

## **Mladen Ančić**

### *For the Triangulation of History: Notes on the Possibilities of Historical Anthropology in Comparative Studies*

The paper focuses on two possible forms of coding the information regarding the past in historiography. The first of them is through discourse on “national history”, which is the prevailing discourse today in East Central and Southeastern Europe. The prime aim for the historian working within this framework is to construct (or to participate in the construction of) the “socio-biography” of his Nation (find the “roots” and “beginnings” of the Nation, discover the “golden ages” etc.) and to claim as much as possible “historical territory” for it. The whole paradigm is deeply entrenched in the political culture of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and its insistence on “historical rights”. This form of coding information does not offer much room for comparison – at best it provides ancillary material for the actors in the “field of politics”.

The second form could be defined as “historical anthropology” and it is only rarely used by historians in this part of the world. The units of analysis in this framework are, roughly speaking, the “social processes” (e.g. forms of power, transformations of political systems, construction and reproduction of collective identities, strategies in social transactions, formation and reproduction of social networks, forms of vertical stratification etc.). This form of information coding may be compared to the procedure of “triangulation” of physical space used in producing modern maps (hence the title of the paper) and it is more promising for the development of comparative studies.