

Trauma in Eastern Europe – Concept, Experience, Memory in Ethnography and Historical Anthropology

Conference on 12 and 13 June 2026 at the University of Graz, Austria

Organised by:

- Department of Cultural Anthropology and European Ethnology at the University of Graz
- Section Southeast European History and Anthropology at the Department of History of the University of Graz
- Commission Cultural Contexts of Eastern Europe in the German Society for Empirical Cultural Studies
- Expert Commission for Empirical Cultural Studies in the Johann Gottfried Herder Research Council

Both historically and today, the societies of Eastern Europe have been shaped in many ways by political and social violence, by war and genocide, expulsion, and persecution. Especially from a Western perspective, these experiences have increasingly been framed in terms of collective or individual trauma.

The interdisciplinary conference seeks to shift perspectives in three interrelated areas of ethnographic, historical-anthropological, and ethno-psychoanalytic research. The contributions

- reflect on concepts of the traumatic in both historical and contemporary Eastern European contexts,
- they broaden and problematize the methodological repertoire of ethnography by incorporating subject-oriented research with and about people who have experienced violence in Eastern European settings,
- and they investigate the places, resonances, and practices of traumatic collective memories.

Conference lectures and discussions are held in English language.

Time:

The conference begins in June 12, 2026 at 2 p.n. and finishes on June 13, 2026, at 6 p.m.

Location:

University of Graz – Jesuitenrefektorium am Rosenhain
Aigner-Rollett-Allee 39, 8010 Graz, Austria

Contact, information, registration:

Institut für Kulturanthropologie und Europäische Ethnologie der Universität Graz
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Programme

Friday, 12 June 2026

Location: Aigner-Rollett-Allee 39, 8010 Graz (SR 120.12)

- 14.00 – 14.30** **Welcome and introduction**
- 14.30 – 15.15** **Keynote**
Linda Mëniku & Eglantina Zyka (Tirana, Albania):
Trauma and Migration: Narratives of Shock, Loss, and Adaptation Among Albanian Diasporas
- 15.15 – 16.20** **Borders**
Alexandru D. Aioanei (Iasi, Romania):
The Memory of Trauma on the Former Romanian–Soviet Border
Manca Švara, Martina Tonet & Daniel Wutti (Koper, Slovenia/Klagenfurt, Austria):
Trauma, Remembrance, Resilience and Reconciliation
- 16.20 – 16.40** **Coffee Break**
- 16.40 – 18.30** **Places**
Sandra Kreisslová & Jana Nosková (Brno/Prague, Czech Republic):
Trauma-heritage in the post-Sudeten space: reconstruction of a German cemetery as a field of memory negotiations
Dušan Medin (Podgorica, Montenegro):
Between Silence and Memorialisation: Dissonant Heritage of the Yugoslav Wars in Montenegro Domestic Archives of Memory: Everyday Mnemonic Practices and Intergenerational Negotiations of Home in Post-war Bosnia
Sanda Üllen (Vienna, Austria):
Domestic Archives of Memory: Everyday Mnemonic Practices and Intergenerational Negotiations of Home in Post-war Bosnia
- 20.00** **Communal Dinner**

Saturday, 13 June 2026

Location: Aigner-Rollett-Allee 39, 8010 Graz (SR 120.12)

- 08.30 – 09.00** **Arriving**
- 09.00 – 09.45** **Keynote**
Hariz Halilovich (Melbourne, Australia):
Afterlives of the missing: Trauma, translocal memory and the politics of absence in post-genocide societies
- 09.45 – 11.35** **Emotion and Ethnographic Resonances I**
Katharina Eisch-Angus (Graz, Austria):
Borderlands silently speaking. Traumatic landscapes, past entanglements and the timeless recurrence of European war memory – and the ethnographic experience thereof

Olivia Anna Rachwol Hansson (Tübingen, Germany):

Postmemory as Method: Collective Trauma, "Halfiness", and Ethnography Among the Polish (Far) Right

Alla Koval (Berlin, Germany):

Researching Trauma and Forced Migration: Emotional Resonance and Researcher Self-Care

11.35 – 12.00

Coffee Break

12.00 – 13.15

Embodied Trauma

Miruna Butnaru-Troncotă & Teofana Cepoi (Bucharest, Romania):

Silenced Wounds: Gendered Violence and the Politics of Memory in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina

Ioana Elena Urda (Timisoara, Rumania):

Renegotiating trauma representation on stage

13.15 – 14.30

Lunch (on site)

14.30 – 16.20

Emotion and Ethnographic Resonances II

Jaroslav Klepal (Prague, Czech Republic):

Between Affect and Solidarity: On the Ethnography of PTSD and Veteranhood in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Johanna Muckenhuber & Jolana Wagner-Skacel (Graz, Austria):

Understanding Transgenerational Trauma: Combining Autoethnographic and Ethnopschoanalytic Approaches to the Study of the Long-Term Impact of Trauma

Christina Sterniša (Graz, Austria):

Naming the Dead: Gender, Necropolitics and Mourning Practices in Postwar Greece

16.20 – 16.30

Coffee Break

16.30 – 17.45

Multimodal Memories

Felicitas Auersperg & Anna Schor-Tschudnrowskaja (Vienna, Austria):

How traumatic experiences are interpreted in the light of political culture

Bogdan Trifunović (Čačak, Serbia):

Digitizing Trauma in the Western Balkans: Memory Institutions and Genocide Narratives

17.45 – 18.00

Conclusion