



A “Stranger” Researching Narratives in Southern Slovakia: Hungarian Minority Research by an Anthropologist Who Is Not “At Home”

Yuko KAMBARA

University of Kitakyushu, Japan
Central European University, Hungary
kambara@kitakyu-u.ac.jp

Abstract. This paper considers methodological questions regarding cultural/social anthropological research in multiethnic fields. Specifically, I attempt to reconsider the possibility of anthropological research by a “stranger” based on a research that I—a Japanese anthropologist—conducted in southern Slovakia. Anthropology originally developed as the study of other cultures; in some European countries, however, most anthropological research is conducted by anthropologists who are “at home”. For Slovak and Hungarian researchers, the Hungarian minority has been a common research target; therefore, many inhabitants, both ethnic Hungarians and Slovaks, have already experienced social research as subjects. Some interviewees get use to present a narrative expressing how they think about a certain topic. This research condition points to a fundamental question in the interviews of anthropological research. In this paper, therefore, my research experience is described to analyze reflexively my research position in the field.

In fact, it is difficult to theoretically define the boundary between “at home” and “stranger”; the difference depends on the context of each study. Anthropologists need to interpret their narratives by considering the results of participant observation and reflexivity in the research. “Stranger” anthropologists might have the advantage of noticing informants’ reflexivity in their narratives. This discussion can, in turn, become part of an ongoing process by which inhabitants’ interactions with researchers create new master narratives in the field.

Keywords: anthropology at home, minority, reflexivity, narrative, stranger

Introduction: the position of ethnographic research by a foreigner

Ethnic Hungarians make up the largest minority group in Slovakia, accounting for almost 8.5%¹ (2011) of the country's total population. Most Hungarians live in southern Slovakia. This is because they have mostly remained in the same region since the period when the current territories of Slovakia and Hungary were ruled as a single country. The ethnic issue concerning Hungarian minorities is well known in Slovakia.² The mass media have spread various kinds of information regarding "ethnic conflict" between Slovaks and ethnic Hungarians. Political debates regarding language laws, nationality laws, and other minority-related concerns have frequently arisen.³ The Hedvig Malina (Hedviga Malinová) incident, which transformed from a claim of violence to an ethno-political affair, has remained a controversy in Slovakia since 2006. The unveiling ceremony for a statue of Hungarian king St. Stephen (István) in Komárno nearly became a diplomatic issue in 2009.

I have conducted field research in southern Slovakia as a Japanese anthropologist who speaks Slovak.⁴ Most ethnic Hungarian and Slovak informants emphasize their peaceful multiethnic community life in southern Slovakia despite frequently reported incidents of ethnic tension between Slovaks and Hungarians (Kambara 2015a, 2015b). While we can respect these realities described by informants, we should be more sensitive to their narratives reflecting the research surroundings. Most informants understand why researchers are interested in minority issues; they know that foreign researchers tend to believe some ethnic conflicts exist. In fact, the Hungarian minority has been a common research target in Slovakia; therefore, they have already experienced social research as subjects. As such, they might be bored with the outsider perception of "ethnic conflict" and therefore might not talk about their real everyday lives. In my own research, the visible foreignness of a non-European researcher might give locals the impression of being "interviewed

1 The data for the national census of the Slovak Republic is available on the official website of the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (<https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/ext/home> – last visit on January 26, 2017).

2 I have published another paper that addresses in greater detail the situation of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia following the 1990s (Kambara 2014a).

3 I have published another paper that addresses in greater detail the Hungarian language issues in Slovakia (Kambara 2014b).

4 I did not speak Hungarian when I started this research in 2013 because my research career as a cultural anthropologist began with fieldwork in a Slovakian area in 2005. Since 2017, I have begun to use Hungarian in my field research. Therefore, my research language for this project was mainly Slovak, with supplementary English and Hungarian. My lack of skill in Hungarian was not a serious problem in interviews because most ethnic Hungarian community elites are bilingual. In terms of the issue with respect to participant observation, I address it in a later section of this paper.

by a stranger.” This paper will therefore deal with the methodological question of cultural/social anthropological research in multiethnic fields. Specifically, I aim to reconsider the possibility of anthropological research by a “stranger” through my own research experience in southern Slovakia.

This research concern is tricky for anthropologists since cultural anthropology originally developed as the study of other cultures, especially those in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and South America. However, many anthropologists have also conducted research in their own countries. This style of anthropology has been called “anthropology at home” in methodological discussions since the 1980s–1990s (Jackson 1987a, Peirano 1998). Especially in Europe, many countries have traditions of ethnology and folklore research that investigates the culture of their own citizens; this continues to be a foundation of the current cultural anthropology in such countries (Schippers 1995; Hann 1987, 2007; Hann, Sárkány, and Skalník 2005). Therefore, the cultural anthropology of Europe has mainly comprised European anthropologists researching topics directly related to their own countries. Foreign cultural anthropologists are relatively marginalized among domestic scholars in Europe. Moreover, social research on current issues is pursued not only by cultural anthropologists but also by sociologists, political scientists, linguists, and educators. Such scholars conduct qualitative and quantitative research on domestic issues, including minority issues. Therefore, it is necessary for European cultural anthropology in particular to rethink the possibility of research by strangers.

In this paper, I examine the possibility of research by foreign anthropologists in terms of the following: 1) a researcher’s foreignness as compared with the “anthropology at home” argument at the methodological level, 2) external influence on minority research, and 3) reflexivity based on informants’ previous experiences of social research. To analyze my own research position in the field, I attempt to describe my research experience reflexively, including interactions with informants.

Narrative to a stranger?

Since 2013, I have conducted research in cities with a relatively high density of ethnic Hungarians.⁵ Most of my fieldwork has been carried out alone, as this is typical of anthropological research. However, since I joined an interdisciplinary research project as a cultural anthropologist, I have also worked with other Japanese

5 I conducted research mainly in Dunajská Streda (Dunaszerdahely) and Komárno (Komárom). I also held interviews in other cities throughout southern Slovakia: Štúrovo (Párkány), Šamorín (Somorja), Rožnova (Roznyó), Kráľovský Chlmec (Királyhelmec), Košice (Kassa), and Bratislava (Pozsony).

scholars on interviews with important political figures.⁶ The main purpose of the project has been to investigate Slovak–Hungarian ethnic symbiosis from historical, political, socio-pedagogical, religious-historical, and anthropological perspectives.

Some interviews were conducted quite officially. However, there are no significant differences in the main directions of narratives between individual interviews conducted alone and collective official interviews. These interviews showed me that there are several patterns of master narratives among the locals, which included the locals that were Hungarian-Slovak bilinguals as well as Slovak monolinguals. General examples of these master narratives include the following (Frič 1995; Kambara 2015a, 2015b):

- We live here peacefully—only politicians/extremists cause ethnic conflict.
- Common locals do not think about their ethnicity in everyday life. Therefore, ethnic conflicts do not arise.
- It is true that some Slovaks do not like Hungarians, but they do not live here.
- We were born in Slovakia and have lived together with Slovaks for a long time.

As mentioned earlier, in the interviews, local residents generally emphasized their peaceful lives in southern Slovakia. Of course, inhabitants are aware of the political arguments and the instances of ethnic tension. Many ethnic Hungarians have suffered from their collective memory of life under the Beneš decrees (Beňušková 2010, Šutaj 2015). Hate messages and vandalism in public places, including on the Internet, have been reported as well (Jablonický 2009, Orosz 2012). Although there are many causes provoking the image of “ethnic conflict”, locals still told me of their peaceful everyday lives. The first narrative (“We live here peacefully—only politicians/extremists cause ethnic conflict.”) is typically used to explain the contradiction between their peaceful lives and the reported ethnic conflicts. In my previous research, I considered the function of this peaceful discourse: they are not describing the facts of the community but are creating a community composed of those who can share in the peaceful narrative (Kambara 2015b).⁷ In other words, they simply do not regard those who want to cause trouble as community members; they maintain peace in the communities with those who believe in peace.

6 My research includes 21 interviews I conducted myself, participant observations with small, informal interviews in local places, and 11 collective interviews held with some of my non-anthropologist colleagues, of whom half speak Slovak and half Hungarian.

7 I have added some explanation of this topic since the article (Kambara 2015b) is published only in Japanese. In that paper, important data included the practices of anti-Hungarian Slovaks (but not political activists) in southern Slovakia, in contrast to the Hungarian (and multiethnic) community. Usually, they have no communication with ethnic Hungarians. It is interesting that they also never complain about ethnic Hungarians in front of Slovaks who have family or friendship connections with the ethnic Hungarian community. This is because they want to avoid conflicts in their Slovak community. I concluded that the peaceful narrative is fragile but is still supported by such careful communications.

In this paper, however, I consider another possible factor in their responses: they want to reflexively present an ideal multiethnic community to a foreign researcher. Locals sometimes mentioned complaints about people belonging to other ethnic groups; however, they carefully explained that it did not come from their neighbors in the same community. For example: “I have many good Slovak friends, but some who are not southern Slovaks are intolerant of ethnic Hungarians when we make grammatical mistakes. They want us to speak perfect Slovak.”

Some interviewees talked about people who engage in ethnic harassment, judging such people as being politically agitated and uneducated. They also explain that the political agitators come from outside of southern Slovakia (both Slovakia and Hungary). Obviously, the interview setting influences an interviewee’s choice of words. Indeed, the mayor of an ethnic Hungarian-majority city spoke to me about previous interview experiences and admitted that interview conditions necessarily influence his responses: “Once, a member of the Venice Commission came here to hear about the Beneš decrees and the lived experiences of Hungarian speakers. At that time, a staff member from the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs was also sitting with them. I think this was not good a condition for an interview about minority issues.”⁸

That might be an extreme case, but our interviewees might have also regarded us as a foreign delegation. Our interviewees could choose what and how they answered. It could be the case that respondents would tell us the truth but not provide full answers to our questions. In particular, minority elites or community leaders tend to be accustomed to speaking in official interviews.

Such anthropological methodological questions have been discussed for a long time. This is why anthropologists not only depend on interviews but also perform participant observation in their fieldwork. In his influential book on ethnographic research, *The Professional Stranger*, Agar (1996) suggests that an anthropologist should maintain a stranger’s perspective in field research in order to analyze practices. However, he does not define the parameters of what constitutes a “stranger” (Agar 1996). Generally, the disadvantages of anthropologists “at home” as well as of native anthropologists have been more widely discussed. Such researchers tend to lose sight of cultural differences in their home field (Kempny 2012: 43). Sometimes their gender, religion, ethnicity, or social status can become a serious obstacle in their fieldwork; such researchers are easily embedded in the cultural and political context of the field (Jahan 2014). Nevertheless, they have also advantages, such as not needing to learn a new language or set of customs, as well as more opportunities to conserve financial resources for their research (Jackson 1987b: 8). Meanwhile, foreign researchers can face disadvantages as

8 Interview with the mayor of a city in southern Slovakia on September 12, 2013.

anthropologists, even though they are often regarded as unbiased.⁹ Foreign researchers risk misinterpreting the meanings of local behaviors and are not necessarily objective when they live with informants in the community through their fieldwork.

Although the term “anthropology at home” has been widely used in cultural anthropology, the definition of “at home” is not fixed. Usually, it simply refers to researching within one’s national territory. Research subjects can include both majority and minority cultures. For example, much of Brazilian anthropology could be called anthropology at home, though it includes plentiful studies of indigenous people (Peirano 1998). Norwegian anthropology also includes studies of Sami and migrants (Eriksen 2009). Generally, Roma people and non-European migrant communities are common research targets in European anthropology at home. In these cases, the researchers could very well be strangers at home.

In addition, the term “native” complicates the meaning of “at home.” This is due to the crossing of two different contexts: the tradition of European ethnology and the emergence of native anthropologists from non-Western postcolonial countries. Some anthropologists emphasize the term “native anthropologist”, usually in specific cases where non-Western researchers studying at Western universities study their home countries. However, other researchers use the term “at home” in the same situation (Jahan 2014, Mughal 2015). British-Polish anthropologist Kempny defined herself as a Polish native when she conducted research in a Polish community in Northern Ireland (Kempny 2012). She used the term “native” because the Polish community in Northern Ireland was not her home. Her definition of “native anthropologist” is distinct from the postcolonial sense. The concepts of “at home” and “native” are both too broad in the contemporary globalized world for a researcher to conclusively align himself or herself as such. At the theoretical level, it is difficult to define the concept of “at home” as opposed to a “stranger” in anthropological research. However, in the case of southern Slovakia, at the methodological level, a “stranger” could be distinguished as a non-Slovak and non-Hungarian foreigner. Hungarian minority anthropologists could be regarded as natives. However, it is difficult to judge the boundary of an ethnic Hungarian researcher since some Slovak and Hungarian scholars have backgrounds as Hungarian minorities in Slovakia.

A simple way to examine differences in informants’ reactions is to compare research results obtained by foreign and domestic researchers. The abovementioned peaceful narratives do not only appear in my research. In fact, previous qualitative studies have also characterized local communities as having peaceful, multicultural everyday experiences. Such authors are not only Slovaks and Hungarians (Botíková, Navrátil, Öllös, and Végh 1994; Frič 1993; Lukácsová and Kusá

9 Actually, our previous research results (Ieda 2014, Ieda and Nagayo 2015) are understood as an objective approach in the book review of a Hungarian journal (Gyelik 2016: 165).

1995; Macháček, Heinrich, and Alekseeva 2011) but also researchers from other countries (Ellen 2003, Torsello 2003). In particular, only the research of Botíková et al. (1994) mentions some conflicts between Slovak and Hungarian inhabitants in the community. That project involved collaboration between ethnic Hungarian and ethnic Slovak researchers; thus, they might have been able to easily obtain such stories from locals. Yet, that is not enough to determine whether the results might have been influenced by the researchers’ ethnicities. I did not obtain similar results in ethnographic research on Hungarian minorities in Slovakia. The Hungarian minority research institute *Fórum* publishes the social science journal *Fórum Társadalomtudományi Szemle* and the ethnographic journal *Acta Ethnologica Danubiana*. The former journal often covers minority issues but mainly from the perspectives of political science, history, minority education, and sociology using quantitative research. The latter focuses on the culture of everyday life among ethnic Hungarians but not always in relation to current ethnic relationships.¹⁰

Considering such diversity in researchers’ interests, researcher collaboration has strong potential for approaching reality in the field, as with the ethnographic research of Botíková et al. (1994). Similarly, American sociologist Brubaker studied the Hungarian minority in Romania and described the lives of ordinary people without ethnic conflicts under the salience of ethnopolitics (Brubaker, Feischmidt, Fox, and Grancea 2006). Brubaker’s ethnographic research was conducted in collaboration with researchers who included ethnic Hungarians and Romanians from Transylvania. Here, there is still the possibility of discussing research on Hungarian minorities from the perspective of a stranger. The authors made an effort to analyze ethnicity in everyday life through not only dialogues with informants but also through discussions with his co-authors (Brubaker et al. 2006: xvii). Even if opportunities for collaboration in research are limited by financial or organizational constraints, this can be overcome by researchers’ intensive efforts to discuss social phenomena among those whom the topics concern.

Influences in Hungarian minority research

As mentioned in the previous section, Hungarian minority researchers, including anthropologists and ethnologists, have published many studies. However, their focuses have been slightly different from interethnic relationships. The closest works I can identify are Árendás (2011) and Liszka (2003). The former one focuses on the hybridity of minority identity, while the latter one on the historical transformation of folk culture in southern Slovakia. It is understandable that

10 Hungarian minority researchers have also published many ethnographies, but not all of these deal with actual interethnic relationships (e.g. Liszka 2003, Juhász 2005, Keményfi 2002).

some research interests cannot be shared between strangers and researchers “at home”. This is because foreign anthropologists sometimes describe phenomena that are too natural or common for them to discern new findings. In addition, we should also consider that the minority issue itself is located in a certain political context as an actual problem. Some topics are quite sensitive to study, especially when the researchers themselves are involved in the problem.

Greek-Jewish anthropologist Kravva, who studied Jews in Greece, explained the difficulties of neutral descriptions within the wider political context of Jews (Kravva 2003). Academic inquiry into national cultural origin sometimes connects with another type of politics. Cotoi (2013) highlighted the example of the small ethnic/religious minority group *Csangos* in Eastern Romania, which is involved in the cultural politics of Hungary, Romania, and the church; it is difficult to clearly define this group as either ethnic Hungarian or ethnic Romanian. Hungarian minorities could sense a risk of being involved in political conflicts based on their research results on contemporary multiethnic communities.

On the other hand, some specific topics—such as minority education and the language choices of inhabitants—are studied quite well by other disciplines, even though those topics are political enough to relate to minority rights (Dolník and Pilecký 2012, Győriová-Baková 2015, Lampl 2015, Tóth 2003, Vajda 2010). Social research on minorities is relevant to their actual problems in Slovakia and useful for improving their condition. The *Fórum* institute, established by ethnic Hungarians as an NGO, is a center for minority research and also provides opportunities for collaboration on policy-making based on their research results.

In addition, applied anthropology, which emphasizes social engagements in the field, is also becoming influential in Europe. Norwegian anthropology is closely linked to public engagement within Norwegian society (Eriksen 2009, Howell 2010). In Slovakia, this still has not spread completely. British anthropologist Okely, who studies Roma in Europe, remarked that Roma studies are inevitably connected with political commitment since the Roma is a matter of social inclusion (Okely 1987: 2015). The highly social concerns regarding research on Roma should be evaluated as applied anthropology, but Okely also notes that such debates also marginalize anthropological research on Roma (Okely 2015: 350). If cultural anthropologists engage more actively with social matters, their roles may become close to those of policy designers who manage practical details. Many European anthropologists are also concerned about how research fundraising would influence the direction of anthropology (Papataxiarchis 2015, Gregory 2015, Miller 2015, Okely 2015). If this tendency is strengthened, only subjects that anthropologists can approach as actual social problems (e.g. migrants, other ethnic or religious minorities, gender, or regional development) can be pursued to continue their studies. Nevertheless, other subjects are also essential for deeply understanding a social phenomenon such as culture.

These issues regarding anthropology at home can promote diversity in research interests among local and foreign researchers in Europe. This is because it is difficult for domestic anthropologists to ignore the demands of their own countries. Current diversity in research interests can reflect the differing perceptions between Hungarian minorities and others. The possibility exists for a stranger anthropologist to relativize or rethink the issues as a culture within these contexts from another position.

Reflexivity in research

Most anthropologists avoid directly asking about interviewees' identities because, based on postmodern ethnicity discourse, we understand the difficulties of distilling the nature of ethnic identity from informants' narratives (e.g. Brubaker 2004). However, ethnic identification is a common topic in social research, and it is an important question in the national census, which can count the number of Hungarian minorities. People can answer this question by using the corresponding information. As discussed earlier, various kinds of qualitative and quantitative social research has been conducted by mainly domestic researchers in southern Slovakia. This means that a large part of the Hungarian minority has had the experience of being a research subject. Such experiences have formed their unconscious perceptions of themselves.

A discussion of identity spontaneously occurred during a collective interview, which was conducted as a roundtable discussion with local ethnic Hungarians (teachers, a doctor, a historical researcher, and a local government worker). The following discussion¹¹ was prompted by a question from my Japanese colleagues:

A: We should have ethnic consciousness and pride. We speak Slovak and understand Slovak without a problem. Many students successfully study in high schools and universities in Slovakia. However, some ethnic Hungarians have such disappointing experiences that when we do not know something about Slovakia or cannot explain ourselves in Slovak, Slovaks criticize us, saying, “Why do you not know it in Slovak? You were born in Slovakia, you should know it.” We are not Slovaks, and Slovak is not our mother tongue. We should be proud of our education as a Hungarian minority in order to not be too hesitant in Slovakia.

11 This discussion occurred on September 7, 2016. The excerpted dialog was in Slovak, except the parts of A, who spoke in Hungarian, while B translated it into Slovak. A is a teacher in a local school, B is a historian at the research institute who helped organize this discussion, C is a doctor, and SN (Susumu Nagayo) and TN (Tatsuya Nakazawa) are Japanese colleagues of mine.

S. N.: Is it possible to imagine a dual or mixed Slovak-Hungarian identity?

B: Yes... It is possible, we understand it..., but....

T. N.: According to my survey (Nakazawa 2012, 2014, 2015), many ethnic Hungarian students identified their identity as being “Hungarians in Slovakia” or mixed “Slovak-Hungarians”. What do you think about that? Do you think this is an exceptional case for university students?

B:I understand it, but it is difficult to explain.... Once, I also explained the same thing to another Slovak professor.... I can also say “Hungarian in Slovakia”, of course, because both cultures are similar, and we have lived together with Slovaks for a long time. Also, we feel a difference from Hungarians from Hungary. We are more tolerant and more patient because we always feel some pressure as a minority.

(...)

S. N.: How do you think about European identity? Both Slovaks and Hungarians are members of the European Union. Don't you think that European identity becomes an option for a solution to manage identity problems?

C: Citizenship and ethnic identity are different.... Ethnic identity does not change. Even it is impossible for me to have a dual identity.

S. N.: You speak Slovak fluently, but you do not regard yourself as having a dual identity?

B: That is why I say I am a Hungarian in Slovakia. My spirit is made up of what I inherited from my family. Slovakia as a state is important for us because we live here. But Hungarian identity is also important for us.

There are two remaining points in this discussion. The first concerns the difficulty the interviewees had explaining their own identity; the second concerns minorities' reflexive reactions to research. In this discussion, some attendees did not answer questions directly. My colleague directed questions to *A* and *C*, but *B* answered instead because the others were embarrassed. *A* talked eagerly about the necessity of minority education as a teacher but did not answer questions about her identity. The nature of their identities was not easily conveyed by the term “dual identity” or mixed “Slovak-Hungarians”. *B* eventually chose to

use the expression “Hungarians in Slovakia”, and she seemed satisfied with her explanation.

Minorities’ reflexivity, as I indicated in my second point, is also important in this case. *B* discussed her ethnic identity in place of other attendees and remarked that she had already explained it for another minority research project. (I imagine she only wanted to say this to express the difficulty of describing minority identity.) Many minority elites have likely had similar experiences. Social research not only investigates people but also gives them an opportunity to present a narrative expressing how they think about a certain topic. In other words, locals usually do not have opportunities to verbalize their concept of identity in everyday life. The provisional expression “Hungarians in Slovakia” can therefore be understood as a compromised selection from a vocabulary developed through the experience of being research subjects.

However, it is questionable whether such an identity narrative is effective in the community. The current community is not a holistic or organic monolith. Research on minority groups involves the paradox that ethnic boundaries have never been defined, especially in the margins of their community. Some researchers have already noticed this ambiguity in the boundary of the Hungarian minority. A. Gergely (2014) insists that the Hungarian minority was politicized and that the cultural meaning of “minority” has been weakened under the processes of globalization and Europeanization. Árendás (2011) notes the hybridity of identity between Slovaks and Hungarians in cases of ethnically mixed-marriage families. These studies describe the contemporary reality of minority communities from a new perspective, which local inhabitants themselves may find difficult to generalize.

For anthropologists, informants’ narratives are only part of the reality in the field since people cannot always articulate their experiences and feelings. To account for this, anthropologists frequently interpret locals’ actual practices through participant observation. In my research, the effectiveness of participant observation was limited because of my inability to understand Hungarian. This is a limitation of the paper; however, I attempted to conduct in-depth interviews so as to gain the fullest possible understanding of their practices. For my main informants among community elites, I asked for details about their careers and workplaces, their cultural or political activities, the personal backgrounds of their current positions, and so on. Those data were useful for understanding the details of their peaceful lives. Meanwhile, many ordinary people also showed unconcern for ethnicity. The narrative in which minorities were not interested in their own identities was confusing because it was hard to ignore the objective phenomena of ethnic tension. Weakened identity, as noted by A. Gergely (2014) and Árendás (2011), is hard for people to express. Researchers are often blind to the difference between what they are able to understand and what interviewees want to convey. The discourse on

peaceful community life and unconcern for ethnicity also reveal the existence of their agency in reacting to minority research. This could reflect a resistance by the minority against the notion that they should express their identity to strangers. In this case, “strangers” are those who come from outside of the Hungarian minority community, including Slovaks and Hungarians not from southern Slovakia.

Conclusions

In this paper, I have aimed to rethink the possibility of anthropological research by a “stranger”. In the field of cultural anthropology, it should be obvious that research involves understanding a culture by relativizing it from another cultural viewpoint. However, this assumption is not effective in a field in which anthropologists at home are the majority, as it is the case in Central Europe. Theoretically, as I have argued, the boundary between “home” and “stranger” is losing its effectiveness, especially in the case of minority research. Aside from the researcher’s position in field research, cultural anthropologists should consider reflexivity based on the influence of informants’ previous experiences as subjects. “Stranger” anthropologists may have an advantage here because they tend to carefully examine the context of each phenomenon. Foreign viewpoints have the potential to collaborate with local researchers.

The capacity to describe cultural reality is one distinguished advantage of cultural anthropology. However, such ambiguous details are hardly shared among inhabitants’ narratives. The discourse of a peaceful community life and the unawareness of ethnic identity reflect parts of minorities’ realities, but these are too simplistic. Anthropologists need to interpret these narratives considering the results of participant observation and reflexivity in the research. This discussion, in turn, will become part of an ongoing process by which inhabitants’ interactions with researchers create new master narratives among ethnic Hungarians.

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