



Editorial Foreword

In his book titled “Small Places, Large Issues” (1995), Thomas Hylland Eriksen makes reference to Kirsten Hastrup’s words, according to which through the works of anthropologists the familiar becomes exotic and the exotic becomes familiar. I think that this observation is true not only in the case of the analysis of distant, less known cultures, but also regarding the adjacent, East-Central European societies. Thus, the observation suits the analysis of those social processes which are taking place in the post-socialist region that produces more and more hardly translatable social phenomena. The understanding of these phenomena—besides the measuring of the administrative, legal, statistical, etc. parameters of the so-called Europeanization—needs sustained intellectual work. The anthropological approach, while it can reach both those phenomena which seem to be very familiar, can also provide the essential distance for the interpretation of these facts. For me, the fact that this discipline has a major role in the understanding of what is occurring throughout this region is beyond any doubt.

In the present issue of the *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae – Social Analysis* we intended to offer a space for such approaches, which assesses the importance of the above mentioned intellectual endeavor. The analysis of the period before 1989 is very important, since previous models continue to exist even nowadays. There are increasing numbers of signs which suggest that besides the analysis of certain periods, the interpretation of those processes which go beyond these tracts can provide useful conclusions. The case studies approach the identity structures of several social groups and localities, but interpersonal observations are also worth mentioning. The research perspectives are various, and they cannot be otherwise, because the teaching of cultural anthropology and anthropological research still has not been institutionalized in the countries of the region in such a way that it could offer a framework of systematical studies. Thus, the thematic diversity, the differences between the approaches are, after all, the proofs of this situation.

Turning back to the already mentioned work of Eriksen, I think that we can agree with him regarding the observation that cultural globalization leads to uniformity and homogenization, but also to newer cultural differences occurring at the places of encounter between global and local. As a reproach to uniformity, or in parallel with it, complexity is reproduced. This is the case of those post-socialist regions within which previous models of life conducts, behavioral habits, knowledge and cultural patterns are still persisting and individual and

group identities are produced as the result of global – local projections. Such reproduction of complexity provides new challenges for the anthropologists both in terms of perspectives and methods. With this end in view, I think, we must take part in the understanding of these processes and, maybe, even in the search for solutions. We thank the authors of this thematic issue for being partners in this work.

Julianna Bodó
Guest editor