (mainly of the second half of the twentieth century) was particularly developed and became very popular. As a result, over a relatively short period the work of collection and study in the area of *urban folklore* and *urban ethnography* produced very serious results.¹

These studies all have two features in common. One is that this concept of the *urban* (defined by what it is not) includes almost everything except so-called traditional peasant culture, and, in particular, phenomena which in principle are devoid of any urban socio-cultural specificity whatsoever, simply because for the communities concerned the question of the sort of settlement that they live in is irrelevant (e.g. the tradition of temporary closed communities) or those which have for a long period (even if not originally) belonged equally to urban and rural traditions (e.g. contemporary jokes circulating orally). The other common feature of these studies is that most of their authors have carried over the categorical apparatus and methodological settings developed during the study of peasant culture into the typology and interpretation of *urban culture*, which is new to the scholarly tradition, and which has on occasion led to evidently strained interpretations and methodological slips.

Nevertheless, there has by now on the whole been a great deal achieved in this direction. One can say without any particular qualification that certain cultural phenomena which until recently were empty spaces on the map of Russian anthropology have over this period been extremely thoroughly described, for example the twentieth-century joke, the traditions of army and prison communities, the folklore of children and adolescents, the young people's subcultures of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, and some others.²

Secondly, in anthropology, if the subject of the research is thematically connected with the town — when the researchers are interested in cultural texts and practices in which a decisive role is played by urban realia or images — then that research is understood as *urban*.

¹ The main direction and character of the research is best represented by the collection of articles entitled [*Sovremenniy gorodskoi folklor* 2003] and prepared at the end of the 1990s in the course of work by the joint seminar headed by A.F. Belousov and S.Yu. Neklyudov. Besides this collective monograph, the same period saw the publication of several dozen works of anthropological research with the same thematic and methodological preferences.

² See for example [Arkhipova 2003; Bannikov 2002; Efimova 2004; *Poeziya v kazarmakh* 2008; *Molodezhnye subkultury* 2009; *Russkii shkolnyi folklor* 1998; *Uchebnyi material* 1989; *Shkolnyi byt* 1999; Shchepanskaya 2004] and many others.

Whereas in the categories of research described above it makes no difference which town we are dealing with, in this case it is essential to attach the research to a particular town or towns, because it is always the cultural specifics of an actual town, represented in its inhabitants' milieu, that are the subject of the research. Admittedly, the individuality of each case should not be regarded as absolute, insofar as different towns' cultural texts may be stereotypical on many levels.

In Russia this sort of research first developed in the context of local history, and scholars' attention was drawn above all to *urban legends* (as this term is understood in Russia, i.e. as traditions connected with the history of the town), which most obviously combined folkloric features with urban specificity and the idea of the uniqueness of a particular town's cultural image. Important milestones in this scholarly tradition were E.N. Baranov's collection *Moskovskie legendy* [Moscow Legends] (1928), and the first attempts to develop a theory in N.P. Antsiferov's works in the 1920s (at present it is the local historian of St Petersburg, N.A. Sindalovsky, who must be considered the most prominent heir to this tradition).¹

The end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first, a time of a sudden growth in interest in urban culture amongst anthropologists, saw a noticeable widening in the sphere of interests of researchers into the cultural specifics of the town. Most indicative in this respect is I.A. Razumova's article 'Neskazochnaya proza sovremennogo goroda' [Modern Urban Prose other than Stories] in the aforementioned collective monograph *Sovremennyyi gorodskoi folklor* [Modern Urban Folklore] (2003), where she first distinguishes between 'the common urban layer of oral culture' and 'urban folklore as such — the totality of texts of "urban" content, which are moreover connected with a particular town' [Razumova 2003: 544], and, secondly, includes within the second group not only historical traditions and anecdotes, but the reputations of particular loci within the town and minor forms of text connected with unofficial toponymy and urban rumours and gossip.²

At first such phenomena (as can be seen from the quotation) were analysed according to the usual categories of folklore studies and ethnography, taking the same course as the mass of urban anthropological research of that period. However, with time, and especially after special 'urban expeditions' (see below), originally also denominated as *folkloristic and ethnographical*, began to be conducted

¹ See [Baranov 1928; Antsiferov 1923; 1924; 1925; Antsiferov, Antsiferova 1926; Sindalovsky 2000; 2008].

² See also some of the articles in the same collection's section on 'Space in the modern city', where elements of modern *urban mythology*, such as persistent narratives and ritual practices connected with monuments, or urban toponymy, are examined on the basis of actual urban traditions.

at the turn of the century, it became evident that the conceptual frameworks of *folklore* and *popular culture*, even in their widest sense, were in principle too narrow to permit the simultaneous description of the system of local ideas, and the whole complex of the forms in which they were represented, and the pragmatic aspects of their operation. Firstly, in this case those amorphous texts which cannot be assigned to a particular genre are inevitably omitted from the material studied; secondly, persistent ideas and images connected with the town are regularly and systematically represented not at all in the spontaneous, variable forms in which they exist, but in institutionally produced texts and practices — forms intended for education, museum tours, propaganda, or holiday rituals, and also the individual works of local *littérateurs*.

Success in overcoming these methodological limitations was partly achieved through the development of the concepts of the *urban text* or the *local text of the town*, and corresponding methods of collecting and analysing the material. It should be noted that the term ‘local text’ (like its twin, ‘local myth’) began to be used at about the same time not only in cultural anthropology, but in literary studies, cultural studies and other disciplines, filling out its meaning in each of them. Within the framework of that approach to urban anthropological research which is being developed in particular by the authors of these lines, the local text is understood as the system of mental, locutory and visual stereotypes, persistent subjects and behavioural practices connected with a particular town and relevant to the community that identifies itself with that town. The diversity of the local text’s realisations in urban culture forces researchers to have recourse to methods from a variety of disciplines: according to this methodology, the anthropological study of local text is somewhere at the intersection between the study of identities, the folkloristic analysis of texts and the study of discourse.

It is obvious that understood this way the local text of a town is a particular instance of the local text of the dwelling-place with which a particular community associates itself, so that it is possible to speak of the local text of a village, settlement or region. The fact that researchers’ interest in the phenomenon of local text is primarily connected with towns is not accidental, and there are specific reasons to explain it. In the first place, every town, unlike rural settlements of various types, has in modern culture a presumption of uniqueness, an inimitable individuality to its ‘face’ and ‘character’. In the second place, local identity or identification with a particular settlement has a greater significance for the urban community than for the rural community, and accordingly the system of local ideas is more relevant in the first case. In the third place, towns and townfolk are more involved in the system of communication, as a result of which the community of townfolk is significantly more inclined than that

of countryfolk towards self-presentation on the one hand, and on the other towards reflecting upon the specific local features of its town. In the fourth place, it is in the towns that there is an evolved network of institutions (museums, literary societies, educational establishments, local mass media etc.) whose business it is to construct and transmit the local text and stimulate the local patriotism of the residents, and their activities result in a sort of local identity industry — publishing local studies literature, producing items bearing the local emblems, discovering and ‘canonising’ local worthies, writing songs and verses about the town, toponymic activities, creating websites etc.) All this has combined with the historical and academic reasons for the popularity of the urban direction within anthropological disciplines to ensure that the great interest in the study of local texts was directed towards urban material.

Specialised field research in towns (usually small towns) and settlements of an urban character began to be systematically carried out in the second half of the 1990s: one might mention the expeditions of the St Petersburg University Academic Grammar School to Tikhvin, Slantsy, Toropets, Staraya Russa, Gdov and Pikalyovo, of the Pushkin Leningrad State University to Priozyorsk and Lodeynoe Pole, of St Petersburg University to Myshkin, the Russian State University of the Humanities to Borovsk, the State Republican Centre for Russian Folklore to Murom and Krasnaya Gorbatka, the ‘Petersburg Judaica’ centre to Mogilev-Podolsky, Tulchin and Balta (in the Ukraine), Petrozavodsk University to Petrozavodsk and Medvezhegorsk, field research by I. A. Razumova and her pupils in the towns of Karelia and Murmansk Province, M. G. Matlin in Ulyanovsk, K. E. Shumov in Nytva and the inter-university expedition to Bologoe.¹

Not only was there a very great deal of material collected during these expeditions, which *en masse* permitted scholars to proceed from the analysis of particular cases to generalisations, but the methodology of anthropological collecting work in the modern town took shape, and our ideas about the nature and structure of the local text of a (provincial) town were developed and refined. Nevertheless, although (or perhaps because) the researchers working on them move in the same or similar academic circles, over ten years on there are still no collection programmes for fieldwork on urban local texts. Their absence both blurs the research landmarks, on the one hand, and on the other is evidence of the inadequacy of the generalising interpretations in the sphere of local texts.

¹ Materials from these expeditions were reflected in many works; we shall name only those directly connected with local texts: [Alekseevsky et al. 2008a; 2008b; Akhmetova 2007; Akhmetova 2009; Akhmetova, Lurye 2005; Akhmetova, Lurye 2006; Kuleshov 2001; Kuleshov 2004; Leontyeva, Maslinsky 2001; Lityagin, Tarabukina 2000; Lityagin, Tarabukina 2001; Razumova 2000 etc.].

A large proportion of the articles written on the basis of the fieldwork discussed above deal only with individual concepts or subjects (or groups of related concepts or subjects) of certain local texts or provide summary information about the local text of a particular settlement. However, there is as yet no monograph describing an urban text taken in isolation. The actual form of the description presents a certain problem: insofar as the local text is in many respects ephemeral, and does not exist in an integral state (shared by all the inhabitants of the locus), for a researcher to define it would in a way do violence to cultural reality. In this situation, one possible form of description of the local text is the dictionary, which should include data on the local symbols of identity, loci and toponyms, key events, personalities and communities of a single urban text with the necessary contextual commentaries (see [Alekseevsky et al. 2008a; 2008b]).

Nor are there any works tracing the formation and function of local texts and their components. In order to fill this gap we need research that would take particular fragments of a local text and follow the mechanics and logic of their transmission, transformation and variation in detail.

Furthermore, there is an acutely felt lack of comparative and typological research in this direction. The capacity for repetition and stereotyping of elements of local texts may be observed at various levels: the same formulae of identity are repeated (*N is a corner of Moscow/St Petersburg; N is a little X*, e.g. ‘Mogilyov-Podolsky is a little Odessa’; *N is X’s brother (or sister...)*, e.g. ‘Dmitrov is Moscow’s little brother’, ‘Angarsk is St Petersburg’s little brother’, etc.), microtoponyms, e.g. *Shanghai* for a densely populated building or locality, or a locality with much private building going on, or a building or locality whose inhabitants enjoy a dubious reputation; *Mudyshka’s factory* for a business the employees or products of which are badly thought of; *the Pentagon* for a building shaped like the Russian letter П, etc.); conceptual models (for example, defining provinciality as (quasi-)metropolitan status or a more general ‘centrality’, such as the idea of Perm as the centre of the world, or of Samara is the capital of the Povolzhye, or even the parodic formula *Tyumen the village capital*); scenarios and means of representation (for example, the participation of people dressed up as symbolic personages or *genii loci* in local holidays such as the ‘day of the town’, or the inclusion of local symbols in the verbal, visual or acted presentation of all kinds of different things, and their use in souvenirs, the names of local products, businesses, organisations, etc.¹), and

¹ For example, one of the symbols of Murom is the *kalach* [a type of bun], which appears on its coat of arms. Besides the recent renaissance in their production in Murom, there is a shop in the town called *Muromskii kalach*, *kalachi* play an important part in the ‘day of the town’ and tourist programmes, one of the local colleges has a KVN team called ‘Muromskie kalachi’, and so on. [KVN is a humorous television quiz. Trans.]

there is a common set of dominant ideas, subjects and motifs, structural elements and principles for the semiotisation of objects. There is an acute lack of research to summarise these regularities, particularly when one considers that a quite sufficient quantity of material seems to have been accumulated.

In conclusion we shall mention a number of trends in the humanities in Russia concerned with the study of the modern town which intersect with anthropological research into urban local texts. These are studies into cultural semantics and the mythology of space (including urban space) conducted within certain trends in cultural studies, sociology, philosophy, political studies and geography, including ‘humanities geography’, ‘contingent geography’, ‘mythical geography’ and ‘regional discursology’;¹ studies of the *features of urban dialects*, which are often felt to be elements of local identity;² studies of the *image of the town*, which, since the work of Kevin Lynch and his immediate successors, have also appeared in a number of Russian sociological and anthropological works (particularly in folkloristics).³

References

- Akhmetova M. V. ‘Vybor “mezhdru Peterburgom i Moskvoi”, ili diskurs o dvukh stolitsakh v g. Bologoe [The “Choice between Petersburg and Moscow”, or the Discourse on the Two Capitals in the Town of Bologoe]’ // *Antropologicheskii forum*. 2007. No. 7. Pp. 141–55.
- _____. “Russkost” kak topos “lokalnogo teksta”: sluchai Muroma [“Russianness” as a Topos of the “Local Text”: the case of Murorom]’ // *Vestnik RGGU. Seriya “Filologicheskie nauki. Literaturaovedenie i folkloristika”*. 2009. No. 9. Pp. 207–15.
- _____, Lurye M.L. ‘Materialy bologovskikh ekspeditsy 2004 g. [Materials from the Expedition to Bologoe in 2004]’ // *Antropologicheskoye forum*. 2005. No. 2. Pp. 336–57.
- _____, _____. “Malenkaya stolitsa mezhdru dvukh stolits” [“A little Capital between Two Capitals”]’ // *Otechestvennye zapiski*. 2006. Vol. 32. No. 5. Pp. 207–17.

¹ There is a fairly wide literature in this sphere, and in particular specialised periodicals devoted to its problems: the almanac *Gumanitarnaya geografiya [Geography and the Humanities]* (since 2004), and the electronic almanac *Communitas/Sobshchestvo* (since 2005). We can also mention a few works connected in one way or another with the topic of local identity and local texts: [Bogomyakov 2007; Zamyatin 2003; Zamyatin 2008; Zakharov 2009; Mitin 2007; Rupasov 2009; Savoskul 2009; Tyugashev 2003].

² See for example [Belikov 2010; Erofeyeva, Skitova 1992 (on Perm); Kolesov 2006 (on Petersburg); Prokurovskaya 1996 (on Izhevsk)] etc.

³ See, for example, I. A. Razumova’s recent book on the cultural images of the towns of the Kola Peninsula [Razumova 2009], and the studies of folkloric texts and ethnographical practices (both ‘traditional’ and ‘urban’) which are largely determined by geographical factors [Drannikova 2004; Kalutskov, Ivanova 2006; Ivanova, Kalutskov, Fadeyeva 2009].

- Alekseevsky M., Zherdeva A., Lurye M., Senkina A. 'Materialy k "Slovaryu lokalnogo teksta Mogileva-Podolskogo" [Materials towards a "Dictionary of the Local Text of Mogilyov-Podolsky]' // *Antropologicheskyy forum*. 2008a. No. 8. Pp. 419–42.
- [_____, _____, _____, _____.] 'Slovar lokalnogo teksta kak metod opisaniya gorodskoi kulturnoy traditsii (na primere Mogileva-Podolskogo) [The Dictionary of the Local Text as a Method of Describing the Urban Cultural Tradition (exemplified by Mogilyov-Podolsky)]' / Lurye M. (ed.) // *Shtetl, XXI vek: Polevye issledovaniya / Sost. V.A. Dymshits, A.L. Lvov, A.V. Sokolova*. SPb.: Izd-vo Evrop. universiteta v Sankt-Peterburge, 2008b. Pp. 186–215.
- Antsiferov N. P. *Dusha Peterburga*. [The Soul of Petersburg]. Petrograd: Izd-vo Brokgauz i Efron, 1923.
- _____. *Byl i mif Peterburga* [Petersburg: Myth and Reality]. Petrograd: Izd-vo Brokgauz i Efron, 1924.
- _____. *Puti postizheniya goroda kak sotsialnogo organizma: Opyt kompleksnogo podkhoda* [Ways to the Understanding of the City as a Social Organism: an Attempt at a Synthetic Approach]. Leningrad: Izd-vo "Seyatel", 1925.
- _____, Antsiferova T. *Gorod kak vyrazitel smenyayushchikhsya kultur: Kartiny i kharakteristiki* [The City as an Expression of Changing Cultures: Pictures and Characteristics]. Leningrad: Izd-vo Brokgauz i Efron, 1926.
- Arkipova A. S. 'Anekdot i ego prototip: genezis zhanra i proiskhozhdenie zhanra [The Joke and its Prototype: the Genesis and Origin of the Genre]'. Candidate of Sciences dissertation. M., 2003.
- Bannikov K. L. *Antropologiya ekstremalnykh grupp. Dominantnye otnosheniya sredi voennosluzhashchikh srochnoi sluzhby Rossiiskoi Armii* [The Anthropology of Extreme Groups: Relations of Dominance among Russian Army Conscripts]. M.: IEA RAN, 2002.
- Baranov E. Z. *Moskovskie legendy* [Moscow Legends]. M., 1928. Vyp. 1. (Staraya Moskva / Sektsiya o-va izucheniya Mosk.gub.).
- Belikov V. I. 'Leksicheskaya spetsifika goroda i regionalnaya identichnost: k postanovke problemy [Specific Lexical Features of the Town and Regional Identity: towards a definition of the problem]' // *Problemy kompyuternoi lingvistiki*. Issue 4. Voronezh: Voronezhskii gosudarstvennyi pedagogicheskii universitet, 2010.
- Bogomyakov V. G. *Regionalnaya identichnost "zemli tyumenskoi": mify i diskurs* [The Regional Identity of 'The Land of Tyumen': Myths and Discourse]. Ekaterinburg: Izdat. dom "Diskurs-Pi", 2007.
- Drannikova N. V. *Lokalno-grupповые prozvishcha v traditsionnoi kulture Russkogo Severa. Funktsionalnost, zhanrovaya priroda, etnopoetika: Monografiya* [Local and Group Nicknames in the Traditional Culture of the Russian North: Functionality, the Nature of the Genre, and Ethnopoetics]. Arkhangelsk: Pomorskii universitet, 2004.
- Erofeeva T. I., Skitova F. L. *Lokalizmy v literaturnoi rechi gorozhan* [Localisms in the Standard Speech of Townsfolk]. Perm: Izd. Permskogo universiteta, 1992.
- Efimova E. S. *Sovremennaya tyurma: Byt, traditsii, folklor* [The Modern Prison: Lifestyle, Traditions, Folklore]. M.: OGI, 2004.

- Ivanova A. A., Kalutskov V. N., Fadeeva L. V. *Svyatye mesta v kulturnom landshafte Pinezhya* [Holy Places in the Cultural Landscape of the Pinezhye]. M.: OGI, 2009.
- Kalutskov V. N., Ivanova A. A. *Geograficheskie pesni v traditsionnom kulturnom landshafte Rossii* [Geographical Songs in the Traditional Cultural Landscape of Russia]. M.: Izd. PFOP, 2006.
- Kolesov V. V. *Yazyk goroda* [The Language of the Town]. M.: KomKniga, 2006.
- Kuleshov E. V. ‘Sobiratel'skaya rabota v Tikhvine: aksiologiya gorodskogo prostranstva’ [Collecting Work in Tikhvin: the Axiology of the Urban Space] // *Zhivaya starina*. 2001. No. 1. Pp. 13–15.
- _____. “A Tikhvin togda malenkii byl...” [‘Tikhvin was Only Little Then...’] // *Geopanorama russkoi kultury: Provintsiya i ee lokalnye teksty*. M.: Yazyki slavyanskoi kultury, 2004. Pp. 161–78.
- Leontyeva S. G., Maslinsky K. A. ‘Gorod i turist: mekhanizmy samoprezentatsii “klassicheskoi” provintsii [The Town and the Tourist: the “Classical” Provinces’ Mechanisms of Self-Presentation] // *Provintsiya kak realnost i obyekt osmysleniya: Materialy nauch. konf. 29.08–01.09.2001*. Tver: Tverskoi gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2001. Pp. 76–86.
- Lityagin A. A., Tarabukina A. V. ‘K voprosu o tsentre Rossii (topograficheskie predstavleniya zhitelei Staroi Russy) [On the Question of the Middle of Russia: the Topographical Notions of the Residents of Staraya Russa]’ // *Russkaya provintsiya: mif — tekst — realnost*. M.; SPb.: Izd-vo “Tema”, 2000. Pp. 334–47.
- _____, Tarabukina A. V. ‘Spetsifika issledovaniya kultury malyykh gorodov [Specifics of the Study of the Culture of Small Towns]’ // *Zhivaya starina*. 2001. No. 1. P. 12.
- Mitin I. I. ‘Voobrazhaya gorod: uskolzayushchii Kasimov [Imagining the Town: the Elusive Kasimov]’ // *Vestnik Evrazii*. 2007. No. 1 (35). Pp. 5–27.
- Molodezhnye subkultury Moskvy* [Youth Subcultures of Moscow]: [Sbornik statei] / Gromov D. V., Martynova M. Yu. (eds.) M.: IEA RAN, 2009.
- Poeziya v kazarmakh: Russkii soldatskii folklor* [Poetry in the Barracks: Russian Military Folklore] (iz sobraniya “Boyan” Andrey Broido, Dzhany Kutynoi i Yakova Broido). M.: OGI, 2008.
- Prokurovskaya N. Ya. *Gorod v zerkale svoego yazyka* [The Town in the Mirror of its Language]. Izhevsk: Izd. Udmurtskogo universiteta, 1996.
- Razumova I. A. “...Kak blizko ot Peterburga, no kak daleko” (Petrozavodsk v literaturnykh i ustnykh tekstakh XIX–XX vv.) [“How Near to Petersburg, But Yet How Far” (Petrozavodsk in Literary and Oral Texts of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries)]’ // *Russkaya provintsiya: mif — tekst — realnost*. M.; SPb.: Izd-vo “Tema”, 2000. Pp. 324–34.
- Razumova I. A. ‘Neskazochnaya proza provintsialnogo goroda [Modern Urban Prose other than Stories]’ // *Sovremennyyi gorodskoi folklor*. M.: RGGU, 2003. Pp. 544–59.

- _____. *Kulturnye landshafty Kolskogo Severa: goroda u "Bolshoi vody" i Khibin: Sotsialno-antropologicheskie ocherki* [Cultural Landscapes of Kola: Towns near the 'Great Water' and Khibiny: Socio-Anthropological Studies]. SPb.: GAMAS, 2009.
- Rupasov N. Yu. 'Mentalnye karty Izhevsk: startovye pozitsii i perspektivy goroda [Mental Maps of Izhevsk: Starting Positions and Prospects for the Town]' // *Idnakar: metody istoriko-kulturnoi rekonstruktsii: nauch.-prakt. zhurnal*. 2009. No. 2 (6): Mentalnye karty Izhevsk: Atlas gorodskoi sredey / Sakharnykh D. M. (ed.). Pp. 29–75.
- Russkii shkolnyi folklor. Ot "vyzyvanii" Pikovoi damy do semeinykh rasskazov* [Russian School Folklore: from Summoning the Queen of Spades to Family Stories]. Belousov A. F. (ed.). M.: Ladomir, 1998.
- Savoskul S. S. 'Lokalnoe samosoznanie sovremennogo russkogo naseleniya Tsentralnoi Rossii (na materiale Pereslavlya-Zalesskogo) [The Local Self-Awareness of the Contemporary Russian Population of Central Russia (Material from Pereyasavl-Zalessky)]' // *Ocherki russkoi narodnoi kultury*. M.: Nauka, 2009.
- Shechepanskaya T. B. *Sistema: teksty i traditsii subkultury* [The System: Texts and Traditions of Subculture]. M.: OGI, 2004.
- Shkolnyi byt i folklor: Uchebnyi material po russkomu folkloru* [School Life and Folklore: Teaching Materials on Russian Folklore]. Belousov A. F. (ed.). Tallinn: Tallin. ped. un-t im. E. Vilde, 1992. Ch. 1, 2.
- Sindalovsky N. A. *Mifologiya Peterburga: Ocherki* [The Mythology of Petersburg: Sketches]. SPb.: Norint, 2000.
- _____. *Sankt-Peterburg. Entsiklopediya: legendy, predaniya, mify, poslovitsy, pogovorki, aforizmy, anekdoty, chastushki, stikhi, pesni* [St Petersburg. Encyclopaedia: Legents, Traditions, Myths, Proverbs, Sayings, Aphorisms, Jokes, Chastushki, Verses, Songs]. SPb.: Norint, 2008.
- Sovremennyyi gorodskoi folklor [Modern Urban Folklore]*. M.: RGGU, 2003.
- Tyugashev E. A. 'Kontseptosfera sovremennoi Yugry: diskurs Aleksandra Filippenko [The Conceptual Sphere of Modern Yugra: Aleksandr Filippenko's Discourse]' // *Severnyy region: nauka, obrazovanie, kultura: Nauch. i kultur.-prosvet. zhurnal*. Surgut, 2003. No. 1. Pp. 87–92.
- Uchebnyi material po teorii literatury. Zhanry slovesnogo teksta. Anekdot* [Teaching Materials on Literary Theory. Genres of the Written Text. The Joke] / Belousov A. F. (ed.). Tallin: Tallinskii Pedagogicheskii universitet im. E. Vilde, 1989.
- Zakharov A. V. 'Kulturnye geroi mediinoi provintsii [The Cultural Heroes of the Media Provinces]' // *Internet i folklor: Sbornik statei*. M.: Gos. resp. tsentr prov. folklor, 2009. Pp. 20–31.
- Zamyatin D. N. *Gumanitarnaya geografiya: Prostranstvo i yazyk geograficheskikh obrazov* [Geography and the Humanities: Space and the Language of Geographical Images]. M.: Aleteiya, 2003.
- _____. 'Lokalnye mify: modern i geograficheskoe voobrazhenie [Local Myths: the Modern and the Geographical Imagination]' // *Literatura Urala: istoriya i sovremennost: Sbornik statei*. Issue. 4. Lokalnye teksty i tipy regionalnykh narrativov. Yekaterinburg: Izd-vo Ural. universiteta, 2008. Pp. 10–12.

STEPHEN V. BITTNER

Whither Urban History?

Few historical fields have been plagued by as much self-doubt and pessimism over the years as urban history. Almost since its inception in the 1960s as a branch of the emerging social history, historians of city life and urbanisation have been questioning the field's legitimacy, tallying its shortcomings, predicting its demise, and/or calling for its transformation. The sociologist Charles Tilly, one of most prolific and creative thinkers about intersection of large-scale social processes and the minutiae of city life, once titled an essay 'What Good Is Urban History?'. Tilly was undoubtedly poking fun at the field's existential fears, and ultimately defended the field from its many doubters, but his message was unsparing: urban historians 'have turned unseeing eyes to the challenge' of analysing cities. The result was 'dormant' scholarship in need of resuscitation [Tilly 1996: 702–4].

What's wrong with urban history? Nearly a half century after the field's formation, there is little consensus about what makes urban history distinctively urban, rather than social, cultural, labour, environmental, architectural, or any other label that historians use to categorise scholarship. Among scholars of American cities, urban history typically connotes studies of residential segregation and ghetto formation, ethnic assimilation, the migration of African-Americans from the rural south, suburbanisation, and the economic and social crises that beset American cities in the 1960s and 70s. However, just as often scholars working on these topics use other labels to identify their work. Similarly, for historians of European cities, studies of the working class, architecture and urban planning, and, in certain chronological contexts (such as Paris in 1871 and Petrograd in 1917), revolutionary strife sometimes, but not always, fall under the urban-historical rubric. These subject lists, which are by no means exhaustive, are meant to emphasise the point

Stephen V. Bittner
 Sonoma State University
 Bittner.stephen@gmail.com
 steve.bittner@sonoma.edu

that urban history, in practice, is not so much the history of cities, but of the people who live in cities and the events that occur there. In fact, as the focus of analysis, cities are often strangely absent from urban history.

Mine is not a new observation. More than thirty years ago, Don Karl Rowney, a historian of tsarist-era economic and bureaucratic politics, noted that the city was too often a 'moving target' in urban history [Rowney 1977: 321]. Rowney called on historians to find common ground on core issues like methodology, theory, and scope. Because there is a natural tendency to defend a diversity of approaches, Rowney's admonition might be easily dismissed. But its value lay precisely in underscoring the precarious line between a beneficial diversity and a dangerous vacuousness. Because the city is so essential to understandings of modernity, nearly any historical topic of the last 150 years can be construed as tangentially urban. Indeed, from my vantage point, a third of a century after Rowney, the absence of a critical centre in urban history, coupled with the well-chronicled turn away from social history, has led to its marginalisation. Despite the expansive boundaries of urban history, the number of historians who treat cities as their primary focus of analysis, and urban historiography as their primary frame of reference, is small and shrinking.

Yet perhaps all is not gloomy in urban history. In my own field of Russian and Soviet history, a number of recent works suggest the possibility of moving beyond the present malaise. For the most part, they come from historians who, like myself, are not explicitly engaged with urban historiography, or, for that matter, from historians who are not apt to categorise their work as primarily urban-historical. Yet they share certain assumptions about the city, and about the ways to make sense of it, that stand in contrast to earlier works. If historians are going to undertake the task of refashioning urban history to make it relevant once again, these commonalities may provide a good starting point.

1. Less Marx, more Simmel

In 1952 only six colleges and universities in the United States offered courses on the history of American cities. By the mid-1960s, this figure had grown to more like 50, and by the early 1980s, urban history had become 'virtually a staple' in history departments across the country [Ebner 1981: 70]. With curricular popularity came grant money, dedicated journals (the *Journal of Urban History*, the first of several in the Anglophone world, began publishing in 1974), and a wave of doctoral dissertations on urban-historical topics. The growing interest in urban history was driven largely by its marriage with the increasingly fashionable genre of quantitative social history.

In a highly influential article from 1971, Stephan Thernstrom, a historian of Boston, identified the formation of a 'new urban history' that was deeply indebted to quantitative sources. Criticising urban history's always 'elusive' boundaries, where any sort of work that was vaguely urban qualified for inclusion, Thernstrom called on urban historians to study history 'from the bottom up,' by making use of previously unexploited sources such as church parish registers, city directories, local tax rolls, and the raw (untabulated) data schedules collected by the United States Census [Thernstrom 1971: 359–61].

Thernstrom's call to action was not *sui generis*. It was inspired, in part, by a similar interest in historical demography that was underway in Great Britain and France. Like the *annalistes*, Thernstrom argued that the new quantitative sources allowed historians to judge long-term trends such as urban population fluidity, class and ethnic segregation, social mobility, and immigration patterns from the countryside and abroad. They also reflected the possibility (which was new in 1971) that computers could be used to analyse ever larger data sets. Thernstrom argued for mathematical rigor because he thought there was no 'powerful general social theory which bears upon the matters of prime concern to the urban historian' [Thernstrom 1971: 362]. In the absence of theory, hard-nosed empiricism would reign.

Thernstrom's latter assertion may have raised eyebrows, because it was so plainly not a sentiment shared by the field as a whole. Among social historians, there was a widespread tendency to look to Marxism as a general theory of society. Among urban historians, the indebtedness to Marxism was even more pronounced, in part because Friedrich Engels' famous description of Manchester in 1844 typified many of the field's assumptions about modern cities: they were sites of alienation, social breakdown, environmental degradation, and criminality. While not all urban historians shared Engels' diagnosis of the root cause of urban ills (historians of American cities, for instance, were more apt to cite racism than capitalism), the impoverishment of American cities in the 1950s and 60s, white flight to the suburbs, rising criminality, de-industrialisation, and riots in Los Angeles, Detroit, and Newark made it hard to think that cities were about anything but poverty, despair, and decay. Indeed, even Thernstrom, who later became a noted 'neo-conservative' scholar at the Manhattan Institute, made a name for himself by studying urban poverty.

In the Russian field, this highly quantitative approach to urban history is exemplified by Joseph Bradley's dense study of the growth of late-tsarist Moscow. Seeking to explain Moscow's special volatility in the revolutionary upheaval of 1905, Bradley used census data and other demographic materials to construct a portrait of the 'swarming' masses of peasant migrants who engendered so much anxiety among educated Muscovites, and of the well-intended but failed schemes to acculturate

migrants to city life. Although Bradley came to the un-Marxist conclusion that it was the persistence of rural behaviours and characteristics that distinguished Moscow's urbanisation at the end of the nineteenth century, his study typified urban history's vaguely Marxist orientation in its focus on social breakdown and unrest. Comprising 'vagrants, paupers, idlers, parasites, and hooligans,' Bradley's Moscow was a powder keg of anger and envy [Bradley 1985: 1].

At the risk of sounding insensitive to the plight of the downtrodden and dispossessed, there are limits to what this sort of history can tell us about urban life. Consider, for example, an American college student who encounters late-tsarist Moscow only in Bradley's book and Anton Chekhov's play *Three Sisters* (1901). The images of urban life in these works are not easy to reconcile. Olga, Irina, and Masha, Chekhov's protagonists, aspire only to flee their bland provincial existence for Moscow. Yet if we are to believe Bradley, the city they pine for is a seething cauldron of lower-class anger and upper-class dread. Of course, what's missing in Bradley's Moscow is precisely what Olga, Irina, and Masha imagine exists there: excitement, cosmopolitanism, freedom, and culture. Their rose-coloured view of Moscow should not be dismissed as mere class bias or youthful naïveté. (After all, the famous peasant-turned-worker memoirist Semen Kanatchikov held similar views of the big city.) Rather, it reflects a longstanding, alternate way of understanding the city as a place of individual freedom and fulfillment.

This latter view of the city is most closely associated with Georg Simmel, the relatively neglected German social theorist of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries whose work became the foundation for much of urban sociology. In *The Metropolis and Mental Life* (*Großstädte und das Geistesleben*), Simmel argued that the modern city, because it was the site of the 'most advanced economic division of labour,' allowed for the fullest realisation of individual freedom and independence. That much reflected conventional nineteenth-century liberal thought. Yet Simmel's thinking then took an unexpected turn. He noted that the modern city also hindered the expression of this freedom and individuality, compared with small villages and towns, because of its size, number of inhabitants, and the brevity of interaction between them. According to Simmel, this paradox led 'ultimately to the strangest eccentricities, to specifically metropolitan extravagances of self-distanciation, of caprice, of fastidiousness, the meaning of which is no longer to be found in the content of such activity itself but rather in its being a form of 'being different' — of making oneself noticeable.' In Simmel's formulation, therefore, the city marked the site where Enlightenment notions of individual freedom and independence confronted Counter-Enlightenment (or Romantic) notions about the uniqueness and inimitability of each individual. It was the

purpose of the metropolis, Simmel wrote, to seek the unification of these phenomena [Simmel 1971: 335–36].

Although Simmel has never enjoyed the sort of critical attention that urban historians have shown to Marx and Engels, he has never been entirely absent from the field either. His notion of the city as a place of individual freedom and individuality finds reflection, at least implicitly, in a diverse body of historical works, such as Judith Walkowitz's revisionist history of prostitution in Victorian-era England [Walkowitz 1982] and George Chauncey's pioneering study of homosexuality in New York [Chauncey 1995]. These works share an unwillingness to couch the city solely, or even primarily, in the terms that Marx and Engels offered, namely as a site of alienation and social breakdown. Indeed, in a feminist-inspired defence of modern urban life, Elizabeth Wilson rejects entirely Engels' disapproval of the reversed gender roles that typified England's textile cities. Although Engels regarded this as nothing short of insanity, his attack on working women reflected little more than a chauvinist dismay at the 'independence of the factory woman.' Perhaps, Wilson wryly notes, the 'disorder of urban life,' which was often indicted by Engels, Dickens, and others, 'did not so much disturb women' [Wilson 1992: 8, 33]. Similar observations might be made about the artists and writers who once sought refuge in New York's Greenwich Village and Moscow's Arbat, and about the tech savvy young people—from virtually every corner of the globe — who today crowd the cafes of San Francisco's Mission District, hoping to be present at the creation of the next Google.

In the field of Russian and Soviet history, there are also signs that Simmel's ideas about the city are relevant. In her study of postwar Soviet youth, Juliane Fürst argues that young people's devotion to a collective revolutionary project was supplanted, after 1945, by an emphasis on individuality and friendship [Fürst 2010]. Although the generational cohort at the center of Fürst's study is not strictly urban, her sources tilt heavily in that direction. Moreover, some of the developments among Soviet youth that most concern Fürst, such as the appearance of the *stilyagi*, were entirely urban-based. With his emphasis on 'making oneself noticeable,' Simmel also anticipated what Fürst identifies as one of the hallmarks of postwar Soviet youth — self-definition through consumption. The growing literature on Soviet fashion, advertising, popular culture, retail, and architecture may offer equally promising avenues to explore Simmel's notions of individuality, and the urban world of constant sensory stimulation in which he saw it being forged.

Part of the usefulness of Simmel's work for the Soviet context lies in the fact that he did not conflate individual political freedoms, which were obviously highly constrained in the Soviet Union, with

individuality. Indeed, Fürst draws a similar distinction between political opposition among postwar Soviet youth (which she argues was exceedingly rare) and non-conformist behaviour (which was increasingly common). For the most part, however, historians of Russia and the Soviet Union have not taken up Simmel's ideas in any systematic fashion. In a land where two urban-based revolutions occurred during the twentieth century, where industrialisation was forced on a reluctant population by a repressive state, and where cities like Vorkuta and Magnitogorsk were carved out of the tundra and steppe by convict labor, the usefulness of the Marxist-inspired vision of the city as a cauldron of social grievances may simply be too great to ignore. Yet that does not mean that it captures the full complexity of urban life in Russia and the Soviet Union, much less the way most urban residents experienced the cities they inhabited.

2. Place matters

It was commonly held among the first generation of urban historians that their craft had to consist of more than 'city biographies'. There was an admirable sentiment, motivated by a desire to create a common agenda that would facilitate cross-fertilisation among scholars working in different languages and national historiographies. During the 1970s and early 80s — the years that corresponded with the apex of the social-historical approach — this meant the investigation of urban social groups, networks, and structures. But the dismissal of 'city biographies' had a number of deleterious consequences. Most important, historians too often let their desire to generalise obscure the spatial and geographical specificity of individual cities. This meant that cities became little more than static, inert contexts for the significant events — such as class formation — that occurred there. Moreover, studies of the physical city (through analyses of architecture, urban planning, and so on) were relegated to periphery of urban history, or sometimes cast outside it altogether. Even Tilly, who recognised the value of these latter approaches, maintained that urban history was fundamentally a social-historical endeavour, and that urban historians, consequently, 'should move to the boldest edge of social history' [Tilly 1996: 704].

Historians working on Russian and Soviet cities, particularly in recent years, have shown sensitivity to these shortcomings. It has helped that the people at the centre of our analysis — the inhabitants of Soviet cities — were often self-conscious about the specificity of their urban environments, and even acted in ways to preserve that specificity (or, as Eldar Ryazanov famously showed, to laugh at the absence of specificity).¹ Blair Ruble notes in the introduction to

¹ In *The Irony of Fate*, a hugely popular made-for-TV romcom, the hero and heroine meet up because the former has mistaken her flat in Leningrad for his own in Moscow [Editor].

a recent collection of essays on urban history and identity in Europe that ‘local history, historic and environmental preservation — endeavors tied to place — were among the few points of social mobilisation considered legitimate by Communist regimes throughout Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union’ [Ruble 2003: 4]. Ruble partly has in mind the *kraevedenie* movement, which was widely embraced in the 1950s and 60s as part of the popular obsession with the past that grew out of Khrushchev’s thaw. Party leaders saw *kraevedenie* as harmless enough to official ideology (compared to more fraught scholarly disciplines like genetics), so that *kraevedy* were granted a wide degree of autonomy over their research and activities. In fact, party leaders accepted *kraevedenie* for many of the same reasons that Western urban historians rejected the particularism of ‘city biographies’: they perceived it as a trifle. Yet *kraevedenie* was far from insignificant. In Moscow, it helped fuel the rise of a potent historical preservation movement, which first called for greater public input in urban-planning projects in the 1960s, and then became associated with a conservative brand of Russian nationalism in the 1970s. And even though *kraevedy* came in all shapes and sizes, from school children to amateur history enthusiasts, at the forefront of the field were a handful of skilled historians. The foremost Arbat *kraeved*, for example, remains S. O. Shmidt, one of the most authoritative historians of early-modern Russia. On nearly an apartment-by-apartment basis, Shmidt has chronicled the cultural history of his native Arbat in books and essays that are part memoir, part scholarship, and entirely a labour of love.

This attentiveness to the specificity of Soviet cities has helped produced an urban historical literature that is distinguished by its focus on the way popular myths and collective memories were attached to, and manifest in urban landscapes. After Stalin’s death, perhaps the most widely disseminated of these popular myths involved Shmidt’s Arbat neighborhood. Honed largely through the poetry and songs of Bulat Okudzhava and the novels of Anatoly Rybakov, the Arbat myth situated an intellectual and cultural paradise in the Arbat that existed before Stalin. It tallied the neighbourhood’s casualties — both human and architectural — of the intervening years. And it explained the Arbat’s supposed demise in terms of its longstanding association with the Russian and Soviet intelligentsia. The Arbat myth was thus not a belief that was demonstrably false (indeed, it contained more than a grain of truth). Rather, it was a belief that was accepted uncritically because it helped explain a past that was morally ambiguous and potentially dangerous. Because the myth treated the Arbat as a synecdoche for the intelligentsia, it allowed Okudzhava and Rybakov to say things about the neighbourhood — such as lament its supposed demise — that were impossible to say about the intelligentsia. Moreover, in an era

when questions of guilt and complicity were omnipresent, the Arbat myth privileged memories of an intelligentsia that opposed Stalinism and suffered as a result, and downplayed memories of an intelligentsia that was a prime beneficiary of Stalinism [Bittner 2008: 29–39]. A similar concern with the construction and utility of urban-based myths can be found in Karl Qualls' study of the postwar reconstruction of Sevastopol, where residents and officials contested the commemoration of Sevastopol's two heroic defenses, and in Patricia Herlihy and Oleg Gubar's work on the Odessan myth, which holds that Odessa is neither a Ukrainian or Russian city, but a cosmopolitan, outward-looking enclave, a sort of Hong Kong of the Black Sea [Qualls 2009; Gubar and Herlihy 2009].

Historians of the Soviet Union have also shown a capacity for treating the city as more than an inert background for its inhabitants. Carl Schorske once described the architecture of Vienna's Ringstrasse as an 'iconographic index to the mind of ascendant Austrian liberalism' [Schorske 1981: 26–27]. Schorske would likely find Stalinist architecture to be an even more transparent historical source. In the ornate neoclassical and gothic facades that line Moscow's radial streets, there is a clear expression of the values of Stalinism: hierarchy, elitism, awe [Papernyi 1996: 100–143]. Yet at two different moments in Soviet history — in the 1920s and the early 1960s — architecture was a good deal more than this. During these periods, Soviet architects tried to design buildings that inculcated a set of values that diverged sharply from those of Stalinism: egalitarianism, gender equality, democracy. (Of course, during other periods, the 1950s and 70s, when an ethic of cost-conscious utilitarianism reigned, Soviet architecture was also a good deal less than what it had been during the Stalin period!) The first of these periods, the 1920s, corresponded with the acme of Soviet constructivism, and has been widely chronicled by cultural and architectural historians. It came to an end in 1931, when Lazar Kaganovich, weary of the seemingly endless debates among architects, declared that Soviet architecture was socialist by location rather than essence. About the revival of the constructivist ethic in the early 1960s, considerably less is known. It was triggered by the adoption of Khrushchev's new party programme at the Twenty-first Party Congress in 1959, and the ensuing 'new life' campaign, so its fate was joined with Khrushchev's. It resulted in only a small number of built structures, the most notable of which, Natan Osterman's House of the New Life in Moscow's Novye Cheremushki, proved unpopular among the public. It was perhaps most significant for what it failed to accomplish, despite the brave efforts of a handful of architects and architectural historians in Moscow: the formal rehabilitation of the 'formalist' constructivist experiments of the 1920s. Of course, this is an incomplete survey of the richness of Soviet architectural history. It is meant only to

emphasise the point that a relatively dynamic understanding of the urban landscape is well entrenched among historians of the Soviet Union: people create cities, and cities, in turn, shape people.

The latter part of this equation — how cities shape people — has proven to be one of the most promising avenues for recent urban-historical research. One approach to the question has focused on political behaviours that are grounded in a certain neighbourhood, city, or as Blair Ruble shows, type of cities. In a comparative study of Silver Age Moscow, Meiji Osaka, and Gilded Age Chicago, Ruble argues that ‘second metropolises’ (a description which is meant to connote a sense of inferiority and wounded pride) often fostered a more inventive, pluralistic, and pragmatic brand of politics than the main urban cores of St. Petersburg, Tokyo, and New York [Ruble 2001]. Similarly, G. V. Golosov has sought to explain St. Petersburg’s comparatively liberal, post-Soviet electorate by focusing on the peculiarities of place. Contrary to Ruble, however, Golosov does not attribute St. Petersburg’s voting patterns to its demotion to ‘second metropolis’ in 1918, but to a unique set of collective memories of the city’s past that privileged democracy and civility [Golosov 2003].

A second approach to the way cities shape people has focused on identity. It is easy to see how the myth of cosmopolitan Odessa, for example, is predicated on a real sense of difference that comes from Odessa’s colourful language, its humour, its temperate climate, and its history as a multi-ethnic, multi-confessional free port and Jewish Babylon, home to both Ostap Bender and Benya Krik. In fact, the Odessan identity defies easy categorisation. Odessa’s first language remains Russian (although Ukrainian is taught, by law, in schools), and Odessans, despite the protests of Ukrainian Cossacks, have embraced the symbols of the Russian Empire, such as the new statue of Catherine II erected near the top of the Potemkin Steps in 2007. Yet Odessans see these not as ethnic markers or as evidence of an enduring loyalty to its neighbour to the east, but as treasured remnants of its ‘unique cosmopolitan past’. Consequently, both Ukrainian and Russian nationalists are apt to be disappointed by Odessa, which remains an ‘enfant terrible among cities’ [Herlihy 2008: 23]. Likewise, the history of sport may prove to be a fruitful ground for examining the formation of unique urban identities. To its fans, Spartak Moscow embodied a working-class grittiness that distinguished it from its long-time rival, Dynamo Moscow (which had the great public-relations misfortune of being affiliated with the Ministry of Internal Affairs). Cheering for Spartak could thus be a form of mild subversion — an assertion of blue-collar solidarity, rowdiness, and anti-elitism rooted in the working-class past of Moscow’s Presnya neighbourhood [Edelman 2009].

With the notable exception of Blair Ruble, who has long argued for the value of a distinctly urban approach to Russian and Soviet history, the historians whose works I have cited as evidence of a revival of urban history are not usually inclined to identify with the field. Rather, they are motivated by other scholarly debates — about the nature of Stalinism and the reforms that followed Stalin's death, about the formation of nationalism and national identities, about center-periphery relations, and about the roots of the Soviet collapse. In some sense, therefore, Russian and Soviet urban history has come half circle from where the broader field was three decades ago, when Don Karl Rowney warned that cities were too often missing from so-called urban histories. Unlike earlier works, recent Russian and Soviet scholarship treats cities as topics worthy of analysis in their own right, either as sites where people seek individualism and fulfillment, as cultural artifacts upon which myths and memories are inscribed, or as shapers of individual outlooks, identities, and beliefs. Yet paradoxically, it remains a scholarship that is unaware of its cohesiveness and significance vis-à-vis urban historiography. Perhaps this essay will be its annunciation.

References

- Bittner S. *The Many Lives of Khrushchev's Thaw: Experience and Memory in Moscow's Arbat, 1953–1968*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008.
- Bradley J. *Muzhik and Muscovite: Urbanization in Late Imperial Russia*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985.
- Chauncey G. *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940*. New York: Basic Books, 1995.
- Ebner M. 'Urban History: Retrospect and Prospect.' // *Journal of American History*. 1981. Vol. 68. Pp. 69–84.
- Edelman R. *Spartak Moscow: A History of the People's Team in the Workers' State*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009.
- Fürst J. *Stalin's Last Generation: Post-War Soviet Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2010.
- Golosov G. 'Identity Contests: Local History and Electoral Politics in St. Petersburg' // Ruble B., Czaplicka J. (eds.). *Composing Urban History and the Constitution of Civic Identities*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2003. Pp. 117–39.
- Gubar G., Herlihy P. 'The Persuasive Power of the Odessa Myth' // Czaplicka J., Gelazis N., Ruble B. (eds.). *Cities after the Fall of Communism: Reshaping Cultural Landscapes and European Identity*. Baltimore. 2009: Woodrow Wilson Center. Ch. 5.
- Herlihy P. 'How Ukrainian Is Odesa?: From Odessa to Odesa' // Ramer S. and Ruble B. (eds.). *Place, Identity, and Urban Culture: Odesa and New Orleans*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2008. Pp. 19–26.

- Papernyi V. *Kul'tura dva*. M.: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 1996.
- Qualls K. *From Ruins to Reconstruction: Urban Identity in Sevastopol after World War II*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999.
- Rowney D. 'What Is Urban History?' // *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*. 1977. Vol. 8. Pp. 319–27.
- Ruble B. 'Living Apart Together: The City, Contested Identity, and Democratic Transition' // Ruble B., Czaplicka J. (eds.). *Composing Urban History and the Constitution of Civic Identities*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2003. Pp. 1–21.
- _____. *Second Metropolis: Pragmatic Pluralism in Gilded Age Chicago, Silver Age Moscow, and Meiji Osaka*. Cambridge: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2001.
- Schorske C. *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1981.
- Simmel G. *On Individuality and Social Forms*. Chicago, 1971.
- Thernstrom S. 'Reflections on the New Urban History' // *Daedalus*. 1971. Vol. 100. Pp. 359–75.
- Tilly C. 'What Good Is Urban History?' // *Journal of Urban History*. 1996. Vol. 22. Pp. 702–19.
- Walkowitz J. *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State*. Cambridge, 1982.
- Wilson E. *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women*. Berkeley, 1991.

ANATOLY BRESLAVSKY

1

2

Let me introduce myself by indicating my research interests. They are directly connected with the urban history of Russia, and in particular with the way the town is constructed in the regional discursive practices of the historical discipline. I shall answer the questions relying primarily on my experience of studying post-Soviet Ulan-Ude.¹ As in many other regional capitals of the Russian Federation, local history, and its (re)construction and extended reproduction, is becoming more topical than ever before; it is moreover not particular periods in the city's history that are attracting attention,

Anatoly Breslavsky

Institute of Mongol, Buddhist,
and Tibetan Studies,
Siberian Department
of the Russian Academy
of Sciences,
Ulan-Ude
anabres05@mail.ru

¹ Ulan-Ude is the capital of the Buryat Republic within the Russian Federation. It was founded in 1666. My argumentation will be based on experience of research within two interdisciplinary projects on post-Soviet Ulan-Ude: "'Urban villages": the anthropology of squatter settlements in Ulan-Ude' (RGNF, No. 08-01-0476a), and 'Sociocultural space in the city: inner and outer limits (as exemplified by Ulan-Ude)' (RGNF, No. 07-03-00578a).

but the whole of it. As a result of the general enthusiasm across society and across the academy for local identities and cultural practices, there is now a great demand for the various kinds of historical narrative about the city that have accumulated over the past. This history has ‘progressed’ from the pages of monographs and textbooks to city projects for cultural rebirth, historical and architectural reconstruction, various political and social projects, etc.

In the case of post-Soviet Ulan-Ude one may also speak of a many-layered semantic of urban space: the discursively organised elements of pre-revolutionary, Soviet and post-Soviet reality in the city have intertwined in a fairly organic manner. Moreover, as research has shown, the symbolic space of contemporary Ulan-Ude to a great extent reproduces and develops those social tendencies, meanings and ideas that had arisen in the Soviet and pre-Soviet stages of the city’s development [Amogolonova, Skrynnikova 2009: 291; Breslavsky 2009: 74–88]. This manifests itself not only in the way contemporary Ulan-Ude is stylised as ‘a pre-revolutionary city’, ‘a Soviet city’, or ‘a national capital’, but in the ‘more real’ effects of the structural inertia which the contemporary city (or urban community) is experiencing.

Moreover, it is quite evident that the interest in urban history blown in by the ‘wind of change’ can hardly be sustained for long without efforts on the part of its professional producers to present their handiwork as a significant resource for the evolution of the discourse across the humanities concerning the city and the realisation of present and future social and/or technological projects for urban development. In this sense, historians in Russia are faced with a multitude of interesting and significant tasks. One of them, for example, is to elucidate the formation and development of the city (any city) as the product of Tsarist colonisation, the epoch of empire-building, the Soviet socialist project or modern Russian federalism. After this we may take particular local instances for analysis and consider the results produced by those political projects which have such historical significance both for the country and for urban communities. It might be a question of specific and relatively universal social tendencies, the constructs of cultural memory (collective, family, individual), the metamorphoses of urban identity, the positions of one or another social group within the urban community, etc. Historians can study this using the resources of their own discipline or those of an interdisciplinary approach (thereby achieving ‘real’ interdisciplinarity). However, research priorities of this sort in urban history remain less relevant today than, for example, the tradition of local historiography which is concerned primarily with extending the knowledge base — the empirical description of facts.

Returning to the first question, I should like to offer two seemingly interrelated theses for discussion. It is important to note in the first place that there is a severe lack of historicist criticism (which is part of the social sciences [Bourdieu 1996: 9–15]) to be felt in historical programmes for the study of the city in Russia at the moment. As a result the contemporary (post-Soviet) Russian historical discourse concerning the city is as uncritical and in many ways extra-social as before. In other words, in most cases it reproduces itself without attempting any critical revision of the methodological and socio-political foundations for its origins and existence.

Russian urban history in its present state is often in demand only at the level of the towns themselves and their local academic schools; it is of interest primarily to the local authorities who act in the name of the urban community. Usually it is written and published either at the request of the municipality, or as a result of an authorial enthusiasm which may not be supported by any academic or commercial requirements (so-called naïve history). In this case the resulting historical product is for the most part lyrical historical *Landeskunde*. It passes through the ‘authorised’ institutions — libraries, museums, universities, schools — in order to support the city’s common identity and a sense of pride and attachment to one’s home town.

At the same time one cannot help noticing that urban historians (generally with a ‘solid academic pedigree’) are frequently no less involved than the sociologists in the discussion of the ‘problems and perspectives’ of urban development. For example, the town planning programmes that are now so firmly entrenched in Russia and the corresponding administrative discourse are, if viewed from the position of discourse analysis, frequently highly intertextual and contain significant components of sociological and historical narratives. Regional historians appear as experts on local television programmes, in conferences organised by the mayor’s office, at public and private seminars and conferences, and formulate their expert (scholarly) historical knowledge for the benefit of politicians, administrators and society in general. In respect of the urban community this appears in historians’ formulations of such concepts regarding it as ‘the historical experience of the urban community’, ‘the historical context of urban development’, ‘historically conditioned urban problems’, ‘the city’s historic tasks’, ‘the city’s historic traditions’, and so on.

These concepts, which in individual cases have their own locally articulated peculiarities, may be (and often are) used to construct the priorities of urban politics and to legitimise them. This may affect programmes for the distribution of resources, projects for cultural renewal, the priorities for developing particular areas within the city,

and much more. In recent years urban history has become much more commercialised: historians are invited to participate in developing local tourist brands, conceptions of the city image, booklets, guidebooks etc. Unfortunately academic historians who undertake this kind of task (the formation of a positive common identity for the city, expert evaluations of current projects for urban development, construction of city images attractive to tourists) are by no means always inclined to feed their empirical knowledge and analytical conclusions into the Russian (let alone international) tradition of topics and problems (say, the study of the medieval town, or the city in recent and contemporary history) and methodological discussion (the study of the town in the East, in the West, in the Soviet Union, orientalism, postcolonialism, etc.).

My second remark is a consequence of the first. One cannot help noticing that there has still been no methodological discussion of any significance of the problems of studying the town such as there has been in sociology (see, for example, [*Rossiiskoe gorodskoe prostranstvo* 2000]) amongst Russian historians. In our bookshops it is almost impossible to find any historical work written in Russia about a town which makes use of heuristic historical methodology or 'alternative', 'non-classical' visions of the field of study. Unlike our sociologists, social and cultural anthropologists and philosophers, urban historians in this country have for the most part not yet brought about any situation of a crisis of subject and methodology, contenting themselves instead with the opportunities afforded by a fact-based writing of history and historiography. It is by no means certain that this will happen in the near future.

Leaving aside the traditional 'urban' research problems and means of making sense of them, since they are already well-known to all historians who work in this subject or discipline, I shall now focus on a single question which seems capable of being a resource for the partial renewal of the problems and methodology of Russian history in the sphere of urban (and other) studies. I mean critical discourse analysis (CDA) (see, for example, [Van Dijk 2001: 352–371; Fairclough 1995]), and in particular the processes of the *naturalisation* of concepts and ideas.

It is well-known that 'many of our understandings of the world are naturalised; that is, we view them not as *understandings of* the world but *as* the world' [Jørgenson, Phillips 2004: 178]. In this situation investigative studies (research positions) that reveal these taken-for-granted 'common sense' views and ideas, many of which are deeply 'rooted' in historical discourse, are particularly important. It is possible to do this by elucidating the conditions in which they come into being and establish themselves. It is mostly sociologists who have been undertaking this sort of work recently, which is, of course,

no bad thing in itself. Only it seems to me that this is not so much a task for them as for the historians themselves, since the very process of naturalisation is a historical one, and any discourse that favours naturalisation is also historical [Fairclough, Wodak, 1997: 271–80]. The discursive naturalisation of ideas, concepts and notions cannot be examined outside its historical context and historical materials.

In discussing naturalised concepts and ideas connected with urban development, it should not be forgotten that it is historical texts, and not, for example, sociological texts, that contain the vast majority of them. Until very recently it has been for the most part historians who have been interested in the realities of Russian towns in the mediaeval, modern and contemporary periods. Who, then, but historians should undertake the exercise in self-reflection, the analysis of the historical discourse relating to the town, themselves, and to their predecessors in the discipline? I repeat, this allows us to understand the basis for the present-day knowledge about any town, how it was historically (re)produced and (re)constructed, how it has been used in the past and how it is used today by different sorts of agent, from politicians and businessmen to scholars and the ‘ordinary’ members of urban communities. In this case the historical discourse — how the texts themselves are constructed — is studied alongside the study of historical reality, and their meaning is established in the context of the culture of one or another town (or, more widely, region).

If we accept the proposition that the analysis of the historical discourse relating to the town is a matter for historians, then it seems that what we need to do now is find a solution to four research questions (or tasks) connected with the denaturalisation of some of our current concepts and ideas and with the development of a historicist critique built into the historical knowledge being produced.

1. We should perhaps begin by bringing to the fore an understanding of (urban) history as ‘an ideological, or rather imagined construct’ [Barthes 2003: 427–441], which might seem commonplace but which has (for fairly obvious reasons) never established itself among us, and an understanding of the historical fact as a relative phenomenon (formulated ideologically) connected with the strategy of its interpretation. The most general example by which this proposition may be demonstrated is the problem of determining the chronological period of the formation of a town as a historico-cultural phenomenon. At least two historical discourses may collide at this point: the official discourse, which desires, say, to push the history of the settlement back in time (by connecting it with some formal act), and the discourse of the inhabitants of the settlement (documented over several generations), which shows that urban

identity had never been particularly relevant for the community, and that the local inhabitants had never seriously referred to their settlement as a town. The town of the official imagination thus collides with the town of the everyday imagination, and the political history of the town with the history of everyday life and social history.

2. Moving on from the first proposition, we might consider what sort of constructed history we are dealing with in the case of a particular town, whether there were any sorts of alternatives while it was being produced, and if there were, why they did not prevail. Here it is important to determine what ideological foundations the dominant historical discourse is built on, which categories it makes use of, which experience it mostly embodies and in what framework (global or local, public or everyday, etc.). A comparison between data obtained from the official historical discourse and those from the same discourse of the local residents, made up, say, out of oral histories, provides a splendid illustration of the many layers that go to make up historical knowledge of a town. In such a case the historian's task is not confined to making the comparison and, perhaps, unmasking one of the discourses, but it extends as far as every new discourse refers the researcher to yet another plane, to new empirical data and meanings.

3. Once we have solved the second research problem, we may consider which social ideas and concepts connected with the town and extant in our present-day reality were produced and naturalised in the dominant historical discourse on the town. It goes without saying that there is no particular sense in analysing as great as possible a range of ideas from the sphere of the urban imagination. According to the logic of discourse analysis attention should be focused on naturalised ideas (urban myths, ideologies etc.) that cause or maintain within the urban community relationships of social inequality, discrimination and the predominance of certain social groups (or in some cases territories) over others. In this case the researcher obviously requires a profound knowledge of the historical material surrounding any particular case and a subtle social sensitivity capable of foreseeing the dynamics of potentially harmful processes resulting from discursive naturalisation.

4. Finally one might describe the sorts of consequences that these historically naturalised ideas about the town might have (or have had). This allows them to be transformed into potential objects of discussion and criticism, and thus opens up the possibility of changing them. The ideal situation would be one where the scholar (or academic community) was capable of forming an understanding of a situation on the fly before any of its negative consequences had manifested themselves and debate with his colleagues in public with the support of other interested social elements.

Analysis of historical discourse permits an elucidation of the development of the socio-cultural and political space of the modern town in its textual dimension and to reveal the so-called ‘historico-cultural context’ of present-day social, cultural and political processes. Urban culture, the urban community and the urban landscape are all discursively organised elements of social reality. The historical discourse takes part to a more or less significant extent in their construction and constitution. The effect of ‘the presence of history’ in present-day processes manifests itself discursively across the whole range of texts (obviously, to a varying extent) produced by different social agents. In my opinion it is the historian’s task to determine which historical narratives, and which concepts, ideas and causal relations contained in them, are used in a particular text (urban development programme, advertising hoarding, article in a newspaper or learned journal, etc.). Then he must determine whether the use of historical knowledge in any particular case amounts to an attempt to naturalise it, i.e. give it the status of something taken for granted, and what the consequences, symbolic and practical, of such a naturalisation might be.

It is clear that in some cases the naturalisation of history may be unconscious (when there is no reflection on historical knowledge), but it is evident that there are situations where the inclusion of ‘historical experience’ in some social, cultural or political project is quite deliberate. Some of these projects may be perfectly harmless, whereas others may create and widen distances between different groups within the urban community (or else between the urban community and the countryside), and produce relationships of inequality, dominance, discrimination etc. Then by virtue of the naturalisation of certain ‘historical bases’ for the said relationships, they may themselves also appear natural. The historian’s task in this sense is to involve himself in the process of the production of expert knowledge and avert the negative social and political consequences of such a use of urban history. In the context of present-day Russian reality, where historical knowledge (including urban history) is highly politicised while the institution of public debate is poorly developed, finding a solution to this problem is simultaneously extremely urgent and extremely difficult.

References

- Amogolonova D., Skrynnikova T. ‘Tekst i kontekst Ulan-Ude: slozhnyi obraz gorodskogo prostranstva [The Text and Context of Ulan-Ude: the Complex Image of Urban Space]’ // *Rossiya: voobrazhenie prostranstva / prostranstvo voobrazheniya* (Gumanitarnaya geografiya: Nauchnyi i kulturno-prosvetitel'skii almanakh. Spetsialnyi vypusk) / Otv. red. I.I. Mitin. M.: “Agraf”, 2009. Pp. 268–294.

- Barthes R. [*Le discours de l'histoire*, 1967] Diskurs istorii // *Sistema mody. Staiyi po semiotike kultury*. M.: Izd-vo im. Sabashnikovykh, 2003. Pp. 427–41.
- Bourdieu P. [As Burdye P.] ‘Za ratsionalisticheskii istorizm’ // *Sotsio-Logos postmodernizma. Almanakh Rossiysko-frantsuzskogo tsentra sotsiologicheskikh issledovany Instituta sotsiologii RAN*. M.: Institut eksperimentalnoi sotsiologii, 1996. Pp. 9–29.
- Breslavsky A. ‘Konstruirovaniye “gorodskikh okrain” v postsovetском Ulan-Ude [Constructing ‘the Edges of the City’ in Post-Soviet Ulan-Ude]’ // *Palitychnaya sfera*. Minsk: “Layt-Print”, 2009. No. 12. Pp. 74–88.
- Fairclough N. *Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Longman, 1995.
- Fairclough N., Wodak R. ‘Critical Discourse Analysis’ // van Dijk T.A. (ed.). *Discourse as Social Interaction: Discourse Studies. A Multidisciplinary Introduction*. Vol. 2. London: Sage, 1997. Pp. 258–84.
- Jørgensen M., Phillips L. *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*. London: Sage, 2004.
- Rossiiskoe gorodskoe prostranstvo: popytka osmysleniya* [Russian Urban Space: an Attempt at Interpretation] / Vagin V. V. (ed.); Series “Nauchnye doklady”. Vol. 116. M.: MONF, 2000.
- van Dijk T. ‘Critical Discourse Analysis’ // Tannen D., Schiffrin D., Hamilton H. (eds.). *Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2001. Pp. 352–371.

BENJAMIN COPE

1

The question itself poses two problems for me. First, it implies the perspective of a discipline from which to view the study of urban spaces. Whereas, as far as I am concerned, it is precisely my growing interest in post-socialist urban spaces that has caused me to lose a secure disciplinary foothold. For these urban spaces are a stimulating and problematic field of study because they present us with something new for which a new range of theoretical and activist responses need to be found. For example, the last article I wrote started off as a theoretical exposition about the relations between cultural mega-events and local spaces, and ended up being a kind of detective story, following clues of corruption and intrigue between politicians, developers and the NGO sector in the privatising and managing of space! My first response to the question asked therefore is that the exploration of the complex social relations producing spaces requires an unusual degree of disciplinary

Benjamin Cope

European University
of the Humanities, Vilnius /
Galerija Zachęta,
Warsaw
b.cope@zacheta.art.pl

flexibility, which can often leave the researcher feeling something along the lines of 'Oh, no! Do I really have to start learning something new, again?!'

(At this juncture, I want to just mention the problematic element of the political repercussions of urban studies. By this I mean the potential to make a career from urban studies or the dangers that may be involved in trying to track the powerful spheres of influence at work in developing, regulating and capitalising on spaces. In this respect, urban studies is clearly at an interesting interface and thinking through such questions will be part of what enables the discipline to move forward. A more established (cross-)disciplinary structure could be helpful in providing solidarity for researchers undertaking difficult research.)

The second problem for me is the insistence in the question on the study of the city. What I am interested in is the complex relations through which spaces are produced and thus in discovering the potential to produce space differently. For me, rural spaces form just as much an interesting part of the contemporary patchwork of spatial forms, as do small towns, as do provincial centres as do capital cities. All, even the most isolated or natural of spaces, are a product of the contemporary configuration of relations of production, which, for want of a better word, we generally refer to as 'globalisation.' They are its product, in as much as they are outside the dominant paradigm or focal centres of this process, and therefore reveal that globalisation is much less of a globally homogenous process than its name implies. This may not be so obvious in an urban centre. The distinction or difference of such places from cities can precisely offer interesting optics for considering cities, and the limits or alternatives to the modes of economic production and social relations that they engender. I therefore resent the urban triumphalism that seems implicit in some of even the most critical urban scholars and suggest that urban and rural need to be examined within the frame of the same dynamic. I therefore also have a problem with the terminology in English or Russian of 'Urban Studies' or 'gorodskie issledovaniya', but as yet cannot think of a good alternative: 'Spatial Studies' seems too abstract and 'Regional Studies' does not seem quite right either. All suggestions would be gratefully received.

It can be argued that it was the fall of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe that has brought about (or was brought about by) an intensification, diversification and complexification of the relations through which spaces are produced. It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that the discipline of post-socialist urban studies seems faced at the same time by the energising feeling of having much to do and the depressing sense that it has not yet really constituted itself as a discipline, nor yet really got to the heart of the rapidly changing

processes underway in our urban spaces. These shortcomings to a large extent have material causes in the sense that researchers here face extraordinary difficulties of institutional instability, a lack of a reliable journal and book distribution networks and an absence of financial support for long term in the field research. This fragmented and unreliable patchwork of relations of academic production are themselves further evidence of the need to investigate the emergent spatial relations of production that constitute our region.

The general lines of the discipline of post-socialist urban studies are, however, reasonably clear: post-socialist urban spaces are to be found somewhere along the scale from the alienated, under-urbanised (or inappropriately urbanised), pseudo-collective spaces of corrupt communism (or versions of this still pursued by the more authoritarian post-socialist regimes) to the hyper-privatised, more spatially segregated cities of corrupt post-socialist capitalism, or to put it another way from too much bad urban planning to a deficit of the management of space. What this view seems to underestimate is the extent to which, to paraphrase what Abdou Maliq Simone wrote with reference to African cities, all cities 'don't work', or rather that they do not work as they ought to or as they are presented as working. Or to put it in the language of David Harvey, cities are capitalism's spatial fix: the built environment of cities is that which enables the accumulation of capital, but at the same time for capital to accumulate it must move, and cities are fixed. It is thus inevitable that cities represent paradoxical spaces where conflicts of interests of different sorts come into contact. The question is how these conflicts work themselves out in particular locations and what can we do to influence them?

The situation is changing as conflicts surrounding local spaces, seen from an ecological, communitarian or simply 'defence of individuals' rights' perspective is, and here I speak for what is happening in Warsaw, becoming a focal feature for mobilising political and theoretical engagement. Thus, the question of the spatial transformations occurring in post-socialist urban forms (to paraphrase the title of Kiril Stanilov's 2007 book) or the mosaic of post-socialist Europe (Sasha Tsenkova and Zorica Nedelic-Buda 2006) are becoming an increasing focus of academic interest as local spatial issues become more of a feature of activist and political debate: For instance, the interventionism of the Warsaw supplement of Poland's main daily newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza* in local issues in the name of the good of the community contrasts with the sterile pro-European liberalism of the main section of the paper. This rise in an interest in the spatial dimensions of post transformation societies coincides with a time when, on an international level, there is growing interest in charting the impact of globalisation in the diversity of its effects, as evidenced by the volume *Globalizing Cities: a New Spatial Order* (Peter Marcues

and Roger Van Kempen, 2007). Interestingly, and perhaps worryingly, on a local level it is often art projects and NGO initiatives that are leading the way in exploring or critiquing the fabric of the urban structures in which we live. This is interesting as artists are very able to plunge experimental testing-rods into urban space, but worrying as the production of art itself is part of a differentiation of spatial possibilities that art often purports to critique. Can we separate spaces from our own class/spatial ambitions and possibilities?

The aforementioned analyses of post-socialist urban spaces present the changing structures of the commodification of land and housing in post-socialist cities, and with it the emergence of more socially stratified urban spaces. The development of land market mechanisms, it is argued, has caused difficulties for municipal planning for most cities in the region where planners are not adept in finding ways to relate the market and planning. Also interesting are the growing number of anthropological and sociological accounts based in urban or rural practices, or artistic and activist experiments in the context of particular spaces. However, what in my opinion is needed are academic accounts that attempt to tie these elements together. To return to the initial thrust of my response, a multi-disciplinary approach that takes in all the political, social, cultural, psychological, legal, artistic, economic, personality, etc., etc., factors involved in the specific configuration with which local spaces emerge in their confrontation with international influences requires intense and extensive intellectual labour. The endeavour to create such a discipline would also have significant implications for social activism.

2

The most compelling contemporary academic problem, in my opinion, is how to build an adequate account of uneven spatial development. What I mean by this is the endeavour to account for what Jadwiga Staniczki has called the ‘anathema of reason,’ or in other words how it is possible that decisions that seem sensible at a centre of power can have very different effects when implemented at a spatial periphery. This is also what I understand Doreen Massey as gesturing to when she compares the view of the world of someone flying in an aeroplane to that of someone living on an island beneath. In other words, to examine space is to analyze the way in which space itself creates a multiplicity of differentiating factors which frame, limit and construct the way the world is experienced.

A theory of uneven spatial development would of course take into account the political-economic factors involved in producing space as unevenly developed. In this endeavour, it would look to build on the ideas expressed in ‘critical geography’ a discipline which attempts to read Marx through a spatial optic and thus arrive at an understanding of the spatial implications of the contemporary capitalist mode of production. These ideas need to be thought through with

a sensitivity to the local specificities of particular spaces both to critique systemic change (modes of spatial commodification and governance) and ways of living, talking about and perceiving spaces. Such work, for example, is being done by the feminist geographer Linda McDowell whose response to changes in the gender balance of labour markets has been to perform a spatially based analysis of the strategies of working class young men in disfavoured areas of Sheffield and Cambridge. What McDowell manages to show is the ways in which spatial location and class are profoundly intertwined: both the factors that exclude these young men and the support structures that they find are specific to the spaces they come from. This spatially sensitive sociological study gives voice and logic to young people and the challenges they face, rather than simply dehumanising them as is often the case in the way they are represented in the media.

It is thus not by chance that McDowell's interest in uneven spatial development has led her to studying the experiences of different generations of migrants living and working in London. For if one level of uneven spatial development is between different districts of a city, or different cities in a country, another exists on geo-political levels: for example being inside the Schengen Zone and being outside it are not the simple opposites that they might seem. Being outside the Schengen Zone is a qualitatively different experience than being inside it: indeed the vast majority of those inside the Schengen Zone do not realise what it means to be outside. Migration brings these dissonances of spatial experience into closer relationship: for instance, in her analysis of precarious work in London McDowell brings to light the fact that while they may be doing similar jobs, very different networks, expectations and threats are important in the experience of a recent migrant from eastern Europe as compared to a long term migrant from South Asia. The articulation of how a particular space is experienced unevenly dependent on place of origin, time of life, family status, etc., thus has a great deal to tell us about how society functions.

As I hope is clear from the above example, a theory of uneven spatial development would be neither economically nor even spatially determinist. In approaching urban or rural space from a feminist perspective, for example, it becomes immediately clear that space is unevenly developed from a gender perspective, in other words, that the city or the village is sexist. A similar case could be made for the elderly, children, teenagers, the disabled, immigrants, wildlife, etc. This is not to suggest such members of the population are passive victims of space: coping strategies and the improvisations of everyday practice indicate new avenues for the use, understanding and production of spaces. Activist or artistic experiments, or projects of urban design indicate new potential qualities of spatial interaction, and thus contrast with actual spatial forms. The goal of a theory of

uneven spatial development would thus be to move from and through thinking of space in terms of uneven levels of economic development, or the capitalisation potential of a space, to the quality of space as the ultimate value.

But what is this 'quality of space': what is space and how is it performed, imagined, resisted, suffered or recreated differently by those who use it? How can we articulate the experience of the movements of 'mrówki' or the journeys made by the cigarettes they smuggle across the Polish-Belarusian border: for it is these movements that transform space into value, and bring international politics up against networks of contacts within local communities on one side of a border or another. What this in effect returns to is a question long faced by anthropology, that of doing justice to the complex relations that create a local community and at the same time linking this to universal or global questions, an interface currently particularly being explored by Anna Tsing. For when one starts to investigate even a very limited space, one is struck by the overwhelming impossibility of taking into account or expressing all the factors that play a role in the formation of this space. How much more complex does this become when one starts to examine how this space is lived and perceived by different people who use and make it, and to consider whether their experiences of space are mutually compatible? Yet it is this complexity that seems vital in constituting a space. So how then can this complexity be made relevant to wider discourses about the study and dynamics of space? Thinking though this interface between the complexity of a given space and a wider context is what I have in mind by a theory of uneven spatial development. I leave it to the reader to imagine what strange and patient research practices or inventive ways of expressing them this might require: as mentioned, post-socialist urban and rural studies is an exciting if overwhelming field.

Or perhaps what I am arguing for is a reinvigoration of the discipline of geography? To a great extent, the most dynamic developments in geography departments worldwide are linked to the development of G.I.S. and related technologies for the measuring and representing of spaces, with its obvious military and commercial ramifications. Otherwise, human geography seems to have been a discipline uncertain of its status, particularly as other elements of the social sciences have become more spatially orientated: certainly the new humanities academic projects in Central and Eastern Europe seem not to have made much allowance for geography. However, the flourishing of technologies for measuring and representing space carry a great potential for the democratisation of the ability to make maps and express visions of space. A challenge for geography, therefore, in an age where spatial patterns and practices have been fundamentally altered by technologies of communication is to

explore how these technologies can be used for a fuller understanding of space and the relations through which it is composed, and thus for making spaces differently.

To sum up, I find the title of Henri Lefebvre's magnum opus 'the production of space' an especially bright point of theoretical and political orientation in that it insists on the need to think through two apparently paradoxical aspects to space in relation to one another. The first is that of the need to examine space as a product (as THE final product) of relations of production: in other words, it is the political-economic configuration in which our society is organised that produces space as it is. The second aspect is that space is merely what our social relations produce, so by changing our social relations, by changing the psycho-physical choreography through which we inhabit/move through space, we change the spaces we live in. So space is both the closed object we need to analyse and something open for us to produce differently. *Nu, davai!..*¹

HEATHER DEHAAN

Bringing the Social Back In: The Challenge of Western Historiography on the Russian and Soviet City

In the past two decades, urban studies have come to occupy a prominent position in scholarship on Russia and the former Soviet Union. No longer preoccupied with modernisation, urbanisation, and the socio-economic impact of development (issues of the 1970s to 1980s), urban studies now feature the study of discursive and conceptual structures that define power, the urban experience, and modern subjectivity. Fewer and fewer studies seriously explore the social, institutional, or economic basis of human interaction in the city; if they do, text often serves as the prism through which they view and interpret everyday human relations. The social has become the textual, and scholars of urban life need to better distinguish the two.

For English-speaking students of Russia and the former Soviet Union, the rebirth of urban studies has been strongly influenced by the

Heather DeHaan
Binghamton University
hdehaan@binghamton.edu

¹ Let's get to it! [Editor].

coincidence of the opening of the former Soviet archives and the rising influence of postmodern theory. As historians eagerly entered regional and provincial archives, they not only explored new materials, but also new approaches to the study of the past, showing unprecedented interest in the urban landscape. Once the purview of art and architectural historians, the cityscape won the attention of social scientists, who began to view power and subjectivity in terms of the mediation of language, text, and visual symbols. Art, advertising, newspapers, policing, monuments, festivals, and landscapes stole their attention, for all had the power to represent self, state, and society in spatial terms.

This interest in the spatial quite likely reflects the influence of Foucault and Derrida, whose theories make extensive use of architectural metaphors. Like other philosophers and social scientists, they compare ideas to architectural edifices; unlike modernist philosophers, however, they present these edifices as traps. Whereas modern philosophers claim that their ideas rest on foundations external to history or human society, such as the ‘absolutes’ of morality or natural law, Derrida insists that modern ideas define their own foundations. To him, both conceptual edifices and their foundations are mere fabrications, flimsy and open to deconstruction.¹ Stepping further, Foucault casts conceptual edifices as threats, comparing the body of knowledge composed of the scientific discourses of self — medicine, psychology, and criminology — to Jeremy Bentham’s panopticon, an instrument of surveillance and social discipline [Foucault 1977].

The ideas of Foucault and Derrida nicely complement a number of studies that note how modern lives are mediated by texts. As McLuhan notes, written language permits for abstract thought and experience, for it replaces both spoken words and seen things with abstract representation in the forms of letters and spaces. Reading therefore lays the foundation for an abstract sense of space and place, not to mention self [McLuhan 1964; Anderson 1991; Fritzsche 1996]. In this vein, other thinkers and scholars have traced how modern sciences such as cartography, ethnography, and history, as well as journalists and literature, give rise to national and geographic identities that are abstract, understood only through representation in maps, literature, or visual media [Aasen 1998; Hirsch 2005; Bennett 2005; Schwartz 1998]. In the case of McLuhan, the technology of print and computer is treated as an extension of human perceptive capacity and therefore as something inherently enabling, potentially establishing a global village. Others look askance at such technological capabilities, identifying abstract concepts of place and

¹ For an excellent reading of the architectural metaphor in Derrida’s thoughts, see [Wigley 1993].

identity with power and, in many cases, with assaults on everyday lives and selves.¹

Such interest in discursive mediation shapes Stephen Kotkin's *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as Civilization*, a seminal work in the field of Soviet history generally. In the book, Kotkin explores the building of Magnitogorsk, a factory town founded in the Urals during the First Five-Year Plan. Covering the whole of the 1930s, the book deals with a wide range of topics, from urbanisation and city planning to working-class life, official and unofficial markets, and the Great Purges. Although Magnitogorsk had not been previously studied by western scholars, none of Kotkin's materials were strikingly novel; rather, the book's renown derives from its conceptual approach, particularly its theorisation of Russian modernity. Inspired by Foucault's concept of discursive 'technologies of the self', Kotkin emphasises the state's monopoly on public discourse, particularly its ability to define what becoming Soviet might mean. To integrate into Soviet society, to live and survive, workers had to master the languages and practices of the model Soviet worker as envisioned by the state. To be Bolshevik, one had to learn the appropriate state-enforced lingo, which Kotkin dubs 'speaking Bolshevik' [Kotkin 1995: 201].

Kotkin's study presupposes that the Soviet Union was a well-delineated discursive realm, a habitat constructed not only out of Soviet diplomatic isolation, but also out of Soviet ideology, particularly out of Soviet self-definition as a socialist land in a capitalist world. Because of unequal power between the state and its subjects, the state defined the rules of interaction within this space, outlining the limits (and possibilities) of human action. Surveillance mechanisms, campaigns, newspapers, and political theatrics served to enforce the state's definition of socialism and socialist behaviour. Although the 'little tactics of the habitat', or popular subversion, might encompass illicit trade, foot-dragging at work, or inhabiting unauthorised spaces, none of these acts of resistance set common workers outside of the space of the Soviet system. Meanwhile, certain elements of Soviet life—such as the Corrective Labour Colony, special settlements for dekulakised workers, and the black market—were conceptually excluded from the realm of socialism.

Kotkin's work both inspired and was accompanied by a series of books exploring identity as shaped by the symbols and discourses of the state. All took interest in the spatial-symbolic coding of ideology, self, identity, and power [Dobrenko, Naiman 2003; Qualls 2009;

¹ For a prime example, see James Scott's *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven, 1998.

Rowland 2001; Maddox 2003; Sahadeo 2007].¹ Showing particular interest in the mediated nature of identity, Evgeny Dobrenko's *Political Economy of Socialist Realism* conflated the space of real socialist experience with the space of Socialist Realism as literary text and architectural symbol. In effect, truly socialist life and experience was textualised, reduced to the medium of art and literature. Anything outside of this textual apparatus was excluded from 'real socialism' [Dobrenko 2007].

To some extent, Kotkin's work convinces only because Magnitogorsk lacked textual layering. Space, particularly literature or discursive space, tends to be unstable. In fact, any physical, literature, architectural, or mental space can generally be compared to a palimpsest marked by several layers of text, each representing different epochs, experiences, ideas, or concepts of self. The author of any particular text can rarely dictate its meaning, ruling out alternative readings as shaped by other experiences and other texts [Brown 2004; Buckler 2005]. Magnitogorsk existed as an insular habitat in part because it lacked history, having been founded in the First Five-Year Plan. It therefore lacked anything that might compete with Soviet discourses of identity, including workers accustomed to pre-Soviet shop-floor politics, churches and long-serving priests, merchants' shops and homes, and historic architecture. Also, because of its time frame, Kotkin's study never grapples with 'deterritorialised' discourses, as discussed by Yurchak [2006]. In such discourses, the structure of Stalinist language remains formally intact, albeit emptied of original meaning.

Despite this limitation, in some ways Kotkin's work fits into the tradition of Marx-inspired cultural theory defined by George Simmel [1903/2002], Walter Benjamin [1999], or Guy DeBord [1977]. These three treat the urban experience as an event marked by alienation. All document how modern (urban) human relations are mediated through text, spectacle, and monetary exchange. While they recognise the potential for autonomy and self-recreation in this alienation, they also worry about the phenomena of crowd-pleasing and crowd-control, as made possible through the fetish of consumption, at least in capitalist societies. All view the city as a gathering place of strangers, but unlike the sociologist Richard Sennett [1976], they perceive no opportunity for meaningful human connection in these spaces. Rather, they warn against alienation and the threat of co-optation. Assuming the social fabric to have been torn apart by modernisation and urbanisation, all recognise the power of discourse, money, institutions, and newspapers to mediate the urban experience. Applied to the Soviet Union, where the state monopolised print,

¹ On spatial-conception construction of the nation, see [Ely 2002; Schönle 2001].

radio, and education, one could easily turn their writings into an explanation of how Soviet control over language could automatically translate into control over human subjectivity.

As Henri Lefebvre [1991] — another Marx-inspired thinker—emphasises, none of these thinkers operates with a clear understanding of the social sphere as a complex, dynamic place that cannot be reduced to either economic relations or discursive structures. Few theorists, even Marxist theorists, have a complex understanding of social space. Marxists too easily identify social space with relations of production. For instance, the eminent Marxist theorist David Harvey [1990; 2003] does an excellent job of assessing the space of power, but does not wander too far from orthodox Marxist theory. Manuel Castells does indeed study the space of resistance, paying particular attention to marginalised voices in society [1983]. Both adhere to Lefebvre's demand that scholars challenge the Kantian tendency to conflate social space with intellectual space. But Henri Lefebvre advocates for an utterly new concept of social space, one that views such space as more than a product of discourse or of any monolithic entity or even of production, but rather as a work of art, bearing the imprint of nature, history, and human activity. In a similar way, Michel de Certeau suggests that social scientists pay greater attention to the act of speech. The spoken word upsets the search for visual clarity, which is marked by its power to define, abstract, and delineate. Scholars' fetish for the visual (including the textual) ignores the auditory, the tactile, and the spontaneous or inscrutable and 'unforeseen'. Not unlike Lefebvre, Certeau challenges the dominance of textual/mental abstraction, both in our daily lives and in our scholarly assessment of how experience and self are constructed [Certeau 2002].

For historians to escape the textual prism poses no small challenge, for most historians depend to some extent on written sources. In Soviet studies, the very police reports through which historians find evidence of workers' non-conformity categorises workers' actions as resistance, whether or not workers subjectively viewed their actions as such. The documents only illuminate the perceptions of the text's authors, not workers' self-understanding. Similarly, worker diligence and self-esteem, if expressed in the workplace, were co-opted by the state, which identified these as signs of patriotism and socialist pride. Historians cannot reach beyond these interpretations to workers' motives. Given that textual materials dominate, historians might easily prefer to equate all life and experience with text and discourse, for these are the mediums through which they work.

There are, of course, studies of social groups and societal resistance that resist the textual. David Hoffmann published a study of immigration to Moscow that clearly documented the resilience of

village identities and cultural practices, not to mention peasants' ability to thwart state attempts at workplace organisation or controlled worker recruitment.¹ Taking the approach of a memoirist and anthropologist, Svetlana Boym explores the world of the communal apartment in her book, *Common Places*. She depicts this apartment as a domestic realm cluttered by Soviet artifacts and philistine kitsch. In these spaces, the self was arranged in space, tenuously expressed through the placement of selves and things, and yet both crushed and created by the closeness of enforced collectivism.² As Gerasimova notes [2002], the arrangement of domestic spaces could articulate a distinct self, a form of privacy despite its lack of formal acceptance on the part of Soviet authorities. Soviet furnishings furnished a subtext that was in some ways more verbal and spontaneous than other spatial texts.

One can also separate the social from the textual by studying how individuals toyed with state-imposed discursive categories. Sheila Fitzpatrick, for instance, rejects the notion that historians can uncover subjectivities, and instead her work investigates how citizens manipulate identities, strategically donning and doffing social masks [Fitzpatrick 1993; Fitzpatrick 2005]. One might link her work to that of Bakhtin, whose *Rabelais and His World* [1984] explores the phenomenon of carnival, which upset taboos and inverted all socio-political and theological hierarchies. Although the carnivalesque never permanently upset discourses or realities of power, it nevertheless mocked and desecralised them. Such manipulation of hegemonic discourses not only testifies to human resistance or to selves that lie both inside and outside of those discourses, but also enables historians to separate social and personal life from the discursive sphere.

None of this denies the value of studies of the visual and textual in the urban experience or in Soviet life. Nor does it deny the value of the spatial. Rather, this suggests that scholars need to broaden their spatial analysis to encompass social activities and social life, actions and activities that cannot be reduced to text or discourse. Sounds, voice, actions, sense, and person-to-person interaction— all merit our attention, no matter how text mediates our research or our own.

References

- Aasen C. T. *Architecture of Siam: A Cultural History Interpretation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Anderson B. R. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1991.

¹ [Hoffmann 1994]. Other studies that testify to non-conformist behaviours, if not identities, include [Viola 2002; Gorsuch 2000; Husband 2000; Rossman 2005].

² [Boym 1994]. Cf. [Dunham 1976; Hessler 2000].

- Bakhtin M. *Rabelais and His World* (1968) / Iswolsky H. (trans.). Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.
- Benjamin W. *The Arcades Project* / Tiedemann R. (trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999.
- Bennett T. *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*. London: Routledge, 2005.
- Brown K. *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Buckler J. A. *Mapping St. Petersburg: Imperial Text and Cityshape*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- Castells M. *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.
- Certeau M. *The Practice of Everyday Life* / Trans. Rendall S.F. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
- Cracraft J., Rowland D. (eds.). *Architectures of Russian Identity: 1500 to the Present*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003.
- Crowley D., Reid S. (eds.). *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc*. New York: Berg Publishers, 2002.
- DeBord G. *Society of the Spectacle*. Detroit: Black & Red, 1977.
- Dobrenko E. A. *Political Economy of Socialist Realism*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.
- Dobrenko E. A., Naiman E. (eds.). *The Landscape of Stalinism: The Art and Ideology of Soviet Space*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005.
- Dunham V. *In Stalin's Time: Middleclass Values in Soviet Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.
- Ely C. *This Meager Nature: Landscape and National Identity in Imperial Russia*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2002.
- Foucault M. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage, 1977.
- Fritzsche P. *Reading Berlin 1900*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996.
- Gerasimova K. 'Public Privacy in the Soviet Communal Apartment' // Reid S.E., Gorsuch A. *Youth in Revolutionary Russia: Enthusiasts, Bohemians, Delinquents*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000.
- Harvey D. *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry Into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1990.
- Harvey D. *Paris: Capital of Modernity*. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Hessler J. 'Cultured Trade: the Stalinist Turn towards Consumerism' // *Stalinism: New Directions* / Fitzpatrick S. (ed.). London: Routledge, 2000. Pp. 182–209.
- Hirsch F. *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005.
- Hoffmann D. *Peasant Metropolis: Social Identities in Moscow*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.

- Husband W. B. *“Godless Communists”: Atheism and Society in Soviet Russia, 1917–1932*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2000.
- Kotkin S. *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
- Lefebvre H. *The Production of Space*. Trans. Nicholson-Smith D. Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.
- Maddox S. “‘Healing the Wounds’: Commemorations, Myths, and the Restoration of Leningrad’s Imperial Heritage’, 1941–1950: PhD Dissertation. University of Toronto, 2003.
- McLuhan M. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York: Mc-Graw-Hill, 1964.
- Qualls K.D. *From Ruins to Reconstruction: Urban Identity in Soviet Sevastopol after World War Two*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009.
- Rossmann J. *Worker Resistance Under Stalin: Class and Revolution on the Shop Floor*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005.
- Sahadeo J. *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent: 1865–1923*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007.
- Schönle A. ‘Garden of the Empire: Catherine’s Appropriation of the Crimea’ // *Slavic Review*. 2001. Vol. 60. No. 1. Pp. 1–23.
- Schwartz V. A. *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
- Scott J. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Sennett R. *The Fall of Public Man*. New York: Vintage Books, 1976.
- Simmel G. ‘Metropolis and Mental Life’ (1903) // G. Bridge (ed.). *The Blackwell City Reader*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002. Pp. 11–20.
- Viola L. (ed.) *Contending with Stalinism: Soviet Power and Popular Resistance in the 1930s*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002.
- Wigley M. *The Architecture of Deconstruction: Derrida’s Haunt*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1993.
- Yurchak A. *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: the Last Soviet Generation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.

MEGAN DIXON

My research into a Chinese-financed and designed district outside St. Petersburg, Russia, implicates several different strands of research in urban and cultural geography, particularly work on competitive city networks, issues with migrant arrival, and place attachment issues that get caught between the first two.

The district, called the Baltic Pearl, is a development project on 205 hectares, partially on reclaimed land, about 10 kilometres southwest

of the historical centre. As the company's own documentation asserts, 'The Baltic Pearl project is the largest strategic cooperation project between China and Russia to date, and is also China's largest public investment project overseas.' The master plan, as finally approved in early 2007, promised to include more than one million square meters of housing, 400–800 thousand square meters of retail and office space, parks, and schools. The lead investor is the Shanghai International Investment Company, or SIIC, a development firm with close ties to the Shanghai municipal government. Total investment by the Chinese consortium will reportedly exceed 1.3 billion dollars.

The first building, completed in summer 2007, was a luxurious business center and headquarters for the local firm. One of two apartment complexes under construction along the Peterhof Highway has had units for sale since fall 2008; the design somewhat resembles standard large scale construction in Petersburg, with multi-storey buildings surrounding an interior courtyard. Initial protest with some xenophobic overtones invoked the non-belonging of Chinese bodies and Chinese influence in Russian/Soviet space; this protest has mostly faded in the face of other urgent conflicts over urban development in the city. The Baltic Pearl firm produces a glossy magazine to use in outreach to the local population and potential clients; it has some connections to the few thousand Chinese immigrant businesspeople in the city, but as yet there is little direct cooperation. The Baltic Pearl firm has made efforts since its first activity in the city to present its project as a neutral housing development, inspired by the best European traditions, merely filling a market gap in St. Petersburg. The Baltic Pearl involves new international participants in the struggle to define the identity and symbolic landscape of modern St. Petersburg, along with long-time residents who want more of a voice.

At one level, St. Petersburg's welcoming of the Chinese investment in a large 'mega-project' reflects the desire of its top officials (and possibly the current Russian prime minister, a Petersburg native) to enhance St. Petersburg's status as a 'world city.' This concept first appeared in a book by Patrick Geddes [1915]; it was taken up by Friedmann [1986], and extended by Sassen [1991]. Geddes originally designated eight such major cities; Sassen pointed to New York, London, and Tokyo as 'global cities.'

Efforts to engage the global economy can happen anywhere; in a symbolic sense any size settlement can have aspirations to emulate the so-called 'global cities' or 'world cities.' However, it seems clear that cities and towns develop these aspirations precisely because the features of such cities, economically and culturally, have become associated with successful positions in the global economy, that is,

advantageous positioning in the ‘circuits of capital accumulation’ and investment [Brenner et al. 2009: 176], thus revealing crucial assumptions about city health and socio-economic sustainability. As Birkinshaw and Harris write of Mumbai [2009: 4], the concept of the world city or ‘world class city’ ‘normalises the idea that the neoliberal urban development model is replicable and sustainable’ — that it can, in fact, happen anywhere.

Unfortunately, the assumption of a world city hierarchy includes the notion that cities and urban-type settlements of any size have to ‘compete’ for scarce resources of financial success and prestige; whereas the supply of good management of city services and urban life might be unlimited, places in the world hierarchy are by definition limited. This framework draws cities into competition with each other for these few places, possibly at the expense of their local needs. It could be argued that good management and distribution of city services require investment, but that investment is frequently not directed at local needs. The most familiar aspect of this competition is the race to acquire visual symbols of world city status through high modern architecture, financial firm headquarters, and hybridised pedestrian shopping malls, landscapes that are aimed at a cosmopolitan world elite [Marshall 2003]. Harvey [2001] observed ‘the serial reproduction of science parks, gentrification, world trading centres, cultural and entertainment centres, large-scale interior shopping malls with postmodern accoutrements, etc.’ [Harvey 2001: 359]. This race for generic visual symbols can mask the underlying economic assumptions that drive the aspirations of elites who tend to favour such ‘mega-projects.’

Vendina [2005b] offers the intriguing hypothesis that Russian cities which can engage in the global economy could help to create a political and economic polycentrism in Russia, working against the ‘power vertical’ envisioned by Moscow through establishing horizontal contacts with each other and with other locations abroad. While this is an exciting possibility (and to some extent can be seen in operation along the Russo-Chinese border, e.g. [Larin 2008]), the effect of participation in the global economy has tended to repolarise many cities. Where once perhaps cities saw themselves as linked to and dependent on their local populations and hinterlands (e.g. [Sassen 1991]), they now see themselves as more dependent on (and beholden to) a global network of investors and financial structures. Harvey’s seminal reading of ‘entrepreneurial’ cities remains prescient [2001, first published 1989]: he described cities as turning their activities away from the ‘managerial’ (i.e. chiefly managing the distribution of services to citizens to whom they were primarily responsible) and towards the ‘entrepreneurial’ (i.e. seeking investments from local and international investors to whom they then became primarily responsible). His analysis is related to the

conflict between ‘use-value’ and ‘exchange-value’ [e.g. Logan and Molotch 1987] where ‘use-value’ emphasises ‘the needs and prerogatives of everyday existence’ [Dirlik 2005: 50] as opposed to ‘off-ground conceptions and goals of [read: economic] spatial utility’ [ibid.: 49]. This privileging of ‘exchange-value’ also has the effect of increasing the ‘vote’ of non-residents in transforming the city: the constituencies of potential tourists and cosmopolitan business elites start to have more of a say than ‘non-world-class’ inhabitants (see [Birkinshaw, Harris 2009] on Mumbai in this respect). City inhabitants who are not considered ‘world-class’ are marginalised and excluded from envisioning the city.

The concern of a recent special issue of CITY [2009] was to examine the way that the global financial crisis has deepened the conflict between those who conceive of cities as spaces of capital accumulation and those who live in them as places of daily practice [Brenner et al. 2009, based on Harvey]. Much of this discussion is inspired by Henri Lefebvre’s call [1968] for extending ‘the right to the city.’ As Purcell [2008] explains,

Urban space is imagined to be owned property and its role is to contribute to economic productivity. The right to the city destabilises that neoliberal answer and offers a distinctly new vision for what the city is for. The right to the city demands that we see the city first and foremost as *inhabited*. [Purcell 2008: 105]

Articulating what ‘inhabitation’ means in the contemporary context requires finding a balance between competing visions of the city held by everyone who actively inhabits it, not just traditional ‘local residents’ [Purcell 2008: 101]. Who gets to define which residents are ‘good’ or ‘beneficial’ in urban development? Who defines a common vision for a city around which stakeholders can unite and agitate? What relationship do these struggles have to a persisting notion of the urban ‘native’?

There may be a parallel, to some extent, in the persisting notion of *peterburzhets* [‘the Petersburgers’]. Protests against large-scale urban development projects in St. Petersburg and Moscow (Argenbright, Buckler) indicate that this is an urgent problem in Russian cities, too. In St. Petersburg, there is ongoing struggle, focused most notably around the Gazprom skyscraper or Okhta-Centre, about how parameters should be defined for the good of the city. Will the economic benefit in tax revenues and jobs indeed vindicate those who want to see the structure built, or will the damage to the juridical structure of ordinances and building codes along with the impact of non-transparency in the political process outweigh any such benefits [Dixon forthcoming]? The Baltic Pearl does not raise such urgent issues on the surface; it is located far enough away from the city

center not to engage the city's height regulation, and the process of its design and development, while annoying some residents, does not match the outrage against the high-handedness of the Gazprom process. However, it does raise issues about 'the right to the city,' particularly insofar as it suggests a shifting agency in defining 'the good city' both in terms of design and in terms of the cultural source of its assumptions.

Arguably, if St. Petersburg wants to be a 'world city' not only financially but also in the cultural sense discussed by Hannerz [1993], the city must find a way to integrate and accept new influences, such as Chinese agency; Ruble [2005] discusses the idea of 'diversity capital' or the ability to take advantage of the new contributions and skills of immigrants, an ability which seems to have narrowed in Russia in the post-Soviet period. (Of course, today the prototypical world cities themselves are suffering from an inability to integrate all new presences and influences.)

The work of Doreen Massey [2005; 2007] has attempted to find a balance between the imperative for cities to accept new inhabitants and the foundation for a steady social fabric that inheres in notions of a 'native' or 'traditional' urban culture. For example, immigrants and politically disenfranchised 'natives' may have equal concern about their ability to use the city but for other reasons may find it difficult to unite around a common vision of the city against the focus on profitable uses of city space which seeks to marginalise both groups as 'non-world-class.' Recent work by Vendina [2005a] indicates that this is germane in the Russian context; her study of the negative effect of depressed economic conditions on receptivity to Others (even traditional Moscow enclaves) suggests that new patterns of housing and a tendency to separate oneself from the previously 'mixed' Soviet housing blocks will reduce the integration of new migrants to the city. Diatlov [2000; 2004] examines common prejudices against migrants from the Caucasus, comparing their patterns with prejudices against increasing numbers of Chinese migrants, newly provoked by a resurgence of Chinese out-migration since the late 1980s.

The Baltic Pearl engages this last cluster of problems in an interesting way, because while the project represents the arrival of Chinese 'immigrants' into the city, it is simultaneously an embodiment of Chinese elite ambition to shape world city landscapes. While Moscow reportedly hosts about 80,000 Chinese residents, Petersburg has not yet faced this problem (partly thanks to immigration and residency restrictions). There are several thousand Chinese students enrolled in Petersburg institutes of higher education; there are about a thousand businessmen and their families, who run everything from centres for importing construction materials and textiles to

restaurants [Interview 2007]; and there are at least some unskilled labour migrants (at least a few thousand brought by the Baltic Pearl firm itself, who are housed on or near the project site). But the Baltic Pearl, in spite of early blog protests, is not a typical 'Chinatown'; it is not a housing area designed to attract and house Chinese specialists as a way of bolstering the local economy. The Baltic Pearl in fact aims to present a new model of affluent housing for St. Petersburg. While the economic viability of the project remains in question due to the impact of the global financial crisis on local demand for new housing, the project's possible success would herald the participation of non-Russian (and non-European) elements in redefining the quality of urban life in St. Petersburg.

The question of public space provides a crossroads of sorts for several of these questions, particularly the one of political power for the displaced and dispossessed, whether immigrant Others or economically disadvantaged.

The dominant Habermasian vision of public space extols it as the site of critically-reasoned public discourse, characterised by inclusiveness and universality; the loss of public space understood in this way poses a threat to open societies. Yet many have noted that the 'space of representation' Habermas envisioned was the eighteenth-century coffeehouse [e.g. Mitchell 2003: 34], not the large squares that frequently claim to be 'public.' Ultimately, we can distinguish between a 'public' space that expresses the consensus idea of the state and its symbols and a 'public' space that allows the expression of the 'will of the people,' i.e. political dissidence or debate. The same distinction is probably necessary in public spaces that are supposed to accomplish another function of public space — fostering connections between radically different people.

The imperative to provide public space clearly resonates with developers in Russia. The highly controversial Okhta-Center, for example, is intended to provide office space to several thousand employees of Gazprom Corporation subsidiaries; like the Baltic Pearl, it espouses a distinctly global esthetic. In an apparent effort to soften the feared threat to the Petersburg skyline from its 300 meter height, the corporation emphasises the provision of public or semi-public space in its advertisements: a full-page ad in the June 2008 issue of the tourist/expat glossy *Pulse* assures readers that the proposed skyscraper will include 'a generally accessible observation platform at 300 meters, cafés and restaurants for city residents, a year-round ice rink, the largest European museum of contemporary art, and linear parks in the tradition of Petersburg architecture' [*Pulse* June 2008: 19].

When the Shanghai investment consortium came to St. Petersburg with the intention of building a multi-use residential-retail-recreational district, they wanted their project both to communicate

understandably to the Petersburg administration and its population and also to express a vision of Chinese participation in shaping new global culture. Thus, there are elements in the design of the Baltic Pearl that express negotiation with the spatial-formal language of local Petersburg tradition (residential courtyards) and also elements that seem to express concepts of urban space employed in Shanghai and Beijing; a large ‘public square’ at the southern end of the site suggests ‘state-oriented’ public space.

For comparison with the Baltic Pearl, a contact in Shanghai [Interview, 2008] suggested a project near Tongji University completed by SIIC, the same parent firm that created the Baltic Pearl (the firm proudly mentions the Russian project on their website). Located in north-central Shanghai near Tongji University and other new developments, HaiShanghai displays innovative elements in its public space, such as whimsical public art (including the statue of a man taking a picture), diverse textures in the building décor, and artistic seating; a Starbucks café signals its participation in global public urbanity. The language describing HaiShanghai on the SIIC website calls it a Creative Commercial Street, ‘an open space drawing endless imagination for creative persons’ <www.siic.com>. The emphasis is on ‘public’ understood as business, global connections, and technical innovation. The intimate public spaces between the buildings, along with the theatre and lecture hall, are meant to prompt this creativity and the synergy between creative people that engenders yet more innovative activity. It is a public space designed in particular for the catalytic classes designated e.g. by Hannerz [1993], not necessarily for a broader mixing: the website also states that ‘it leads the trend in Shanghai and gathers the people with great imagination and pursuits.’

Jianwai SOHO in the Central Business District of Beijing offers another provocative comparison. In this popular development just inside the Third Ring Road, housing towers surround central open areas with retail outlets and greenery. The insistent visual presence of advertising images and retail signs, typical of SOHO projects, places this district a world away from the intensely social-public spaces of hutong housing which used to exist not far from this spot. Yet although the area seems to depart from an idealised public space as embodied in those traditional structures, creating dense contact between residents, it does have an explicit vision of mixing. The SOHO website claims that

At the Jianwai SOHO Summer Carnival, which runs for four months each year, pop stars, poets, artists and writers present concerts, poetry recitals, street displays and theme salons to audiences who come in large numbers from all over the city <www.sohochina.com/en>.

The developer clearly has an idea that the space needs to have a 'public' aspect; the content of this 'public' is cultural, seeing music, poetry, and literature as the uniting forum in which people make contact and form new connections. Thus, although the architectural transition in forms of 'public space' has forcibly evicted previous residents and their practices of public life, SOHO sees another 'public' taking shape: 'Jianwai SOHO has introduced not only a new style of housing, but also a new way of living.'

The Baltic Pearl uses similar language when it describes the contribution of the new district to St. Petersburg. The website states:

We want not simply to build a Euro-style universal district with developed infrastructure and European-quality services, but also to create a new way of life <www.baltic-pearl.com>.

The Beijing-Shanghai projects that may influence the Baltic Pearl are marked by an amenities-based concept of 'public' that also emerges in the Gazprom advertising. Whether proponents of a different, more political and social type of public space can affect the spread of this concept in the Russian or Chinese context is an urgent and open question.

Watson [2006] suggests that 'globalised space' does not facilitate the development of what we might think of as public, since, as Marshall [2003] also notes, it tends to foster landscapes and service amenities that serve a particular homogeneous class of the global wealthy. The 'global' spaces discussed here recognise the need to offer 'public' qualities (and this itself is intriguing), but it is not clear that they will offer the possibility of public debate or of true social mixing. (See [Makarova 2007] for a positive sense of these possibilities.)

The Baltic Pearl project in Russia will be a test of these ideas. It may succeed in providing a common ground where affluent Russians and Chinese can mix and know each other better (although it is as yet unclear whether the quarter will have any Chinese residents). Its very newness may turn out to disable the development of spontaneous social and political mobilisation, since knowledge of historical traditions tends to provide a space independent from intended state or corporate meanings [Scott 1998].

Yet while the Baltic Pearl offers a new phenomenon in St. Petersburg, with some potential to create new possibilities in design, planning, and cultural mixing, the problem is that the project is still dominated and dictated by this 'global' hybridised vision that tends to subsume messy local notions to itself. The Baltic Pearl firm possibly replaces the real daily interaction of Chinese migrant individuals and Russian city residents with government-sponsored intervention, and certainly does not increase the scope of local oppositional political movements to force transparency in the city administration. Uncovering the

competitive urges implicit in the Baltic Pearl and other urban mega-projects still leaves us mesmerised by these global forces. A great need in research is attention to and foregrounding of alternative visions of the city, such as the creed advanced by Petersburg NGO EKOM. The latter for example states as a motivating principle an ‘ecological relationship to life and the city,’ thus refusing a typical orientation, especially an economic one.

At a certain moment we realised that we are ‘ecoists.’ Ecoism is when a person wants to live in an environment that is favorable for HIM or HER, without regard to ‘government interests’ in economic development, ignoring the assertion that ‘progress cannot be stopped,’ and not accepting as fact the UnConDitional InEviTaBility of the construction of new factories, roads, and so on. The chief motto of the ecoist is: ‘Whatever is good for Nature is good for me!’ <www.ecom-info.spb.ru/about/>.

References

- Argenbright R. ‘Avtomobilshchina: Driven to the Brink in Moscow’ // *Urban Geography*. 2008. Vol. 29. No. 7. P. 683–704.
- Birkinshaw M., Harris V. ‘The Right to the “World Class City”? City Visions and Evictions in Mumbai.’ // *The Urban Reinventors Online Journal*. 2009. No. 3. Pp. 1–23. (Urbanreinventors.net).
- Brenner N., Marcuse P., Meyer M. ‘Cities for People, Not For Profit. Introduction.’ // *CITY*. 2009. No. 13/2–3. Pp. 176–84.
- Dirlik A. ‘Architectures of Global Modernity, Colonialism, and Places’ // *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*. 2005. No. 17. Pp. 33–61.
- Dixon M. ‘Gazprom vs. the Skyline: Spatial Displacement and Social Contention in St. Petersburg.’ // *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. Online December 2009.
- Dyatlov V. I. *Sovremennyye torgovyie menshinstva: faktor stabilnosti ili konflikta? (Kitaittsy i kavkaztsy v Irkutske)* [Modern Trading Minorities: a Factor of Stability or Conflict? (Chinese and Caucasian People in Irkutsk)]. M.: Natalis, 2000.
- _____. “‘Novyye diasporyy’ i problema integratsii vneshnikh migrantov v prinyimayushchee obshchestvo’ [‘New Diasporas’ and the Problem of Integrating Internal Migrants into the Receiving Society] // “*Most cherez Amur*”: *Vneshnie migratsii i migranty v Sibiri i na Dalnem Vostoke: Sbornik materialov mezhdunarodnogo issledovatel'skogo seminara*. M.: Natalis, 2004. Pp. 62–74.
- Friedmann J. ‘The World City Hypothesis.’ // *Development and Change*. 1986. No. 17/1. Pp. 69–84.
- Geddes P. *Cities in Evolution*. London, 1915.
- Hannerz U. ‘The Cultural Role of World Cities.’ // *Humanising the City? Social Contexts of Urban Life at the Turn of the Millennium* / Cohen A. P., Fukui K. (eds.). Edinburgh, 1993. Pp. 67–84.

- Harvey D. 'From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: the Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism' // Harvey D. *Spaces of Capital: towards a Critical Geography*. London: Routledge, 2001 [1989]. Pp. 345–68.
- Larin V. 'Interregional Cooperation between Russia and China at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century: Experience, Problems, Prospects.' // *Far Eastern Affairs*. 2008. No. 2/36. Pp. 1–17.
- Lefebvre H. *Le Droit à la ville*. Paris: Anthropos, 1968.
- Logan J. R., Molotch H. L. *Urban Fortunes: the Political Economy of Place*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.
- Makarova E. 'The Changing Boundaries of Public and Private: Urban Space and Urban Culture in Moscow' [in Russian] // *Project Russia: Journal on Russian Architecture and Design*. 2007. No. 43.
- Marshall R. *Emerging Urbanity: Global Urban Projects in the Asia Pacific Rim*. New York, 2003.
- Massey, D. *For Space*. London, 2005.
- Massey D. *World City*. Cambridge, UK, 2007.
- Mitchell D. *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space*. New York: The Guilford Press, 2003.
- Purcell M. *Recapturing Democracy: Neoliberalization and the Struggle for Alternative Urban Futures*. London: Routledge, 2008.
- Ruble B. *Creating Diversity Capital: Transnational Migrants in Montreal, Washington, and Kyiv*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2005.
- Sassen S. *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- _____. 'Introduction. Locating Cities on Global Circuits' // Sassen S. (ed.). *Global Networks, Linked Cities*. London: Routledge, 2002. Pp. 1–36.
- Scott J. *Seeing Like a State. How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Smith N. 'New Globalism, New Urbanism: Gentrification as Global Urban Strategy.' // *Antipode*. 2002. No. 34. Pp. 427–50.
- Vendina O. 2005a. 'Migranty v Moskve: grozit li rossiiskoi stolitse etnicheskaya segregatsiya?' // Vendina O. (ed.). *Migratsionnaya situatsiya v regionakh Rossii*. 3. M.: Tsentr migratsionnykh issledovaniy, 2005.
- _____. 'Perspektivy polittsentrichnogo razvitiya prostranstva Rossii v kontekste globalizatsii' // *Rossiya i ee region v XX veke. Territoriya — rasselenie — migratsii*. Glezer O., Polyani P. (eds.). M.: Tsentr migratsionnykh issledovaniy, 2005. Pp. 307–33.
- Watson S. *City Publics: the (Dis)enchantments of Urban Encounters*. London: Routledge, 2006.

DMITRY GROMOV

1

Like many aspects of the social sciences, research into youth communities began much earlier in the West than in the Soviet Union. It appears that the first study in this country, which began the modern tradition of the socio-anthropological study of young people, was V. F. Pirozhkov's book *Zakony prestupnogo mira molodezhi (kriminalnaya subkultura)* [The Laws of the World of Young Offenders (a Criminal Subculture)], written in the late 1970s but not published till 1994. Another 'founding' publication on this subject was T. B. Shchepanskaya's book *Simvolika molodezhnoi subkultury: Opyt etnograficheskogo issledovaniya "sistemy" 1986–1989* [The Symbols of Youth Subculture: an Attempt at an Ethnographical Study of the 'System',¹ 1986–1989] (1993). Unlike Pirozhkov, she positioned herself firmly on the ground of social anthropology. Her book, if one includes the expanded edition of 2004, is the most frequently cited work in Russian studies of youth subcultures.

It has come about that when we speak of young people, we have in mind exclusively the urban community. The young people of the countryside are relegated to the margins of our attention, and there are very few studies of them in Russian (and even fewer that take a social anthropological approach). There are two reasons for this.

First, for the last two decades the Russian village has been an extremely depressing place. There are fewer and fewer young people there, and the most active of them do their best to move to the towns (according to the 2002 census, the urban population made up 73 % of the total, with a significantly higher proportion of young people in it than the rural population). It is the town which is the place that young people principally inhabit, while the village has come to be seen as marginal (this is true, of course, not only of Russia, but also of developed countries in the West).

Dmitry Gromov

State Republican Centre
of Russian Folklore, Moscow /
Institute of Ethnology
and Anthropology, Russian
Academy of Sciences,
Moscow
gromovdv@mail.ru

¹ The 'system' [*sistema*] is the word used by members of this subculture to refer to it. [Editor].

Second, it is the town which provides the opportunities for young people to find their place and express themselves, creating a wide range of communities for every taste and every need. In the urban milieu there is less social control over the behaviour of children and young people, and there is a wider choice of employment, entertainment and range of sexual experience available. Unlike the village, which has lost its cultural identity, the town remains (and will remain, as they say, 'on condition') a place of uninterrupted evolution where new things appear and traditions are formed. Their boundless potential for socio-cultural reincarnation makes the young people of the city a fertile object for academic study.

There is no doubt that at present the study of youth communities in Russia is an academic subject which is actively evolving and shows great promise. Since the second half of the 1980s, when researchers 'discovered' the existence of youth communities and the fact that young people do in fact exist outside the social structures specially organised for them, the quality of research has been steadily increasing to the present day. This is partly due to an accumulation of research experience and a more serious approach to the question. The observation that 'young people exist' has been replaced by an examination of more definite aspects of the activity of youth communities: the determination of status and power sources, their composition according to gender, the creation of means of self-presentation, and the connexions between elements of typically adolescent activity and the process of socialisation.

The success of research into youth communities in Russia is even more noticeable when compared with how this branch of scholarship has developed in our nearest neighbours. Alas, we have not been able to discover any tendency towards the study of the youth of today either in the Ukraine (despite its orientation towards Western models) or in Belarus.

There have so far been a large number of publications on the young people of Russia and their communities. One might point to the two volumes on youth subcultures in St Petersburg edited by V. V. Kostyushev (1997 and 1999), the publications prepared by E. L. Omelchenko, and so on. It is striking that we are aware of no less than five textbooks entitled *The Sociology of Young People* [Sotsiologiya molodezhi].

Many of these works are devoted to particular youth communities: skinheads (S. V. Belikov, I. V. Kosterina and others), football supporters (A. Ille), Goths (V. A. Gushchin), perpetrators of graffiti (M. L. Lurye), punks (O. A. Aksyutina), roller skaters (A. L. Barkova, D. B. Pisarevskaya), practitioners of extreme sports (V. R. Khalikov) and telephone hoaxers (M. D. Alekseevsky). Publications on army conscripts and officer cadets (D. L. Agranat, K. L. Bannikov,

V. V. Golovin, E. V. Kuleshev, M. L. Lurye and others) should also be included amongst studies of youth communities. Many researchers have dealt with student communities. The study of youth slang (F. I. Rozhansky, P. Likholtov and others) has also proved a fertile field.

The subjects studied are often connected with delinquent behaviour among young people, particularly drug abuse, among which special attention should be paid to those produced under the direction of Elena Omelchenko at the 'Region' research centre.

One promising direction is the study of street gangs among young people, a milieu widely represented in Soviet towns and still (*mutatis mutandis*) in existence today. There are over fifty entries in Russian in the bibliography of this subject, and it is time for work to consolidate the fruits of research.

There has been less work than one might have expected on young people of the Soviet period, although the material for such work is, if anything, easier of access than that for research on the present day: the young people of that period have grown up and are capable of reflecting on their experience. In this connexion the project on 'Youth Movements in Russia: Young People in the USSR from the 1940s to 1980s', which has been begun by the 'Region' research centre, is of interest.

There seems to be some promise in the study of young people on a regional basis. Studies of the provinces are particularly interesting, because it has been the young people of big cities who have traditionally been at the centre of researchers' attention, and the provinces have been largely ignored. A happy exception has been Ulan-Ude, where a tradition of studying the local young people (N. A. Khaludorova, A. A. Badmaeva, K. B. Mitupov, N. I. Karabainov, A. Yu. Buyanova) has grown up. The discovery of 'systemic' differences between young people living in different territories and different types of settlement (conurbations, large cities, medium-sized and small towns), is now on the agenda.

Most of this research has been done in respect of particular groups of young people — ideocentric subcultures, territorial communities etc. It is however possible to structure the material on other lines. Thus there is an interesting book by Vladimir Ilyin, *Byt i bytie molodezhi rossiiskogo megalopolisa: sotsialnaya strukturatsiya formiruyushego obshchestva potrebleniya* [The Life and Being of Young People in the Big Cities of Russia: the Social Structuralisation of a Consumer Society in Formation], which, as one might expect from the title, presents the life of young people as a cross-section of consumer strategies.

The publication in 2008 of the encyclopaedic dictionary *Sotsiologiya molodyozhi* [The Sociology of Youth], edited by Yu. A. Zubok and V. I. Chuprov, marked a watershed in research into young people in this country. Our knowledge of the subject has been distilled into this book, which provides a sound theoretical foundation for the study of particular phenomena in the young people's milieu. This was a very significant publication, although somewhat incomplete in certain aspects (for example, the block of articles on informal unions is left 'hanging').

2

If we say that it is time to create an integrated discipline of youth studies, we are saying nothing new. This idea has already been expressed, for example, by the philosopher V. V. Pavlovsky. However, we cannot agree with him when he says that it should be based on philosophy. There is no doubt that the most convenient basis for an interdisciplinary discourse is social anthropology — an integrative science which includes elements of sociology, psychology, literary studies, history and other human and social sciences. Starting from the position of a social anthropologist, it is most convenient to borrow the tools of other disciplines to solve particular research problems.

And, conversely, if one starts from the position of a 'narrower' discipline, one will finish by allowing various aspects of the subject to escape from one's field of vision. Thus, literary scholars concentrate on texts without always paying due attention to their socio-psychological context. Sociologists are inclined to ignore many particular manifestations of social reality — clothing, folklore, behavioural stereotypes, rituals, etc. Psychologists are reluctant to go beyond the examination of personal characteristics (and, by contrast, personality rarely receives any attention from anyone else).

Ethnographical methods are suitable for use as the basic method for research into young people.

On the whole, works about young people (though not the better ones) have certain typical shortcomings.

1. Insufficient attention paid to to empirical material, and lack of field experience on the researcher's part. One quite frequently encounters texts which reveal on perusal that their author (to put it mildly) is not competent to deal with the question, and they are based on clichés and dubious sources (such as the 'popular' press). This is particularly typical of those disciplines which aim to discover the most general principles governing the existence of society (philosophy and cultural studies) or at practical applications in education (pedagogy).

One means of reducing the number of factual errors and raising the general quality of research would be to work with experts. In other

words, it would be proper and useful to have one's text read, once it is finished, by representatives of the communities who are described therein, or by other researchers who are competent in the subject. The conditions that prevail in the modern city allow for a new sort of relationship between researchers and their informants, different from that which has been traditional in ethnography. Unlike the natives of New Guinea or nineteenth-century Russian peasants, many of the inhabitants of the modern city belong to the same cultural circle as the researcher, and can participate in the discussion of the subject on an equal footing. Experience of work with experts shows that they can point out a large number of mistakes. The use of experts guarantees the objectivity of the research.

2. The dynamics of the evolution of communities are not taken into account. Many of them undergo significant change during their existence, and they must be studied in the context of these changes. Some authors, however, take no account of this: the facts of the subculture are presented as something irrefragable and immutable. This sort of author is happy to reproduce data from previous publications without in any way adapting them to the present situation. One could point to the example of a book about deviant behaviour among people written on the basis of material from the late 1980s and republished at the beginning of the first decade of the present century without any supplementary commentary, as if the 1990s, a decade which radically changed youth offending in Russia, had not intervened between the book's writing and its reissue.

The dynamics of the subculture are likewise ignored, for example, in some recent publications about skinheads. This movement peaked in 2002 and has significantly declined since, and there has been a noticeable change in the discourse of young people belonging to the far right. This, however, is not mentioned in these publications, and the reader is left with the impression that hordes of 'baleful skinheads' are wandering the streets to this day. One encounters similarly out-of-date information where punks are concerned: there is a considerable difference between the punks of the 1980s and those of the 1990s or the first decade of this century, and this is frequently completely ignored in the literature.

3. The purpose of many publications about youth communities is not so much to study or analyse them, as to discover negative, deviant stereotypes amongst them.

Pedagogical publications are particularly guilty in this respect: their authors take the traditional view that any informal association of young people is dangerous, and that young people and adolescents must be deterred from joining them. This approach excludes a huge amount of material from the author's field of view, and the resulting descriptions are, to put it mildly, one-sided. It should be noted that

the educational effect of such publications is non-existent: the members of the youth communities are aware of the prejudice and incompetence in them, and far from being 're-educated', are the more convinced of the rightness of their behaviour.

Legal works are another example of a prejudiced description of young people. One could point to instances where the description of youth subcultures (which was what the titles and introductions of these works claimed them to be) was reduced to nothing more in practice than a relation of the crimes committed by their members.

Yet another sphere is the examination of youth subcultures within the context of political discourse. A political struggle does not presuppose any objectivity in the description of youth communities, especially when they are labelled as 'extremist organisations', 'storm-troopers' or 'yobbish no-hopers'.

There have been cases where studies of youth communities have suffered prejudiced transformations at the editorial stage. Those passages which gave a positive picture of the representatives of the subcultures have been excised from the text, and any negative evaluations made more forceful. There is no doubt that the publishers acted with the best of intentions, but the scholarly objectivity of such publications is dubious. Not to mention the fact that a tendentious presentation of information about certain youth communities may lead to 'moral panic', to the propagandising of 'extreme' subcultures and push them along destructive channels of development.

It seems to us that it would be proper to follow the practice accepted in the West of separating anthropology as a science and social work with the objects of its observations. Overall the most productive approach appears to us to be a 'distanced', non-ideological, but at the same time respectful approach to any youth communities that are the object of academic study.

4. One of the problems of Russian research into young people (as indeed into other subjects) is that it is somewhat divorced from its international context. The proportion of researchers who are fluent in foreign languages and at home with the literature in other languages on their own subject is too low. Therefore from time to time they 're-invent the wheel', or fail to grasp and evaluate the specific features of material from their own country in comparison with that from abroad.

To sum up this review, we should note that research into urban youth and youth communities is a promising and interesting direction in which there is no danger of running out of material: the researcher is faced with a huge amount of raw information, and new problems and research topics are constantly emerging.

NATALYA KOSMARSKAYA

I must begin by confessing that I started to get involved in city studies relatively recently, which, apparently, is also the case for other Russian scholars who have turned their attention to this area. However, if we are to speak about urban anthropology, even in the West it announced itself as a special discipline relatively late; ‘anthropologists appeared upon the urban scene in the 1950s, almost in the wake of their informants migrating into the city [from the countryside]’ [Alexander, Buchli 2007: 10]. Setha Low, (co-)author and (co-)editor of a series of large monographs, published her informative review of the state of affairs a lot later, in 1996, but she nevertheless considered it necessary to start her review by posing the following questions. Why is the city undertheorised in anthropology? Why is an anthropological voice rarely heard in the urban studies and urban policy discourse? [Low 1996: 383].

Despite these concerns, the volume of what she has achieved, if only from a quantitative point of view, is impressive: the review is based on an analysis of 254 works written in English on urban anthropology which were published over a short period of time — from 1989 to 1996. And after Low’s article came out, a multitude of various ‘urban’ publications saw the light of day in the West. To what extent can this wealth of ideas and empiricism help us when studying the processes that were typical of cities of the former USSR?

When asking myself this question, which is completely logical for a Russian scholar in the humanities, I am forced to adopt a position of reserved scepticism.

I will attempt to explain why. For many years, since 1992, I have been studying the various phenomena and the role of ‘the ethnic’ in the lives of people of the post-Soviet era; the correlation of ethnicity with other factors of social demarcation. It stands to reason that back then, when new independent states were establishing themselves as ‘nationalising’

Natalya Kosmarskaya

Institute of Oriental Studies of the
Russian Academy of Sciences,
Moscow
natkos2003@mail.ru

(Rogers Brubaker's term) (on a macro level) and there was a huge surge in interest in ethnicity (on a grassroots level), one of the most topical problems was the radical redistribution of status amongst the titular and Russian-speaking population. I studied the consequences of these large-scale shifts on the level of everyday understanding (using qualitative sociological methods) as exemplified by one Central Asian country — Kirgizia. The capital city, Bishkek, was my main 'production platform', but at the time it served as nothing more than a background. It was only a lot later, when, having finished my main research and having published a book, that I started to think about new frontiers; the desire to ponder many other unanswered questions resulted in my gaining an understanding of the importance of the 'spatial measurement' of identity, ethnocultural borders, contacts and conflicts.¹

In what ways do urban transformations affect an individual's sense of self in the city; which points on the map of the latter most often become what Marc Augé would call 'identity-forming places' (anthropological places) (cit. [Dürr 2002: 209])? How do different ethnocultural and social groups perceive toponymic changes and other signs of the reformatting of the symbolic urban space? To what extent are the images of the city that are circulated on the micro level successive or, conversely, to what extent do they compete with the images taken from the past; do they facilitate social consolidation or, conversely, an increase in social and/or ethnic tension? How are the symbolic and 'physical' changes in the urban environment experienced by people with different urban experience and standing: old inhabitants, on the one hand, and migrants of different waves, in terms of origin and scale, on the other? For what reasons do individual objects of urban places or urban spaces become the object of competing claims of different ethnocultural, religious and other communities or groups of activists of different levels (for example, inhabitants of a courtyard)? What tools do they use to make their claims? The list is by no means limited to the above... It would seem that all of these significant questions are completely 'international', and for this reason one can certainly use the examples of their academic interpretation available in world literature when studying the post-Soviet space. However a lot of 'but's follow...

¹ A discussion of these issues with my sociologist colleagues, who have experience working in Central Asia, led to the launch of a new international research project called 'Identity and ethnocultural boundaries in the cities of post-Soviet Central Asia (using Bishkek, Karakol, Tashkent and Fergana as examples)', which is being carried out using the methods of qualitative sociology, with the support of the Leverhulme Trust (Great Britain, 2007–2011). The project's participants include, apart from the author, Moya Flynn (Glasgow University), Gusel Sabirova (Scientific Research Centre 'Region', Ulyanovsk) and Artem Kosmarskiy (Institute of Asian and African Countries, Moscow State University, Moscow). Empirical material that was gathered during this project is used in this text, but the author bears responsibility for all of the conclusions that were made.

The point is that the life of cities in the space of the former USSR developed under the influence of two very important factors that were not characteristic of cities in the West at the time when they started to be actively studied by anthropologists. The significance of the first of them does not need to be commented on in detail — the powerful transformations of ‘existence’ and ‘consciousness’ caused by the collapse of the USSR and without equivalents in the West. The other is not so systematically important; it does not concern the social organism as a whole but has a serious influence on the appearance of cities and the social-psychological atmosphere forming in them.

Here we are talking about the internal (rural-urban) migrations of the late-Soviet and post-Soviet era that clearly became active in many of the new independent states due to the economic chaos that seriously affected agriculture which was undergoing devastating reforms (in Central Asia the increase in the territorial mobility of the rural youth was facilitated also by the high birth-rate combined with the lack of land). As regards Russia, a very intense influx of villagers into the city was characteristic here of the periods of industrialisation and post-war economic stabilisation, but even now this factor cannot be disregarded, especially in depressed federal subjects (see, eg.: [Manzanova 2007]). And the urban stability of Western countries (first and foremost European), starting from the post-war period that interests us, has its strength tested by external labour migration from the so-called developing world (from the South to the North) which brought many people into cities not only from a different culture, but different in terms of their racial, ethnic and confessional affiliation.

This has been reflected in the subjects of academic research. The subject of immigration with all of its numerous branches into other-tions: integration, assimilation, adaptation, isolation (of migrant workers, refugees, etc.) — is so important for Western societies that literally thousands of works have been written on it. However its significance goes beyond the confines of urbanism proper and therefore there have been very few publications (at least that is the impression I have got) in which the lives of different groups of immigrants would be considered from the position of urban and spatial anthropology (sociology). And even fewer works in which not immigrants-foreigners, but groups that are internal migrants, or who arrived such a long time ago that they already consider themselves to be old residents, have been ‘written into’ the urban context. And for the Western urban context, unlike the post-Soviet one, even the very concept of ‘old resident’ is not very topical, if only for its lack of definition. In conditions where external migration has been constantly going on for many decades, without a precise localisation of temporal ‘waves’, it was hard for this stratum of the urban population that was constantly being augmented to establish itself

in stone precisely as a group of old inhabitants, with their own particular culture and attitude towards ‘their own’ city. However, other social criteria began to play a much more rigid, structural role there. In this context I would like to turn the reader’s attention to the issue of ethnic borders and ethnic demarcation in Western and post-Soviet societies (as applied to urban communities).

In Russia, which inherited from the previous era the concept of primordialism (these traditions, as we know, are overcome with great difficulty), attempts are still being made to study the position of various ‘passport’ nationalities who have come to the country (let us say, Azerbaijanis or Armenians) without ‘ethnic glasses’ (for example, without *a priori* seeing their ethnic identity as the main factor determining their views and motivations, but instead these people themselves as communities that have been closely welded together by their ‘blood’ origin). Perhaps this task is made easier for us by the fact that in Russia’s cities, for various reasons, the practice of the dense co-residence of immigrants has not yet established itself (on the model of ‘China Towns’ or ‘Small Istanbul’).¹

When conducting my research, I also arrived at the conclusion that post-Soviet countries, which in Russia are normally called ethnocentric or ‘nationalising’, on a grassroots level constitute a complex mosaic of mobile social coalitions and allegiances [Kosmarskaya 2006; 2009]. As I attempted to show, using Kirgizia as an example, at their core lies the factor not of ethnicity but of social status differences (‘poor’ and ‘rich’, ‘the authorities’ and ‘simple folk’, and so on), political-ideological and cultural (the old urban residents of various nationalities versus the rural Kirgiz migrants).

As regards the Western works, despite the ‘comprehensive and definitive victory’ there of constructivism (as we have all grown accustomed to thinking), the subject area associated with ethnicity and migration is not subject to its rules. Historically, out of the Western works on urban anthropology the ones that have dominated are those that were based on American material,² and were inspired by the rigidly segregated structure, in terms of social and racial criteria, of settlement in US cities: many different kinds of texts have been published which deal with an analysis of black ghettos and even hyperghettos. Race acts as the most important criterion, bringing with it other forms of differences, including those that are attached to certain territories. This tradition of studying cities as communities divided up into practically congruent ethnic (racial), social and

¹ This is how people refer to, for example, Kreuzberg — a region of Berlin where Turkish people have for several decades taken up residence in compact formations; not leaving the area and not knowing a single German word, a person can satisfy all of their needs there, from everyday and professional needs to cultural and religious ones.

² This is clear to see in the publications used by S. M. Low in her aforementioned review.

spatial boundaries, was, it seems to me, taken from Afro-Americans and transposed onto other groups living there.¹

This kind of logic is hard to apply to what is going on in post-Soviet cities. And the attempts of Western scholars (for the time being few and far between) to study namely ‘our’ cities results, in my opinion, in quite a realistic picture, but at the same time a very simplified one. In particular, the authors of the collective monograph ‘Urban Life in Post-Soviet Asia’, that deals with the changes in Tashkent, Alma-Ata, Astana and Ulan-Ude, consider the consequences of the influx of rural migrants (ruralisation), who brought their own customs, consumer practices and so on to the cities, to be a very important (and deeply negative) factor determining the vector of their [the cities’] development after 1991 [Alexander, Buchli 2007: 2, 8, 29–30].

This observation is accurate, but this is just the tip of the iceberg. I will now turn to my own field materials.² The example of Bishkek, which since the end of the 1980’s has been trying to ‘digest’ what is now the third wave of internal migration, shows the ‘battle for the city’ as a very complex, multidimensional process in which interethnic co-operation is far off in the background, and the confrontation of the rural outsiders and the old inhabitants conceals a whole mass of contradictions in urban development in the post-Soviet period, and also the system-wide difficulties of reforming a former social organism (coated, naturally, in the specifics of one or other country).

In the eyes of the old inhabitants the entire city, not its individual parts, has already, due to the onslaught of outsiders, turned into a huge disputed, even ‘abandoned space’ (*People who used to live on the fringes of society have started to hold sway, now we need to stay in our little corner where we reside so we can live quietly and in peace, and where we work...*). But what is hiding behind that which at first looks like a clash of urban and rural lifestyles? The negativity of the Kirgiz old inhabitants is in many respects caused by the fact that after the ‘revolutionary’ replacement in 2005 of the ‘northern’ president by a ‘southerner’ there was an increase in the influx into the city of ‘southerners’ who live side by side with Uzbeks and are miles apart

¹ For example, Eveline Dürr analyses which strategies are used by three different groups, with their own habitat, social status and culture — Indians, descendants of Spanish-speaking settlers and Anglo-Saxons — in their dispute over the entitlement to the symbolically significant and tourist-luring historical part of the city of Albuquerque (USA, state of New Mexico) [Dürr 2002]. An article written by Emanuel Guano also features ‘contested space’ in a quarter of Buenos Aires. The text, written on behalf of middle-class Argentineans of Italian birth, shows their resistance to the influx of dark-skinned paupers from the neighbouring countries of Latin America who take up residence in dense formations literally a stone’s throw away from them and, with their presence, challenge not only the lifestyle of the quarter’s old inhabitants, but also their cultural heritage in the form of wall-paintings and plaques [Guano 2003].

² Interviews with old inhabitants of Bishkek of different nationalities conducted in the Autumn of 2008.

from the russified Kirgizs of the North in terms of their mentality. But this is not the main thing. In the anti-migrant discourse the figure of the hated villager (incidentally, by no means are all migrating outsiders ‘southerners’ and/or uncouth villagers) in actual fact is becoming a convenient ‘scapegoat’ to be blamed for all the difficulties of modern life.

The moaning about the ‘lack of culture’ of migrants (it is from there that we have got the ‘dirty staircases’, ‘shabby benches’, ‘upturned refuse bins’, and everything that we didn’t have ‘in our wonderful Frunze’) conceals a general decline in the cultural level of the population in the conditions of the degradation of the educational systems and the fact that people have been forced to change their priorities in life:

So I am walking down the street and I can see men with no intellect showing on their face, with tracksuit bottoms bagging at the knees... Yes, it is bad, but if you are forced to go with your university degree to the market to trade, you’re not exactly going to go there wearing a suit and tie...

The escapism and complaints about the fact that ‘all migrants are petty criminals’ displayed by the old inhabitants are, in essence, complaints directed at a state incapable of adjusting the development of the ‘savage marketplace’¹ in such a way so that it could provide people with the basic things needed to survive not just in large cities but in the provinces as well.

In this case it is more correct to speak not about ruralisation of cities but rather about a broader process — their uncontrolled, ‘grassroots’ demodernisation. And here one cannot fail to mention, at least briefly, the topic of ‘the Soviet past’ that resounded so strongly in the tales of the informants². The shortcomings, inevitable in the described conditions, in the appearance of cities, the losses in terms of the provision of amenities; the impoverishment of the leisure repertoire, the difficulties of following the former patterns of everyday culture cause the friendly nostalgia of the old inhabitants (both Kirgizs and ‘Russians’) for the ‘Soviet’ [element] that is to be seen in a few guises.

On the one hand, this is an appeal to the Soviet urban aesthetics that is based on the ideology and consumer practices of that era (*We were pioneers back then, they were strict with this* [behaviour on the street. — N.K.]. *Well, what exactly would we litter with? They didn’t sell chewing*

¹ ‘Savage marketplace’ is a standard term in post-Soviet culture for the largely unregulated exchanges characteristic of the 1990s, in particular. [Editor].

² The frequency of references made by respondents to the Soviet past in the second half of the 2000’s, in comparison with the first decade after the collapse of the USSR when this was a very rare phenomenon (I base this on my own field research experience), in and of itself deserves to be studied. Unfortunately, the space given to me in this forum is not enough for me to go into any more detail about this matter.

gum at the time...). Evidently it was no coincidence that the new mayor of Bishkek, having zealously taken on the task of developing the city's infrastructure, chose postcards of Frunze in the 1970's as a visual 'model range'. At the same time the Soviet element acts as a synonym of the standards and regulations of the supranational industrial-urban 'order'.

One more topical problem of post-Soviet urban studies that I would like to touch upon here is associated with society's reaction to the diverse manifestations of the re-symbolisation of the urban environment — an inevitable result of the historical and political landmarks being replaced by the authorities of 'nationalising' states. Here we mean the large-scale renaming of streets, squares, and sometimes the cities themselves, and also the demolition of monuments, ideologically charged buildings and so on, often accompanied by the erection of new 'symbolic beacons' that better suit the spirit of an era of change.

Fighting for a name or a monument is a battle for 'ownership' of the city and its parts; the position of the city's inhabitants, if it manifests itself in any way, demonstrates their attitude towards the state; it shows us to what extent the inhabitants of a region, street, etc., consider them to be their own personal space within the bounds of which they can function as active social actors. In the post-Soviet conditions one would also expect a sharp divergence of the positions of the titular and 'Russian' population in this sensitive area. However this turns out not to be the case — activeness does not manifest itself and their positions are not at variance with one another...

People may retort: but what about when they moved the 'Bronze Soldier' in Tallin in April 2007 and mass unrest ensued, showing the whole world how far the conflict between the country's Estonian and non-Estonian population could go? However these truly dramatic events (and those similar to them that were less scandalous but also concerned the fate of military monuments) 'fall outside' of our topic in as much as they are weakly connected to the symbolic appearance of the city proper and have been 'written' into 'large narratives' — in this case, narratives involving an interpretation of the history of the Second World War (see, eg.: [Poleschuk 2009]).

If we are to speak about more widescale and routine politically-motivated changes in the urban sphere, this topic has been studied in the post-Soviet and post-socialist context mainly on a macro level (see, eg., works dealing with how the elite groups' hunt for a new national identity re-shapes the symbolic space of the city: [Mikhalev 2009; Bell 1999; Vukov, Toncheva 2006]). Despite all of their merit, they represent a view 'from above' and therefore practically do not take account of what ordinary people think about all of these past and imminent changes, how they adapt to them.

There are even more texts (normally polemical in nature) that relay the point of view of the politically engaged segment of the Russian-speaking post-Soviet countries — activists of ‘Slavonic organisations’, journalists and humanitarian scholars who express their heartfelt disagreement with the process of things being renamed which in these states accompanied the parting with the ‘imperial’ past. But I personally have not happened to read about the position of the ‘Russian street’, as ordinary representatives of titular groups (here I have research papers in mind).

Naturally, when planning an ‘urban’ project at whose centre lies people’s perception of the changes in their own lives and the life of their city after the collapse of the USSR, we could not fail to pay attention to the topic in question. However the results turned out to be slightly discouraging. Well, people are not interested in all of this; it rarely evokes a lively response...

For example, the conversations in 2007 with the ordinary inhabitants of Karakol, where streets are being renamed to this day, were indicative of a clear indifference to this issue. This issue constantly arose during conversations with passers-by when looking for a certain street or building, and the most common reaction was: ‘What’s the difference, it would have been better if they had thrown this money at something useful for the city.’ In Bishkek (2008), where the population is more politicised, the respondents reacted to questions in a livelier manner (although they themselves did not usually raise the topic we were interested in). However the conversation usually amounted to an assessment of individual new names, some of which they liked (or were accepted as well-founded), while others they did not like, and no clear differences in the positions of the ‘Russians’ and Kirgizs were noted.

By way of corroborating these observations I will allow myself to cite a fragment of a conversation with a Russian woman that took place in Autumn 2008 in Bishkek. This example is valuable in that the interview was structured as a free exchange of opinions between old acquaintances. It all started with the person sitting opposite me recollecting a certain Western [female] researcher who was working in Bishkek and was also expecting people to react actively to the fact that these ‘symbolic beacons’ were being replaced:

Inf.: *She was interested in associations...which monuments best symbolise the city of Kyrgyzstan. We discussed this a lot and realised that, in general, monuments as symbols of some or other processes are very rarely encountered in the city. This is most likely to do with the fact that you grew up in this area and lived your whole life next to the ‘Eternal Flame’ or whatever it may be, but it almost has no symbolic meaning. There are some or other everyday attachments...But for the following generation they are almost completely non-existent.*

Int.: *Yes, you know, in Russia we have the feeling that in our country everyone is concerned about things being renamed, let's say, or monuments...so, there are these scholars in Kazakhstan...over there there is a constant battle over the renaming of their cities in the north... There is also the matter of the Russian presence there in the North-East of Kazakhstan since the seventeenth century, this really touches a nerve, and it transpires that this is important for the activists of the so-called diaspora, but the people themselves...But here I don't think we have such attachments to this kind of Russianness.*

Inf.: *And here, incidentally, they issued a decree prohibiting the renaming of cities, streets, and so on.*

Int.: *Yes, I cut out a newspaper article [about this]. So, were you angry or not about the Abdrakhmanov business [a part of Sovetskaya Ulitsa, one of the city's main roads, recently being renamed after a Kyrgyz statesman. — N.K.]?*

Inf.: *I get angry when there are significant streets that in actual fact bring people together a lot more; and when they rename them...if they start to rename the Moskovskaya and Kievskaya streets, this will turn out to be very...It is a sort of connection with other territories.*

Int.: *Well, Sovetskaya [street] has a connection with a certain period in the past which will be perceived, let us say, ambivalently by some people. One could also argue...*

Inf.: *It is seen to a great extent in a positive light. So, let's get back to her project...and we were also discussing this topic with architects...here it is as if the symbolic layer does not have such significance, or it is present in something else...Or here there is symbolism with something else...But they came here [British researchers. — N.K.] with their preconceptions that there is a symbolic space (irony) here, that people associate their lives with some or other...*

It is most likely that the discussion here of this subject could end with a call for it being studied in more detail, for looking for the reasons behind the 'absence of the desired result', including by means of once again turning back to the (Soviet) past. The attitude towards today's 'idols' (to use the expression of my interlocutor) cannot not be a projection of the interpretation of plaques with the names of the 'idols' of the past era. But I will complicate the task: if various kinds of urban objects that are intended to play the role of canonical 'sites of memory'¹ do not measure up to this role at all, perhaps this function

¹ The concept of the 'site of memory' (lieu de mémoire) was introduced as an academic term by the French scholar Pierre Nora as applied to such things, objects and practices as archives, museums, cathedrals, squares, cemeteries, memorials; text-books, emblems, foundation course texts; rituals involving celebrations of very important historical dates. According to P. Nora's definition, 'a lieu de mémoire is any significant entity, whether material or non material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community (in this case, the

will be transferred to some other points of the urban landscape that are significant for people **in a different way?**

Russian inhabitants of Fergana could, with a derisive chuckle, call the new monument to the great medieval astronomer Ahmad al-Farghani in the city park that was completely done up during the period of independence, ‘the guy with the towel’ (in his outstretched hands he holds an unrolled manuscript in the form of a scroll). But they spoke quite calmly about the ‘Russian’ cemetery being demolished by the local authorities — for the purpose of laying out a public garden in its place (true, those who wanted to were given the opportunity to move the remains of their close ones to a new location). However, both the Russians and Uzbeks of Fergana (naturally, not people who recently migrated from kishlaks [villages in Central Asia], but those people who grew up in this city) of the relevant age groups spoke, with emotions in their raised intonation and smiling nostalgically, about... the grocery shop that existed in the Soviet era. The destroyed building, of no architectural or historical interest, thanks to its function of supplying the city’s inhabitants with a ‘deficit’ and its location, was a favourite spot for planned and unexpected ‘meetings of shared interests’: in the queue you could always find kindred spirits, discuss the news, and then continue your discussion in the nearby park with a splash of vodka and some zakuski you had just bought there. The building, judging by the descriptions of the informants, is in fact the thing where memory about the past secretes itself, to this day uniting different people belonging to the wide international community of the Fergana intelligentsia — not as much in terms of their official or professional status as in terms of culture (in which they also became involved through family and friends), [in terms of] urban customs, interests, semi-underground pastimes, and so on.

Another example (I could cite many) is a current urban ‘object’ — a boulevard in Bishkek, laid down back in the pre-revolutionary era, which until 1991 was named after Dzerzhinsky, and later was renamed ‘Independence Boulevard’ (‘Erkindik’). This not exactly remarkable street (well, it’s green; well, it’s shady, well-looked-after) continues to be affectionately called Dzerkhinka by practically all of the city’s inhabitants, both young and old, and the old residents speak about it very fondly. In the accounts of some people — those people who happened to live in the ‘Stalinki’ [Stalinist apartment blocks] alongside the boulevard where in the 1950’s–1960’s ‘listed’¹

French community) [Nora 1996: XVII]. In other words, we are talking about places that constitute ‘crystallisation of [cultural] memory; about places where memory secretes itself’ [Nora 1989: 7].

¹ ‘Nomenklaturnye’ in the Russian. In the USSR the *nomenklatura* was ‘a list of individuals drawn up by the Communist Party from which were selected candidates for vacant senior positions in the state, party and other important organisations’ [Collins English Dictionary 2000] [Trans.]

families of different nationalities started to take up residence (from national poets and academicians to generals and party officials) — one can hear echoes of a former trouble-free life. Their testimony, as if demonstrating entitlement to Dzerzhinka, is at first glance contradicted by the recollections of people who actively disputed this entitlement: they are former rural folk who came to the capital to study and who were allured by the capital-like appearance of the boulevard where the city's only decent cafes and cinemas were located. The 'aboriginals' would, more often than not, beat the 'outsiders'... Now those street brawls are forgotten, and both sides are united by their nostalgic recollections of the 'wonderful green Frunze'.

Perhaps in the post-Soviet conditions cultural memory 'crystallises' in the form of special, de-ideologised objects that take on — on the level of small (urban) communities — the function of rejected, forgotten, re-evaluated 'lieux de mémoire', whose symbolic power was to a certain extent the creation of the state?¹

One would like to hope that the issues that have been set out in this short piece will serve as a stimulus for new studies and will not be perceived at just relevant to Central Asia which is already being seen by many in Russia as a severed limb. Many thousands of people from that area live in our cities, and my contribution will, at the very least, suggest the idea that there is perhaps a lot more in common between 'us' and 'them' than we think...

References

- Alexander C., Buchli V. 'Introduction' // Alexander C., Buchli V., Humphrey C. (eds.) *Urban Life in Post-Soviet Asia*. London: UCL Press, 2007. Pp. 1–39.
- Bell J. 'Redefining National Identity in Uzbekistan: Symbolic Tensions in Tashkent's Official Public Landscape' // *Ecumene*. 1999. Vol. 6. No. 2. Pp. 183–208.
- Dürr E. 'Contested Urban Space: Symbolizing Power and Identity in the City of Albuquerque, USA' // Erdentug A., Colombijn F. (eds.). *Urban Ethnic Encounters: Spatial Consequences*. London: Routledge, 2002. Pp. 209–25.
- Guano E. 'A Stroll Through la Boca. The Politics and Poetics of Spatial Experience in a Buenos Aires Neighborhood' // *Space & Culture*. 2003. Vol. 6. No. 4. Pp. 356–76.
- Kosmarskaya N. P. '*Deti imperii*' v postsovetskoy Tsentralnoy Azii: adaptivnie praktiki i mentalniye sdvigi (russkie v Kirgizii 1992–2002) ['Children of the Empire' in Post-Soviet Central Asia: Adaptive Practices and Mental Shifts (Russians in Kirgizia 1992–2002)]. M.: Natalis, 2006.

¹ This is the case with practically all of the objects and practices listed by P. Nora.

- _____. 'My vse seichas v odnoi lodke — i russkie, i kirgizy'. Ob etnichnosti kak faktore sotsialnogo razmezhevaniya v postsovetских obschestvakh ['We are Now All in the Same Boat — both Russians and Kirgiz']. Ethnicity as a Factor of Social Demarcation in Post-Soviet Societies] // *Neprikosnovennyi zapas*. 2009. No. 4.
- Low S. M. 'The Anthropology of Cities: Imagining and Theorizing the City' // *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 1996. Vol. 25. Pp. 383–409.
- Manzanova G. 'City of Migrants: Contemporary Ulan-Ude in the Context of Russian Migration' // Alexander C., Buchli V., Humphrey C. (eds.). *Urban Life in Post-Soviet Asia*. London: UCL Press, 2007. Pp. 125–35.
- Mikhalev A. 'Sovetskie memorialy v Mongolii: kollektivnaya pamyat i borba za simvolicheskoe prostranstvo [Soviet Memorials in Mongolia: Collective Memory and the Fight for Symbolic Space]' // *Diaspora*. 2009. No. 2. Pp. 208–32.
- Nora P. 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire' // *Representations*. 1989. Vol. 26. Pp. 7–25.
- _____. 'From Lieux de Mémoire to Realms of Memory' // Nora P., Kritzman L.D. (eds.) *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*. Vol. 1. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996. Pp. xv–xxiv.
- Poleschuk V. "'Aprelskii krizis" 2007 v Estonii. Vyzovy istorii i neestonskoe naselenie [The "April Crisis" of 2007 in Estonia. Challenges to History and the non-Estonian Population]' // *Diaspora*. 2009. No. 2. Pp. 177–207.
- Vukov N., Toncheva S. 'Town Squares and Socialist Heritage: the Reworking of Memorial Landscapes in Post-Socialist Bulgaria' // Schröder-Esch S., Ulbricht J.H. (eds.) *The Politics of Heritage and Regional Development Strategies — Actors, Interests, Conflicts*. Weimar: Bauhaus — Universität Weimar, 2006. Pp. 121–136 <http://www.swkk.de/hermes/research/Buchbeitraege/HERMES-Band_2/HERMES_vol2_13Vukov.pdf>.

KIRILL MASLINSKY

There is much individual anthropological research currently in progress whose object is in one way or another localised in the city. However, I should prefer my answer not to be a detailed review of this research, but rather to start with the very concept of *the town* perceived as a problem suitable to be the object of anthropological studies. One of the most natural levels which allows the inclusion of the town in anthropological research is that of communities.

The community of townsfolk, even in a small town, should evidently be included in the class of imagined communities (in Anderson's terms).

The basic form of existence for a community of this type is the level of stereotypes about oneself, which are reproduced in situations where a presentational text is to be created or in intercourse with one's fellows, and also strategies of opposition to other significant communities round about (citizens of other towns). Furthermore, urban festival culture, which unites the community of citizens and brings to the fore their urban identity, provides a basis for examining the town as an independent ethnographical object.

However, such a narrow disciplinary approach results in a sense that the field of the anthropology of the town is too restricted, since all the other interesting phenomena are linked with 'the town' only formally. For example, the localisation of the community to be studied (let us say, a particular group of young people with their own subculture) inside the city limits may be a sufficient reason for adding the word 'urban' to the title of the research, but a mechanical construction of the anthropology of the town out of all these interesting objects seems somewhat arbitrary.

As far as I am concerned, my interest in the search for the town and for urban culture as an independent anthropological object (which is not equal to the sum of the traditions and subjects recorded in it) is first and foremost connected with fieldwork in a small town of local significance, which, it seems, may be accommodated within the field of vision and described as a whole. It is for the most part such towns which have provided the prototype for anthropological studies in this country embracing a whole town, particularly within the framework of a large project for studying the Russian provinces at the end of the 1990s and beginning of the next decade. However, many such studies were written by 'listening to the voice' of only one of the communities in the town: local studies specialists, tourists, chavs, or naive poets. The sense that such a picture is fragmentary and incomplete leaves open the question of finding a theoretical basis and systematic descriptive toolkit which would avoid missing anything of importance for the integral description of the town.

It seems to me that one way of making the transition from listing the traditions that exist within the town to a synthetic description of urban culture would be to address oneself systematically to the spatial level of the town's existence. It is the topographical specificity of such a socially complex object as a town, its reasonably well-defined spacial limits, the natural positioning of components that are different both in nature and structure, and the evident contact and connexion between the various communities that inhabit the town that look so attractive and promising to the anthropologist.

This problem of relating the spatial and social levels of the town is most clearly expressed in urban geography, a discipline that starts from the assumption of wholeness of the town in all its mani-

festations. During the second half of the twentieth century the thesis that forms of space and people's forms of behaviour within space are mutually conditioned became a commonplace of urban geography. Hence came the idea of looking for a connexion between the spatial forms of the town (the configuration of its streets, their width, the positioning of landmarks, etc.) with one or another aspect of the social reality experienced by its residents: their shared visual images, the speed at which they walk, their communal values and emotions regarding loci within the town etc.

Moreover, the means available for the description and analysis of urban spatial forms (*patterns*) has evolved considerably from the five elements (paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks) that made up the morphology used by Lynch in his research into the image of the city in the 1950s to much more abstract and sophisticated forms of topological analysis of spatial configurations, which make active use of mathematical graph theory, a contemporary variant of which is the space syntax of the London school (see, for example, [Batty 2004]).

By taking space as an independent component in the analysis of social realities, urban geographers find it possible identify the reasons for the genesis of spatial forms in concrete social processes and, equally, precisely to trace the restrictions placed by spatial configurations on social processes, which leads directly to the problems addressed by anthropological studies of the town [Hillier, Vaughan 2007].

Nevertheless, the interaction between anthropology and urban geography in this question is still less than one might wish. Patterns of movement within the town, which have always been a favourite subject of urban geography, have been found too ordinary to be an attractive subject for anthropologists, and social segregation in the town has traditionally been the sociologists' responsibility. Urban geographers in turn, even when orientated towards the analysis of the cultural space of a town, very rarely turn up cultural configurations that are relevant to anthropology, even when they are as obvious as the aforementioned subcultures, confining themselves to more sociological examples such as the dependence of certain kinds of crime on the environment in which they are committed.

I come now to what I consider to be the problem facing anthropological research into the town in the present day. If anthropology is interested in the social dimension of the town as an integral object, it seems to me that the results obtained solely on the basis of a well-developed analysis of a given town's spatial milieu will not be trivial. At present it is the spatial conditioning of communities and traditions in the town that is least systematically studied.

Anthropologists are inclined to record the spatial location of traditions as a given, without asking questions about the reasons and conditions that have caused them to be so located. I should like to use the example of urban geography to stress that in many cases it is possible convincingly to demonstrate that social phenomena are spatially conditioned.

Moreover, the meaning of the localisation of one social situation or another is not confined only to the group being studied. For example, a regular meeting place for informal associations also provides a range of possible contacts with other groups of citizens whose daily routes take them through that particular locus, which may be reflected also in the reputations of particular districts, the places that people avoid, where they choose to go for walks, the geography of confrontations and so on.

Spatial attachment in modern social research, in which there is an awareness of the problems of visualisation and interpretation that invariably accompany cartography (see, for example, [Monmonier 1996]) can no longer be reduced to placing points on a map. It seems to me that one or another variant of the theoretical and applied techniques for analysing the spatial environment already well developed by the urban geographers (including computer applications, such as the Depthmap package used in space syntax, mentioned above) could be productively used.

An immediate application and use for the methods of urban geography can be seen in such individual questions as the study of districts, traditional and new, toponymy and reputation, but more subtle results are also possible, since even the most universal of the methods of urban geography are applicable to spaces on any scale, from a single building to a whole district. Similarly, the use of formalised spatial configurations in the description of towns would provide for reliable typological comparisons of field material from different sources.

In fact, the problems of the interrelationship between the social and the spatial are not limited to urban spaces as such, but much more generally applicable. It just so happens that for historical reasons it was the urban milieu that gave rise to reflection upon this subject, and urban geography was the cradle of this type of research. One would like to hope that the interpretation of the urban spatial milieu will stimulate the development of new methods in anthropology.

References

- Batty M. *A New Theory of Space Syntax*. Working Paper 75. Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis, UCL. London, 2004. <http://www.casa.ucl.ac.uk/working_papers/paper75.pdf>.

Hillier B., Vaughan L. 'The City as One Thing' // *Progress in Planning*. 2007. Vol. 67. No. 3. Pp. 205–230.
 Monmonier M. *How to Lie with Maps*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

MIKHAIL MATLIN

1
2

It seems to me that from the point of view of folkloristics the study of the town is at present only in its initial stages. This means firstly that the modern town in its various historical, ethno-confessional, socio-economic and cultural aspects has been recognised as a separate and most important space for fieldwork. Secondly, the more material is accumulated, the clearer it becomes that to achieve an adequate understanding of the forms and functions of folklore/post-folklore in the multicultural space of the modern town we require new methodological approaches and working practices. Such marked attention on the part of academics today to the urban cultural space and to the town's outlook on classical peasant folklore may be useful not only in the study of these areas of traditional culture, but also in the solution of wider problems, including that of the self-definition of folkloristics within the system of the humanities.

A very important fact and factor in the formation of Russian folklorists' interest in urban culture was the publication of the collective monograph *Sovremenny gorodskoi folklor [Modern Urban Folklore]* edited by S. Yu. Neklyudov. It gave a provisional summing-up of what had been done in this field in the last quarter of the twentieth century, indicated the vast majority of the directions of study that are most significant for the present day, and formulated its methodological bases.

The following decade saw a rapid growth in the amount of urban folklore recorded and in the number of studies of separate genres and forms, including dissertations for doctorates and higher doctorates. Conferences played a most important role in this process, among them those

organised and conducted by the State Republican Centre for Russian Folklore: ‘Slavonic Traditional Culture and the Modern World’, ‘The Folklore of Small Social Groups: Traditions and Modernity’, ‘The Traditional Culture of the Russian Town as an Object of Interdisciplinary Research’, ‘Folk-art-net: New Horizons of Creativity. From Tradition to Virtuality’, and also the First All-Russian Congress of Folklorists, etc.

However, in my opinion we cannot regard the stage of collecting material as complete, and indeed it conceals a certain important problem. This is that modern forms of everyday and ritual or holiday urban culture, including post-folklore, are extremely dynamic and fluid in their own way, and this is due to a variety of factors. These include the more significant role of the personal element in the performance and development of the modern tradition; the sudden expansion of the communicative field in which it exists, thanks to the Internet; and the heightened influence upon it of business and state cultural and educational establishments and organisations. Therefore no convincing or well-founded generalisation can be made about urban post-folklore without a constant monitoring of the processes taking place in it.

The second major problem is the fundamentally different relationship between orality and writing. One may recall the term *folklorisation*, which was popular in Soviet folkloristics and referred to the way a work of literature might be absorbed by the folkloric space, as a result of which not only were the principles of its functioning changed, but the text itself was subject to restructuring and ‘re-working’. Something of the same sort is happening today. Thus at the end of the twentieth century certain written texts reproducing various official documents acquired a firm place in the modern urban wedding. This text may on the one hand be constructed according to the rules of written (visual) culture (using typographical means to highlight certain passages, words or letters, with drawings, vignettes and photographs, including scanned images etc.), but on the other hand it must be read aloud, or rather read out at the wedding, and it also possesses the characteristics of variability, anonymity, etc.¹

The third problem may be considered to include the problem of the study of the Internet as the communicative space of the information society, in which social groups of a new type — web communities — take shape and become active. They are the milieux in which certain forms and aspects of the urban cultural tradition, including post-folklore, have acquired a new space in which to exist. Of course it is no longer possible to speak of Internet communication as a phenomenon of exclusively urban culture, though it is nevertheless urban

¹ See [Matlin 2002].

traditions that are accumulated and transmitted within it. An example of this might be the so-called ‘brides’ forums’ which now exist on all the nuptial portals of any size.¹

References

Matlin M.G. ‘Pismennye dokumenty kak verbalny komponent sovremennoi russkoi svadby [Written Documents as a Verbal Component of the Modern Russian Wedding]’ // *Aktualnye problemy polevoi folkloristiki*. M.: Izdatelstvo MGU, 2002. Pp. 180–96.

GYÖRGY PÉTERI

Urbanism, Modernity, State Socialism, Agency — the Practices of Private Life and the Everyday in Hungarian Cities

A key issue in the study of Western cities is automobilism, which — particularly in the case of US urban development — is seen to have driven decisions about planning and infrastructure, facilitating the decentering of traditional settlements, a process only slightly impeded by the oil crises of the late twentieth century and by the negative effects of mass car ownership, e.g. traffic congestion.² As a number of commentators, particularly Lewis Siegelbaum (*Cars for Comrades*, 2008), have pointed out, these processes began later in socialist countries, such as the Soviet Union, than they did in the US and in Western Europe. It was not until the 1960s when there was a shift in central planning from an all-out commitment to public transport (with cars viewed essentially as ceremonial vehicles), to an understanding of the car as a vehicle of urban and exurban mobility (not coincidentally, the development of outer city areas, of leisure facilities for activities such as hunting and ski-ing, and of secondary residences used in summer only was also accelerated round this time).³ At the same time, the processes of

György Péteri
 Norwegian University of Science & Technology,
 Trondheim
 gyorgy.peteri@ntnu.no

¹ See, for example, *Svadebny forum* <<http://forum.svsp.ru/index.php>>; *Svadebka. Forum* <<http://forum.svadebka.ws>>; *Krasivaya svadba. Forum* <<http://v-zags.com/forum/index.php>> and many others.
² See e.g. [Rammert 1997: 186], pointing to the influence of ‘the strongly-knit relations between automobile manufacturers and suppliers, the close intertwining of transport and taxation policy, the long-lasting tradition of mass-car engineering [...] and the mass myth and mass practice of “automobilism”’ on technological development in the city, ‘although the automobile system has been deeply shaken by the crises of oil supply, air pollution, and traffic jams’.
³ On the exurban drive in the Soviet Union, see [Lovell 2003].

automobilism did not work, in socialist cities, exactly as they did in Western cities, because access to vehicles still continued to be much more strongly associated with social status.

The brief remarks here, a study in the historical sociology of urban development, look at the situation in Hungary, and at the crucial role played in automobilism by the regulation of vehicle use by high- and middle-ranking party officials, who remained the most important group of car users right to the end of socialist power. Alongside automobilism as such, then, the analysis also contributes to understanding of the key role of social status in development of the socialist city (it is common for discussion to suggest the opposite — e.g. by pointing to the distinctiveness of the socialist city in terms of the *absence* of zoning according to social stratum or ethnic group).

The task of discussing car use in the city is crucially related to the understanding of state socialism as a project of *alternative modernity*, i.e., as a large scale attempt to create a civilisation constituting an at least feasible and possibly even superior alternative to capitalism, in a way that discards the traditional focus on policies and discourses, and concentrates instead on *the practices of private life and the everyday*, the routines people from various walks of life develop and sustain in meeting their needs for housing, mobility, various dimensions of domesticity, in taking care of the upcoming generation, and also in seeking and gaining escapes from the everyday (leisure activities, vacation, weekend cottages, etc.).

We could list several good reasons to plead for placing in the focus the practices of private life and of the everyday, without entirely neglecting the policy and discursive dimensions, even when it comes to such fields of inquiries into the modern as urban history. The most important intellectual advantage is that such studies make the human agency structuring aspects of modern urban life accessible. Tendencies characterising modern cities will be grounded in the choices made and routines adhered to by individuals and their groups, rather than in some mysterious ‘interplay’ or ‘negotiations’ between various technologies and political-ideological tendencies in various ‘departments’ of city planning. Everyday practices prevalent in groups possessing large shares of the economic, social and cultural resources available at any point of time will assume additional significance by the pull exercised on the rest of society whose desire is most often to catch up and emulate. Indeed, the private life of an elite, their practices of the everyday might contribute to shaping a society just as much (or even more than) these elites’ pronounced political-ideological visions of what ‘good society’ is about. Reading what kind of a society was inscribed in the everyday life of communist elites is of even greater import, since they cultivated a self-image in which

they figured as a radical, boundary-pushing, transformation-oriented avant-garde.

A short presentation of the findings yielded by my recent study on the mobility of the party apparatus in communist Hungary,¹ might make these points clearer and more palpable. At the end of 1957, the total number of personal cars in Hungary (a country of roughly 10 million people) was less than 13,000. About a third of these cars (3980) were owned by private individuals. By 1980, the share of privately owned cars had risen to 97 % within a total stock of over 1 million personal cars. At the beginning of this short quarter of a century (1957–1980), alternative paths to develop modern mobility could still have been considered and asserted by central planners. In 1960, the density of personal cars (number of cars per 1000 inhabitants) was 3 in Hungary — it was 40 times higher in France, 33 times in Britain, 27 times in Belgium, 19 times in Austria, 15 times in the Netherlands, and 11 times in Italy. ‘Motorisation’ via the growth of the number of personal cars in private hands was still but a distant possibility and not a necessity. In other words, the late 1950s was still a time when an alternative (distinctly *socialist*) modernity in terms of the structure and ‘mode’ of mobility (emphasising collective transportation yet meeting the demands for individual mobility through well developed services rendered by taxi and rental companies instead of privately owned cars — as N. S. Khrushchev imagined a socialist ‘motorisation’) could rightly be regarded feasible. By the 1970s and 1980s, however, the inertia of private mass automobilism had grown overwhelming. Privately owned and used personal cars constituted the fastest growing sector of personal transportation already in the 1960s, and their share in the total of personal transport performance grew from a mere 4,3 % in 1950 (even less in 1960) to more than 26 % by 1972.

This assimilation (or convergence) of ‘socialism’ to ‘capitalism’² in terms of modern mobility patterns (the explosion of private automobilism in the 1960s and 70s) can be rendered as a consequence of some kind of economic-cum-technological determination or of deliberate political decisions. To my mind none of these strategies yield a compelling explanation. Had state socialism been the most rational historical regime of resource use, the privately owned and possessed personal car could hardly constitute a serious alternative to an ambitious development of public transportation. As is mentioned above, in Hungary’s case the country’s relative ‘underdevelopment’ created an opportunity for steering development towards an alternative path. Political decisions cannot work miracles without

¹ Cf. [Péteri 2009; Péteri 2011].

² The striking similarity between West and East German motorisation is an important theme in [Schmucki 2003].

the social practices that may establish, sustain and enable patterns to proliferate.

Trying to find an explanation for this ‘characteristically non-socialist’ pattern of modernisation (and for the failure of the ‘socialist mode of consumption’ to assert itself), I took a close look at the everyday practices of mobility in what constituted the core of the communist political class: the members of the salaried apparatus of the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party (HSWP), from the level of district committees up to the ‘White House’ of *Jászai Mari Square* (the party headquarters where the apparatus of the Central Committee had their offices).

The bulk of my sources consisted in documents from the Department of Party Economy and Administrative Management of the Central Committee of the HSWP (PGO), from the years 1956–1980. This is probably the least known of the departments of the central committee apparatus, and its task was to take care of and exercise control over the internal economic and administrative management in the central, regional (county) and district organisations of the party. The PGO monitored the development of general personnel management (including salaries and incomes) in the party apparatus and supervised the management of the economic affairs of the whole national party apparatus, including the planning for the annual budgets of the HSWP, controlling and enforcing proper use and accountancy of monetary and other material resources in the various party organisations, and even matters pertinent to the welfare issues of the party apparatus. Among the duties of the PGO was to secure a proper infrastructure enabling the mobility of the apparatus at all levels, including an infrastructure of automobility (i.e., cars, garages, repair and other services for the cars). They took care centrally of the procurement and distribution of cars among the county, city, and district party organisations, they designed the regulations to be observed in the use of cars (and other means of transportation) within the party organisations, and it was also their duty regularly to control and report on the practices of mobility (most importantly: the use of cars) obtaining in the various district, regional, and central party organs. The PGO executed thorough controls of economic administration (almost always covering the practices observable in the use of cars) sending a group of inspectors to at least a third of the county level party organisations (18 counties and the Party Committee of the capital city of Budapest) annually. They often conducted inspections in the various departments of the Central Committee apparatus too. The corpus of reports generated in the course of these controls through a quarter of a century made up the largest single component of the empirical material I drew upon in my work.

The dynamics that is manifest in this corpus was fed by the apparatus class's never ceasing attempts at 'privatising' the possession / use of the party cars put to their disposal for their official work. This sneaking privatisation assumed a number of different forms. To name but a selection, we should mention the use of the party's car for private purposes through blatant fraud, e.g., by way of providing false data on the journey docket tracking the car.¹ Combining official trips with leisure where family members were taken to the ride was a widespread tendency too. There are numerous reports in the PGO archives about the curious convergence of large numbers of official cars belonging to central as well as lower (county and district) level party and state authorities on the Balaton Lake (the most important single resort of urban Hungarians during the summer months) throughout June, July and August. This phenomenon was not lost on the rest of society, as is well reflected by a very amusing film directed by Frigyes Bán, one autonomous episode of which is devoted in its entirety to the 'state[-owned] car' (*állami autó*), represented as the most convenient form of privately possessing / using a car at the cost of the state. As the narrator of the film put it "the only compelling argument for using the car is the state car. Because the state-owned car is run on the state's fuel, driven by a chauffeur salaried by the state, repaired and taken care of at the state's expense... Consequently, nowhere else in the world there are as many state cars as in our country. In this respect we have managed not only to catch up with but even to outpace the leading capitalist countries...".² Sneaking privatisation could also assume the form of resistance to (and systematic sabotage of) norms and measures promoting increased car-sharing within and between the various departments in the party apparatuses. The higher a person was within the bureaucratic hierarchy, the greater his chances were of succeeding in monopolising the use of a car — the PGO reports reveal a large number of cases where inspectors complain about party bosses at various levels (from district secretaries and up) not allowing anyone else in their apparatus to use what they regarded to be "their cars". Departments of the Central Committee apparatus received almost every year circulars from the PGO complaining about the departments' malpractices, such as randomly sending several cars with only one or two passengers, all from the same corridor in the 'White House' (the party headquarters at Jászai Mari square in Budapest), to the same provincial centre, on the same day.

¹ More often than not, the social basis of such practices was the familial relationship that tended to develop between party bosses at various levels and their chauffeurs. I could find no case throughout the documentation of almost three decades when the higher party-economic authorities decided to prosecute this kind of fraud.

² *Kár a benzinért!* [Don't Waste the Gas!] Director: Frigyes Bán, script: Imre Bencsik, produced by Studio 3, Budapest, 1964.

The tendency of sneaking privatisation was met by the party's economic administrators with measures going half-way towards satisfying, within clearly defined limits, the 'legitimate needs' for private car use. The hope was that they could thus manage to keep the urge towards illegitimate privatisation at bay. By the mid-1960s an elaborate hierarchical system of privileges emerged wherein the different echelons of the apparatus class (in the party as well as in the state) were granted various entitlements, from the right to unlimited mileage and 24/7 access to the car, enjoyed by the top elite, to permissions on a case-to-case basis in connection with major family events (birth, death, wedding), granted to the lesser.

Significantly, the only fear among the apparatchiki that may have been greater than their aversion towards car-sharing, was in relation to the use of public transportation, even though the PGO tried to encourage it just as much as they encouraged car-sharing. In 1958, the Central Committee apparatus's expenditure on public transports constituted 0,8 % of their expenditure on personal cars. In 1964, an amount equaling 1,1 % of the car budget was used for collective forms of long distance transportation, while the expenditure on local public transports in Budapest amounted to about 0,6 % of the spending on cars. The 1979 budget plan for the Central Committee apparatus specified personal car costs to the magnitude of 22 million Ft, while less than 10.000 Ft (0,045 % of the car costs) were budgeted to reimburse expected costs of public (collective) transport. Translating all these data into words, we can say that reliance on collective (public) transport was never a significant avenue for apparatus mobility, and that, in the course of the history of state socialism in Hungary, this alternative can be said to have literally withered away.

Anxious about surging costs and faced by the meagre results of other restrictive measures to curb the use and misuse of the party's cars, the economic administrators of the apparatus decided in the early 1970s to introduce radically new policies with regard to apparatus mobility. One of these was to allow and even encourage chauffeur-less car services — i.e., they wanted the apparatchiki, provided they had a driver's licence, to drive their official cars and use them without a chauffeur. In 1971, 15 % of the total mileage (2,563.146 kms) covered by the CC apparatus was covered by the 'party workers' themselves, without chauffeurs. The cost of a chauffeurless kilometer by the party car was 25 % off the unit-cost of a car with chauffeur. To begin with, the use of cars without chauffeur was a privilege granted to members in the Central Committee apparatus. Seeing the opportunities to secure economies, however, the party's economic administration decided to encourage the chauffeurless utilisation of party cars nationwide. Chauffeurless driving, however, never really managed to gather enough momentum to make any

major 'breakthrough'. Part of the explanation was the resistance it met in some of the provincial party organisations. Yet, in the light of the modest but promising results of the first 'experimental' years (in 1972 1,2 million kilometers were covered in 'chauffeurless' party cars, a mileage corresponding approximately to the annual work load of 40–50 professional chauffeurs), the PGO (and, behind it, the party leadership) decided to promote this form of car-use by two measures clearly calculated to appeal to the private-individual interests of the members of the apparatus: It was decided that apparatchiki driving the party's cars themselves should receive, as a mileage at their disposal for private purposes, 10 % of the mileage performed by them on official trips without chauffeur; and the last resolution of the Central Committee Secretariat in this matter (4 February 1980), raised this private mileage to be gained to 15 % (maximum 1000 kilometers annually) and offered, alternatively, the possibility of a direct cash payment to apparatus members undertaking to drive the party cars on official missions. The PGO also offered to finance 50 % of the fees for driver education courses on behalf of members of the apparatus, provided they successfully passed their final exams. This latter measure especially was said to have evoked an enthusiastic response on the part of the apparatus.

The growth of 'chauffeurless driving' in the apparatus, both in absolute and in relative terms, continued until 1976. Thereafter, however, no more advances were made in this respect, and the tendency leveled off. As a report, summarising the experience of inspections made in the center as well as in the provinces in 1976, put it: 'We witness year after year the growth of reliance, for official purposes, on private cars. The demand for cars without chauffeur [however] is losing its momentum [*mérséklödik*].'

The real breakthrough in stopping the growth and even bringing down the costs of apparatus mobility was achieved by a measure which appealed to an even greater extent to the private-individual interests of the members of the apparatus class. Indeed, what in 1972 appeared to have been a minor contribution to the total automobility of the apparatus (slightly more than 1.5 % of the total mileage performed in party cars), by 1976 had grown into a major component of the total mileage performed in the service of the party: *private cars owned by members of the apparatus* ran almost 7 million kilometres (around 75 % of the total mileage performed by party cars), bringing the professional revolutionaries wherever they had to go in their official capacities. In 1976, there were 'Nationwide, approximately 2000 comrades using regularly and/or in periods their own cars in taking care of their tasks.'

The 1972 resolution on car use of the CC Secretariat opened up the opportunity for reliance on the apparatus's private cars to a radically greater extent than it had been possible ever before. It provided

a mighty new impetus towards acquisitions among apparatus circles of private cars by (a) rewarding higher level functionaries who relinquished their entitlements to use party cars for private purposes, offering support to them for their private car acquisitions (independently of whether or not they promised to use their cars then in their official work), and (b) by deciding to secure exemption from queuing and advantageous credit conditions for functionaries in general, provided they undertook to use their private cars for official purposes. The resolution triggered a veritable avalanche of car acquisitions in the party apparatus nationwide. In the course of the second half of 1972 and 1973, 1080 cars were bought by members of the apparatus with the help of the PGO. The county committees reduced their stock of party cars by 62 cars (11 %). In the same period, the Budapest central party garage (Transportation and Technological Company) could rid themselves of 23 party cars, and even though the total mileage used in party work increased from 22.8 million kilometers (1972) to 23.5 million kilometers (1973), due to a radical growth in the contribution of private cars (increasing from a mere 130,000 kilometers to more than 2 million kilometers from 1972 to 1973), the total costs of automobility in the party apparatus remained at the 1972 level. A report on developments in 1974 reveals that the PGO facilitated the purchase of 1134 private cars by the apparatus, while the reduction of the number of party cars in the county committees continued and reached 100 cars by the end of that year.

Reports from the counties indicated a rapidly increasing ‘motorisation’ of the party apparatus, through the spread of private car ownership.

The reports from 1972 and 1973 suggest that only a very few apparatus members owned and used private cars in service. Thereafter, however, the number of car owners, the number of apparatchiki taking driving courses, and using their own cars in work grew at a spectacular tempo. Besides subsidised driver’s education, exceptionally favourable credit conditions, and the possibility to purchase cars without having to queue for years (as all other citizens in the country had to), the availability of the party’s infrastructure (garages, repair shops) that took care of and serviced their private cars at special (subsidised) prices substantially increased the propensity of the apparatus class to acquire and use private cars in their party work. By 1977, the results became absolutely convincing: the party managed to reduce its stock of cars from 948 in 1972 to 740 by September 1977; while the mileage covered by party cars dropped by 30 %, the total mileage used for the purposes of official work shrunk only by 7.5 %, due to the increasing and sizeable contribution of private cars used. “Today, in the country as a whole, 1800–1900 comrades use regularly or intermittently their own cars in doing their work”, announced a proud PGO chief to the national meeting of economic chiefs in the party apparatus. These cars covered

6.2 million kilometers — the annual average performance of approximately 190–200 professional chauffeurs. The party leadership had no longer any doubts about their being on the right path and wished to continue the policy of encouraging the use of private cars in the party's service. They were determined to do so partly by repeating the annual car sale campaigns.

In these campaigns, the PGO received from the Ministry of Domestic Trade a contingent of approximately 1200 personal cars annually, which they then distributed among the applicants forwarded to them by the various county committees. This implied a short-cut access to cars for the apparatus, a considerable advantage over other mortal citizens who had to wait months or even years (depending on the demand for the particular model) from the point of time they fully paid for the car and the time they received it. The PGO also had special arrangements with the National Savings Bank for credits on exceptionally good terms (not accessible for the rest of the population) to the benefit of the apparatus. They carefully monitored price developments affecting the costs of owning and driving private cars and adjusted reimbursements accordingly to maintain the interestedness of the apparatus in using their own cars in work. Last but not least, they wished to promote the use of private cars in the party's service also 'by measures taken to [organise] the ongoing servicing and repairs of the functionaries' cars by the repair shops, garages of the county party committees and of the Transportation and Technological Company [in Budapest]'.

What this regime achieved was nothing less than simultaneously, and at comparable total costs, managing to secure the car mileage required for party work, and enabling the party apparatus to enjoy the fruits of individual-private mobility through the wholesale conversion of costs of party cars into costs of reimbursements for the use of private cars (as well as into costs of maintenance and services subsidised with public funds). Looking back at a decade of experience with the regulations introduced in 1972, the chief of the party's economic administration could proudly announce in 1981, 'Essentially, the apparatus's demand for mobility has been solved by the integration of private cars. [...] The efficient utilisation of the work time of the political apparatus operating in the districts has been improved. Those travelling on assignments can use their time more flexibly and efficiently. *The imposed need of having to wait for one another has ceased to exist. Through the utilisation of private cars even the leisure time of the functionaries has increased considerably.*'

The social group whose everyday practices of mobility we have just discussed constituted the very core of the state-socialist political class and politically the most powerful segment of the social elite. There is little reason to believe that a closer scrutiny of the state side of the

political class of the party-state (the governmental apparatuses, national authorities) would have yielded greatly different findings. We may also safely assume that the values and attitudes of this elite, as it manifested itself in their everyday life, did in fact impress the rest of society. Commoners may have been profoundly suspicious when they were listening to political speeches or had to read some agitprop texts, but they perceived the 'message' immediately when they saw the high level of 'motorisation' of the political class of the party-state both in terms of the large stock of public cars at their disposal and in terms of the conspicuously high density of private cars in their circles. They may have had doubts as to the legitimacy of their rulers, but they could without hesitation follow them when it came to their choices of the ways and style of everyday life, and they certainly subscribed to their understanding of what 'good life' was like.

Yet few among the Hungarian population would have felt prompted to revolt against communist rule again if the Kádár regime had decided consistently to follow a policy of large scale development efforts when it came to the infrastructure of collective transportation and a Khrushchovian-style system of national car-sharing to cater for needs of individual mobility. It is hard to imagine that the chances of survival for state-socialism would have been smaller if it had wished to distinguish itself by way of prioritising and committing large resources to the development and maintenance of an up-to-date system of collective mobility, or if state-socialist elites would have satisfied their needs for mobility by relying on collective transport and car-sharing. The choices made by the latter during 'the long 1960s' are of historical significance in that they confirmed the inability of the state-socialist social order to emancipate modern social and economic development from 'capitalist' patterns. It was in the everyday practices of elite mobility that I have discussed where was decided the question whether state socialism could assert an alternative modernity in the field of mobility, a pattern distinct from (as well as in some respects antithetical to) capitalist modernity. These practices constituted probably one of the mightiest social mechanisms bringing about the convergence of 'socialism' with 'capitalism'. At the same time, they contributed to a once-and-for-all alternation of the urban landscape, because facilities had to be provided for private cars, and more importantly, because private car use and membership of the urban elite were now identified. A situation was created where anyone who could use a private car did so, and where the mass of the population regarded such car use as a sign of social standing and success. It is no surprise that the post-socialist period saw a further steep decline in commitment to public transport within the political leadership, and inexorable further increases in car ownership, with all the associated problems of congestion and pollution that also bedevil major cities without a legacy of socialism (from New York to Mumbai).

References

- Lovell S. *Summerfolk: A History of the Dacha, 1710–2000*. Ithaca, NY, 2003.
- Péteri G. 'Streetcars of Desire: Cars and Automobility in Communist Hungary (1958–1970) // *Social History*. 2009. Vol. 34. No. 1. Pp. 1–28.
- _____. 'Alternative Modernity? Everyday Practices of Elite Mobility in Communist Hungary, 1956–1980' // *The Socialist Car: Automobility in the Eastern Bloc* / Siegelbaum L. (ed.). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011.
- Rammert W. 'New Rules of Sociological Method: Rethinking Technology Studies' // *British Journal of Sociology*. 1997. Vol. 48. No. 2. Pp. 180–93.
- Schmucki B. 'Cities as Traffic Machines: Urban Transport Planning in East and West Germany' // *Suburbanizing the Masses: Public Transport and Urban Development in Historical Perspective* / Divall C., Bond W. (eds.). Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2003. Pp. 149–170.
- Siegelbaum L. *Cars for Comrades: The Life of the Soviet Automobile*. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2008.

VLADIMIR PODDUBIKOV

The Ethnocultural Space of the Russian City:
Some Problems of Ethnological Research

1

The problems facing academic research on the city are important and challenging from the point of view of socio-cultural anthropology, in particular its sub-discipline, above all ethnology. In this context, the city is of great interest as a special socio-cultural environment that is giving rise to the phenomenon of mass culture, spreading far beyond the confines of urban agglomerations. Of great significance today are the main characteristics of the urban environment from the point of view of the current ethnic processes, the ethnic make-up of urban populations and the factors influencing changes in it; the nature of inter-ethnic relations and ethnocultural interaction in urban communities.

Most of these issues have not received due attention in the Russian academic research tradition, as an analysis of the literature forces one to note; in addition, they have not been covered as thoroughly there as they have elsewhere. For example, in Anglo-Saxon countries research in the field of urban anthropology

(including research touching on the ethnic aspects of urban culture and the make-up of the population) has already been going on for more than half a century. Over this time, significant bodies of information have been built up, several research areas have been formed, and the necessary toolset, approaches and methods have been selected and tested successfully. The results that have been obtained are widely used for practical purposes in the sphere of urban administration, formulating pre-election platforms of political parties, social programmes, and many other areas.

Russian ethnology does not have the same experience and developments in as much as it has traditionally focused on historical reconstructions and empirical descriptions of 'indigenous' ethnocultures which include sets of ethnic traditions in terms of the spiritual, material and socio-normative culture characteristic of ethnic groups who have been exposed to the cultural innovations of the twentieth century to the minimum extent. Cities (to be more precise, their influence on ethnic cultures) are deemed to be one of the causes of innovations of this type. This predetermined the famous inattention of Soviet, and subsequently Russian, ethnographers to urban problems.

Only over the last decade have we seen people beginning to conduct purposeful ethnological research on Russia's cities, although here we should only speak about individual research projects aimed at studying the ethnic composition of a city, the ethnic processes taking place in the urban environment and the ethnocultural situation in the space of the Russian city. They include the integrated scientific-education programme 'Megapolis' that was initiated in the 2000's in Moscow and St Petersburg, a few cities in the European part of the country and Siberia, and also the findings of specialists from Krasnodar in their research on ethnic migration in the Southern Federal Okrug.

In terms of the volume of research and the list of issues that have been raised, this is hardly sufficient for a country as vast as Russia, especially if one bears in mind that the first of the above projects was not directly aimed at an ethnological analysis of the social situation in Russia's cities but instead only one of its divisions was assigned for this purpose. Furthermore, there is undoubtedly a need for such research to develop. The processes of the urbanisation of society, the rise in the numbers of the urban population and the complication of its ethnic structure to this day require the academic study of a wide spectrum of problems many of which have a high level of practical significance.

2

We will try to single out and briefly characterise the most, in our opinion, important aspects of ethnological research on Russian cities and the issues associated with this. We will also note that many of the materials cited in this text, the examples, facts and authorial obser-

uations are in respect of Siberian cities which in some instances does not mean that generalisations and certain conclusions cannot be said to apply to the problems associated with ethnological studies of cities in other regions of Russia.

First and foremost, the methodological side of urban ethnological studies seems important, as well as the problems with the methods and sources of information that are used. As a research subject, the city is incomparably more complex than the rural ethnic groups usually looked at by Russian researchers. The approaches and toolsets normally used for ethnographic research cannot always be used in the case of urban studies.

Firstly, an important peculiarity of the city that complicates its ethnographic study is the dispersed nature of the settlement of ethnic groups within the city walls. The majority of Russia's cities do not have ethnic enclaves to the same extent as, for example, the Chinese or Latin-American quarters in the cities of North America. One rarely sees individual ethnic groups settled in compact formations in Russian cities. A well-known exception to this, I would say, are the gypsy communities that sometimes form, for example in Siberian cities, single settlement locations, as a rule, within the urban periphery. Or cities in the Caucasus and Transcaucasia where elements of the spatial divergence of a population on the basis of their ethnic membership remain. In Russia's cities, including the largest megalopolises, it is still typical for ethnolinguistic groups to be settled in a dispersed manner. All of them, in essence, can consider themselves to be ethnically dispersed (apart from the part of the population that is dominant in terms of their numbers). This makes it more difficult for the researcher when, let us say, he or she has to choose where to make observations or conduct a survey. In this case there will most probably need to be a preliminary analysis of the materials of the statistic records of the population for the purpose of determining the places of residence (territorial distribution) of the ethnic groups being researched. However most of the materials that are needed for this cannot be accessed by researchers.

Secondly, the peculiarities of urban communities as a subject of ethnological research predetermine the ambiguity of the position of the researcher himself. Unlike the practice of fieldwork in a rural district, in this case the researcher is always submerged in the ethnocultural environment in as much as he himself is often a city-dweller. He conducts the research work not in another cultural environment but on his home turf, in conditions that he has grown accustomed to, even if the place where he is conducting the research is not the same as his place of residence: the surrounding environment, in general terms, is similar in many cities. Such a situation has both its advantages and obvious complications and shortcomings.

The advantage, I would say, is in the accessibility of some of the aspects of people's behaviour, their daily practices and relationships, by means of observation, including involved (participating) observation in which ethnographers have always put a lot of faith. In the case of ethnographic research in a 'foreign' environment, amongst rural ethnic groups, one often has to spend a lot of time and effort on 'entering' this milieu, i.e. on removing the first reaction of alienation (and sometimes even frustration at the presence of an outsider) before the researcher can establish the necessary contact with his informants. And even when this contact has been established, it does not yet mean that the researcher will manage to participate in one of the cultural practices that he is interested in. In the urban environment many of these practices are open for participation and therefore there is every opportunity to see them 'from within'. For example, all you have to do is act as though you are purchasing fruit at a city market and you will have the chance to participate in the retail trade process — one of the characteristic activities of, say, some of the Azerbaijani community.

As regards the difficulties associated with ethnographic fieldwork in urban conditions, they are, in essence, linked with the very same circumstances — the complete and uninterrupted submersion of the researcher in the urban ethnocultural space he is studying. He runs the risk of falling under the influence of a phenomenon which could be described as an aberration of the proximity of cultural distance separating the researcher, with his life (sociocultural) experience, from the realia being observed in urban conditions. A lot of what we see in the city we know only too well and come across on a daily basis. We, as city-dwellers, are exposed to the influence of stereotypes and clichés in our opinions and the assessments of our surroundings that have been thrust upon us, sometimes with the help of the mass media, our daily environment and other factors. All of this denies the researcher the advantage of observing this 'with fresh eyes' and can complicate his ability to see, impartially assess and adequately interpret what is going on in front of him.

The difficulties of getting access to the necessary sources of information and the issues of their reliability represent a significant problem when conducting ethnological research on the city. As it has already been noted, it is hard to imagine successful research in the field of urban ethnology if one cannot use mass quantitative data. And getting access to such information is not always an easy task. Municipal statistics are practically inaccessible for research purposes. At present it is not even easy to get access to the materials of the Register Office which in the recent past were freely available to staff of research institutes if they put in an official request. As for departmental statistics, they are even less accessible. The present author, for example, has on more than one occasion had first-hand experience

of a strong lack of desire on the part of leading medical workers to provide statistical summaries of the sickness and death rates of the population for scientific purposes. And categorical refusals will follow, as a rule, immediately after one has explained the aims and purpose of the project which consists of a comparison of the sickness rates typical for different ethnic groups. One encounters a similar situation when it comes to trying to use the statistical data of other departments. Even if one does manage to get access to them, there is a high probability that they are not completely accurate or full and that they do not accurately reflect the situation the researcher is interested in. One often has to deal with figures that have been generalised twice or even three times; that have been 'standardised' for reasons of 'efficient' record keeping.

Some of these shortcomings (or ones similar in terms of content) are characteristic also of such official sources of information as population census materials. The latter have been criticised in detail in the ethnological literature. We will just remark here that the census materials of 2002 in a number of cases fail to adequately reflect the ethnic composition of the population of the country as a whole, as well as that of individual regions and cities. Due to the imperfection of the census technology and the tools used, many ethnic groups ended up being accounted for to a far lesser extent than they should have been. This concerns mainly those groups of the so-called 'labour contingent' (a term used in the 2002 census), including the vast groups of illegal immigrants whose presence in Russian cities at the moment requires the attention of ethnologists. These are, in general terms, the difficulties and problems associated with conducting ethnological research in the city using the tools and methods traditionally employed by ethnographers.

No less interesting is the issue of what one should consider especially important in the characteristics of a city as a subject of ethnological research and what range of issues should be raised during this research. We are of the opinion that the main peculiarity of the city from the point of view of its ethnological characteristics is the polyethnicity of the urban population's composition. There are currently no cities that are homogenous in terms of the ethnic make-up of their population. The world's vast megalopolises and the urban agglomerations in Russia alike are notable for their complex ethnic composition which, unfortunately, has not been studied to a sufficient degree.

From the data that is available to us we can only note that the urban population in Russia has been steadily (and most rapidly) growing since the start of the twentieth century. At the beginning of that century, the urban population was no more than 13 % of Russia's overall population. According to the data in the all-Russian population census of 2002, it [the urban population] was more than

3 times larger in terms of numbers than the rural population (73.3 % versus 26.7 %). However, in the Rosstat report 'Results of the all-Russian population census of 2002', dated 21 May 2004, it is indicated that over the last inter-census period the ratio between the urban and rural population in the country did not change at all, and the process of the population's urbanisation ended back in 1989. Evidently, since that time there has been a reduction in the influence of the factors that previously aided the concentration of the population in large cities.

How has the ethnic structure of Russia's cities changed over the past decade alongside the growing trend of urbanisation? In this respect there is practically no reliable data available to researchers. It is most likely for this reason that the issue remains unanswered to this day. One can only make qualitative assessments of the situation based on direct observations, an analysis of mass media materials, and expert assessments. But even this factual repository, albeit not completely accurate, is enough for one to be able to state the current ethnic heterogeneity of Russia's urban population.

Firstly, with some qualifications, one can single out in the composition of the urban population the numerically dominant group of native city-dwellers of titular nationality. However the category of 'titular national group' in such a context does not seem completely monosemantic. For the majority of Russia's cities they are primarily groups of the Russian population, if we are not talking about the administrative centres of national republics and autonomies.

However, even in the latter case Russians normally dominate in the composition of the urban population although the status of titular nationality is reserved for the representatives of other ethnic groups that are native to that territory. The capital of the Republic of Khakassia — Abakan — can serve as an example of this where the titular ethnic group — Khakassians — are represented significantly less than the Russian population (8.8 % versus 79.5 %). A similar situation is typical for Gorno-Altaysk.

These matters are so important for an understanding of the current ethno-social situation in the national border areas of Russia that they deserve to be considered separately. On the whole here we are tracing the spatial divergence of ethnic groups, recorded by researchers, that is typical for the majority of the national autonomies and republics within the Russian Federation. Here the titular (native) population is mainly spread over rural areas, while in cities Russians and representatives of other non-titular ethnic groups dominate. In the formation of this situation a role was, evidently, played by the historical peculiarities of the process of the formation of urban settlements in areas that are traditionally inhabited by a native population, for example Siberia.

While the country's national border areas were exploited for agricultural purposes, the cities were inevitably becoming the centres for the concentration of resources, the development of industry, social-economic infrastructure, jobs and administrative-management structures. Meanwhile the development of the cities, city-like villages and industrial communities was often connected to the concentration here of a mass of migrants from other regions, i.e. 'newly arrived' groups who were utilised in the construction and maintenance of industrial facilities, and who worked in services and the administrative-management sphere.

The native population in urban settlements of Russia's national borders was initially represented to a far lesser extent. It was primarily concentrated in rural regions, continuing to preserve the elements of traditional agricultural specialisation, i.e. specialisation in the agrarian sphere. This was facilitated by several important circumstances amongst which a significant role was played by the expressed unwillingness of several aboriginal groups to become integrated into the system of the city's social and economic links. So, we know of cases in the 1920's of the voluntary re-settlement of Shorians from places of active urban development and labour settlement on the part of 'newly arrived' groups, to remote taiga regions. At the same time similar processes were noted in Khakassia and the mountainous areas of Altai. As a result of this the territory of the settlement of the native ethnolocal groups became more and more compact in terms of the space they occupied, and their representation in urban communities was insignificant. Over the duration of the twentieth century, these disproportions smoothed over slightly due to the partial integration of groups of the native population into the urban milieu and the fact that it [the native population] started to participate in the economic and political life of republic and administrative-territorial centres. However in many regions the situation with the spatial divergence of the population's ethnic groups on the city-village plane, noted above, continues to be preserved to this day.

In essence, the majority of the native population of national republics and autonomies are only involved to a small extent today in the urban infrastructure and occupy ecological, economic and spatial niches that are qualitatively different to those occupied by the rest of the population. If one bears in mind that low standards of living and material security are typical for rural territories all over Russia, and the national village from the 1990's to this day is in a state of deep social and economic crisis, one is starting to see more clearly the actual underlying cause of the ethno-political manifestations on the part of the ethnic groups of the native population. In the speeches of the national elite groups of small ethnic groups over the past decades one can often observe dissatisfaction with the unavailability for the native population of material goods that are concentrated in the

cities of national republics and autonomies where the native inhabitants are the minority. Owing to this some political projects arise that intend to strengthen the role and status of native ethnic groups in the cities that are located on their ethnic territories (i.e. those areas in which they have traditionally resided). Below I will cite just one of the examples known to me.

In the 1990's, on the wave of the overall increase in the political activity of ethnic minorities, the idea was widely discussed in Russia of recognising the city of Novokuznetsk (Kemerovo province) as the capital of Gornaya Shoriya — i.e. an area which has been home to Shorians since the beginning of time. We will not go into any discussion of the economic reason for the project which is completely obvious; suffice it to say that from an historical point of view it is not without good reason that the issue is raised. The city is actually located in an area where, before the first Russian settlers arrived, the ancestors of the current Shorians lived — ethno-territorial groups of Abintsy. As for the legal grounds for such statements, they were established in the recognition in 1993 of the Shorians as the native, small-numbered people of Siberia and the acceptance in the first edition of the list of places where they reside in compact formations. The national leaders were of the opinion that Novokuznetsk should also have been included precisely in this category which would have given the native population entitlement to benefits (receiving accommodation and in respect of the taxation of the traditional types of economic activity which, incidentally, some of the discourse's participants suggested should also include retail trade).

This issue was not resolved in the 1990s; nothing was undertaken in practice in this area. However, now the situation has changed. The latest edition of the list of places of the compact residence and traditional agricultural activity of the native small-numbered peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East, put together with the participation of the RF Ministry of Regional Development, includes Novokuznetsk. This bewilders the officials of the regional administration, namely the department of culture and national policy of Kemerov Oblast.

In their opinion, the situation carries the threat of serious legal clashes. Firstly, in this city with its population of half a million it is not possible for the native ethnic group to have a compact place of residence. The numbers of its urban groups are not enough in that city to reach the necessary level for this to happen. It goes without saying that the Shorians do not constitute not only a majority group but even any kind of homogenous population group in any of the city's districts. On the contrary, there is an exclusively dispersed nature of the settlement of representatives of the native ethnic group within the boundaries of the city. Secondly, the city is one of the

region's large industrial centres. An industrial base of mining and processing works is concentrated on its territory and in the areas adjacent to it. In these conditions there is objectively no possibility for the native population's traditional practice of exploiting the area's natural resources. Its local groups are deeply integrated into the system of the city's social and economic links. In terms of the predominant forms of material provision, economic activity and lifestyle they are hardly differentiable (if differentiable at all) from the main part of the urban population.

Meanwhile, the logic behind the list of places of compact residence of small ethnic groups supposes a definition of precisely isolated territorial enclaves where ethnic groups who are residing in a compact formation could preserve the age-old lifestyle and elements of their ethnic culture based on the practice of traditional farming. In connection with this it seems unjustified to include an urban territory of a regional industrial centre in a list of places where a native group lives in compact formations and preserves the tradition of exploiting the earth's natural resources. I think that such clashes arise in many respects due to the fact that the issues of the ethno-national composition of cities, as well as the peculiarities of the ethno-social situation and the ethnic processes occurring in the urban milieu, have not been the subject of thorough research. Cities have yet to be studied on a wide scale with the participation of expert ethnologists, although the practical need for such work, evidently, has already been exemplified in the practice of regional and municipal management.

I would say that ethnic groups of migrants in the composition of the urban population have been studied to an even lesser extent. They can be split up into diaspora communities, relatively stable in terms of migration mobility, and unstable groups represented mainly by labour (including illegal) migrants from countries of the former Soviet Union and South-Eastern Asia. Both of these groups of an urban population are of great interest from the point of view of studying ethno-social processes in the urban space and interethnic relations. Needing to be studied in this respect are, for example, issues of economic specialisation, the nature of the spatial distribution and interaction of the representatives of ethnic migrant communities with the rest of the urban population. The issues of preserving (or transforming) their ethnic identity, ethno-cultural traditions and participation in mixed marriages are also interesting and important from the research point of view. However the prospects of research being conducted in this ethnic field are not the same. While the urban diasporas of, say, the Caucasus or central Asian peoples are relatively accessible and have their own social organisations and national-cultural organisations and communities, ethnic groups of illegal migrants are extremely closed communities, and there is practically no reliable information available about them.

Another important part of the community of urban immigrants is the category of the so-called 'new city-dwellers', i.e. individuals who came to the city from a rural area or to large megalopolises from the outskirts (including the national borders). Here research is needed in the field of personal motivation for changing their place of residence, the problems of the social and cultural adaptation of the settlers in the conditions of large cities, and the issues of their ethnic self-awareness in the urban milieu also need to be studied. The latter issue seems especially important for this category of migrant in as much as migration to the city (megalopolis), as a personal choice, presupposes a certain level of openness and willingness of an individual to be exposed to the potential cultural influence on the part of the new setting. It is not rare for this to result in the cultural assimilation of the migrants, especially if we are talking about communities that are small in numbers and do not have stable unifying bonds in the form of communities and/or diasporas.

What is also interesting is the phenomenon itself of the diaspora/national community/national-cultural community in the context of modern-day urban ethnology. A diaspora facilitates cultural pluralism of an urban community, drawing a polycultural picture of the urban reality. Diasporas not only perform the function of consolidating ethnic groups on a national-cultural basis in the conditions of a foreign cultural environment, but also operate a lot on the external surroundings, delivering a presentation of their ethnic culture for the rest of the city's population. This often takes place in the context of active collaboration and dialogue between different cultures.

This important nature of the diaspora as a mechanism for transcultural communication is not currently being studied thoroughly by ethnologists. I think that in a situation where the problems of tolerance in interethnic relations are becoming a topic of wide social discourse, without an in-depth examination of the very process of this interaction at the level of urban ethno-national communities, these problems will forever remain merely a subject of futile discussions of a theoretical nature.

The limited space available to me in this Forum does not leave room for a full depiction of the entire range of problems associated with ethnological research on the contemporary Russian city. However, this would hardly be possible even within the framework of a separate academic paper. I still think that what has been said above will suffice for a description of the city, being as it is an exceptionally complex subject of ethnological research, but no less interesting because of this than rural ethnic communities that are traditionally studied within the framework of the Russian research tradition. In many respects urban anthropology is only just coming into being in our

country. This concerns the hunt for new research methods, the topics of potential research, and determining the areas in which the results could be applied practically. Only one thing is unquestionable: in our country urban ethnology represents a very promising area of research with not only great fundamental, but also scientific and practical, potential.

ROBERT PYRAH

**Questions in Urban History:
The Case of L’viv, Ukraine**

If there were such things as ‘ideal types’ in urban studies as there are in sociology and psychology, then the city of L’viv in West Ukraine would appear to fit the mould from the current disciplinary perspectives of history and cultural history. There are several reasons for thinking this might be the case. Since around 2005 there has been a visible boom in broadly historical publications on the city across different languages (primarily Ukrainian, Polish and German, but also English) that more or less consciously treat L’viv as a paradigmatic case study of wider cultural processes within the region (cf. the pathbreaking volume edited by John Czaplicka [2005], the recent work edited by Henke, Rossolinski and Ther [2008], and numerous works by Yaroslav Hrytsak [2000; 2003; 2005a; 2005b] to name a few).¹ Common to these works is an emphasis on the city’s ‘cross-cultural’ heritage, despite its largely mono-ethnic present as a Ukrainian city, and a demand for an integrated history-writing that crosses disciplinary as well as ethno-linguistic boundaries in order to better understand the city’s past and present (see especially [Hrytsak 2005b]).

As is repeatedly emphasised by commentators, including the present one, the city was controlled by five different regimes over the course of the twentieth century alone: Habsburg until 1918, Republican Polish until 1939, via wartime

Robert Pyrah
St. Antony’s College,
University of Oxford
robert.pyrah@sant.ox.ac.uk

¹ See also [Fäßler, Held, Sawitzki 1995; Żaliński, Karolczak (eds.) 1995–2002], and other works cited in this article.

occupation by the Nazis and Soviets to become part of the USSR after 1945; then it became part of independent Ukraine from 1991. These shifts in regime were matched by no less momentous changes in demographic: from more or less stable proportions comprising a majority of Poles (c. 55 %), then Jews (c. 30 %) and a minority of Ukrainians (c. 10 %) before the Second World War, to contain an overwhelming majority of Ukrainians (c. 90 %) mostly from the surrounding rural areas thereafter.¹ Varying but decreasing numbers of ethnic Russian migrants in sometimes statistically questionable surveys made up the second largest group,² following the near-obliteration of the Jewish population in the Holocaust and the mass expulsion of Poles, part of Stalin's policy to clean up post-war boundaries along ethnic lines.³

In other words, L'viv — as pointed out by Czaplicka and others — serves as a useful microcosm of wider regional processes of ethnic transferral and boundary shifting that affected other numerous cities such as Wrocław, Szczecin, Gdańsk, Vilnius.⁴ But to a degree sometimes perceived as more intense and unique than elsewhere, L'viv also maintains, intact, a highly developed urban fabric where changing toponymics⁵ have allegedly done little to alter its pervasive visual impact as a reminder of previous regimes: in particular, the Habsburg and late-Habsburg semi-autonomous rule of the Poles from the 1880s onwards, when most of the civic architecture and urban planning in question originated. The fact that Soviet planning made few incursions into this fabric is also cited, and the visual legacy of this urban space has obvious implications for the writing and study of history in the present [Czaplicka 2005b: 17].

Again, these specific conditions chime fortuitously with developments in historical studies more widely. Especially (but not exclusively) within recent Western scholarship, the focus of historical enquiry has crept away from a preoccupation with national contexts and political frameworks as the benchmark unit of analysis — a longstanding approach shaped by Benedict Anderson's near-ubiquitous notion of political communities as 'imagined' constructs [1991] — towards the study of cities, regions, minorities, and an interest in general in

¹ <http://www.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/results/general/nationality/Lviv>, retrieved 09/02/2009. This figure is up from 79% in 1989, and reflects a steady rise over the decades since Stalin's death in 1953. For a discussion of the attendant factors see [Hrytsak 2000: 264].

² Anna Wylegała, 'Die Russen und die Russischsprachige Minderheit im gegenwärtigen Lemberg' in [Henke, Rossolinski and Ther 2008: 220].

³ For a more detailed analysis and statistical breakdown, see: [Fuhrmann, Tomicka, Turowska 2008: 142].

⁴ [Czaplicka 2005b: 15]. Cf. Norman Davies and Roger Moorhouse's emblematically-entitled work on [Wrocław 2002; Briedis 2009].

⁵ On these see [Hrytsak, Susak 2003: 151–6].

heterogeneous spaces of cultural interaction. To some extent, this phenomenon reflects what has been called ‘nationalism fatigue’,¹ and the search for new paradigms in historical studies of East-Central Europe in particular that stress cross-national commonalities as well as, or instead of, the differences [Esbenschade 1995]. Recent work by Pieter Judson among others into such topics as the borderland, minorities and the wider concept of marginality offer key and prominent examples, demonstrating how a variety of lenses are now being applied that readily transcend a nation-state perspective.² Other thematic considerations include, but are not limited to, such topics as: the conditions of modernity and its artistic and cultural manifestations in modernism in the early 20th century;³ post-colonialism (Habsburg and Soviet); migration, as an attendant feature of transnationalism [Guarnizo, Smith 1998: 5]; and the role of sub-national associations (such as social or scholarly societies) and religions as units of identity formation. All of these overlap with concerns that are central to urban studies, with the city construed as the primary unit of reference as well as the formative locus of such developments.

Of course, historians of non-comparative nationalism have also gained much from these micro-perspectives, and L’viv has offered plentiful grist to their mill. The role played by the city as a parallel symbolic ‘Piedmont’ for the respective Ukrainian and Polish national causes in the late nineteenth century, for instance, has received particularly close attention, with articles focusing on the role of scientific and scholarly institutions centred in L’viv as foci of national consciousness and vehicles for cultural self-expression in adversity [Magocsi 2002; Wendland 2002; Hrytsak 2003: 105]. In the Polish case, the importance of L’viv as an incubator and repository of national culture is governed by the relatively lenient and devolved conditions of Austrian rule under the partition of the country from the 1790s until 1918, at least by comparison with conditions in Warsaw or Poznan (which were under tighter Russian and German suzerainty respectively).⁴ Historians of Ukrainian national self-consciousness also draw attention to L’viv’s status within the

¹ Workshop: ‘Nationalism Fatigue? New Approaches to the History of Society, Memory and Public Sphere in Eastern and Central Europe’, L’viv Center for Urban History of East-Central Europe, 11 June 2009. Programme: <<http://www.lvivcenter.org/en/chronicle/news?newsid=190>>. Accessed 11/01/2010.

² [Judson 2007]; cf. [Pyrak, Turda 2010].

³ Conference: ‘Sex in the Cities: Prostitution, White Slaving, and Sexual Minorities in Eastern and Central Europe’, L’viv Center, June 2009: <<http://www.lvivcenter.org/en/conferences/sic2009/>>, accessed 11/01/2010.

⁴ For this reason, the ultra-nationalist Roman Dmowski (1864–1939) moved from Russian-controlled Poland to Lwów in 1895 to found his National Democratic movement; Philipp Ther argues that the development of a ‘Polish’ theatre in repertoire and style was also possible due to the regime’s relative leniency [Ther 2003: 543–71].

country's fractured geo-politics, with the city as the perceived Western (and majority Ukrainian-speaking) urban polarity, citing its political affiliations (centre of the anticommunist 'Ruch' movement in the late 1980s), and status as powerbase of the 2005 'Orange Revolution' against the openly Russian-affiliated Presidential candidate Viktor Yanukovich. These discursive factors pivot on a mutually antagonistic, but parallel discourse of the city as a respective centre of 'Polishness' or 'Ukrainian' national identity. As such, they clearly overlap with the concern in recent historical scholarship with the decoding of 'myth-based' discourses. Such analyses seek to understand *longue durée* historical phenomena not merely in terms of political and economic factors, but draw explicitly on insights from literature and 'culture' more broadly, construed in this case as Arts-based forms of representation (literature, the performing arts, music and so on), as well as public discussion in newspapers and journals [Grabowicz 2005]. Crudely put, this 'cultural turn' within both history and urban studies has brought the two fields into closer alignment.¹

However, the concern with 'culture' is not limited to the Arts, but has also followed the move described away from a predominantly Olympian, 'top-down' preoccupation with the nation state in historical discussion. This has brought historical studies into anthropological and sociological territory, particularly where concerned with such 'bottom-up' perspectives as lived experience and everyday life, with research materials drawing upon interview material as well as 'classical' archival source documentation.² These approaches also clearly reflect the higher status accorded to oral history over the last decade, and its incorporation into mainstream historical analysis. Studies of L'viv written from these angles are not yet numerous, perhaps in part because ethnic minorities other than Russian settlers' descendents number currently less than 2 % of the population, and those with a living memory of the pre-1945 era still available to interview are very few in number [Sabic 2007]; however, a palpable trend towards this form of work on the city is visible in emerging scholarship, focusing on 'everyday life' and the experience of its inhabitants, notably among current doctoral candidates studying in

¹ 'If the distinctiveness of urban history as a discipline is no longer so clearly demarcated, this is due to changes in the nature of historical discipline itself rather than to any crisis of confidence in the validity of the town or city as the object of historical research. The 'cultural' turn [...] has helped to dissolve the boundaries between many different subgenres of history, not just urban history.' Roey Sweet, 'Urban History', <http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/urban_history.html>. Accessed 21/01/2010.

² E.g. [Wendland 2005]. Wendland's excellent piece deals with 'the culture of everyday life' in contradistinction to state frameworks, although it is based on archival records of reported cases rather than interviews per se.

Ukraine.¹ The presence in L'viv, since 2006, of a non-state-sponsored 'Center for Urban History of East-Central Europe', an institution backed by a private scholarly foundation, has also provided impetus for research that incorporates 'bottom-up' perspectives into the wider narrative, in particular through its workshops involving these younger scholars, but also through its project 'L'viv Interactive', which it describes as 'a web-accessible, interactive historical map of the city of Lviv. The map aims at presenting the contemporary, living city in its historical dimension rather than reproducing a static picture of the past.'² It includes historical notes about streets and buildings, biographies of former residents, archival material, interviews with residents, plans and photographs, and narrates the facts very deliberately without reference to national affiliation. This has the effect of emphasising the heterogeneity of L'viv's urban history, in line with the broader trends outlined, and of 'lives lived' alongside, in contradistinction to, or in isolation from, wider political processes either at state or sub-state level.

An important parallel development has been the massive growth in historical studies concerned with 'memory' over the last decade, which may be construed as 'cultural', that is: pertaining to its selective, top-down creation by the state or smaller political unit (such as a city council) for present-day political purposes; or else as 'social'. This latter form of memory is sometimes taken to refer to the sum of individuals' recorded memories within a given framework, and which are obviously more fractured and differentiated by definition than the top-down form; or else to the collective impact of these memories, irrespective of (or sometimes in open conflict with) the 'official' version.³ This concern with memory, both 'official' and personal or unsystematic, and the interactions between these spheres, has obvious relevance for historical studies of L'viv and cities like it, again given their ethnically heterogenous political histories. The theme of 'memory' also has direct relevance to the study of monuments and memorial culture, a sphere in which government actors (whether regional, civic or national) — but also sometimes groups of individuals acting outside the legislature — seek to give representative, 'concrete' form to aspects of history. A considerable secondary literature on this phenomenon within the East-Central European space is now available, dealing with a range of issues, from the practical to the symbolic dimensions of memorial culture — not least, the selectivity and partiality of monuments as an index of

¹ Oksana Vynnyk (doctoral thesis, Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, in progress); Kateryna Ruban (ibid.).

² <<http://www.lvivcenter.org/en/li/>>, accessed 21 January 2010.

³ There is a large secondary literature on this subject, for a summary see: [Caldicott, Fuchs 2003: 11–32].

contemporary ideologies and their approach to history.¹ It is another aspect of recent (cultural, but also political) history in which L'viv has revealed itself, again, to be exemplary. The various shifts in street renaming have been carefully catalogued as indexes of the nationalistic values of the Polish and Ukrainian regimes, and of the Soviet ones of the long interregnum from 1945–1991 [Hrytsak, Susak 2003: 151–6]; as have the various waves of monument building after 1991 in the city [Rossolinski 2008: 111–13]. Precisely this point about memory, however, demonstrates the large scope for divergence on points of detail between individual cases, despite the structural similarity of 'memory studies' per se, and the methodologies used. One particular recent case of note where official, 'cultural' memory and social memory collided involved the restoration of the Polish military section of the city's largest and most representative cemetery, the Lykachiv, in 2005. Arguably, in this case the official version of memory — that of a Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation — outran the feelings of many L'viv residents themselves, a majority of whom opposed the restoration; however, Poland's 'Eastern' policy and Yuschchenko's pro-Western course converged on the point of an implicitly anti-Soviet (or tacitly, a defensive, anti-Russian) stance, a point confirmed in the speeches by both Presidents stressing their countries' interdependence 'as a necessary means of assuring their freedom'.²

I would like, therefore, to devote this next section to outlining a few locally specific cases relevant to the historical study of L'viv, before referring back to the wider discussion about the status of the discipline. The first, perhaps obvious, point is that despite the prevailing, recent surge in works reflecting disciplinary developments in a manner consistent with (Western) methodologies as described, historiography of L'viv since 1991 has been far from uniformly 'politically correct'. Indeed, in terms consistent with other developments in East-Central Europe, the 'national' (if not strictly speaking 'nationalist') perspective on the city's past — namely, one that privileged a telling of the city's history through a purely mono-ethnic lens — has arguably held sway in prominent Ukrainian publications on culture and history until very recently.³ This tendency was no less true of the many hagiographical, biographical or otherwise sentimental works written and published in Polish until the late Communist period. The second point is that for all the works that are careful to integrate L'viv's multi-ethnic history, there remains in Western and local scholarship alike a significant blind spot and

¹ See for example [Lahusen 2006; Crowley 2003: 17–97; Nadkarni 2003: 193–207].

² President Kwasniewski's speech: <<http://www.president.pl/x.node?id=6042902&eventId=2526680>>, retrieved 8 September 2008.

³ As demonstrated by the three-volume chronicle of L'viv's history [Isaievych, Steblii, Lytvyn 1996].

research gap on the Soviet period in L'viv's history,¹ which in my view somewhat diminishes the claim to be writing integrated history, depending how stridently that claim is made. My contention is that an understanding of how 'multiculturalism' has been framed in recent public discussion inside the city offers important pointers to interpreting these phenomena. To do this, I will draw very briefly on examples from historiography, as well as publications like the L'viv-based cultural journal *Ji*, and city council initiatives like cultural festivals, the curatorial policies of the history museum, and the telling of local history on their multilingual portal www.lviv.ua. The constraints of space make this discussion necessarily brief.²

Following the initial wave of nationalisation that occurred in L'viv's public spaces after 1991, which was consistent with practice across the East-Central European region, i.e. renaming institutions and streets, creating and replacing monuments in line with nationalist history,³ there followed in historical discussion but also in certain aspects of public life a marked interest in the Habsburg aspects of the city's past. Clearly leapfrogging any association with the Soviet period or Polish interwar rule, this phenomenon, labelled Galician nostalgia, was also shared by some scholars primarily from Poland and Austria.⁴ In an essay published in 2001, Andriy Zayarnyuk criticised the tendency by Ukrainian historians of this stripe to use West Ukraine's Habsburg inheritance to imply political maturity and cultural superiority over other regions. He made this point by citing essays by L'viv historian Yaroslav Rasevich, as well as such public events in L'viv as the celebration of Austrian Emperor Franz Josef's 170th birthday in 2000 [Zayarnyuk 2001]. His observation about the normative component of this discussion is well made, but he does not in my view give sufficient credit to its philo-European dimensions, nor to its manifestations in commercialised fetish that have become increasingly visible in L'viv's central spaces in recent years: most notably the array of themed coffee houses, which he erroneously

¹ This theme was stressed by Tarik Cyril Amar in his presentation 'L'viv's Ukrainian Memories after 1991' at the CEELBAS conference on 'Politics, Economics and Culture of Eastern Europe', December 2008, St. Antony's College, Oxford. Amar cited the existence of 46 post-1991 memorials in L'viv to Soviet repression. Elsewhere, [Herzing, Milewska Waś 2008: 72] note the absence of a memorial to the 'Great Patriotic War'.

² For a fuller discussion see [Pyrah 2009].

³ On the Bandera controversy, and also the monument's controversial status, see: [Rossolinski 2008: 111–13].

⁴ For a discussion of the phenomenon by one of its proponents, which highlights the tension between local and national identity in Galician identity discourse, see: Yaroslav Hrytsak, 'Historical Memory and Regional Identity among Galicia's Ukrainians' in: Hann and Magocsi (eds.), *Galicia. A Multicultural Land*, pp. 185–209. For an exposure of the Galician 'nostalgia' as positing a false sense of harmony between ethnic groups, where literature of the time records hostility also towards the monarchy and the 'esoteric' Jewish way of life, see: Yaroslav Isaievych, 'Galicia and Problems of National Identity', *Austrian Studies* 5 (1994), 37–45 (43–44).

dismisses as too expensive for locals, and which through their sheer number and visibility impress an insistent, theme-park style nostalgia on casual visitors and locals alike, regardless of ability to pay or willingness to patronise them.¹

It might be helpful at this point to invoke Svetlana Boym's distinction between types of nostalgia: reflective, that is prompting critical engagement, or restorative, the more regressive variant [Boym 2001]. This second aspect is more pronounced in L'viv's commercial sphere, since a critical framework is lacking beyond the simple recreation of a Disneyfied atmosphere, designed to invoke and arguably even ritually 'perform' a Western heritage.² However, in this case the 'nostalgia' is neither for lived experience, nor for Soviet times; but quite clearly only for non- or even anti-Soviet strands in the city's history. Although I do not have space here to go into this subject at length, such public practices, however unsystematic, reinforce the dominant tenor of Galician revivalist discourse that is also present in historiography and journalism. One prominent example, also cited by Zayarnyuk, is the cultural journal *Ji*, which is published in L'viv and derives its emblematic name from a character in Ukrainian that is absent from the Russian alphabet [Zayarnyuk 2001]. It comprises between two and four editions per year on contemporary topics, each on a separate unifying theme, but with a particular emphasis on the 'European' identity of Galicia and L'viv. The tables of contents read programmatically and reflect the contours of 'Galician' revivalism by stressing the mixed, 'European' heritage of L'viv and the surrounding region: there have been special editions on Jewish Galicia (September 2007); Jewish L'viv (March 2008); Polish L'viv (November 2008); EU-Ukraine (December 2007). The journal features contributions from Western writers and scholars as well as reprints of literature from former Habsburg Galicia, and its editor Taras Vozniak is a prominent local commentator.³

One effect of this 'Galician' revival, in tandem with growing tourist flows particularly from Poland as well as the former USSR, has been

¹ Again I disagree with Zayarnyuk, whose article is in any case now a decade old, that most of these are in fact Polish: only one is explicitly Polish, the rest are Ukrainian-Habsburg-Jewish in theme. Examples include the predictable and seemingly ubiquitous Habsburg themed Viennese establishments like *Videnska*, *Cukernia*, *Svit Kavy*, *Veronika*, *K+K* (*kaiserlich und königlich*); hotel 'Vienna', restaurant *Amadeus*, and also the recently opened *Sacher-Masoch* café, which celebrates the German-language author (1836–1895) who was born and worked in L'viv.

² The phenomenon is in some senses analogous to the 'Ostalgie' seen in Germany, which pivots on the fetishisation of consumer products associated with the former DDR. On *Ostalgie* and its complex dynamics, including the East/West split and consumer fetish, using examples from film culture, see [Enns 2007].

³ *Ji* arguably stands on the border between reflective and restorative forms of nostalgia, since it still operates within a 'Galician' discursive framework. The phenomenon at large clearly overlaps with the revival of discussion about 'central Europe' from the late 1980s onwards.

to reinforce public awareness of the city's multicultural heritage in terms that exceed the bounds of a purely restorative nostalgia. The case of L'viv's 750th anniversary celebrations, organised by the city council in 2006, underscores the theme of a limited, commercialised nostalgia being given space as part of a legacy of multiculturalism, but one that remains confined to the past; and one that suggests either some form of 'European' heritage that remains partial or selective. On the one hand, themed walks on Polish and Jewish L'viv were organised, and a new logo for the city, aimed at international tourists was launched. It comprises five stylised, pen-drawn towers representing the city hall, the Armenian cathedral, the Polish cathedral, the Bernadine monastery and the Assumption of the Virgin Cathedral. The council's website claims that this logo 'symbolise[s] the rich architectural heritage of the city, the diversity of cultures, nationalities, affiliations that existed in the city since its foundation.'¹ Together with the slogan (translation: 'open to the world'), the logo and events of 2006 appear to show a new top-down recognition of the city's multicultural past. However, on the other hand, themed walks apart, there is no mention of the city's important Jewish heritage. To this degree it is an accurate reflection of the stymied recovery of a Jewish cultural memory in L'viv, epitomised by the continued absence of the central Golden Rose synagogue (plaques note its destruction by the Nazis in 1942 but a gaping hole remains while debates continue about its possible resurrection).² And again, the Soviet period in L'viv's history is passed over in silence.

Second, this apparent multiculturalism is specifically backwards-oriented. A closer look at the history section of the council's website reveals that the 'celebration' of other ethnic components, while flattering to L'viv's intended European course and self-conception, is limited to their recognition as temporary guests or incidental contributors to a wider Ukrainian story [Herzing, Milewska, Was 2004: 76]. This is underscored by the repeated sloganising talk of 'Our L'viv — Nashe Misto' and in the site's introductory paragraphs on L'viv's history. The text skips over the four centuries of Polish rule and the interwar period to emphasise the city's privileged location on the east-west trade routes. The Habsburg era is invoked as an era of technological progress and the Soviet period is mentioned as a totalitarian interlude, but emphasis is given to the assertion: 'From the

¹ <<http://www.lviv.ua/en/page1.html>>, accessed 9 February 2009.

² In his recent study of formerly Jewish Galicia, *Erased*, Omer Bartov reaches scathing conclusions about the reasons for this neglect, and detects a Soviet-style attempt to gloss over the specifically Jewish aspect of the Nazi and Soviet periods alike [Bartov 2007: 15]. On the subject of the Janovska concentration camp memorial, which similarly omits to mention the Jewish tragedy, merely citing 'innocent people', he states: 'this text allows the local population to view the camp as "belonging" to them, rather than to a category of people whose history has been largely erased from public and collective memory' [Bartov 2007: 30–31].

first days of Ukraine's independence Lviv obtained the status of the cultural and spiritual capital of the Ukrainian state.¹ From this perspective, the new narrative of 'multiculturalism' does not contradict the pre-existing narrative of Ukrainian paternalism.² The same priorities hold sway at L'viv's Historical Museum, which focus on the struggle for Ukrainian independence.³ And the same theme comes across in the new optional school subject of *Lvovoznavstvo*, dedicated to the history and culture of L'viv, which follows the introduction of *Ukrainoznavstvo* at national level in 1993. Non-Ukrainian scholars Herzing, Milewska and Waş [2008] examined the main textbook in this field with similar conclusions: that it is a step towards recognising a multicultural heritage, but through a paternalistic lens. The textbook's title is again emblematic: *Nashe Misto — L'viv* ('Our city, L'viv' — again, the slogan raises the question of 'whose L'viv?': it refers narrowly to its present-day inhabitants). There are of course many other examples that could be cited in detail, and here I have chosen the most representative.

Returning to the broader theme of urban history, one might therefore reflect again on L'viv's status as a nominally representative case study. On the evidence of recent work, which I surveyed at the start of this article, there is certainly plenty of correlation in terms of recent historical work on L'viv being methodologically progressive, and reflective of the cross-disciplinary evolution of urban history more widely. However, in terms of its thematic content, I would suggest that there is the danger of reproducing — perhaps unconsciously — the pattern of historical discussion within the city itself outlined in the closing section. That is: while nominally 'multicultural' and progressive in tone, it remains subject to important lacunae, most particularly, in the treatment of the city's not inconsiderable Soviet past. Whether this pattern is true for other cities across the region is for other specialists to decide, but I suspect that L'viv may, ironically, prove to be 'paradigmatic' in this respect, too.

References

Anderson B. *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. 2nd edn. London: Verso, 1991.

¹ <<http://www.lviv.ua/en/tourism/history/>>, accessed 21 January 2010.

² One might compare this narrative with the situation in Poland, where a self-conscious philo-Semitism (also in the absence of a sizeable Jewish community) has been expressed in commercial terms by Polish entrepreneurs: for instance the celebrated 'Pod Samsonem' restaurant on the edge of Warsaw's post-war reconstructed, highly museal 'Old Town', on ulica Freta. On the dynamics of memory in Warsaw's urban space, see [Crowley 2003].

³ Visited in September 2005 and July 2008; there had been no change to the exhibits in the intervening period, despite the 2006 'multicultural' sloganeering of the city-council sponsored 750th Anniversary celebrations of the founding of L'viv.

- Bartov O. *Erased. Vanishing Traces of Jewish Galicia in Present-Day Ukraine*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.
- Boym S. *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books, 2001.
- Briedis L. *Vilnius. City of Strangers*. Budapest; New York: CEU Press, 2009.
- Caldicott E., Fuchs A. 'Introduction' // Caldicott E., Fuchs A (eds.). *Cultural Memory*. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2003. Pp. 11–32.
- Crowley D. *Warsaw*. London: Reaktion, 2003.
- Czaplicka J. 2005a: Czaplicka J. (ed.). *Lviv: A City in the Crosscurrents of Culture*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2005a.
- _____. 2005b. 'L'viv, Lemberg, Leopold, Lwow, Lvov: A City in the Crosscurrents of European Culture' // [Czaplicka 2005a: 13–45].
- Davies N., Moorhouse R. *Microcosm: A Portrait of a Central European City*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2002.
- Enns A. 'The Politics of Ostalgic: Post-Socialist Nostalgia in Recent German Film' // *Screen*. 2007. Vol. 48. No. 4. Pp. 475–91.
- Esbenschade R. 'Remembering to Forget: Memory, History, National Identity in Postwar East-Central Europe' // *Representations*. 1995. No. 49. Pp. 72–96.
- Fäßler P., Held Th., Sawitzki D. (eds.). *Lemberg — Lwów — Lwiv. Eine Stadt im Schnittpunkt europäischer Kultur*. Cologne: Böhlau, 1995.
- Fuhrmann K., Tomicka O., Turowska J. 'Von der Mehrheit zur Minderheit. Polen in Lemberg nach 1945' // L. Henke, G. Rossolinski, Ph. Ther (eds.). *Eine neue Gesellschaft in einer alten Stadt. Erinnerung und Geschichtspolitik in Lemberg anhand der Oral History*. Wrocław: ATUT, 2008. Pp. 141–159.
- Grabowicz G. 'Mythologizing L'viv / Lwów' // [Czaplicka 2005a: 313–42].
- Guarnizo L.E., Smith M.P. 'The Locations of Transnationalism' // Guarnizo L. E., Smith M. P. (eds.). *Transnationalism from Below*. New Brunswick: Transaction, 1998. Pp. 3–34.
- Henke L., Rossolinski G, Ther P. (eds.). *Eine neue Gesellschaft in einer alten Stadt. Erinnerung und Geschichtspolitik in Lemberg anhand der Oral History*. Wrocław: ATUT, 2008.
- Herzing J., Milewska A., Waś M. 'Lemberg aus der Sicht der Oral History und der historischen Stadtanthropologie' // [Henke, Rossolinski, Ther 2008: 69–88].
- Hrytsak Y. 'National Identities in Post-Soviet Ukraine: The Case of L'viv and Donetsk' // Gitelman Z. et al. (eds.). *Cultures and Nations of Central and Eastern Europe. Essays in Honor of Roman Szporluk*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000. Pp. 263–77.
- _____. 'Crossroads of East and West: Lemberg, Lwów, L'viv on the Threshold of Modernity' // *Austrian History Yearbook*. 2003. Pp. 103–109.
- _____. [2005a] 'Historical Memory and Regional Identity among Galicia's Ukrainians' // Ch. Hann, P.R. Magocsi (eds.). *Galicia. A Multicultural Land*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005. Pp. 185–209.

- _____. 'Lviv: A Multicultural History through the Centuries' // [Czaplicka 2005b: 47–74].
- _____, Susak V. 'Constructing a National City. The Case of L'viv' // Czaplicka J., Ruble B., Crabtree L. (eds.). *Composing Urban History and the Constitution of Civic Identities*. Baltimore; London: John Hopkins University Press, 2003. Pp. 151–156.
- Isaievych Y. 'Galicia and Problems of National Identity' // *Austrian Studies*. 1994. 5. Pp. 37–45.
- _____, Steblii F., Lytvyn M. (eds.), *L'viv: Istorychni narysy*. L'viv: Instytut ukrajnoznavstva, 1996.
- Judson P. *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007.
- Lahusen Th. 'Decay or Endurance? The Ruins of Socialism' // *Slavic Review*. Winter 2006. Vol. 65. No. 4. Pp. 736–46.
- Magocsi R. *The Roots of Ukrainian Nationalism: Galicia as Ukraine's Piedmont*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002.
- Nadkarni M. 'The Death of Socialism and the Afterlife of its Monuments: Making and Marketing the Past in Budapest's Statue Park Museum' // K. Hodgkin, S. Radstone (eds.). *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory*. London: Routledge, 2003. Pp. 193–207.
- Pyrah R., Turda M. (eds.). *Re-Contextualising East Central European History. Nation, Culture and Minority Groups*. London: Legenda, 2010.
- Rossolinski G. Bandera und Nikifor — Zwie Modernen in einer Stadt. Die "nationalbürgerliche" und die "weltbürgerliche" Moderne in Lemberg // [Henke, Rossolinski, Ther 2008: 109–124].
- Sabic C. *"Ich erinnere mich nicht, aber L'viv!" Zur Funktion kultureller Faktoren für die Institutionalisierung und Entwicklung einer ukrainischen Region*. Stuttgart: ibidem, 2007.
- Ther P. 'Die Bühne als Schauplatz der Politik. Das Polnische Theater in Lemberg 1842–1914' // *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung*. 2003. Vol. 52. Pp. 543–571.
- Wendland A. V. 'Semper fidelis: Miasto jak narodowy mit polakowy i ukraincyw (1867–1939)' // Żaliński H., Karolczak K. (eds.). *Lwów, Miasto, Społeczeństwo, Kultura: Studia z dziejów Lwowa*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe WSP, 2002. Vol. 4. P. 263–273.
- _____. 'Neighbors as Betrayers: Nationalization, Remembrance Policy, and the Urban Public Sphere in L'viv' // Hann C., Magocsi P. R. (eds.). *Galicia. A Multicultural Land*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005. Pp. 139–59.
- Żaliński H., Karolczak K. (eds.). *Lwów, Miasto, Społeczeństwo, Kultura: Studia z dziejów Lwowa*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe WSP, 1995–2002. 4 vols.
- Zayarnyuk A. 'On the Frontiers of Central Europe: Ukrainian Galicia at the Turn of the Millennium' // *Spaces of Identity*. 2001. 1. Pp. 14–34. <<https://pi.library.yorku.ca/ojs/index.php/soi/article/view-File/8053/7230>>.

IRINA RAZUMOVA

1
2

First of all, it is hard to define my discipline. On the one hand, there is an interdisciplinary space in which urban culture is studied by historical and social anthropologists, sociologists, folklorists and literary scholars, and ethnologists. In this respect it is hard to draw a line between sociologists using qualitative methods, literary scholars concentrating on the ‘urban’ or ‘local’ text, social anthropologists using observation and interviews, and so on. On the other hand, there is a palpable lack of unity amongst specialists even within disciplines, as a result of which their research is fragmented and poorly co-ordinated.

There still seems to be a lack of research carried out using a combination of various methods, and therefore it is hard to compare the results. Nevertheless there is today something by which one can orientate oneself in the field of the study of urban culture, and specifically Russian urban culture. One can identify the priorities in the subject field: the stratification and symbolic evaluation of social space, the formation of the urban milieu and the functioning of its individual elements, ethno-cultural communications, a particular town as a text, images of towns in culture, urban ritual and holiday culture at various historical periods, subcultural stratification and peculiarities of subcultures, modern urban folklore and certain others.

One of the most outstanding works of recent years, in my opinion, is Finn Nielsen’s book, which offers an interesting and well-argued interpretation of the functioning of social space in the Soviet town [Nilsen 2006].

The perspective of social anthropology presupposes *inter alia* that the aim is to define the ‘human dimensions’ of the town. A town has a name, it is physically (‘bodily’) defined, it has a certain age, a biography, it has served the state (‘hero-cities’¹), and it enjoys various relation-

Irina Razumova
Centre of Humanitarian Problems,
Barents Region, Kola Peninsula
Scientific Centre of the Russian
Academy of Sciences,
Apatity
irinarazumova@yandex.ru

¹ The status of ‘hero-city’ was bestowed on certain cities of the Soviet Union that had played a particularly important rôle in the Second World War.

ships with other towns. Anthropological methods are used first and foremost to study the way of life and behaviour of urban residents, different types of townfolk, the spatial and temporal co-ordinates of their life and activity, the history and memory of urban communities, and to identify universal and specific meanings and values connected with the basic elements of the socio-cultural milieu, with the town as such and with specific towns and their history.

The general premises of sociology concerning the process of urbanisation are diversified when a researcher has to do with specific urban communities and cultures. While acknowledging the overall correctness of the conclusion that 'urbanisation leads to a breaking-down of local types of culture' [Yanitsky 1998], one must also recognise that in individual towns, agglomerations and urbanised territories a local individuality and cultural specificity do come into existence. It is different from that which is based on what neighbours have in common, and relies upon a particular identity based both on the opposition between 'town' (status, image and lifestyle, type of personality) and 'country' and on a definition of the distinctive characteristics of one's 'own' town.

In such a way the field of subjects and problems open to social anthropology in its study of the town turns out to be extraordinarily wide. At the same time there are inevitably certain 'blind spots' which are invisible not only to anthropology, but to other disciplines too.

A whole complex of problems is connected with the systemic analysis of the object of study and the further development of a typology of towns. The classification based on the formal administrative hierarchy (federal capital — republican capital — regional capital — provincial capital and so forth) is perfectly usable, but inadequate. It needs to be supplemented by typologies based on dichotomies — large town : small town, metropolitan : provincial, single-profile : multi-profile, closed : (open), historic : recent, etc.

Besides these, other characteristics may be used to indicate particular types of urban settlements and their communities. The dominant signs have been formalised to various degrees. Thus, for example, a formal indicator of the distinction between 'large' and 'small' towns may be the size of their populations. A town may be recognised as 'historic' by receiving official status as such (but by no means always), not to mention the closed cities¹ connected to objects of strategic military importance. At the same time many other determining factors are founded entirely upon public opinion, a knowledge of history, reputation, visible indicators of the urban

¹ *Zakrytye administrativno-territorialnye obrazovaniya* ['closed administrative-territorial formations'] containing military facilities or industries with military applications, which outsiders are not permitted to visit.

environment, unofficial nomenclature, and so on, that is, they are subjective and variable to a high degree. For example, 'socialist' towns are primarily so called because they were built during the period of Soviet industrialisation and as a result all have the same sort of infrastructure, architectural appearance, composition of population, etc. At the same time, according to many indicators some 'historic' towns have also become 'socialist', having been either entirely transformed, or else expanded with Soviet industrial districts or 'towns within towns', as was the case with Sverdlovsk/Ekaterinburg and the Urals district. A special case of this are the specialised 'townlets' (military, academic, student), when they have a certain autonomy and their own infrastructure.

In such a way, features of various kinds may be used for differentiation, and these include the social-anthropological characteristics of a town. Alongside the historical (mediaeval, socialist, etc.) and functional (resort, industrial, commercial) distinctions, use may also be made of distinctions relating to profession (working-class, military), age (young, old), class (merchant) and so on. The predominant socio-demographic features are often indicated in periphrastic denominations of towns [Klubkova 2001]: 'the city of brides' (Ivanovo), 'the city of metallurgists' (Monchegorsk), 'the city of power workers' (Polyarnye Zori), or 'the city of students' (Apatity), etc.

It is a frequent problem in the identification of the object of study that subjects' positions on the question of specific settlements of an urban type do not agree. Sometimes a town's administrative status is doubted or, contrariwise, it is asserted of a place officially classified as a village. On this point there may be a difference of opinion between experts (sociologists or economists, for example), the residents themselves, people from other towns and 'countryfolk'. It is not merely a question of the ironic designation of many towns (including Moscow) as 'a big village'. It is worth noting, for example, that a survey conducted at the beginning of the 1990s revealed that many of the residents of Karelia believed that there was only one town in the republic, Petrozavodsk. A similar view was expressed by a competent professor from Murmansk regarding the provincial capital of Murmansk Province, even though according to the statistics this region is the most urbanised in the country. By putting together various points of view one can discover the stereotypical and variable ideas and evaluations on the subject of the town as such and the ideal types of urban dwellers, the urban lifestyle, space, milieu, and so on.

From an anthropological point of view one of the current issues is the study of the phenomenon of the single-profile town or monocity of various types, depending on its specialisation: industrial town, military town, resort town, religious centre, tourist centre (which is

often also a historical town), etc. There have been special studies (though often fairly fragmentary) devoted to particular Russian towns of this sort. In particular, there were a series of works carried out within the framework of certain projects on the culture of the Russian provinces [*Russkaya provintsiya* 2000; *Provintsiya* 2001; *Geopanorama* 2004]. They revealed the particular symbolism of small towns, the properties of their cultural landscape, and the specific self-awareness of their inhabitants.

Over the last twenty years the majority of Russian monocities have for obvious socio-economic reasons entered a critical phase of existence which they are experiencing in different ways. Many of them have acquired the epithet of 'dying'. One realistic means of survival is to change their profile. This applies first and foremost to those industrial towns which are inseparable from the industry that brought them into being. The very concept of the town's existence, its history and symbolism and the activity of its socio-cultural institutions are all bound up with this industry. In such a case a change of profile is practically a 'rebirth' which goes hand in hand with a cultural transformation.

In the end the capacity of urban communities to adapt under stress is determined by the cultural resources they possess. As a result it is the young socialist towns that are the most vulnerable. At present anthropologists have the chance to observe and study at first hand the processes of death and/or rebirth in such towns and the reconstruction and reinterpretation of their cultural milieu.

One symptom of a 'dying' socialist town is the decaying urban landscape. There are many examples of this among the industrial towns of the North. Within the urban space one may see the ruins of buildings and architectural projects of the Stalinist and subsequent eras, deserted districts and areas formerly used for mass recreation, and so forth. These cultural monuments deserve large-scale investigation, using the methods of visual anthropology among others. One example of this would be the '25th Kilometre' in Kirovsk, until relatively recently a prosperous working-class district and now practically a ruin, though continuing to function. It would be worth preserving such fragments of the decaying urban landscape as museums; they deserve this just as much as the well-known 'ethnographical villages'.

Alongside them some towns contain objects which the locals call 'unfinished'. These are evidence of plans for urban development that were never brought to completion. In particular, ever since the end of the 1990s these 'unfinished buildings' have been one of the symbols of Apatity (Murmansk Province). One can at present record and study by immediate observation mainly spontaneous forms of secondary use of these ruinous or unfinished buildings.

The least well studied of all urbanised settlements are still the so-called 'settlements of an urban type'. They seem to fall outside the 'responsibilities' of both traditional ethnography, which deals with village cultures, and of modern social anthropology, which concentrates on the phenomena of the modernised culture associated with the town. In this case it is hard to discover any sort of cultural text, because it is weakly expressed and unrepresentative.

The phenomenon of the 'settlement of an urban type' is regarded as marginal. In the first place, though it is the administrative equivalent of a village, it is usually not such in its socio-economic aspect. Secondly, many such settlements were so designated and existed as a 'transition' towards becoming towns, and represented only a stage in the process of urbanisation. Even though working-class settlements have had different histories, the idea of them has had a great influence on their inhabitants' self-consciousness. Thirdly, 'settlements of an urban type' are so different in all respects, including their profile, infrastructure, social and cultural milieu and much else, that it is hard to include them all within a single category.

Finally, their very official status is unclear, since only some of them are officially designated as such. Some are simply described as 'inhabited points'. So all our efforts to discover the status of the workers' settlement called Titan near Kirovsk (Murmansk Province) in official documents have so far been fruitless. As a result, the settlement is left 'without a status'. At the same time we have discovered that its older inhabitants still consider that it was only 'by accident' that Kirovsk did not grow up 'out of Titan', but a short distance away.

For all their marginality ('bastardy', as A. Levinson put it), such settlements are not only not 'outside culture', but, as we suppose and as our preliminary materials suggest, possess a certain cultural integrity, and at least have their own image, memory of the past, and identity [Zmeeva 2007]. The local inhabitants regard the very names of these settlements as 'historical' and symbolic of the region's Soviet past.

At a certain point in the industrialisation of the North, workers' settlements were the principal type of settlement, and most of the present-day single-profile towns can trace their origins to them, as they do in the Arctic regions of the Kola Peninsula. 'Genealogically' they are the parents and grandparents of the present centres of industry. Some are now suburbs of the towns, some are ruinous and deserted, and others continue to exist. As a rule their residents have an urban identity and look upon the place where they live as a 'town of the future'. For example, ever since it first came into existence in the late 1960s and early 1970s, everyone called the builders' settlement of Polyarnye Zori a town, in complete disregard of its

administrative status; it was only officially recognised as a town in 1991.

It should be pointed out that this situation is typical only of regions that underwent a certain type of urbanisation. In the north of the Kola Peninsula, for example, the opposition between 'town' and 'country' is almost absent, because the villages, properly speaking, are extremely few in number and culturally far apart, and also because the people 'from the country' who came to build socialist towns were beginning a new life as town-dwellers and acquiring a new identity in the process. This means that urban culture has regional features, which is yet another field for research.

The study of the manifestations of urban culture that represent the social and historical profiles (the image) of a particular town is connected with a set of methodological problems. The cultural significance of towns is determined by the quantity and quality of their representations — literary, visual, multimedia, etc. Their existence, diversity, contents, extent of distribution and persistence are in turn determined by the level of development of the cultural milieu inside the town, the activity of the local professionals and specialists in regional studies and the 'ethnographic' interest of external observers, as well as the opportunities open to researchers and their own preferences.

For small and relatively young towns their 'emergence from the void' is a matter of chance. The depth of the cultural associations of any particular town is largely dependent on its reputation as 'historic', as having a past, as being the centre of a region which is attractive in the ethnographical sense, in other words, quite traditional (such, for example, are Archangel and Kargopol). The study of the culture of such towns is most often undertaken using the approved historico-ethnographic methods and a reconstructive approach, in accordance with which elements of modernised culture are interpreted as later accretions and transformations. From this point of view young (including Soviet) towns are considered to lack a past and therefore to have little to tell about the historical dynamics of culture. The inhabitants of socialist towns have migrated from various places and are considered as bearers of the cultures of the areas they came from.

This approach would not seem to have a future. Far from it: it is precisely the analysis of the situation in young towns which is able to show how it is not simply a sort of cultural symbiosis that takes place, but rather the genesis of a socio-culture that is by no means always in a hereditary relationship with the other foci of local culture. This may be clearly seen in the monocities of the Far North which were built in sparsely populated areas as part of a process of extreme urbanisation carried out by migrants from the most diverse parts of the country. The interpretation and evaluation of the circumstances

in which these new industrial towns were built under very specific conditions influenced the formation of a special cultural commonality (including separate urban communities) and local identity.

In connexion with this it is relevant to study the present-day memorial culture of young towns, how it came into being, its professional and amateur forms, aspects of its content and how tradition and innovation are correlated within it. The historical image of the place plays an important role in the formation and stabilisation of urban communities and maintains their identities. The former Soviet towns also have their 'face' and biography, and it is obviously possible to construct a typology of their historical images.

A young town may indeed be distinguished by a high level of memorial culture. It is looked after by professionals whose activity compensates for the lack of a communal 'memory'. An example of this would be the town of Polyarnye Zori. It is very small, but contains every possible kind of memorial slab, tablet, symbol and war memorial. The observer is struck by its fondness for monuments. It is interesting to note that this town put up a monument to the leader of the worldwide proletariat even after he had become extremely unpopular. The town library publishes informational and bibliographical digests and brochures devoted to cultural objects, personalities and individuals born in the town. A voluminous 'Chronicle of Polyarnye Zori' has been compiled [*Polyarnozorinsky khronograf* 2006].

If one considers that officially the town of Polyarnye Zori is less than twenty years old, it is a case deserving special attention. It is natural that there should be no oral historical tradition in Polyarnye Zori. But it is here that one can observe a high level of historical reflection on the part of the small urban community, which is aware of its high 'intellectual' status (the town owes its existence to an atomic power station). In this connexion the problems of the functioning of socio-cultural institutions in various types of town and aspects of the activity of those professionals who shape their cultural milieu and history seem ripe for investigation.

Finally I shall note one more group of problems connected with the methods of present-day urban studies. The social anthropological perspective requires the analysis of the positions occupied by the subjects of the process — the anthropologist and his informants in the town. In this case the anthropologist is himself a bearer of urban culture, and a specific one at that, so that the results of his work cannot but depend on this factor and on his evaluation of his own cultural experience. The professional may be a representative of the 'metropolitan' or 'provincial' point of view, and identify himself — according to where he was born, where he lives, or where he studied — with a town of a particular type and status, but at the same time he must always be ready to change his position. The central problem is

the search for a new technology for working with informants by virtue of the cardinal distinction between urban and rural communications.

Paradoxically, the urban social milieu, which is closer to the anthropologist, has proved to be less accessible. Finding a person and establishing contact with him in the village, be it a village house or a village street, is considerably simpler than doing it in the urban environment, in which private life is totally privatised, access to buildings is controlled by intercom, and the potential informant is fully aware of his rights to information, values his spare time and does not want to be 'an object of study'.

Individualisation and specification (informational containment) are characteristic not only of private and family life but also of corporate activities. Intensive research work in the towns only makes the situation worse. The constant sociological and journalistic surveys, market research and suchlike undertakings gradually alienate the residents. This is particularly visible in the relationships between researchers and informants in those small towns which for some reason have particularly attracted researchers or else happen to be near to research centres or universities. All these circumstances call for improvement and innovation in our research methods in the town and co-ordinate our research projects.

References

- Geopanorama russkoi kultury: Provintsiya i ee lokalnye teksty* [A Geopanorama of Russian Culture: The Provinces and their Local Texts]. M.: Yazyki slavyanskoi kultury, 2004.
- Klubkova T. V. 'Perifrasticheskie naimenovaniya gorodov i lokalny tekst [Periphrastic Designations of Towns and the Local Text]' // *Provintsiya kak realnost i obyekt osmysleniya*. Tver: Tverskoi gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2001. Pp. 26–9.
- Nilsen F. S. *Glaz buri*. SPb.: Aleteiya, 2004. [Russian translation of Nielsen, Finn Sivert, *The Eye of the Whirlwind: Russian Identity and Soviet Nation-Building. Quests for Meaning in a Soviet Metropolis* (Oslo, 1987) <http://www.anthrobase.com/Txt/N/Nielsen_F_S_03.htm>.
- Polyarnozorinsky khronograf: istoriya goroda i rayona v datakh* [The Chronicle of Polyarnye Zori: the History of the Town and Region in Dates]: [komplekt iz ... broshyur] / Polyarnozor. tsentr. gorod. b-ka / Sost. Filipchuk Y. V.; red. Smetanina O. I. (ed.). Polyarnye Zori, 2006.
- Provintsiya kak realnost i obyekt osmysleniya* [The Provinces as Reality and the Object of Interpretation]. Tver: Tverskoi gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2001.
- Russkaya provintsiya: mif-tekst-reálnost* [Provincial Russia: Myth — Text — Reality] / Belousov A. F., Tsivyan T. V. (eds). M.; SPb.: Lan, 2000.
- Yanitsky O. N. 'Sotsiologiya goroda [The Sociology of the Town]' // *Sotsiologiya v Rossii* / Yadova V. A. (ed.). M.: IS RAN, 1998. <<http://socioworld.nm.ru/>>.

Zmeeva O.V. “‘Nash mir — eto Titan’: Iz istorii odnogo lokalnogo soobshchestva [‘Our World is Titan’: From the History of a Local Community]” // *Texts and Communities: Soviet and Post-Soviet Life in Discourse and Practice* / Aleksanteri Institute, Finland — Aleksanteri Series. 2007. Vol. 4. Pp. 159–67.

TANYA RICHARDSON

In a 1996 review article on the anthropology of cities, Setha Low asked why the city has been under-theorised in anthropology. She argued that anthropologists had been more concerned with analysing everyday urban life and processes than participating in broader theoretical discussions on urbanism. Synthetic theoretical statements about urbanism and ‘the city’ still tend to emanate from urban geographers and sociologists [Amin, Thrift 2002; Pile 2005]. However, since Low published her article, anthropologists have become much more prominent participants in interdisciplinary discussions of urbanism and urban life [Holston 1999; Huyssen 2009; Low 2005; Alexander 2006]. My commentary addresses two issues. First, I track debates about what urban anthropology is to show that while anthropologists no longer discuss whether they should study life in cities or the city as a whole, the in/of distinction remains an important framing device. Second, I present anthropological studies of cities on three themes: city mythologies and sociabilities; social movements and citizenship; and urban planning and design. These works are particularly interesting for the different ways in which they simultaneously tackle the specificities of urban life and their relationship to discourses of the city as a whole.

This forum links up with an earlier discussion in *Forum for Anthropology and Culture* about changing conceptualisations of ‘culture’ in which many contributors noted the shift in Russian and Anglo-American cultural studies and anthropology from rural to urban settings as sites for research. In the postwar period anthropological research remained focused on ‘primitive’ and ‘traditional’ societies, and research on urban themes was thus relatively rare. The

Tanya Richardson
Wilfrid Laurier University,
Waterloo, Ontario
trichardson@wlu.ca

1960s witnessed the burgeoning of a self-identified urban anthropology, as some anthropologists followed their informants into cities. Since the emergence of urban anthropology, its practitioners have oscillated back and forth in their assessment of the value of an anthropology *in* the city versus an anthropology *of* the city. Early urban anthropologists influenced by the Chicago School focused on 'ecological niches' of the city, neighborhoods, and social worlds (ethnic enclaves, gang studies, behaviour in public places, mixed neighborhoods) to produce detailed ethnographies of street life. Anthropologists' initial concerns about studying urban life were methodological and stemmed from questions about whether their research in cities was still anthropological given that the scale and complexity of cities required the use of methods that would not only distance them from the core method of participant observation, but also move the discipline closer to sociology [Breitborde 1994: 3].

In the 1970s Richard Fox critiqued an anthropology *in* the city with its street level ethnographies as 'pedestrian' and instead advocated an anthropology *of* the city. In following peasants to the city, he claimed, anthropologists had taken for granted the form and function of the cities, many of which had been shaped (or established) by outside powers, and the global political economies into which they had pushed them. In relying on the classic method of participant observation, anthropologists' accounts of the marginal lifestyles of the poor, deviants and migrants neglected the broader urban context. He argued that the focus of urban anthropology should shift away from isolated ghetto studies and towards a holistic perspective which would take the city as a whole as the object, and conceptualise it as a social form interacting with surrounding society. In his view, the city was an institution which could be empirically identified though population concentration and unique physical qualities or appearance.

In the 1980s, critics took Fox and others to task for essentialising and reifying the city [Zenner 1994]. Neither population concentration nor monumental architecture, they said, could serve as indicators that a settlement is a city. Fox's own analyses were actually analyses of urban elites whom he subsequently identified as the 'city'. Critics argued that this essentialism concealed demographic, economic, political and other forces in cities. Anthropologists returned to the streets to study people categorised as urbanites in their particular social and cultural contexts. Urban anthropology was thus seemingly left without a distinct theoretical orientation during a period of unprecedented growth in urban populations and the emergence of a new hierarchy of cities connected with reconfigured global economic and financial relations, and in spite of the fact that people worldwide continued to draw important cultural distinctions between the country and the city [Lynch 1994: 36].

The expanding focus of urban anthropology produced another conundrum of sorts: a questioning of the extent to which anthropology conducted in the city was specifically urban. Topics covered in urban anthropology classes mirrored those in anthropology as a whole (ethnicity, class, inequality), leading Roger Sanjek to remark in a 1990 review article that the broad trend toward urbanisation would make urban settings the default location for anthropological research and displace urban anthropology as a distinct field. This is part of another broad shift in anthropology over the past three decades from the study of the marginal, exotic and traditional to the study of the institutions, practices and subjectivities of modernity. Much contemporary anthropological research conducted in urban settings is conceptualised as the study of the state, governance, international development, finance, or science and technology rather than 'the urban'. By the 1990s, social anthropology had largely become urban anthropology even though it was no longer identified as specifically 'urban'.

Contemporary anthropological research that explicitly examines urbanism and urban life has, over the last 15 years, been part of what Ash Amin calls an inter- or postdisciplinary intellectual formation involving urban geographers, sociologists, architects, planners, and historians [Amin 2007: 100]. These scholars are grappling with transformations of urban life and the self-evident territoriality of cities as entities which have been produced by the intensification of transnational flows of ideas, information, knowledge, money, people, trans-local networks of influence including global financial institutions, international governance regimes, and technologies associated with globalisation. Drawing on strands of Marxist, poststructuralist, postmodern and posthuman theory (Benjamin, Lefebvre, Foucault, de Certeau, Latour, and Haraway), these scholars shifted their analytical focus to processes of spatial formation rather than pre-given orders of spatial arrangement. Cities have been re-conceptualised as places where networks of various scales, speed and duration intersect, where people, technology and biology co-constitute the social, where spatial proximity does not necessarily imply dense social relations, and where everyday life is constituted by complex temporalities, historicities and memories. Informed by relational understandings of space, place and cities, anthropologists have turned back to the question of the 'city' — usually a particular city — not as a pre-existing entity, but as something co-constituted by a range of actors, techniques, imaginaries and political economies operating at different scales. While contemporary anthropology of the city is often still framed by an in/of distinction, debate no longer pivots around whether anthropologists should focus on one or the other. In my view, some of the most interesting anthropological research on cities addresses urban imaginaries, practices and politics

simultaneously. In this rest of this commentary, I outline three ethnographies that represent different directions in contemporary anthropology of the city and that incorporate these concerns in different ways. These are by no means comprehensive.

One strand of research focuses on urban imaginaries, city mythologies and the places and practices that sustain them. Adam Reed [2002] argues that an anthropology of the city should take seriously the ways in which ordinary city dwellers theorise their city as a whole. His work examines how London enthusiasts (guides) use the category of 'detail' to develop their capacity to see their city's pasts and to sense its personality. Similarly, Hansen [2009] wants to take the notion that cities have souls seriously in ethnographic terms, and conceives of urban charisma, as a quality both of cities and of particular urban types such as gangsters, politicians, police officers, business tycoons and hustlers who can claim to know the urban world, and can demonstrate their ability to control the urban environment and create narratives about it. My own research on Odessa is another example of research on the interplay of urban myths, places and sociabilities in constituting the time-spaces of the contemporary city. It takes as its starting point how Odessans articulated claims to distinctiveness and provides an ethnography of the idea of Odessa as a city in relation to other cities, the surrounding countryside, Ukraine and Russia. In contrast to the semiotic or textual readings of Odessa undertaken by literary scholars and cultural historians (see [Stanton 2004] and [Tanny 2005]), I underscore Odessans' social engagements with texts, stories, and documents during walks, at flea markets, and in courtyards. In tracing the invocation of stories in relation to places and practices my study also illuminates the temporalities and historicities of the city and the sociabilities of its residents.

My book *Kaleidoscopic Odessa* examines the particularities of places and practices that cannot be subsumed by narratives of urbanism articulated by theorists, even as they resonate with them. Chapter 5 on a local history walking club provides one example. The My Odessa Club is a group of 30 mainly elderly people who walk a particular street with Valeriy Netrebsky, a charismatic guide and friend, every Sunday. Valeriy brings maps, documents and articles and recounts detailed histories of events, people, and buildings. The walkers enter courtyards and speak with residents. They comment on their surroundings using all their senses. On the one hand, the group's walking practices resemble a collective act of flaneurie. On the other, they resonate with phenomenological accounts of memory, place and embodiment. So far, however, few scholars have paid attention to the sociability of such groups, the meaning of this sociability to group participants, and the relationship of their values of sociability to Soviet and post-Soviet transformations of urban public space. I argue that the walkers' understanding of space is informed by

a notion of Odessa as a courtyard, an understanding that the space of the city is like (should be like) the space of a courtyard, neither fully private nor public but accessible to all, a space whose sociality can be described as a 'big family'. The walkers are therefore critical of strangers who are 'unsociable', and of modifications to the cityscape that enclose what they feel should be areas accessible for all to view. Practices such as walking and efforts to cultivate knowledge of city mythology and history perpetuate time-spaces outside the state and nation.

Social movements and citizenship form another important theme in contemporary anthropological work on cities. This work addresses how cities have become a key site for renegotiating inclusion, belonging and entitlement as the primacy of the nation as the context for citizenship has been displaced by new movements of capital, people, and rights discourses [Holston, Appadurai 1999]. Julia Paley's ethnography *Marketing Democracy* charts the history of urban social movements in La Bandera, a poblacion (shantytown) in Santiago, Chile, since the 1950s to show changing strategies of mobilisation under the conditions of neoliberal capitalism and political democracy. Drawing on oral history, government documents, and active involvement with the women's health group Llaretta, Paley details the political struggles between committees of the homeless, left political parties, and government agencies over the allocation of land to the urban poor and the roles played by planners and residents in creating this district. Weaving back and forth between workshops with young people detailing the process of establishing a chronology and a more formal narrative, she provides a history of collective action. She explains how the experience and memory of organising to obtain land and build a neighbourhood among supporters of left-wing parties in the 1950s and 1960s was utilised to mobilise social movements under Pinochet's dictatorship first for survival and later to protest and delegitimise the regime.

A significant part of Paley's analysis focuses on delineating why political democracy had the paradoxical effect of demobilising urban social movements. In the early 1990s social organisations in La Bandera were in decline partly because of the retreat of political parties, partly because of continuing economic difficulties, and partly because their strategy of denunciation, useful during the dictatorship, was no longer effective. In a chapter called 'The Paradox of Participation', Paley analyzes how Llaretta tried to articulate its demands for solving health problems to the authorities, with mixed results. While the Ministry of Health campaigned against cholera by emphasising personal hygiene, Llaretta wanted the government to address the underlying causes of disease in the district, namely water quality and waste disposal. In the course of their confrontations, it became clear that officials and Llaretta had

dramatically different understandings of democracy and participation. Whereas Llaretá expected to be consulted and involved in decision-making, the ministry saw the group as a means to deliver services (garbage disposal, roads, buildings) but not to decide on what to do, and denounced their criticism of the government as ‘anti-democratic’. Llaretá eventually achieved its desired outcome of having the garbage dump removed after holding meetings, writing letters, distributing leaflets, and occupying a building. As time went on, Llaretá activists eventually shifted their strategies and began positioning themselves as experts (which involved getting credentials) to legitimate their knowledge claims and to ‘professionalise’ their presentation styles so that state officials would take them seriously. Paley’s detailed account of social movements’ strategies, actions, and discourses seamlessly stitches together urban, national and global relations in accounting for the changing forms of power shaping activists’ abilities to have demands for substantive citizenship met.

A third strand of anthropological research on cities addresses questions of urban governance and design [Holston 1989; Rabinow 1989; Collier 2005]. Urban planning’s inextricability from regulating, containing and controlling ‘the city’ makes it an interesting site for exploring the production and circulation images of ideal cities and their constituent parts, and the complications that arise in turning plans into built realities. Gisa Weszkalnys’ *Berlin, Alexanderplatz* is an ethnographic study of how the agendas and practices of planners, developers, social workers, citizen groups and young people constitute Alexanderplatz as a ‘multiplicity’ in post-unification Berlin. In exploring the conflicts, controversies, and problems that arose in attempting to implement the redesign of Alexanderplatz, she poses questions such as: How is the city constructed as an object in the first place? What practices of objectification are at play? How does a particular place express ideas about the city? These questions are tackled by considering how ‘Alexanderplatz multiple’ (a term inspired by Anne-Marie Mol’s ‘body multiple’) in all its spatio-temporal complexity is assembled. It is assembled in a literal sense in the planners’ and citizens’ acts of bringing together of documents, drawings, and grievances in meetings and demonstrations. It is also assembled in a more Deleuzian sense of becoming through time. We encounter Alexanderplatzes as a vision of the ‘heart of a European city’, a ‘disintegrating socialist exemplar’, citizens’ ‘object of grievance’, and ‘the place of young people’. However, the book does more than merely present different perceptions. It unravels assumptions underpinning contemporary city planning by exploring how the square became the object of government and how discourses of government are also embedded in citizens’ own understandings of Alexanderplatz.

Weszkalnys does not want to tell another ‘just so story’ of creeping neoliberal governmentalsation. Rather, her book demonstrates that the outcomes are not the same everywhere, and suggests that without attention to the specific values shaping the shift to neoliberal urban management anthropologists and others merely reproduce another metanarrative of modernity. Weszkalnys complicates the tendency in theory and empirical studies to sharply dichotomise plan and reality, lived and planned space, and planner as disembodied engineer and the citizen as embodied practitioner. She tracks the friction in translating plans and visions into built realities and examines a perception of failure among some of the planners she worked with in the early 2000s. Instead of holding up plan and reality to point out the gap between them and how the plan failed, Weszkalnys’ ethnographic work leads her to take seriously planners’ own understanding of planning as messy, full of surprises, and to argue that failure (or the perception of failure) is in itself productive of social action.

The study of the ‘urban’ in anthropology has had an interesting career. Once the qualifier of a marginal disciplinary subfield, by the 1990s the urban had practically become the default setting for anthropological research, very nearly displacing the discipline’s traditional objects of study. As relational understandings of space and place have become more prominent, debates about whether urban anthropology is the study in or of the city have given way to recognition that interesting questions and lines of inquiry can arise out of both stances. Although contemporary anthropologists often no longer reference older debates, the notion of a study in/of the city nevertheless continues to frame recent discussions [Hansen 2009] while more effective analyses combine them. Anthropologists are now keen to demonstrate that they can contribute to debates in urban studies in theoretically as well as empirically significant ways. Yet their theoretical insights arise out of the unexpected discoveries that come from taking seriously the knowledge practices of different kinds of urban dwellers.

References

- Alexander C., Buchli V., Humphrey C. *Urban Life in Post-Soviet Central Asia*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Amin A. ‘Re-thinking the Urban Social’ // *City*. 2007. No. 11(1). Pp. 100–114.
- _____, Thrift N. *Cities: Re-imagining the Urban*. Cambridge: Polity, 2002.
- Breitborde L. B. ‘Urban Anthropology in the 1990s Whither the City? An Introduction’ // *City & Society*. 1994. No. 7(1). Pp. 3–10.
- Fox R. G. ‘Rationale and Romance in Urban Anthropology’ // *Urban Anthropology*. 1972. No. 1(2). Pp. 205–33.

- Hansen T. Blom, Verkaaik O. 'Urban Charisma: On Everyday Mythologies in the City' // *Critique of Anthropology*. 2009. No. 29(1). Pp. 5–26.
- Holston J. *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasilia*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.
- _____ (ed.). *Cities and Citizenship*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999.
- Huyssen A. (ed.). *Other Cities, Other Worlds: Urban Imaginaries in a Globalizing Age*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009.
- Low S. 'The Anthropology of Cities: Imagining and Theorizing the City' // *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 1996. No. 25. Pp. 383–409.
- _____, Taplin D., Scheld S. (eds.). *Rethinking Urban Parks: Public Space and Cultural Diversity*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005.
- Lynch O. 'Urban Anthropology, Postmodernism and Perspectives' // *City & Society*. 1994. No. 7(1). Pp. 35–52.
- Paley J. *Marketing Democracy: Power and Social Movements in Post-Dictatorship Chile*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- Pile S. *Real Cities: Modernity, Spaces and the Phantasmagorias of City Life*. London: Sage Publications, 2005.
- Rabinow P. *French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- Richardson T. *Kaleidoscopic Odessa: History and Place in Contemporary Ukraine*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008.
- Sanjek R. 'Urban Anthropology in the 1980s: A World View' // *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 1990. No. 29. Pp. 151–86.
- Stanton R. 'Odessian Selves: Identity and Mythopoesis in Works of the Odessa School'. PhD Dissertation, Department of Slavic Studies, Columbia University, 2004.
- Tanny J. 'City of Rogues and Schnorrers: The Myth of Old Odessa in Russian and Jewish Culture'. PhD Dissertation. Department of History, University of California, Berkeley, 2008.
- Weszkalnys G. *Berlin Alexanderplatz: Transforming Place in a Unified Germany*. London: Berghahn, 2010.
- Zenner W. P. 'Nominalism and Essentialism in Urban Anthropology' // *City & Society*. 1994. No. 7(1). Pp. 54–66.

MONICA RÜTHERS

Significant Issues in Urban Studies: An Overview

Historians pose their questions from the present; questions that intrigue us today also direct our research interest. Take, for example, the histories of memory, of stress, of visual images. As soon as we realise their importance for our present lives, we start to inquire about their stories. Khrushchev's reforms came into the

focus of western historians at the very moment when Gorbachev emerged as a reformer.

Urban history evolves in a similar way. Global cities began to interest historians when globalisation became palpable in everyday life: the growing flow of migrants, the pictures of megacities in emerging countries, Bollywood movies, t-shirts made in China. Urban history is supposed to produce answers to urgent questions of present urban development.

Historians ask their questions also from a certain point of view, from where they are standing. My own urban experiences include Berlin, where I lived in the early seventies and which I visit frequently, and the Swiss cities of Basel and Zurich. So I will comment on actual issues in urban history from a clearly European point of view, and specifically on recent research concerning the European City and the Socialist City.

What is Urban History and how is it done?

European cities, imperial cities, global cities

In European urban history, the ‘European city’ represents a dominant feature; it is associated with a predominant paradigm firmly embedded in modernisation theory. Since the end of the 20th century, however, the paradigmatic status of the European city has come into question, and the end of its dominance has been openly discussed.

‘The European city is the vessel of a certain way of life, distinguishing the city dweller from the villager. The city is the place of outstanding professions, to be a city dweller means not to be a peasant. The notion of urban lifestyle suggests a refined, intellectual and distinguished behaviour, the separation of public and private spheres, of work and leisure’ [Siebel 2004: 25].

In this notion, city becomes the opposite of countryside. It is market-place, trading place and built environment, destination of migrants and site of modernisation in the era of industrialisation. In cities, people get together, society and economy take shape.

Urban history is concerned with topographically and socially segregated spaces of socialisation emerging in big cities, with the city as socially constructed space in history. Urbanisation denominates an economic and demographic process of concentration that resulted in urban growth from the beginning of industrialisation in 19th century. Recent urban development is marked by deindustrialisation and tertiarisation,¹ in emerging countries by rural exodus and

¹ The third economic sector is also called non-productive industries or services sector; in the context of global cities; it has also become customary to refer to a ‘fourth sector’, comprising specialised financial services.

migration into cities. History of urbanisation is at the same time the history of this process and of the emergence and development of urban ways of life [Zimmermann 2000: 11].

Thus, in nineteenth-century urban growth, urbanisation and industrialisation were closely related. They were the classic fields of social history in the 1970s and 1980s. Social historians analysed problems of urban growth and rural exodus, traffic, economy, administration and politics, migration into cities and the development of urban infrastructures as well as specific forms of urban socialisation. They investigated the norms and values of the emerging urban society, which was held to consist of bourgeoisie and working class, of clerks and employees; they focused on patterns of in-town migration and social segregation.

This research was mostly limited to Western European or Northern American cities. After 1989/1991 the same categories were applied to former socialist cities in Central and Eastern Europe. This led to a critical reflection on categories and methods. Another cause for this reflection was the perceived 'crisis of the European city' from the 1970s onwards, when western societies were hit by the awareness of the 'Limits of Growth' [Club of Rome 1972], by the first energy crisis, the ongoing globalisation of capital flow, and the beginning of de-industrialisation. For East European urban history, 1989/1991 seems to be more of a break than the start of the 1970s. Belated de-industrialisation coincided, at this point, with structural changes following on the end of the socialist planned economies [Lenger 2009: 30].

A new generation of historians came up with new interests in the late 1970s and 1980s. Post-modern theory resulted in the dismissal of master narratives. 'Minorities', or unprivileged groups, came into focus, women, workers, ethnic minorities. Everyday history made its way into the history departments, closely followed by microhistory. Microhistory was concerned with the small things and the individual lifeworld, postulating that it was connected in countless structured-structuring relations to bigger networks and big societal contexts. Historians read Foucault, discovered discourse and adopted a social constructivist view on relations of power.

Towards the end of the 1980s, discourse history met urban history. Contemporary 1990 discourse on problems of rapid urban growth was investigated: there was analysis of slums, delinquency and social conflict, but also the fascination of the bourgeoisie with urban underworlds [Schlör 1991; Walkowitz 1992]. Next to the history of personal experience, historians became interested in debates and social movements proposing solutions to the problems of urban growth: philanthropy and welfare policy, but also attempts to educate the working classes, to discipline them. The hygiene movement was

now seen to have had great impact on urban history, on the improvement of urban infrastructure, on building policy, regulations, and town planning. The virulent anti-urbanism of the late 19th century was explained as a feeling of unease towards modernity.

Since it came under the influence of post-colonial studies the 1990s, urban history has been concerned with empire and forms of imperial and national governance [Driver 1999]. The city began to be perceived as a representational space for the ruling powers of society. The relations of art, architecture and power were studied, as were the different forms of *imperial displays*, e.g. in the form of national and international exhibitions [Greenhalgh 1988; Rydell/Gwinn 1994]. In comparison, the different forms of nationalism expressed in 'national architectures' have been neglected by urban historians to this moment. On the other hand, the city was also explored as a space of and for communication (e.g. [Saldern 2006]).

Metropolis, Global City and Megacities

The impact and growing awareness of globalisation has led to historians giving attention to Metropolis, Global City and Megacities as well as to the history of economic and cultural relations between cities on different levels [Feldbauer et al. 1997; Sassen 2000a; Sassen 2000b; Sassen 2004; Matejovski 2000; Bronger 2004; Schwentker 2006].

Usually, big city, metropolis, and megacity are defined by their size in terms of area and population. In addition, historians have developed definitions in different periods of time. Pre-modern cities were different from modern and post-modern cities. The metropolis of the 19th and 20th centuries with one to two million inhabitants was quite manageable and straightforward. It had a centre and a periphery. The pre-modern metropolis was either a religious or a political centre, or both. Modern metropolises were cultural centres or 'mother cities' [Leach 2002: 1]. Economic geography today defines metropolis in terms of hierarchic orders, e.g. in terms of their functional reach, and classifies them according to the presence of highly central institutions [Häussermann 2000: 75]. Yet these criteria miss the important point of uniqueness: A metropolis has its unmistakable character. The straightforward metropolises of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are being replaced by the Megacities of the twenty-first century with their 13 or 20 million inhabitants and multiple centres. Some of them, indeed, solely consist of conurbations and networks. An American phrase designates them as 'no-place urban realms'. For example, the greater Los Angeles Metropolitan Area with 13 million inhabitants comes to mind, but also the German area of Rhine-Ruhr with its approximately 11 million inhabitants, the Greater Osaka Area or Keihanshin (Osaka-Kobe-

Kyoto, over 17 million), or Randstad Holland (Amsterdam-Rotterdam) with approximately 7 million. They are not distinct cities any more, but so called metropolitan areas. All of them are constantly and rapidly developing and changing.

Cities, regions and globalisation

The 'global theory' approach takes two directions. One posits the disappearance of time and space, the impact of dilution or disintegration; cities are seen as transgressing their boundaries and sprawling [Castells 2003; Castells 2004; Schroer 2006]. The other sees the city as the scene (or site) where globalisation takes place, where corporate oriented services concentrate and creative classes gather in the process [Sassen 2000b].

A discussion has evolved around the seemingly typical division of these global or world cities in two (or more?) parallel cities. When Mega-Cities grow into global cities, those cities may develop similar physiognomies, but they do not become homogeneous. The integration into global networks of science, culture, society, economies and markets is limited to certain spatial, social or economic segments. Globalisation produces what some observers call 'dual cities' [Feldbauer et al. 1997: 16]. In these cities, a new economic centre emerges for financial and other corporate oriented services. The whole city economy reorganises. The economic and financial sectors have gained in importance in urban economies since the 70s. The high profits of those sectors have devalued the goods-producing sector. The expanding international economic sector with its well-paid employees, luxury restaurants and hotels exists alongside the local economy. The locals cannot afford the rising rents for small neighbourhood shops or flats. It is a paradox that the big companies and their employees also need cleaning staff and simple local services such as laundry shops and so on. Since the local commerce and trade cannot compete with the rents and wages of the global players, they disappear and their places are taken by migrants who work for extremely low wages, relying on their informal family networks. Sassen therefore rates the growing informal sector as an integrative part of global cities. The apparent division of cities in two is in fact the reflection of a single economic system [Sassen 2000: 40; Sassen 2004].

In the course of globalisation, a clear North-South-divide has emerged. The world seems to be divided into the countries of the rich northern hemisphere (the 'centre'), semi-peripheric or 'emerging' countries (e.g. 'BRIC', Brazil, Russia, India, China), and 'poor' countries located in Asia, Africa and South America. Urban historians have to pay attention to the histories and attributions of such rankings and dominating categories as they are highly discursive and

socially constructed. The nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries are marked by quite swift modifications. The big cities did not start only recently to compete for attention in the global arena. The diffusion of an aura, generating charisma, getting media presence is part of the definition of Metropolis. Today's vehicles are festivals, events, spectacular museums and architecture.

All of this affects urban history, and history as a whole. Historians have given up on Eurocentrism or other centrisms, they combine cultural studies with the study of economy and politics. Global history tries to catch up with the complex interrelations of micro- and macrospheres. The approach of microhistory asks how historical processes affect the smallest sections of everyday life, private lifeworlds and social relations, and how subjects through their actions and networks structure the processes. So microhistory complements global history, which is looking at the same processes not from a worm's eye, but from a bird's view.

Socialist cities, Soviet cities, post-soviet cities

Is there a socialist city?

Concerning Eastern Europe, there have been two main approaches: On the one hand, the 'Socialist City' was investigated as a distinct urban type, with its own specifics and preconditions [French/Hamilton 1979; Bater 1980; French 1995]. In this approach, inner organisation, town planning and ideology were the main interests [Andrusz 1987 etc.; Bodenschatz/Post 2003]. On the other hand, there are urban histories of distinct Eastern European towns and cities. Capital cities such as Moscow or St. Petersburg are seen as metropolises with an unmistakable character, with myths. Those are cities with a very distinct personality and hence also with a 'biography' of their own. Other urban histories — of more interchangeable cities — often take the shape of case studies. In the last few years, several important contributions have been made to Soviet town planning and urban development in general, and several 'urban biographies' have appeared, e.g. on Minsk [Bohn 2008] or Moscow [Colton 1995].

Methods and disciplines

The specific socialist forms of urban growth and development were discovered by historians as a topic in the 1980s. Before this, sociologists and geographers dealt with socialist cities ([Bohn 2009: 6]; in Germany, these include Jörg Stadelbauer, Ingrid Oswald, Isolde Brade and Paul Rudolph). They were (and still are) concerned with actual changes and after 1991 concentrated on the effects of political, economic and social transformation on the

cities. Since 2000, interest lay in the effects of globalisation. For sociologists and geographers, who observe contemporaneity directly, after 1989/1991 the typology of a 'socialist city' became obsolete. It all of a sudden began to look like some hybrid structure combining elements of socialist planning and capitalist relics. What caught their eye was the continuity of infrastructure, services and administration throughout the revolutionary events. Some even de-constructed the term post-socialist city on the grounds that a socialist city never existed in reality, but only in ideas, plans and images [Andrusz 2000].

To historians, however, things look somewhat different. The notion of 'socialist city' can be salvaged as history of a concept or as a category. Moreover, the socialist city can be turned into a very appealing 'closed experiment', ready for periodisation. So, we are able to construct many histories of the socialist city, of the idea, of its planning, of its realisation in construction and in propaganda, of its experience, of its habitants.

In the field of history of architecture, there is a growing interest in the legacy of the 'socialist city', given its presence all over Central Europe. Barbara Kreis [1984] has analyzed the design competition for the Palace of Soviets as key element in the process of formulating the language of a distinctive Stalinist architecture. Jean-Louis Cohen [1979] and Bodenschatz/Post [2003] characterised the General Plan for the reconstruction of Moscow from 1935 as a model for the Stalinist 'city beautiful', and as a central feature in the emergence of the actual socialist city. Jean-Louis Cohen compared the Stalinist reconstruction of Moscow to Haussmann's remodelling of Paris and called it a 'catch-up modernisation process'. Since 1989/1991, interest has also focused on the post-war period and the switch from Stalinist to post-war modern architecture. Elke Beyer from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich is preparing a comparative study of the planning of 'Socialist City Centres' between the late 50s and the 70s.

Spatiality, socialist and post-socialist spaces

Space as relational category is socially constructed. This holds especially true for socialist spaces, the ideologically constructed topographies of the socialist state. One could also say that society was constructed through spaces [Crowley, Reid 2003]. At the end of the 1980s, a new interest in East European cities and the histories of public and private spaces arose. Public spaces were analysed as scenes for performing socialist rituals [Tolstoy, Bibikova, Cooke 1990; Rolf 2006; Dmitrieva 2005], 'Spaces of cheering' [Ryklin 2002] were investigated as well as living spaces [Buchli 1997; Kettering 1997]. The civic notion of public life (Öffentlichkeit,

or ‘the public sphere’, following Habermas) was challenged, because it entrenches a concept that does not apply to societies under socialism [Wendland, Hoffmann 2002; Rittersporn et al. 2003]. Other topics are the seeming contradiction of the vast open, public spaces in the cities and the crowded inner spaces [Stites 1999; Epstein 2003].

The revolutions of 1989 and 1991 changed the faces of East European Cities. They became the most visible sites of transformation. The 90s showed the quick impact of capitalism on the surfaces: kiosks and billboards sprang up like mushrooms. In a second step, architectural transformations followed. Topics of urban history included the legacy of socialist town plannings as well as the consequences of several simultaneous processes: privatisation, the reshaping of national and transnational urban systems and de-industrialisation, causing new forms of migration and shrinking cities due to the closing-down of whole branches of industry.

The Soviet city

A significant feature of Soviet town planning was the debate on the ideal city in the 1920s, which has been thoroughly investigated [Kopp 1970; 1975; Chan-Magomedov 1987]. The debate spelt out the deeply felt unease and ambiguity of the time towards the city. On the one hand, the city was a product of capitalism, on the other hand, it was the cradle of the worker’s movement. The catch-up industrialisation deemed necessary for the young Soviet state dependent on advocacy of urbanisation, up to the founding of agricultural cities (*agrogorod*). The New Soviet Man and Woman were to grow up in housing communes in a kind of conveyor-like system following the ideas of Taylor and Ford. The socialist city should create perfect conditions for the ‘new way of life’ (*novyi byt*): the establishment of collective living, the minimalisation of travel time to work, the creation of green parks and collective leisure activities [Altrichter 2003]. Little attention has as yet been given to the actual use of those buildings, to the people living in the early communes.

Soviet cities, above all planned cities such as the newly founded industrial towns, offered a whole new set of working conditions to planners and architects. The socialisation of property made the state the only landlord. Architects did not have to worry about private owners and could plan boldly. This prospect attracted some of the best architects from all over Europe (which was, by the way, badly hit by a major economic crisis, while the first Five-Year-Plans bestowed the Soviet Union with a boom — at least, so it looked from the outside) [Altrichter 2003; Bodenschatz/Post 2003; Bohn 2009; Brumfield 1993; Quilici 1976].

After WWII, the Moscow General Plan of 1935 with its monumental buildings and grand boulevards for ritual marches and parades at the centre, its parks for culture and leisure and its monumental statues, became the mandatory pattern for the reconstruction of socialist capital cities. It was exported to the new socialist countries as well as to all Soviet republics.

After the death of Stalin, Khrushchev gave the housing shortage and consumer industry top priority. The housing campaign, the promise of a small flat for every family, became his political capital. It was put into practice with the help of industrialised mass construction using pre-fabricated elements and new materials. Urban construction took no longer place at the centre, but moved to the free spaces at the periphery. Huge neighbourhoods of ever larger housing blocks began to form around the towns and cities. The Stalinist developments had been constructed along large boulevards in the form of superblocks, large rectangles with passageways and courtyards inside, a pattern also followed in the enlargement of nineteenth-century cities in the West, for example Barcelona. The new Mikrorayons from the late 50s on were built in a more openly spaced manner. They were conceived as autonomous neighbourhoods for 6000–20000 habitants and offered a complete infrastructure of services such as shops, laundries kindergartens, schools and public canteens. These neighbourhoods were generously planted with trees and should obviously look like parks. The fact that Soviet cities had no conurbations and suburbs distinguished them from Western European and American towns and cities and also from the emerging cities of Latin America, Africa, and Asia, with their shanty-towns on the fringes.

Urban development

In the socialist countries, town planning differed from and even sometimes was disconnected from real urban development. What was put into practice mostly depended on the parameters of planned economy, where industrial production always ranged higher than residential construction. Changing priorities, supply shortfalls and lack of construction workers, organisational and infrastructural problems all accompanied urban growth. Uncontrollable immigration ridiculed all attempts to limit urban expansion, because the growing industries needed workers. So the overall concepts were adapted again and again. Workers continued to live in barracks at the city margins, in communal apartments, *obshchezhitiya*; considerable numbers also lived in makeshift self-made constructions. All of this resulted in the ragged image socialist cities offered to the viewer. Building lines and eaves heights changed every few steps. In spite of all efforts, residential construction never quite met the growing demand [Andrusz 1984; Bohn 2008].

Urban culture

For the specific Soviet forms of urbanisation (the notion of urbanisation itself seems to have been classified as capitalistic until WWII: [Bohn 2009: 8]) and urban development, the lasting permeability of town and country is a specific feature. The ongoing in-migration from the village led to a 'ruralisation' of cities [Hoffmann 1994]. Soviet authorities tried to educate the incoming population by the means of *kulturnost*-campaigns which ranged from hygiene to advice literature, popular journals and the decorations of shop-windows. All of this was aimed at propagating an urban way of life. Even the cities themselves were seen as agencies of education for a cultured way of life [Kelly 2001]. This was especially the case for St. Petersburg/Leningrad, the city ranked highest on the cultural barometer. St. Petersburgers, and in due course Leningraders, were credited with a high cultural capital. Their manner of speaking, walking, eating was taken as a model. Socially ambitious immigrants from the country or small towns, in their aspiration to become 'urban' and cultivated willingly accepted the advice and corrections given by 'native Leningraders' (*korennye leningradtsy*) in the crowded communal apartments. Pre-revolutionary bourgeois values were transformed and translated into dominant Soviet discourse on *kulturnost* and became an agency of Sovietisation for the 'backward' rural population. The myth of the cultural metropolis was transformed into Soviet cultured city life [Obertreis 2009].

The stylised image of Petersburg as cultural capital may well have appealed to all social levels of Soviet society and fulfilled its unifying function for the *imagined community* of the *Pitertsy*. But historians should take a closer look at its post-Soviet afterlife. The first post-Soviet Blockbuster, *The Brother* (1997) refers to Petersburg-connotations in the chaotic Russia of the 1990s. Danila as a new version of the Russian national hero was a big success: He is young, released from military service, and comes to St. Petersburg from a small provincial town. What kind of culturedness does he encounter? Does he become a Petersburg? Or what has become of Petersburg? Danila came to help his brother who turns out to be not a successful *biznesmen*, as he supposed, but a criminal mobster called the 'Tatar'. Danila himself moves in the underworld, survives a trap, and is soon cleaning up in a big way. In the process, he becomes a killer, but he also has his morals which strongly connect him to the simple (post-) Soviet man. Money does not hold any value for him (this is aimed against capitalism seen to be colonising Russia), he is a 'simple person' true to his word (honour is more important than money). He looks like any ordinary, lanky Russian boy from the province. His image emulates the truly Russian hero Gagarin in contrast to the physical American action hero who looks like a bodybuilder. So, he

is 'one of us'. The film also evokes the parallel to the Russian *bogatyr* by showing Vaznetsov's well known painting on a tapestry. Danila's Russianness becomes also apparent in his loyalty towards his brother, and, in the sequel, *Brat-2* (2002), to the 'brotherhood' of his comrades. Danila moves on the margins of society, and boundaries are frequently put forward in the film. He hates Jews and 'darkies' (people from the southern provinces), but also Americans and other Europeans. In St Petersburg, Russia's traditional window on the west, Danila meets an American girl at McDonald's and complains about the American music played at a party. The 'un-Russian' element is present in violent pornography, McDonald's hamburgers and professional hockey-players [Larsen 2003: 504–510]. At the same time, at least in the first film, Danila's dislike stays on the level of dialogue, and is territorially limited to St. Petersburg [Hashamova 2007: 301–302]. His only friend is a German, a philosopher who lives on the Lutheran cemetery (representing the 'other' of the Orthodox Church).

The study of inherited myths and characters could profitably be extended beyond St Petersburg and Moscow: cities such as Nizhny [Evtuhov 1998] and Odessa [Herlihy 2008; Humphrey 2011], for instance, would make worthwhile objects.

Urban topography and spaces, architecture and ideology

A new view upon the city in the 1980s began to decipher its surface as social text. The exemplary study was *Moskau lesen* by Karl Schlögel (1984). The re-reading of urban surfaces led to studies of social as well as symbolic topographies ([Slezkine 1994]; [Schlögel 1998]) The sociologist Hartmut Häussermann applied this view to Berlin (2002). Recent studies on Moscow have been concerned with reading city space at a certain moment in time, such as Moscow 1937 [Schlögel 2008], with the changing social and urban topographies of specific districts such as Ostozhenka [Gdaniec 2005] or Arbat, Lubyanka, Novye Cheryomushki, Sukharevka and Tverskaya [Rüthers 2007], and with the communal flat as a characteristic urban space of socialist Moscow and Leningrad/Petersburg [Pott 2009], for SPb see also [Gerasimova 1999; Gerasimova 2000; Obertreis 2004; Utekhin 2004], with leisure space [Kucher 2007], with individual buildings such as the House on the Embankment [Kozyrev 2000; Korshunov, Terekhova 2002], the Palace of Soviets [Hoisington 2003; Chibireva 2002; Gentes 1998; Dmitrieva 1997] or infrastructures such as the metro [Neutatz 2003; Jenks 2000; Bouvard 1999]. Others address the relation between public and private spaces, especially in the context of housing [Siegelbaum 2006; Crowley 2003; Gerasimova 2003].

Soviet urban housing

A history of housing would prove a revealing approach to Soviet social history. It would range from the first revolutionary ideas for collective living and social reform to house communes, communal apartments and worker's barracks of the 20s and 30s, on to the industrialised building methods (big-panel construction) of the 50s and 60s [Martiny 1983; Brumfield, Ruble 1993; Harris 2003] and go on to post-Soviet privatisation, gentrification, displacement of former habitants and real estate-related crimes, emergence of new forms like gated communities and so on, including the discourses accompanying those processes. Urban social topographies should be complemented by a history of the socio-economic ranking of cities in the Soviet urban system, by a history of the system of closed cities and a history of migration control by means of internal passports and restriction of residential permits [Buckley 1995]. Some topics, such as the *kommunalka* and the cultural education of rural immigrants, have been quite thoroughly investigated [Reid 2002; Reid 2005; Buchli 1997; Kettering 1997; Cooke 1997], while others still wait to be discovered. A survey of different forms of dwellings including barracks, hostels, and private houses has still to be written. Urban dwellings should also be compared to rural ones. The housing campaign has been convincingly analyzed as a means of social mobilisation under Khrushchev [Harris 2003]. Cross-connections to urban social history and a long range survey of housing construction covering also post-Soviet practices would be worth the while. The diversity of urban lifestyles through times and social groups, also in different towns and regions could be explored using private photographs and memories.

Urban history as case study

Much less has been published on small towns and the peripheries — but there are some good examples as well. There is a clear trend away from the one-city monograph towards the study of the single city as part of a larger system or a civilisation. Urban histories are turned into case studies shedding light on certain questions. Magnitogorsk has been analysed as a site where a specific form of civilisation was built [Kotkin 1995]. Ongoing research highlights single company towns such as Naberezhnye Chelny and closed cities, *naukogrady* and atom cities, such as Severodvinsk or Shevchenko. Ivanovo, on the other hand, as become a case study of population decline [Shrinking Cities 2004–2005] Nizhny has been investigated as an example of the emergence of old-new trading places after socialism [Schlögel 1991] and Minsk as an instance of Soviet urban development [Bohn 2008]. Yaroslavl has become a case-study for the effects of the advent of capitalism [Ruble 1995], Voronezh for the creation and history of

Soviet rituals of power in urban spaces [Rolf 2006]. But we are still waiting for urban histories of Central Asia and other cities far from the centre.

Urban history and modernities

It would be of interest to position urban history in the debates on modernities and traditionalism [Kotsonis 1999; Hedin 2004; von Hagen 2004; David-Fox 2006] — as well as linking it to discourses on Eurasia and globalisation. Some urban historians (as well as sociologists and geographers) adhere to modernisation theory and see signs of convergence, while others use urban history to demonstrate precisely the emergence of multiple, competing modernities. Of particular interest is the question of Moscow being or developing into a global city [Brade/Rudolph 2001; 2003; Stadelbauer 1989].

In traditional urban history, the notions of city and society were an entity. The city was seen as the place where communication concentrates, here people get together, city is the place of the ‘public sphere’, it is where important decisions are made. However, this assumption of city as a location where society takes place has been disputed. A rival has appeared on the scene, under the name of ‘Zwischenstadt’ (‘between-city’, [Sieverts 1999; Sieverts 2003]), which denotes the agglomeration or conurbation, a congested urban area, ‘no-place urban realms’. There is also talk of ‘Edgeless Cities’ [Lang 2003; Bruegman 2005] and of ‘Edge Cities’, of the dilution of public spaces and the rise of artificial, corporate owned spaces such as shopping malls or gated communities. A digital spectre has appeared, if so far only on paper: As everyone will soon be working from home, the cities will disappear into cyberspace, where more and more of communication is already taking place now [Lindner 2000; Sieverts 2003].

Is this picture adequate for Eastern Europe? Such a trend is only going to happen when some kind of essentially ‘urban’ infrastructure is in place everywhere (in particular, when the Internet has spread to formerly remote areas). This might still take some time, given the vast expanses to cover. But it is an interesting idea in connection with the urban spaces of earlier generations, for example, the Siberian new towns of the Khrushchev era, which might have no permanent residents, and be habited by rotating crews like offshore drilling platforms.

Conclusion: What are the most significant issues at the moment?

Urban history is fascinating because cities are enmeshed in networks of economical, political and cultural relations. They are connected to their hinterland, but also to regional national and transnational

economies. People, information and commodities move in and out of cities. From this view, the fields of urban history, between Alltagsgeschichte, microhistory and global history, are unlimited.

I propose four domains to group approaches to urban history.

1. Social History Topics

This field is structured by urban topics linked to social history, with its emphasis on processes of segregation, but also on overarching categories and theories such as modernisation, the creation of the public sphere, globalisation. In this area, the focus lies on social topographies, urban classes, ethnic and professional groups and gender. We should also focus on new categories: on generational groups such as children or the elderly, on migrants on different levels, expatriate businessmen and underclass alike, on the employed — including the so-called ‘working poor’ — and those excluded from the labour market. Further topics might include forms of association (for example, neighbourhood networks), urban living and housing, and urban lifestyles.

Sociologists have published elaborate studies on social topographies; historians should focus also on the statewide social topographies structuring the urban system. There are social segregations between urban settlements themselves, according to degree of ‘culturedness’, climate, supply, commodities. This is a topic touched upon regularly, but not investigated in-depth. Urban architecture and town planning are linked not only to social segregation and to a city’s self-representation (often with competing cities as a target), but also to public security.

Secrecy, urban security and control are new topics of research. The interdisciplinary Arbeitskreis Stadt und Sicherheit [Work Group ‘Cities and Security’] at the Leibniz-Universität Hannover is preparing a research project, ‘Sicherheit in städtischen Räumen’ [Security in Urban Domains], looking at the situation since the 1970s. The researchers observe the growing demand for ‘security’ and the dynamics of control of public urban spaces this entails. This captivation with security in urban environments will be explored in historical perspective and using a transnational comparative approach.

In the context of security, seen from a wider perspective, we could also place urban histories of lighting, social hygiene, traffic and public transport, urban infrastructures, economy, markets.

2. Relational webs, urban systems

The structures and networks formed by the relations between cities have to be taken into account: This relates, for instance, to town-

country-relations and exchange in commodities and migrants. Complex 'urban systems' exist, and have their own histories, on different levels: regional, national, global. We should investigate factors of positioning such as town size and location; differences in and factors of development.

3. Theory and method: turns, approaches, fields of meanings

This would be the field of theory and method, where effects of the 'turns' in the humanities on urban history would be discussed. There has been a growing influence of other disciplines and cultural studies in general on urban history — the most influential are probably sociology, anthropology, urban ethnography, geography, history of architecture, visual culture studies.

The cultural, linguistic, spatial, visual, performative and global 'turns' have already been or are being applied to socialist, Soviet and post-Soviet cities, but there are still wide fields and new lands to turn to.

The spatial turn has taught us to take a closer look at urban spaces as socially constructed, communicative spaces. Cities are still perceived as scenes where politic and other rituals are performed. But the performing spaces are contested. The media offer competing spaces. It might be that important decisions are no longer taken by the masses we observed in 1989, in Prague or Riga, singing or ringing their keys. During the August coup in Moscow in 1991, Ostankino was as important as the White House. New forms of public life and communication develop. It is now more important what politicians say in talk shows than in parliament. With the ongoing digital revolution and Web 2.0 we could ask if cities will have to position themselves in computer games or other forms of virtual spaces. What questions does that raise for urban history? We should take a look at performative actions: who did what and where? What happened to street names, monuments, and sites of memory during the 1991 revolutions in different cities, not only in capital cities, but also in regional centers and provincial towns?

What about *mental mapping* in different periods? Inside and around the cities, new kinds of semi-public spaces emerge. Pedestrian zones and arcades are replaced by malls. These corporate owned spaces are marked by measures of security and control, such as the omnipresent video cameras. Gated communities indicate the emergence of new social classes asking for new forms of segregation in the process of changing social topographies in post-Soviet cities [Andrusz 2004; 2006].

And if spaces are socially constructed, what role did emotions play in the historical process, in defining 'home', for instance? Did emotions

fuel anti-urbanism? How does the notion of quality of life and of living conditions relate to emotions?

4. Area studies, space/time specifics, comparative approaches

This is the field of East European, socialist and post-socialist cities and their specifics. As mentioned already, East European urban history deals with different forms of urban jurisdiction on a territory reaching from Poland to Central Asia. A central point of difference has been the judicial side. The towns and cities of the Russian Empire consisted of a variety of judicial and administrative forms, reaching from European to Oriental [Hausmann 2002: 97–113; Haumann 1979; Hamm 1976]. In the medieval and early modern periods, the clear limits of the Western European city with its city law were in sharp contrast to the Russian town without defined limitation. In Soviet times, however, city growth was strictly limited by master plans.

During the period of socialism, models of society were not only culturally, but also ideologically defined. Houses and cities clearly were seen as models of the society to build, ‘building communism’ was a strong metaphor [Urussova 2004]. In this sense, socialist urbanisation took a specific route.

These four domains are interconnected and overlap in many ways. On all levels there are influences of other disciplines, as well as the need for positioning urban history in the general field of history.

More than at any other time, historians should try to cross-connect urban history to topics covered by history of architecture, technology or tourism. In 2012, Steve Harris and Daria Bocharnikova initiated the ‘Second World Urbanity: Between Capitalist and Socialist Utopias’ project.¹ This project aims at linking together approaches from different disciplines concerned with urban history and culture. It also aims to call into question the place of the subfield that is vaguely defined as urban studies vis-à-vis other related fields such as global history, state socialism studies, the history of architecture and material culture, and seeks to redefine this relation.

So far, there is no **comparative cultural history of tall buildings and skyscrapers**, which are invested with specific sets of meanings not only in the Americas, Asia and Europe, but also in Soviet history and in post-Soviet Russia. Tall buildings interact both on a local urban and on a representative, extroverted, transnational level. The history of certain buildings such as the Stalin Palace (Palac Kultury) in Warsaw would go together well with politic, economic, social and

¹ See: <<http://secondworldurbanity.umwblogs.org/>>.

cultural histories — and, of course, with the history of Polish-Russian relations.

A recently published project investigated in a comparative study the phenomenon of ‘Shrinking Cities’ (2004–5), and it might be a good idea to take a look at the **rise of urban peripheries in post-socialist Europe**. The American and European suburbs are connected to auto-mobility, to the wide availability of cars [Siegelbaum 2006]. They had no equivalent in socialist countries, which had very different parameters of welfare. On the outskirts of socialist cities, mass construction and Mikrorayons to a standardised format played the leading part. Behind the last residential blocks, the countryside began quite abruptly. The city boundaries established during Soviet times are under pressure, new satellites such as the *naukograd* of Skolkovo are under construction. One of the issues currently with St Petersburg is whether to expand the boundaries so that spatial pressure can be relieved. These boundaries are the reason why the shift from centre to conurbation, the ‘Zwischenstadt’ (Sieverts), which preoccupies western urban historians and geographers, has not occurred as yet. The dacha allotments had limited infrastructure (rudimentary electrical supplies, usually no individual supply of water and heating or mains drainage). The settlements were explicitly intended for summer living only [Lovell 2003]. Yet one should regard them as parts of urban agglomerations, not only, because they compensated urban shortfalls in living space and vegetables, but also, because in the last few years they have become part of a process of gentrification. They are sites for the cottage-building of ‘new Russians’ and the construction of gated communities for the emerging middle classes and the growing expat communities. Another object of gentrification are urban areas with low density, such as the garden city of Sokol in Moscow [Scheide 2003]. With the growing motorisation of post-socialist societies, the ‘Zwischenstadt’ is in the process of being formed.

Historians should accordingly attempt to trace the reasons and effects of catch-up automobilisation. A comparative approach could look out for signs of the emergence of something similar to ‘edge cities’, at least on the outskirts of Russia’s two capital cities. Edge cities are located at major motorway junctions on the periphery of big cities. They consist of a combination of shopping malls and office buildings, laid out for the well trained / skilled housewives from the suburbs who take care of back office work for moderate wages [Lang 2003]. Are the big shopping malls around Moscow the beginning of such developments? [Rudolph, Brade 2003: 1408].

The city of Moscow is pursuing a **global city policy**, trying to establish itself among the world cities by the construction of skyscrapers and office surfaces. The best known example is the International Business

Center ‘Moscow-City’. There are some signs of this process in St Petersburg too. In the meantime, the socio-cultural and economic gap between city and *hinterland* which developed during Soviet times has not diminished, but rather increased since 1991 [Oswald, Voronkov 2004: 318].

As a start to understanding these processes, we need histories including thick descriptions and social topographies of many diverse Soviet and post-Soviet (and other East European) cities and their development seen from different angles. We need a **comparative, de-centered history from the margins**. We need urban histories of Harbin, of Workuta, of the closed cities. During Soviet times, cities were sometimes off limits in more than one respect. We need histories of those closed cities [Schlegel 2009; Vasilenko 2006; Gerchik 1995].

Sovietisation by means of the **displacement of entire populations** and its impact on Soviet cities has not been investigated yet, though the exchange of whole urban populations during and after the war has been frequently mentioned [Bohn 2009; Schlögel 2005].

We need histories of **urban and interurban infrastructures** which carry meanings of the empire such as the metro system and train stations, of gas pipelines, of ports connecting cities to other cities or to the provinces, we need a history of the rivalries between cities. Distances and prices for transport matter a lot in a big country, and people still have nostalgic memories of cheap transport in Soviet times.

We also need to interrogate the **concepts of Russia, Russians and ‘Russianness’** throughout the urban history of the Russian and Soviet empires and post-soviet Eastern Europe.

The cultural turns have focused attention on the **mythical meanings and the ‘characters’ of cities**. Cities are being read as texts, and more and more their surfaces are also seen as images and analysed in a visual context. These texts and images relate to meanings and attributions, the atmospheres of cities. For the public image of a city, this ‘soft’ factor is very important. Every big city has its ‘character’, making it unique. This character consists of various elements, e.g. an unmistakable skyline, and it is, above all, historically founded, flexible and medially constructed and communicated. To proceed to some analysis of how cities’ characters are constructed, historians could take a look at TV-series, commercials, and cinema. What I have on mind are serials such as ‘Miami Vice’, ‘Streets of San Francisco’, ‘Tatort’ [Crime Scene] and other crime stories set in Frankfurt, Düsseldorf, or Berlin. In similar vein, we have the Moscow-based crime serial *Petrovka 38* (a remake of a Soviet film from 1980), and *Banditskii Peterburg*, as well as the movie *Brat* (1997) (see above). Many more visual sources from Soviet times cry

out for analysis: photographs (both professional and more particularly amateur), and television pictures. Soviet propaganda films such as *Novaya Moskva* (Aleksandr Medvedkin, 1938), or popular movies such as *The Irony of Fate* (Eldar Ryazanov, 1975), *Moscow Doesn't Believe in Tears* (Vladimir Menshov, 1979) may tell us more about the imagined way of life in Soviet and post-Soviet cities. ([Urussova 2004]). The post-Soviet mini-series 'Likvidatsya' (2007) was set in the postwar port city of Odessa. It was labeled 'retro-detektiv' [a period detective film] with elements of 'boevik' [thriller], and produced in Ukraine with Russian actors (Vladimir Mashkov, Sergei Makovetskiy, Vladimir Menshov, Mikhail Porechenikov). The episodes play with nostalgic components, popular memories and clichés of Jewish Odessa.

In such productions, the city itself becomes an agency which conveys meanings and also images of history. The frequently used bird's eye views of the cities which in many of these productions make up the lead (such an establishment shot was also used in the glasnost-era hit film *Little Vera*, Vasili Pichul 1988), can be followed back in visual history to the city views of the middle ages (at the University of Zurich, a group of historians around Bernd Roeck investigates 'Images of the Modern City'). Back then, making the city the subject of a picture was by no means a matter of course. Medieval cities used to be rather chaotic and putrid. But when town planning set in, the architects of late Italian middle ages and renaissance created aesthetic images of the 'beautiful city'. The view of the town became a symbol of local pride, and the power and influence of the ambitious towns should become visible in their appearance. This led to an often idealised rendering of the town in the images, which strongly reminds us of the General Plan for the Reconstruction of Moscow from 1935.

These **images and sites of memory** should be explored by urban historians, because they show how urban characters are constructed and traded. What is the city in Soviet and post-Soviet culture? How is it remembered? What importance do the war and the post-war have for the images of Soviet cities? And how do people talk about the Soviet city today, or about socialist Bukhara or Bucuresti? How are those memories generated and structured? Are cities objects of memory at all? Do images of 'old Warsaw' or 'old Moscow' influence the lives of new generations?

And, finally: let us not forget, that urban history is nothing without **the parallel history of the countryside**, the village and the landscapes it is part of [Dobrenko 2003].

References

- Altrichter H. "Living the Revolution". *Stadt und Stadtplanung in Stalins Russland // Utopie und politische Herrschaft im Europa der Zwischenkriegszeit*. Hartwig W. (ed.). München, 2003. Pp. 57–75.

- Andrusz G. D. *Housing and Urban Development in the USSR*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1984.
- _____. 'The Built Environment in Soviet Theory and Practice' // *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. 1997. Vol. 11. No. 4. Pp. 478–99.
- _____. 'A Polemic on Post-Socialist Cities' // *Anthropolis*. 2000. Vol. 14 No. 2. <<http://www.anthropolis.de/andrusz.htm>>, accessed 30 December 2009.
- _____. 'From Wall to Mall'. Unpublished conference paper, 'Winds of Societal Change: Remaking the Post-Communist Cities'. University of Illinois, June 18–19 2004.
- _____. 'Wall and Mall: a Metaphor for Metamorphosis' // *The Urban Mosaic of Post-Socialist Europe: Space, Institutions and Policy*. Tsenkova S., Nedović-Budić Z. (eds.). Heidelberg: Physica-Verlag, 2006. Pp. 71–90.
- Antsiferov N. P. *Dusha Peterburga* (1922). <<http://www.wmos.ru/book/detail.php?ID=4255>>.
- Bater J. H. *The Soviet City. Ideal and Reality*. London: Edward Arnold, 1980.
- Bodenschatz H., Post C. (eds.) *Städtebau im Schatten Stalins. Die internationale Suche nach der sozialistischen Stadt in der Sowjetunion 1929–1935*. Berlin: Verlagshaus Braun, 2003.
- Bohn T. M. 'Das sowjetische System der "geschlossenen Städte". Meldewesen und Wohnungsmangel als Indikatoren sozialer Ungleichheit' // [Lenger, Tenfelde 2006: 273–385].
- _____. *Minsk — Musterstadt des Sozialismus. Stadtplanung und Urbanisierung in der Sowjetunion nach 1945*. Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2008.
- _____. 'Von der "europäischen Stadt" zur "sozialistischen Stadt" und zurück? Zur Einleitung' // *Von der "europäischen Stadt" zur "sozialistischen Stadt" und zurück? Urbane Transformationen im östlichen Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts* / Bohn T. M. (ed.). München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2009. Pp. 1–20.
- Bouvard J. 'Symbolische Architektur in der Stalin-Ära: Die Moskauer Metro' // *Symbole und Rituale des Politischen. Ost- und Westeuropa im Vergleich* / Pribersky A., Unfried B. (eds.). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999. Pp. 119–33.
- Boym S. *Common Places. Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994.
- Brade I., Rudolph R. 'Global City Moskau? Die russische Hauptstadt an der Schwelle zum 21. Jahrhundert' // *Osteuropa*. 2001. Vol. 51. No. 9. Pp. 1067–86.
- Bronger D. *Metropolen, Megastädte, Global Cities: die Metropolisierung der Erde*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2004.
- Brubaker R.; Cooper F. 'Beyond "Identity"' // *Theory and Society*. 2000. Vol. 29. No. 1. Pp. 1–47.
- Bruegmann R. *Sprawl. A Compact History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.

- Brumfield W. C. *A History of Russian Architecture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- _____, Ruble B. A. (eds.) *Russian Housing in the Modern Age. Design and Social History*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Buchli V. 'Khrushchev, Modernism, and the Fight Against Petit-Bourgeois Consciousness in the Soviet Home' // *Journal of Design History*. 1997. Vol. 10. No. 2. Pp. 161–76.
- Buckley C. 'The Myth of Managed Migration: Migration Control and Market in the Soviet Period' // *Slavic Review*. 1995. Vol. 54. Pp. 896–916.
- Castells M. *The Internet Galaxy. Reflections on the Internet, Business, and Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- _____. (ed.) *The Network Society. A Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2004.
- Chibireva N. 'Airbrushed Moscow. The Cathedral of Christ the Saviour' // *The Hieroglyphics of Space. Reading and Experiencing the Modern Metropolis* [Leach 2002: 70–9].
- Cohen J.-L., de Michelis M., Tafuri M. *URSS 1917–1978. La Ville, l'architecture*. Paris: L'Équerre, 1979.
- Colton T. *Moscow. Governing the Socialist Metropolis*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Cooke C. 'Beauty as a Route to the "Radiant Future": Responses of Soviet Architecture' // *Journal of Design History*. 1997. Vol. 10. No. 2. Pp. 137–160.
- Crowley D. 'Moving Warsaw. The Public Life of Private Spaces, 1949–1965' // [Crowley, Reid 2002: 181–206].
- _____, Reid S. E. (eds.) *Socialist Spaces. Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc*. Oxford: Berg, 2002.
- David-Fox M. 'Multiple Modernities vs. Neo-Traditionalism: On Recent Debates in Russian and Soviet History' // *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*. 2006. Vol. 54. No. 4. Pp. 535–555.
- Design, Stalin and the Thaw. Special Issue of Journal of Design History* / Ed. by Reid S. E. 1997. Vol. 10. No. 2.
- Dmitrieva M. 'Christus-Erlöser-Kathedrale versus Palast der Sowjets. Zur Semantik zeitgenössischer Architektur in Moskau' // *Kultur und Krise: Russland 1987–1998* / Cheauré E. (ed.). Berlin: Verlag Arno Spitz, 1997. Pp. 121–136.
- _____. 'Der neue visuelle Raum in Moskau. Entstehung eines postsowjetischen Stils' // *Das Neue Russland in Politik und Kultur* / Eichwede W. (ed.). Forschungsstelle Osteuropa, Universität Bremen. Bremen, 1998. Pp. 156–173.
- _____. 'Dekorationen des Augenblicks im Massentheater der Revolution. Petrograd, Kiew und Witebsk 1918–1920' // *Neue Staaten — neue Bilder? Visuelle Kultur im Dienst staatlicher Selbstdarstellung in Zentral- und Osteuropa seit 1918* / Bartetzky A., Dmitrieva M., Troebst S. (eds.). Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2005. Pp. 117–131.

- Dobrenko E., Naiman E. (eds.). *The Landscape of Stalinism. The Art and Ideology of Soviet Space*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993.
- Driver F., Gilbert D. (eds.). *Imperial Cities. Landscape, Display and Identity*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999.
- Epstein M. 'Russo-Soviet Topoi' // [Dobrenko, Naiman 2003: 279–82].
- Evtuhov C. 'Voices from the Provinces: Living and Writing in Nizhnii Novgorod, 1870–1905' // *Journal of Popular Culture*. 1998. Vol. 31. No. 4. Pp. 33–48.
- Feldbauer P., Husa K., Pilz E., Stacher I. (eds.) *Mega-Cities. Die Metropolen des Südens zwischen Globalisierung und Fragmentierung*. Frankfurt-am-Main: Brandes und Apsel, 1997.
- French R. A., Hamilton F. E. I. (eds.) *The Socialist City. Spatial Structure and Urban Policy*. Chichester: Edward Arnold, 1979.
- French R. A. *Plans, Pragmatism and People. The Legacy of Soviet Planning for Today's Cities*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press (Pitt Series in Russian and East European Studies), 1995.
- Gdaniec C. *Kommunalka und Penthouse. Stadt und Stadtgesellschaft im postsowjetischen Moskau*. Münster: Lit, 2005.
- Gentes A. 'The Life, Death and Resurrection of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, Moscow' // *History Workshop Journal*. 1998. Vol. 46. Pp. 63–95.
- Gerasimova E. 'The Soviet Communal Apartment' // *Beyond the Limits. The Concept of Space in Russian History and Culture* / Smith J. (ed). Helsinki: Kikimora, 1999. Pp. 107–31.
- _____. *Sovetskaya kommunalnaya kvartira kak sotsialnyi institut* [The Soviet Communal Apartment as a Social Institution: a Socio-Historical Analysis]. Candidate's dissertation. SPb., 2000. <<http://dissertation1.narod.ru/avtoreferats2/av31.htm>>.
- _____. 'Public Spaces in the Communal Apartment' // *Zwischen partei-staatlicher Selbstinszenierung und kirchlichen Gegenwelten: Sphären von Öffentlichkeit in Gesellschaften sowjetischen Typs / Between the Great Show of the Party-State and Religious Counter-Cultures: Public Spheres in Soviet-Type Societies*. Rittersporn G. A. et al. (eds.). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2003. Pp. 185–93.
- Gerchik K. B. *Legendarnyi Bainokur*. M., 1995.
- Greenhalgh P. *Ephemeral Vistas. The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851–1939*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998.
- Hausmann G. 'Fortschritt oder Kolonialismus? Stadtordnung und Städte an der nicht-russischen Peripherie' // Hausmann G. (ed.) *Gesellschaft als lokale Veranstaltung. Selbstverwaltung, Assoziierung und Geselligkeit in den Städten des ausgehenden Zarenreichs*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2002.
- Hagen M. von 'Empires, Borderlands, and Diasporas: Eurasia as Anti-Paradigm for the Post-Soviet Era' // *The American Historical Review*. 2004. Vol. 109. No. 2. Pp. 445–468.

- Hamm M. F. *The City in Russian History*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1976.
- Harris S. E. 'Moving to the Separate Apartment. Building, Distribution, Furnishing, and Living in Urban Housing in Soviet Russia, 1950s — 1960s'. Unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Univ. of Chicago, 2003.
- Hashamova Y. 'Aleksi Balabanov's Russian Hero: Fantasies of Wounded National Pride. *Slavonic and East European Journal*. 2005. Vol. 51. No. 2. Pp. 295–311.
- Haumann H. 'Die russische Stadt in der Geschichte' // *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*. 1979. Vol. 27. Pp. 481–497.
- Häussermann H. 'Es muss nicht immer Metropole sein' // [Matejovski 2000: 67–79].
- _____. 'Topografien der Macht: Der öffentliche Raum im Wandel der Gesellschaftssysteme im Zentrum Berlins' // [Wendland, Hofmann 2002: 81–96].
- Hedin A. 'Stalinism as a Civilization. New Perspectives on Communist Regimes' // *Political Studies Review*. 2004. Vol. 2. No. 2. Pp. 166–184.
- Herlihy P., Gubar O. 'The Persuasive Power of the Odessa Myth' // *Cities after the Fall of Communism: Reshaping Cultural Landscapes and European Identity* / Czaplicka J., Gelazis N., Ruble B. A. (eds.), Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2008.
- Hoffmann D. L. *Peasant Metropolis. Social Identities in Moscow, 1929–1941*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994.
- Hoisington S. S. "'Ever Higher": The Evolution of the Project for the Palace of Soviets' // *Slavic Review*. 2003. Vol. 62. No. 1. Pp. 41–68. <http://www.shrinkingcities.com/fileadmin/shrink/downloads/pdfs/I.2_Studies2.pdf> (October 2005).
- Humphrey C. 'Odessa: Pogroms in a Cosmopolitan City' // *Post-Cosmopolitan Cities: Explorations of Urban Co-Existence* / Humphrey C., Skvirskaya V. (eds.). (Oxford: Berghahn, 2012). Forthcoming.
- Jenks A. 'A Metro on the Mount. The Underground as a Church of Soviet Civilization' // *Technology and Culture*. 2000. Vol. 41. No. 4. Pp. 697–724.
- Kettering K. "'Ever More Cosy and Comfortable": Stalinism and the Soviet Domestic Interior, 1928–1938' // *Journal of Design History*. 1997. Vol. 10. No. 2. Pp. 119–135.
- Khan-Magomedov S. O. *Pioneers of Soviet Architecture: the Search for New Solutions in the 1920s and 1930s* / Lieven A. (trans.), Cooke C. (ed.). London: Thames and Hudson, 1987.
- Kopp A. *Town and Revolution: Soviet Architecture and City Planning 1917–1935* / Burton T. E. (trans.). New York: G. Brazillier, 1970.
- _____. *Changer la vie, changer la ville: de la vie nouvelle aux problèmes urbains, U.R.S.S. 1917–1932*. Paris: Union générale d'éditions, 1975.
- _____. *L'architecture de la période stalinienne*. Grenoble: Presses universitaires de Grenoble, 1985.
- Korshunov M., Terekhova V. *Tainy i legendy Doma na Naberezhnoi*. M.: Slovo/Slovo, 2002.

- Kotkin S. *Magnetic Mountain. Stalinism as a Civilization*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995.
- Kotsonis Ya. 'Introduction: A Modern Paradox. Subject and Citizen in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Russia' // *Russian Modernity* / Hoffmann D. L., Kotsonis Ya. (eds.). New York: St Martin's Press, 2000.
- Kozyrev S. 'The House on the Embankment' // *Russian Studies in History*. 2000. Vol. 38. No. 4. Pp. 21–7.
- Kreis B. *Moskau 1917–35; vom Wohnungsbau zum Städtebau*. Düsseldorf (Diss. Hochschule für bildende Künste Hamburg), 1984.
- Kucher K. *Der Gorki-Park: Freizeitkultur im Stalinismus 1928–1941*. Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2007.
- Lang R. E. *Edgeless Cities. Exploring the Elusive Metropolis*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003.
- Larsen S. 'National Identity, Cultural Authority, and the Post-Soviet Blockbuster: Nikita Mikhalkov and Aleksei Balabanov' // *Slavic Review*. 2003. Vol. 62. No. 3. Pp. 491–511.
- Leach N. (ed.) *The Hieroglyphics of Space. Reading and Experiencing the Modern Metropolis*. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Lenger F. 2009. 'Stand und Perspektiven der europäischen Urbanisierungsforschung zu 20. Jahrhundert' // [Bohn 2009: 21–33].
- Lenger F., Tenfelde K. (eds.) *Die Europäische Stadt im 20. Jahrhundert. Wahrnehmung — Endwicklung — Erosion*. Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2006.
- Lindner R. 'Das Verschwinden der konkreten Orte' // [Matejovski 2000: 321–323].
- Lovell S. *Summerfolk. A History of the Dacha, 1710–2000*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003.
- Martiny A. *Bauen und Wohnen in der Sowjetunion nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg. Bauarbeiterschaft, Architektur und Wohnverhältnisse im sozialen Wandel*. Berlin: Berlin Verlag, 1983.
- Matejovski D. (ed.) *Metropolen: Laboratorien der Moderne*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2000.
- Neutatz D. "'Schmiede des neuen Menschen" und Kostprobe des Sozialismus: Utopien des Moskauer Metrobaus' // *Utopie und politische Herrschaft im Europa der Zwischenkriegszeit* / Hartwig W. (ed). München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2003. Pp. 41–56.
- Obertreis J. *Tränen des Sozialismus: Wohnen in Leningrad zwischen Alltag und Utopie 1917–1937*. Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2004.
- _____. 'Die Leningrader Kultiviertheit (Kul'turnost') im 20. Jahrhundert' // [Bohn 2009: 311–332].
- Oswald I., Voronkov V. 'Die "Transformation" von St. Petersburg — Anmerkungen zur postsowjetischen Stadtentwicklung' // [Siebel 2004: 312–320].
- Pott P. *Moskauer Kommunalwohnungen 1917 bis 1997: materielle Kultur, Erfahrung, Erinnerung*. Zürich: Pano Verlag, 2009.
- Quilici V. *Città russa e città sovietica: caratteri della struttura storica: ideologia e pratica della trasformazione socialista*. Milano: G. Mazzotta, 1976.

- _____ (ed.). *Mosca, capitale dell'utopia*. Milano: Arnoldo Mondadori Arte, 1991.
- Reid S. E. 'Cold War in the Kitchen. Gender and the De-Stalinization of Consumer Taste in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev' // *Slavic Review*. 2002. Vol. 61. No. 2. Pp. 211–52.
- _____. 'The Khrushchev Kitchen. Domesticating the Scientific-Technological Revolution' // *Journal of Contemporary History*. Vol. 40. No. 4. Pp. 289–316.
- Rittersporn G. T., Rolf M., Behrends J. C. 2003. (eds.) *Sphären von Öffentlichkeit in Gesellschaften sowjetischen Typs / Between the Great Show of the Party-State and Religious Counter-Cultures: Public Spheres in Soviet-Type Societies*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2003.
- Rolf M. *Das sowjetische Massenfest*. Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2006.
- Ruble B. A. *Money Sings: The Changing Politics of Urban Space in post-Soviet Yaroslavl*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Rudolph R., Brade I. 'Die Moskauer Peripherie. Transformation und globale Integration' // *Osteuropa*. 2003. Vol. 53. No. 9–10. Pp. 1400–1415.
- _____. 'Moscow: Processes of Restructuring in the Post-Soviet Metropolitan Periphery' // *Cities*. 2005. Vol. 22. No. 2. Pp. 135–50.
- Rüthers M. 'Auf dem Weg nach Leningrad: Der Moskowskij Prospekt' // *St. Petersburg. Eine historische Topographie* / Ackeret M., Schenk F. B., Schlögel K. (eds.). Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2007. Pp. 159–72.
- _____, Scheide C. (eds.) *Moskau. Menschen, Mythen, Orte*. Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2003.
- Rydell R. W., Gwinn N. (eds.) *Fair Representations. World's Fairs and the Modern World*. Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1994.
- Ryklin M. *Prostranstvo likovaniya: totalitarizm i razlichie*. M.: Logos, 2002.
- Saldern A. von (ed.) *Stadt und Kommunikation in bundesrepublikanischen Umbruchzeiten*. Stuttgart: Steiner, 2006.
- Sassen S. 2000a. *Cities in a World Economy*. Thousand Oaks, California: Pine Forge Press, 2000.
- Sassen S. 2000b. 'Über die Auswirkungen der neuen Technologien und der Globalisierung auf die Städte' // [Matejovski 2000: 29–50].
- _____. 'Die Verflechtungen unter der Oberfläche der fragmentierten Stadt' // [Siebel 2004: 373–384].
- Scheide C. 'Die Gartenstadt Sokol. Eine antiurbanistische Enklave in der Metropole' // [Rüthers, Scheide 2003: 142–7].
- Schlegel S. 'Alltag im "Objekt" Geheimhaltung, Druck und Privilegien in den "verbotenen" Städten des sowjetischen Nuklearkomplexes' // [Bohn 2009: 377–395].
- Schlögel K. *Das Wunder von Nishnij oder Die Rückkehr der Städte, Berichte und Essays*. Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn, 1991.
- _____. 'Kommunalka — oder Kommunismus als Lebensform. Zu einer historischen Topographie der Sowjetunion' // *Historische Anthropologie*. 1998. Vol. 6. No. 3. Pp. 329–46.

- _____. *Moskau lesen. Die Stadt als Buch*. [1984]. Berlin 2000.
- _____. 'Urbizid: Europäische Städte im Krieg' // Schlögel K. *Marjampole oder Europas Wiederkehr aus dem Geist der Städte*. München: Hanser Verlag, 2005. Pp. 171–82.
- _____. *Terror und Traum : Moskau 1937*. München: Hanser Verlag, 2007.
- Schlör J. *Nachts in der großen Stadt. Paris, Berlin, London 1840–1930*. München: Artemis und Winkler, 1991.
- Schroer M. *Räume, Orte, Grenzen. Auf dem Weg zu einer Soziologie des Raums*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006.
- Schwentker W. (ed.) *Megastädte im 20. Jahrhundert*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2005.
- Shevryev A. 'The Axis Petersburg-Moscow. Outward and Inward Russian Capitals' // *Journal of Urban History*. 2003. Vol. 30. No. 1. Pp. 70–84.
- Shrinking Cities: Complete Works 1, Analyse/Analysis. Edited by: Philipp Oswalt for the Kulturstiftung des Bundes. With the assistance of: Andrea Andersen and Kristina Herresthal. Graphic design: Tanja Wesse and Hansjakob Fehr. Published by: Arch+ Verlag GmbH, <www.archplus.net>; <http://www.shrinkingcities.com/fileadmin/shrink/downloads/pdfs/I.1_Studies1.pdf> (February 2004).
- Siebel W. (ed.) *Die europäische Stadt*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2004.
- Siegelbaum L. 'Cars, Cars and More Cars: The Faustian Bargain of the Brezhnev Era' // *Borders of Socialism. Private Spheres of Soviet Russia* / Lewis H. Siegelbaum (ed.). New York: St Martin's Press, 2006.
- Sieverts T. *Zwischenstadt. Zwischen Ort und Welt, Raum und Zeit, Stadt und Land*. Braunschweig: Gütersloh, 1999.
- _____. *Cities without Cities. An Interpretation of the Zwischenstadt*. London: Spon, 2003.
- Slezkine Yu. 'The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism' // *Slavic Review*. 1994. Vol. 53. No. 2. Pp. 414–52.
- Stadelbauer J. 'Die Entwicklung von Moskau zur Weltmetropole' // *Mitteilungen der Österreichischen Geographischen Gesellschaft*. 1989. Vol. 131. Pp. 189–228.
- Stites R. 'Crowded on the Edge of Vastness: Observations on Russian Space and Place' // *Beyond the Limits: The Concept of Space in Russian History and Culture* / Smith J. (ed.). Helsinki: Kikimora, 1999. Pp. 259–69.
- Tolstoy V., Bibikova I, Cooke C. (eds.) *Street Art of the Revolution: Festivals and Celebrations in Russia 1918–33* / Trans. Longman F., O'Dell F., Vnukov V. London: Thames and Hudson, 1984.
- Urussowa J. *Das Neue Moskau. Die Stadt der Sowjets im Film 1917–1941*. Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2004.
- Utekhin I. *Ocherki kommunalnogo byta*. M.: OGI, 2004.
- Vasilenko S. 'Die Stadt hinter Stacheldraht. Kapustin Jar/Russland' // *Last & Lost. Ein Atlas des verschwindenden Europas* / Raabe K., Sznajderman M. (eds.). Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2006. Pp. 196–220.

- Vendina O. I. 'Moskau und Petersburg. Städtemythen als Spiegelung ihrer Rivalität' // *Osteuropa*. 2000. Vol. 50. No. 12. Pp. 1299–1315.
- Walkowitz J. R. *City of Dreadful Delight. Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late Victorian London*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Wehner M. 'Hauptstadt des Geistes, Hauptstadt der Macht. Leningrad/St. Petersburg und Moskau: Die Konfrontation im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert' // *St. Petersburg — Leningrad — St. Petersburg. Eine Stadt im Spiegel der Zeit* / Creuzberger S. et al. (eds.). Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2000. Pp. 19–36, 220–234.
- Wendland A. V., Hofmann A. R. (eds.). *Stadt und Öffentlichkeit in Ostmitteleuropa 1900–1939. Beiträge zur Entstehung moderner Urbanität zwischen Berlin, Charkiv, Tallinn und Triest*. Stuttgart, 2002.
- Zimmermann C. *Die Zeit der Metropolen. Urbanisierung und Grossstadtentwicklung*. 2nd ed. Frankfurt am Main, 2002.

ALEXANDER SADOVOI

On the Problem of the Development of Urban Anthropology in the Constituent Territories of the Russian Federation

1

The question needs to be made more concrete. On the one hand, 'the town' has always been the object of *interdisciplinary* research. The definition of a 'subject field' according to academic discipline is always provisional. To a great extent it is not so much defined by the specific features of the problems being studied as by the dominant conservatism of the academic (social) institutions in determining 'their' place in the stream of funding allotted to the development of 'fundamental' science. One may speak in more or less concrete terms of the territorial and chronological limits that form a framework for the subject area of the research.

Historians are careful to leave the social processes of the last decade to one side. Sociologists and economists avoid any retrospective analysis that covers several centuries. As their territorial framework gets wider, specialists in the field of ethnic sociology shun the problems of preserving their traditional domestic ethnic speciality, which would require the use of comparative analysis based on mass sources and a substantial expansion of the chronological framework of

their research. Ethnographers studying ethno-cultural processes according to the prescribed taxa ignore the external influences (determinants) resulting from globalisation. We refer to the dynamically changing forms of mass culture that are effacing socio-cultural and ethnic distinctions.

The methods applied and sources of information used do not define the borders between disciplines either. When foreign 'urban anthropologists' study social processes they use such a wide range of methods that it is practically impossible to perceive in them any of the 'narrowly specialised' methods corresponding to the dissertation synopses of our own historians, ethnologists and sociologists. Their research methods, if they are discussed at all, are largely defined by the tasks they set themselves and not by their field of knowledge.

On the other hand, the social processes taking place in 'the town' determine the formulation of the standards in force in academic disciplines. The internal interrelation between teaching and research in the universities is also a manifestation of 'the state of urban studies'. In over twenty years spent teaching students of history, ethnography and sociology, I have more than once had to undertake a synthesis of the presuppositions and working hypotheses, sometimes mutually contradictory, of the various fields of knowledge which Anglo-American historiography unites as 'urban anthropology'. Common standards and a common subject field are also evident in the series of sections or themes that are taught as 'ethnology', 'social anthropology' and 'ethnic sociology'.

If we confine ourselves to the Western Siberian region and contemporary ethno-social processes, the current 'state' of the transmission of knowledge in the fundamentals of this discipline (teaching, research training) is perfectly acceptable in the majority of large universities. The number of hours allotted to sociology is sufficient to reflect the achievements of historiography at home and abroad through an acquaintance with the approaches of the 'Chicago School', the results of the work done by Muscovite specialists in the field of ethnic sociology and the pilot studies of Siberian specialists. The internet resources for ongoing social processes in big cities are used as a source for essays and coursework in ethnic sociology. When there is 'public demand' for research into ethno-social processes in the towns of Siberia within the overall framework of urban anthropology, it is perfectly realistic to reorientate the subjects of the 'industrial' and 'final' placements provided for by the syllabus. In such a case the number of researchers may be substantially increased, which will make it possible to begin compiling a unified computerised database.

As for the possibilities of specialisation within this subject area at Siberian universities, they are limited. On the one hand, the problems

of the history of the formation of Siberian towns from their foundation to the 1980s, their social composition and their system of social connexions are elaborated in some detail in the regional historiography, the best quality being achieved in the cases of specialists in Tomsk, Novosibirsk, Barnaul and Omsk. Their analysis of the historians of Kemerovo, Novokuznetsk, Gorno-Altai, Biisk and other towns is at the level of *Landeskunde*. This has formed the basis for specialised lecture courses delivered at the universities, and for undergraduate and graduate dissertation.

At the same time it must be pointed out that the vast majority of the analyses in this field are based on 'Marxist-Leninist methodology' and are very far removed from the approaches practised in population geography and sociology, which are based on a statistical analysis of mass sources and on GIS technologies. All this begs the question of how representative the conclusions drawn by historians are and how comparable with the observed changes over time of the urban infrastructure.

It should also be noted that the ethnic structure and ethnic processes in the Siberian urban milieu have as a rule never been the subject of separate attention either for historians or ethnographers. What is more, the current social processes of the last three decades, conditioned by the reforms, constitute an 'information gap' all over Western Siberia. The processes of interaction between ethnic groups in Siberian towns have as a rule not been studied during the 'ethnographic practicals' that have been conducted.

The overall state of Siberian historiography allows us to believe that, given the need and the will on the part of heads of departments of Russian history, the number of analyses based on the history of Siberian towns will at least remain no less than it is at present. As for research into contemporary ethnic processes in the urban milieu (including ethnodemographic and ethnoauthoritarian research), the situation cannot be described as other than critical. We are unaware of any permanent group of ethnographers in any Western Siberian university that has a realistic possibility (in terms of personnel, funding or equipment) of organising ethnic monitoring in the towns of Siberia. The lack of specialised departments, the limited number of teaching hours devoted to the basics of ethnography, and the traditional perception of ethnography as a discipline concerned exclusively with research into 'cultural relics' and the ethno-cultural processes of the rural milieu have all resulted in a situation where there are practically no monographs on the problems of modern 'urban anthropology' in Western Siberia. Neither have there been any conferences or round tables on the subject that might have coordinated the work being done in the various Siberian centres, nor have there been any mid- or long-term comprehensive projects to

co-ordinate the research of the few groups of ethnographers working in this field.

If we consider 'urban anthropology' as a 'direction' within the research being carried out within the system of the Academy of Sciences, the situation here is no less critical. Research into inter-ethnic relations is not one of the priority areas that are guaranteed financial support from the state. This is quite strange, considering that one of the main reasons for the break-up of the USSR was the federal power structures' incompetence and inability to devise a scientifically-based nationalities policy adapted to the regions. The question of how far the 'neglect' of a set of problems which are quite important to the world community is connected with the local ethnic elites' and power structures' interest in objective information remains open.

At present both sides receive guaranteed state funding based on the unvoiced and stereotypical presumption that the situation in this area is still a long way from complete health and resolution. The principle of 'the worse the better' applies, insofar as it guarantees regular funding of the 'subsidised' regions and, on this basis, a solution to some of their social problems. Both sides are characterised by a sceptical attitude not only to the existing academic analyses, but to the very possibility of an academic analysis intended to find ways to neutralise situations of conflict in ethnic regions without recourse to force or bribing the ethnic élites. It is by no means accidental that the ethno-social research conducted within the walls of the Siberian Section of the Academy of Sciences (in Omsk, Novosibirsk, Kemerovo and Gorno-Altaysk) is mostly done in the countryside (or amongst diasporas) and receives short-term funding from grant-awarding bodies at home and abroad. The regional authorities' contribution is minimal.

The result is that if urban populations and the problems of inter-ethnic interaction are among the objects of research, this research as a rule takes the form of a pilot study. Typically, they are representative only at a low level. The resulting publications appear in small print-runs and are hard to get hold of even for local specialists. As a result of all this, this research has no serious effect on the organs of power or on the training of specialists in ethnography and ethnic sociology in the universities of Western Siberia at present.

If we trace the linkage between the relevance of current research into the urban milieu and the extent to which it has been studied, the situation in Siberia is also full of paradoxes. On the one hand, the processes of migration are, as a constant tendency, determining a qualitative change in the ethno-social environment. Pilot studies into the ethno-demographic structure of the population have shown that the region has not yet emerged from a state of demographic crisis

and the process of emergence will be quite painful, as it will be determined not so much by population renewal as by migration, with all the social processes that accompany it, including outbreaks of xenophobia and nationalism. Economic migrants from countries of the former Soviet Union are already encountering a range of social problems in Siberia that result from corruption in the institutions of authority and from the limited opportunities for them to adapt and integrate themselves into the urban market system. At the same time ‘forced’ emigrants from among the Russians from the ‘national periphery’ of the former USSR, who have lost their property, as well as participants in the ‘peaceful regulation’ of ‘flashpoints’ (and the members of their families), are persistent carriers of ‘Russian nationalism’. Manifestations of both skinhead and russophobe ideas have already been observed amongst young people in Siberia. On the whole, it is not surprising nowadays that there are constant trivial manifestations of nationalistic attitudes that feed off each other on the part of representatives both of the ‘nominal’ majority and of the ‘ethnic minorities’. It is hard to tell to what extent this phenomenon results from changes in the ethno-confessional situation, since the connexion between them has not been studied at all.

On the other hand, it cannot be said that the recorded changes in the ethno-social situation have received any attention from the regional authorities. There has never been any demand on their part for ethno-social monitoring in the urban milieu. Nor is there any clearly stated intent to train specialists in applied and ‘urban’ anthropology or to improve the competence of the representatives of the local authorities, as the most numerous section of officialdom. World-wide experience suggests that there will be no substantial change in the situation until the towns of Siberia begin to experience the ‘Kondupohju Effect’¹, which demonstrates quite clearly the high cost of measures aimed at neutralising the consequences of the neglect of latent processes in the sphere of interactions between ethnic and other groups.

2

We do not believe that there is any point in stressing the relevance of particular problems when there is no overall concept of the changes that are taking place to the socio-economic and ethnic infrastructure of towns everywhere in the Russian Federation as a result of the reforms of the last twenty years. We must open a research front of staged investigation of towns with a population of more than 500,000, to be carried out by temporary research groups including specialists from different backgrounds organising ethno-social monitoring.

¹ Named after a small town in Karelia which experienced ethnic violence involving immigrants from other parts of the Russian Federation in 2006. [Trans.]

It would seem that urban anthropology should be developed by means of two approaches at once. The first stems from the need to preserve the heritage of the work on ethnic sociology done by specialists from Moscow and St Petersburg, and to form local schools, funded by the federal centre, on the basis of this work. The body of data accumulated is of interest not only for the opportunities it affords for secondary analysis, but also in that it can be renewed through sociological studies on the territories of the Russian Federation using surveys (corrected where need be) already tried and tested in the 1970s and 1980s. This could form the basis for tracing the tendencies towards the social stratification of the urban population, changes in its ethnic structure and the adaptive mechanisms of various social groups.

It should however be noted that we must avoid the research centres' tendencies to create 'artificial monopolies' of research lower down the hierarchy. This work can and should be done by local groups in co-operation with specialists from the centre, and not the other way round. Otherwise we shall be faced with the situation which characterises the use of census material in the provinces. What we mean is that at present there is no access to primary census material and only 'closed access' to materials held by registry offices and state archives, so that, while the cost of selective research is rising, the possibilities for quantitative expansion of the techniques available to research groups is sharply restricted.

Another problem is that the practical application of the results obtained by research institutes is only possible when they are engaged in permanent rather than sporadic action with the authorities at the municipal (not provincial) level, as long experience of conducting ethnographical case studies shows. Otherwise the results of the research are not called upon, and in the majority of cases not even read. With the first approach the problems to be studied will not only be defined, but also provide a basis for the closer co-ordination of research devolved from the centre to the constituent territories of the Russian Federation.

The second approach is more labour-intensive, but it seems to us that if it can be successfully undertaken, it offers greater possibilities for the incorporation of academic analysis into the everyday political practice of the local authorities. We have in mind the creation of systematised thematic atlases of towns (which should be kept up to date by means of GIS technology), which would reflect dynamically the ethnodemographic and social structure of the town, the traditional occupations of various groups of the population, their degree of political activity, level of criminality, etc. The structure of the complex would be determined by social needs: the local authorities' acknowledged priorities in social policy and the most

acute social problems, which groups of scholars would be involved in resolving. Although this task is exceptionally labour-intensive in its content, it is in principle achievable by making use of existing university resources and utilising tens of thousands of humanities students for the collection and initial aggregation of information without interrupting their studies.

Experience of this has already been acquired in Siberia (Omsk, Novosibirsk, Kemerovo, Barnaul) where students' archaeological practicals have been organised on the basis of contractual projects. The main problem is finding sources of funding for integrated projects within the system of the Academy of Sciences directed towards the formation of a single programme for the regions and the development, co-ordination and confirmation of research methods and topics intended for specialists from different backgrounds, and of a unified database and access régimes, and towards the co-ordination of the research programmes with the local authorities. Determining the sources and mechanisms for funding the research groups which will be engaged in this work on a permanent basis is no less complicated.

If both approaches can be put into practice, this will solve one of the most acute problems facing universities: the widespread degradation of the 'scholarly significance' of undergraduate coursework and dissertations based on the compilation of material from the Internet. The role of the academic administration of universities, whose basic function is to organise the academic process that seeks to resolve the substantial social problems faced by society, will increase.

MIKHAIL STROGANOV

1

The very concept of the town has yet to be defined. This is both a good thing and a bad thing, since the definitive elucidation of any category is a sign of its death, objectification and disappearance from living culture. When we use the Russian word *gorod*, we do not have in mind the capital or some other great city of that sort, but a small and/or provincial town, what in English would be called a *town* rather than a *city*. Imagine the amusement that would be generated if the badges issued to delegates at an international conference indicated that the *gorod* in which their institution was situated was Moscow, Tokyo, or New York. But if the *gorod* thus designated were Tver, that would not raise a smile from anyone; on the contrary, it is necessary, because no one is obliged to know

that there is such a town. We would be similarly amused was if we were to read that one of the founding institutions of *Anthropological Forum* is not the European University in St Petersburg but ‘the European University in the town of St Petersburg’.

Obviously, the use of the word ‘town’ to denote a small and/or provincial town does not stop us from regarding the rituals and folklore of Moscow and St Petersburg as urban rituals and urban folklore. But the very concept of the town is firmly associated with the provinces or with the local text (because, since we have, unfortunately, described scarcely any regional local texts, we only associate the concept of the local text with the text of the town).

Thus the vagueness of the very concept of the town is both the first result and the first problem in the description of the anthropology of a town, and this is reflected in much of the research that has been done. I shall name only a handful of candidate of sciences dissertations¹ and can only lament that not one of them (in accordance with our traditions) has been published as a book. Not that I imagine that every reader would be pleased with such a book, but the very fact of their publication would have significantly advanced our understanding of the town. So: E. V. Milyukova, *Kulturnoe samoopredelenie provintsii v samodeyatelnoi literature Yuzhnogo Urala sovetskogo perioda* [The Cultural Self-Determination of the Provinces in Amateur Literature from the Southern Urals in the Soviet Period]. M., 2006; Yu. V. Klochkova, *Obraz Ekaterinburga/Sverdlovsk v russkoi literature (XVIII — seredina XX vv.)* [The Image of Ekaterinburg/Sverdlovsk in Russian Literature, 1700–1950]. Ekaterinburg, 2006; S. A. Zhadovskaya, *Literatura severorusskogo provintsialnogo goroda: tekst, forma, traditsiya* [The Literature of the North Russian Provincial Town: Text, Form, Tradition]. SPb., 2009; T. A. Yudina, *Kontsept “Orenburg” v proizvedeniyakh russkikh pisateley XIX–XX vv.* [The Concept of ‘Orenburg’ in the Works of Russian Writers of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries]. Samara, 2009. Not having been published as books, these works remain invisible to each other, nor does anyone else seek to introduce them. They thus remain ignorant of the fact that they exist in the same culture, suffering from their loneliness and making us suffer from the imperfections of our notions of the town.

Still less have we been able to draw any general conclusions from the accumulated material of various ethnic cultures even within the boundaries of Russia (as they were at various historical periods). For example, there is a Russian saying that ‘the town of *N.* is a corner of Moscow.’ It is a commonplace expression found in works of literature and recorded in dictionaries. The towns calling themselves

¹ The approximate equivalent of the Ph.D or D.Phil. [Editor].

‘corners of Moscow’ are Tula, Yaroslavl, Tver, Elets, Shenkursk, Pogorelets, Kashin, Kharkov, Kolomna and Penza. St Petersburg is a less frequent patron city, and Pinega, Tver and Chita recognise themselves as corners of it. The Jewish population of the small towns (shtetls) of the southern Ukraine, Tulichin, Balta and Mogilyov-Podolsky, have a traditions of calling their home town ‘a second Odessa’ or ‘a little Odessa’ [*Shtetl* 2008: 207–209, 265].

It is well-known, however, that in literary texts provincial towns are often given conventional designations such as ‘the town of *N.*’ or ‘Chukhloma’,¹ or designated by some sort of ‘pronoun’ [Belousov 2004]. These all refer to some sort of general image of the provinces. But it turns out that this is not a specifically Russian phenomenon, but an international one, which means that it must be re-evaluated. For the accumulation of facts to provide a wide and three-dimensional view of the object of study, they must be systematised, and then systematised again.

Starting from the current opposition in our culture between the (small, provincial) town and the (capital or very large) city, we must certainly pay some attention to the history of the formation of a social hierarchy of towns, for which there have been many external reasons. For example, Toropets was famous among the towns of Old Russia as the place where Grand Prince Aleksandr Yaroslavich (Nevsky) was married in 1238. The choice of Toropets for such an event was no accident: in those days it was on the western edge of the Russian territories, and the high road to the West passed through it. Aleksandr’s bride Praskovya was the daughter of Prince Bryachislav of Polotsk, and for this reason he awaited her in Toropets, on the Lithuanian border. In the thirteenth century, and in the first half of the fourteenth century, the town was repeatedly attacked by the Lithuanians, and in the middle of the fourteenth century it became part of the Grand Principality of Lithuania. It was only at the beginning of the sixteenth century that Russian troops reconquered it. During the Time of Troubles military activity again took place around Toropets: the town changed hands several times, battles were fought nearby, and it was besieged. But once the Russian border had expanded towards the West, Toropets was safe: there were no more invasions or plunder. It was only fires that became milestones in its history (1634, 1683, 1758, 1792 and 1808). In the eighteenth century Toropets became part of Pskov Province, though Pskov itself was more than 200 verstes away. But since 1957 Toropets has been part of Kalinin (Tver) Province, and now the provincial capital is even further away — about 350 km. This distance from the administrative centres has developed a spirit of independence and self-sufficiency

¹ The name of a real town in Kostroma Province, with something over 5,000 inhabitants. [Trans.]

in Toropets, a sort of ‘national pride’ which the residents of many a metropolis might envy. Toropets was a merchant town, and in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries its inhabitants traded with many European cities, and even with Kyakhta in Asia. But as the frontier receded, so did the trade routes, and commercial activity died down. At the very beginning of the nineteenth century there were 431 merchant households in the town, but by 1836 there were only 76.

Another example is Torzhok, now a district capital, and long a rival of Tver. Tver was from the beginning a princely seat, and Torzhok only a dependency. But Tver was a young city, and Torzhok was a dependency of Novgorod itself. This rivalry faltered as Russia became more centralised, and Tver and Torzhok found themselves on an even footing in the face of their common enemy, the cruel and autocratic capital city of Moscow. Under the first Romanovs the administrative division of Russia was so confused that there was no possibility of sorting out a hierarchy of towns. For example, foreign visitors to Russia in the seventeenth century systematically equate Tver and Torzhok: ‘Tver is a little bigger than Torzhok’ (Olearius, 1630s); ‘Tver is not much bigger than Torzhok’ (Struys, 1668 and 1675); ‘Tver, a similar town [to Torzhok]’ (Witsen, 1665). It is not surprising, therefore, that the town dues paid by Tver and Torzhok to the state treasury were the same, and, as Giles Fletcher reported to Queen Elizabeth, the towns ‘pay yeerely for *Tagla & Podat* [...] *Torshocke & Otfer* 8000. rubbels.’ This means that there was practically no difference between them.

There was no real change in the situation until the time of Catherine the Great. And although she began to introduce a more regular management first of her viceroalties and then of her provinces, there continued to be an absurd confusion in popular perceptions which the modern mind finds hard to grasp. For example, in Yakov Knyazhnin’s comedy *The Boaster* (1786), Verkholyot, a gentleman of no means whatsoever, desires to marry the daughter of Chvankina, a gentlewoman, and so boasts to her of his imagined wealth, assisted by his servant Polist.¹

Verkholyot: The main village is like a little town... Such as, for example...

Polist (to Chvankina): Do you know Torzhok?

Chvankina: I’ve passed through it many times.

Polist: And Tver, ma’am?

Chvankina: I’ve been there too.

¹ The translation makes no attempt to reproduce the rhymed couplets of the original.

Polist: Imagine Torzhok and Tver combined: that's the Count's village, do you see now?

Believing this, Chvankina joyfully declares her future son-in-law's wealth to her neighbours: 'The Count's village is Torzhok and Tver and a bit more.' When the deception is revealed, she exclaims sorrowfully: 'What's happened to the estate? The village the size of Torzhok and Tver?' Torzhok is always named first, and Tver follows. In fact, though, at that time Tver was a provincial capital, and Torzhok only the chief town of a district.

One can find various reasons, sometimes quite convincing, for this confusion. One might, for example, seek them in the transport system. People travelling from Moscow to Petersburg would spend the first night of their journey in Torzhok, or, if making the reverse journey, the second. In neither case would they pass through Tver. Unless they deliberately set out to see the sights of Tver, they might not even notice its existence, but they could not help seeing Torzhok, whether they wanted to or not.

The places of Tver and Torzhok in the present hierarchy of towns are not for the most part the result of a natural organic process, but of administrative decisions forced on them by the centre. Only in one case did the citizens of Torzhok (*Novotory*, as they call themselves) take the initiative, and then they got it wrong. The Nikolaevsky Railway¹ was planned to pass through Torzhok, but the merchants, confident in the practice of transporting goods by water that they had inherited from their grandfathers, petitioned the Emperor that it should bypass the town. The Emperor decided not to argue with the fools, as he called them, and the Nikolaevsky Railway took a more direct route not passing through Torzhok, after which trade in the town declined.

So we ought now to be concentrating on the history of the social hierarchy of towns, and this is not, strictly, a historical question. The history of the social hierarchy of towns is relevant to the study of cultural consciousness as a whole.

But when we speak of this social hierarchy, we must not confine ourselves to the historical factor, we must take the geographical factor into account as well. The distance between a town and the capital makes a considerable difference to its status. Tver may be the centre of a province, but it is still an outlier of Moscow. The status of Samara or Saratov — let alone Tyumen — is different. In the same way (but for different reasons) the small towns of the Russian North in the hinterland of Archangel are substantially different from the small towns in Tver Province. Living conditions in the towns of the

¹ The main line between St Petersburg and Moscow, named after Nicholas I. [Trans.]

Russian North may on closer examination prove to be worse than in Torzhok. But culturally they will undoubtedly be more independent and productive.

2

So, I repeat, the very concept of the town has yet to be defined. In everyday use, and in scholarly practice, it is the most recent sense of the word that is meant. One should nevertheless be aware that the original meaning of the word *gorod* ['town'] was an enclosed and, therefore, fortified place of human habitation, which put the accent on how it was built; but this meaning is long obsolete, and so is the corresponding approach to the problem of the town. The next meaning of the word *gorod* — a place of human habitation which is organised in a particular manner — shifts the accent to how life is ordered; but it too is out of date, and so is the methodology connected with it.

For our contemporaries the word *gorod* means 'the totality of people, the population which lives in a space which need not necessarily be enclosed, and may indeed not be enclosed at all'. The town's space became more and more organised, and the tendency towards regularity more pronounced, by the second half of the eighteenth century, when town-building on a regular pattern began. Incidentally, the collocation 'the anthropology of the town' provides further confirmation of the relevance of the idea of the town as its population in modern consciousness.

Of course, these three successive meanings of the word *gorod* indicate not so much a succession of research strategies as a succession of three stages in the evolution of the town as such. One more example from Torzhok, which has passed through all three stages in its history: it was an outlier, a fortified defensive outpost of Novgorod. It was a space organised in a particular manner, which was regulated under Catherine the Great. And although it was always also a population, this meaning was for a long time largely irrelevant, and so it is today: the board of honour inherited from Soviet times headed 'The Best People of the Town' only underlines this, because 'the best' does not mean 'everyone' or 'the totality'.

In this respect the problem of representing the visible appearance of the town is becoming very relevant. It is, of course, the visual arts (photography, painting, drawing, and cinema, both dramatic and documentary) that represent the town's visible appearance best. But it is only the literary arts (travel writing and descriptive verse) that have been studied in this context (see, in particular, [Lityagin, Tarabukina 2001]). Still less has any of this material been described outside the recognised subject headings. This is not the place to make a special study of it, so I shall simply give a single example, based on photographic material.

Photographs of views of Russian towns taken at the end of the nineteenth or beginning of the twentieth century have recently started to be republished all over Russia, frequently even taking the form of catalogues. In Tver Province collections devoted to Korcheva, Krasny Kholm, Kalyazin, Kimry, Vesegonsk, Zubtsov, Staritsa, Bezhetsk, Rzhev, the village of Kamennoe (Kuvshino), Ostashkov, Kashin and Torzhok have been published. I list them specially in order to show that there is material on which to draw general conclusions.

The repertory of views is not limited, and is determined by the places that are considered significant. As noticed long ago by students of verbal descriptions of Russian towns, the number of visually significant places in them is limited: the railway station, the park or boulevard, the main church, the watchtower, the market square and the theatre [Klubkova, Klubkov 2000]. Even without making special comparisons, one can predict that we shall find the full set in the photographs of every district centre. But it is quite obvious that the first thing that anyone (including the researcher) notices is the resemblance of culturally remote objects. If all Chinese or Japanese people look alike to a European, so do all Europeans to a Chinese or Japanese person. However, once they get to know each other better, Europeans find that they can tell Chinese people apart, and the Chinese can tell Europeans apart too, but this does not stop the European from always seeing the Chinaman as a Chinaman, nor the Chinese from seeing the European as a European. This approach to the anthropology of the town, constantly stressing sameness and uniformity, is already well developed in modern studies of the provinces.

Thus a standardised representation of the provincial town is evident. But what we have to do is not yet again to wax sentimental over the province's primitive outlook or mock the simplicity of provincial life. The point of studying the visual image of the town is to put into practice two methods which the study of the provinces has opposed to each other from various points of view.

The first method is connected with the concept of the local text. This modish term is now associated with the works of Vladimir Abashev, but the concept of the local text is in fact a generalisation of the concept of the St Petersburg text¹ and an extension of the methods used for analysing it to other spaces. The local text presupposes that particularity and diversity are brought into play (see the two remarkable and complementary articles [Klubkova 2001; Klubkov

¹ As exemplified particularly by the famous studies of the city written by Nikolai Antsiferov, *Dusha Peterburga* [The Soul of Petersburg] (1922) and Vladimir N. Toporov, *Peterburg i "peterburgskii tekst" russkoi literatury* (1971). [Editor].

2001]). It must however be acknowledged that the construction of a local text is the result of mythopoeia on the part of the researcher, and therefore one may have confidence in it as a scholarly discourse susceptible to the procedures of verification only with very considerable qualifications.

On the dangers with which the local text is fraught see my works ‘Two Remarks on Local Texts’ [Stroganov 2004] and *Literary Local Studies* [Stroganov 2009: 30–41]. If we describe the visible appearance of a town from the point of view of the local text, we shall inevitably find deviations from the general scheme constituted by the provincial text. In particular, old photographs of Torzhok show a number of individualised sights in addition to the typical places. In the first place, the town is dominated by its monastery (although there are actually two monasteries in the town, but the overwhelming majority of the photographs are of the Monastery of SS Boris and Gleb). In the second place, we find many photographs of a college (and moreover, a college for girls, not boys), because it occupied a historically significant site, that of the former imperial waystation. In addition, a special place among the photographs of Torzhok is occupied by general plans and bird’s-eye views. Continuing our analogy of the Chinese and the Europeans, we could formulate the task of studying the town from the position of the local text as follows: as they look more closely, the Europeans should try to see the Chinese person as a human being, and *vice versa*.

However, we hardly ever do see a human being on the postcards, and if people do appear, it is always as a crowd. This, of course, is the purpose of a postcard: to show a place, not a person. Therefore if we wish to see how the human being is embodied in the visual depiction of the town, we must look not for people as objects of depiction, but as subjects, the people who are taking the photographs. The photographer and his point of view are the only objects which this material provides for the study of the anthropology of the town.

There are two positions that we could take here. Either we can turn our attention to series of postcards showing photographs taken by the same photographer; here we shall see this person’s town. Or, we can turn our attention to depictions of the same town by different photographers. Here too it is very easy to discover the differences between the approaches taken by different people to one and the same object. To put it another way, when we compare how Torzhok is photographed by V. N. Solovyov and P. F. Dobrynin we discover that they create their own local texts. One of them creates the image of a garden city, and the other of a slum. Each photographer has his own approach to a particular place or building. Besides, each place or building reveals unique features in the work of each photographer. The watchtower appears everywhere — it depends on how one sees it.

We know how often photographers have taken pictures of the main boulevard in Torzhok and the many different ways in which they have done so. And it is not merely a matter of any one photographer's technical and professional skill, but most of all of the difference between human beings. One could, incidentally, do the same sort of work comparing modern photographs of Torzhok, and one would have a wide field to work in, because there have been not a few albums of photographs of Torzhok published in recent years.

Switching our attention to written material, we should ask the same question. We could take any sort of material: the notes made by foreign visitors who stopped at Torzhok on their way from Novgorod to Moscow in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Bakunin's well-known poem describing the place in verse, travel notes, nineteenth- or twentieth-century memoirs, or the poetical works of our own contemporaries. Clearly the local text remains unchanged, but in each case it acquires particular nuances which belong only to the author in question and distinguish his local text from the rest.

I am not at all suggesting that one should study every work by local poets or painters. But I am suggesting that we should see their point of view, without an assessment of which we shall not understand what they are describing. This is the problem for the study of the town and urban culture that I regard as the most urgent at present and as yet unaddressed. It is also the one problem, obvious though it is, that completely lacks any methodology.

References

- Belousov A. F. 'Simvolika zakhlostya (oboznachenie rossiiskogo provintsialnogo goroda) [The Symbolism of a Backwater (the Designation of the Russian Provincial Town)]' // *Geopanorama russkoi kultury: Provintsiya i ee lokalnye teksty*. M.: Yazyki slavyanskoi kultury, 2004. Pp. 457–82.
- Klubkov P. A. "Zamkami slaven Tver, a Novgorod syrtyami..." ['Tver Is Famous for Locks, and Novgorod for Bream'] // *Provintsiya kak realnost i obyekt osmysleniya*. Tver: Tverskoi gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2001. Pp. 47–52.
- Klubkova T. V. 'Perifrasticheskie nazvaniya gorodov i lokalny tekst [Periphrastic Town Names and the Local Text]' // *Provintsiya kak realnost i obyekt osmysleniya*. Tver: Tverskoi gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2001. Pp. 26–9.
- _____, Klubkov P. A. 'Provintsializmy i provintsialny slovar [Provincialisms and Provincial Vocabulary]' // *Russkaya provintsiya: mif — tekst — realnost*. M.; SPb.: Tema, 2000. Pp. 137–55.
- Lityagin A. A., Tarabukina A. V. 'Zritelnyi obraz malenkogo goroda [The Visual Image of the Small Town]' // *Provintsiya kak realnost i obyekt osmysleniya*. Tver: Tverskoi gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2001. Pp. 53–62.

Shtetl, XXI vek: Polevye issledovaniya [The Shtetl in the Twenty-First Century: Field Studies]. SPb.: Izdatelstvo Evropeiskogo universiteta v Sankt-Peterburge, 2008.

Stroganov M. 'Dve zametki o lokalnykh tekstakh [Two Remarks about Local Texts]' // *Geopanorama russkoi kultury: Provintsiya i ee lokalnye teksty*. M.: Yazyki slavyanskoi kultury, 2004. Pp. 483–96.

_____. *Literaturnoe kraevedenie* [Literary Local Studies]. *Uchebnoe posobie*. Tver: Tverskoi gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2009.

FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

The very first Forum published in this journal identified the move to the study of urban culture as an important new development in Russian studies. Internationally, ‘urban studies’ has, over the last twenty to thirty years, become an increasingly prominent field, and one that is interdisciplinary in a real sense. Alongside anthropologists, sociologists, and historians, some of the leading contributors to the creation of new paradigms have been geographers, particularly of the ‘cultural’ orientation represented by Edward Soja, Doreen Massey, Linda McDowell, and others¹ — just as with the ‘peasant studies’ that is in some respects the complement of this intellectual domain.² Urban studies is interdisciplinary not just because different specialisms are involved, but because the field itself demands flexible approaches from each observer. Benjamin Cope’s description — ‘it is precisely my growing interest in post-socialist urban spaces that has caused me to lose a secure disciplinary foothold’ — would be echoed by many working in this area.

¹ See e.g. [Soja 1996; Soja 2000; Massey 2007; McDowell 1999]. Other influential studies include [Anderson 1991; Mitchell 2003]. A useful anthology of recent anthropological work in the area is [Low, Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003]. On the specifics of Eastern Europe, see also [Czaplicka, Gelazis, Ruble 2009; Bassin, Ely, Stockdale 2010].

² As Benjamin Cope points out in his comments, this can lead to a certain ‘urban triumphalism’ in study of the city.

A detailed overview of the multifaceted work on urban culture is not the purpose of these brief concluding remarks. (In her overview, Monica Rùthers has provided a useful outline of the evolution and the current state of discussion of work in the fields of history and sociology; a comparable overview of Russian-published material in the domains of anthropology and folklore is given by Maria Akhmetova, Mikhail Alekseevsky, and Mikhail Lurye.) Instead, we shall comment briefly on the character of the discussion that emerged. To begin with, it turned out that even the denomination of the subject matter of urban studies is not straightforward. As Mikhail Stroganov points out, the established usage of the word *gorod* itself is a differential factor: ‘When we use the Russian word *gorod*, we do not have in mind the capital or some other great city of that sort, but a small and/or provincial town, what in English would be called a *town* rather than a *city*. Imagine the amusement that would be generated if the badges issued to delegates at an international conference indicated that the *gorod* in which their institution was situated was Moscow, Tokyo, or New York. But if the *gorod* thus designated were Tver, that would not raise a smile from anyone; on the contrary, it is necessary, because no one is obliged to know that there is such a town.’

In practice, the ‘urban’ in ‘urban studies’ as carried out internationally, usually applies to the ‘city’ side of the ‘city/town’ binary.¹ Some of the most interesting work in Russia, by contrast, has been on small towns — as was also clear from several of the contributions here. (Here may be a sign of the legacy of Russian urban studies — especially as relating to folklore — in studies of the countryside, which Mikhail Alekseevsky, Maria Akhmetova, and Mikhail Lurye point to.) While a micro-focus is sometimes adopted outside Russia (as in Michael Herzfeld’s work on the Cretan small town of Rethymnos, for example),² on the whole it is the metropolis, and indeed the megapolis, that holds sway. The emphasis on structures of power and politics and the incursion of external capital that characterises ‘urban studies’ (as with Megan Dixon’s remarks on the ‘Baltic Pearl’) and on the contestation of social relations (see Heather de Haan’s comments) may usefully be contrasted with Irina Razumova’s shortlist of topics of

¹ A ‘city’ in British English has the traditional meaning of an urban settlement with a *cathedral* — cf. the Russian binary *selo/derevnya*. It has nothing to do with size: the cathedral ‘city’ of Ely has a population of 14,500, while the ‘town’ of Basingstoke has one of over 80,000. However, this traditional meaning has been a legal dead letter for at least a century: Leicester, for instance, became a ‘city’ in 1919, but acquired a ‘cathedral’ only in 1927. For most native speakers of English ‘city’ simply equates to *Grossstadt*, *grande ville*, or *bolshoi gorod* (cf. the railway term ‘intercity’). At the same time, as Irina Razumova points out, naming practices are more complex than this, involving the dismissive use of terms such as *bolshaya derevnya* (‘the big village’, or indeed such derogatory terms as ‘the big wen’ or ‘the big smoke’ for London).

² See e.g. [Herzfeld 1991]. A different line is the work of Ana Kladnik on the Slovenian new town of Velenje (a brief introduction to which is available on the New Towns portal, <http://www.newtowns.net/whats-new-1/whats-new/view?set_language=pt> (accessed 9 February 2010).

interest: ‘the stratification and symbolic evaluation of social space, the formation of the urban milieu and the functioning of its individual elements, ethno-cultural communications, a particular town as a text, images of towns in culture, urban ritual and holiday culture at various historical periods, subcultural stratification and peculiarities of sub-cultures, modern urban folklore’.

When it comes to the study of sub-cultures or micro-communities (such as the youth groups studied by Dmitry Gromov and others), this difference in focus has less significance. But the British, French, German, and American concentration on cities in the sense of large, ramified, and problematic socio-political and economic structures (rather than as the spaces for textual games and communicative exchanges) points to the close link between ‘urban studies’ and broader preoccupations with the modernisation process — whether this is understood as implicitly a progressive phenomenon (as by many theorists of the first third of the twentieth century), as something to be regretted, or as lying somewhere in between.¹ Amid the general collapse of ‘grand narratives’, the grand narrative of modernisation has become so ubiquitous that its pressures are hardly noticed.

As several participants in the discussion, notably A. N. Sadovoi, argue, the study of urban settlements by Russian scholars is quite tightly compartmentalised in disciplinary terms. It is also self-contained in another way: ‘Ethnographers studying ethno-cultural processes according to the prescribed taxa ignore the external influences (determinants) resulting from globalisation.’ The concentration on specific cities and their anomalies can throw up discussions that are parochial in the primary meaning of the term (as with studies of St Petersburg that write about the *dokhodnyi dom* as though the tenements, *maisons à louer*, and *Mietskasernen* of Glasgow, New York, Paris, or Berlin never existed: compare the observation by Akhmetova, Alekseevsky, and Lurye, ‘there is an acutely felt lack of comparative and typological research’). The lack of international context also makes itself felt in something else: the relative neglect, in post-Soviet space, of the ethnically heterogeneous character of the urban world. Robert Pyrah’s comments on Lviv — ‘apparent multiculturalism is specifically backwards-oriented’ — fits the situation in St Petersburg, for instance, rather well:²

¹ The most detached observers of historical change are the psychogeographers, with their emphasis on ‘deep structures’ of territorial denomination: see e.g. [Sinclair 1998; Sinclair 2003; Ackroyd 2001; Attlee 2008].

² The majority of studies on multiethnic St Petersburg deal with the historical city: see e.g. [Yukhneva 1982; Yukhneva 1984; Smirnova 2002; *Mnogonatsionalnyi* 2002]. It is much harder to locate serious discussions of present-day St Petersburg as a multiethnic city, and the emphasis in those that exist is often on in-migration (interpreted as the arrival of ‘outsiders’ in an environment that is assumed to be monoethnic). Interestingly, rather more attention was given to multiculturalism in the late Soviet period: see particularly [Starovoitova 1987].

This adoption of an inward-looking perspective may be one factor behind the situation depicted by Anatoly Breslavsky: ‘Russian urban history in its present state is often in demand only at the level of the towns themselves and their local academic schools; it is of interest primarily to the local authorities who act in the name of the urban community. Usually it is written and published either at the request of the municipality, or as a result of an authorial enthusiasm which may not be supported by any academic or commercial requirements (so-called naïve history).’ Yet the attempt to impose ‘global’ assumptions about development may lead to simplistic conclusions, as Nataliya Kosmarskaya emphasises, pointing to the significance of political events such as the collapse of the USSR that simply have no analogue in the West, and of mass rural-urban migration, as highly specific factors in the Russian and post-Soviet experience.¹ The delayed but dynamic process of automobilisation — a topic addressed by Gyorgy Peteri — is another highly characteristic factor of the socialist city right across Eastern Europe.²

But there are important discontinuities with the past as well. The collapse of socialist internationalism (more often associated with the rise of primordial nationalism) has fostered not just regionalisation in a political sense, but a sense of regional, or indeed local, difference (cf. the established term, *lokalnyi tekst*). This process of specialisation does not have to generate ‘boosterism’; the last few years have also seen the emergence of nuanced representations of local history, where a properly distanced view of the mythology of place and the canon of past events is offered.³

In any case, under the pressure of change, perceptions of ‘modernisation’ have now moved well beyond the patterns observed by early twentieth-century sociology — just as ‘urban folklore’ (as Mikhail Matlin points out) has been transformed by the Internet, which functions as a repository and a laboratory of its different products, in a way that calls into question traditional analytical categories such as *folklorizatsiya*. With their ever-expanding fringes and debatable centres, conglomerations (*aglomeraty*) such as Beijing, Hong Kong, Delhi, or Mexico City lack the symbolic topography of the classic European, Asian, or American city, denominated by places of worship and assembly halls, and later by transport junctions, trading places, and amenities such as cinemas and cafés. Now, the

¹ On the latter count one might hesitate (rural in-migration has been a highly important factor in Greece, Portugal, and Ireland, for example, and it should not be forgotten that in-migration by groups who are primarily ‘marked’ as ethnically ‘other’ by the receiving culture may also involve a rural-urban shift (as with Irish or Bangla Deshi incomers in London).

² [Siegelbaum 2008] addresses the situation in the USSR.

³ As, for example, in the answers by Vladimir Abashev here, or Mikhail Lurye and Mariya Akhmetova’s work on Bologoe, or Serguei Oushakine’s researches on Barnaul [Oushakine 2009]. Cf. also A. N. Sadovoi’s comments in the ‘Forum’ about recent work on Tomsk, Novosibirsk, Barnaul, and Omsk.

key structural elements in the organisation of space may be the upheaval of reconstruction ('one of the world's largest construction sites -- in what may become the world's largest conurbation' [Miller 2009: 271]), and wilfully haphazard zoning (gated estates next to shacks).¹

Yet even the new megalopolises in a true sense² have more shape than what a resonant phrase which came into use during the 1990s terms the 'no-place urban realm', with its plasticated 'strip' of fast-food outlets and chain stores. However, such places tend to exist, in post-socialist cities, as in other European settlements — as opposed to the US, for instance — within the interstices of more traditional structures. In comparison with these new places, the socialist cities of the early to mid twentieth centuries represented a continuation, rather than a departure from, standard 'Western' patterns of urban organisation. The urban domain was one place where the state planning of socialist societies represented, in comparison with capitalist Europe and the US, not an aberration, but the norm. At the same time, one might wonder what is happening to the spatial hierarchies of the many monotowns bequeathed to the Russian Federation by the Soviet era, now that plants have closed and Lenin statues and palaces of culture have alike emptied of symbolic significance. In the words of Irina Razumova:

Within the urban space one may see the ruins of buildings and architectural projects of the Stalinist and subsequent eras, deserted districts and areas formerly used for mass recreation, and so forth. These cultural monuments deserve large-scale investigation, using the methods of visual anthropology among others. One example of this would be the '25th Kilometre' in Kirovsk, until relatively recently a prosperous working-class district and now practically a ruin, though continuing to function.

In some settlements, new places of worship may be reviving traditional perceptions of appropriate planning (*gradostroitel'stvo*), but this is not yet a universal development. On the whole, as Benjamin Cope puts it, post-socialist cities are transcribing the route from 'too much bad urban planning to a deficit of the management of space'.

Thus, like the megacities of the so-called 'developing world', the urban settlements of former socialist countries problematise the traditional rhythms of 'becoming modern'. On the one hand, inward investment, such as the 'Baltic Pearl' project that Megan Dixon

¹ As Vladimir Poddubikov, among others, points out, the 'zoning' in post-socialist cities, unlike US ones, seldom has an ethnic colouration — though this is true of many European and Asian cities also.

² Among Russian cities, only Moscow can properly be described, in an international context, as a 'megalopolis' (Delhi, by comparison, has around 15 million, Mexico City nearly 20 million, Shanghai over 16 million, Beijing over 17 million, Cairo 17 million, etc.)

discusses, creates a situation where development is ‘dominated and dictated by [a] “global” hybridised vision that tends to subsume messy local notions to itself’. Yet a stubborn sense of place — only partly captured in the rather trite term *glocalisation* — persists. Exactly how to recognise and record this is one of the issues under debate here.

In raising such fundamental issues of conceptualisation, the contributions to the discussion move beyond the tendency to see study of the city essentially in terms of its objects — so that ‘urban studies’ would become simply the summation of work about cities.¹ At the same time, they insist that the study of cities should be more than simply the study of local events, personalities, or communities, sub-cultures, and groups — an all-consuming attention to which can mean that, in Stephen Bittner’s words, ‘as the focus of analysis, cities are often strangely absent from urban history’ (and indeed from urban studies generally). Bittner’s emphasis on the individual experience of incomers, and the individual nature of the spatial environment to which they were and are exposed, offers a sense of how to put the city itself back into the study of cities. But may not emphasis on ‘individualisation’ (particularly among the human denizens of cities) be simply a way of returning to the safe orthodoxies of modernisation theory once again? Or conversely, does stress on communicative networks, communities, and shared myths point to the still unexamined hold of mid-twentieth-century functionalism on study of the city (which may prompt a reluctance to examine *dysfunctional* phenomena in the urban realm)? Are cities perhaps inevitably ‘absent’, as in Vladimir Abashev’s witty description of Perm’, distinguished above all by invisible sites — such as the substructure of what was once a giant steam-hammer — by the narration that forms its ‘intangible body’ (*neosyazamoe telo*)? Or do spaces shape social relations as much as — or more than — the other way round? Our contributors come to no overall consensus about these questions — but it is healthy that they should not.

The discussion of these underlying issues, of specific problems in urban life, and of city identity is taken further in the collection of articles that appear alongside the Forum. Many of these fill gaps in the literature as identified by the participants in our discussion (and in particular, the need for more work on cities beyond Moscow and Petersburg, and the desirability of addressing urban *practices* and how these transform through space and time). The discussion of the

¹ This kind of approach is found, for instance, in a useful and informative review article about recent work on Eastern European cities [Weeks 2009], whose basic conceptual position is that cities are ‘poly-valent entities’, which makes generalising about the study of them essentially impossible. In 2009, the journal *Voprosy istorii* (No. 1. Pp. 65–80) published a thematic collection, ‘Russian History: New Boundaries and Spaces of Dialogue’, including two essays on ‘the city and urbanisation in Russian history’, but without a methodological discussion.

city theme here complements and extends the material on urban life that has appeared in our journal before, for example, addressing the crucial contemporary issue of in-migration to cities and travel between them (see no. 13 in the original Russian and no. 6 in English).

Our warm thanks, as always, go to the participants in the discussion.

References

- Ackroyd P. *London: The Biography*. London: Vintage, 2001.
- Anderson K. *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875–1980*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991.
- Attlee J. *Isolarion: A Different Oxford Journey*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008.
- Bassin M., Ely C., Stockdale M. T. (eds.). *Space, Place, and Power in Modern Russia: Essays in the New Spatial History*. DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010.
- Czaplicka J., Gelazis N., Ruble B. A. (eds.). *Cities after the Fall of Communism: Reshaping Cultural Landscapes and European Identity*. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2009.
- Herzfeld M. *A Place in History: Social and Monumental Time in a Cretan Town*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Low S. M., Lawrence-Z niga D. (eds.) *The Anthropology of Space and Place*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003.
- Massey D. *World City*. London: Polity Press, 2007.
- McDowell L. *Gender, Identity and Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies*. Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.
- Miller S. *Delhi: Adventures in a Megacity*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2009.
- Mitchell D. *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space*. New York: The Guilford Press, 2003.
- Mnogonatsional'nyi Peterburg: Etnografiya. Religiya. Narody* [Multi-National Petersburg: Ethnography. Religion. Peoples]. SPb.: Iskusstvo, 2002.
- Smirnova T. M. *Natsionalnost — peterskie: Natsionalnye menshinstva Peterburga i Leningradskoi oblasti v XX veke* [Nationality — from Piter: National Minorities in Petersburg and Leningrad Province in the Twentieth Century]. SPb.: Sudarynya, 2002.
- Soja E. W. *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996.
- _____. *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2000.
- Siegelbaum L. *Cars for Comrades*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008.
- Sinclair I. *London Orbital*. London: Penguin Books, 2003.
- _____. *Lights Out for the Territory*. London: Penguin Books, 1998.
- Weeks T. 'Urban History in Eastern Europe' // *Kritika*. 2009. Vol. 10. No. 4. Pp. 917–34.
- Yukhneva N. V. (ed.) *Staryi Peterburg: Istoriko-etnograficheskie issledovaniya*

[Old St Petersburg: Studies in Ethnographical History]. L.: Nauka, 1982.

_____. *Etnicheskii sostav i etnosotsial'naya struktura naseleniya Peterburga: Vtoraya polovina XIX-nachala XX veka* [The Ethnic Composition and Ethno-Social Structure of the Population of Petersburg, 1850–1920s]. L.: Nauka, 1984.

The contributions by Vladimir Abashev, Natalya Kosmarskaya, and Vladimir Poddubikov were translated by Thomas Lorimer.

The remaining contributions originally written in Russian were translated by Ralph Cleminson.