



**16th Mediterranean Ethnological  
Summer Symposium/School**

Nova Gorica, 21 - 26 September 2009

**16<sup>th</sup> MESS – MEDITERRANEAN ETHNOLOGICAL  
SUMMER SYMPOSIUM/SCHOOL**

Programme

Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> September

**Arrivals to Nova Gorica**

Monday, 21<sup>th</sup> September

**9:00 – 12:30 Border Towns**

**Katja Jerman** (Slovenian Parliament), *Not even "Lady" Europe can Succeed in Connecting the Two Gorica: Shared Square as a Contested Place between Two Border Towns*

**Florin Cioban** (University of Oradea), *School as a Multicultural Place in Border Areas*

Moderator: **Bojan Baskar** (University of Ljubljana)

**16:00 – 18:00 Workshop**

**19:00 Opening at Kromberk castle** (Museum of the region of Goriška)

Tuesday, 22<sup>th</sup> September

**9:00 – 13:00 Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology Day:  
African and Asian Nomads Experiencing State Borders as Constraints  
and Opportunities**

**Andrea Nicolas** (Max Planck Institute), *Invisible Borders: Oromo Ethnicity and the Politics of Homogenisation (Ethiopia)*

**Fecadu Adugna** (Max Planck Institute), *Ethnic Identity Politics, State Borders and Pastoralism in Ethiopia*

**Günther Schlee** (Max Planck Institute), *The Political Ecology of Pastoralism: The Development of Ethnic Territoriality in Northern Kenya*

**Svetlana Jacquesson** (Max Planck Institute), *Which Borders Matter, How and Why? Border Experiences among Central Asian Herd Breeders (The Case of Kyrgyzstan)*

Moderator: **Sarah Lunaček Brumen** (University of Ljubljana)

16:00 – 18:00 **Workshop**

Wednesday, 23<sup>th</sup> September

9:00 – 12:30 **Anthropologists Facing NGOs**

**Sarah Lunaček Brumen** (University of Ljubljana), *Kel Project: Tuaregs in the North of Niger Experiencing Development Projects and NGOs*

**Monica Martínez Mauri** (Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona), *Development Anthropology, Fieldwork and Indigenous NGO among the Kuna People*

Moderator: **Thomas K. Schippers** (MMSH, Aix-en-Provence)

13:00 **reception at the Municipality of Nova Gorica**

16:00 – 18:00 **Workshop**

**Marijana Koren** (Humanistic Society of Goriška, Društvo humanistov Goriške), *Medicalization of gambling: Nova Gorica Between State Supervision and the Emerging Medical Power*

22:00 **Visit to Casino**

Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> September

9:00 – 12:30 **Production of Locality**

**Miha Kozorog** (University of Ljubljana), *Art Festival "Stazione Topolo/Postaja Topolove" and the Production of Alternative Reality in Slavia Veneta/ Benečija in Italy*

**Eleonora Sava** (Babeş Bolyai University, Cluj Napoca), *Time in Romanian Contemporary Holiday: Sacred and Feastful. A Case Study*

**Antoaneta Olteanu** (University of Bucharest), *Representations of Space in Folk Beliefs: The Otherworld*

Moderator: **Peter Meurkens** (Radboud University Nijmegen)

16:00 – 18:00 **Workshop**

20:30 **Cinema Kinoatelje, Kinemax, Gorizia (IT)**

Friday, 25<sup>th</sup> September

9:00 – 12:30 **Europe and Anthropology**

**Máireád Nic Craith** (University of Ulster), *Memoirs, Autobiographies and the Anthropology of Europe*

**Andrés Barrera González** (Universidad Complutense de Madrid), *Mapping the Practice of Socio-Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology in Europe*

**Ksenija V. Horvat** (University of Ljubljana), *Consuming European Identity: Popular Culture, Memory and Border Imaginaries in the New Europe*

Moderator: **Ksenija V. Horvat** (University of Ljubljana)

16:00 – 18:00 **Workshop**

Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> September

**Excursion to Torviscosa, Aquileia, Grado and to Coljava, Carst region**

## **Abstracts**

**Katja Jerman** (Slovenian Parliament), *Not even "Lady" Europe can Succeed in Connecting the Two Gorica: Shared Square as a Contested Place between Two Border Towns*

In 1925, Robert E. Park wrote, "The city is a mental atmosphere, it is a totality of customs, traditions, actions and emotions that are organized within these customs and transmitted by the same tradition" (Park 1925: 1).

The research into understanding the question of how to identify appropriate "contested places" between the two cities required the identification of the causes and explanations for the evaluation of the current situation, and in so doing, also past events need to be interpreted. Bearing in mind that past is always viewed from the present, the ethnologist has to be careful when evaluating and interpreting present can be still heavily burdened by the past.

Everyday life is a reality that is interpreted differently by the people and those interpretations are of the unique and subjective notion of the cohesive world (Berger & Luckman 1988: 27). The combination of well established methods and techniques of ethnological work and a use of REAP methodology (Low, Taplin, Scheld 2005: 181-193) offers the view of the situation as a world of experiences in order to reveal the local people's perspective, which is common to other members of the community (Berger & Luckman 1988: 30). The use of internet sources interfered with the field of intersubjectivity that can sometimes be hidden to the researcher since there is always a gap between what partners in dialogue think and what they actually tell us. On the other hand, when using internet sources there is always a possibility someone's identity has been concealed (although it is publicly exposed and accessible medium). However, the opinions, emotions and experiences shared this way can be more open and direct.

The paper considers a case study of two border towns: Nova Gorica in Slovenia and Gorica/Gorizia in Italy. Therefore the crucial perception of space through the anthropological interpretation of the place (see Augé 1995: 51-55) is central and is combined with the interpretations of chosen "contested places" since the selected case study indicates that a "contested place" is understood as the crossroads and a meeting point of various interests whereas at the same time it indicates (non)cooperation and (non)identification with the two cities.

**Florin Cioban** (University of Oradea), *School as a Multicultural Place in Border Areas*

Border regions can be considered as areas of separation, bringing about latent or clearly manifested tensions, or sometimes they are even places of past and present confrontations. These areas can be seen as bridges of connection providing cultural interferences, as contact points focusing on the convergence of many cultures.

Obviously borders are represented by visible elements, like barriers, border police patrols, areas to which access is denied, all of these having direct influences on the communication between the people on both sides of the border. On the other hand we all have mental representations of the space we inhabit, thus implicitly of the barriers that bound it; these representations have in their turn effects upon our behaviour, upon our relationship with our co-citizens, and upon the way we perceive the others on the other side of the border. From this perspective we consider that the field of education has an important role and can have a significant contribution either emphasizing separation, or promoting a real knowledge, which assures a peaceful regional stability on the long run.

**National identity and trans-border cooperation**

The changes that marked Eastern Europe in the past few centuries brought about the appearance of a mixture of populations of high complexity. Thus in all countries of the region, besides the majority population, there are minority ethnic groups who preserved their languages and specific cultural characteristics. Similarly, every nation from this region has members who live as part of the minority in the neighbour countries.

This social reality, which characterizes the region, has effects not only upon the relationships between the different ethnic communities inside each country, but also upon the relationship between the countries. It is unanimously accepted that we cannot speak about a long-term stability and about a pluralist democracy in this region of Europe without taking into consideration the problem of ethnic minorities. There are however regions where diversity gave birth to collaborative relationships and sense of respect towards the identity of the other. In these cases, this cultural diversity construes a source of richness and development in all aspects of the respective region. A significant example can be offered, for example the Banat region. Situated on the territory of three countries, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Hungary, the Banat region has a rich tradition of harmonious living-together among many ethnic and religious communities.

Insufficiently known by nowadays generations, this tradition is barely alive in the present days. Moreover, if at each country's level they generally maintained very good relations among the members of different cultural communities, not the same can be said about the relations between the three parts of Banat. At present, borders represent powerful lines of separation, having an impact not only on the practical level highlighted by the difficulty of travelling inside the region, across the borders, but also on the level of mental representations expressed through the reduced level of knowing the "other."

Rediscovering a regional identity based on rediscovering common cultural traditions, on converting into value the specific benefits of a multicultural space, but also on designing and putting into practice of concrete activities of collaboration in many fields, among which there is the education, may contribute to the reducing of the isolating effects of the frontiers.

The limits of educational systems

Traditionally educational systems were not construed to stimulate international cooperation and, of course, educational systems from South-Eastern Europe don't make any exception. The fundamental objective of these, declared or only implicit, is the development of national identity, thus offering support and justification for the process of consolidation of national states. This orientation is mostly visible in the contents and structure of teaching history. There are numerous examples regarding the majority of European states in which national identity is constructed through the prism of the educational system, in positive terms, though in opposition with the identity of others. These "others" are, in many cases, neighbours, from over the border, but sometimes also the nations whose members can be found in the respective state, as national minorities.

In the perspective of the European integration process, it is a widely accepted idea that such an approach no longer corresponds to the actual necessities, claiming therefore the necessity of some reforms of the educational systems in this sense. At a practical level, the implementation of such reforms advances slowly, especially in Central, Eastern, and South-Eastern Europe.

In this context we can consider that the activities, which promote trans-frontier collaboration in the field of education, can have a significant role in rendering inter-communal tensions ineffective, and to this the ethnocentric approach of the educational systems can add a lot.

Languages, a barrier—minorities a bridge

One of the most often mentioned impediments, which forms an obstacle for trans-frontier collaboration is connected to the linguistic barrier. Minorities, sources of tensions between countries, represent at the same time an element which can contribute to the strengthening of trust and of respect for cultural differences, and to the coming closer of the respective nations as well. Thus for example, the contact between the members of a majority and their co-nationals from the neighbour countries can contribute to a better understanding from the part of the first ones, regarding what it means to be a minority. This understanding will have positive effects on the ways this majority organizes its relationships with the minorities that live in its country. Moreover, if in a country the politics regarding minorities are successful and manage to promote the respect of identities, it can be proved that minorities do not represent a threat for the identity of the majority, on the contrary it is a source of enrichment through the contacts between minority communities and the majorities of the same ethnic origin; this favourable attitude towards the minorities can be transmitted to other countries as well.

**Andrea Nicolas** (Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology), *Invisible Borders: Oromo Ethnicity and the Politics of Homogenisation (Ethiopia)*

Ethnic federalism, introduced several years ago in Ethiopia, bases on the making and maintenance of borders and ethnic boundaries. While the own group is often defined in terms of a homogeneous image, members of other groups become minorities in the newly defined territories. The Oromiya Regional State of Ethiopia, allocated to the Oromo majority group (while excluding Amhara and members of other ethnic groups from access to power) is such a case at hand. Local practices and categories of identification, like traditional lineage belonging or interethnic neighbourhood organization, however, rarely mirror such state-induced perceptions of nationality. To bridge the gap between their ideal conception of ethnicity, including the all-embracing “we”-group notion of “Oromoness”, on the one hand, and the reality of a culturally rather diverse Oromo population on the other, the state reacts with financial programs and political campaigns that aim at a homogenisation of cultural traits, simultaneously trying to bring them in step with wider state-political agendas. While already having significant impacts on local practice, such policies partially also meet resistance and create potential conflict. The presentation shall examine the effects and theoretical impacts of the recent developments in Ethiopia in a long-term perspective, allowing for wider comparison.

**Fecadu Adugna** (Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology), *Ethnic Identity Politics, State Borders and Pastoralism in Ethiopia*

The paper examines the interplay between ethnic identity politics, territorial borders and pastoralism. It is designed in response to the current explosion of identity politics in Ethiopia and its entanglement with territoriality. It explores how a new form of territoriality attached to ethnic identity politics has been created and/or exacerbated and contested around ethnic borders, which has become politically important with the ethnic based federal arrangement in Ethiopia that necessitated the drawing of new domestic borders. The paper would argue that the new emphasis on the domestic ethno-national borders and the emerging ethno-territoriality would be a constraint in pastoralists' way of life.

**Günther Schlee** (Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology), *The Political Ecology of Pastoralism: The Development of Ethnic Territoriality in Northern Kenya*

The paper examines the interaction of electoral politics and the administrative order in northern Kenya with pastoral land use and conflicts between pastoralists. The ethnicisation of politics in Kenya has hardened ethnic differences among pastoralists, rigidified territorial boundaries between them and reduced the potential for flexible and ecologically adjusted, mobile land use.

**Svetlana Jacquesson** (Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology), *Which Borders Matter, How and Why? Border Experiences among Central Asian Herd Breeders (The Case of Kyrgyzstan)*

The collectivisation and sedentarisation campaigns of the Soviets in the 1930s marked the end of nomadism in Central Asia. During the socialist period mobile herd breeding was carried on within state or collective farms. While the state deliveries of animal products were defined by republic, the final word on the access of farms to pastures belonged to Moscow; it was a usual practice during that period for herds to cross the borders in order to reach suitable pastures in the neighbouring republics.

The rise of national states in the early 1990s coincided with the end of state or collective farms. After a short period of transition during which the good Soviet tradition of open borders was maintained, the new independent states took measures for reinforcing their borders and gradually closed them even to their closest neighbours. Since all the economic infrastructure during the Soviet period was conceived on an all-union level, the closure of state frontiers led to conflicts over the use and appropriation of this infrastructure: water use was and still remains one of the most painful subjects but minor conflicts have occurred also over road use and even over access to markets. Conflicts over access to pastures or over the movements of herds have not been outstanding in part because of the severe fall of livestock numbers after the end of state-sponsored mobile herd breeding.

Yet, the word *chek ara* or *chegara* “frontier” can be heard quite often in discussions with people doing herd breeding in Central Asia today. Based on my fieldwork in Kyrgyzstan, I will describe the frontiers that are meaningful or significant to Kyrgyz herd breeders. I will show how the state is experienced as much through its state borders as through the internal administrative borders it needs in order to function as a state. I will argue that conflicts over frontiers develop only when state or administrative frontiers challenge the social strategies of inclusion and exclusion developed by local communities. Finally I will dwell on the recurrence of “frontier conflicts” in Kyrgyzstan these last years and on the prevailing discourse on frontiers as constraints and rarely, if ever, as opportunities.

**Sarah Lunaček Brumen** (University of Ljubljana), *Kel Project: Tuaregs in the North of Niger Experiencing Development Projects and NGOs*

In the north of Niger, as in the Sahel region as a whole, the development aid augmented after the draughts at the beginning of 70is, although different approaches to development were present before in colonial period and latter trough the state. The scope of development interventions is wide and actors involved range from international organisations, state agencies, local and international NGOs, local cooperatives and individuals. I shall lean on the conceptualisation of developmentalist configuration elaborated by Olivier de Sardin where next to encounters of different logics, discourses, interests and knowledges, particularly important are the chains of intermediaries. The focus will be on narratives on experiences with and views on development projects of different kind as transmitted to the researcher by local intermediaries and animators employed on development projects, as well as other local people working on project as chauffeurs and main d'oeuvre and other users and witnesses of the projects. The changes in global discourses in development and prestructuration to local NGOs as principal actors has diverse local implications and interests involved reflect tensions between traditional end emerging elites as well as the capacity to adapt to changing discourses by local actors in development. The problematisation of participation and views on it by local actors shall be exposed. The special emphasises will be on encounters of Imajeghan (Tuareg) and ikufar (Westerners) in scope of development projects and the views of first on the role and motivations of the latter. The particular situation of Saharan tourism opens a way to small projects that I shall consider through the lenses of orientalisms and occidentalisms and question of solidarity. In changing context of development in time of globalisation and neoliberalism the question of the role of (social) state is reopened; as small projects sometimes present a welcome bypass by the state for the marginalised minority, from another side the responsibility for infrastructure and social care for population as well as for ecological problems is blurred. This goes together with the old question of needs and who has a power to define them; state serving mainly interests of ex-colonial powers and elites in power, international projects with particular neoliberal salvation logic promoting microcredits or Imajeghan, partly pastoral nomads where it is important to consider urbanisation and scolarisation as well as differentiation by gender and generations, their belonging, memories of colonisation, attitude to changes, survival strategies, habitus and questions of cultural identity.

**Monica Martínez Mauri** (Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona), *Development Anthropology, Fieldwork and Indigenous NGO among the Kuna People*

Using an anthropological approach, I will try to elucidate the transformations in indigenous politics in connection to the emergence of Kuna NGO. The proliferation of Kuna NGO since the 1990s, both in number and scope of involvement, has been very significant. Today in Panama there are more than 90 Kuna NGO. Some of the Kuna NGOs had established new linkages transcending local and national boundaries. They have integrated transnational NGO coalitions and communications networks punctuated by international conferences and aided by regular use of the Internet. In this lecture I will focus on this new transnational space to understand how they had collaborate to construct new panindigenous discourses and local political practices.

**Miha Kozorog** (University of Ljubljana), *Art Festival "Stazione Topolo/Postaja Topolove" and the Production of Alternative Reality in Slavia Veneta/ Benečija in Italy*

Arjun Appadurai defined the concept 'production of locality' in the article with the same title from 1995. Locality is described as a "phenomenological quality", connected with concepts of 'identity', 'ideology' and 'structure of feeling'. He claimed that each community ('neighbourhood' in his terminology) develops different kinds of rites de passage to create "its" subjects. His main concern was the production of locality in contemporary global reality, in which three things are supposed to play the major role in the processes of producing locality: the nation-state, diasporic flows, and electronic and virtual communities.

In my opinion, bearing in mind global cultural flows, Appadurai overlooked the inner social mechanisms of local communities (communities described in "classical" anthropological literature). However, it is exactly the concept of 'production of locality' as defined by Appadurai, which enables us to describe such local communities not as producing monolithic local identities, but as producing very different (and also competing) local identities and ideologies of the local reality. I will try to illustrate this with ethnographic example of an art festival in the village of Topolo / Topolove in peripheral area of Benečija / Slavia Veneta in Italy.

**Eleonora Sava** (Babeş Bolyai University, Cluj Napoca), *Time in Romanian Contemporary Holiday: Sacred and Feastful. A Case Study*

The present study is based on a fieldwork conducted between March and October 2007, in Romania, Viişoara village, Mureş district, as part of the Project Contemporary Villages from Romania. Openings towards Europe, which was initiated by the Mureş District Museum, Section of Ethnography and Popular Art, and financed by the Romanian Ministry of Culture and Cults, through the National Cultural Fund Administration.

In the following pages, we propose a diachronic analysis of time in Romanian holiday, focusing on the most frequent festive context: the Sundays. We shall trace the ideological, cultural and mentality changes, which have transformed the Sunday from a sacred day into a week-end day, as well as the changes of behavioural conduct which these changes involve; we shall exemplify this problematic with research material from Viişoara, Mureş district.

The ethnological analyses dedicated to the ritology and mythology of the Sunday in Romanian folklore (based on documents from XIX and beginning of XX century) have revealed the existence of two time levels: a sacred one, characteristic of the feast, and a secular one, specific to daily activities. The Sunday is circumscribed to the sacred time, being considered a favourable time, of communion between human beings and the divine.

For many of my interlocutors from Viişoara (2007, XXI century), Sunday has the signification and the value of a feast at the discursive level, pointing out the connexion with a traditional ideology, partially inherited and partially learnt. At the level of practice, though, there is a widely varied range of relating oneself to the Sunday time.

During the fieldwork, I focused on the transformation of the Sunday from a sacred day in a week-end day, implying the change of the festive (sacred) time into leisure time (in front of the TV), socializing (at the pub or at the wicket in front of the house) or feastful (emptied of holiness) represent a complex and long lasting process. The fieldwork carried on in 2007 in Viişoara village, Mureş district, grasps only one instance of this very intricate process.

**Antoaneta Olteanu** (University of Bucharest), *Representations of Space in Folk Beliefs: The Otherworld*

The binary division of the Universe, divided between the visible and the unseen one, between the human world and that of the Others (spirits, dead people), between here and there dates back to ancient times, and is based on the binary oppositions, which were within the reach of people, but also on their extension, as well as on the contact places which changed once Man conquered the surrounding universe. At a macrocosmic level, there is a world in which people live, this world, focusing on the inhabited space, in other words, on the hearth of each house, around which one can notice the expansion, in successive circles, of the other microspaces owned by Man, which he has prepared through defence practices in order to be able to move freely within them. The main elements which have spatial, but especially ritual values in this first circle of the humanized world are the hearth, the stove, the oven, the chimney, the beam of the house, the table, the bed (cradle), the lintel, the window, the eaves of the house. As we move away from the house, there are other items which Man consecrated and used in its own interest, both magical and household ones, as the yard, the stable, the fence, the gate leading to the household entrance, and also the frontier of the village, its borders which separated peoples' plots of land, gradually reaching the most dangerous places, such as the crossroads, the bank of the river, the bridges, the forest, the mountains, etc. Beyond these transition places which could be reached by people too as they needed to gather construction materials, to travel, but also to earn their living, and, why not, dangerous entities, representing various embodiments of the sacred world which lived in another space, known as the Otherworld. This is not necessarily a world of the dead (which we are to describe below), but a place where the Others, the anti-humans, the non-humans, the super humans lead their existence.

**Máireád Nic Craith** (University of Ulster), *Memoirs, Autobiographies and the Anthropology of Europe*

This presentation focuses on literary texts as resources for anthropologists working on Europe. Following an exploration of the European mosaic that emerges in a range of auto-ethnographies and memoirs, a number of key issues are presented for discussion. These include the extent to which (a) writers can be regarded as key 'informants' on contemporary everyday life in Europe and (b) autobiographies and memoirs can be regarded as anthropological resources. The contribution that such resources can make to the anthropology of Europe is also examined. This lecture builds on earlier material published in the *Journal of Social Anthropology* 17(2).

**Andrés Barrera González** (Universidad Complutense de Madrid), *Mapping the Practice of Socio-Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology in Europe*

Anthropology is indeed a broad discipline (recall the four field rendering of its scope); and it is understood and put into practice in many different ways, by relying on a diverse range of traditions: regional, national, and local. The “Anthropology in Europe” scholarly endeavour aims at making a substantive contribution to the surveying and mapping of this astonishing diversity. The academic exercise is circumscribed to one such field, socio-cultural anthropology (incorporating alternative names given to the discipline in diverse local traditions: ethnology, ethnography, folklore studies); and to the ways in which the discipline is enacted in one continent (geographical Europe).

“Anthropology in Europe” is not meant to be a benchmarking undertaking conducted by some specialised agency, but an intramural exercise of self-reflection performed by anthropologists and ethnologists themselves. The task may be conceived as an ethnographic account of the past and current teaching-training and research practices within Anthropology, in the European context. Given the plurality of ‘anthropologies’ residing in Europe, the need to pay attention not just to the well established ‘great’ traditions but to the ‘little’ and emerging ones as well, to the ‘subaltern’ as much as to the ‘hegemonic’ strands of the discipline, must be underlined. Moreover, the study takes interest in investigating how different national or regional anthropologies relate to their particular historical, social and political contexts; and how ‘little’ and ‘great’ traditions in the discipline relate to each other in the context of Europe at present.

**Ksenija V. Horvat** (University of Ljubljana), *Consuming European Identity: Popular Culture, Memory and Border Imaginaries in the New Europe*

This paper addressed the question of the articulation of European identity in the contexts of postsocialist Slovenia. It investigates this through consumerism. The author argues that practices of consumption in the EU should be examined in their constitutive role as they form visions of Europe and construct notions of European citizenship, identity and belonging. This is particularly the case in postsocialist Europe whereby memories of consumerism in socialism are an important part in the formulation of European identity in postsocialism. In brief, whereas the main sociological production of discourse on Europe focuses on the production of European identity, this paper interrogates the “consumption” of European identity. The analysis is based on media memories in the time of the Slovenia's joining of the Schengen regime in December 2007.

## 16<sup>th</sup> MESS is organised by:



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*Oddelek za etnologijo in kulturno antropologijo*

Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology



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**16<sup>th</sup> MESS is supported by:**



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