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# Race, Science and Medicine in Central and Eastern Europe in the Decades around 1900

## *An Introduction*

*Emese Lafferton*

Central European University, Budapest

*Laffertone@ceu.edu*

In the long nineteenth century, modern scientific discourses concerning race emerged around the world to serve different imperial and national state interests. These discourses charted the richness and expansion of lands and their peoples, helped to consolidate forms of identity and group-belonging, and created hierarchies in order to legitimate social inequalities and exploitation and to control and manage populations. Some emergent disciplines, such as physical anthropology, were themselves mostly direct responses to such imperial and national challenges, while racial discourses occupied considerable and often overlapping territories in different medical, social, and human disciplines with still mostly malleable boundaries, such as psychiatry, geography, ethnography, public hygiene, eugenics, public statistics, and sociology. While the study of these disciplines has elicited a vast secondary literature in the context of Western European empires in the past decades,<sup>1</sup> such historical inquiries are still relatively small in number and are in an introductory phase in the Central and Eastern European contexts.<sup>2</sup>

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- 1 Due to the wide range of disciplinary fields and geographic contexts of the present collection, this introduction does not attempt to provide any overview of the scholarship. Rich literature relevant to the context of each article is provided in the respective bibliographies.
- 2 A former workshop I co-organized with Tatjana Buklijas ten years ago at the Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge, entitled "Science, Medicine, Technology and the State in the Multinational Empires of Central and Eastern Europe,

The present issue of *East Central Europe* originates in an international workshop held on the “History of Science, Race and Empire in Central and Eastern Europe” in February 2014 at the Central European University, Budapest. The workshop explored different aspects of the history of race and racial sciences in the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. What prompted the convening of the workshop was the assumption that Austro-Hungarian and Russian sciences, rooted in the ethnically and confessionally most mixed regions of contemporary Europe, faced unique intellectual challenges in the process of constructing or exploiting racial theories and creating ethnic, national, and imperial identities with the aim to contribute to nation- and empire-building or maintenance. Without considerable external colonies and distant Others to control, subjugate, or exploit, these empires were facing increasing tensions around internal otherness that had to be managed and subjected. Constituting neither a modern form of nation-state nor a classical colonial power, these political entities nevertheless faced a unique mix of nationalist and imperial tensions and problems. The term “nation,” ubiquitous in late nineteenth-century public and political discourses, was however a greatly ambiguous concept in the Austro-Hungarian imperial context. Sciences too had to be fostered in such a complex social, political, and cultural milieu. As most contributions to this issue testify, science and medicine affected – and were also shaped by – these imperial and nationalist forces and therefore the disciplinary trajectories of “sciences of race” in these regions might diverge from the models offered by the historiography in the British, French, North American, and other regions.

Central and Eastern European empires may also allow an approach that more successfully integrates nationalism studies and colonial/imperial history, formerly more isolated areas where, according to Frederick Cooper and Ann Stoler’s criticism, the “nation-state” has been too anchored in “conceptions of European history since the late eighteenth century, and ‘empire’ not centered enough” (1997: 22). To take an example from physical anthropology, within the European and American contexts, George Stocking’s differentiation between “empire-building” and “nation-building” anthropological traditions is especially revealing (2001: 286–287). While encounters with “external otherness” fundamentally shaped anthropological and ethnological knowledge and fieldwork practices as well as imperial identities in the first case, “internal

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1848–1918” was among the early attempts to bring the analytical tools of recent history of imperial/colonial science to the study of science and medicine in the Austro-Hungarian, Russian, and Ottoman empires. Papers focusing on the Austro-Hungarian context were published in: Buklijas and Lafferton (2007).

otherness” is seen as the organizing principle of national ethnographic traditions and the instrument of constructing and bolstering national identities. Naturally, the two contexts gave rise to different disciplinary trajectories; yet, such a division tends to obscure the interaction between nationalistic and imperialistic functions, tensions, and practices that may simultaneously prevail within a single cultural context.<sup>3</sup>

Since the recognition of the fundamental spatiality of science—the realization of how essential the spatial dimension is for the historical reconstruction of scientific knowledge production, practices, and exchanges—the study of imperial/colonial sciences have undergone considerable shifts and changes. Early understandings of locality and interaction encapsulated in the relationship of center and periphery and the diffusionist model of knowledge transfer gradually came under attack and eventually a new global context for the discussion of science emerged. Not only the deeply entrenched, simplistic notions of the exclusively Western source and universality of modern science have been questioned, but also the mechanisms of diffusion, transportation, and imposition have been undermined and a more dynamic and reciprocal relationship emerged in the scholarship in which knowledge is produced through interaction, negotiation, and circulation, often between different knowledge systems. This challenging critique went as far as arguing that knowledge produced by certain branches of modern science, for instance, racial anthropology, economic botany, survey astronomy, or tropical medicine, is the product of the intercultural encounter within an imperial or colonial setting and would not even exist without an imperial context (Raj 2006; and Fan 2004). Important recent workshops, for instance, the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH, Cambridge) in 2009 and 2013–14, approached science from a global perspective and scrutinized how “sciences have come to take form through global confrontations, connections, and politics.”<sup>4</sup> All these developments naturally raise the issue of the problem of scale in the historical study of science: whether a local, a regional, or a global scale or perspective is the most effective in order to include the agency of non-European peoples as well as to suggest that knowledge is the result of co-production, negotiation, and translation.

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3 My case study on the development of Hungarian ethnography and physical anthropology, disciplines that had to live up to both nationalist and imperialist challenges in the Hungarian Kingdom in the decades around 1900, demonstrates precisely this complexity. See Lafferton (2007); for the Russian context, Avrutin (2007).

4 Sujit Sivasundaram and Simon Schaffer were the conveners of the workshops. See CRASSH webpage and papers in Sivasundaram (2010).

De-centering classic narratives of scientific innovation and dissemination by shifting away from Western European centers, materials, and sources is not only legitimate for the sake of putting South America, the Middle East, the Pacific, Africa, and Asia on the map of the history of science. We also need to look at Central and Eastern European national and imperial settings whose history of science still needs to be scrutinized, especially from a spatial perspective concerning the production of knowledge. A few recent workshops focusing on this region already put such issues on the agenda.<sup>5</sup> The Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman empires produced greatly intricate networks of science over vast geographic expanses and culturally heterogeneous communities, and the spatial analysis of scientific knowledge production, circulation, and practices promises to be especially fruitful in this respect.

Core questions proposed for the 2014 workshop at CEU included, although were not confined to, the following: How did the linguistic, cultural, and denominational diversity of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires influence racial thinking and the construction of racial categories in different scientific disciplines? How can we grasp the rather malleable concepts of race/ethnicity/type in these multiethnic empires? How were the different ethnic populations identified, made visible, and represented for imperial or nationalist purposes? Does the history of international and imperial exhibitions, scientific societies, folklore collections, expeditions, forms of prevalent Orientalism, etc., in the observed region differ significantly from their history in Western Europe? How did the scientific disciplines of anthropology and ethnography inform political discourses and shape the social milieu in which racist or anti-racist, cultural or biological, and integrative or exclusionary approaches could or could not prevail? How did scientists contribute to the “internal colonization” of different social and ethnic groups, as well as to the further expansion of these empires? How did imperial decline, the growing disruptive/centrifugal forces of the nationalities’ movements shape these disciplines and influence racial thinking in the public? How did racial categories become entangled with

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5 For instance, “Science, Medicine, Technology and the State in the Multinational Empires of Central and Eastern Europe, 1848–1918” at University of Cambridge, June 2006; “Malinowski’s Children: East Central European ‘Betweenness’ and Twentieth-Century Social Science,” Heyman Center for the Humanities, Columbia University, May 2014; “Epistemologies of In-Betweenness: East Central Europe and the World History of Social Science, 1890–1945” at the Institut für Ost- und Südeuropaforschung, Regensburg, May 2015; “Intertwined Enlightenments? Studies of Science and Empire in the Habsburg, Ottoman and Russian Realms during the Eighteenth Century,” Institute for Advanced Study, Central European University, May 2016, to name a few.

categories of class, gender, criminality, and so on? What perspective is useful for the study of imperial science in Central and Eastern Europe (local, trans-imperial, comparative, global, etc.)? What role did local/provincial centers of science play in relation to those in the imperial capitals? What is the relationship of center and periphery in these empires?

Many of these questions are scrutinized in the present volume which contains several of the original workshop contributions and includes further articles directly solicited to extend the scope beyond the original geographic and disciplinary focus. To understand how concepts of race, ethnicity, nation, and the multiethnic empire were co-produced in these regions, contributions here reflect on a variety of scientific disciplines, including ethnography, physical anthropology, sociology, geography, criminal and social statistics, public health, eugenics, and psychiatry. The geographic scope of the articles range from the Russian Empire, regions of partitioned Poland, and Prussia, to regions of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Romania, and territories of Yugoslavia.

Before briefly introducing the individual contributions to this issue, I would like to draw some more general conclusions from this workshop project.<sup>6</sup> These articles fully confirm the understanding that the term “race” is a moving target which needs careful definition in each particular historical context. After exploring a wide variety of references for the term, we arrived at no secure definition, no fixed meaning of race. Race could mean the “human race,” undivided, or refer to the opposite, to essential human difference (races in the plural), but could designate class and other differences. Even at a given time, it could carry very different connotations and values over scientific disciplines, such as physical anthropology, psychiatry, or eugenics, embedded in distinct social and political contexts. In a sense, to evoke Stuart Hall’s metaphor, race is indeed a “floating signifier” where meaning is gained not through the existence of some essence, but is context-dependent, relational, and subject to appropriation and redefinition.<sup>7</sup>

Another emergent issue concerns tensions around the understanding of different forms of racism: biological vs. cultural, the lack of clear boundaries between them, and the values traditionally attributed to them (benign vs. sinister differentiation). Zimmerman problematizes this in his article in the present volume. While it is very important to strip cultural approaches to race from their traditionally assumed benign nature, it still matters what rationale dictates the choice of one or the other. The symmetrical treatment of biological

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6 I would like to use this opportunity to thank all participants and especially Mitchell Ash for their contribution in the debates and final discussion at the workshop.

7 Stuart Hall’s lecture, “Race, the Floating Signifier,” given at Goldsmiths College, London, 1997.

and cultural forms of racism and hierarchies will prompt us to ask a similar set of questions in case of both: What political agendas lie behind them, what social, political, and other ends do they serve, and what makes us evaluate them in certain ways?

Race is also only one of the major organizing concepts that operates in human societies and enables the production of normative discourses together with age, class, gender, able-bodiedness, and so on. These concepts are relational, often entangled and overlapping, especially when it concerns social inequalities and political/economic domination. Any study of race and racism in a given context thus needs to be sensitive to these different forms of social classifications and their mutually constitutive nature. While class as a closely related concept pops up in virtually all articles of this issue, only Stauter-Halsted's and Zimmerman's articles deal with gender and its interaction with race in more depth, and Herza discusses able-bodiedness from a similar perspective.

The concept of "science" also came under criticism. Since this workshop was not simply about racial thinking but more specifically about the role of modern scientific disciplines emerging in the long nineteenth century that were occupied with and theorizing about race, different assumed aspects of "science" were criticized, such as its widely held rationality and objectivity. Yet, thanks to the work of many sociologists and historians of science in the last decades, who demonstrated that science is a fundamentally social and cultural activity as most other human doings, such assumptions are no longer tenable in the study of science. Therefore, rather than brushing aside the inhumane, absurd, or plainly "wrong/false" aspects of the past of racial sciences as "pseudoscience" or the history of irrationality, we need to properly contextualize and historicize them.

Further tensions were emphasized between two parallel and complementary processes at work in the history of our observed field: those of nationalization and universalization of the sciences. These processes need to be scrutinized, together with their institutions (national academies, associations, and exhibitions, as well as international congresses and fairs). What characterizes national sciences in a context where the "nation" itself is yet a historically ambiguous entity? And how do scientific ideas acquire their universality?<sup>8</sup>

Finally, the study of this topic in the region has timely political relevance again. The history of racial thinking in East Central Europe in the period leading up to the cataclysmic twentieth century may provide an understanding

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8 For deeper discussion of these in the Austro-Hungarian context, see Ash and Surman (2012).

of the complex relationship between (multi)ethnicity, nationalism, and supranational political structures that proves to be crucial in facing problems in contemporary Europe, supposed to be “postnational,” politically united, and “morally” integrated. These include the rise of anti-Roma sentiment and the reappearance of anti-Semitism in Western European countries since the 1990s and the more culturally and religiously informed anti-Semitism in Eastern European countries following the fall of the Iron Curtain. These also include the enormous strain the recent migration crisis has put on Europe as well as potential scenarios of a shrinking European Union or one with its center of gravity shifting eastwards, towards illiberal democracies, allowing populist, nationalist, and racist voices more and more space again. With the benefit of hindsight, some of the essential references of these recent developments may go back to the period and geographic regions under scrutiny and, specifically, to tensions of nationalism and imperialism, the disintegration of the multiethnic empires, and the re-creation of novel multiethnic nation states.

The present issue begins with the article “Race against Revolution in Central and Eastern Europe: From Hegel to Weber, from Rural Insurgency to ‘Polonization’” by Andrew Zimmerman, which was originally presented as keynote speech at the workshop. Serving to introduce core questions concerning the origins and nature of racism and racial science in the region, the article defines racism as a form of “counterrevolution,” a set of “political reactions to preserve hierarchies of power against democratic revolutions.” Zimmerman thus argues for the key role that worldwide rural insurgencies played against bonded labor: Transatlantic uprisings of serfs and slaves was at the base of the inception of racism and racial science in Europe. This interpretation departs from the usual top-down model of power, in which “elites make history”; Zimmerman reverses the relation of power and resistance and considers in this case elite power as opposition and resistance to popular democratic and autonomous politics.

Zimmerman also provides a unitary framework for the reinterpretation of works by Hegel (and the Marxist tradition inspired by him) and Weber based on these very real social conflicts they were witnessing and problematizing. In the case of Weber, the lived experience of social conflict consisted of anxieties concerning the mobility and sexual rebellion of young Polish seasonal workers in Prussia. Racializing class conflict, Weber saw in these workers a “Polonizing” racial threat. It is thus not far-fetched to say, claims Zimmerman, that “Weber made his career by developing his anti-Polish racism into a general theory of culture, race, and class.”

Two articles deal with ethnographic and anthropological traditions in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy at the turn of the century, one from an

imperial perspective in Vienna, the other from a minority nationalist perspective in the Czech lands. In "Science, Race, and Empire: Ethnography in Vienna before 1918," Andre Gingrich provides a survey on developments in academic ethnography with close ties to anthropology in Vienna through three decades before the end of WWI. He outlines the dynamics of institutionalization and the competition between different disciplines and their representatives, and recognizes three distinct phases of development. Intellectually, the heritage of both Blumenbach's racial categorization and Herder's cultural differentiation informed the Viennese field, but—in line with general Christian theology in the Habsburg Catholic context—the theory of monogenism prevailed, which upheld the scriptural unity of all peoples (the theory of single creation). After the Novara expedition and due to the considerable influence of the pathologist and liberal politician Carl von Rokitansky, anthropometric measurements and classifications were conducted especially by scientists trained in the life sciences. At the same time, linguists, philologists, monks, and priests studied the cultural diversity of the empire. Serving imperial interests, ethnography institutionally integrated the study of different peoples at home (the multiethnic population) as well as overseas (involving, for instance, the ethnography of the Middle East with clear orientalist and colonial orientation).

Importantly, the first phase of the development of ethnography before 1900 was marked by conservative liberalism (in the sense of serving imperial interests) which also included what Gingrich calls a "short Jewish moment." Mueller, Glaser, and Krauss are shown as key players in the field and their work is also linked to the activities of Franz Boas in Berlin before his emigration to the US. This perspective allows Gingrich to claim a "German-speaking and Jewish," rather than just a "German" influence on the history of American anthropology. In this first liberal phase of ethnography, in which "race" did not play an important conceptual or empirical role, key methodological inventions in ethnographic fieldwork coalesced into a "dialogic ethnographic field approach" that, Gingrich suggests, influenced young intellectuals in all fields of the humanities, potentially including the Cracow-born Bronislaw Malinowski who would end up revolutionizing British anthropology. As elsewhere in German-speaking territories, a "racist turn" is demonstrable in Vienna from 1900, gathering strength by the eve of the Great War. After the physical anthropologist and physician Rudolf Pösch's occupation of the first chair for anthropology and ethnography at the University of Vienna in 1912/13, a priority on the study of racial diversity and hierarchy became dominant and pushed ethnography to the background, favoring physical anthropology alongside racial hygiene in the region.

Filip Herza's "Anthropologists and Their Monsters: Ethnicity, Race, and Able-Bodiedness in Early Czech Anthropology" is an important contribution to the history of "minority" nationalist anthropological traditions within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Herza focuses on the Czechoslovak Ethnographic Exhibition held in Prague in 1895 and places it within the larger contexts of the professionalization of physical anthropology and strengthening nationalism in the Czech lands by the 1890s. Relying on recent literature, Herza attempts to tease out differences between the different anthropological traditions that emerged in Vienna, Budapest, and Prague. Arguably, opposed to a clear imperial interest in ethnic diversity and notions of racial mixing dominant in both Vienna and Budapest, here a strong preoccupation with and insistence on the existence of a "Czech type" prevailed, which shows an anthropology anchored to an increasingly nationalist view of the Czech body politic.

An important new element is brought into analysis: the role of bodily normality in relation to the construction of an ethnic type. Herza argues that the recording of people with disabilities in the 1893–95 extensive anthropometric surveys and then their subsequent exclusion from the results was intended to present the Czechs as an able-bodied, healthy national collective. On the other hand, famous Czech freaks presented as integral part of the anthropological exhibit also served to reinforce normative visions of the "Czech type." The "ambiguous," "abnormal" body of the freak could also allude to the role and function of peasantry within this imagined community. These issues not only link the history of racial thought to the history of disability, but also highlight connections to forms of popular entertainment.

Marina Mogilner's contribution to this issue, entitled "Racial Psychiatry and the Russian Imperial Dilemma of the 'Savage Within,'" takes us to new geographical and disciplinary terrains. The article first outlines a history of the evolution of racial language and categories (such as "savagery," "primitivism," "atavism," "survivals," and "instincts") in the emerging modern disciplinary fields of race science, ethnography, and psychiatry, and then places them within the wider contexts of racialized public discourse and mass politics. By the turn of the century, a progressive, modernist, and nationalist perception of society and a strengthening self-image of Russians as a homogeneous community came into conflict with the former imperial social imagination of diversity and heterogeneity. With the concession that discriminatory and repressive elements of Russian race science were not necessarily predominant, Mogilner argues that they nevertheless came into being and gradually strengthened in the 1890s and 1900s as a response to tensions over internal backwardness and diversity. The situation worsened in the years of the First Russian Revolution (1905–07) and the inter-revolutionary period (1907–1917), when Russian

intellectuals and politicians seemed to have recognized that the same alarming qualities of “primitivism,” “savagery,” and “irrationality” were present within their own Russian ethnocultural community.

Racial psychiatry as a scholarly field solidified in this intellectual and political context in Russia, in Mogilner’s words, as “the branch of psychiatry which located the individual psyche within the collective racial organism and developed its medical discourse and national sanitation measures within the context of a new Russian nationalism that rejected both old imperial universalism and particularism in politics.” In the second part of her article, Mogilner documents this preoccupation by psychiatrists with racial studies and racial differentiation within the wider context of psychiatric professionalization, psychiatrists’ political affiliations, and the existence of different approaches and schools in the country (the more liberal and “humanistic” approach prevalent in Moscow and the more biologically oriented, rigidly classificatory Petersburg school employing coercion and hostile to psychoanalysis). In her interpretation, the history of racial psychiatry in Russia is ultimately a response to the challenges of modernity and the “tensions of empire.”

In her article entitled “Bio-Politics between Nation and Empire: Venereal Disease, Eugenics, and Race Science in the Creation of Modern Poland,” Keely Stauter-Halsted looks at certain characteristics of eugenics in independent Poland and traces their origins back to the formation of social hygiene and related medical areas in the imperial period. She assigns a formative role to Polish race science in the new Second Republic’s health and social welfare system where eugenics informed much of the vocabulary and plans for social reform. It predominantly employed a concept of race stripped of ethnic or religious connotations, meaning the community, the society. Polish biopolitics seems to have followed a “classist” rather than a racist program. Importantly, Stauter-Halsted argues that questions of sexual promiscuity, the damaging effects of syphilitic infection, and the social conditions of prostitution dominated the Polish eugenics discourse until the 1949 demise of the Polish Eugenics Society.

The article thus explores why and how prostitution and its related social and medical ills could occupy such a center stage in nascent Polish biopolitics and perceived national “degeneration” (rather than racial miscegenation, for instance). According to Stauter-Halsted, such an age-old and insoluble social problem as prostitution nevertheless managed to elicit an eager attention from Polish medical practitioners in the late imperial period since questions of social hygiene, regarded as a justifiable territory for scientific inquiry in the eyes of the partitioning powers, provided possibilities for challenging the legitimacy

of imperial rule. Medicine enabled the articulation of national interests and goals. The language of scientific modernity thus provided the tools to criticize the three empires for neglecting Polish interests. While mostly trained in German-speaking institutions in imperial centers, proponents of eugenics “shaped an anti-imperial and post-imperial agenda for Poland that was progressive, rational, and rooted in the authority of university-trained experts.”

The following article by Calin Cotoi, “Cholera, Health for All, Nation-Building, and Racial Degeneration in Nineteenth-Century Romania,” deals with the gradual emergence and transformations of public health and the sanitation system in Romania. Discussing developments from the establishment of the quarantine system through the gradual development of sanitary arrangements and public hygiene and finally the emergence of bacteriology in Romania, Cotoi provides a well-documented case of modernization pursued partly as a tool of nation-building. The fight against epidemics (the plague and more prominently cholera from the 1830s on) with a quarantine system was judged to be both costly and outdated and eventually opened up space for new administrative and medical solutions. Modeled on the Austrian “medical police” and Prussian “Polizeiwissenschaften,” an early system of public health management with the help of trained physicians as its main practitioners was transported to the Romanian Principalities. Cotoi derives the establishment of the modern Romanian state at least partly from this European and Russian concern with epidemics and their economic and social costs. Lacking local medical and educational resources, Romania initially had to rely on foreign influence to shape its public health and sanitation system. Cotoi discusses in detail the important role the Paris-trained physician Carol Davila played in the improvement of Romanian medical and sanitation systems.

The attempt to create a national sanitation system that provided for everyone failed due to the “rural problem,” i.e., peasant revolts that “disrupted the democratic public hygiene model,” which Cotoi argues led to a new discourse of “racial degeneracy” and the use of anti-Semitic arguments concerning high Jewish fertility rates. Within a gradually nationalized medical system, Constantin Istrati’s work is relevant here. Cotoi concludes by looking at the influence of Victor Babeş and modern bacteriological knowledge in transforming public health with the help of the laboratory and the political ramifications of these changes.

Vedran Duančić’s contribution to this collection entitled “Geographical Narration of Interwar Yugoslavia: Serbian, Croatian, and Slovenian Perspectives, 1918 to the mid-1920s” demonstrates the role of geography and its practitioners in the process of nation-building on the ruins of former empires and nations.

By exploring the work of two leading but lesser-known Croat and Slovene geographers, Filip Lukas and Anton Melik, and juxtaposing their perspectives with that of the towering figure of Serbian geography Jovan Cvijić (also hailed as the father of Yugoslav geography), Duančić de-centers this history and does justice to alternative, multiple nationalist voices in the geographic productions of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. By contextualizing their relations and projects in the messy aftermath of WWI, the peace conference, and early stages of nation-building, Duančić makes a so far one-sided story into a more complex and fascinating one, undermining formerly assumed power relations between “center” and “periphery.”

The case study is also illuminating concerning the malleable boundaries of our modern sciences. Duančić amply demonstrates how the disciplinary fields of ethnography, anthropology, and ethno-psychology overlapped with branches of geography, how they mutually influenced each other and occupied a preeminent role in forming new political entities at the end of WWI. Similarly to the case of other newly created nations, the construction of the Yugoslav national space as “natural” was seen as crucial in its political-geographical legitimation after WWI. Hence the preoccupation of many geographers in Central and Eastern Europe with natural boundaries, the long-term sustainability of their countries, the racial make-up and characteristics of their population, and the long-term influence of the physical landscape on the peoples who inhabit the land. Educated in Vienna and influenced by Friedrich Ratzel, Cvijić established an anthropogeographical school that lay emphasis on ethnographic research and examined the connections between human groups and the physical landscape they occupied. Valleys supported the unity of the Balkans, while mountains and high ridges were obstacles to communication and thus promoted isolation and separation. The fragmentation of terrain was a cause of ethnographic diversity, Cvijić believed, and the landscape as well as migration through the lands left their mark on the psyche of the people, which was the main source of the formation of the national spirit. The “naturalizing” tendency remained influential in geographic argumentation in the observed period, although sometimes used for exactly opposite ends: from around 1925 Lukas used this reasoning to deconstruct Yugoslavia as a natural unit and instead naturalize Croatia. Early Yugoslav geographies show a conspicuous and curious, though not altogether surprising tendency of using the construction of Yugoslavia as a backdrop against which the geographers’ own specific national territories could be narrated: the Serbian in the case of Cvijić, Croatian (and Dalmatian) in the case of Lukas, and Slovenian in the case of Melik.

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