




“World Anthropologies”: Some questions, issues, and limitations

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Between 'us' and 'them': Where (or who) is 'the World'

- ▶ The topic of 'World anthropologies' has re-emerged in recent years as a consequence of both globalization of anthropological knowledge, as well as of increased awareness of the developments 'on the margins' of established anthropological centers (Fahim 1982; Cardoso de Oliveira 2000; Ribeiro and Escobar 2006; Bošković 2007, 2008). It has been argued that even some 'great' or 'central' traditions arose as a direct consequence of the encounter with the other (Brumana 2002, Latour 2004).
- ▶ But just as anthropology never had a single point of origin, it also never had a single stream of development – for example, the very distinction between 'Western' and 'non-Western' anthropologies has already been described as problematic (Madan 1982; Asad 1982).
- ▶ Therefore, are 'World anthropologies' just another 'folk model' (as outlined by Holý and Stuchlik), or are there objects of analysis, something 'good to think with', or something else?
- ▶ This presentation will deal with some of the examples of 'others', primarily the region referred to as 'the Balkans'.
- ▶ In this lecture, I will address 1. the issue of representation (and self-representation), based on the former Yugoslavia; 2. some key factors in the development of regional ethnological/anthropological traditions in Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia.
- ▶ But first, a few words about Brazil.



Anthropology in Brazil

Brazil is an example of a lively anthropological tradition that developed since the Second World War, but especially after 1960s.

Mariza G. S. Peirano (upper picture), who was Professor at UnB, defended her PhD at Harvard with a thesis on 'anthropology of anthropology'. She published widely about the history of Brazilian anthropology, as well as its self-perception.

Gender studies are an area of exceptional scholarship, and here one should mention Lia Zanotta Machado (also taught at the UnB), who wrote about legal aspects of the protection of women, as well as about femicide.

Miriam Pillar Grossi (lower image) was the key organiser of the IUAES Congress at her University (UFSC) in Florianópolis, in 2018. She was one of the first professors who started teaching queer studies in Brazil.



Prehistory of the region: Mesolithic



○ - Lepenski Vir culture (6700-5500 BC) / Kultura Lepenskog Vira (6700-5500. g.p.n.e.)

- The so-called 'Lepenski Vir culture' thrived on the banks of the Danube river in what is today Serbia and Romania from before 7000 BCE, until approximately 5300 BCE.
- The dwellers of this culture showed extraordinary skills in using their environment, living on collecting plants and hunting small animals, while also exploiting wide resources provided by the Europe's biggest river.
- The sites represent earliest planned human settlements in Europe.
- They also created the first monumental sculpture in the history of humanity, made from river stones, and with diameter of just over 1m.



Prehistory of the region

- Vinča on the outskirts of Yugoslav and Serbian capital, Belgrade, was the largest settlement during the Neolithic Europe (5200-4200 BCE), with carefully planned streets and houses, and with brilliant examples of art, some of which are depicted in these figurines.
- The figurines were portraits of individual persons (male and female) - *not* 'goddesses'.
- It was part of the 'Vinča cultural sphere', that was part of the Balkans
- This rich historical heritage also had important consequences in self-representation, especially in the latter part of the 20th century. ('Us' vs 'Them').





Neolithic Vinča culture

À la recherche du temps perdu: Postsocialist Yugoslavia

- 'Postsocialism' is the term that became questionable already in the late 1990s;
- Recent criticism by Müller (2019);
- The difference in focus – regional variations, but I can present here only one example;
- The Yugoslav example: like in an old *film noir* – love, lust, betrayal, murder, and disappointment.
- Former Yugoslavia was a fertile ground for illusions, but they did not translate into adequate studies.
- Most of its reputation among the scientists in social sciences & humanities was constructed as a version of the “hero myth.”

Second World War and after



- Josip Broz Tito (1892-1980) was the leader of the Yugoslav communists from 1937, and Yugoslavia from 1945 (he was president from 1953 until his death). This photo was taken during the Second World War, in 1943.
- He was also one of the leaders of the Non-Aligned Countries Movement, which he helped establish in 1955 with prominent Third World leaders such as Nehru (India), Nasser (Egypt), Nkrumah (Ghana), and Sukarno (Indonesia).

Power, culture, and everyday life

- After the Second World War, Yugoslavia developed a very lively cultural scene. This photograph, probably taken around 1955, shows famous Yugoslav theatre director, Bojan Stupica, being received by Josip Broz Tito and his wife Jovanka. The body language tells a lot about the power relations involved.
- At the same time, Yugoslavia achieved a fantastic rate of economic growth between 1953 and 1965.



International relations

Tito and his wife, Jovanka, visiting his lifelong friend, former Ethiopian dictator, King Haile Selassie (1892-1975). Note the exoticism and power symbolism inscribed all over the image: the uniforms, the cheetah, etc.

Africans were in the official Yugoslav ideology considered as 'brothers,' and, because of their struggle against the colonial oppression, Yugoslav communists felt a symbolic kinship with them.

On the other hand, brutal suppression and mass executions of communists in "friendly" countries (like Egypt) were never mentioned in the Yugoslav media.



The fall...

- ▶ The bloody dissolution of Yugoslavia between 1991 and 1999 created images of horror most Western people thought cannot be repeated in the "civilized" Europe. These events also created a range of responses from scholars throughout the world, primarily because of the fact that, as one author observed:
- ▶ "Yugoslavia — the south slav state — symbolized a progressive and open socialist society, held in high regard internationally for its monumental struggles for unity and independence and its role as the key leader of the Non-Aligned Movement." (Kate Hudson 2003: 1)





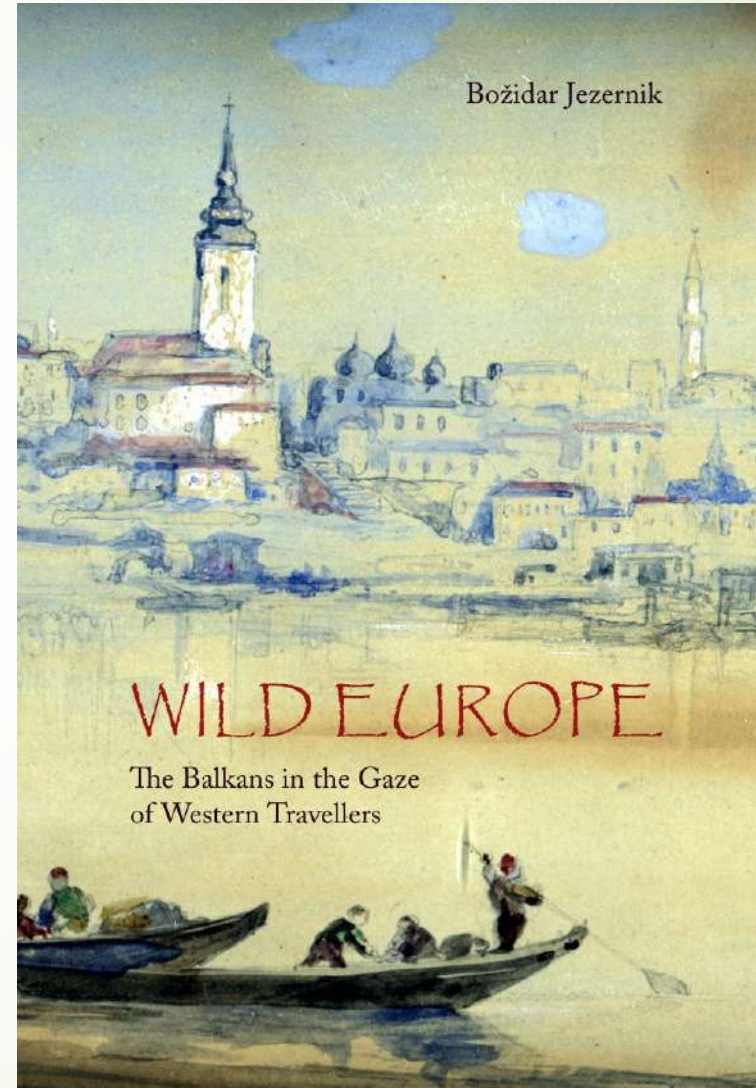
New paradigms: Maria Todorova

Maria Todorova's influential book *Imagining the Balkans* (1997) created an extremely powerful paradigm for scholars writing about the Balkans, but perhaps even more for scholars *from* the Balkans. The powerful and traumatic events needed some sort of explanation, so Todorova introduced the metaphor of 'Balkanism' constructed along the lines of Edward Said's 'Orientalism.'

Just as 'the Orient' was constructed as the exotic and less civilised fantasy of 'the West,' so was 'the Balkans.' This line of reasoning was also present in the articles by Bakic-Hayden and Hayden (1992) and Bakic-Hayden (1995), where it was pointed out with great clarity how symbolic vilification of the one side in conflict (the Serbs) took place, and how various ethnic groups in the region created local 'Orientalisms' to refer to their neighbours. Somewhere along these lines, another ambitious book project appeared in September of 2002, the book *Balkan as Metaphor* gathered a group of (mostly) Balkan-born and Balkan-educated scholars (mostly working in the USA, but also some in the UK) that took the task of explaining 'the Balkans' to the uninitiated. As such, it is an attempt of presenting the situation 'from a native's point of view' – with all the potential problems and perplexities that this kind of research brings.

'Wild Europe' — Božidar Jezernik

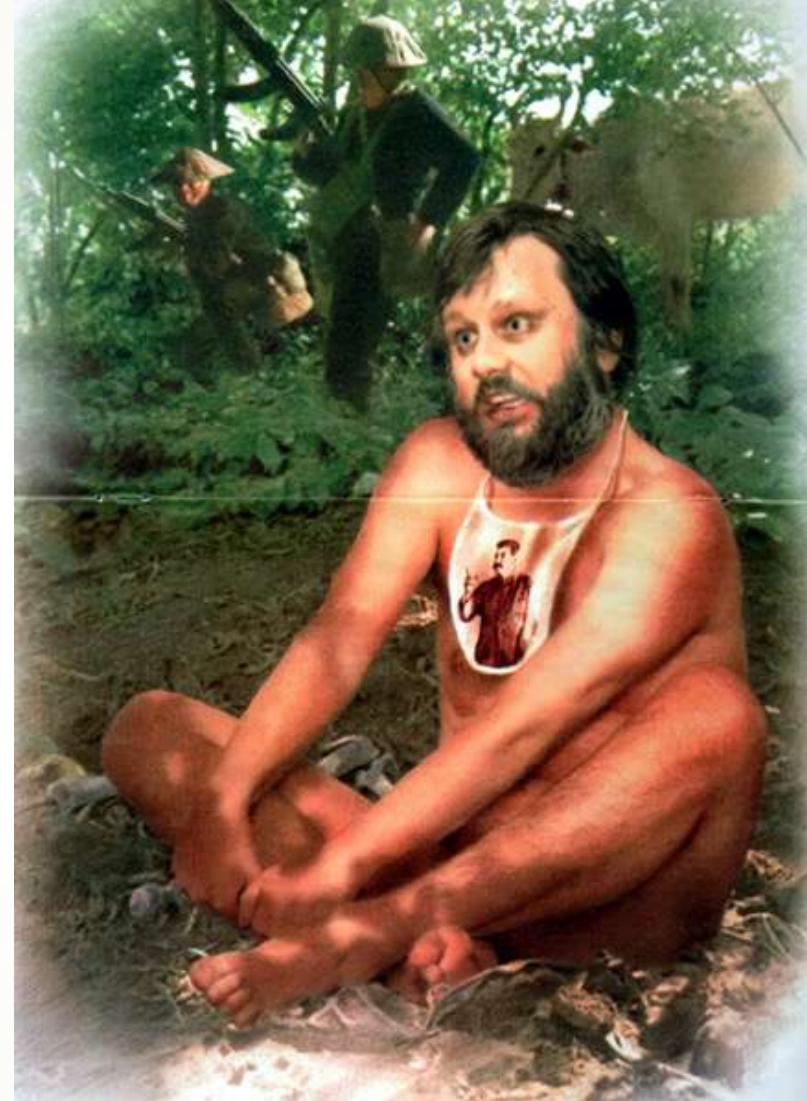
- ▶ 'The land where everything is upside down';
- ▶ In connection with 'the Balkans', Western writers use adjectives: *Oriental*, *Slav*, *Balkan*, *non-European*.
- ▶ The notion 'Oriental' (or Asian) implies other set of negative concepts: dirt, passivity, unreliability for business, ignoring of women, doing things behind someone's back, unscrupulousness, opportunism, indolence, superstition, laziness, slowness, slow and widespread bureaucracy, etc. (Jezernik 2000: 9)
- ▶ Generally speaking, *Balkan* denotes something that is cruel and unrefined, the non-European character of the region is something almost self-explanatory [ibid.]



"The Balkans" as the frightening *other*

- Balkan society is a frightening mirror of our own.
- (Eugene Hammel 1997: 5)

- *Le nom "Balkans" résonne encore aujourd'hui du bruit des canons.*
- (Olivier Gillet 2001: 9)





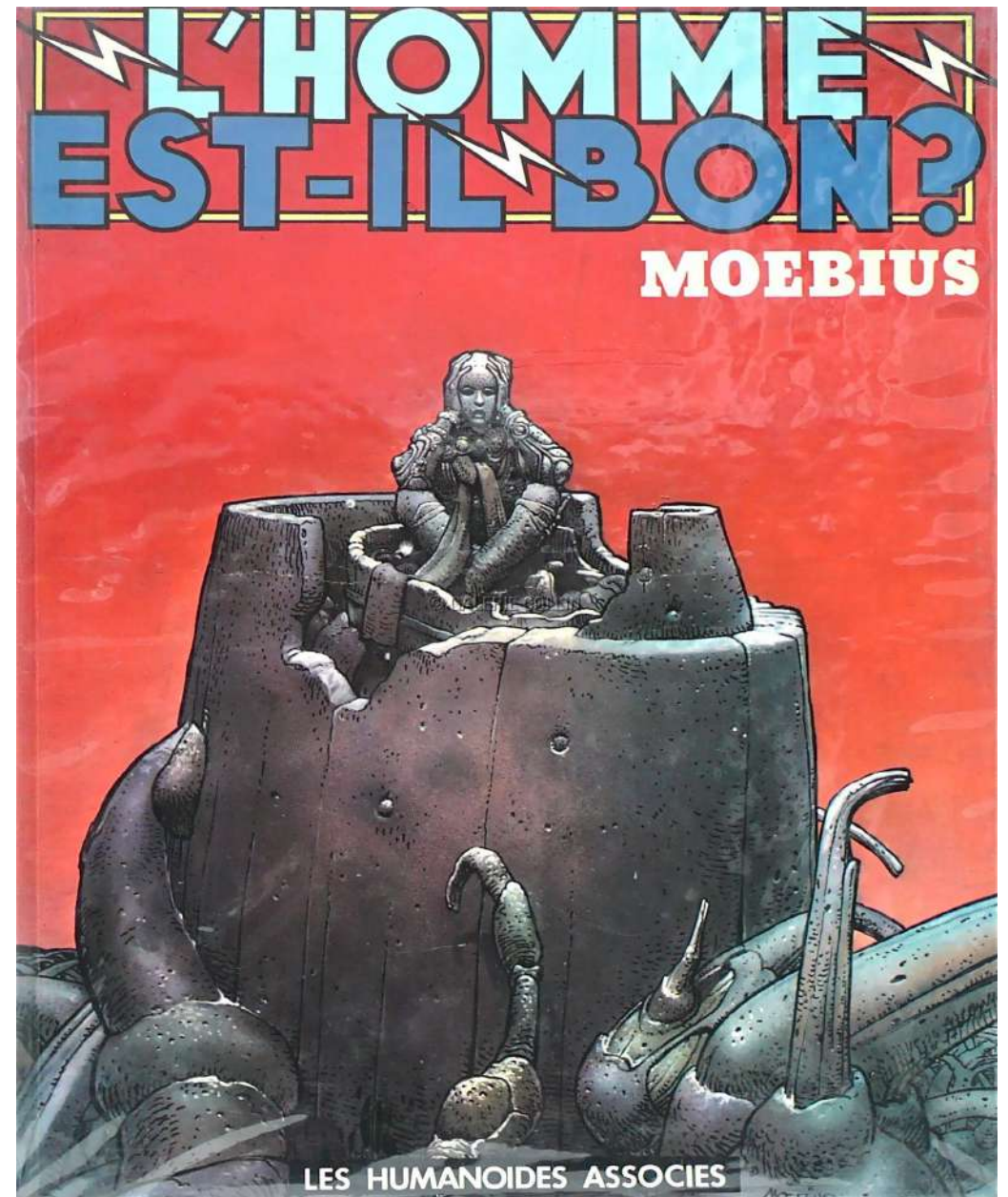
Which all leads to some questions...

Debating “human nature” comes into play, as well as many other things.

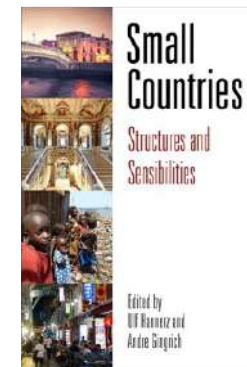
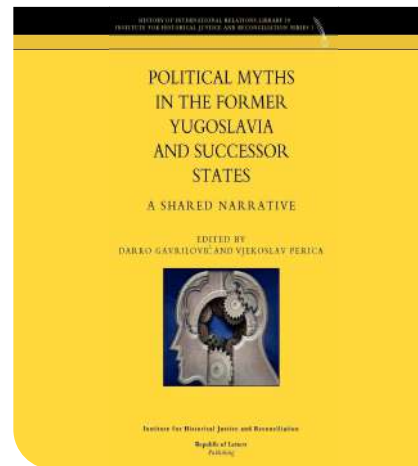
Why do people suddenly become violent?

Or is this shift really sudden?

‘Primitive mentality’ was already referred to by French philosopher Lévy-Bruhl (1922) – anthropologists added to these debates with their own research.



Frankfurter Allgemeine
ZEITUNG FÜR DEUTSCHLAND




Nationalism of the 1990s: explaining the Yugoslav wars

The idea that development (modernity) can somehow bring an end to the “ancient hatreds” was put to the test with the wars in former Yugoslavia, 1991-1999.



⌘ “How nationalist discourse develops as a humanly destructive force is an empirical matter and demands an interrogation of nationalist arguments and how they became vital in political and social dynamics giving rise to the force and shape of their violence. (...) The perspectives of Gellner (1983) and Hobsbawm (1983), who exemplify such positions [objectivist and rationalist – A.B.], dismiss nationalist arguments as mere figments of the imagination or constructions and distortions of reality. Theirs are important contributions, however, they risk an overdetermination in a European and North American historical experience. Furthermore, they do not confront thoroughly enough either nationalist arguments or the discursive structures of their appeal.” (Kapferer 2012)

Kapferer’s book “describes nationalism as an *ontology*; that is a doctrine about the essence of reality” (Eriksen 2010). War, birth, and death are all used as powerful symbols, but they gradually transcend the symbolic and enter “reality’.”



Three different
anthropological
traditions - their origins,
starting points, and main
emphases of research

Croatia

Serbia

Slovenia

Ethnology in Belgrade

- Teaching as part of *anthropogeography* at what would later become the University of Belgrade since 1884, due to the influence of Jovan Cvijić (1865-1927).
- Early researchers were educated in the Austro-Hungarian Empire – in Vienna, Berlin, Leipzig, Prague, Munich.
- The Department and the Chair of Ethnology was established in 1906 – by then, Serbia also had a national journal on ethnology, as well as an Ethnographic Museum.
- Key figures before the Second World War: Jovan Erdeljanović (1874-1944), who was the first Assistant Professor and Chair of Ethnology in Belgrade; Tihomir Đorđević (1868-1944); and Veselin Čajkanović (1881-1946). The first two were educated in history and philology, earning doctorates in Prague (w. Lubor Niederle) and Munich. Čajkanović was very much interested in comparative religion and combined some insights from psychoanalysis. He produced highly original work which still needs to be re-evaluated.



Leading figures in Serbian ethnology before 1940



The change of paradigms

- After the Second World War, ethnology underwent a period of development that was only marginally inspired by the dominant political paradigm.
- After 1960s, also teaching (of 'Social Anthropology') in the Department of Sociology in Belgrade, with cooperation by archaeologists.
- The influence of 'Praxis' philosophy and the application of the 'culture and personality' approach.
- Finally, in mid-1970s and early 1980s, some younger researchers and one book publisher 'discover' structuralism.
- Key figures for this paradigm shift were: Dušan Bandić (1939-2004), who had the first MA degree in ethnology in Serbia (in 1968) and was the first president of the Serbian Ethnological Society; Ivan Kovačević (b. 1952), who was for many years HoD in Belgrade; and Ivan Čolović (b. 1938, who actually studied literature), who worked in the Institute of Ethnography of SASA.
- This has created something like the tectonic shift, as it allowed scholars to criticize the dominant paradigm, and to apply structuralist and formalist approaches to the study of rituals.
- Their influence is still visible in the curriculum of the Department today.

After the 1990s

- Further changes were instituted in the early 1990s, with the gradual shift from ethnology to cultural anthropology. In the last fifteen years, with the influx of young researchers and increased possibilities for publishing, there is a variety of projects that deal with issues as diverse as studying cultural heritage of the former Yugoslavia, traditional religions and the new religious movements, cultural identities of second and third-generation Serbian immigrant workers in Western Europe, appropriations of the European identity, theory and history of anthropology, human rights, and rationality.
- Most of the research is oriented toward places that can be easily reached, as there is no real research funding for it since 1991.
- Research of the diaspora proved to be quite popular, including research in the neighbouring countries (Romania, Montenegro).
- In recent years, a number of joint research projects with colleagues from Slovenia and Croatia.
- In the last ten years, regional approaches by individual researchers included West Africa, Indonesia, Latin America (Mexico), and Norway.

Perspectives for the future

- Developing research orientation of younger researchers (film & media studies, audit cultures, methodology, African studies – in cooperation with the Museum of African Art in Belgrade).
- Possibilities for international cooperation.
- Serbia as the potential partner for the Horizon 2020 and the subsequent projects – despite the fact that the actual European-funded projects (especially through the ERC) heavily discriminate against non-Western European countries.
- Developing cooperation with non-European partners (especially Brazil and Japan) which invest in higher education and research.



Identities and uncertainties

- The role of ethnologists and anthropologists as ‘gatekeepers’ and official interpreters of the local culture is very important. This is the case in Brazil, but also the case with Croatia and Slovenia, as well as many other European countries with heavy reliance on ‘ethnic’ paradigms.
- The emphasis on the distinction between ‘material’ and ‘non-material’ culture. This is something that actually goes back to the 19th century discussions. (*Volkskunde/ Völkerkunde*), as well as to the whole idea of ‘European ethnology’.
- Cultural heritage (especially ‘intangible cultural heritage’) as a potential new and interesting venue for research. Role of/ for UNESCO.
- Possible cooperation with other disciplines (like sociology and archaeology).
- Not enough cooperation with other venues where anthropology is being practiced (Ethnographic Institute of the SASA; Ethnographic Museum) – at least in part due to the problems in these institutions. Cf. with the situation in Croatia and Slovenia.
- Possibility of establishing new programs, primarily in collaboration with political scientists, but also exploring the border areas of anthropology and psychotherapy (incl. psychoanalysis).

Ethnology in Croatia

- Begins with the work of Antun Radić (1868-1919), who actually did ethnographic work only between 1896 and 1902. Established the difference between the 'peasants' culture and 'gentlemen's' culture, as well as the principles of how to do field research.
- These principles were published in 1897.
- Ethnology was first taught in Zagreb from 1923 by Aleksandar Gahs (1891-1962), as part of the Comparative science of religion course at the Theological University. Gahs was a student of Fr. Wilhelm Schmidt in Vienna, and was interested in religion, magic, and shamanism, among other topics.
- The Chair of Ethnology was established at the University of Zagreb in 1927, and the first lecturer was Milovan Gavazzi (1895-1992), who studied Slavic studies, German studies, and philosophy in Zagreb and Prague. He was a recipient of the Herder's Prize, in 1970. Along with his colleague Branimir Bratanić (1910-1986), dominant figure until early 1980s.
- The Department of Ethnology was established at the University of Zagreb only in 1960. The other important institution was Institute for Folklore Research, established in 1947.
- The most important 'break' with his culturalism was introduced by one of his students, Dunja Rihtman Auguštin (1926-2002), who introduced structuralism, starting in mid-1970s. She received many international awards, including the Herder's Prize, in 1997.
- She was also responsible for 'anthropologizing' Croatian ethnology.

Key figures in the history of Croatian ethnology



Shifts in some of the key research topics

Before 1995

- Folk culture
- Ethnomusicology
- Literature
- Women's studies (especially from late 1970s)

After 1995

- Migration
- 'War ethnography'
- Social issues
- Women's studies
- Urban sociology
- Tourism

Parallel tracks: Two programs at the same Faculty (until 2015)



Jasna Čapo (1961), one of the leading researchers in the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies.



Pavao Rudan (1942), secretary of the Croatian Academy of Arts & Sciences, established the Program in Anthropology, which included biological anthropology. The Program was shut down in 2015.

Ethnology in Slovenia

- Begins with the studies of Slovenian peasants in the 19th century (Šterklj, Murko).
- Emphasis on folklore.
- Very much intertwined with sociology, which influenced its gradual turning focus on the issues like the 'ethnogenesis' (the origins of the Slovene people).
- Before the Second World War some insistence on eugenics, by physical anthropologist Božo Škerlj (1904-1961), who was also the leading Yugoslav anthropologist after the war.
- Ethnographic Museum (then called Ethnographic Institute) was established in 1923 in Ljubljana, with Niko Županič (1876-1961) as its first Director, until 1940.
- In 1940, he took over as Professor of Ethnology, in the newly established Department at the University of Ljubljana. However, because of the outbreak of the war (April 1941), the first academic year was never completed.
- Gavazzi gave visiting lectures at the Department after they were re-established after the war.

Key figures for the development of anthropology in Slovenia



Županič

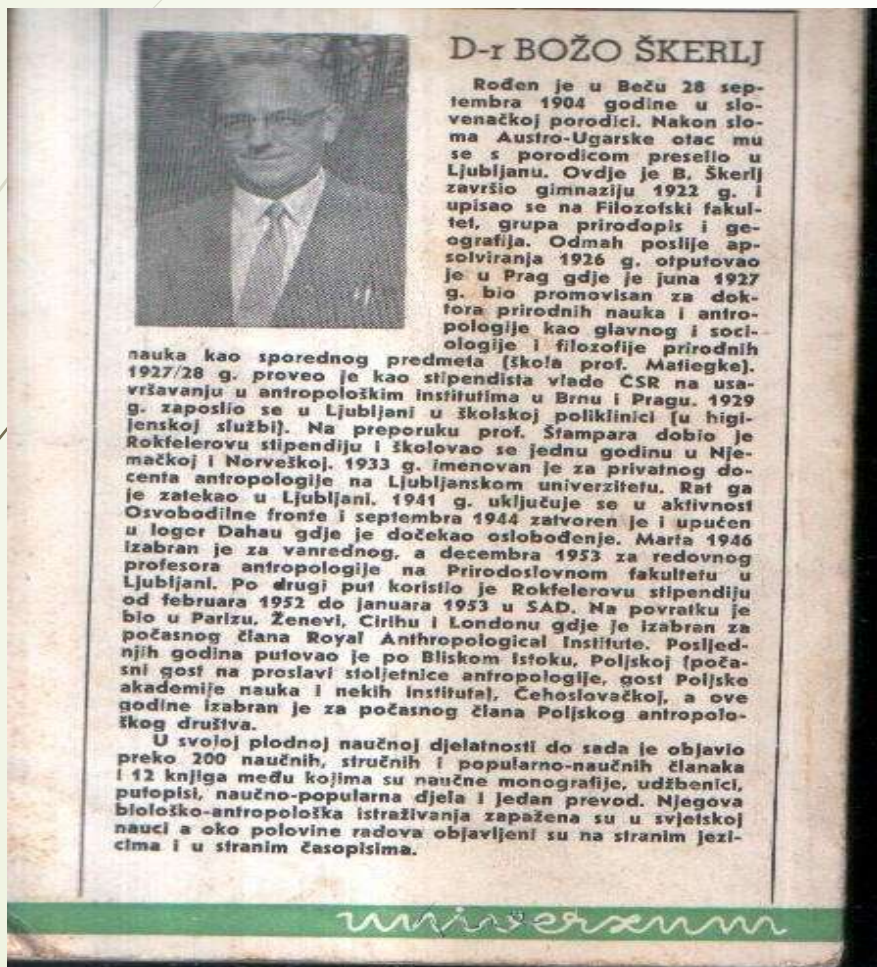


Škerlj



Južnič

Developments during socialist Yugoslavia



- Božo Škerlj was the most influential figure until his death. He also wrote popular articles, like the one presented here, on the similarities between apes and humans, as well as an article about the anthropology in Yugoslavia for the *Biannual Review of Anthropology*.

More recent developments

- ▶ Between 1990 and 2005 (for more detailed accounts, see Slavec Gradišnik 2013), anthropology was taught at:
- ▶ Department of Sociology, Faculty of Philosophy, as **social anthropology** (taught by Bojan Baskar (b. 1955 – became full Professor in 2003), who in 2006 joined the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology);
- ▶ Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Philosophy, as **cultural anthropology**. Key figures were Božidar Jezernik (b. 1951) and Zmago Šmitek (b. 1949) , in the early 2000s Borut Brumen (1963-2005), and today Rajko Muršič (b. 1963);
- ▶ The Faculty of Social Sciences (FDV) in Ljubljana, where Stane Južnič (1928-2013) established courses in **sociocultural** and **political anthropology**, as well as **anthropology of gender** (more details by Godina 2013). His first student was Vesna Godina, who succeeded him, and headed the Graduate program (M.A.) until recently.

The space of anthropology

- Maja Petrović-Šteger (1974), from the Anthropological institute of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts graduated at FDV in Ljubljana, has M.A. and Ph.D. from Cambridge, research in Serbia, on Tasmania, and in Switzerland. Maja focuses on anthropology of the body, how people (families and institutions) relate to the body parts of the deceased, as well as to the psychological aspects of relation to mental health.
- Until recently Head of this Institute, Borut Telban (1956), is one of the leading authorities on the cosmology of Sepik (PNG).





Regional perspectives

- Despite shared elements, divergent histories influence actual developments.
- Slovenia has, despite its presence on the international scene (the EASA conference in 2008), problems in integrating different approaches, and several top researchers were in recent years for a time unable to get 'habilitation' (Maja Petrović Šteger, Liza Debevec - this has changed in the meantime). Some others remain marginalized, despite the international recognition of their work (like Ivan Šprajc, current head of the Scientific Research Center at the Slovenian Academy of Arts and Sciences, as well as his colleague, Telban).
- In Croatia, there was a tension between two programs where anthropology was taught, and now biological anthropology (for which Croatian scientists are among the top in world) is not taught at the University. The main hurdles are administrative incompetence, along with some bullying and mobbing – for example, several years ago, the then Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy refused to hire a young anthropologist even after she was formally admitted by the University – and even prevented her from completing her PhD.
- In Serbia, despite the long-term isolation and total financial collapse (no grants for conference trips, or research), young scholars are still able to work and publish (and Serbian journals are internationally recognized, as they made it onto the ERIH list) – but this is perhaps just a 'swan song'. On the other hand, Serbia is relatively well placed to be a partner in the Horizon 2020 programs.