

Ethnologia Europaea

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Information for the readers of volume 29: 2

Because of a planned book edition of the papers from the Berlin Conference we have changed the usual practice of continuous pagination through this year's volume.

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Editorial

Europe as a Cultural Construction and Reality

The present issue is based upon the lectures of the latest conference of *Ethnologia Europaea*. This conference was held at the *European Academy Berlin* in September 1998 and organized by Peter Niedermüller, Klaus Roth and Bjarne Stoklund. It was arranged by the journal in cooperation with the Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft and the Institute of European Ethnology at the Humboldt-University, and supported financially by the Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft (Munich), the Toepfer Foundation (Hamburg) and the Koerber Foundation (Hamburg).

The workshop pointed at ethnological discourses and approaches in order to describe and to analyze social and political concepts and cultural constructions of Europe in a changing world. The collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe led to decline and fall of the conceptual geography which was based on East vs. West and has shown political, social and cultural implications for both parts of the continent. The latest decade showed us that political borders and blocks have disappeared, but national, ethnic, cultural and social differences are still at work. Today we can observe on the one hand a new symbolic geography in Europe, but on the other we are witnessing how old lines of demarcation are revitalized, how different cultural imaginations of Europe are politically instrumentalized, and how political conflicts are being culturalized. At the beginning of the next millennium a new Europe is emerging, but behind this imagination we have to face old problems and unsolved conflicts of our historical past. European Ethnology has a central role to play in the research of the complex process of the social, cultural and symbolic construction of Europe, and in the way in which new images and realities are produced in and of Europe.

The papers of this issue can be divided into two sections. In the first part one can find articles with general, theoretical and/or historical approaches. Michael Harbsmeier describes

how Europe as an imaginary community has been experienced and described historically by travelers and explorers from other parts of the world. Jonas Frykman in his paper examines the relationship between place and identity in the context of a new concept of locality. Thomas Schippers points at the cultural idea of border in the European context and shows how the thought of spatial representations of one's own territory emerged, and what was the role of ethnology in this process. Konrad Köstlin's paper analyzes the new functions of localized cultures and the new meaning of national culture in a transnational world. The crucial problem of interethnic relations in Europe is discussed in Klaus Roth's paper at the background of historical parallels. Cris Shore approaches the new cultural politics of European integration and examines the idea of the ever-closer union from an anthropological perspective. Reinhard Johler examines this topic from another perspective and describes the cultural concept of *Euroland(e)*.

In the second part of this issue are some cases or regional studies reflecting the different regional or national contexts of Europeanization. Ueli Gyr analyzes a Swiss cultural symbol and myth, the so-called *Heidi-Figur*, in the context of changing regional identity and mass tourism. Ullrich Kockel takes Northern Ireland as a microcosm of Europe and explores different concepts of nationality, citizenship and identity in this country. John W. Cole's paper outlines the current situation in South Tyrol and presents how the local political elite in this region has worked to promote ethnic cohesion. Christian Giordano analyzes some historical and current forms of secessionist discourses in Italy, which are going to weaken the nation-state and to set up a new concept of a Europe of regions. And finally Ants Viires in his paper reports how the national identity has changed in Estonia as a consequence of the collapse of the Soviet Union.