

# Abstracts

## Informal Strategies in Post-Socialist Poland

*Gábor Danyi and András Vignári: Survival, Resistance, Adaptation: Informal Practices in Poland and Hungary*

Initially prepared as an introduction to the thematic issue of the Replika, the chapter offers an insight into the rich literature on informality and informal social practices. The first and second part of the chapter presents theoretical approaches and concepts, including the long-term history of informality in a semi-peripheral perspective in East-Central Europe. The third and fourth part provide an analytical framework for understanding informalities in the context of socialist and post-socialist Hungary and Poland. This framework is based on approaches which consider informality as a practice of crisis management, a form of resistance, and a social heritage in which knowledge transfer plays an important role. None of these approaches, however, exclude the others, but represent peculiar features of a complex phenomenon in a compatible way. From a *longue durée* perspective informal practices are part of a long-term social adaptation process which transforms accumulated social knowledge into new adaptive forms and practices responding to the changing needs of semi-peripheral societies.

*Keywords:* informality, Poland, socialism, post-socialism, economic crisis, unemployment, adaptation, form of resistance, social heritage

*Tomasz Rakowski: Freedom in the Mines*

In the communist period the mines created a modernized and industrialized space for daily life. People's actions and the objects and technologies they used were controlled from above by an external system. After restructuring the mine industry, the unemployment rate enormously increased, the technology and organization of the Wałbrzych mines has risen to the surface with the birth of bootleg mines, scrap collecting, gathering and all the other improvised forms of earning a living. The ex-employees of the industrial basin were forced

to construct their own work sites and tools. The author analyses relations which came into being between environment, objects and people within the framework of informal practices of demolition and gathering. After the liquidation of the mines ex-miners began to perceive the material world in a whole new light, looking at the things and the environment through their capacity to be used and utilized. In their experiences a paradox reveals itself: the fascination for objects procures during the widespread demolition of old industrial cities. The author argues that in the post-industrial reality there has occurred a kind of “liberation” of material beings/testimonies which caused that “biographies” of things grew longer and assembled into entirely new patterns, crossing well beyond the production-monetary exchange-consumption/use formula. The perception of time has also been changed. In de-industrialized town of Wałbrzych memory underwent local mythologization and structural amnesia which collapse all history and factography, prompting many flights of fancy. Phantasy – a problem-free access to imagined goods/riches – becomes a way of defence against painful realities in which ex-miners found themselves as well as a tool which helps to analyse and understand their experiences.

*Keywords:* unemployment, mines, bootleg mines, gathering, phantasy, memory/remembering, things

*Tomasz Rakowski: Ethnography – Animation – Art. A Methodological Defense*

The purpose of this text is to answer the question: how to introduce elements of art to rural areas, without establishing at the same time relations of superiority and domination. To this, the author reconstructs the project *Prologue. Unrecognized dimensions of cultural development* from 2011, and then its extension, *Ethnography / Animation / Art*, from 2012. Both projects were led by a team of animators, artists and ethnographers in the villages in the vicinity of Szydłowiec, in areas of unprofitable, small-scale agriculture, affected by local, endless unemployment.

Ethnographic research gradually enrich and ground animation, while animation brings about quasi-experimental research situations, in which ethnographic reality becomes „thick” and dynamic. The author shows how ethnography combined with animation reveals what is the most important in the life of the community – an implicit dimension of creative work, bottom-up, spontaneous self-organization. It is in this way that a new methodological perspective on action comes about. Its aim is not so much to induce „mechanical” social change as to construct common, creative event with unpredictable and emergent effects.

*Keywords:* ethnography, art, action research, cultural animation, emergence of meaning

*Gábor Danyi and András Vigvári: Do it yourself sir, if you have no servant*

The review focuses on Tomasz Rakowski's *Hunters, Gatherers, and Practitioners of Powerlessness: An Ethnography of the Degraded in Postsocialist Poland* which analyses the practices of managing economic and social crisis occurring during the post-socialist transition in Poland, with a special emphasis put on survival strategies in post-industrial and rural areas.

The book casts new light on the everyday reality of the presented communities living in mining towns and deindustrialized villages. While at the first glance the cases discussed in the book might seem to constitute typical examples of social marginalization in East-Central Europe, the monograph presents them instead as the underpinning of an active society (both in social and economic terms), capable of adapting hidden skills and inventing new survival practices.

*Keywords:* ethnography, postsocialist Poland, unemployment, crisis and adaptation, informal practices, post-industrial areas, rural areas

### **I just called to say I love you**

*Ágoston Fáber: Autotelic relationships and the child as 'metaproject'*

The increasing fragility of marriages and intimate relationships in general is particularly apparent from the perspective of long-lasting premodern marriages. Traditional families once based on the unquestionable dominance of the father as well as on the need to pass on the family's fortune and social status to the next generation are progressively replaced by a hitherto unprecedented configuration of relationships which are, at least in the dominant discourse of late modernity, underpinned solely by the affective relation between the partners (with or without children). The democratizing effect of this shift towards what I will call an „autotelic relationship” is irrevocable, however it also imposes the imperative to strive for happiness within relationships as well as to submit all matters and life plans to permanent debilitation, discursivation, and evaluation. Despite the fact that marriage and birth rates clearly indicate the deep crisis of contemporary family, people still tend to believe that their difficulties related to family life and relationships can somehow – with the help of psychotherapy, couple's or family therapy – be overcome by submitting oneself, once again, to the imperative of constant communication, discursivation which, instead of bringing ease, only enhances fragility as they are themselves a great part of the problem. The only apparently viable, and more or less unconscious, strategy to stabilize fragile relationships is having a child. This is how having a child becomes the only possible 'metaproject' in the era of late modernity.

*Keywords:* late modernity, intimacy, autotelic relationship, epistemological counter-revolution, discursive alcoholism

*Tamás Barcsi and Kinga Soós: 68 and the “Three M” (Marx, Mao, Marcuse). The Socio-Philosophical Context of the Counter Culture of the Sixties and its Heritage*

In this paper we examine how Marxism, Maoism and Marcuse’s highly influential work *The One Dimensional Man* affected the social and political movements of the sixties. Furthermore the leftist features of these movements of the West are scrutinized; and the meanings and interpretations of 68 as well as the controversial legacy of the counter culture flourished in the sixties are discussed. The sixties are still heavily debated among scholars, and although the evaluations differ vastly, it is important to further analyze the movements of the sixties from different points of view. From a critical perspective, we argue that Marcuse’s thesis that consumerism and capitalism are able to integrate and pacify social movements and counter cultural movements has been corroborated. Our main argument is, that besides the integration and the commercialization of the values of 68, the counter culture of the sixties had a lot of positive effects on our culture, we reject the idea that the events of the sixties had a solely negative impact in the development of Western culture. Through the analysis of the integrative tendencies of global capitalism, we have found that our culture can be described by the ‘consciousness of the unchangeable’ rather than the ‘happy consciousness’ of Marcuse: within global capitalism it seems to people that there are no alternatives for the apparent systematic problems caused by capitalism. Nowadays even the rebellious generation of the sixties emphasizes the pointlessness of any systematic resistance.

*Keywords:* movements of 68, counter culture, capitalism critique, Marxism, Maoism, Marcuse

## Review

*Gergely Csányi: The micro-sociology of societies past, or Schütz in Nekeressedpuszta. Krisztina Németh (2018): Életvilág-értelmezések. Utak felbomlott életvilágokhoz. [Lifeworld Interpretations. Approaching Broken Lifeworlds] Budapest: Argumentum.*

Krisztina Németh’s monograph entitled *Lifeworld Interpretations* explores the empirical – qualitative – applicability of the lifeworld concept with the help of two case studies. Nevertheless, it is primarily not a methodological handbook, rather a description of self-reflective ethnographic research that is informed by social theory, which points to the road any field researcher has to take of continuously reflecting on theory, methodology, as well as themselves. At the same time, the book is a good guide to reconstructing the gone-by lifeworlds of societies having undergone trauma and destruction.

*Keywords:* review, lifeworld, qualitative research, ethnography, methodology

Zoltán Nagy: *Minorities in the Force-field of Ethnic and State Nationalism. Sárközi Ildikó Gyöngyvér (2018): A mártírium homályából. Sibe ősök és hősök a kínai nemzetépítés oltárán. [From the Mists of Martyrdom. Sibe Ancestors and Heroes on the Altar of Chinese Nation-building]* Budapest: MTA BTK Néprajztudományi Intézet – PTE BTK Néprajz–Kulturális Antropológia Tanszék – L'Harmattan Kiadó.

The book of Gyöngyvér Ildikó Sárközi is about the Sibe people, one of the ethnic groups officially recognized by the People's Republic of China. Since 1764 the two groups of Sibe live in two far away parts of China, where they have been subject to various challenges and they needed to adjust to different circumstances: two differing ethnic groups naming themselves by the same denomination, but not having any more relations than their name. However, lately making use of the possibilities of the identity politics of the Chinese government they have become a united ethnic group in the last decades due to the impacts of the local elite's endeavours in the politics of memory. This extremely interesting anthropology book, based on the author's stationary fieldwork, follows the formation and development of this 'imagined community', the pursuits and possibilities of the participating players, building upon the instrumentalist approach to ethnicity.

*Keywords:* review, China, Sibe people, ethnicity, ethnic nationalism, memory

