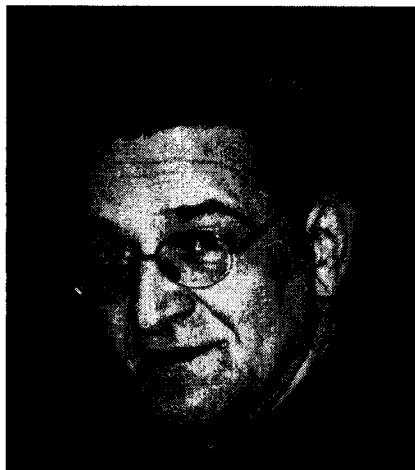


---

## IN MEMORIAM



Alija Kulenović  
(1951-2004)

It happened on Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2004, dreadfully. Whole psychological and academic community, who ever knew him was truly shocked. Professor, adviser, fellow, supervisor, colleague, the dearest friend, Alija Kulenović passed away, for good. We lost one of the greatest Croatian scholars in psychological science, one of the most creative and productive researchers and lecturers, an unusually vigorous thinker, a humanist, an exceptional personality...

Alija Kulenović was born on 25<sup>th</sup> of September 1951, in the town of Kozarac, Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He completed primary and secondary education in Kozarac and Prijedor, and thereafter in the academic year of 1970/71 started undergraduate studies at the Department of Psychology, University of Zagreb. He graduated psychology and received his Bachelor's degree from the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb in 1975. After the completion of postgraduate program he defended the Master's thesis entitled "Validation of some tests for the measurement of intellectual capability in the context of several empirical criteria" in 1980. He defended dissertation entitled "The importance of roles in the context of the theory of expectancy" and received doctoral degree in psychology from the same University in 1986.

Since 1971 he has been employed permanently at the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb, first as a laboratory technician and after graduation he started working as an assistant at the Chair for Psychometrics. He was appointed in 1981 to the position of scientific assistant and in 1988 to the position of Assistant Professor at the Department of Psychology in Zagreb. He was promoted to Associate Professor in 1997 and to Professor and Scientific Consultant in 2002.

During the last 20 years he has held the position of the Head of the Chair for Psychometrics at the Department of Psychology of the Faculty of Philosophy. He served as the Head of the Department of Psychology and its Deputy Head for several times. He contributed to the functioning of many scientific and professional bodies and committees within the Department and the Faculty of Philosophy.

He was active in professional associations as well. He was member of a number of national and international scientific and professional organizations and participated in a range of activities run by the Croatian Psychological Association, served as its vice-president and member of its Executive board, and was president for many years and a member of the *Committee for Psychological Measurement*

---

*Instruments* of the CPA. He was actively engaged on and largely meritorious for the development and the final appearance of the *Law on Psychological Vocation and Profession*.

Scientific and academic career of Professor Alija Kulenović began even before his graduation. His first scientific papers were published in 1975 and 1976 and dealt with the possibilities of improvement of psychometric characteristics of composite tests – through differential weighting of correct answers for item difficulty index, or by use of the frequencies of the categories of incorrect and skipped answers in cognitive tests.

Since that time he published more than 70 mostly scientific articles on diverse topics ranging from the theory of scaling and psychological measurement to coping with institutional life and from construction and validation of intelligence tests to evaluation of psychosocial interventions. He presented more than 50 papers at domestic and international conferences, co-authored more than 20 scientific surveys and professional handbooks, and wrote an enormous number of reviews of predominantly scientific papers submitted to national and international journals, as well as the reviews of books, tests, professional manuals, and research projects.

He had a wide variety of intellectual interests and social concerns. The topics of the national and international research projects carried out under his supervision or wherein he collaborated as a researcher speak of the breadth of his scientific interests. Here are the titles of several of them: "Measurement in theoretical and applied psychological issues"; "The structure and development of abilities, personality, and socialization in educational process"; "The construction and evaluation of test battery for personality assessment based on interactionist model"; "Cognitive, personality, and motivational characteristics of female soldiers"; "Profiles of reading audience"; "Influence of work and working conditions on employees' life, health, and working capacities"; "Work importance study"; "Psychosocial climate in penal institutions".

He led and completed two extensive research projects, one of which entitled "Psychological determinants of criminal behaviour and treatment of the offenders", and the other "Stress and social reintegration". And the final research project he headed and worked on during the last two years is "Emotional intelligence and the processes in the stressful transaction".

The period of 1980s in his scientific career was characterized by the interest in the areas of universal and work values, in the structure of attitudes, and the process models of motivation and contentment. He studied attitude consistency and its effects on the stability of affective and cognitive attitude component. He searched for an adequate account for the process model of contentment within the context of the theories of expectancy.

Yet, the majority of his articles and work done at that time is about the collaboration on the large international enterprise on the importance of work, major life roles, and the hierarchy of human values. The results of this project were published by Josey-Bass in 1993 in the book entitled *Life roles, Values, and Career: International findings of the Work Importance Study*. For the extensive findings, development and evaluation of the internationally applicable set of instruments for the assessment of work values and importance of major life roles, and for a series of published papers within this project, Alija Kulenović along with other members of the national team was awarded in 1988 by the "Ramiro Bujas reward for the remarkably valued scientific work".

In 1990s he started doing research in the field of stress and coping. He studied for years the consequences of the adverse life circumstances, such as imprisonment, military service, and war trauma, on psychological well-being or mental health of people. At times, some colleagues and friends of him wondered how come did he stick with the rather tough issue of the effects of confinement and carrying out research within not really pleasant ambience of penal institutions. And he used to smile mildly while answering: "I just need to get to know whether prisons are changing people for better or for worse." Within this environmental context he contributed to the studies on the dimensions of institutional psychosocial climate and the determinants of its quality in prison settings. After the obvious link was found between climate characteristics and the episodes of unrest in some maximum security Croatian penitentiaries, he was able to foresee the large prison riot happened soon after in another maximum security prison. Many years after the events he used to mention modestly how the incidents must have had happened having in mind the apparently poor psychosocial climate of the institution at that time. Yet, the anecdotes of the riots are still being told and he must have had admitted with his typically selfless sense of humour that the anticipation of those events heightened his reputation among professionals within the penalty system.

The period of research on the effects of war events and trauma overlaps largely with the commencement of warfare and all the cruelties connected to it, as in Croatia so in his fatherland of Bosnia. Not only did he study the psychological and health effects of war trauma but was entirely involved in all the activities aimed at helping people touched by war brutalities in his native soil, and providing for refugees.

Throughout the entire career he did research in the fields of abilities and personality. He dealt with the structure of temperament, searched the relationships of personality with social attitudes and socio-pathological behaviour, studied intellectual and time-sharing abilities, analyzed theoretical foundations and operationalizations of the construct of alexithymia, and tested the ideas of controversial conceptualization of emotional intelligence.

---

The largest part of his scientific work concerns, however, the problems of testing and measurement: the assessment of intellectual capacities, personality traits, and other psychological attributes, as well as the attributes of organizations and groups. The majority of his papers pertain to the area of formal or applied psychometrics. It should be acknowledged that Alija Kulenović definitely played a major role in the construction of psychological instruments, the development, use, and verification of quantitative testing procedures. In the area of psychometric theory and methodology he was by far the foremost authority in Croatia. He constructed personality scales, work values and life roles questionnaires, institutional psychosocial climate scales, various situation specific coping scales. And the intelligence tests happened to be almost a passion to him. He offered also one of the first performance tests for the assessment of emotional intelligence.

Yet, something is common to all his texts. Anything he worked on, wrote, or talked about, he was thoroughly devoted to. And while doing so he might have cared for anything but to be pragmatic. Any writing he was giving rise to, had a particular meaning for him regardless of the kind or the rank of publication he wrote for. And he wrote smoothly, resourcefully. And still, he was respectful greatly for any reader or a listener of his speeches, and was always making every effort to find the ways how to adjust the complexity of the contents he presented to the level of knowledge and understanding of an actual or potential audience.

Apart from his scientific production he wrote probably the largest number of reports evaluating qualification theses or pertaining to promotions of psychologists holding positions at a range of scientific and education institutions in Croatia. He tutored numerous students in writing diploma works, masters' and doctoral theses. And everyone of them would say he was incredibly dedicated mentor.

Except for teaching *Psychometrics* all over his career, he created programs, introduced and lectured in several subjects for undergraduate students, such as *Applied multivariate methods*, *Computers in psychology*, *Psychodiagnos-*

*tic methods*, as well as *Psychometric theory and methods* for postgraduate students of psychology.

Although his entire academic career was spent at the Department of Psychology in Zagreb, he became involved in a range of activities including teaching, research, and consulting in a variety of applied settings and with other academic institutions. He taught methodological subjects within postgraduate programs of sociology and kinesiology as well. As a guest professor he delivered lectures in Psychometrics for many years at the Department of Psychology in Zadar, and several years at the Department of Psychology, University of Sarajevo. And these years included again those of wartime – thus, the support he was giving to these Departments was of even much greater consequence.

He was unusually favoured and admired among students. He always scored highest on students' evaluations, and some of the anonymous open-ended records given by last year students were: "the best professor", "with a great sense of humour", "extremely pleasant and amusing person", "patient and creative in teaching", "his teaching makes psychometrics most interesting subject". It has been a quite known phenomenon at our Department that students used to smile while getting out from his office after an oral examination. But one could hardly recognize whether any one of them did well or failed on the exam.

When someone entered into his office asking for help or instruction, he used to say "All the time of this world is mine", and he always found time for students, colleagues, and whoever sought his advice. And that was Professor Alija Kulenović. "Witty, ingenious, straightforward, positive, generous, wise, charismatic, tireless, a humanist, tolerant, responsive, proficient, honest, a legend" - these are some of the most frequent attributes telling an impression he left on second year psychology students who attended his lectures for less than two months of his last fall semester. And all of us who were honoured to know him could tell our own special stories about how he affected our lives. He really made a difference...

Vesna Buško