





WHO WE ARE?

- The Institute of Ethnology and Social Anthropology SAS is a prominent institution for ethnological, socio-anthropological, and religious research in Slovakia and Central Europe.
- We place emphasis on interdisciplinary overlaps, but we also pursue the internal integrity of our core disciplines and constant refining of their subjects, approaches, and methods.
- The Institute's research focus is distributed between basic, problem-oriented, and applied research.
- We contribute to the search for scientific answers to both current and historical social issues and challenges.
- We conduct field research in Slovakia and abroad in Central Europe and elsewhere in the world.
- We focus on the qualitative research of societies following the intricacies of modern life, trying to face and respond to present-day social challenges.

- We have a clear mission and a bold vision.
- We respect liberty in research, applying a research concept with explicit thematic clusters consisting of cultural heritage studies, urban studies, ethnic and religious studies, digital studies, and conceptual challenges of the Anthropocene.
- We are part of international networks and research consortia, and we have grounded expertise and a driven passion for what we do.
- Our team is balanced, with senior researchers as well as young researchers, postdocs and promising PhD students, who are an inherent part of our research projects.
- We adopted a Gender Equality Plan and the corresponding Plan of Actions.
- We are proud of using the logo of excellence in human resources.
- We care for the wellbeing of our employees.





WHAT WE DO

- The Institute's expertise includes cultural traditions and ways of life as well as social, cultural and material aspects of the economic and political transition after 1989 in rural and urban environments.
- Special emphasis is placed on phenomena of collective identities, memory, ethnicity, religion, minorities and migration, and cultural heritage.
- The Institute comprises a library and an information and documentation department with an extensive scientific archive containing textual, pictorial, and multimedia documents.
- Institute houses the editorial office of the scientific journal Slovenský národopis/ Slovak Ethnology.
- The Institute cooperates with the Academia Ethnologica et Anthropologica, the Ethnographic Society of Slovakia, and the Slovak Society for the Study of Religions.
- The Institute's programme has been designed to provide comprehensive and broadly-based research training for PhD students.
- The Institute develops cooperation with the decision-making sphere and thirdsector institutions and organisations on the national and international levels.

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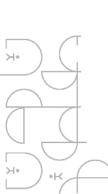
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OUR METHODS

- The Institute's work is based on field research and use of intensive qualitative methods to obtain data.
- We use methods such as in-depth and semi-structured interviews, detailed descriptive and reflective notes, audio-visual records or photo documentation, schematic recording of genealogies and maps, ethnography, and participant observation.
- We also use methods such as oral history, textual or visual analysis, discursive and content analysis, critical work with archive sources and documents, and more recently also online data collection through, for instance, (critical) observation of discussion forums on the studied topics.
- We are also familiar with other types of research methods such as short-term questionnaire surveys, statistical methods of processing for analyses of larger data corpuses, social laboratories that apply experimental research methods, and visual anthropological projects such as ethnographic films production.







RESEARCH STRATEGY (2021–2025)

MAIN RESEARCH FOCUS - KEY AREAS

- (1) continuity and transformation in the lives of people, groups, and society;
- (2) sustainability of the cultural heritage;
- (3) challenges of the Anthropocene;
- (4) the history of the discipline, development of the theory and methodology.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- maintain a balance between basic research and research oriented on current social issues,
- maintain a balance between the historical and social science perspective,
- enhance visibility of our research results (Open Data and Open Science),
- increase the level of internationalisation (international cooperation, involvement in international consortia and partnerships, intensification of research mobility),

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- increase the extent of cooperation in domestic research (interdisciplinary research and interinstitutional cooperation),
- increase the share of excellent research; set up excellent teams within the workplace or joint external teams; systematic orientation on quality, innovativeness, frontier research, and scientific syntheses,
- support a systemic building of scientific collections in the field of digital humanities and involvement in EU infrastructures,
- consider the gender dimension in research design,
- strengthen the environmental aspects and challenges in research design with a view to the protection and sustainability of the environment and climate,
- pursue the highest ethical standards and research integrity.





SAFEGUARDING CULTURAL HERITAGE

The research on cultural heritage and associated values is a fundamental pillar of our activities. We are dedicated to ethnographic research directly within the communities of living heritage bearers. We also trace communication between generations as a prerequisite for transmitting intangible cultural heritage.

We acknowledge the significance of living heritage as an invaluable source of inspiration for a sustainable world and contribution to the resilience of local communities.









HISTORICAL ETHNOGRAPHY

- The ethnological aspects of traditional material culture with a focus on manual production and meanings of artefacts.
- The genesis of material culture from pre-historic societies to folklorism.
- The present use of cultural heritage (so-called adaptive heritage reuse and creative industry).
- The abuse of cultural heritage in different historical periods and political regimes.





SAFEGUARDING LIVING HERITAGE

- Discussions about safeguarding policies and good practices of safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage at the national and international level.
- Participation in the activities of the Council of the Minister of Culture of the Slovak Republic for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.
- Expert activities within the Committee for the Evaluation of Proposals for Inscription in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Slovakia and the List of Best Safeguarding Practices in Slovakia.
- Cooperation within the UNESCO 2003 Intergovernmental Committee of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

CULTURAL HERITAGE as a means of resilience for local communities

 Community-based needs identification for living heritage among displaced communities from Ukraine – cooperation with UNESCO, Living Heritage Entity related to the Convention for Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003).

CONTEMPORARY FEASTS AND RITUALS

In the late modernity period, festive culture is influenced by a dynamic process of transformation. These changes of a global nature can be described as a process of eventisation. Common forms of holidays, celebrations, and cultural actions are enriched with new elements of entertainment and consumption. At the same time, events – as pre-planned and purposefully produced activities aimed at providing an extraordinary experience – emerge.









- The structure of Slovakia's holiday calendar in the 21st century and the ways of spending holidays.
- "New" holidays such as Halloween and Valentine's Day as a new opportunity for celebration.
- The secularisation of Christian holidays (Christmas, Easter).
- The commercial potential of rural and urban feasts, festivals, and events as an effective tool for tourism and economic development.
- New urban events and multi-genre festivals.

- Holiday celebration models relaxation, performance, self-perception, extraordinary experience.
- Family rituals from a historical perspective.
- Civil ceremonies.
- Social and individual holiday proctice.
- Process of eventisation and festivalisation in Slovak culture.
- Holidays in Slovakia during the coronavirus pandemic in 2020.
- Ritual as a tool for creating social ties and cooperation between participants.













ROMANI STUDIES - ENGAGED ANTHROPOLOGY











We engage in applied research regarding the health conditions in vulnerable Roma communities in Slovakia.

- We proactively engage in the monitoring of and interventions regarding health and health determinants.
- We contribute to the state management of the COVID-19 pandemic situation across the country's marginalised Roma communities via the COVID-19 epidemiological surveillance system.
- We have contributed to the increased local general awareness of the Roma vs non-Roma health inequity and its key (social) determinants, as well as promotion of critically applied and collaborative medical anthropology.







We analyse and help improving the living conditions in segregated Roma settlements in Slovakia.

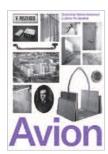
- Although access to drinking water and sanitation is recognised as a human right enshrined in many international instruments at the UN and the European level, many marginalised Roma communities in Slovakia are without any drinking water.
- The increased incidence of infectious diseases in areas with Roma population is one of the indicators of structural inequalities in Slovakia.
- In our methodological approach, we focus not only on technical aspects, but primarily on social processes at the local level and their links to structural disadvantages.
- We have developed a typology for the categorisation of Roma localities, and analysed how social actors and Roma themselves, both individually and collectively, cope with the absence of water and sewerage systems.

MEMORY STUDIES - ORAL HISTORY

Memory studies have been used in Eastern and Central Europe to reflect on the political and social changes that emerged after the collapse of the Communist regime. The fall of the Iron Curtain released memories that had been silenced or distorted in the era of Communism. We are interested in how the memories of the non-democratic regimes that ruled Slovakia in the 20th century are constructed in contemporary society from national and international comparative perspective.









TWO MAIN AREAS

- Holocaust studies
- The memory of the Communist past

OUR RESEARCH FOCUSES ON

- Biographical, social/communicative, and collective/national/cultural memories.
- Subjectivity and intersubjectivity issues.
- Remembrance policies.

THE OBJECTS OF THE STUDY

- Representations of the past.
- Family memory as a prospective field of memory (identity – values – relations).
- Inter-generational communication.
- Inter-generational transfer of the Holocaust trauma (family and community).
- Slow memory.







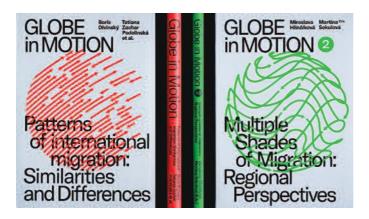
PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH

- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Oral History Documentation Project (2011–2016)
 Audio- and videotaping of the non-Jewish eye-witnesses' testimonies in Slovakia focused on the fate of local Jews/Roma people during WWII and the Holocaust.
- Current Images of Socialism (SRDA project 16-0345) (2017-2021)
 The aim was to obtain current representations of the Communist past as communicated today in Slovak society via collecting audio/video interviews focused on biographical narratives of the generation of experience.
- Slow Memory: Transformative Practices for Times of Uneven and Accelerating Change (SlowMemo) COST Action 20105 (2021–2025)

 Slow memory seeks to undertake a reframing of how the past is made meaningful in the present, with implications for how we as memory scholars conceptualise memory, which methods we employ, and how we work together as a community of scholarship and practice.

MIGRATION STUDIES

- The Institute's aim is to advance thinking of migration and mobility as an inseparable part of global change and development. We empirically look at complex issues related to mobility and migration in Slovakia and the wider Central European context.
- The most recent projects where the IESA SAS has been participating are COST Action on Transnational Family Dynamics in Europe, coordination of the community-based needs identification for living heritage among refugees from Ukraine, initiated by UNESCO, or coordination of the Danube Region Information Platform for Economic Integration of Migrants aimed at strengthening multi-level and transnational governance and institutional capacities and ensure viable institutional and legal frameworks.

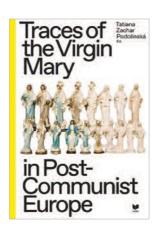




RELIGIOUS STUDIES

- In the framework of the religious studies in IESA SAS, we trace the modern forms religiosity, spirituality, and non-religiosity in modern societies both within Central and South-Eastern Europe and on the global level.
- We apply comparative qualitative multi-sited anthropological research, also employing experimental research methods within the cognitive science of religions.
- We are part of international research networks (COST actions) and we also foster cooperation outside Europe (Mauritius, Cuba, Siberia, Great Britain, etc.).











VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGY

- Our institute has a long tradition of visual anthropological projects and collaborations.
- We have created ethnographic and anthropological films, published monographs and papers on visual anthropology and ethnology in international and national scientific journals, participated in ethnographic film festivals and workshops, produced educational videos and audiovisual materials for various museums, galleries, and other cultural institutions, and developed original visual methodology.
- We live in/study societies that communicate primarily by audio-visual means, we need to develop further visual-anthropological methodological tools to approach them scientifically.





PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH

 A Happy Man (author/director: Soňa G. Lutherová, Azyl, HBO MAX, and COMPANY F), 2023

A visual anthropological documentary feature film about a Czech transgender man living in Sweden with his Slovak husband and their small children. The film was created in partnership with the IESA SAS.

• Marinka (author: Z. Beňušková, Ľ. Patsch, IESA SAS), 2020 The short film captures a biographical interview with a singer of traditional Slovak songs Mária Mezovská from Liptovská Teplička. It was created under the APVV-16-0115 project.





This book discusses the transformation of visual systems within the community of Chukchi and Yupik people in Russian Beringia. The author examines not only tangible products of visuality but also those evoking the abstract concepts of community knowledge and action: drawings, family photographs, grave photo portraits, and home décor.



 Flooded (author/director: Soňa G. Lutherová, AH production, RTVS, and SFI), 2018

The film Flooded is a complex yet intimate story about individual (familial) and collective identity, history, and memory concerning the current existence of a distinguished historical site, the mansion in Parížovce. The film won The Annual Prize of the Monuments and Museums Journal for the popularisation of science.



OTHER ANTHROPOLOGICAL FILMS AVAILABLE ONLINE

We Were the Village of the Year 2005 (authors: Z. Beňušková, Ľ. Patsch, IESA SAS), 2021

The film was created under the APVV-16-0115 project "Socio-cultural capital of successful villages as a source of sustainable development of the Slovak countryside".

Personalities of Slovak Ethnology (authors: Zuzana Beňušková, Dušan Ratica), 2010–2019

A series of portraits of 24 Slovak ethnologists.

SCIENTIFIC COLLECTIONS & DIGITAL HUMANITIES









- The Scientific Collections of the IESA SAS include extensive textual, pictorial, and multimedia documents. In addition to rare materials collected by our staff in the process of field research, they contain a rich collection of photographs, drawings, and folk customary materials.
- We place special scientific research and application emphasis on digital archiving and digital humanities. We coordinate the membership of the IESA SAS as a cooperating partner in the DARIAH-EU European research infrastructure.
- We are currently digitising our collection of research reports, which contains over 1,500 documents from the ethnological and anthropological field and other research (a total of 120,000 units in various formats) and are preparing a digital archive system for its online publication.

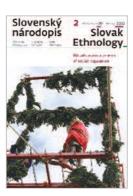


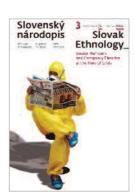


SLOVAK ETHNOLOGY / SLOVENSKÝ NÁRODOPIS JOURNAL

- Slovak Ethnology / Slovenský národopis is an academic peer-reviewed journal published by the Institute of Ethnology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava since 1953.
- The journal presents to the international academic community the results of research in social sciences and humanities, mainly in the field of ethnology and cultural/social anthropology.
- The papers follow up-to-date theoretical and methodological research perspectives and the topics range from the current challenges of people living in a globalised world to specific themes in the local setting.
- The journal also publishes essays, discussions, book reviews, and book essays. Slovak Ethnology is published four times a year, the first issue of the year in the Slovak/Czech language and the rest in English.







PHD PROGRAMME

- The Institute of Ethnology and Social Anthropology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences as an external educational institution conducts doctoral study programmes in the field of World Cultures and Religions and Social Anthropology both on a full-time basis and in external form.
- PhD students carry out their studies at the IESA SAS, while being enrolled at the doctoral study desks of the respective faculties.
- Doctoral studies are conducted based on individual study plans under the leadership of a tutor from the IESA SAS, and consist of scientific, educational, and pedagogical activities.
- The scientific activities have the form of individual or team research work of the PhD student and are tied to the topic of the dissertation thesis. The educational part consists of attending lectures and seminars, and individual study of expert literature.





IESA SAS (from left to right): Martina Wilsch, Ľubica Voľanská, Bahdan Serdziuk, Vladimír Potančok, Barbora Siváčková, Branislava Kolesárová, Tomáš Hrustič, Zuzana Beňušková, Kristína Cichová, Alexandra Bitušíková, Katarína Baračková, Tatiana Zachar Podolinská, Daniel Škobla, Andrej Gogora, Vladimír Bahna, Miroslava Kinczer, Peter Maňo, Peter Salner, Edita Rigová, Soňa Gyárfáš Lutherová, Natália Slivková, Katarína Popelková, Juraj Zajonc, Andrea Kalivodová, Monika Vrzgulová, Tomáš Kubisa.

