



LET / YEARS

INŠTITUT ZA
NARODNOSTNA
VPRAŠANJA
INSTITUTE FOR
ETHNIC STUDIES

The Importance of Exploring Ethnicity in the 21st Century

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME
AND BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

15-16
MAY 2025

Ljubljana,
Slovenia



Welcome to our conference

Dear colleagues, scholars, and friends,

It is with great honour and enthusiasm that we welcome you to the international academic conference *“The Importance of Exploring Ethnicity in the 21st Century”* held on 15 and 16 May 2025 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. This gathering marks the centennial celebration of the Institute for Ethnic Studies (IES) – a milestone that reflects a century of our commitment to academic excellence, international collaboration, and the advancement of ethnic studies.

Founded in 1925 as the Minority Institute, the IES stands as one of the earliest public research institutions of its kind in Europe. Initially dedicated to studying the status of Slovenian minorities in neighbouring countries and ethnic minorities within Slovenia, the Institute has since broadened its scope. Today, it addresses a wide array of issues, including migration, integration, nationalism, and the protection of national and ethnic minorities.

Our conference brings together a diverse assembly of scholars and educators from around the globe to engage in meaningful dialogue on pressing issues such as increasing ethnic diversity and the challenges faced by both new and traditional minorities. Through a series of panels, we aim to delve into topics including the legal status of ethnic communities, the formation and preservation of ethnic identities in contemporary societies, and common research dilemmas in this field.

Academic discourse is the cornerstone of our gathering. It is through the exchange of ideas, critical discussions, and collaborative research that we can advance our understanding and contribute to the development of inclusive societies. Networking opportunities abound, providing a platform for participants to connect, share insights, and foster future collaborations.

Our Institute’s commitment to international cooperation is exemplified by its active participation in international networks and projects. By organizing conferences such as this one, we aim to create inclusive spaces for scholarly interaction and bring together researchers from diverse backgrounds to engage in meaningful dialogue, share insights, and explore new avenues for transnational cooperation.

As we commemorate this centennial milestone, we invite you to engage fully in the discussions, share your evolving knowledge, and build connections that will enrich our collective understanding and contribute to the advancement of ethnic studies. We wish you a successful conference filled with inspiring and enlightening debates. May your participation lead to fruitful collaborations and a deeper appreciation of the complexities surrounding ethnicity in our global society.

Thank you for joining us in this significant celebration.

We wish you a wonderful time in Ljubljana!

The Conference Scientific and Organising Committees

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

DAY 1 | Thursday, 15 May 2025

TIME	ACTIVITY
8:30-9:00	Arrival and registration
9:00-9:30	Welcome and introductory speeches
9:30-10:30	The (Evolving) Legal Status of Ethnic Communities Keynote speech by Francesco Palermo and plenary discussion
10:30-11:00	Coffee break
11:00-12:30	PANELS
12:30-14:00	Lunch break
14:00-15:00	Integration into Diversity. A new theoretical framework for European diverse cities Keynote speech by Maurice Crul and plenary discussion
15:00-15:30	Coffee break
15:30-17:00	PANELS
18:00	Conference dinner

DAY 2 | Friday, 16 May 2025

TIME	ACTIVITY
9:00-10:00	The Importance of Researching Ethnicity: A Personal Perspective Keynote speech by Sonja Novak Lukanović and plenary discussion
10:00-10:30	Coffee break
10:30-12:00	PANELS
12:00-12:30	Plenary: Conference conclusions
12:30-13:30	Farewell drink
14:00-16:00	Guided tour through Ljubljana

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Prof. Dr. Francesco Palermo
University of Verona & Eurac Research,
Italy

Francesco Palermo is professor of comparative constitutional law at the University of Verona and Director of the Institute for Comparative Federalism at Eurac Research in Bolzano/Bozen. He worked for the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and was member and president of the Council of Europe's Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. From 2013 to 2018, he served as a non-party member of the Italian Senate. He has been a member of the Group of Independent Experts of the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities since 2011. He is a former president (2016–2022) of the International Association of Centres for Federal Studies (IACFS). He was member of the Scientific Committee of the Fundamental Rights Agency of the EU for the term 2018–2023 and has been a constitutional adviser to the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities since 2019.

Maurice Crul is a distinguished professor of sociology at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam. He specialises in the school and labour market careers of children of immigrants and refugees in Europe and the United States. He coordinated the TIES project, the first European comparative study on the second generation in Europe, and two ERC Grant projects. The first looked at the upcoming elite among the second generation (ELITESproject.eu) and the second, an ERC Advanced Grant project, examines the new minority in superdiverse cities: people without a migration background living in majority-minority neighbourhoods (BAMproject.eu). He has written over a hundred journal and chapter articles about diversity and inclusion. Some of his books include *The New Face of World Cities*, *Coming to Terms with Superdiversity: The Case of Rotterdam*, *Superdiversity: A New Vision on Integration*, *New Social Mobility: Second Generation Pioneers in Europe* and *The New Minority: People Without a Migration Background in the Superdiverse City*.



Prof. Dr. Maurice Crul
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam,
Netherlands

Sonja Novak Lukanović has been the director of the Institute for Ethnic Studies since 2010 and is a full professor of Applied Linguistics at the University of Ljubljana. Her research topics cover applied linguistics with special emphasis on sociolinguistic themes dealing with social and language processes in areas of language contact. She specifically works with language policies and language ideologies, the status of languages in multicultural areas of contact, relations between minority and majority languages, strategies of language adaptation, links between language and individual identity, significance of speakers' attitudes towards language, bilingual education, and economic aspects of language. Within the basic research projects Language and Economy (2008–2011) and Institutional Bilingualism in the Ethnically Mixed Areas in Slovenia: Evaluation of Bilingualism Bonus Programme (2018–2022), which she headed, she performed pioneer research in Slovenia defining the links between language and economic variables in different ethnically mixed and homogenous settings.



Prof. Dr. Sonja Novak Lukanović
Institute for Ethnic Studies
& University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

OVERVIEW OF PANELS

Thursday, 15 May | 11:00–12:30

Legal Status of Ethnic Communities

Chair: Dr. Mitja Žagar

- **Shaping Minority Protection Standards: The Role of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention**
Ljubica Djordjević & Meyeti Payet, ECMI – European Centre for Minority Issues, Germany
- **The “erased” and the ECHR case law on citizenship**
Ana Vilfan Vospersnik, European Court of Human Rights, France
- **Challenges in regulating the legal status of national minorities in Slovenia**
Vera Klopčič, Slovenia
- **The EU Parliament and its role in the protection and promotion of national and linguistic minorities**
Craig Willis, ECMI – European Centre for Minority Issues, Germany
David Smith, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom

Historical Aspects of Ethnicity

Chair: Dr. Danijel Grafenauer

- **The Development of Slovenian Culture in Gorizia in the Pre-World War I Period**
Robert Devetak, Institute for Ethnic Studies, Slovenia
- **Exploring Slovenian ethnic identity in pre-modern times: between constructivist and cultural-historical approaches**
Vanja Kočevár, ZRC SAZU – Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Slovenia
- **Hungarians in Vukovar During the Austro-Hungarian Period**
Denis Njari, University of Osijek, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Croatia
- **Between violence and identity preservation: Slovenes in Austrian Carinthia and British Efforts to Restore Ethnic Balance in the First Years after the Second World War (1945–1947)**
Ane Marie Herceg & Gorazd Bajc, University of Maribor, Faculty of Arts, Slovenia

Thursday, 15 May | 11:00-12:30

Ethnic Data Collection

Chair: Dr. Tamara Trošt

- **Ethnic data collection in Slovakia: challenges and limitations**
Svetluša Surová, Minority Issues Research Institute, Slovakia
- **Language and ethnicity in German censuses**
Astrid Adler, Leibniz Institute for the German Language, Germany
- **Spatial Dimension of Ethno-Demographic Processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the Breakup of Yugoslavia**
Vladimir Nikitović, Institute of Social Sciences, Serbia
Sanja Klempić Bogadi, Institute for Migration Research, Croatia
Branislav Bajat, University of Belgrade, Serbia
- **Collecting Ethnicity Data: Purpose, Operationalization, and Methods**
Alenka Verša, SLORI – Slovenian Research Institute, Italy

Ethnicity in Border Regions

Chair: Dr. Barbara Riman

- **Croatian-Slovenian Border Parallels along the Kolpa River – From Žumberak and Bela krajina to Kočevska and Gorski Kotar**
Damir Josipovič, Institute for Ethnic Studies, Slovenia
Filip Škiljan & Marina Perić Kaselj, Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies, Croatia
- **Language – Trauma – Ethnicity**
Daniel Wutti, University of Teacher Education Carinthia, Austria
- **Spatiality as a fundamental category of minority literature**
Jadranka Cergol, University of Primorska, Faculty of Humanities, Slovenia
- **Traditional ethnic minorities and human-induced environmental degradation in two Eastern European border regions**
Giustina Selvelli, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Thursday, 15 May | 15:30-17:00

Conceptualisation of National and Ethnic Minorities

Chair: Dr. Ljubica Djordjević

- **Conceptualization of minorities in the practice of the UN treaty bodies – a case study from Central and Eastern Europe**
Noémi Nagy, Institute for Ethnic Studies, Slovenia
- **Conceptualization of National Minorities in the Context of their Political Participatory Rights in Serbia**
Katinka Beretka, Dr Lazar Vrkatić Faculty of Legal and Business Studies, Serbia
- **A reflection on the definition of Slovene emigration**
Anja Moric, ZRC SAZU – Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Slovenia
- **European citizenship in perspective of national identities**
Uroš Pinterič, ZIS Pomurje – Pomurje Science and Innovation Centre, Slovenia

Ethnicity and Language

Chair: Dr. Sabina Zorčič

- **Ethnolinguistic Vitality of collateral language communities in Poland. A sociolinguistic approach**
Nicole Dołowy-Rybińska, Polish Academy of Sciences, Institute of Slavic Studies, Poland
- **Linguistic identity and language policy. The case of the protection and promotion of Friulan language**
Michele Gazzola, Ulster University, United Kingdom
- **Repercussions of Language Ideologies and Policy on Linguistic Diversity in Georgia**
Nona Tatiashvili, Tbilisi State University, Georgia
- **The status of Mirandese in the Iberian Peninsula: a comparative study**
Cláudia Martins & Joana Aguiar, Polytechnic Institute of Bragança, Portugal
Sérgio Ferreira, University of Porto, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Portugal
- **Ethnolinguistic Vitality Revisited: A social dynamic approach to sustainability**
Conchúr Ó Giollagáin, University of the Highlands and Islands, United Kingdom

Thursday, 15 May | 15:30-17:00

Ethnic Identities and Diversity in Contemporary Times

Chair: Dr. Giustina Selvelli

- **Fluid perceptions of ethnicity: How to define the German minority in Latvia?**
Heiko F. Marten, Leibniz Institute for the German Language, Germany
- **Ethnic and Linguistic Declarations: Two [Distinct?] Dimensions of Minority Identities in Poland's National Censuses**
Tomasz Wicherkiwicz, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland
- **Shaping Ethnic and Linguistic Identities: Naming Practices and Religious Decisions in Ethnically Mixed Hungarian-Serb Families in Vojvodina**
Karolina Lendák-Kabók, Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary
- **Safeguarding Identity Through Education: The Role of Bilingual Educational Models in Minority Language Preservation**
Lara Sorgo, Attila Kovács & Katalin Hirnők Munda, Institute for Ethnic Studies, Slovenia
- **Patterns of national identity among minority Hungarian youth**
Csilla Zsigmond & Attila Papp, HUN-REN Centre for Social Sciences, Institute for Minority Studies, Hungary

Migration and Integration

Chair: Dr. Damir Josipović

- **Invisible Migrants: Slovenian Domestic Workers and Their Associations in Interwar Croatia**
Barbara Riman, Institute for Ethnic Studies, Slovenia
- **Lived Migration Experiences of Immigrant Women in Portugal**
Patricia Silva & Henrique Pereira, University of Beira Interior, Portugal
- **Ethnic Discrimination in Slovenia: Nationalism, Hate Speech, and the Challenges of Measuring Inequality**
Veronika Bajt, Peace Institute, Slovenia
- **The Participation Paradox: Immigrants' Civic and Political Engagement and Majority Attitudes in Slovenia**
Janez Pirc, Mojca Medvešek & Romana Bešter, Institute for Ethnic Studies, Slovenia

Friday, 16 May | 10:30-12:00

Dimensions of Ethnic and Minority Identities

Chair: Dr. Lara Sorgo

- **Measuring Ethnic Identities in the Social Sciences: Challenges and Recent Methodological Advances**
Tamara Trošt, University of Ljubljana, School of Economics and Business, Slovenia
Elena Gadjanova, University of Exeter, United Kingdom
- **Politics of Ethnic (Im-)Mobilization: Russian Compatriots in the Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan**
Görkem Atsungur & Buğra Güngör, American University of Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan
- **Ethnically marked choices in the Ukrainian-Hungarian intermarriages in Ukraine permeated by Hungary's kin-state politics**
Patrik Tátrai, Viktória Ferenc, Julianna Kohut-Ferki, Katalin Kovály, József Molnár, HUN-REN CSFK Geographical Institute, Hungary
- **The fraught recognition of the group dimension of minorities' fundamental rights: exploring the differences between linguistic and religious rights**
Kristin Henrard, Brussels School of Governance, Belgium

Contemporary Challenges in Roma Communities

Chair: Dr. Vera Klopčič

- **The scent of prejudice: Olfactory-based discrimination against Roma in Slovenia**
Mojca Ramšak, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Chemistry and Chemical Technology, Slovenia
- **Protective and risk factors for the psychosocial health of Roma and non-Roma communities living in poverty in Portugal**
Jóni Ledo, University of Beira Interior, Portugal
- **The Role of Ethnic and Identity Capital: Educational Support Programs' Impact on Identity Formation and Labour Market Outcomes of First-in-Family Roma Graduates in Hungary**
Zsanna Nyíró & Judit Durst, HUN-REN Centre for Social Sciences, Hungary
- **Understanding antigypsyism in Europe**
Andreja Zevnik, University of Manchester, United Kingdom
Andrew Russell, University of Liverpool, United Kingdom
- **Exploring Language Competence of Roma Children in the Slovene Education System**
Sabina Zorčič & Mojca Medvešek, Institute for Ethnic Studies, Slovenia

Friday, 16 May | 10:30-12:00

Political Participation of National Minorities

Chair: Dr. Janez Pirc

- **Local politics in minority-majority cities: the case of Narva**
Vello Pettai, ECMI – European Centre for Minority Issues, Germany
- **The Slovene Minority Political Elites in Italy on the Go: What's Next?**
Zaira Vidau, SLORI – Slovenian Research Institute, Italy
- **The issue of parliamentary representation of national minorities in the practice of the ECtHR**
Balázs Kiss, ELTE Faculty of Law, Hungary
- **Political Participation of Slovene Communities and National Minorities in the Neighboring Countries of the Republic of Slovenia**
Mitja Žagar & Danijel Grafenauer, Institute for Ethnic Studies, Slovenia

International Academic Conference:

The Importance of Exploring Ethnicity in the 21st Century

15-16 May 2025 | Ljubljana, Slovenia

Book of Abstracts

Legal Status of Ethnic Communities

Thursday, 15 May | 11:00-12:30

Chair: Dr. Mitja Žagar

Shaping Minority Protection Standards: The Role of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention

Ljubica Djordjević & Meyeti Payet, ECMI – European Centre for Minority Issues, Germany

The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) is Europe's cornerstone treaty for national minority protection, establishing core standards in the field. As a "framework" convention, it grants state parties significant flexibility to tailor implementation to local circumstances and minority-specific needs. Its designation as a "living instrument" reflects its adaptability and development through ongoing interpretation and application. At the heart of this interpretative process is the Advisory Committee, an expert body that supports the Committee of Ministers in monitoring states' compliance. Monitoring occurs in five-year cycles, with the Advisory Committee's Opinions serving as key assessment documents. Additionally, the Committee has issued four thematic commentaries consolidating its views on critical aspects of minority protection, including education, language use, participation, and the scope of application. Through follow-up dialogues with states, it has further facilitated the Convention's implementation. Since its first Opinion in September 2000, the Advisory Committee has established a significant body of soft-law jurisprudence. Over time, its Opinions have become more detailed, structured, and inclusive, addressing both traditional minority concerns and contemporary issues such as socio-economic participation and gender dimensions. This paper examines the evolution of the Advisory Committee's work and its contribution to developing minority protection standards. More specifically, the analysis will demonstrate developments regarding the scope of application and how the Advisory Committee has influenced countries' willingness to extend minority protection to groups initially excluded. It will also examine countries' readiness to collect ethnic and equality data and assess the position of national minorities in various areas of life. Furthermore, the analysis will address the use of Article 6 of the FCNM to foster an inclusive society, as well as use of Article 15 to expand opportunities for minority participation. Finally, the study will shed light on the gradual inclusion of environmental issues and gender perspectives within the Framework Convention through the Advisory Committee's monitoring efforts. By analyzing the Advisory Committee's evolving positions and their influence on state responses, the paper sheds light on the dynamic interplay between progressive interpretation and the readiness of states to adopt innovative approaches to minority protection. This study underscores the importance of the Advisory Committee's work in shaping comprehensive standards for the protection of national minorities in Europe.

The "erased" and the ECHR case law on citizenship

Ana Vilfan Vospernik, European Court of Human Rights, France

The "erased" and the ECHR case law on citizenship This contribution explores the development of the case law of the European Court of Human Rights ("the Court") on citizenship over the past 20 years, reflecting the changes in contemporary societies, geopolitical developments (the end of Soviet Union, the SFRY, EU) and challenges of the 21st century, such as immigration and terrorist threat. A right to acquire or retain a particular citizenship/nationality is not protected per se by the European Convention on Human Rights ("the Convention"). Traditionally, the Court considered the question of citizenship as the exclusive prerogative of member States. However, there have been a number of cases in the recent period in which nationality and residence issues have arisen under the provisions of the Convention, predominantly under Article 8 (right to private life) and Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination). The Court has not excluded that an arbitrary denial or revocation of a citizenship might in certain circumstances raise issues under the Convention. The contribution focuses at the outset on the case Kurić and Others v. Slovenia [GC], no. 26828/06, ECHR 2012, concerning the legal status of persons, citizens of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia ("the SFRY") living in Slovenia at the time of the Slovenia's declaration of independence. This raises the question of the link between the citizenship and legal status of foreigners living in a country, based on the ethnicity, and touching the concept of "new minorities". The applicants in the case of Kurić and Others belonged to a group of persons known as the "erased", who were removed from the Slovenian register of permanent residents shortly after Slovenia's declaration of independence from the SFRY because they had not opted for Slovenian citizenship – an option that had been briefly available to all former Yugoslav citizens residing in Slovenia at that time. The aim of the contribution is to perform a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the Court's case law in

order to establish which legal principles have developed in this field, the Court's methodology in the examination of such cases and the scope of the Convention protection of this right. Based on the individual circumstances of the Court's cases, the contribution will also explore if the Court's case-law is in consonance with the evolution of the international law, including the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities' and the United Nations' standards.

Challenges in regulating the legal status of national minorities in Slovenia

Vera Klopčič, Slovenia

The article discusses the approach to the legal protection of national minorities in Slovenia, and analyzes in more detail two current initiatives - the Act on the Exercise of Cultural Rights of Members of Communities of the Former Yugoslavia, which was adopted in 2024 and the initiative to legally regulate the status of the Roma community in Slovenia as a national minority. In historical perspective, the author raises the hypothesis that the level of protection of the two officially recognized national minorities in Slovenia, based on territorial principle, corresponds to the political consensus, achieved before the adoption of the Coe Framework Convention for Protection of National Minorities. According to this principle, at present, only Italians and Hungarians living in Slovenia have the status of a national minority in the Republic of Slovenia. The Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia provides only for special status and special rights of the autochthonous Italian and Hungarian national communities and of the Roma community as an ethnic group. However, situation in practice reflects some limits of territorial model of minority protection. Therefore the main challenge for the future regulation remains the extension of obligations of the State towards protection of rights of other ethnic minorities in accordance with wishes of members of these communities and international legal standards.

The EU Parliament and its role in the protection and promotion of national and linguistic minorities

Craig Willis, ECMI – European Centre for Minority Issues, Germany

David Smith, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom

The European Union has long been criticised for its limited role in the protection of national and linguistic minorities, with the most prominent European-level legislation being the Council of Europe's ECRML and FCNM. Both scholarly work and activist campaigns have sought to increase the EU's role, particularly after the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, yet they remain largely unsuccessful. One prominent recent example was the EU Citizen's Initiative, the 'Minority SafePack' which collected the necessary one million signatures but was ultimately rejected by the EU Commission in 2021. The initiative did have the backing of the EU Parliament however and this has become one of the main avenues which activist and political pressure groups have sought to exploit – again particularly post-2009 when its competences were strengthened. As such, this paper considers the overall landscape of minority protection within the EU since 2021 and looks at the role of the EU Parliament in promoting the rights of national and linguistic minorities in Europe, in particular through the longstanding Intergroup for Traditional Minorities, National Communities and Languages. The case of the Minority SafePack is examined as one high-profile example of EU Parliament involvement, before the paper moves on the focus on the most recent EU Parliament elections. This has seen a marked shift in composition, with a growth in right-wing parties and the establishment of a new political group, Patriots for Europe. The implications of this on the various national and linguistic minorities represented within the Parliament are the focus of this presentation, concentrating on reformation of the Intergroup. Despite its long tradition, the Intergroup is a fragile composition of MEPs from different political and geographical positions, whereby the closer links of some of its prominent members to the far-right could see it struggle to maintain all opinions under one roof. The presentation will also discuss the role of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) and its president who was one of the co-chairs of the previous Intergroup and has risen to prominence through his leading role with the Minority SafePack Initiative.

Historical Aspects of Ethnicity

Chair: Dr. Danijel Grafenauer

Thursday, 15 May | 11:00-12:30

The Development of Slovenian Culture in Gorizia in the Pre-World War I Period

Robert Devetak, Institute for Ethnic Studies, Slovenia

During the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Gorizia was the capital of the multi-ethnic region of Gorizia and Gradisca, where Slovenian, Friulian, Italian and German ethnic communities lived together. The town functioned as a centre for all these communities, but the Slovene one, despite its large population, was not granted equal rights in administration, politics, education and the judicial system. Changes in these areas were prevented mainly by the Italian urban elite, who feared that Slovenian demands would threaten their primacy in Gorizia. These dynamics gave rise to increasing conflicts between the two ethnic communities during the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Despite these obstacles, Slovene political thought, economy and, above all, cultural and private educational institutions developed successfully in the town. At the beginning of the 20th century, Gorizia developed into one of the major centres of the Slovenian national community. Cultural associations, which strengthened Slovenian national consciousness, education and cultural creativity, played a particularly important role in this rise. The foundations were already laid during the Spring of Nations in 1848, but the breakthrough for the development of Slovenian culture was made possible by the democratising social and political changes in the Habsburg Empire from the early 1860s onwards. This led to the formation of a wide and diverse societal network. The societies created rich cultural activities, established various sections (drama, singing, music), organised professional lectures, libraries, and strengthened cooperation with similar organisations from other Slovene regions. Such activities were also of great importance for strengthening national consciousness. The paper will present the main aspects of the development of Slovenian culture in Gorizia, in the context of systematic societal activities. On the basis of relevant literature, newspaper articles and archival documents, it will be analysed how, within the framework of systematic work, some of the central cultural associations approached the community, which was actively involved in the process, as a creator of content (literary work, participation in plays, choirs, etc.) or passively as a recipient of content (audience, readership, theatre). Emphasis will also be given to the analysis of the national and educational role of the associations in the community.

Exploring Slovenian ethnic identity in pre-modern times: between constructivist and cultural-historical approaches

Vanja Kočevár, ZRC SAZU – Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Slovenia

This paper addresses the question of whether Slovenian ethnic identity existed prior to the advent of the 19th-century national movement. This topic is the subject of considerable debate within contemporary Slovenian historiography. The subject matter is addressed by seeking to ascertain responses to the pivotal research question of who self-identified with the Slovenian ethno- and linguistic denominations, ethnic community, and ethnic territory in the pre-modern periods. In alignment with Tovia U. Raun's approach, this paper offers a critical perspective of the "strictly modernist" stance, which is characterised by three key attributes. 1) an a priori rejection of any links between "popular proto-nationalisms" and modern national identities; 2) a constructivist view that posits ethnic communities are not shaped by objective criteria, but rather by a shared belief in these criteria; and 3) the demand for a "view from below," which elucidates how ethnicity was experienced by ordinary people from the lower social strata (Eric J. Hobsbawm). In light of the research conducted on "neutral sources" and the comparisons made between the reports of various pre-modern writers, this paper puts forth the argument for the utilisation of cultural-historical approaches to the study of pre-modern ethnic identities, as proposed by Anthony D. Smith, Miroslav Hroch and Adrian Hastings. However, it simultaneously acknowledges the constructivist challenge of modernism by examining self-identifications as a significant indicator of ethnicity and strives to align with the criterion of "the view from below" by investigating the experiences of the ordinary people. The methodological approach is based on the study of "neutral sources," which include the published university registers, the lists of guests lodged at pilgrimage hospices, and the lists of members from various religious congregations. Furthermore, the research incorporates an analysis of urbanisms and judicial documents, which frequently contain information regarding an individual's ethnic, linguistic, class, provincial, or regional affiliations. Moreover, the paper analyses the accounts of various pre-modern authors on ethnic and linguistic circumstances, employing a comparative methodology to evaluate their

veracity. The paper puts forth the proposition that ethnic identity among Slovenes existed in pre-modern times. However, the paper acknowledges that the significance of this identity fluctuated over time, with periods when it was overshadowed by religious or regional affiliations.

Hungarians in Vukovar During the Austro-Hungarian Period

Denis Njari, University of Osijek, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Croatia

The exploration of ethnicity within historical contexts is vital to understanding the complexities of identity and coexistence in the 21st century. This paper focuses on the Hungarian community in Vukovar during the Austro-Hungarian period, a time of significant demographic and cultural transformations shaped by broader imperial policies. Hungarians had been present in the region since the Middle Ages, but their numbers diminished dramatically during the Ottoman period, leaving only a small enclave in the village of Kórógy. The 19th century marked a period of renewed Hungarian settlement in Vukovar and its surroundings. Driven by economic opportunities, Hungarian farmers purchased land and established agricultural enterprises. This agrarian base was supplemented by a growing number of Hungarian craftsmen, merchants, clerks, and railway workers. The presence of Hungarian nobility added another dimension, contributing to the region's social stratification and cultural exchange. During this period, Hungarians made notable efforts to institutionalize their identity, as evidenced by the construction of a Calvinist church and the establishment of a Hungarian-language school. These institutions not only served the local community but also symbolized the assertion of Hungarian culture within a multi-ethnic environment. However, this period was also marked by interethnic tensions, reflecting both local and imperial dynamics. Croatian newspapers often portrayed Hungarians as a cultural and political threat, amplifying anxieties about Hungarian influence in the region. These tensions sometimes escalated into conflict, as demonstrated by incidents such as the attempted arson of the Hungarian school in Vukovar. Such events highlight the challenges of ethnic coexistence in a region marked by overlapping identities and competing nationalisms. By situating the Hungarian experience in Vukovar within the broader framework of Austro-Hungarian ethnic policies, this paper provides a nuanced understanding of how ethnic communities navigated coexistence, conflict, and cultural expression. This case study underscores the importance of historical analysis in informing contemporary perspectives on ethnicity and interethnic relations.

Between violence and identity preservation: Slovenes in Austrian Carinthia and British Efforts to Restore Ethnic Balance in the First Years after the Second World War (1945-1947)

Ane Marie Herceg & Gorazd Bajc, University of Maribor, Faculty of Arts, Slovenia

Identity is a complex and multidimensional concept, involving individual and collective self-perception in relation to cultural, ethnic, linguistic, geographical and historical factors. In the context of minority communities, identity often becomes a central question of existence, as minorities maintain their fundamental characteristics in the context of a majority society that may assimilate or marginalise them. Identity is not a static phenomenon but a dynamic process that changes in relation to external geopolitical factors, social change and internal social dynamics. In the case of the Slovenian minority in Austrian Carinthia, identity is intertwined with historically conditioned questions of political and cultural existence in an environment where borders and power structures have changed several times over the decades. These changes often reshape power relations and affect the way minorities form, maintain and express their identity. The main aims of this research paper are to analyse and interpret the conception of Slovenian minority identity in Austrian Carinthia in documents held by the British National Archives in Kew-London (fonds Foreign Office and Control Office for Germany and Austria), from the initial period of British occupation in Austria after the Second World War. The main research question is how the British treated Slovene identity, Slovenian efforts to preserve their identity, in the context of the reparation measures taken post-war. The theoretical framework focuses on the identity(ies) of the Slovenian minority in times of geopolitical change, with a third-party perspective at the forefront. The analysis of selected British archival sources mentioned above, as well as documents held in the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia in Ljubljana, in particular from the holdings of the Institute for Ethnic Issues, are used to provide insight into Slovenian views on this period. In addition, relevant scientific literature and analyses of Austrian and Slovenian newspaper reports will be included to show how Slovenians in the public (and private) spheres sought to preserve their ethnic and cultural belonging. The expected conclusion of the research paper is that the question of the identity of the Slovenian minority in Carinthia in the initial period of the British occupation zone was mainly addressed in the context of political interests, especially those related to the so-called struggle for the border. The British occupational authority perceived questions of ethnic balance and identity as less important than other strategic and security issues.

Ethnic Data Collection

Chair: Dr. Tamara Trošt

Thursday, 15 May | 11:00-12:30

Ethnic data collection in Slovakia: challenges and limitations

Svetluša Surová, Minority Issues Research Institute, Slovakia

Different countries collect data on the national, civic and ethnic identities of people in different ways and for different purposes. The collection of such data is used, for instance, for developing information bases for various analyses, and evaluations but also for decision-making and policymaking, including minority policies (Surova, 2021). This paper examines what ethnic data, how, and why are collected in Slovakia by official institutions. What are their main conceptual, methodological, legal, ethical and practical challenges and limitations? Firstly it is analyzed what “ethnicity” as a term and concept is and secondly, how is defined and operationalized by state authorities which collect ethnic data. As well it is scrutinized what the data collected on ethnicity in censuses, different surveys, atlases and databases collected by state institutions mean and (mis)represent. This study looks critically at how Slovak practices in ethnic data collection correspond with the latest scientific knowledge on ethnicity, identity, nationality and other related concepts, as well as with international practices and recommendations for collecting data concerning the identities of individuals, especially minorities. The conclusion is that state authorities define and operationalize “ethnicity” in different ways, and use different methodologies and data granularity. When analysing administrative and statistical ethnic data and being aware of these differences. Social scientists should be very careful about the kind of data collected, how they are collected, and for what reasons. It follows that administrative or statistical ethnic data cannot, and should not, be the source of knowledge about the ethnic composition of society.

Language and ethnicity in German censuses

Astrid Adler, Leibniz Institute for the German Language, Germany

Censuses are bureaucratic acts carried out by states – but they are also more than that. They reflect, shape and create visions of social realities (Kertzer/Arel 2002:5). They do so by supporting collective identities along seemingly neat and undisputed categories to which people are assigned. Such categories are, e.g., gender, age, and categories marking “national-ethnic-cultural affiliations” (Mecheril 2003:23-27). These are, for example, citizenship, ethnic or national affiliation, and also language. In this light, this paper aims to examine questions on language in German censuses. For this purpose, the paper presents an analysis of census documents, census questionnaires, presentations of results and other publications by census officials and statisticians. During the 19th century, German states started to collect information on their population (Labbé 2003:41ff.). After the foundation of the German Empire in 1871, nationwide censuses were carried out at regular intervals. These censuses included questions on the mother tongue of the respondents (Hofmeister-Lemke 1987:154). However, none of these censuses was primarily interested in collecting linguistic information about the population. Rather, the data gathered on languages was intended as a ‘proxy’ to determine the national/ethnic identity of the population. In particular, the approach of “nationality statistics” by Richard Böckh (Böckh 1866) had an impact on implementing language in census programmes as a means to determine national/ethnic identity (e.g. Labbé 2009, Leuschner 2004). His ideas were internationally received and discussed. In this tradition, mother tongue was used in German censuses in an increasingly “biopolitical” context also during the first half of the 20th century (Burgdörfer 1932:417ff.). Finally, in the first two censuses in Germany after World War II (1946, 1950), mother tongue was elicited in order to identify ethnicity/nationality of the post-war population, of which large parts were on the move and had undefined citizenship status. Afterwards, however, it took almost seventy years until the language of the population was again recorded in official German statistics. Yet, even in 2017, language was again used as a proxy, this time in order to identify cultural integration of individuals. In total, the paper therefore argues that language has repeatedly been used in German censuses to serve as a means to identify and distinguish national-ethnic-cultural groups, i.e. those that belong to the nation and those who do not.

Spatial Dimension of Ethno-Demographic Processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the Breakup of Yugoslavia

Vladimir Nikitović, Institute of Social Sciences, Serbia

Sanja Klempić Bogadi, Institute for Migration Research, Croatia

Branislav Bajat, University of Belgrade, Serbia

The disintegration of Yugoslavia had particularly severe consequences for Bosnia and Herzegovina, primarily due to the more complex ethnic composition of its population compared to other republics of the former federal state. Almost 30 years after the Dayton Peace Agreement, tensions between the three largest ethnic groups – Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats – have not been resolved. Moreover, it seems that the crisis has deepened. The lack and questionable quality of demographic data, especially according to ethnic composition, and/or uncritical interpretations of demographic and migration processes that have taken place in this country since 1991 significantly contribute to the confusion in interethnic relations. Given that the concept of ethnic homogeneity of space was a key starting point in the formation of the post-Dayton political and administrative organization of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also that it is the source of current political crises, it is essential to improve the knowledge of the spatial and temporal dimension of ethno-demographic processes in this country. The aim of this research is to examine what changes in terms of spatial homogenization and dispersion of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina according to ethnic composition took place after the breakup of Yugoslavia. Consideration of ethnicity as one of the most important drivers of demographic variations in society and consequently the geographical concentration of ethnic groups enables a deeper understanding of demographic and related socioeconomic processes. We used global and local univariate and bivariate Moran’s I indices, known as the spatial autocorrelation indicators, to measure and test how local administrative units (municipalities) are clustered or dispersed in space with respect to ethnic composition of their population. These statistics were calculated upon the data from the 1991 and 2013 Censuses of population. The results indicate that all three ethnic groups are characterized by a significantly high level of spatial homogenization at the state level in both time points. It is the highest among Croats, and the lowest among Bosniaks. However, contrary to popular belief, the global level of spatial homogenization declined among all three ethnicities between 1991 and 2013, with the largest decline among Bosniaks and the smallest among Serbs. The results obtained by bivariate autocorrelation analysis indicate that the spatial pattern of ethnic homogenization between the two censuses remained similar with pronounced changes that can be observed in areas characterised with forced migration and mortality both caused by ethnic cleansing.

Collecting Ethnicity Data: Purpose, Operationalization, and Methods

Alenka Verša, SLORI – Slovenian Research Institute, Italy

Ethnicity is a dynamic concept encompassing various dimensions such as self-identification, race, origin, citizenship, language, and place of birth, as well as a sense of belonging to a group defined by shared roots, history, culture, and values. The relevance of specific dimensions of ethnicity depends on the context and purpose of their application. While studies in sociology and political science explore the influence of ethnicity on individual and group opinions, such as voting decisions and attitudes toward discrimination and ethnic conflicts, anthropological research emphasizes belonging, tradition, and culture. As such, the operationalization of ethnicity and its measurement is highly non-standardized. On the one hand, population censuses frequently measure self-identification either directly, using open-ended or predefined responses, or indirectly, using specific dimensions such as birthplace, citizenship, or language. International social surveys such as the European Social Survey (ESS) and the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), on the other hand, while gathering some information on self-identification (origin, birthplace, parental birthplace, nationality, and/or religion), focus also on measuring the »felt« aspects of ethnicity like ethnic pride, strength of attachment, shared fate, and other variables. Until the late 20th century, most countries collected data on ethnic identity to better understand population structures and dynamics amid increasing mobility. These data, primarily gathered through population censuses, provided insights into demographic trends. However, stricter data privacy laws and the transition to register-based censuses, which offer cheaper and more frequent statistics production, have led many (European) countries to reduce direct collection of ethnicity data. This absence of direct data poses challenges for understanding population structures, with significant political, economic, and social implications. For instance, governments in diverse states use ethnicity data to ensure institutional representation of major ethnic and linguistic minority groups in institutions and to implement linguistic policies, despite potential high fixed costs. Ethnicity data is also essential for identifying social inequalities, particularly in public services like employment, education, and justice. This paper reviews the methods used in official statistics to collect ethnicity data across the globe, analyzing their evolution over time and their implications for policy and

research. By highlighting best practices and challenges, it aims to inform efforts toward more standardized and effective data collection frameworks. This paper presents data from the PhD dissertation Methodological aspects of collecting data about ethnicity.

Ethnicity in Border Regions

Thursday, 15 May | 11:00-12:30

Chair: Dr. Barbara Riman

Croatian-Slovenian Border Parallels along the Kolpa River – From Žumberak and Bela krajina to Kočevska and Gorski Kotar

Damir Josipovič, Institute for Ethnic Studies, Slovenia

Filip Škiljan & Marina Perić Kaselj, Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies, Croatia

The contribution provides a series of information about the border formation between Croatia and Slovenia. Over the centuries, the population along the Kolpa River from Žumberak to Gorski Kotar in Croatia, and Bela Krajina and Kočevsko in Slovenia, have relied on each other both economically and in everyday interpersonal communications. From the Middle Ages to the Ottoman wars and the formation of the Military Frontier, these border areas, despite frequent border changes, have remained permeated with specific micro-geographies to this day. Living in a common state from the late Middle Ages to 1991 resulted in numerous interconnections that are visible through culture, economy (cross-border branches of factories and employment), education, cross-border marriages, and in the formation of national identity, which is always dual on the border. The authors deal with the issue of national identity at the local and regional levels, which in the case of Žumberak and several villages around Marindol is even more complicated due to the local Greek Catholic and Orthodox affiliations, i.e. regional (Žumberak) identity and Serbian identity in the villages along the Kupa River in Slovenia. Based on semi-structured in-depth interviews, archival material, statistical data and available literature, the authors show how specific the dual border identity is, on both sides of the border. It will also point out the problem of setting the border and its regime after 1991 and making it difficult for the local population along the border to function after the formation of independent states.

Language – Trauma – Ethnicity

Daniel Wutti, University of Teacher Education Carinthia, Austria

This article is focused on the links between language, memory culture, trauma and ethnicity on the example of Slovene(s) in Carinthia. Traumatization decomposes language, and what is experienced becomes difficult, or nearly impossible, to express. As for the thematic entanglements of trauma, language, and literature, the following can be said: what cannot be spoken about can at least be written about. Or, as Florjan Lipuš, one of the most outstanding authors of the Carinthian Slovenes stated: “Der Literatur ist eine heilende Kraft zuzuschreiben. Dies ist der Grund, dass es so viele Schreibende unter den Kärntner Slowenen gibt” (“Literature can be attributed a healing power. This is the reason why there are so many writers among the Carinthian Slovenes”). In recent years, a respectable amount of scholarly literature has appeared on trauma and intergenerational transmission of trauma among Carinthian Slovenes (see e.g. Jurič Pahor 2001, Ottomeyer & Lackner 2009, Wutti 2012, Opetnik 2021, Zwitter-Grilc 2021, Wirth 2021). The “second generation” – the immediate children of the eyewitnesses – are often strongly connected to the story of their parents’ suffering. This seems to be especially the case when traumatic elements have not been dealt with: the “unfinished business” is passed on generationally. The “third generation,” grandchildren of contemporary witnesses are more ambivalent in this respect. For them, the topics of the past are already less engaging, less overwhelming. However, there are strong indications that both generations born after the witnesses of National Socialism draw their ethnic identifications as Carinthian Slovenes to a high extent from the traumatic events as well as from a culture of remembrance that emerged from them. The article shows this on the basis of selected literature by Carinthian Slovenes (including Florjan Lipuš, Katja Sturm-Schnabl and younger authors such as Elena Messner and Stefan Feinig over three different generations). At the same time, this article uses selected biographies to show the circumstances that lead Carinthians speaking purely dialectal Slovene to ethnically separate and differentiate themselves from Carinthian Slovenes. Results provide information about interconnections of language, (transgenerational) traumatised, memory culture and ethnicity.

Spatiality as a fundamental category of minority literature

Jadranka Cergol, University of Primorska, Faculty of Humanities, Slovenia

This paper aims to shed light on some of the close links between spatiality and identity, using the example of some literary passages written by members of the Slovenian minority in Italy. A review of the academic literature shows that the sense of belonging to a territory is one of the key identifying elements of any ethnic community (Smith 1988). Already G. Deleuze and F. Guattari defined the first characteristic of minority literature as the deterioration of one's identity, i.e. one's geographical distance from one's people. The very existence of minority literature is often defined by space, where Slovene authors coexist in close contact with other languages and identities, and therefore the connection to space permeates all their literature, creating a new spatial reception or marking their roots (Bandelj 2009). In many literary systems, researchers have noted that spatiality has in fact fundamentally shaped the cultural self-understanding of a particular people. Members of minority communities who do not live within the boundaries of a nation-state are also assumed to not always feel a close connection to the nation-state and do not (always) regard it as their homeland (Udovič, Sörgo 2024). Nevertheless, in their literary works they show a close attachment to their own homeland, as we encounter numerous descriptions of their native places, memories of escapes to idyllic landscapes and, at the same time, a sense of threat from the loss of spaces, which is closely linked to a sense of threat from the loss of language and identity. Using the example of some literary excerpts by Slovenian literary authors in Italy, the paper aims to shed light on what is their living space, what do they actually understand as their homeland and what kind of attitude do they show towards the space they inhabit.

Traditional ethnic minorities and human-induced environmental degradation in two Eastern European border regions

Giustina Selvelli, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

In this paper, I focus on the consequences of human-induced environmental degradation in the form of loss of natural and cultural heritage for traditional ethnic minority groups in the so-called peripheral regions of Europe, where environmental history was problematic both during communism and the transition to capitalism, and continues to have a direct impact in post-communist societies. I argue that the damage caused by the expansion of mining activities affects not only the physical environment of local communities, but also their intangible cultural heritage (especially language), threatening the survival of these minorities as distinct socio-cultural entities. The two case studies I focus on are the villages of the Sorbian minority in Germany devastated by lignite mining and the villages of the Vlach minority around the town of Bor in eastern Serbia, which suffer from the consequences of copper mining. By illustrating the impact of extractivism on multi-ethnic areas, I show that vulnerable minority groups seem to be disproportionately affected by patterns of environmental degradation over the last century, which is problematic from the perspective of preserving ethnolinguistic diversity in Europe. Furthermore, I hypothesize that the specific and strong attachment of many traditional minorities to their land means that its physical destruction is potentially more damaging in cultural terms than is often the case for other groups. This presentation is based on the ethnographic fieldworks I have conducted in 2024 among the Sorbian and Vlach communities and adopts a multidisciplinary perspective based on the environmental humanities, anthropological and sociolinguistics to approach issues of ecocultural diversity loss.

Conceptualisation of National and Ethnic Minorities

Thursday, 15 May | 15:30-17:00

Chair: Dr. Ljubica Djordjević

Conceptualization of minorities in the practice of the UN treaty bodies – a case study from Central and Eastern Europe

Noémi Nagy, Institute for Ethnic Studies, Slovenia

Despite decades of scholarly effort, there is still no universally accepted definition of minorities and other identity-related concepts, such as ethnicity, race or nationality. Yet, international law habitually operates with these terms when recognizing group-specific rights or providing protection from discrimination, without actually setting out definitions on the protected groups. This is not merely an unresolved theoretical issue, but a practical deficiency with crucial importance for the protection of minorities. The lack of international regulation leaves States with too much discretion which leads to divergent interpretations and, more often than not, a lower level of protection (Nagy & Vizi 2024). Divergent views are well reflected in the national legal regulations of the status of ethnic communities: some States simply refuse to recognize the existence of minorities in their territory; others recognize only certain groups; yet others apply a narrow concept, confining protection only to their linguistic or national minorities, or differentiate in the rights and status of traditional vs. modern (migrant) minorities (Nagy & Tóth n.d.).

However, while international legal regulation per se is silent on the issue of conceptualization, the practice of monitoring organs can provide guidance in this regard. Therefore, my presentation draws on the comparative legal analysis of the case-law of the ten UN human rights treaty bodies, including but not limited to, the Human Rights Committee, the monitoring organ of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which is the only international treaty with a universal scope to contain a minority-specific provision (Article 27).

The presentation will scrutinize the relevant concluding observations of the treaty bodies adopted on the basis of 10 selected States' reports, including Slovenia and its neighbours as well as (other) former states of Yugoslavia. The presentation has two aims. First, to show whether there is an emerging consensus or split between the approaches of the individual treaty bodies, therefore in the UN human rights system as a whole. Second, to identify elements of the minority concept which appear systematically in the practice of all treaty bodies in the examined countries/region, therefore constituting a possible basis for setting forth an all-encompassing definition of minorities, in the framework of international human rights law.

Conceptualization of National Minorities in the Context of their Political Participatory Rights in Serbia

Katinka Beretka, Dr Lazar Vrkatić Faculty of Legal and Business Studies, Serbia

In recent decades — due to numerous political, social, and economic factors — the number of different ethnic groups living in Serbia has increased. In addition to the Serbian nation, 43 other ethnic groups were registered in the 2022 census. Which of these ethnic groups are national minorities is not entirely clear. Although there is a domestic legal definition of national minorities, it is so inclusive that almost any ethnic group can claim certain minority rights by invoking this provision. In the absence of an official recognition procedure, the list of groups who have managed to set up a national minority council (minority self-governance) may be a good starting point in specifying the number and identity of national minorities in Serbia. On the other side, this approach automatically excludes those communities that exercise their right to self-determination in other ways, or that do not want to or have not been able to elect a national minority council so far. This statement is also supported by the fact that some communities who have only recently elected a national minority council have had their own (ethnic) political party for a longer time and participated in elections at various levels. Although Serbia, according to international monitoring reports, is continuously developing the framework for the effective participation of national minorities in public life, most ethnic groups remain invisible in political processes. The paper primarily examines the above-mentioned issues in the context of the political participatory rights of national minorities in Serbia: which ethnic groups can participate in political life under what conditions; what are the control mechanisms against possible abuses and ethnobusiness; whether the law differentiates between de facto different national minorities with regard to their participatory rights.

By analyzing the legislation, relevant administrative decisions and judicial practice, as well as relying on practical experience, especially election results, the paper not only presents the system elements of the political participation of national minorities in Serbia but also points out the shortcomings and makes suggestions on how the system could be improved, primarily by taking into account the actual differences between national minorities in the country.

A reflection on the definition of Slovene emigration

Anja Moric, ZRC SAZU – Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Slovenia

The legal definition of Slovene emigration dates back to the time of Slovene independence, when the Slovene nation had just chosen its own state according to the model of nation states with one titular nation. It understands the Slovene nation and Slovene emigration as being based on Slovene origin and the Slovene language, but did not take into account the complexity of the migrants' experiences and identifications. The definition corresponded to the spirit of the time in which it was created, but has not (yet) been adapted to the current reality of emigrants (as well as Slovenes living in neighbouring countries). The ethnic and linguistic understanding of the Slovene nation is also present in the perception of organisations in Slovenia that take care of contacts and connections with Slovene emigrants. In the article, the author reflects on the particularities of the migrant experience, or multifaceted identities. Using the example of Germans who emigrated from Slovenia, she presents examples that question the perception of language and ethnicity as fundamental indicators of a Slovene emigrant. Based on the territorial and voluntaristic understanding of the nation, she proposes a different understanding of the Slovene emigration, which also includes the Germans (as well as Hungarians, Italians and Jews) who emigrated from Slovenia. The author's findings are based on an analytical-descriptive analysis of legal sources and on data gathered during her extensive research among emigrated Slovene Germans in Austria, Germany, the USA and Canada, which includes qualitative and quantitative research methods.

European citizenship in perspective of national identities

Uroš Pinterič, ZIS Pomurje – Pomurje Science and Innovation Centre, Slovenia

In 1992 the Maastricht Treaty established not only the European Union but also European citizenship. It can be considered as one of the main pillars of long-desired European state. However, there is an ever-present question if European citizenship has any base in identity, which would provide legitimacy of it. Based on Eurostat data, we will try to establish that supranational identities are rather weak, especially in crisis situations. On the psychological level, an individual's identification develops in sets of environments that one is exposed to. On the other side, authors in the field of nationalism and national identity argue that national identity is of utmost importance and additionally strengthened through the “indoctrination” system of the state (education). Moreover, developments of electoral results are showing ever growing levels of nationalism, and people's connection to their own states. In this manner we are trying to assess how relevant European citizenship (together with European identity) is in the perspective of various historical events and also in comparison to earlier studies in the field. As already indicated, we assume that European citizenship as well as identity in the last 20 years actually lost its relevance, which reduces not only the importance of discussed concepts but also the legitimacy of the European Union as such; especially in the perspective of the White paper on the future of Europe, published in 2017.

Ethnicity and Language

Chair: Dr. Sabina Zorčič

Thursday, 15 May | 15:30-17:00

Ethnolinguistic Vitality of collateral language communities in Poland. A sociolinguistic approach

Nicole Dołowy-Rybińska, Polish Academy of Sciences, Institute of Slavic Studies, Poland

This paper presents the results of an ethnolinguistic vitality survey carried out between 2021 and 2023 among five communities in Poland, namely: Kashubians, Silesians, Podhalanians, Podlachians and Masurians. The study focuses on communities using collateral languages (Wicherkiewicz 2014) - minority languages (or official language varieties) that belong to the same language family as the state language, are mutually intelligible with it, and are therefore often perceived as dialects of the dominant language. They are “contested languages” (Tamburelli & Tosco 2021) because they are not officially recognised and often not recognised by the speakers themselves. Their ‘contestation’ influences language ideologies and the way these languages function in private and official life. The same is true of collateral language communities. They have a strong sense of regional identity, but not necessarily an ‘ethnic’ one. The stronger identification is usually with the dialect of a particular sub-region, while identification with the whole territory of the collateral language appearance is not always widespread (making it difficult to recognise its autonomy). The sense of ethnic or national distinctiveness of the group speaking the collateral language is therefore low (present in some activist circles but absent in others). The aim of this study was to understand which factors, and in what configuration, make an (ethno)linguistic group able to “maintain and protect its existence in time as a collective entity with a distinctive identity and language” (Ehala 2015). Although the tradition of ethnolinguistic vitality research is now almost 50 years old, the model we propose takes into account those factors that affect the vitality of groups that have previously been overlooked. Inspired by research in critical sociolinguistics, the model takes into account language transmission, perceptions of (ethnic) institutions and protection, language practices, as well as language ideologies, attitudes and emotions. In this paper, I will focus primarily on discussing those aspects of ethnolinguistic vitality that are indicative of a community’s cohesion and its sense of distinctiveness: collective identity and the relationship between identity and language. The statistical findings will be complemented by an analysis of ethnographic qualitative research (participant and non-participant observation, in-depth interviews), which will allow us to better understand how unrecognised groups perceive their ethnicity in the 21st century.

Linguistic identity and language policy. The case of the protection and promotion of Friulan language

Michele Gazzola, Ulster University, United Kingdom

Object and context: The paper assesses the quality of the implementation of the language policy for the protection and promotion of the Friulian language, a minority language spoken by approximately 425,000 people in the Autonomous Region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia in the Northeast of Italy. The current language policy plan covers the period 2021-2025, and has three fundamental objectives, that is, (i) to promote the intergenerational transmission of the minority language in Friulian-speaking families; (ii) to improve the knowledge of Friulian (also in writing); (iii) to increase the social use of the Friulian language.

Theoretical approach: The presentation adopts a public policy analysis approach to language policy. It presents an assessment of the extent to which the language policy has been effectively implemented at the level of municipalities. The presentation focuses on examining the actual use of the minority language in written and oral communication, both in internal meetings and in communications with citizens. This analysis provides evidence as to whether the linguistic rights of minority language speakers and their linguistic identity have been respected.

Method: The language policy includes a system of indicators, covering all its areas of intervention, i.e. corpus, public administration, media, social presence, technologies, and language acquisition (education and training). This presentation focuses on public administration and uses data collected in 2023 and 2024 from the 173 municipalities located in the Friulian-speaking area. The response rate of the municipalities was 98% making the survey very representative of the statistical universe.

Results: The results show that the degree of implementation of the language policy is good concerning the use of the minority language during the meetings of the city council. The analysis of the actual use of the Friulian in communication with citizens shows that the language is used more frequently orally than in writing, a phenomenon typical of diglossia situations. In most municipalities where the majority of the population speaks Friulian and has a strong Friulian linguistic identity, oral administrative services often take place in the minority language, but in some parts of the region this is not the case and therefore social bilingualism is not realised. The presentation concludes with a discussion on the implications of the results for language policy.

Repercussions of Language Ideologies and Policy on Linguistic Diversity in Georgia

Nona Tatiashvili, Tbilisi State University, Georgia

The essay is predicated on the assumption that everything in society, including language, is political, at least theoretically. Language is one of the most important ‘nation-building’ (Anderson, B., 2020.) components, and it can occasionally overlap with other potentially defining factors. In its ability to shape identity, language is both inclusive and exclusive. Language is a significant social and political dividing factor. As countries embrace multiculturalism and multilingualism, governments must adapt to address linguistic diversity in new ways. It emphasizes the interdependence of language and ideology (Ricento:2005), arguing that ideology provides the framework for constructing and expressing linguistic messages.

Ideology (Spolsky 2004; Blackledge & Pavlenko 2002; Kroskrity 2000; Blommaert & Verschueren 1998). As Woolard (1998) has stated: “Ideologies of language are rarely about language alone”) has a significant impact on language policy and planning initiatives enabling prioritized social groups to standardize a particular language for marginalized minorities (Pelinka:2007). Discriminatory ideological attitude is noticed in the case of the former Soviet republic of Georgia, supporting the language policy and setting certain standards for marginalized groups. To answer the main research question, how the language ideology and policy underpin minority groups’ linguistic diversity, the present research intends to identify ideology and linguistic policy developments, and their impacts on Azerbaijanian, Armenian, and Chechen minorities’ linguistic diversity, preserving their identity through education. It is crucial to examine how the ideological foundations of language have affected educational systems, shaping teaching methods and policy approaches. (Forker, D. and Botkoveli, N. (2024)).

Theory. Social Identity theory, linguistic relativity theory.

Methods. This study is a qualitative mixed-method study based on document analysis regarding current language policies in Georgia, and in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with minorities.

(Expected) Findings. Language is regarded as a key component of (ethnic) identity, as it holds a prominent position within an ethnic group or community. Language ideologies in education frequently appear in how educators and policymakers give preference to certain languages, influencing students’ educational experiences and potential future opportunities. Such policies can significantly affect democratic processes, as they can either promote inclusivity and multiculturalism or contribute to the marginalization of linguistic diversity. The results indicate a gap in context and methodology regarding language policy for minority languages. Initial empirical analysis showed that effective and supportive language policies played a significant role in the preservation and revitalization of minority languages.

The status of Mirandese in the Iberian Peninsula: a comparative study

Cláudia Martins & Joana Aguiar, Polytechnic Institute of Bragança, Portugal

Sérgio Ferreira, University of Porto, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Portugal

The Iberian Peninsula could be described as a linguistically rich territory. Although Portugal has been traditionally understood as a monolingual country, the truth remains that this is far from the truth. Not only did Portugal acknowledge the rights of Portuguese Sign Language and Mirandese speakers, language communities that are pretty much alive, in 1997 and 1999, but it was also home to other language minorities and varieties, such as barranquenho, rionorês, quadramilês and minderico. On the other hand, Spain is known as a country with many regional languages despite the strong dominant language, Castilian. In this paper, we aim to analyse the legal status that the selected minority languages enjoy in their respective countries and discuss the implications of this status:

their national and regional/local language policy, their education context and their speakers' vitality. In the specific case of Mirandese, national and regional language policies are compared with the ones put in force in Spain for Galician, Asturian, Basque and Catalan.

Ethnolinguistic Vitality Revisited: A social dynamic approach to sustainability

Conchúr Ó Giollagáin, University of the Highlands and Islands, United Kingdom

The assimilation of non-dominant language cultures into subordinating socio-cultural groups is ubiquitous in (post) modernity. This paper will reassess the concept of ethnolinguistic vitality (EV) from an interactional social dynamic framework, informed by World Language Systems perspectives. This EV research presents a new conceptual framework by which we can interpret the various constituent socio-political and cultural elements contributing to language dynamics in society. This new EV conceptualisation entails four foundational processual stages in the social dynamics by which a language group develops and bolsters its societal sustainability: 1) primary socialisation; 2) secondary socialisation; 3) civic reinforcement; and 4) processes leading to coherence in perceptions of collective identity. Both the extent and inter-relations of these four processes are pivotal to positive cyclical social dynamics underpinning a group's societal sustainability. The EV framework demonstrates the interaction of key groups of social participants (identified as minority; majority/majoritarian; tangential and neo-cultures), and how they influence the outplay of the dynamic in society. Viewed from the minority-language perspective, the analysis contends that established LPP dispensations have generated a de-societalised approach to the concerns of the vernacular communities in decline, as policy affairs do not adequately correspond to core aspects of the actual reality of minority social dynamics. Defining aspects of minority LPP have focussed on promoting language issues through key sectors of education, media, arts, and through symbolic use in public administration; despite considerable achievements in these sectors, broader social policies aimed at supporting the communal/societal use of minority languages remain underdeveloped. The paper demonstrates how the preferment of the sectoralist approach to minority LPP has been to the advantage of an intermediary state class – analysed through the Bordieuan lens of symbolic authority – and has led to formal dispensations for language promotion which do not adequately align with interactional processes and social dynamics which are foundational to a language group's ethnolinguistic vitality.

Ethnic Identities and Diversity in Contemporary Times

Thursday, 15 May | 15:30-17:00

Chair: Dr. Giustina Selvelli

Fluid perceptions of ethnicity: How to define the German minority in Latvia?

Heiko F. Marten, Leibniz Institute for the German Language, Germany

Research on linguistic minorities has long understood ethnic groups as clearly definable categories. In this tradition, the investigation of speakers of German in the Eastern half of Europe and Central Asia has long focused on so-called "language islands" of ethnic Germans who remained after larger parts of the German-speaking population left these areas during the 20th century. This conceptualisation as linguistic and ethnic minorities with distinct separate identities has frequently dominated in spite of language decline and cultural assimilation to majority populations. In recent years, however, such traditional understandings have been challenged by more fluid perceptions of identities and affiliation to linguistic minorities. In this vein, current research at the Leibniz Institute for the German Language in Mannheim, Germany, investigates persons and places with a heritage of German language and culture in several countries, including the Czech Republic, Uzbekistan, and Latvia. The paper discusses self-perceptions of speakers of German in Latvia, as identified through semi-structured interviews and ethnographic observations. Interview data indicate that ethnic self-affiliation is frequently by far less stable than often assumed. The research also shows that practices of speaking German, of engaging in the maintenance and revitalisation of German heritage, and of supporting German in education cannot be understood without taking into consideration different groups of speakers. These extend far beyond the traditional minority, but include individuals with an emotional attachment to minority organisations, Germans who moved to Latvia in recent years, and people with dominant other identities who include an element of "Germanness" in the ethnic self-perception. In this sense, the ethnic and linguistic German element in contemporary Latvia consists of a variety of practices and places shaped by different groups of people. These include fluid perceptions of ethnic self-affiliation and transcending boundaries of identities. Not least, these new understandings pose challenges to the definition of what counts as a German minority, as actualised in discussions on the international status of the German language and in exterior cultural and language policies for the benefit of German.

Ethnic and Linguistic Declarations: Two [Distinct?] Dimensions of Minority Identities in Poland's National Censuses

Tomasz Wicherkiewicz, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland

This article examines the interplay between ethnic and linguistic declarations as interrelated dimensions of minority identity, drawing on data from Poland's 21st-century national censuses. It investigates how members of ethnic and linguistic minority communities articulate their identities within shifting sociopolitical landscapes, evolving patterns of self-identification, and changing public perceptions. Since the post-communist era, Poland has increasingly recognized its multicultural heritage, leading to legislative developments concerning the public presence, rights, and use of minority languages. The national censuses conducted in 2002, 2011, and 2021 provided an opportunity for self-declared community affiliations, offering insights into the construction and expression of minority identities. This article explores whether ethnic and linguistic declarations reinforce each other or diverge due to external factors such as assimilation, stigmatization, or geopolitical influences. The design and terminology of the census are also considered, emphasizing the fluid and context-dependent nature of minority identities shaped by both internal perceptions and external societal dynamics. The analysis highlights significant variations among minority groups, shaped by historical experiences, cultural preservation efforts, and community dynamics. It critiques methodological inconsistencies in census data from 2002, 2011, and 2021, noting their limited utility for informing both top-down and bottom-up language policy initiatives.

Key analytical angles include:

- Ethnolinguistic vitality: The use of minority languages within communities, particularly those most at risk of extinction.
- Policy implications: The application of census data in language policy and planning, with a focus on revitalization strategies for endangered languages.
- Statistical and legal challenges: Issues related to linking minority language declarations with the introduction of auxiliary languages or their use in municipal place names.

The article argues for a dynamic understanding of ethnic and linguistic identities as a continuum rather than fixed categories. It situates its findings within Poland's unique sociopolitical context, providing insights into the preservation of minority cultures in a globalized world. Finally, the study underscores the empowering role of self-reported linguistic identity, highlighting the efforts of minority communities to reinforce group cohesion and the centrality of language in shaping these affiliations, despite restrictive policies that often marginalize ethnolinguistic diversity.

Shaping Ethnic and Linguistic Identities: Naming Practices and Religious Decisions in Ethnically Mixed Hungarian-Serb Families in Vojvodina

Karolina Lendák-Kabók, Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary

The paper examines the interplay of cultural, religious, and personal factors influencing naming practices and religious decisions among ethnically mixed Hungarian-Serb families in Vojvodina. Drawing on couple interviews, it highlights how parents navigate complex dynamics between ethnic identities, cultural traditions, and modern influences while shaping their children's identities and heritage. The study reveals diverse approaches to naming, ranging from the selection of neutral or international names to choices rooted in ethnic and familial traditions, which favour one ethnic background over to another. Similarly, decisions regarding religious upbringing reflect a balance between cultural preservation and the practicalities of mixed family life. By capturing these intimate negotiations, the paper offers valuable insights into the processes of identity formation, cultural adaptation, and intergenerational transmission in a multilingual and multicultural region.

Safeguarding Identity Through Education: The Role of Bilingual Educational Models in Minority Language Preservation

Lara Sorgo, Attila Kovács & Katalin Hirnők Munda, Institute for Ethnic Studies, Slovenia

The minority protection arrangement applying to the Italian and Hungarian national communities in Slovenia is based on broad constitutional provisions aimed at preserving the language, culture, and identity of their members. This legal and institutional framework is particularly significant in the ethnically mixed regions of Slovene Istria and Prekmurje, border areas characterized respectively by Slovene-Italian and Slovene-Hungarian coexistence. Within these regions, language and educational policies serve as key instruments not only for securing the equal status of minority communities but also for fostering mutual understanding between majority and minority populations. These policies contribute to the development of a bilingual and multicultural environment.

This contribution begins with an overview of Slovenia's language and education policies, emphasizing their implementation within the specific educational models developed in Slovene Istria and Prekmurje. It then presents three interrelated case studies that shed light on the practical effects of these policies. The first case study explores attitudes toward language use and educational model, drawing attention to the perspectives of various stakeholders within the school communities (pupils, teachers, parents). The second investigates the cross-border movement of Hungarian pupils who attend bilingual schools in Prekmurje, offering an analysis of the phenomenon's historical development, statistical patterns, and the lived experiences of the students involved. The third focuses on the role of bilingual education in preserving the Slovene language in Hungary's Porabje region, based on qualitative research conducted among teachers at bilingual primary schools. These case studies provide valuable insights into the implementation and impact of Slovenia's language and education policies in promoting linguistic diversity and ensuring minority rights in the ethnically mixed regions.

Patterns of national identity among minority Hungarian youth

Csilla Zsigmond & Attila Papp, HUN-REN Centre for Social Sciences, Institute for Minority Studies, Hungary

The paper aims to examine the national identity of minority Hungarian youth based on the GeneZYs 2015 youth sociological survey. In the early 2000s, the first sociological survey of youth (MOZAIK 2001) was conducted, which covered the youth of minority Hungarians. No similar quantitative data collection has taken place in the 15 years since then. This gave the 2015 GeneZYs Youth Sociological Survey its particular significance. The comparative analysis of the four regions is based on this survey. One of the novelties of the analysis is that it also measures the potential impact of the facilitated naturalisation (the possibility of dual citizenship) introduced after 2010 on the dimensions of national identity that we have been studying. The prevalence of multiple attachment/dual identity among minority Hungarians has been indicated by previous surveys, but there has been little analysis of its patterns, especially in a comparative way across the four regions. The GeneZYs 2015 survey focused on the nearly 400,000 Hungarian-speaking young people aged 15-29 living in Romania, Slovakia, Serbia and Ukraine. The questionnaire survey of 2,700 respondents is considered representative by age, gender, type of settlement and spatial distribution within the regions. In the analysis, we have examined multiple attachment based on the acculturation model (see e.g. Berry 2005). According to the acculturation model, multiple attachment is the most typical attachment pattern among minority Hungarian youth - with the exception of Hungarian youth in Slovakia - followed by exclusive Hungarian ethnicity (segregation). The strongest general characteristic of multiple attachment is openness, which is mainly reflected in the attitude towards the majority nationalities - stronger sympathy, a more positive view of minority-majority relations, stronger ties to the country, etc. But this is not generally associated with a stronger acceptance of different social and ethnic groups, although we have hypothesised this based on the results of other research (Huff et al., 2017; Saleem et al., 2018; Hernández et al., 2020). Although not in all the regions studied, multiple attachment among Hungarian youth in Romania and Ukraine is also associated with well-being, with individual and social satisfaction increasing the likelihood of multiple attachment, as other research on indigenous minorities has found (e.g. Hernández et al., 2020; Zabala et al., 2020).

Migration and Integration

Thursday, 15 May | 15:30-17:00

Chair: Dr. Damir Josipović

Invisible Migrants: Slovenian Domestic Workers and Their Associations in Interwar Croatia

Barbara Riman, Institute for Ethnic Studies, Slovenia

The phenomenon of migration, driven by a variety of factors, has been a constant throughout human history. Although both men and women participated in migration processes, historical records have traditionally afforded greater visibility to men (Harzig 2002, 15; Morokvašić 2014). Women, conversely, have often remained obscured. One reason for this invisibility lies in the nature of the work typically undertaken by women (Morokvašić 1984, 887).

Paid domestic labor was heavily feminized and occupied a liminal position between the public and private spheres (Summers 1998; Verginella 2006). Urban domestic workers faced additional marginalization, as many originated from rural areas and were often of foreign backgrounds (Hoerder 2015, 74). As unmarried and foreign women, they were frequently met with suspicion, rejection, and distrust by local communities (Hahn 2002, 122).

Slovenian women who migrated abroad for work, driven by both economic and political motives, shared a similar fate. The history of the former Kingdom of Yugoslavia reveals that, following the First World War, a significant number of Slovenian women migrated in search of employment to other (non-Slovenian) parts of the shared state. This trend contributed to patterns of internal migration and positioned these women within the framework of an internal diaspora. Although some studies have addressed this issue (Kržišnik-Bukić 1995; Ratej 2014; Riman 2019; Cergol Paradiž & Testen Koren 2021), the phenomenon largely continues to be overlooked in scholarly research.

The objective of this article is to examine the activities of Slovenian domestic workers in Croatia between the two world wars, with particular attention to their (self-)organization through associations. In Zagreb, several Slovenian women's associations were established, operating with the explicit aim of protecting and assisting Slovenian women who had migrated to the city for economic reasons. A further aim of this study is to explore the role of other Slovenian associations dispersed across Croatia in providing protection and assistance to Slovenian women seeking employment not only in Zagreb but also in smaller urban centers, including Karlovac, Sušak, Varaždin, Osijek, Slavonski Brod, and others.

Lived Migration Experiences of Immigrant Women in Portugal

Patricia Silva & Henrique Pereira, University of Beira Interior, Portugal

Migrant women represent almost half of the global migrant population. In Portugal, 47.7 per cent of immigrants are women, with around 88,215 immigrating to the country in 2023. However, migration studies often overlook the specific experiences of migrant women, referring to them as part of a homogenous group. This approach perpetuates gender inequality and limits the recognition of migrant women as active agents in the production of knowledge about their own experiences. This study seeks to reduce this gap by answering the question: How can the narratives of immigrant women redefine the discussion of migration by emphasizing their unique experiences? The study is based on theories that explore the intersections between gender, migration and structural inequalities. It also adopts critical approaches to minority studies, questioning hierarchical (top-down) knowledge production and privileges participatory methodologies that promote the centrality of the voices of marginalized groups. Through electronic interviews with 155 women of 48 nationalities, responses were collected from a single open question: 'Being an immigrant woman living in Portugal, please describe your lived experience, providing as much detail as you can'. The electronic platform facilitated access, confidentiality and convenience for the participants. Data was analyzed using thematic content analysis. The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Beira Interior, Portugal (CE-UBI-Pj-2022-055-ID). The results highlight significant challenges faced by immigrant women in Portugal, such as discrimination at work, language barriers, xenophobia, racism, sexualization, bureaucracy and difficulties in accessing public services. Feelings of isolation and conflicts between cultural identity and pressure to assimilate were recurrent, aggravated by prejudice and sexism. On the other hand, positive experiences included community acceptance, personal achievements such as access to education and work, and the perception of Portugal as a relatively safe country with a good quality of life. The participants' resilience highlighted their ability

to overcome obstacles and seek inclusion. Finally, the analysis highlighted the impact of intersectionality, with inequalities amplified by factors such as race, ethnicity, class and color. By incorporating the voices of immigrant women, the study challenges generalizations that disregard their specific experiences and reinforces the importance of inclusive narratives in research on minorities, contributing to the discussion regarding citizenship, rights and integration policies for this population.

Ethnic Discrimination in Slovenia: Nationalism, Hate Speech, and the Challenges of Measuring Inequality

Veronika Bajt, Peace Institute, Slovenia

Ethnic discrimination in Slovenia remains a pervasive yet underestimated issue, despite recent efforts by institutions such as the Advocate of the Principle of Equality to address it. Discrimination manifests most notably in employment, the housing market, healthcare, access to public services, and administrative procedures. This paper critically examines the interconnections between ethnic discrimination, nationalism, and racist hate speech, while also exploring the methodological challenges of measuring discrimination through tools like audit studies and situation testing. Drawing on a robust dataset of over 800 survey responses, nearly 800 discrimination tests, and more than 50 in-depth interviews, this study provides empirical insights into how individuals experience discrimination based on ethnicity, skin color, nationality, and religion in Slovenia. Findings reveal that discrimination disproportionately affects individuals perceived as “foreigners” by the majority population, with particularly severe impacts on applicants for international protection and refugees, who often report ethnic profiling by police. These patterns of exclusion reflect a resurgence of nativism, which, under the guise of protecting “authentic” culture and tradition, deepens the divide between nationals and non-nationals. This paper argues that ethnic discrimination in Slovenia is intricately tied to prejudice and structural racism, which perpetuate unequal power relations and hinder equitable treatment. While foreign nationals are the most frequent victims, Slovenian-born individuals are also subjected to discrimination based on names, skin color, ethnicity, religion, or language. This study underscores the urgent need to address the structural and attitudinal drivers of discrimination and to create more effective measures for combating inequality.

The Participation Paradox: Immigrants’ Civic and Political Engagement and Majority Attitudes in Slovenia

Janez Pirc, Mojca Medvešek & Romana Bešter, Institute for Ethnic Studies, Slovenia

This presentation explores two interrelated dimensions of immigrant integration in Slovenia: the actual civic and political engagement of immigrants and the attitudes of the majority population toward such participation. Drawing on original survey data, the first part analyses patterns of involvement among immigrants, with a focus on differences based on citizenship status. The second part investigates the widespread reluctance of the Slovene majority to support immigrant political participation - particularly voting and candidacy rights - highlighting how ideological, demographic, and spatial factors shape these attitudes. Together, the findings reveal a participation paradox in the Slovene integration discourse: immigrants are encouraged to integrate through active citizenship but are met with structural and symbolic barriers when attempting to do so. The presentation concludes with implications for policy and public debate around democratic inclusion in contemporary Slovenia.

Dimensions of Ethnic and Minority Identities

Friday, 16 May | 10:30-12:00

Chair: Dr. Lara Sorgo

Measuring Ethnic Identities in the Social Sciences: Challenges and Recent Methodological Advances

Tamara Trošt, University of Ljubljana, School of Economics and Business, Slovenia

Elena Gadjanova, University of Exeter, United Kingdom

Ethnic identities are among the most behaviorally-significant aspects of social life. Countless studies from a variety of disciplines show that they matter both in every-day one-to-one social interactions, and in mass phenomena such as block voting, protests, riots, and civil wars. The numerous uses of ethnicity as both dependent and independent variable pose two unique challenges for social scientists: (1) how to reconcile the need for distinct, valid, and reliable measures of identity with the now dominant theoretical understanding of identities as malleable, contingent, and constructed, and (2) how to translate what are now common individual-level measures and indicators of attitudes and behaviors into capturing what are essentially group-level phenomena. These challenges are amplified in comparative work in particular, which requires notions of identities to be captured and isolated from one context and transported to another without loss of internal consistency. In this paper, we survey recent advances in how identities are conceived and measured in the social sciences. We argue that the conceptual definition of identity, and whether we are focusing on identity as classification, or a set of attitudes, meanings, or behaviors, as well as the level of analysis (individual versus group-level measures), critically affects our choice of methods. This juxtaposition will inform our analysis of the types of questions most frequently asked in the ethnicity literature across disciplines, theoretical assumptions they have made, and the measures and indicators they have used. We propose a classification of methods and tools for capturing various dimensions of ethnic identity, matching the conceptual and theoretical definitions with appropriate empirical measures.

Politics of Ethnic (Im-)Mobilization: Russian Compatriots in the Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan

Görkem Atsungur & Buğra Güngör, American University of Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan

With the ongoing Russian involvement in Ukraine and Syria, fear of Russian irredentism is increasing. Yet, the fate of Russian minorities in the post-Soviet periphery has not been adequately explained by existing literature – which mainly covers the Western republics. This research seeks to bridge this gap in the literature by comparatively examining inter-ethnic relations between the Russian minorities and titular majorities in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Independent variables, such as language, inter-ethnic marriages, an external actor’s influence, political mobilization, social inclusion, and economic discrimination are expected to explain inter-ethnic perceptions and interactions. By focusing on individuals in urban settings who self-identify as either the titular majority or ethnic Russian, this research aims to increase understanding of how Russian minorities perceive collective identities, the measurement of stereotypes and prejudice, as well as of potential causes of inter-group feelings and perceptions.

Ethnically marked choices in the Ukrainian-Hungarian intermarriages in Ukraine permeated by Hungary’s kin-state politics

Patrik Tátrai, Viktória Ferenc, Julianna Kohut-Ferki, Katalin Kovály, József Molnár, HUN-REN CSFK Geographical Institute, Hungary

In the era of nationalizing states, the context of autochthonous majority-minority relations is typically marked by institutionally sustained ethnic asymmetries, which—particularly in the case of ethnically mixed families—tend to gravitate patterns of ethnic socialization and ethnic identity transmission towards the majority. However, the ethnically marked choices of mixed families are shaped not only by the nationalizing policies of home-states but also by external factors. This can be experienced in Transcarpathia, Ukraine’s westernmost region, where since the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2014, Hungary’s kin-state activism has become notably impactful, granting socio-economic privileges to the Hungarian minority population. This paper aims to show how the intensifying kin-state politics of Hungary has influenced (1) patterns of ethnic socialization / ethnic identity transmission in

Ukrainian-Hungarian mixed families in Transcarpathia and (2) choices among ethnically marked alternatives in such families like school choice and language use. This study employs a mixed-methods approach. To explore the macro-level patterns of ethnic identity transmission within mixed marriages, this paper relies on the 2001 Ukrainian census and the “SUMMA 2017” survey. Ethnically marked decisions within mixed families are analysed based on field observations and semi-structured interviews conducted between 2015 and 2019 in Transcarpathia, using the framework elaborated by Brubaker et al. (2006), Telegdi-Csetri (2017) and Kiss (2018). We argue that the various benefits offered by Hungary increased the prestige of the Hungarian language/ethnicity. Consequently, a growing proportion of ethnically marked choices favors Hungarian language and educational institutions, particularly in the context of migration to Hungary as a typical coping strategy locally. Contrary to the path dependency observed in other countries in CEE, where decisions typically favor the titular group, in Transcarpathia, external (geopolitical) changes have the power to reshape previous strategies. Hence, in Transcarpathia, the choices of ethnically mixed families are less sequenced compared to other autochthonous settings, illustrating how factors previously perceived as disadvantages (minority affiliation) can be transformed into resources, enabling families to quickly and flexibly adapt to local and global conditions within new social frameworks.

The fraught recognition of the group dimension of minorities’ fundamental rights: exploring the differences between linguistic and religious rights

Kristin Henrard, Brussels School of Governance, Belgium

Are minorities’ rights collective rights, or individual rights, or something in between? A lack of conceptual clarity goes hand in hand with a high level of unease of states towards the phenomenon of ‘minorities’ as groups with a distinct identity than the ‘majority’. The current rights standards reflect states’ reluctance to recognize minorities as distinct groups and grant these groups minority rights. This paper seeks to explore the fraught recognition of the group dimension of minorities and minorities’ fundamental rights, by investigating the apparent differences in this respect between linguistic rights on the one hand and religious rights on the other. The investigation focuses on the most developed system of minorities’ rights protection, namely the Council of Europe’s European Convention on Human Rights and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) and their respective review mechanisms. The paper will first compare the respective legal standards, both in terms of the number of linguistic versus religious rights, and the degree of recognition of the group dimension that is visible in the respective rights. Secondly; the paper will analyse and evaluate the supervisory practice in terms of these rights. The picture that emerges is a fragmented one. To some extent states seem to be more amenable to recognize minority language rights, but an evaluation of the relevant judgements of the European Court of Human Rights and the opinions of the FCNM’s Advisory Committee reveals both promising and rather problematic ones, with varying degrees of recognition of the group dimension of minorities, of the protection worthiness of the distinct minority identity and the related inroads on state sovereignty. The paper concludes with some suggestions about relevant parameters in this respect.

Contemporary Challenges in Roma Communities

Friday, 16 May | 10:30-12:00

Chair: Dr. Vera Klopčič

The scent of prejudice: Olfactory-based discrimination against Roma in Slovenia

Mojca Ramšak, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Chemistry and Chemical Technology, Slovenia

The author examines the little-researched phenomenon of prejudice against the Roma ethnic minority in Slovenia, based on perceived differences in smell. Using a range of written sources, she documents how deeply rooted cultural assumptions about body odour contribute to the social exclusion of the Roma population. The study explores the complex and multi-layered cultural significance of Roma body odour by examining its representation in various historical sources from the 19th century onwards. From the perspective of anthropology, literature and criminology, the author analyses how ideas about Roma body odour have been used to reinforce negative stereotypes, perpetuate discriminatory attitudes and maintain social hierarchies in Slovenian society. The results show that these odour-based prejudices often evade traditional anti-discrimination measures due to their subtle, culturally embedded nature. Such prejudices manifest themselves in various social contexts, from everyday interpersonal interactions to institutional settings and public discourse. It will be shown that these olfactory stigmas play a key role in the overall marginalisation and exclusion of the Roma community. By shedding light

on the sensory dimensions of ethnic discrimination, this study contributes to our understanding of how cultural perceptions of the body and its odours can serve as sites of construction and maintenance of social difference. The study suggests that addressing such prejudice requires innovative approaches that go beyond traditional anti-discrimination initiatives and involve a deeper engagement with the cultural and bodily aspects of marginalisation. The study ultimately calls for a greater recognition of the ways in which stereotypes and prejudices related to the sensory experience of the body - in this case the culturally coded odour of Roma - have shaped perceptions, interactions and social hierarchies in Slovenian society. As such, it offers important insights that can inform the development of more culturally sensitive anti-discrimination policies and diversity training programmes, with the aim of promoting greater inclusion and equity for marginalised ethnic communities.

Protective and risk factors for the psychosocial health of Roma and non-Roma communities living in poverty in Portugal

Jóni Ledo, University of Beira Interior, Portugal

Introduction: Poverty poses a risk to psychosocial health and, when intersected with the accumulation of other minority identities such as ethnicity, can be further compromised.

Objective: To compare the levels of psychosocial health between people from the Roma and non-Roma communities living in poverty in a municipality in northern Portugal.

Method: Cross-sectional study with a sample of 317 participants (202 non-Roma and 115 Roma), aged between 18 and 71 years (mean=38.91; SD=13.89). The instruments used were the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale, Paradox of Self- Stigma, the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support and the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale-10.

Results: There were significant differences between the Roma and non-Roma communities in psychological distress (non-Roma: 2.76; Roma: 1.95; $p < 0.001$), self-stigma (non-Roma: 2.87; Roma: 3.34; $p < 0.001$), perceived social support (non-Roma: 4.48; Roma: 6.05; $p < 0.001$) and resilience (non-Roma: 2.16; Roma: 3.07; $p < 0.001$). People from the Roma community have lower values of psychological distress and higher values of self-stigma, perceived social support and resilience. The results of the linear regression indicate that being from the Roma community is a predictor of lower psychological distress.

Discussion and conclusion: In the Roma community, the effect of discrimination is more evident in self-stigma, which is higher. Resilience and social support contribute as mediator factors in these communities, which may explain lower levels of psychological distress. Continued research on this topic is essential to understand the relationships between these variables and to design public policies with the support of academic knowledge to improve the living conditions of these populations.

The Role of Ethnic and Identity Capital: Educational Support Programs’ Impact on Identity Formation and Labour Market Outcomes of First-in-Family Roma Graduates in Hungary

Zsanna Nyíró & Judit Durst, HUN-REN Centre for Social Sciences, Hungary

This paper examines the education-driven mobility experiences of Hungarian first-in-family (FIF) Roma graduates, focusing on how pro-Roma educational support programs shape identity formation and labour market outcomes. As Europe’s largest racialised and marginalised ethnic minority, the Roma provide theoretical and empirical insight into the selective Hungarian educational system’s role in reproducing social inequalities. The study explores how these programs generate ethnic resources to mitigate classed and racial inequalities faced by Roma students. Using critical race theory (Yosso, 2005), intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991; Collins, 1993), and Bourdieu’s concept of habitus, field and capitals, this research provides a multidimensional understanding of classed and racialised positions (Friedman, 2016; Ingram and Abrahams, 2016; Reay, 2005; Thatcher et al., 2016). It investigates the “emotional imprint” (Friedman, 2016) of one’s social background, analysing how the ‘long shadow of class [and racialised ethnic minority] origin’ (Friedman & Laurison, 2020) influences educational mobility trajectories, labour market outcomes, and modes of incorporation into society. The concept of ethnic capital (Lin & Zhou, 2005; Shah et al., 2010) and identity capital (Mendoza et al, 2023) are employed to assess how NGO-run educational support programs alleviate class and ethno-racial disadvantage (Shahrokni, 2015; Vallejo, 2012) as well as the social and emotional costs of upward mobility (Boros et al., 2021). The research is based on 103 interviews with FIF Roma graduates, comparing those whose mobility path has been facilitated by ethnically oriented educational

support programs (the collective path of mobility) with those who navigated mobility individually. Findings reveal that such programs equip participants with ethnic and identity capital, reducing the emotional “costs of mobility” and shaping their career trajectories and social inclusion. This study underscores the importance of targeted educational initiatives in addressing systemic inequalities and highlights their potential to transform the mobility experiences and outcomes of marginalised groups.

Understanding antigypsyism in Europe

Andreja Zevnik, University of Manchester, United Kingdom

Andrew Russell, University of Liverpool, United Kingdom

For decades EU institutions strove to make positive interventions into everyday realities of Roma people, but with limited effect. In fact, some critics asserted that things actually got worse (Lecerf, 2024). The paper argues that ongoing racism (or antigypsyism) and racialisation of Roma plays an important part in the failure of these policies. While the EU acknowledges that antigypsyism is a problem (EC 2020b), it understands it as a problem of attitude towards the group, and gives little attention to the role its strategies and actions have in reproducing it. To examine ways in which Roma are racialised and the consequences of this racialisation we adopt Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy’s approach to race and racism. Hall’s work which sees race as a sliding signifier is essential in understanding the racialisation of Roma. Methodologically, the paper offers a critical discourse analysis of two sets of documents: firstly, the EU Anti-racist Action Plan 2020-2025, the EU Roma strategic framework 2020-2030 and the European Parliament’s Resolution from June 19 2020 on the anti-racist protests. Secondly, the paper looks at how Slovenia and Hungary (fail to) address antigypsyism in their strategies and actions. The paper draws out reasons for the lack of engagement with antigypsyism and reluctance to engage with questions of Roma equality meaningfully. The analysis focuses on how deflection, denial and distancing as three strategies that enable institutional racism, the culturalisation of race (fetishisation of culture or culture of deviancy) and racialising tropes continue to inform EU’s anti-racist framework and permeate its actions. The paper draws out reasons for the lack of engagement with antigypsyism and reluctance to engage with questions of Roma equality meaningfully.

Exploring Language Competence of Roma Children in the Slovene Education System

Sabina Zorčič & Mojca Medvešek, Institute for Ethnic Studies, Slovenia

The article presents the results of a pilot study of the language competence of Roma children (aged 5 to 10) in their mother tongue (Roma dialect) and the language of instruction (Slovene). The project included: the adaptation of a language test (assessing word comprehension and word naming, syntax, and narrative comprehension, and formation), the testing of 29 children (14 in Prekmurje (Over-Mur), NE Slovenia, and 15 in Metlika, SE Slovenia (White Carniola)), data analysis and proposals for action and further research.

The results reveal a differing socio-linguistic status of the two tested Roma dialects, partly due to the different historical and social circumstances of the two groups (Roma in NE Slovenia are more assimilated into the majority population than those in SE Slovenia). Roma children in SE exhibit better proficiency in their dialect than their peers in NE. Gender and living situation are not statistically significant variables in the proficiency in both languages (Roma and Slovene), but the personal trait “talkative” is statistically significant (allowing children more language input and opportunities for correct answers). Proficiency in both languages increases with age, but achievement in the first three school years does not follow the same age sequence (a larger sample would be needed, as well as a control group of “monolingual” children). Children who are more integrated in the Slovene education system, e.g., attended kindergarten (statistically significant), have better grades in Slovene (statistically significant) and consequently better academic performance (strongly indicated), have lower proficiency in Romani, i.e. they become more dominant in Slovene. Slovene proficiency is better in NE, but the difference is not statistically significant. Testing confirms with a statistically significant difference that children who perform better in Slovene language tests understand more concise texts in both languages. The results also show that there is a significant positive correlation between the knowledge of Romani and the knowledge of Slovene among Romani children. Children who are more proficient in Romani also, on average, are more proficient in Slovene.

Political Participation of National Minorities

Friday, 16 May | 10:30-12:00

Chair: Dr. Janez Pirc

Local politics in minority-majority cities: the case of Narva

Vello Pettai, ECMI – European Centre for Minority Issues, Germany

The analysis of minority politics is often dominated by national-level foci. We tend to ask questions like: how many votes did a minority party get in parliamentary elections? Or how do national policy frameworks affect minority communities? When one does go down to the local level, the predominant standpoint is likely to be municipalities, where minorities perhaps constitute a larger share of the population, but they are still overshadowed by the majority ethnic group and therefore continue to face the challenges of making themselves heard (e.g. Bilbao or Bolzano). Next on the analytical chain are countless small municipalities, if not villages, where minorities may in fact be in the majority, but these do not constitute a major political force. The rural Šalčininkai district in Lithuania that is populated overwhelmingly by Poles comes to mind. Yet, an intriguing political-demographic category that has so far been understudied concerns important urban centres, where an ethnic minority is solidly in the majority. How do local politics operate, when an ethnic minority predominates in such a municipality? To what extent do ethnic minority parties end up prevailing in local elections? Does this prevalence create a long-term political bastion for such parties? How does this preponderance affect municipal administration? Does minority-majority status create a stronger minority-based sociolinguistic and cultural environment that is reinforced by the politics? How does the potential socio-economic base of such a larger region play into minority welfare? This paper will profile one such example, the northeastern Estonian city of Narva. With a population of 55,000 that is some 95% Russian-speaking and placed right on the border with Russia, Narva has been a focal point of ethnopolitics in Estonia. Yet, it has not been a singular stronghold for Russian minority interests, in part because the dominant political party (the Centre Party) has for most of the time not been a narrowly ethnic party. Through detailed event analysis and extensive fieldwork interviews the study will trace the evolution of politics and governance in Narva over the last 35 years. While municipal governance has clearly been weaker in Narva than in other Estonian cities because of the minority-majority ethnopolitical context, the city has slowly begun to evolve into a more integrated Estonian municipal centre. Since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the city has come under renewed political and economic strain. However, it remains a secure part of the Estonian national fabric.

The Slovene Minority Political Elites in Italy on the Go: What’s Next?

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The aim of this paper is to discuss the contemporary challenges of the Slovene minority political elites in the Friuli Venezia Giulia (FVG) Region in Italy in terms of elected representativeness as well as the ethnic and political identification of its members. The Slovene minority political elites in the FVG Region comprise participation in both majority and autonomous ethnic political parties. Election of own representatives is not legally guaranteed. Nevertheless, individuals recognized as members of the Slovene minority have consistently been elected to the Italian parliament as well as regional and municipal bodies. However, the number of votes gained by Slovene elected representatives shows negative trends due to a more plural way of voting of its members compared to the past which include also voting parties which do not actively support minority rights in their agendas. Moreover, the general abstention from voting affects also the Slovene minority members. It has to be considered too that the demographic situation shows a negative trend in the number of pupils enrolled in the Slovene schools in Region FVG which means less Slovene voters on short- and long-term. Particularly, the election of a Slovene representative in the Italian Parliament is now at risk due to recent legal changes which reduced the number of the elected members in the Italian Parliament. The paper will consider the results of two recent research. The first one titled “Political participation of national minorities and persons belonging to them: comparative study of political participation of Slovene communities in the neighboring countries of the Republic of Slovenia”, funded by the Slovenian Research Agency (Project J5-3117), evidenced the main open questions in the political identities and participation of the Slovene community in the FVG Region. Secondly, the main effects of the pandemic crisis and its post-pandemic recovery on minority political participation arose from the analysis made in the frame of the LEGITIMUT Project, funded by the European Union (HORIZON-CL2-2021-DEMOCRACY-91, GA No. 101051550)

and SERI. In both projects, a series of interviews with Slovene elected representatives in the Italian Parliament, Regional Parliament of the FVG Region and local municipalities in the Trieste-Trst, Gorizia-Gorica and Udine-Videm provinces evidenced how various changes on the broader socio-political level including post-pandemic recovery made the Slovene community in Italy more fragile in terms of political representativeness and affirmation of its minority needs and interests.

The issue of parliamentary representation of national minorities in the practice of the ECtHR

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It is undoubtedly true that the case law of the ECtHR has from time to time dealt with a case concerning the parliamentary representation of national minorities, but there has been no consistent, well-developed practice. The aim of this presentation is to outline the level of legal protection achieved so far by the ECtHR and to critically analyse the practice by examining the relevant case law. The analysis will focus exclusively on cases where, in order to achieve parliamentary representation of national minorities, States should introduce preferential rules due to the specific characteristics of the communities concerned, such as their size or territorial distribution. The presentation will therefore place particular emphasis on examining and evaluating the arguments of the relevant cases in the light of the prohibition of discrimination. The presentation concludes that the ECtHR continues to leave a wide margin of appreciation to States Parties on the issue of parliamentary representation of national minorities, citing the absence of an international obligation to do so. It is further noted that this, together with the unexplained and inadequate reasoning on the prohibition of discrimination in cases before the ECtHR, hampers the effective international protection of the participation of national minorities in public life. However, it is important to note that the recent jurisprudence of the ECtHR, in particular its decisions in *Bakirdzi* and *E.C. v. Hungary and Kovačević v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*, may be a landmark case that could have a positive impact on future jurisprudence and case law.

Political Participation of Slovene Communities and National Minorities in the Neighboring Countries of the Republic of Slovenia

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The social and political participation of national minorities and their members, as a fundamental minority right, is essential for their social inclusion and integration, the fulfilment of their specific needs and interests, and the successful management of diversity. Political participation refers to activities that enable citizens to influence political decision-making, as well as social and economic processes. The existence and effectiveness of participation are indicators of the level of democratic development.

The organization of minorities, their status, rights, and protection—including their social and political participation—and the legal regulation of these aspects are shaped by the specific historical, political, and administrative development of individual countries and regions. They are also influenced by international continental and universal norms and standards. Domestic legal provisions and systems are specific to each country. In addition to legal protection, they also regulate forms and competences of minority self-governance and autonomy, participation in various consultative bodies at all levels, and the functioning of minority civil society organizations that take part in political processes.

Minority members participate politically through minority political parties (e.g., Austria, Italy), through majority population parties (in all countries), and at local and regional levels also through electoral lists (e.g., Austria), which enables the election of representatives into (representative and executive) governmental and/or consultative institutions at various levels. In some countries (such as Croatia, Hungary, and Slovenia), there are special systems and procedures for the election or appointment of minority representatives at various levels. All these approaches, methods, and forms enable minority political participation. In Hungary and Slovenia, minority political participation is legally ensured at the local and national levels; in Croatia, at the local level and through cooperation among different minorities at the county and national levels (through a shared representative).

Research results and comparative studies show differences and similarities among the countries studied, all of which claim to adhere to European and universal standards for the rights and protection of national minorities and their members.



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