

INTRODUCTORY CONSIDERATIONS

Studies of migrations and ethnicity have always been a live issue and have never been isolated from macro and micro politics and economies, which keep them in a permanent state of redirection and realignment, from an academic point of view. Going back to 20th century, one can notice that each scholar and research period had its recognisable approach within disciplines, terminologies, theoretical postulates, analytical actions, creating discursive autonomies and formed paradigms. This is why we can talk about scientific movements, research ventures, and institutional policies.

What has changed, comparing the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century? In response to the political turbulences, the circumstances and the perspective of observation have changed – irrespective of the extent to which the topics have remained within their recognisable frames. The political and academic terminology has also changed, bearing the representative indicators of the direction in which the current processes are heading.¹ To be in the field and study migrations and ethnicity meant and still

¹ Let us just have a look at how the term *migrant* underwent constructive transformations and often ideological connotations: socialism – *workers temporarily working abroad*, or *political émigrés*, Yugoslav emigration; post-socialism – Serbian diaspora, Gastarbeiters.

does to blend in and answer the questions of the contemporary socio-political situations and academic trends. Science and politics were and still are a part of the micro and macro social and economic processes in the relations between developed industrial countries and the developing countries, state restructuring, ethnic and national strategies. At the beginning of the new millennium, migrations have gained momentum, with people in transit (refugees), in circulation (labour migrations, daily migrations), in ethnic fusions and conflicts, as a reflection of turbulent and conflict areas or terrifying events in the world with unpredictable consequences (Balkan crisis and other crises, wars, terrorism, fundamentalism, natural disasters, poverty, and other). Academic mobility therefore implies following new trends, which means permanent (re)interpretation and revision of the achieved results, which often demand a distance for an adequate review of academic goals. All these processes establish academic policies, creating thus individual perceptions and embedding research experiences, without which giving an academic opinion would be pointless.

The work on the ethnological research of Serbs in USA (Chicago) and Canada started at the time of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia,² when institutions operated in accordance

² The Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia was established in 1946, and it was renamed the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia in 1963. It consisted of the following Republics: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Slovenia, Serbia, with Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija, Croatia, and Montenegro. After the wars of the 1990s, the Republics became independent states (*Mala enciklopedija Prosveta*, 1968: 624).

with the principles of administrative and territorial division into the regions designated as the "republics" (national policies, in fact), at the time of more intensive communication and more favourable financial possibilities for academic and research work. However, at the beginning of the 1990s, the results of our researches in form of published books and dozens of papers were devoured by the melting pot of the crisis and disintegration of the Yugoslav state, economic sanctions that followed, together with the total social isolation of Serbia (introduction of visas, sanctions and communication blockade). This was a time when even a thought of further academic work out of the country seemed impossible; a time when everything with a touch of ethnic was becoming both national and hyperproductive on the war market; a time when migrations and ethnicity became an extended arm of the regime policies. There was a period in the nineties when, in addition to the work on emigration processes, a prominent reorientation and a stronger focusing on minority rights (Serbian minorities in the neighbouring countries) took place, which served the interests of the potential supervisors (the Ministry of Science of the Republic of Serbia, the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and the self-governed minority communities in Hungary and Romania). Finally, a need arose at the beginning of the new millennium to summarise the work which had and which had not been done that far, to consider what was left as theoretical and methodological legacy and what needed to be revised, as well as to come up with a new overview of scientific and interpretational relation of emigration topics and problems. A frequent error in the sequence of actions that occurs when scientific and research platforms are designed is to always start from the beginning, without

any indication that "some" academic work ever took place and ever yielded appropriate results. The same happened with the topics and the research of the emigration and ethnicity issue, since the political and academic circles had little knowledge, were not well informed, and were even uninterested in these topics. Therefore, we are going to mend this lack of information in this introduction by informing the reader about the social, academic, and political context of the onset and continuance of the academic study of emigrants and ethnicity.

Our objectiviti to tell how the emigration project was created, how we – as fresh graduates in ethnology and fellows of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SASA) Institute of Ethnography started our research period, how we were getting by and building our theoretical and methodological and field routes on our own, under the influence of various authorities, what we have achieved and what we have left for future generations of researchers, as well as why so few ethnologists were until recently dealing with the problems of migrations and diaspora.

Institutionalisation

The work on ethnological studying of emigrants and ethnicity commenced in the socialist Yugoslavia. It should be noted that the socialist state was exercising political repression against those who were leaving the country up until 1962, when the first sets of measures on the employment of workers abroad were adopted, followed by the law on pardoning those persons who had a status of political émigrés. Those regulations were separately finalised in

1964 in the *Law on Yugoslav Citizenship (Official Gazette of SFRY /Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia/ 1964, 38, 23)*.³ Year after year, the number of people who were leaving the country and settling abroad was increasing. However, as the migrations were always monitored by the state, the socialist authorities and establishment determined special strategies of qualification and categorisation of emigrants in their programmes and discourse. This before all referred to a clear differentiation between political and economic emigrants. At the time, émigrés were defined as political emigrants with hostile attitudes towards the socialist Yugoslavia, while economic migrants – with the adoption of the laws and opening of the country borders, became legitimate expatriates recognised by the state as its citizens. The phenomenon of emigrants (especially of the so-called political émigrés), their lives *there*, social, cultural, and economic status, transformation of values, and the entire corpus of altered roles and statuses, have therefore prevalingly remained in the domain of narratives, envisaged images, prejudices, as a consequence of the restrictive policies towards the émigrés. It is not hard to conclude that such a political positioning towards the emigration processes could easily serve the manipulative purposes of classifying the emigrants as "friendly – pro-Yugoslav" or "enemy – anti-Yugoslav" ones. All that existed in the corpus of written material on the emigrants was in the domain of "top secret" bulletins, exclusive newspaper articles and the most widespread verbal accounts, suitable for shaping of the imaginarium.

³ *Official Gazette of SFRY*, no. 38, 23 September 1964, Art. 5, 8.

Only in the end of 1970s and in the beginning of 1980s, the emigration (emigrants) phenomenon assumed a new course in the academic policy. Science got involved in political programmes in a manner which would not only approach the emigration from the perspective of political control, but also as a designated subject of scientific research. This was a period of more intensive yet not more extensive interest, studying, and monitoring the emigration processes on several levels of institutionalised production (Miroslava Lukić Krstanović 2014, 23). Sociology, contemporary history and ethnology started their research itinerary within the academic institutions of SFRY: Institute of Social Sciences in Belgrade (the projects headed by Živan Tanić and the studies of Milena Primorac)⁴, Institute of International Politics in Belgrade (Vladimir Grečić), Centre for Migration (from 1987 – Institute of Migrations and Ethnic Studies) in Zagreb,⁵ SASA Institute of Ethnography, and the Slovenian Migration Institute at the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU).⁶ In paral-

⁴ The study of Milena Primorac (1980) and the thematic issue of *Economic Emigration, Sociology*, XV, no. 2, 1973 (see articles of Baučić, Milojević, Mandić, Burić, Morokvašić, Petrović et alia) shed special light on the sociological aspect of the temporary economic emigration.

⁵ Continuous researches of external migrations can be traced back to 1977, at the Institute of Geography of the Zagreb University, and the Office of Migration and Nationalities, which was established back in 1965. The Institute of Migration and Ethnic studies is the first institution that integrated the researches of migration and ethnic groups and minorities.

⁶ Upon the initiative of SAZU and the History Section of the Slovenian Emigrant Association /Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, *Študijski center za zgodovino slovenskega izseljenstva* /Study Centre for History of

lel with the still scarce scientific research work, sociopolitical institutions named *Heritage Foundation of Serbia*, based respectively in all of the former SFRY Republics, were set up as of 1951, with the aim of establishing contacts with the newly-established clubs of Yugoslavs in their respective countries of immigration and to work on the "positively orientated" cultural cooperation aligned with the politics pursued by the socialist Yugoslavia. Clearly, such a form of social engagement had strong political residues of promoting and selection of the emigrants that were positively oriented towards the socialist Yugoslavia, in contrast to the emigrants and organisations which were labelled as negative anti-communist "elements". Unlike the diffused and insufficiently transparent work in scientific research, *the Heritage Foundations* enjoyed a strong support of the authorities, since they did the job in the interest of the state politics.

Therefore, the research was still under political scrutiny. Such was the establishing of the Board for Academic Study of Emigration, headed by Koča Jončić (who was also a political functionary). An academic gathering on studying emigration was held in the end of 1970s which brought together a number of experts and authorities (The Proceedings entitled: *Emigration of Nations and Nationalities of Yugoslavia*, published in 1978). These Proceedings became the main platform for the forthcoming projects, programmes and initiatives under the auspices of the Yugoslav paradigm, yet these were at the same time explicitly directed towards the national academic itineraries in research of the *own* national

Slovenian Emigration/ was established in 1963. As of 1982, the Centre was renamed to Slovenian Emigration Institute ZRC SAZU.

emigration (Croatian, Serbian and Slovenian emigration). At that time, ethnologists were also becoming involved in researches, and they came up with a clear institutional project proposal for ethnological research of emigrants from Serbia. The originators of the project proposal were Slobodan Zečević and Dušan Drljača. Their proposal was discussed at the meeting of the SASA Social Sciences Department in 1978. Whereas migrations and emigration had a special political treatment under the control of the Yugoslav socialist establishment, the SASA and the Institute of Ethnography authorities saw a new national enthusiasm in the emigration which suited the policy of this institution (in order to study the Serbs in emigration). It was only a matter of direction which this research was going to take.⁷ The ethnological research of emigration started in 1981 as part of the project entitled: "Ethnological Study of Emigration from Serbia and Ethnic Minorities". This was the first time ethnological research went beyond the state borders, albeit not the national ones. The research fellows from the Institute of Ethnology, Miroslava Lukić Krstanović and Mirjana Pavlović received their first research assignments – Canada and USA (Chicago). It was a step into the unknown, when the instructions and the assigned tasks

⁷The initiators of the project of the Institute of Ethnography, D. Drljača and S. Zečević composed a concept of research of emigration based before all on the studies of the then already renowned sociologists and professionals, such as Čizmić, Mikačić (1974), Telišman (1976), Sobisjak (1978), and others. From the very beginning, the focus of the concept of studying emigration was concentrated on the phenomenon of ethnicity, i. e. on monitoring the continuity and changes of ethnic identity (Zečević and Drljača 1982: 417).

were losing their importance in favour of the researcher's goal, when the researcher could only rely on his/her own work and ingenuity. The research experience showed that, studying migrations as part of the Institute projects, we – who were at the start of our academic careers, did not have sufficient educational grounds in the domain of ethnology and anthropology of migrations. Such a subject had not existed as part of the academic ethnology studies. This is why our research – regardless of whether it was on labour migrations, ethnic identity and emigration processes, or global migration policies in theoretical discourse, entailed ad hoc education, which was often based on foreign literature as well as on visiting foreign universities. A part of the challenge was that those were the years when the academic trend was drawn to modern structuralist theories and Van Gennep's *rites of passage*, because of which any dealing with ethnicity and emigration would be considered out of place by those circles. Therefore, we were to deal with the decision, the assigned task, the selected theoretical and methodological concept, our own projection and the future production of the academic work. Namely, we had to win the challenge within the ethnological community and show a personal commitment which would not represent the anticipated approaches and the results of certain policies and trends.

Personalisation 1 – Researcher Mobilisation

The personalisation encompassed researches' independence, resourcefulness as well as construction of the researcher's own characteristic ethnological approaches with time. The preparation

phase and the pre-field work were a real researching experience. The material on emigrants of Yugoslav and Serbian origin was scarce (disarranged emigrant press kept at the Heritage Foundation of Serbia at the time). The researchers realised that the information should also be sought at the institutions such as the Centre for Migration and Ethnic Studies in Zagreb and in other organisations in the now former Yugoslavia. Based on personal contacts and information, as well as on references initiated by some individuals, relevant state institutions, academic circles, and the Serbian Orthodox Church, we started to build independent communication networks and "road signs" which led us to research destinations. This all served the purpose of our first and pioneer field work.

Miroslava:

When I was admitted to the Institute, as a scholarship holder and a fresh graduate ethnologist, I was told the topic of my master paper would be emigration, which was a part of the newly-established project entitled: "Study of Emigration from Serbia". Moreover, I was offered to choose a country I wanted to research, with a hint that it could be Canada or Australia. What a challenge and what a privilege! I remember I was looking at a world atlas that day and I chose Canada off the top of my head, although I was aware I knew nothing about that country and I had no one I knew there. Before I left, I thought I should have better prepared as many written sheets of paper (index cards) as possible about everything referenced as: emigration and Canada. I was supposed to start somewhere and, following the advice of Dušan Drljača,

Head of the Project, I spent days at the Heritage Foundation of Serbia leafing through the Kanadski Srbobran /Canadian Serbian Guardian/ and other Yugoslav emigration press. Then I went to Zagreb, where I did the same, and where to my great surprise, I found a very neatly organised microfilmed written material. I could call this period the two years of my becoming autonomous within the institutional project. In parallel, I was also studying the topic of labour migration or the issues of foreign workers in European countries. I was travelling throughout Serbia – Priboj, Ivanjica, Arilje, Čačak, Kruševac and other places, in "hunt" of the "workers temporarily working abroad", as they were called at that time. So, Canada was still too far away, while emigrants were even farther and a totally unknown population for me. My problem was that I had never had any contacts with individuals who lived in Canada. There I started my journey with a pile of administrative documents, diplomatic and police certificates, references for the university, well-intended advice, and some distant family relations that appeared out of the blue. I received a state scholarship, which lasted me for three months. For the rest of the months, my parents sent me money. Over the six months, I changed my places of residence (more than six of them, with the last one at my new friend's – Adela from the Croatian island of Vis). I split my time between the research and performing activities – especially with regard to visiting various emigration spots, such as the church and organisations and selected Serbian families, and the "free" cruise – through selected association and friendship with the people with whom I could feel true to myself and in some places "ours". It was both, an immediate experience and an experience from a distance, necessarily transformed into a study. I

now realise that this research had entirely facilitated the analytical work, and created an independent view of migration and ethnic problems, which I certainly found useful later. Most importantly, I realised that each life story, including mine, started with an individual, and that different collectivities were well-constructed policies which either embraced each other or not.

Mirjana:

My experience is somewhat different. I was a scholarship holder of the Institute of Ethnography with a commitment to complete my master paper as part of a project of the Institute, although without any obligation on behalf of the Institute to offer me a job. Nevertheless, I wanted to believe that this could mean an entry into the Institute "through the back door". My first attempt was to get involved with the topic of the returnees from diaspora to Pančevo and its surroundings. However, this entailed a lot of travelling and staying in different places, which in itself required a lot of money that I did not have. I did not know anything about the subject and frankly – it did not seem a research challenge to me at the time. When he heard I had a USA visa and relatives in Chicago, D. Drljača offered me to take the life of Serbs in Chicago as a topic for my master's thesis. In addition, he also suggested the Institute would pay for my return ticket, while I was supposed to cover the costs of my three-month research on my own, naturally with the aid of my parents, whereas my relatives would provide for my accommodation and food. It was a great research challenge, which at that moment seemed to me as the right opportunity to engage in

ethnological activities, and maybe the only one, since already then – after three jobless years, I was contemplating about finding a job that would not be related to my profession. Therefore, after a couple of sleepless nights, I decided to take up the challenge and I left for Chicago.

I already knew something about the life of Serbs in Chicago, because I had spent a month visiting my relatives in this city on two occasions. Namely, I come from a family that had "its own emigrants", and which was distancing itself from the communist regime, and was accordingly "labelled" in a certain way. Nevertheless, I regarded the time in which I started my research as democratic and much more liberal towards the problems of emigration, at least in an academic sense. Although this was not true to a great extent, which can also be confirmed by the previous considerations, that naivety had its advantages, too. Namely, I was completely receptive to all the events in the community. Yet, as much as I was striving to be "objective" and to clear my research and especially the presentation of the research results from my personal attitude, and before all, from my personal emotions, this was not always possible; and not even necessary, as I know today. Since each insight, each emotion, and even each prejudice sheds a light on at least one segment and enables an analyst to gain a new insight into this complex and multi-layer subject matter. Thus, while I had certain knowledge, and even a personal attitude, about emigration, I had no idea about ethnic identity. Moreover, the term ethnicity was totally unfamiliar to me. This is how I left.

Hence, the ethnographic narratives are based on different empirical beginnings, and accordingly also on creating different re-

search perceptions on the I-US-THEM relation. Personal contacts in contrast to stereotypes – the images about *mine – ours – others there* were indeed a kind of predisposition of the real and the assumed research subject.

Personalisation 2 – In Medias Res Methodology

The research studies were performed in Canada (Miroslava Lukić Krstanović)⁸ and Chicago (Mirjana Pavlović) in the period between 1981 and 1985. Those were the years when ethnographic research was focusing on new urban fields of megalopolises such as Chicago and Canadian cities – Toronto and other, rather than on native positioning. The field work lasted for several months and thus guaranteed a stationary concept of work: a large number of interviews, collecting a variety of archive materials, participating in numerous emigrant events – private and public celebrations and rituals. We established contacts with professors and experts of Canadian and American universities on our own, within the frame of multicultural institutions and immigration authorities (Miroslava), and emigration organisations (Miroslava and Mirjana). Our research studies were among the first research studies of the diaspora from Serbia and socialist Yugoslavia in Canada and the USA. Although these studies had their respectable supervisors, we – the researchers ourselves, managed to educate and organise ourselves on our own, establishing appropriate and then current theoretical

⁸ These months-long researches were then financed by the Ministry of Science of the Republic of Serbia.

and methodological approaches to studying ethnicity and migrations. Hence, the study of emigration and ethnic processes of the Balkans were for the first time aligned with the currently modern academic movements and trends: ethnicity as non-essentialist, but flexible, situational and constructivist phenomenon, Barth's concept of "ethnic boundaries" on the relation: *us – them*, symbolism of ethnic indicators which were based on communication and semantic analyses of signs of the ethnic identity as very complex and multi-layered phenomena of social stratifications in multicultural societies. The work in large urban communities was very complex: large distances and at the same time a large dispersion of emigrants; continuity of daily work and frequently reduced opportunities of finding potential sources of information, large diversity of interlocutors (in terms of gender, profession, social status and age) and aligning them with particular research and methodological frames on the spot (creating certain social maps). Naturally, time was needed for research adaptation and concentrated work in designating the research problems. On the other hand, we needed to enter the organisations of various collectivities unknown until then, which not always entailed availability and accessibility of information, especially in cases of dealing with the structures of power and hierarchies within the emigrant population. It is well known that ethnologic research has its diachronic and synchronic dimension, which involves a wide variety of insights into particular problems in case of work on monographs. Therefore, the study of emigrants involved a wide field of observation and information that ranged from the beginnings of the immigration to the latest events and actualities. Finally, the work in the immigration envi-

ronment included acquiring information on the go in the states of the USA and Canada.

Cooperativeness and Comparability

The readers might find it useful and interesting as well, to notice a personal component of the research, and why not – an ideological one, in this section. Although the period of our researches was far more democratic, and far less politically oriented – or at least we believed so, an attentive reader will be able to discern our political attitudes in the pages that follow, as well as the attitudes of the environment we descended from. This is good. This book is a proof that researchers can be involved in the same problem area for many years, and yet remain so different; that they can engage in dialogues, and also in internal monologues for decades, to reconsider, reconfirm or change their ingrained standpoints, and with time, to become friends, in addition to being colleagues. Hence, the life of emigrants is a remarkably complex problem, and such is the "truth" about them. Moreover, it is not only the ethnicity that is a flexible and adaptable category, but we ourselves had to acquire these qualities. In the first years of our work, our colleagues often used to equate the two of us, and yet, we were developing and still kept being so different persons to the benefit of the development of our own personalities and our researches, although always nourishing communication with each other, the proof of which can be found on these pages. We still like to boast that our debates, which lasted for hours, and sometimes opposing views, led to very inspirational and effective approaches and conclusions. Although we had different research experiences, different

perception, and sometimes different attitudes, we met in a similar theoretical and methodological context of interpretation of ethnicity and emigration. The similarities and the differences of the subjects of research, taking into account the different areas and even different population, helped in bringing cooperativeness to the positions of comparativeness between Canada and Chicago, which established a higher degree of academic competitiveness and a wider range of academic valorisation. This book is exactly a result of such work and collaboration. After the individual monographs, published articles and lectures given, the idea matured of writing a joint paper – *Emigration Story*, which came as a result of individual articles and analyses and in which a symbolic and constructivist approach to ethnic identity and migration processes are condensed. Delving into ethnic problems of emigrants and their offspring pointed at specific disintegration of identity, which was manifested in what had been taken over from the environments of origin, which got segmented or reshaped in the immigrant or multicultural environments (Lukić Krstanović 1991: 200-210, Pavlović 1990 91-105). Finally, this has deconstructed the myth of avoiding any reading of ethnic phenomena/problems as the traditional essentialism in the direction of ethnicisation or nationalisation of cultural migrational phenomena.

Hence, the results of the research studies of emigration were finalised in the form of monographs and articles published in national and international publications. However, due to the financial difficulties, and the political conflicts and economic sanctions that ensued in the beginning of the 1990s, the research did not continue. Besides, the authors distanced themselves from the prevailingly nationalist and other propaganda that glorified the Serbian

nation in wherever corner of the globe it was, since under such circumstances studying ethnicity and diaspora did not leave enough operational space to academic autonomy and critical opinion. Our works continued, although without real possibilities to conduct field research and follow the boiling events in the emigrant environments. Our books were distributed to Canada and Chicago at the last moment before the communications were discontinued with the approaching sanctions. Many years have passed before we realised that the researches of emigration and ethnicities in those countries were left without research successors and new results. We therefore returned to our studies and resumed studying these issues from a new distance.

The flaw of insufficient representativeness of ethnological and anthropological work probably lies in the very inertness of ethnologists who fail to draw public attention to the issues of historic and current migration problems, believing that these topics are easy to get politicised and become instruments of current political interests. On the other hand, tailoring the current policies of diaspora, which had with time become platforms of current political interests in establishing various institutions, groups, and organisations remained entirely detached from the results of academic papers and research.

The book/monograph entitled *Ethnic Symbols and Migrations, Serbian Communities in USA and Canada* is based on an analysis of until then rare material collected on the field researches conducted in the period between 1984 and 1985, and then on processing and interpretation of the archive collections and systematised verbal and written sources, which opened a new field of emigration anthropology or anthropology of diaspora as it is also called

in some circles nowadays. Therefore, the main topics of the book are emigration and identity processes viewed from a constructivist angle, interpretations of ethnic identity stratification important for shaping various social groups, for association, approximations, differentiations and presenting emigrant communities, i.e. presenting a broad spectrum of interactions between emigrants. The passage of thirty years' time has shown that, although articles were published in the 1990s as well, the ethnological work on this topic has in fact never been finished and that it has been waiting for a *view from a distance*. The sociopolitical context of the research work then and now has undergone certain changes in considering the micro- and macro-ethnological research discourse. The chapters in this book have been classified to analytical units, in accordance with the issues, such as studying the ethnic identity, immigration policies of the USA and Canada, immigrant communities in the USA and Canada, and symbolisation and mythologisation of ethnicity. This book is more of a comparative study than a typical monograph, owing precisely to the alternating course of presentation and the insight it provides into the two immigration societies – that of the USA and that of Canada, that is, the differences and similarities of their migration processes.

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⁹ This book is a result of the work on the project *Multiethnicity, Multiculturalism, Migrations – Contemporary Processes* (177027), funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

therefore like to express our gratitude to Dr Dragana Radojičić, Director of SASA Institute of Ethnography, as well as to our reviewers – Prof. Dr Dragana Antonijević and prof. dr Bojan Žikić. This book has been accomplished mostly due to the engagement of the co-publisher and our colleague Miroslav Niškanović, MA.