

Previously published in the series *Studies on Migration & Ethnicity*

Hans van Amersfoort & Jeroen Doomernik (editors)

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

Processes and interventions

(ISBN 90 5589 111 8)

Gerd Baumann & Thijl Sunier (editors)

POST-MIGRATION ETHNICITY

Cohesion, commitments, comparison

(ISBN 90 5589 020 0)

Maurice Crul, Flip Lindo & Ching Lin Pang (editors)

CULTURE, STRUCTURE AND BEYOND

Changing identities and social positions of immigrants and their children

(ISBN 90 5589 173 8)

Anita Böcker, Kees Groenendijk, Tetty Havinga & Paul Minderhoud (editors)

REGULATION OF MIGRATION

International experiences

(ISBN 90 5589 095 2)

Hans Vermeulen & Cora Govers (editors)

THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF ETHNICITY

Beyond 'Ethnic Groups and Boundaries'

(ISBN 90 7305 297 1)

ROOTS & RITUALS

The construction of ethnic identities

Ton Dekker
John Helsloot
Carla Wijers
editors



Het Spinhuis
Amsterdam

2000

Introduction

TON DEKKER, JOHN HELSLOOT & CARLA WIJERS

This volume testifies to the renewed interest within European ethnology in the study of ethnicity. This interest links up with a long tradition in the discipline. The search and subsequent discovery of ethnic and national roots even formed the main impetus behind its formation. Well into the 1950s, a dominant model of analysis was to explain contemporary elements of traditional culture by referring to their origin in the cultures of ancient European ethnic groups or tribes. Because of its essentialist overtones, stressing the fixed, unchanging nature of particular (ethnic) cultures (*Volkstum*, *Volksgeist*), this approach not only generated serious misrepresentations, it was also compromised by its political abuse before and during the Second World War. As a result, the study of ethnic groups and their cultures only occupied a marginal position in the research agendas of ethnologists, although it was never wanting in Middle and Eastern European countries.

Influenced by the many rapid social and cultural changes in European societies from the 1960s onwards, a paradigm change occurred in the discipline of ethnology. The main focus now became the processual nature of culture, its malleability and variability, conditional upon specific historical, geographical or social circumstances. A conspicuous phenomenon in late 20th century Europe was the active effort of all kinds of regional or local groups and communities – out of various sentiments, generally a mixture of economical, political and cultural needs – to express themselves symbolically, particularly in all kinds of rituals, but also in dress and food, and language. The arrival of economic migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, many of whom were from non-European countries, added up to the complexity of this cultural mosaic and dynamics. For these groups too sought to define themselves culturally, triggering off similar cultural reactions in the host countries. Although ethnic labelling had never been entirely absent in post-war Europe, its status was relatively modest. The collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s, however, saw the resurgence of ethnicity in an unsuspected and brutal

way. Consequently, these hitherto neglected loyalties gained a position of pre-eminence in the study of cultural change.

By deploying the concept of socio-cultural identity – that is: not conceived as a fixed entity, but, from an actor perspective, taking account of such processes as negotiation, appropriation, fluidity, instrumentalisation, invention – ethnologists as well as historians, anthropologists and sociologists sought to address, analyze and interpret the newly emerging and manyfaceted cultural phenomena. The main line of reasoning was that these rituals or artifacts could be seen, on the one hand, as the expression of the identities of specific groups, and on the other hand, in a dialectical way, as constitutive factors in the shaping or construction of ethnic, national, regional loyalties. This implies that, from an ethnological point of view, cultural markers such as rituals and symbols, are explicitly taken as problematic, not as given. Taking ethnic consciousness – basically a shared belief in a common ancestry differing from that of other groups – as a point of departure, the variable and flexible ways this sentiment is articulated in cultural markers have become main areas of investigation for anthropologists and European ethnologists.

The journal *Ethnologia Europaea* and the 'Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore' (SIEF), from the early 1990s on, have taken a keen interest in the processes of ethnization of cultures. In 1994, these processes made up the theme for SIEF's 5th conference in Vienna.¹ Prompted by its success and because of the unremitting topicality of the role of ethnicity in



Participants in front of the location of the conference, the Royal Tropical Institute (Amsterdam). (Photo: Cor Mooij).

European culture, politics and societies, SIEF decided to devote its 6th conference of 1998 in Amsterdam, again to 'Roots and Rituals: Managing Ethnicity'. In view of their common theoretical concerns, it was only natural that the call for papers was addressed, not only to ethnologists, but to anthropologists and historians as well. Thereby, an interdisciplinary debate on ethnicity, its forms and meanings, conditions and impacts, could be raised. Taking account of the fact that 'the process of globalisation invokes or stimulates certain strategies for constructing and managing one's 'own' national, regional, local or non-territorially bound identities', it was suggested that a common topic of debate would be: 'Why do people foster and implement these imagined societies, based on shared perceptions of roots and rituals, and how are they "managed" in both cultural practice and ethnological science'. The words 'roots' and 'rituals' were employed, of course, in a metaphorical sense, without any suggestion of connotations of essentialism or primordialism. It came as no surprise that the call for papers met with a massive response. No less than 140 papers were presented at the conference, in 30 parallel sessions. These were preceded by 12 plenary lectures, accentuating more general and theoretical issues. These papers are published in a companion volume entitled *Managing Ethnicity*.²

For the volume at hand, the editors selected 60 papers. The Bockhorn's explicit theoretical contribution set aside, they all constitute exemplary case studies, drawing on a wealth of empirical data from specific historical and geographical contexts. Most of these concern European countries, or countries outside Europe with immigrant populations of European origin. For comparative purposes, a few contributions dealing with ethnicity in non-European countries were also admitted. Historically, the twentieth century predominates, although a few papers deal with ethnic phenomena in earlier centuries. All authors can be said to focus on the cultural construction of ethnic group identities – on the basis of perceived or experienced differences in language, religion, culture, history, descent, origin – and its instrumentalisation for various political, economic and cultural ends. These may vary from a struggle for independence, or the recognition of a community's special rights, to the ambition of a group to advance itself in society.

Taken together, these papers offer a variegated insight in the meanings and functions of the construction of ethnicity, in many kinds of social and political situations inside, and outside Europe. This volume, in addition, presents a balanced picture of recent studies in this field.

In order to facilitate the access to the papers, the editors have ordered them into thematic sections which generally correspond to the sessions of the conference: I. Ethnicity and ethnology; II. Ethnic groups, minorities, regional identities; III. Ethnic groups and the national state; IV. National identity; V. Negotiating identity, assimilation, ethnization; VI. Ethnic markers: symbols and rituals; VII. Ethnic markers: music, song, language; VIII. Presentation of culture: musealisation and tourism. In these sections, the papers are ordered alphabetically. Merely on a highly summarizing level, we will present here the content of each section.

Section I. Ethnicity and ethnology

In society at large, ethnicity is generally taken to refer to a set of static characteristics, biological as well as cultural. It has been appropriated by political ideologies eager to create an image of their own group as unchanging and homogeneous. For this reason, understandably, some ethnologists are hesitant about using the term ethnic in their own studies. *Elisabeth* and *Olaf Bockhorn*, for instance, recommend the use of the more neutral term 'group'. Only by suppressing the epithet 'ethnic', one can prevent any associations with an abominable, because politically heavily compromised, word like 'völkisch'. In most contributions to this volume, however, their suggestion has not yet been adopted. A clear example of the intricate relationship of politics and ethnology is provided by *Wojciech Olszewski*, in his historiographic study of how changes in the political climate have affected the course and content of ethnic studies in Poland during the 20th century. On the other hand, *Max Caisson* refers to the lack of influence of ethnology research on the nationalist movement in Corsica. He states that the analyses of the ethnologists, produced in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, couldn't be combined with the internally conflicting ideologies of the nationalist and autonomist movements.

Section II. Ethnic groups, minorities, regional identities

In the 1960s and 1970s, minority groups increasingly succeeded in claiming public attention and in securing their rights in international treaties and conventions, such as those concluded by UNO and the European Council. Article 11 of UNO's Minority Rights Declaration, for example, stipulates that 'states shall protect the existence and the national, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories, and shall encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity'.

Once fixed, these rights not merely served to protect the position of minorities already recognizable as such; they also stimulated a process of minorisation or (re)ethnization. A need, hardly articulated before, was now elicited to define one's own group as an ethnic minority within a surrounding dominant culture. In this process, the new minorities' elites played a decisive part (see the contributions of *Reetta Toivanen*, *Marjut Anttonen* and *Herbert Nikitsch*). By homogenizing internal differences and creating myths defining the singular ethnic identity of their groups, these elites sought to gain the material or legal benefits promised to minorities by international treaties and conventions. Their efforts, however, generally were not characterised by further political ambitions. Consequently, members of these minorities often show multiple allegiances. The Norwegian Kven, for instance, who came from Finland in the 18th and 19th century, nowadays cherish both their Finnish and Norwegian identities (Anttonen). In his study of the Slovak minority in Austria, Nikitsch, in order to describe their ambivalent attitude, introduces the term 'identity game'.

While fully participating in Austrian majority culture, they occasionally are prompted to express themselves culturally as Slovaks, e.g. in dishes or festivals. There still is a playful element to this. However, it may forebode more serious manifestations of the ethnization process.

Whereas displaying cultural markers often serves to draw ethnic borders, it may also be instrumentalised to promote a harmonious relation with the surrounding dominant culture. This strategy of re-ethnization was followed, as *Christiane Kugel* shows, by the Muslim community in Granada. Being absent for almost 500 years, it again could take up its abode in Spain when in 1978 religious liberty was embedded in the Spanish constitution.

These recent examples of the minorisation or ethnization process are paralleled by similar cases in the past. It is common to stereotype established ethnic groups by their presumed timeless characteristics. These stereotyped (self)images, however, appear to be cultural constructions, originating from specific social, political or economic circumstances. The impact of such factors is illustrated by *Peter Meurkens*. Whereas inhabitants of the Dutch province of Brabant today are prone to define themselves – and are defined by others – as jovial, diligent or devout Catholics by nature, he shows these characteristics to be only dating from the 19th century. The fact that group identities are constructions is also exemplified by their capacity to adapt to changing circumstances. The Cieszyn Lutherans in Silesia (Poland) developed their sense of group identity in accentuating cultural differences in opposition to the Catholic population in the same region. Communist rule succeeded in obscuring these differences, to the effect that, after its fall, Lutherans and Catholics professed a common regional identity. By now, this restyled identity is mobilised, for economic and political reasons, against newcomers into the region (*Marian Kempny*). From the list of factors contributing to the formation of a group or ethnic identity, the nature of a people's mode of existence must not be omitted, as *Evangelos Karamanes* contends for the case of inhabitants of some villages in Western Macedonia.

All contributions in this section point in the same direction: group identities are variable and relative to historical situations – not primordial.

Section III. Ethnic groups and the national state

Another important factor shaping the identity of ethnic groups is their relationship to the national state. Intentionally or unintentionally, the power and policies of national authorities contribute to different groups identifying themselves as separate cultural entities. A patent example of this is the invention, as *Mary de Haas* shows, of the Zulus as an ethnic community by the former South African apartheid regime. It allowed for the explanation of political violence as inherent in the Zulu's traditional ethnic culture – thereby obscuring its origins in the central government's racist policy.

In many countries, ethnic and regional groups find themselves opposing

the national state, to a greater or lesser extent and for diverse reasons. One of these may be the perceived injustice of a central government trying to infringe 'traditional' rights. As a defence, this may trigger off a process of cultural regionalisation or ethnization. *Jaro Stacul* illustrates such a reaction in his study of hunters in a Trentino valley resisting measures of the Italian state. Strikingly, they succeed in constructing a regional tradition – previously unarticulated – by appropriating traditions from the adjacent Austrian region. Within the same context, *Marie-Dominique Ribereau-Gayon* analyses the effects of the administrative division into districts on the cultural flesh out in France. By using the example of the Landes de Gascogne, she points out that in the creation of a new regional identity, equally advocated by hunters, opposition against the French government and, by extension, against the European Union, plays an important role. In order to make their strategies more effective, national authorities may resort to cultural constructions as well. For instance, by arguing that the inhabitants of the south of France possessed a number of innate characteristics which set them apart from the 'true French', the Paris central government in the 19th century sought to legitimise its repressive policy in the region (*Bernard Rulof*).

Though relations between the national state and ethnic groups can be strained, they can also be characterised by serious efforts at close cooperation. Embracing the idea of a multicultural society, national governments, particularly in Western European countries during the last few decades, have stimulated and supported the preservation of their immigrants' ethnic cultures. In the Netherlands, the state funded Dutch Centre for Popular Culture is active in this field (*Albert van der Zeijden*). Although largely directed at the soft side of ethnicity, minorities generally welcome these initiatives. However, a negative side effect of this state policy of articulating ethnic differences is that inter-ethnic relations can become seriously hampered. This was experienced by the German minority in Bohemia, in the 1930s. Understandably, this group nowadays shows little inclination to exhibit its ethnic culture and identity (*Katharina Eisch*).

Section IV. National identity

Nationalism and the construction of national identities are the theme of the contributions to this section. The construction of national identities generally operates along the same lines as that of regions or minorities. In order to generate a feeling of solidarity, history is re-written or given a deliberate twist, and elements of popular culture are instrumentalised to underline a nation's singularity. At the same time, however, this process closely resembles an arena in which different elites or interest groups compete for their own version of this national identity. This is the case, for instance, in Hungary, as *Attila Paládi-Kovács* outlines. Catholics, Calvinists and noblemen each propagate a different version of Hungarian national identity: Catholics refer to their Hungarian

saints and typical veneration of Mary, Calvinists claim the specific Hungarian character of their religion, and noblemen denounce the international – interpreted as unreliable – leanings of the working class. On Yap in Micronesia, the island's elite, itself internationally minded and hoping to gain from tourism, is actively constructing a national identity out of pre-colonial and modern cultural elements. To the islanders themselves, *Dietrich Treide* claims, this national identity is merely situational. They have multiple and shifting identities. According to specific circumstances they may also define themselves by other loyalties, e.g. residential, religious or social. Treide rightly points to the dynamic nature of the concept of identity, that will be operative in other situations as well.

Creating a national identity can be the work of political elites, but also of ethnologists and artists, as *João Leal* shows in his study on the Portuguese national character. Whereas ethnologists couldn't agree as to its content, poets in the 1900s succeeded in fixing it as best expressed in *saudade*, a feeling of grief over things lost, in particular the glory of Portugal's heydays. In later years, however, the history of this invention became obscured and *saudade* was essentialised as originating from a distant past.

The collapse of communism has unleashed a gulf of nationalistic feeling in Eastern European states. The tensions thereby provoked, *Róbert Keményfi* explains, are the result of the contradiction between the dominant idea that state boundaries should correspond to ethnic borders – ethnic groups being conceived as static entities – and the fact that actual populations are ethnically highly mixed. The emergence of new nation states in Eastern Europe allows a fascinating insight in the process of creating national symbols and redefining symbols from the past. *Alexandra Bitusikova* and *Juraj Podoba* analyze the workings of this process, the exchange of arguments pro and con, for Slovakia, the former in general and the latter focusing on the waterworks in the Danube. Whereas some denounce its symbolic value, because it was begun under communist rule, to others it is an expression of their ethnic identity, fuelled by the supposed obstruction in completing the works on the Hungarian side.

Usually, images of a nation are construed in the motherland itself. But they may also be generated from abroad, for instance by exiles, emigrants, refugees and diaspora communities. Such images are likely to be highly mythical, as *Christopher Peet* illustrates in the case of Tibet. The idea of Tibet being a peaceful nation was created, for political reasons, by an elite that had fled the country, and it fitted well into western conceptions of the harmonious character of eastern societies. It is, however, at odds with reality by obscuring the often violent nature of Tibetan politics in the past. Conversely, changes in the political climate in the motherland can directly affect the identity of their nationals living abroad. For instance, after the nazi take-over, German organisations in the Netherlands coldshouldered their Jewish compatriots (*Barbara Henkes*).

Whereas in many cases, ethnicity is the basis for constructions of national identity, recourse may also be taken to other notions. In the 18th century, the

concept of the 'good citizen' was developed, as *Tine Damsholt* illustrates for Denmark. This citizen loved his fatherland, worked hard, was prepared to defend his country as a soldier and bought national products. His and his fellow citizens' ethnic origins, however, were deemed irrelevant to the process of nation building.

Section V. Negotiating ethnicity, assimilation, ethnization

A number of papers deal with the ambiguities, hesitations and complexities of ethnic identities taking shape or finding expression, mostly in the context of immigrants' experiences in a new country of settlement. Studying this subtle process at the level of individuals proves highly illuminating, as *Åsa Andersson* and *Shirley Tate* show in their in-depth analyses of conversations of immigrant girls (identifying themselves as Assyrian, Somali, Serbian, etc.) in Sweden and of a group of friends in their 30s of African Caribbean ancestry in England, respectively. The conversational narratives in both papers exhibit a constant and almost simultaneous interplay of acceptance and refusal of pre-given ethnic labels and their meanings, a process of negotiation well-characterised by the term 'hybridity', as Tate does explicitly, and Andersson implicitly.

Similar processes can, of course, also be observed at a group level, in particular when groups stand out as (immigrant) minorities. *Gábor Wilhelm* outlines a refined analytical framework to describe the structural properties of situations (e.g. an unequal power relationship), that determine the nature of a minority group's ethnic label. This label can be chosen as such by the group itself, or it can be defined for the group, by outsiders; there are various intermediate positions as well. He illustrates his model by sketching the various shades of meaning of the term 'Gypsy' in Hungary, from the 18th century to the present. When people have emigrated, their uncertain status as immigrants inevitably affects their ethnic identity. Among the various choices and strategies available to them, they also have to decide on their attitude towards their country of origin. Again, there is a wide range of options, varying from an outright desire to adjust to the new surrounding culture, to an emotional nostalgia for the native country. When an immigrant minority experiences injustice and discrimination and cannot accept outside ethnic labels, a felt need to express a distinct ethnic identity – counteracting tendencies towards assimilation – may coincide with a strong involvement in the affairs of the country of origin. *Zafar Khan* and *Shanti Hettiarachchi* demonstrate this in their study of Kashmiris in Britain and their support in the struggle for a free Kashmir. The time factor cannot be left out, as *Pieter Stokvis* shows in his discussion of the immigration of Dutch Calvinists to the United States from the mid-19th century onwards. After a few generations, the barriers to assimilation are crumbling. That is not to say this is a linear process. On the contrary, there are clear indications of different attitudes, and even of cultural hybridity, also within generations.

Other authors equally point to this differential response within a seemingly monolithic immigrant group. *Natalia Shostak* indicates that the competition among Ukrainian Canadians over the definition of what is a true expression of 'Ukrainian' culture, may reflect differences in their positions in local society. In a similar vein, *Jasna Capo Zmegac* distinguishes between three different adjustment strategies among a group of Croatian migrants, and relates these to factors as age, occupation, education and personal ambition. Based on her personal experiences in Canada, *Henriette Kelker* pleads for immigrants adequately understanding their own cultural patrimony and identity as well as those of other groups, as the only guarantee for a viable pluralistic society.

In daily encounters between members of different ethnic groups in postcolonial societies, the colonial past and its culture can still be of pervasive influence. *Brigitte Schmidt-Lauber* demonstrates this in her study of the way in which Namibians of German descent treat their black servants. Feelings of cordiality within personal contacts appear to coexist with an acute sense of distance, based on (colonial) notions of biological and cultural superiority.

Section VI. Ethnic markers: symbols and rituals

There are intricate relationships between ethnic identities and the various ways these are articulated in rituals and symbols. Ethnological studies with a historical approach prove to be highly successful in laying bare the mechanisms of ethnogenesis. There is no such thing as a clear cut equation of ethnic rituals and identities; nor are they fixed from the outset. One witnesses, on the contrary, a constant interplay of deliberate efforts to construct ethnic rituals or symbols and different ways of appropriating them, even up to the point of eventually undermining them. Situating these processes in their historical contexts, and keeping a close eye on the parts played by the different groups of actors involved, might yield fascinating insights.

A fine example of such an approach is *Ferdinand de Jong's* anthropological study of a mask ritual in a Senegalese town, in the second half of the 20th century. Originally uniting participants of different ethnic groups, while accentuating the cultural dominance of one of them, the ritual became fragmented and restyled by several of the groups involved, according to their own ethnic traditions. By successfully disclaiming these rituals as unruly and unorthodox, the former dominant group succeeded in gaining control over the ritual again. Its effect was the reinstatement and even reinforcement of ethnic identities and boundaries. A tendency toward the opposite direction was detected by *Narcisa Stiuca*, in her analysis of the feast of Christmas in a town in Roumania. Not only were elements of the traditional celebration by different ethnic groups appropriated by other groups, sometimes they even participated in each other's rituals, particularly the young. Equally focusing on Christmas, *Monica Janowski*, in a personal narrative relating herself explicitly to the object of research, witnessed the artificial construction by Polish immigrants in the United Kingdom of a Christmas meal that is believed to be specifically Polish,

without there being, however, a factual basis for this perception. The function of this meal is to generate a feeling of shared ethnicity of the Polish community in the UK with Poles all over the world. While doing fieldwork in Borneo, she found that the Christmas meal of a Christian ethnic group there performed this very role of strengthening intra-ethnic solidarity.

In a similar vein, *Daniela Perco* and *Giuliana Sellan* analyse the process of the religious life, especially the local chapel, of Italian immigrants in the Brazilian countryside having come to symbolise and affirm their ethnic identity as Italians, often obliterating distinctions prevailing in the homeland. By taking a temporal perspective, differentiations in these identifications may become visible, as *Christina Rocha* indicates in her paper on the appreciation of the Japanese tea ceremony by Japanese immigrants in Brazil. Whereas the older generations sought to distance themselves from their Japanese roots, the younger ones take a more positive attitude to this ritual. She relates this shift to the high status attributed worldwide in the last decades to Japanese culture. In learning the tea ceremony, these youngsters and, interestingly, also Brazilians of non-Japanese descent, seek to raise their own status correspondingly. Studying life histories of successive generations of owners of Greek restaurants in Brussels, *Christina Moutsou* similarly detected an increase in their efforts to create a 'Greek' ambiance. Here too, a changing perception of their own role and economic interests were the main influential factors. *Ildikó Lehtinen* also found different appropriations and perceptions of the national costume of the Mari ethnic group, living in Central Russia, by different generations of women.

The power of national symbols to arouse intense emotions, is well known. *Lasta Djapovic* describes the strong emotional ties that bind Serbians to their native earth, even in a literal sense, as scraps of earth are sent in letters to nationals abroad. In situations of a country being oppressed or on the brink of independence, these symbols, for instance the national flag, acquire an even greater significance, as *Auksuole Cepaitiene* highlights when discussing political rallies in Lithuania during 1988. He contrasts the perception of the flag embodying the essence of the nation, however, with the process of its genesis. What colours eventually made up the flag was the outcome, in 1917/8, of a conscious choice out of several competing views. In this way, historical analysis puts the nature of national, and ethnic, loyalties in perspective. This may serve to make them more intelligible. *Claudia Schöning-Kalender* relates the Turkish women's enthusiasm in the 1920s to take off their scarfs, as an act of nationalistic symbolism, to Atatürk's speeches, in which he propounded the view of Turkish culture as essentially democratic and feminist. He based this idea on the sometimes neglected writings of a contemporary sociologist.

Section VII. Ethnic Markers: music, song, language

To ethnic groups, language is a prominent weapon in their struggle for appreciation and recognition by others, the national state in particular. In this con-

text, language is closely associated with culture and becomes an ethnic symbol. The second half of the 20th century witnessed an increasing number of regions in Europe demanding a special, often legal status, for their separate languages or dialects. Unless efforts were made to counter the spread of a standard language and to preserve regional languages, it was argued, there was a serious danger of their extinction, soon to be followed by the destruction of regional cultures and identities. Such initiatives can be successful, as *Reimer Alsheimer* shows in the case of the promotion of *plattdeutsch* in the Bremen area, but they can also be thwarted by national political authorities, as *Denis Laborde* illustrates in his analysis of the unfortunate history of the Centre Culturel du Pays Basque in Bayonne.

In the defence or fostering of a regional language, cultural and political aspirations – ranging from the struggle for territorial independence to the recognition as a separate political community – are often strongly interconnected. Language is a prime means to evoke a consciousness of socio-cultural identity, thereby stimulating actions of political self-defence. For example, in the 19th century, the philologist Augustijn Snellaert composed and published songs in the Flemish language, in order that they might serve the cause of equal rights for both Flemings and Walloons in Belgium (*Stefaan Top*). In the same vein, the German philologist Johann Wilhelm Wolf (1817-1855) edited the first large folk narrative collections in Flanders: *Niederländische Sagen* and *Deutsche Märchen und Sagen*. He also contributed to the rise of Flemish consciousness by pointing at the necessity to preserve the traditions of former Belgians – a more singular way of life, a characteristic literature and a vernacular language. However, he came in conflict with some figures of the Flemish Movement, because of his activities within the framework of Pan-Germanism (*Katrien Verschaeren*). Similarly, *Radost Ivanova* analyses the transformation of Kosovo epic poetry, an originally artistic reflection of an event related to Serbian history that changed into an ideological weapon in the ethnic struggle in the Balkans.

The promotion of one language can at the same time serve the cause of political separation and that of integration, as is illustrated in two studies on the position of Gaelic in the political and cultural discourse in Ireland. The IRA, considering Gaelic to be a unique feature of the ethnic culture of the Catholic population, instrumentalises this language as just another weapon in their fight against the British state (*Lars Kabel*). This appropriation of Gaelic by the nationalists is contested, however, by a Belfast cultural organisation that tries to disseminate, as yet to little effect, the view of the Irish language as the common heritage of both Catholics and Protestants, unionists and nationalists (*Gordon McCoy*). *Iris Steen* outlines that similar efforts aimed at cultural integration on the basis of a shared language, particularly in the field of education, did not work out in Flanders and the Netherlands, because of prevailing cultural differences in other respects, such as their political and administrative culture. The overriding influence of borders, not only on language policy but on language itself, is demonstrated by *Leonie Cornips* in her sociolinguistic

study of language change in the Dutch province of Limburg. Whereas shortly after the creation of state borders in the first half of the 19th century, the same dialects were spoken in Dutch Limburg and the German Rhineland, by the late 20th century, marked differences had evolved. This linguistic development reflected the need, on the Dutch side, for an own Limburg identity.

By positing from the outset language, music and song on a par with ethnic culture, there is a danger of overlooking other aspects, pointing in a different or even an opposite direction, thereby creating a false view. For instance, in his study of the origins and development of Dutch male singing societies in the 19th century, *Jozef Vos* contests the thesis that these were closely related to the upcoming national movement. On the contrary, these societies first of all proved to be representatives of their local communities. Their rituals, even the National Singer's Festivals, appeared to be nationalistic, but their roots were definitely local. Also in studying the content of songs, an unbiased point of view is imperative. This is demonstrated in *Henk Dragstra's* analysis of national stereotypes in 17th century broadside ballads (printed songsheets catered to both the literate and the illiterate consumer). Rather than focusing exclusively on the ethnic aspects of certain specific ballads, he views these stereotypes in the context of a popular tradition of listing and criticizing categories of people, whether on social, economical, sexual, religious, local, or national grounds. The use of stereotypes and ridicule of foreigners in broadside ballads could help to integrate new and uncomfortable elements into the social texture.

Section VIII. Presentation of culture: musealisation and tourism

Since the middle of the 19th century, traditions and rituals of groups and communities are also indicated as manifestations of regional or national identity. In this section some real-life cases of traditions and rituals are discussed in the context of the musealisation of folk culture. These examples allow insight into the process in which the meaning of objects and traditions change by relocation. Museums play an active role in the construction of ethnic identity. *Michèle Baussant* illustrates this in view of the example of the exposition 'Les Grecs de Grenoble', in the Musée Dauphinois in 1993. She makes some critical comments on the evoked image of the Greek in Grénoble.

Adriaan de Jong describes the role that traditional costumes played in the rituals of national unity in the period of 1850 to 1920 in the Netherlands. In the last two decades of the 19th century, symbols of national unity began to play an important role. The monarchy of the house of Orange, with the young heiress to the throne, was one symbol of unity, traditional costumes another. Traditional costumes were considered to be a serious part of the cultural heritage. First, the costumes were brought together in exhibitions and museums. Later, country people came to show themselves in traditional costumes at celebrations and festivals. Showing costumes of different regions together in one place was considered to be encouraging for national concord. They became

a symbol of unity in diversity, which they had not originally been.

How the meaning of objects changes by displaying them in another context in a museum, has been made clear by *Uwe Claassen* in the example of the so-called 'Hindelooper-kamer'. In the 19th century this showroom of the town Hindeloopen in the Dutch province Friesland had grown into a Dutch symbol of folk art, expressing the national character. In the 'Museum für Volkskunde' in Berlin, in 1999, the Hindelooper-kamer was only partially reconstructed. The central theme of the exhibition was the influence of foreign cultures on the displayed objects in this room. By doing so, the museum removed the Hindelooper-kamer from the context of national and ethnic clichés.

The growing interest in the 'authentic cultural heritage' of different communities in the postwar society stimulated the process of relocation. Cultural tourism went along with this development. The increasing interest in and sympathy for indigenous people and their ways of life can have both positive and negative effects on the locals. A few examples of the positive effects are the growing awareness of ethnic (local) identity among the locals and the economic advantages of the presence of tourists and their growing demand for indigenous products. This can be illustrated by the success of the Indian music groups in the streets of many European cities, and the Indian youngsters who sell textile products from the Andes, music-cassettes and cd's, emphasizing their Indian identity (*Jeroen Windmeijer*). On the other hand, the presence of tourists can lead to a transformation of living communities into open-air museums, and to tourist entertainments in which local traditions get different meanings for different persons. Because of this, tension grows between the function of traditions and rituals in the daily practice of the participants on the one hand, and the musealisation of folk culture for the benefit of a broader audience on the other hand. In his article about the growth of cultural tourism, *Jeremy Boissevain* points at the increasing number of back-stage-rites, which are hidden from the view of the cultural tourists, as a reaction of the native local community to these developments. To the locals, these hidden rituals are important in maintaining solidarity in communities that are both overrun by masstourism and tied to a work regime that limits socializing for months on end.

The construction of ethnic identities, as the contributions to this volume exemplify, is a dynamic activity, varied in form and shape, and situational. In many cases, its purpose is to instrumentalise what differentiates social groups – be these differences merely perceived or rightout invented – for individual or collective interests. These may vary from the commercial concerns of a small Greek restaurant to the reinforcement of the solidarity, identity and political aspirations of entire communities and nations. Attributing specific ethnic meanings to social groups or cultural elements can be a quite short process. Once fixed, however, these meanings can constitute a durable and accepted truth to many. It is a shocking experience to witness these two aspects of the ethnization process, operative in almost any society. Therefore, the editors seriously hope

that this volume will stimulate an ongoing critical reflection on this phenomenon, as demanded both by our discipline and society at large.

Notes

1. The plenary lectures held at this conference were published by Klaus Beitz & Olaf Bockhorn: *Ethnologia Europaea. 5. Internationaler Kongreß der Société Internationale d'Ethnologie en de Folklore (SIEF, Wien 12.-16.9. 1994. Plenarvorträge* (Vienna 1995).
2. Regina Bendix & Herman Roodenburg (ed.), *Managing Ethnicity. Perspectives from folklore studies, history and anthropology* (Amsterdam 2000).