

<b>FULL NAME</b>	<b>IRENA ŠUMI</b>	<b>FIELDS OF INTEREST, RESEARCH AREAS, FIELDWORK</b>	
<b>YEAR OF BIRTH</b>	1959	Post-socialism studies	
<b>POSITION, TITLE</b>	Assistant Professor, Ph.D.	Identity politics	
<b>DISCIPLINE</b>	Social Anthropology	Borders and boundaries	
<b>INSTITUTION OF EMPLOYMENT</b>	Institute of Ethnic Studies, Ljubljana	Ethnicity and nationalism	
	ISH – Graduate school of the humanities, Ljubljana	History of American anthropology American anthropology on its Native terrain	

#### RECENT RESEARCH INTERESTS

- It was my diploma work on the **history of American anthropology** that initially led me to **anthropological representations of Native Americans** against the backdrop of the political history of Native nations and tribes in the course of the 19th and 20th century. This was the theme of my M.A. thesis (see Item 1 below). Having discovered the critique produced by Native scholars and intellectuals, this study was very formative for all my subsequent work. I shall try to recount it as it unfolded, and in the reverse order from the list of interests I have supplied above.
- My professional work after my M.A. studies took me into the field of **ethnicity and nationalism**. My fieldwork of many years took place in a small Alpine valley in Italy, at the triple border between Italy, Austria and Slovenia. This economically poor region, afflicted with many disasters during the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (the break-up of Austro-Hungarian empire and subsequent annexation to Italy; ethnic cleansing during the Nazi occupation), is the home of a small community of native Slovenian speakers whose experience, and views on state nationalisms and ideology, “ethnicity” and belonging taught me everything I know about how humans go about creating their communities, loyalties and adversities. During the course of my fieldwork among the people of Val Canale, I have made myself useful to them both as a teacher of Slovenian language, and an active participant in their community’s political struggles. This in turn led me to a series of considerations about fieldwork, engaged anthropology, and the role of critical public intellectuals in general, which are soon to come forth in a form of a textbook based on my course on **anthropological research methods** at the ISH. - Another outcome of this prolonged engagement in Val Canale was an attempt at
- **Theorising borders and boundaries**, published in a book (item 2 below) in which I tried to address what has very likely become my central object of curiosity: how people form their communality (“entitativity”, in the word of Donald Campbell) on the one hand, and how they imagine it on the other. This exercise in multiperspectual (“intersubjective”, if you will) thinking resulted in a structural model of boundary that was crucially inspired by my involvement in the renewed field of border studies that built a fresh agenda after 1989 especially in Europe, what with all the new international borders. But it led to other things as well. A first outcome was my interest in what I would sum up as
- **Studies of identity politics**. I have grave suspicions about the usefulness of “identity” as an analytic tool, but I have none whatsoever about “identity” as a prime political tool, an instrument of power. Soon after Slovenian independence, I was involved in a research project about the perception of the new statehood. I am currently involved in a project based at the Institute of ethnic studies that deals with such power-informed notions of “ethnic” diversity in a multitude of public arenas in Slovenia. This complex project aims to “scan” and map many diverse perspectives on “otherness” and the way they are (in)formed in a relatively closed, provincial milieu of a place like Slovenia. – This work “at home” in turn led me to
- A plethora of **epistemological and ontological questions** pertaining, to put it shortly, to the whole project of “social sciences” and the way their problem fields are constituted even their allegedly post-modernist, post-prejudiced, post-biased edition. Specifically, I encountered many problems trying to employ the “post-socialism” or “transition” paradigm to interpreting my own material on otherness in Slovenia. Here I need say no more, except that I hope our joint project, *Post-colony and post-socialism contexts in social scientific writing and teaching*, will address it all.
- Finally, there is a list of some of the research projects I have been involved in during the past decade:
  - **1995 – 1998: New Slovenian statehood** (*Nova slovenska državnost*). At: Institute of ethnic studies, Ljubljana (financier: Ministry of science and technology of Slovenia). Position: co-author of project, research associate. Principal investigator: dr. Frane Adam, associate professor of sociology, University of Ljubljana.
  - **1996 – 2000: Social position of Slovenian codes in Val Canale**. (*Socialna lega slovenskih kodov v Kanalski dolini*). At: Slovene research institute – SLORI, Trieste, Italy. Position: project author and principal investigator.
  - **2000 – 2002: Toward (folk) religiousness as corroborative factor of ethnic belongings: the case of Valcanale** (*(ljudski) religioznosti kot koroborativnem dejavniku etničnih pripadnosti v Kanalski dolini*). At: Institute of ethnic studies, Ljubljana (financier: Ministry of science and technology of Slovenia). Position: project author and principal investigator.
  - **2000- 2001: Imagining the times of the Old Empire in Valcanale, Italy: an archaeology of nostalgia**. At: Österreichisches Ost- und Südosteuropa-Institut. Position: project author and principal investigator. With: Dr. Karl Stuhlpfarrer, full professor of modern history, University of Vienna and Klagenfurt.
  - **2001: Borders old and new: towards a theoretical and applicative framework**. At: Centro studi sulle aree di confine/Centre for border area studies, Tarvisio, Italy (financier: European science foundation, exploratory workshops grant). Position: Author of project proposal, convenor.
  - **2001 - 2004: The processes of ethnic differentiation in Slovenia: confronting the perceptions** (*Procesi etničnega razlikovanja v Sloveniji: soočenje percepcij*). At: Institute of ethnic studies, Ljubljana (financier: Ministry of education, science and sports of Slovenia). Position: Author of project proposal and principal investigator.

COURSES TAUGHT		RECENT TEACHING EXPERIENCE, PRACTICE, METHODS
1.	Native American Political History	<p>My teaching experience is mainly with graduate students enrolled to M.A or Ph.D. programs, and predominantly at the ISH. It is ISH's policy is to individualise the study materials for each course according to each student's interest leading to his or her thesis. This means a lot of individual consultations and specialised work in the evaluation and examination, as well as thesis preparation. Students compile, read through, and write essays on specialised literature; ideally, these essays develop into chapters of their theses. Each approbated M.A. or Ph.D. candidate is required to present, in the form of a public lecture, his or her work on the thesis three times before the defence.</p> <p>At the courses which involve a history to be learnt, I usually prepare visual materials (computer presentations or transparencies) that systematize the material in a problem-oriented way rather than chronologically, and supply the background reading. The "history" itself does not get recounted in the form of classical lectures. Rather, the students are encouraged to illustrate the selected problem nodes with their own research experience, and to employ interpretive techniques they explore in their own thesis work. In this way, the problems – research questions – are seen in many different lights. The purpose is to familiarise them with building interpretive models rather than searching for "ultimate" – or even worse, "scientific truths": an intellectual habit that our students tend to inherit from their rather positivist and essentialising pre-graduate formation.</p> <p>The course Research methods in anthropology involves fieldwork experience. Starting out with "observation exercises" in a nearby bar or at the fresh food market, the students then form teams that work on a selected research. This may be anything from participating in courtroom procedures, interviewing an "ethnically", professionally, or otherwise categorised group of people, to analysing video materials or media reports. The teams work independently, consult with the mentor at will, but have to: submit a valid research question, and a clear plan of work to begin with; describe their selected methods; learn to protect their informants' confidentiality; and to keep a diary. These diaries are the very focus of the seminar work that instigate debates on techniques, methods, interpretation and representation, and last but not least, the observer's own persona and personality as the medium of seeing and interpreting.</p>
2.	Research Methods in Anthropology	
3.	American Anthropology	
4.	Anthropology of Ethnicity & Nationalism	

#### MAJOR PUBLICATIONS IN LAST FIVE YEARS

1.	<i>Blizu polnega kroga tega sveta : ameriški Indijanci med preteklostjo in sedanjostjo</i> /Near the full circle of this world: Native Americans between past and present/ (Ethnicity, 3). Ljubljana: Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja/ Institute of ethnic studies, 1999. ISBN 961-6159-14-3.
2.	<i>Kultura, etničnost, mejnost : konstrukcije različnosti v antropološki presoji.</i> / Culture, ethnicity, boundary: constructions of diversity in anthropological perspective / Ljubljana:ZRC SAZU, 2000. ISBN 961-6358-14-6.
3.	The Slovenian "national question": an academic tradition or an ideology?. In: PODNAR, Gregor (ur.). <i>Vulgata: Kunst aus Slowenien: 12. Mai - 24. Juni 2001, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein.</i> Berlin: Neuer Berliner Kunstverein; Ljubljana: Galerija Škuc, 2001.
4.	"...ker živimo na tromeji": poznavanje, vrednotenje in raba slovenskih kodov pri starših otrok - slušateljev zasebnega pouka slovenščine v Kanalski dolini. / "...for we live at the triple border": the use of Slovenian codes in parents of the children attending private Slovenian language courses in Val Canale / <i>Razpr. Gradivo, Treatises and documents, - Institute of ethnic studies, 1998.</i>
5.	" Mislili smo, da je kaj takšnega možno samo na Marsu": kratka etnografija slovenstva skozi identifikacije evakuirancev Vlade Republike Slovenije in medvojne BiH. / "We thought something like that was possible only on Mars": a short ethnography of Slovenianess through the identifications of the evacuees from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Slovenia / <i>Anthropos, 2001, No. 1/3, pp. 239-262.</i>
6.	(with: Ishii, Lomayumtewa Curtis). More than turning the tables: resistance and representations of the "other" in post-colonial and post-socialist anthropological enterprises. In: vittrup Mikkelsen, Annette (ed.). <i>Engaging the world : book of abstracts.</i> Copenhagen: Institute of Anthropology, University, [2002], 2002, p. 263.
7.	What do state borders intersect? Natives and newcomers in Val Canale, Italy. <i>Focaal - European Journal of Anthropology, 2003, No. 41, pp. 83-94.</i>

#### MEMBERSHIPS IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS, FORUMS ETC.

1.	<b>SINCE 1992</b> founding member, vice-president (1992-1996), president (1996/7): Slovene anthropological society ( <i>Društvo antropologov Slovenije, DAS</i> )
2.	<b>SINCE 1994</b> – : European Union of Social Anthropologists (EASA)
3.	<b>SINCE 1997</b> - : founding member, president: Centre for Border Area Studies / Centro studi sulle aree di confine (BAS-SAC), based in Tarvisio, Italy
4.	<b>2000</b> – member: Content and Language Integrated Classrooms (CLIC), the Hague
5.	<b>SINCE 2000</b> - : American Anthropological Association (AAA)
6.	<b>SINCE 2002</b> – Association for Borderland Studies (ABS), USA
7.	<b>SINCE 2002</b> – Western Social Science Association (WASSA), USA
8.	<b>2001</b> - committee member, National Coordinator's advisory committee, field Ethnic Studies, at the Ministry of education, science and sports of Slovenia
9.	<b>2003</b> - committee member, National Coordinator's advisory committee, field Anthropology, at the Ministry of education, science and sports of Slovenia