

**AEER Spring 2006 issue**

**“ANTHROPOLOGY OF EAST EUROPE:  
FILLING THE GAPS IN GLOBAL ATTENTION?”**

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While surfing the web earlier this month, we stumbled upon the website of “GAP—Global Attention Profiles,” a project of Harvard Law professor Ethan Zuckerman (see his website at <http://h2odev.law.harvard.edu/ezuckerman/>). Professor Zuckerman has developed a method of mapping the countries of the world according to the daily news coverage of prominent news media outlets such as the New York Times, Reuters News Service, and the BBC news. Countries garnering more than 3.2% of the news coverage in a day are shaded red, while countries accounting for less than 0.3% of news coverage are shaded violet. As one might expect, recent profiles feature the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Iraq, Japan, and China in deep red. In contrast, most of the countries of Africa, Latin America, and Central and Eastern Europe consistently appear in violet, regardless of population size. According to Zuckerman, consumers of the mass media are likely to suffer from a deficiency of information about many countries in the world:

*A GAP is analagous to the ingredients and health information on food packaging. When you eat potato chips, it's worth knowing that you're not ingesting much Vitamin C. Eat nothing but potato chips and you're likely to end up catching scurvy. (Zuckerman, <http://h2odev.law.harvard.edu/ezuckerman/faq.html>)*

Zuckerman offers a contemporary illustration of some of the consequences of such a deficiency:

*Immediately post 9/11, much of the world discovered that it was suffering from an information deficiency concerning Central Asia. For a brief interval, there was a great deal of media interest in Afghanistan and surrounding nations... Afghanistan still receives media attention, but media attention is radically reduced in the other countries in Central Asia. This raises the disturbing question: "Is our media paying enough attention to Central Asia?" (Zuckerman, <http://h2odev.law.harvard.edu/ezuckerman/faq.html>)*

Anthropology is a discipline with a unique commitment to filling in the gaps left by the deficiencies of the corporate media. Anthropologists work in virtually every corner of the globe, including those countries that appear regularly in the daily news. The strength of our discipline, however, can be measured in our dedication to presenting the everyday realities of people living in parts of the world that almost never appear in the headlines.

Bessarabia is one such area of the world. We would like to extend our thanks to our guest editors, Deema Kaneff (of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle, Germany) and Monica Heintz (of University of Paris X- Nanterre), for pulling together such a terrific set of articles on this region. They examine Bessarabia as a borderland area undergoing formidable political and economic transformations. Their introduction to the collection leads the volume, and lays out key issues of transboundary economic activity, migration, national histories and ethnic identities.

As announced last time, as in-coming editors, we made the decision to devote space in each issue to an Open Forum. This rubric enables us to maintain one of the special features of AEER – its ability to provide a swift turnover and a forum for new research. In our Open Forum this time, we include a series of compelling articles.

Tracie Wilson examines shifting meanings of environmentalism in Poland, by examining attitudes towards science among environmental activists. Drawing on ethnographic research and interviews, Wilson's article reveals high levels of ambivalence about scientific knowledge. Here, science, though strategically invoked, is widely regarded as a tool of private interests. Narcis Tulbure's article explores the topic of nostalgia, by examining changing practices of social drinking in Romania. Via the concept of liminal nostalgia, the author examines the ways individuals negotiate shifts in status during the postsocialist period. Katherine Metzo's article examines a sister cities program between two towns deeply shaped by the Cold War: Kurgan, a Siberian city that is home to a stockpile of Soviet-era chemical weapons, and the Fox Cities in

Wisconsin, onetime home of the staunchly anti-communist Senator Joseph McCarthy.

In our review section, Anselma Gallimat contributes a report from the conference, 'Oral History and (post)socialist societies.' The conference, which took place in Freiburg, Germany, 3-5 November 2005, focused on the contributions of this methodology to the study of postsocialist states. Pavel Romanov offers a report on "The Anthropology of professions in Russia," a conference held in Saratov, Russia, in September 2005. Daniel Burland reviews Czech anthropologist Hana Červinková's ethnography of soldiers and officers in the Czech Army as it moved to a smaller, professional model. Dávid Boromisza-Habashi contributes a review of a recent Hungarian-language book edited by Mária Neményi and Júlia Szalai and featuring some of the top researchers on the social realities of Hungary's Romani (Gypsy) ethnic minority.

Under our teaching rubric, Sarah Phillips reflects on a new seminar course she designed that took Chernobyl as a case study. In her article, she discusses some of the different challenges she has encountered in attempting to teach the anthropology of postsocialism. Detailing the pedagogical advantages that this focus enabled, she makes a strong case for the power of teaching anthropology via case study.

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## **CALL FOR PAPERS**

### **FALL 2006 ISSUE OF THE *ANTHROPOLOGY OF EAST EUROPE REVIEW***

The editors solicit articles and conference review essays for the Fall 2006 issue's "Open Forum," "Reviews," and "Teaching" sections. Papers should be no more than 2,500-6,000 words (including endnotes and references) and conference reviews should be 300-800 words in length. Please send electronic submissions as a Microsoft Word .doc (or as an .rtf file) to: [anthroeasteuropereview@gmail.com](mailto:anthroeasteuropereview@gmail.com)

Papers and reviews should be received no later than **August 15, 2006**.