

NATIONAL IDENTITY OF CROATIAN EMIGRANTS IN OVERSEAS COUNTRIES: EXAMPLES (COMPARISON) OF CROATIAN MIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN ARGENTINA AND AUSTRALIA (NEW SOUTH WALES)

Rebeka MESARIĆ ŽABČIĆ¹, Marina PERIĆ KASELJ²

COBISS 1.02

ABSTRACT

National identity of Croatian emigrants in overseas countries: examples (comparison) of Croatian migrant communities in Argentina and Australia (New South Wales)

The article discusses national identity on the example of the Croatian diaspora in two overseas countries: Argentina and Australia. The time frame is set from the beginning of the Second World War until today. The topic of the research is the Croatian diaspora with different social and national activities, as well as the attitudes within the Croatian emigrant societies. The purpose of the article is to determine the manner in which the national identity of the Croatian Diaspora in the two overseas countries was formed and preserved and to identify possible similarities or differences between them.

KEY WORDS: Croatian diaspora, overseas migration, Argentina, Australia, Croatian emigrants, Croatian emigrant/migrant community, Croatian emigrant societies, national identity

IZVLEČEK

Nacionalna identiteta hrvaških izseljencev v prekoceanskih državah: primeri (primerjava) hrvaških emigrantskih skupnosti v Argentini in Avstraliji (Novi južni Wales)

Delo analizira nacionalno identiteto na primeru hrvaške diaspore v dveh prekoceanskih državah: Argentini in Avstraliji, od začetka druge svetovne vojne do danes. Tema raziskave je hrvaška diaspora z različnimi družbenimi in nacionalnimi dejavnostmi, kot tudi odnosi znotraj hrvaških izseljenskih družb. Namen članka je predstaviti način vzpostavljanja in ohranjanja nacionalne identitete v hrvaški diaspori v Argentini in Avstraliji in identificirati morebitne podobnosti ali razlike med njimi.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: hrvaška diaspora, prekoceanske migracije, Argentina, Avstralija, hrvaški izseljenci, hrvaška izseljenska skupnost, hrvaška izseljenska društva, nacionalna identiteta

INTRODUCTION

Overseas immigration from Croatia started in the middle of the 19th century and

¹ Ph.D, Research Fellow, Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies, Trg S. Radića 3, HR-10000 Zagreb, e-mail: rebeka.mesaric@zg.t-com.hr.

² MA, Political Science, Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies, Trg S. Radića 3, HR-10000 Zagreb, e-mail: Marina.Peric@imin.hr.

continued in the 20th century. Although, historically speaking, we can single out four great waves of emigration from Croatia,³ this paper will mostly deal with the emigration of Croatian population after the Second World War.

Emigration from Croatia was caused by unfavorable economic⁴, but also political⁵ conditions in the homeland. It was directed toward the countries that were politically more stable and economically developed.

In the period after the Second World War up to 1991, Croatia was in the system of Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, federal state with six republics. The Constitution was proclaimed in 1947 and all the power was in the hands of the president Tito and his small circle, called the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Federation of the Communists of Yugoslavia.⁶

In 1991, a referendum was held, where 94% of the population in Croatia voted for the independence and sovereignty of Croatia. On 25. 06. 1991, with the constitutional decision, Croatian Parliament proclaimed Croatia an independent and sovereign country. Withal, it was the year when the Croatian War for Independence⁷ started in Croatia.

European Union reached the decision of recognition of Croatia on 15. 01. 1992, in Brussels.

³ 1. From 1880s until the First World War to the overseas counties, caused by the political and economic situation;

2. after the Second World War, caused by the insufficient expansion and poverty of the country and the communist government in the ex country;

3. in sixties and seventies of the past century, state politics toward the departure to the so called temporary work abroad to the Western European countries became more liberal. The emigration was of economic nature and was caused by the poor condition of the labor market in Croatia and the demand on the Western European labor market;

4. in nineties of the past century, the great aggression of Serbia resulted in forced migration of a certain number of Croats from a large part of the territory of the Republic of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Akrap 2003; Čizmić and Živić 2005).

⁴ Great economic crisis, inability to feed the family, crisis of the viticulture, crisis of shipbuilding, surplus of the work force in the agriculture, impossibility of cities to employ the surplus of the agricultural population, general underdevelopment, scarce job vacancies in a place of residence, unsatisfying local social (welfare) conditions, and so on.

⁵ Unacceptable political situation in the homeland; activities of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ) and the communist government, two world wars, political crisis of the late communism and the Croatian War for independence.

⁶ The name of the state was changed into the Socialistic Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, centralized and socialistic state, with the 1963 Constitution.

⁷ Serbia and the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) attacked Croatia. In accordance with the project of Great Serbia, Croatian territories inhabited with Serbs responded with the rebellion against the new government. In the municipalities with mostly Serbian population, the autonomy was proclaimed and the loyalty to the new government of the Republic of Croatia was refused. The state and the police were under their authority. The first Serb rebellion was in Knin, on 17. 08. 1990. The war of JNA and Serbia against Croatia ended in 1991 with the defeat of JNA and Serbia. War operations showed that Croatia, in spite of great devastation and victims, could not be broken. The war revealed the depth and width of the moral crisis of the Yugoslav army. Serbia was in a difficult and unenviable situation with other Yugoslav republics during the war in Croatia (Bilandžić 1999: 777–796).

The main objectives of the research are:

1) Examination of forms of social organization of Croatian immigrant community in overseas countries (Argentina and Australia, their activity, development and sustainability in the context of the most relevant socio-political events).

2) The strongest social factors that influenced the preservation of identity of Croats in Argentina and Australia will be examined in Croatian national institutions.

3) Analysis of concepts of national identification of Croatian immigrants, identity, and defining the characteristics of older and younger generations of immigrants.

4) It will be examined whether the public places (coffee bars, restaurants, clubs and similar) are used as informal gatherings of particular Croatian social groups.

5) Proposing measures that will be the basis for the development of a framework model of systematic research of immigration, education and cross-border cooperation.

The research methodology is based on the available literature, former studies, analysis of the emigrant press and the data about the Croatian emigrant/migrant communities found on the internet and based on the interviews with the members and representatives of particular Croatian emigrant societies within the Croatian emigrant/migrant communities.

National issue in Croatia and National identity of Croats: short review

When discussing the national identity of Croats, we should partially examine the period before the Second World War. At that time, a political stream that would unify all Croats and create the sovereign Croatian state⁸ did not exist. During the First World War, Croats in emigration were fighting for the national/ethnic interest of the states they emigrated to, while Croats in the “fatherland” were fighting in the Austro-Hungarian Army for the Austrian and Hungarian interests. One group supported Pan Slavism, other the unification of South Slavs and the third supported the idea of Croatia remaining in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

Preceding the Second World War, the situation in the state was particularly difficult for the Croatian people, primarily due to the political layering of Croatia. Mile Budak, leader of the *Ustaša* movement (pro-fascist collaborators from Croatia), returned to Croatia initiating political activities to exclude Croatia from Yugoslavia and to include it in the joint activities with Germany and Italy, as it was expected that those countries will win the war. In such political disconnection, Croatia was, at the beginning of the Second World War, divided to the left, communist⁹ and the right¹⁰, minority of *Ustaša*, and on the large majority of Croatian

⁸ After the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, HRSS and KPI were the strongest political parties in Croatia. They were the first to start emphasizing the issue of nationality in general and as a fundamental problem of the new state, and especially the Croatian national issue in regard to the fact that the Croats were a second nation by population in that state.

⁹ Left side expected that they will, as the Russians did, carry out the “proletarian revolution”.

¹⁰ Right side believed that they will, with the help of the so called “fascists forces” as the only option, establish the independent Croatia.

people led by Vlatko Maček and HSS¹¹. Most of HSS pledged to maintain neutral and preserve peace and to reorganize Yugoslavia into a federal state or confederation, with Croatia as a separate unit of the state¹². At the beginning of the Second World War, there was some internal turmoil in the state which culminated with the capitulation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in April 17, 1941 in Belgrade. Subsequently, the state was divided by Germany, Italy, Hungary and Bulgaria. Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina entered the Independent State of Croatia (Nezavisna država Hrvatska, NDH).

The oppression of the people by *Ustaša's* and *Četnik's* resulted in the fact that most Croatian people affiliated with the communists.¹³ Until the end of the Second World War, one part of the “politically excluded” Croatian people left the homeland due to the current situation in the newly founded state of Yugoslavia and they turned toward the Western Allies.

In the period from 1945 until 1950, Croatian people emigrated from refugee camps¹⁴ in Italy, Austria and Germany. That was mostly political emigration, because most of the emigrants had a political, cultural or some other role in the NDH (during the Second World War). Due to the large number of refugees (mostly refugees from the communist countries), the western allies divided them in three basic categories, labeling them with the terms: *white*¹⁵, *grey*¹⁶ and *black*.¹⁷

Oznaši (members of UDBA) were active in refugee camps, and with that the serious

¹¹ The *Ustaša* movement on the right and Partisans on the left have systematically fought for the affectation of the HSS.

¹² HSS, led by Vlatko Maček and with the support of the majority of Croatian people, founded the Civil Croatia in 1939. Functioning of the state was independent from the central government and had the basic elements of autonomy and statehood.

¹³ Communists also fought against the occupation (fascism) and they saw the solution of national issues in federalism.

¹⁴ Inside the camps, refugees were separated according to their nationality. Each national group had its elected representative, who was responsible for the group and in charge for the organization of the activities within the national groups. Karlo Mirth (2003) states that in 1946, there were 10.000 to 15,000 Croats in Italian camps.

¹⁵ Under the “white” they included the ones who did not commit any crime. They had the right to reside in the camps, receive the help from UNRRE (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) and IRO (The International Refugee Organization), could not be extradited against their will to the (communist) authority of their countries, and could receive the financial help for transportation and recommendation for immigration to other countries by IRO.

¹⁶ “Grey” were the collaborators with the defeated forces – occupying the lower positions in the Government, Army, and officers who did not commit any war crimes. Their position was significantly more difficult. They were kept under a strict regime in certain parts of that camp until the time of their extradition. Actually, they did not have the right to live in the IRO-camps. At best, they were sent to labour camps that were opened by the Allies in Germany. They mostly ended up in the countries of South America with the special approval of their domicile governments.

¹⁷ The “black” were the officials of the government, military and members of the political parties supporting the Nazi ideology (*ustaše*). If they ended up under allies’ governance, they could not escape extradition. Upon their identification, they were incarcerated in the maximum security prison and waited, until enough prisoners were gathered, for the transportation arrangement to be made.

danger of extradition of political refugees started to threaten in 1946. The largest part of the political emigration emigrated to Argentina and Australia immediately after the Second World War (Rojnica 1974).

EMIGRATION OF CROATS TO ARGENTINA AND AUSTRALIA AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The reasons for emigration to Argentina from 1945 until today

Unlike the first two phases of emigration of Croats to Argentina, which were mostly of economic nature, the third phase started immediately, especially after the Second World War, and was of political nature.

In the beginning of the third phase, Croats arrived in Argentina individually,¹⁸ and then there was a mass immigration of the so-called political immigrants, Croatian refugees¹⁹ from Italian, German and Austrian camps.²⁰ At the beginning of 1946, mostly due to the activities of father Blaž Štefanić,²¹ the government of Argentina allowed the immigration of Croatian refugees. A larger group of Croats arrived in Argentina on 25. 01. 1947, with the ship "Andrea Gritti" from the Italian port Genoa. One group arrived in Buenos Aires on 01. 04. 1947 with the ship "Philippa", under the flag of Panama. Most of them arrived from the camp Fermo in the period from 1947 to 1948, but also from other camps such as Bagnoli, Regio Emilia and other parts of Italy, as well as from many camps in Austria and Germany.

¹⁸ First were brothers' Čiklič, Petar (priest) and Ljubo. They came to Buenos Aires on April 6, 1946. After them, a group of priests arrived (26. 08. 1946), among which were father Vlado Bilobrk, Franciscan (monk) and Mate Luketa. Together with father Blaž Štefanić, who came to Argentina as a missionary for Croats in 1939, they organized the reception of Croatian immigrants.

¹⁹ At the end of the Second World War, a large group of people from the countries with the communist governments emigrated to Italy, Austria and Germany to find refuge in the free world. Among them were several tens of thousands Croatian refugees. They were accommodated in the refugee camps under the management of allies' military government. Smaller part was accommodated in the civil camps under the management of Italian Ministry of interior affairs.

²⁰ Due to the difficult conditions in the refugee camps, a group of prominent Croats in Rome, mostly priests, established the Brotherhood for providing help to Croatian refugees (*Bratovština za pomoć hrvatskim izbjeglicama*) in 1945, within the Pope's Croatian Institute of Saint Jerome in Rome (*Papinski hrvatski Zavod Sv. Jeronima*). It was a non-political and a purely ministerial institution. Brotherhood (*Bratovština*), with its financial and legal aid for refugees, had a status of a Croatian Committee in the government, ally countries and the Italian government. Representative of the Croatian refugees could contact them officially in the event of some needs of refugees. It was engaged in the struggle against the extradition of Croatian refugees to the communist authority of Yugoslavia. Therefore, most of the refugees were saved due to the activities of the Brotherhood. The sanctuary in overseas countries, mostly in Argentina (Lukinović, <http://www.studiacroatica.com>), was found by 20,000 Croatian refugees.

²¹ 15. O. Štefanić sent four memorandums to the general Juan Domingo Peron, who was the president of the Republic of Argentina at that time, pleading for allowing the mass immigration of Croats to Argentina.. The president allowed the admittance of 35,000 Croatian refugees.

Croats were immigrating to Argentina with the permits/group lists with no names that determined the total number of immigrants and did not consist of the immigrants' personal data²².

At the beginning of 1949, the government of Argentina stopped the issuance of the permits according to the lists and introduced the system of personal (individual) requests, the so-called *llamadas* – invitations.

There were Croatian immigrants that immigrated to Argentina without the prescribed travel documents²³. This matter was solved with the presidential *indult* on the occasion of the Argentinean day of independence on July 9, 1949, under which all of the offenders of the law on immigration could regulate their status. All of the immigrants that settled in Argentina under the false names were also granted amnesty.

Croats were arriving in groups until the end of 1951, until all of the previously issued permits were used.

Upon their arrival in Argentina, Croats were mostly employed as constructors of workers' settlements.²⁴ They did heavy manual work, although most of them were highly educated. The biggest obstacle for better employment was the language barrier. After a few months, when they acquired the sufficient knowledge of the language, several hundreds of them were assigned to the Ministry of public works as clerks.

Most Croatian postwar immigrants remained in Buenos Aires. Some of them went south, mostly to the petroleum wells (Comodoro Rivadavia), others went to the tourist regions (Bariloche, Mendoza and the Atlantic coast). One group inhabited Córdoba, other Parana, and some went north to the city Iguazú, on the tri-border region of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay.

Croats that remained in Buenos Aires mostly inhabited the northern city districts and northwestern suburbs, unlike the older Croatian immigrants, who chose their permanent residence in the southern city districts (La Boca) and neighboring suburbs (Dock Sud and Avellandeda).

The exact numbers of Croats who immigrated to Argentina in any time period are not known.

Several sources provide different data.²⁵ According to Argentinean official figures

²² First of those approvals for immigration were issued to 250 persons. The permit was arranged in Buenos Aires by father Blaž Štefanić and the beneficiaries of the permit were determined by the committee formed for that purpose in Rome (within the Croatian brotherhood of Saint Jerome).

²³ And those persons were called *Polizon*.

²⁴ During the postwar immigration of Croats to Argentina, the president general Juan Domingo Peron conducted a number of social reforms. At that period public works were active in Argentina, namely the construction of the workers' settlements. Most Croats worked on the construction of the Barrio Peron settlement in Buenos Aires and Barrio Obrero, situated 30 km away from the first (Rojnica 1974).

²⁵ Up to 1939, there were 150,000 Croatian immigrants in Argentina and after the war, 20,000 Croats immigrated – they were political refugees.

Father Lino Pedišić writes in one of his reports: "Croatian community in Argentina is very large: it amounts to more than 150,000 persons. In the prewar time, 130,000 Croats came to Argentina and

(Sinovčić 1991) after the Second World War, the information about the entry and departure of Croats is as follows:

Tab. 1 Numerical indicators of Croatian migrants in Argentina

Year	Entrance	Departure	Remained in Argentina
1946	689	563	126
1947	1,945	1,000	945
1948	8,526	2,262	6,264
1949	3,075	1,077	1,998
1950	1,646	1,104	542
1951	1,289	877	412
Total	17,170	6,883	10,287

After the Second World War, two groups of Croatian immigrants in Argentina interpreted their national affiliation in different ways: prewar economic emigrants denominated themselves as Yugoslavs, while postwar, mostly political emigrants denied the Yugoslav nationality and declared themselves as Croats. Both groups acted separately and had completely separate goals and interests.

After 1951, the significant emigration of Croats to Argentina came to an end.

According to the Argentinean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there are around 250,000 Argentineans of Croatian origin residing in Argentina today.

Reasons for emigration to New South Wales (NSW) from 1945 until today

In the period after the Second World War, there were three large waves of Croatian immigrants in Australia. The largest wave arrived in 1948, when many Croats who fought in the service of NDH (Independent State of Croatia) during the Second World War, immigrated to Australia from the refugee camps in Austria, Italy and Germany.²⁶

That was the so called political emigration. Although most of them had high education, their qualifications were not acknowledged in Australia, and many entrepreneurs, doctors and other experts from various fields were employed as manual workers and women as housemaids.

they are scattered alongside and across Argentina. After the War, 20,000 persons arrived.” Ivo Rojnica (1974) told us that in Buenos Aires and its suburbs there were around 80,000 Croats in 1934, with more than 14 000 from which only in Dock Sud (one of the south suburbs) there are. He says that 10,000 Croats arrived after the Second World War; Stanković (1980) writes that there were 15,000 Croats in Argentina in 1939, and 20,000 political refugees immigrated after the War. At that time, there were around 4,000 – 5,000 Croats in the city of Buenos Aires, while in 1980, 130,000 Croats born in Croatia resided in Argentina.

Father Blaž Štefančić, a missionary, said that after the Second World War, 35,000 Croats immigrated to Argentina. From 1952 until 1976, when the migration circulation was officially published, 27,026 *Yugoeslavos* were settled in Argentina, 25,819 emigrated and only 1, 207 stayed.

²⁶ It is so called “Displaced Persons” (DPs) when many Croats, due to their (anticommunist) political orientation, were political refugees in the European prison camps before they boarded the ship for Australia (Colic-Peisker 2005).

Ilija Štalo (2004) divides Croatian immigrants in Australia after the Second World War in five categories: economic immigrants, political immigrants, unsatisfied individuals, family reunions and refugees. These Croatian immigrants came from various parts of Dalmatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Srijem, Lika, Bačka, Boka Kotorska and East Slavonia.

The next wave of Croats to NSW and Australia started in 1954 and lasted until 1960. A generation of young, politically aware Croats of Croatian nationality decided to leave Croatia (although that they did not participate in the Second World War) rather than build their future in a communist regime. That was, at the same time, the wave of economic emigration due to the fact that Australia admitted and employed healthy and strong young men for the industrial work (Colic-Peisker 2005).

The biggest wave of Croats arrived to NSW between 1960 and 1973. In the beginning, many considered that the reasons for leaving the homeland were of economic nature, because most of the emigrants were from Dalmatia, Dalmatian outskirts, but also from rural and urban areas of the entire Croatia. Initially, that was the wave of economic emigrants, the so called “part of the mass import” of work force in Australia from South Europe.

The period from 1973 to 1990 could be considered as provisional, as the period of no significant immigration waves of Croatian population to NSW, and Australia in general. There was only individual immigration that was not that significant and was not recorded in the literature.

The new wave of emigration of Croats to Australia that started after the 1990 is still continuing. The war and the economic crisis increased the emigration flows from Croatia to NSW and Australia in the 1990s of the previous century. In the last period, many Croats with the university degree and knowledge of English language arrived to NSW and generally to Australia. After 1990, emigration wave can be attributed to the economic, but also political crisis of the late communism in Croatia, and later with war, economic situation and a high increase in the number of unemployed in Croatia.

INSTITUTIONAL/NON-INSTITUTIONAL FORMS OF SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND NATIONAL IDENTITY OF CROATS IN ARGENTINA AND NEW SOUTH WALES

Period from the Second World War until 1991

Argentina

Most postwar Croatian emigrants identified themselves as Yugoslavs. The second group – postwar Croatian emigrants, political emigrants, did not accept or recognized a new state of Yugoslavia, and therefore they refused to identify themselves as Yugoslavs. They considered and called themselves Croats, organized themselves in emigration, and fought for national, Croatian interests. Due to their convictions, they were in conflict with the old emigration and the government in the homeland. Though they developed the wide

web of activities, their gatherings and activities were secret, so they lived ghettoized and isolated from other Yugoslav migration communities.²⁷

Croatian emigrants in Argentina were on different political sides and did not have common goals. Therefore, they founded different associations under the disguise of the “apolitical”, which mostly acted for or against the government in the homeland. One fought for the Croatian/national interests, other for the Yugoslav nationality and Yugoslavia. Most immigrants, however, did not join the activities of these associations, which resulted in their earlier assimilation in the Argentinean society.

One of the biggest postwar associations founded by Croats (Yugoslavs) in 1947 was the association Free Yugoslavia (Slobodna Jugoslavija), with the primary objective to provide financial and moral help to the population of Yugoslavia harmed by the war and for building a new Yugoslavia. The association had more than thirty branches (Villa Mugueta, Boca, Cipoletti, Pinero, Maria Teresa and others) and boards (Board for help Milna, Starigrad, Dubrovnik, Konavli, board of residents of Imotski, board for the Sinj and Makarska region, Istria and so on) that were founded across Argentina. Within the association, there was the alliance of the Yugoslav emigration youth (Omladina) and women of Yugoslavia (16 branches). Croats organized themselves together with Serbs, Slovenians, Bosnians, Macedonians and members of other nationalities residing in Yugoslavia. Association Free Yugoslavia published its own publication *Yugoslav expatriate post* (Yugoslavian immigrant Journal), which regularly reported on the situation in the country, and included all other interesting news from home and abroad.

War events encouraged and brought other Slav nationalities in Argentina closer to Yugoslavs, which resulted in the mutual association of 115 Belarusian, Ukrainian, Yugoslav, Polish, Czechoslovakian and Bulgarian organizations. They established the Congresses in Argentina; they socialized among themselves and accentuated the mutual interests of Slav nations in emigration. Yugoslav emigrants (Croats, together with other nations of Yugoslavia: Slovenians, Serbs, Macedonians, Bosnians, Herzegovians, and Montenegrins) were engaged in many associations across Argentina that were established even before the Second World War.²⁸ They distanced themselves from the new Croatian emigrants – political emigrants, condemning their activities, considering them enemies of Yugoslavia and the initiators of disputes and turmoil among Yugoslav emigrants.

Despite that, Croatian political emigrants in Argentina managed to create the influential social network connecting themselves with other Croatian emigrants in Europe,

²⁷ Postwar emigrants cooperated only with the members of the association Croatian Domobran, founded by Branko Jelić in 1931.

²⁸ Since the Second World War, there have been many associations in Argentina with the adjective Yugoslav in their name. If the association had any other nationalist title (Slovenian, Croatian, Serb) it was changed into Yugoslav after the war. Across Argentina (Buenos Aires, Rosario, La Plata, Ensenada), numerous associations were established: Yugoslav dole society (Jugoslavensko pripomočno društvo), Yugoslav house (Jugoslavenski dom), Yugoslav club (Jugoslavenski klub), Yugoslav falcon (Jugoslavenski sokol) and others.

South and North America. They established a number of societies and initiated numerous publishing activities.

The first newspaper of the postwar emigrants was *Hrvatska* (Croatia), published in 1947 and issued twice a month. The newspaper was distributed to all Croatian emigrants on all continents. After 1950, it became the official newspaper of the Croatian liberation movement. Catholic newspaper *Glas sv. Antuna* (Voice of Saint Anthony), with the anticommunist content, was issued in 1947. In 1956, a monthly newspaper for political, economic and cultural issues *Slobodna riječ* (Free word) was issued. Although it declared itself as an apolitical and exclusively informative newspaper, it represented a certain political orientation by preferring the HSS and continuously promoting Croatian national interests. *Hrvatska revija* (Croatian review) was a culture and literary review published in 1951 and issued twice a month, as well as the journal *Republika Hrvatska* (Republic of Croatia), the official journal of the Republican Party.²⁹ In 1953, a magazine *Croatian thought* (Hrvatska misao), patriotic character and anticommunist political orientation. At the end of 1950, Croatian political emigrants decided to publish the magazine in Spanish language. Therefore, *Studia Croatica* was founded. During 33 years of its publishing, the magazine was received by 164 institutions in 34 countries: Germany, Argentina, Australia, Chile, Uruguay, Russia, Mexico, USA and so on. Apart from a large number of magazines, postwar emigrants had published around a hundred books in Croatian, Spanish but also in English language until 1990: “Argentina was the center of the activities for Croatian independence, and as such was made in the society to provide financial and organizational help. It was necessary to write the memoirs, books; the things that were facts, the things that communists wanted to kill with the untruth to prove the truth. We worked all this time in Argentina to prove that we are Croats. It was not easy, because the whole world knew Yugoslavia, and nobody heard of Croatia.”³⁰ The postwar emigration established numerous associations. Most of them had a patriotic character: Croatian Home Guard youth (Hrvatska domobranska mladež), United Croatian Youth (Ujedinjena hrvatska mladež), Society of Croatian catholic students and pupils (Društvo hrvatskih katoličkih sveučilištaraca i srednjoškolaca) and Alliance of Croatian united youth of the World (Savez hrvatske ujedinjene mladeži svijeta): United Croatian youth, at that time, included several political options. “Namely, the intention was to establish the association that will unite Croatians in Argentina, which we managed to accomplish” (from the interview, Milan Zorić).³¹

²⁹ The journal of the Croatian Republican Party (Hrvatska republikanska stranka) was founded by professor Ivan Oranić, the first president of the party, and at the same time the first editor of the magazine, the official journal of the HRS. The party was founded on the principals of Ante Starčević.

³⁰ From the interview, president of the Croatian Home, Buenos Aires, <http://www.hic.hr/dom/256>.

³¹ Milan Zorić was born in Jelenja, near Rijeka in 1941. Already during the Second World War, his family was interned to Italy, where they remained until the end of the war. In 1948, they emigrated as Croatian emigrants to Argentina. He graduated in electronics in Argentina. During his study he was active in Croatian associations. He was the founder and the president of the United Croatian Youth. He was the secretary of the Croatian-Argentinean club and the Society of the Croatian-Argentinean

Croatian singers in the choir Jadran, which was formed in the camp Fermo in Italy, continued to sing throughout 1947.

Along with those associations, the organization Croatian Home Guard (Hrvatski domobran) and Croatian catholic community (Hrvatska katolička zajednica) were revived. They were joined with Croatian Dole Stjepan Radić (Hrvatsko pripomoćno društvo Stjepan Radić). On March 11, 1952, the Croatian Home (El Hogar Croata Sociedad Anonima) was established and it became the heart of the gathering and center of the activities of the Croatian political emigration: "As for many Croatian emigrants, the life in Argentina was not easy and they constantly longed to return to the homeland. The homeland Croatia was constantly in the thoughts and hart. We found the segment of the homeland in the Croatian Home. Many Croatians with similar destinies came there, looking for comfort in socializing."³² Numerous Croatian associations of economic, cultural, sport and political nature were situated in the building of Croatian Home. Croatian Home was a meeting place of many Croatian intellectuals of various professions, who strived to spread the truth about Croatia through newspapers, memorandums, various publications.

The Croatian Home was most active until 1977.³³

In 1956, Croatian – Argentinean culture club (Hrvatsko – argentinski kulturni klub) was established by Croatian political emigrants with the goal to preserve Croatian language, culture and tradition and to resist the assimilation.

New South Wales

With the arrival to Australia, Croatians lost their personal professional status due to the destiny in the "new homeland". Morally, they remained strong and they started the fight for preservation of Croatian identity in Australia with the establishment of the Croatian associations and national clubs. Those were the Croats who were supporters of Croatian statehood and Croatian national identity. They pointed out that the terms: "Yugoslavs" (*Jugoslaveni*) and "Yugoslavism" (*jugoslavenstvo*) were created to disavow and deny Croatian nationality and Croatian language (Tkalčević 1999). Due to the reasons mentioned, they refused to be involved in the activities of the existing organizations under the Yugoslav name and with the Yugoslav orientation. In order to strengthen the Croatian national identity, they started establishing separate organizations under the Croatian name and with the significant Croatian orientation. It is considered today that the merit of that generation of Croats was that the broader Australian public was introduced with the existence of Croats as one of the oldest European nations with the thousand year tradition and culture (Tkalčević 1999). That generation of Croatian emigration pointed out the inaccuracy of identifying the Croatian emigration exclusively with the "political right". They pointed out the validity of preservation of the national identity and establishment of the Croatian

entrepreneurs and professionals, as well as member of the Society of Croatian catholic students and pupils.

³² <http://www.hic.hr/dom/256>.

³³ In that year, the municipality of Buenos Aires repurchased the building due to highway construction. Political activity moved over to the Croatian Council (Hrvatsko vijeće).

state, so they founded separate organizations under the Croatian names, but without the “political right”. This generation of Croatian emigrants is mostly retired, but it is still numerously the largest and it is dominant in Croatian clubs and associations. In Sydney, there are around 60,000 Croats of various generations. Many of them are participating in the existing clubs, societies and associations. Type of the national unity is evident in the names of the associations, where the prefix Croatian is emphasized with the regional, such as Adriatic, Dalmatian, Karlovac, Istrian, Bosnian and so on. The accent and powerful manifestation of the regional identity is noticed in the names of the previously mentioned associations. Together with the biggest club Punchbowl, the following clubs are particularly responsible for preservation of the Croatian national migrant community in the area of NSW: Croatian club King Tomislav (Hrvatski klub Kralj Tomislav) – located in the suburb of Edensor Par, founded in 1972, Croatian club Adriatic Hajduk (Hrvatski klub Jadran Hajduk) – located in the suburb St. John’s Park, Croatian club Dalmatia Sydney (Hrvatski klub Dalmacija Sydney) – located in the suburb Terry Hills, Croatian cultural society Bosnia (Hrvatsko kulturno društvo Bosna) – located in Luddenham, Croatian- Karlovac society Sydney (Hrvatsko – karlovačko društvo Sydney) – operating on the premises of the club Punchbowl, Australian Croatian cultural and educational society Brothers Radić (Australско hrvatsko kulturno i prosvjetno društvo Braća Radić), Istra Social and sports Club Sydney Inc. At the same time, churches and Croatian missions are also particularly responsible for preservation of the Croatian national identity of Croatian community in the area of NSW. On the territory of Sydney there are: Croatian catholic center St Nikola Tavelić (Hrvatski katolički centar Sv. Nikola Tavelić) – located in the suburb St. John’s Park, Croatian catholic center St. Anthony (Hrvatski katolički centar Sv. Ante) in Summer Hill and Croatian catholic center of the Our Lady Virgin Mary of the Great Croatian Testament (Hrvatski katolički centar Gospe velikog hrvatskog zavjeta) in Blacktown. Especially important for the Croatian national community in NSW is the formation of national identity and its preservation among the members of the younger generation, who are especially proud of their Croatian roots. Croatian organizations and clubs, i.e. the leaders of the older generations, had a great role in preventing the complete assimilation of the younger generation of Croatian immigrants into the Australian Anglo-Saxon multicultural society. The leading men of the majority of Croatian organizations are trying to include the young people in the managerial bodies of Croatian organizations. The members of the young generation of Croatian immigrants, its first or second generation (those who immigrated to NSW during the 1980s and 1990s) speak Croatian well, while their coevals born in NSW are trying to speak and learn Croatian in the existing Croatian schools, or in language schools in the homeland, financed by the Croatian Heritage Foundation, or by their parents. Significant role in the formation and preservation of national identity have the folklore groups from NSW. Young people participate at different Australian festivals with Croatian national dances and songs, and they frequently perform in the homeland. Even though the majority of young people foster their national identity at the homes of their parents, the above mentioned schools are equally important, because there they learn, together with Croatian language, about their history and culture of their homeland. So

is the Church, as a unifying force in the preservation of Croatian national identity, and a space in which a large part of spiritual and cultural life and work takes place (meetings are organized, lectures, parties and weekend picnics).

Economic cooperation and the types of Croatian national collectiveness in the area of NSW are visible in the field of economic and other business alliances within the Croatian national community. In fact, the existing Croatian business directory for NSW and Australian Capitol Territory is comprised of about twenty Croatian engineers, about ten doctors, pharmacists, tailors, attorneys, music bands, photographers, security guards, tourist agencies, transporters, meat manufactures, and so on, offering their services to the Croatian community in Croatian and English language. In the region of NSW, members of other national migrant associations, mostly fiancés or spouses of Croatians, wanted to become members of the Croatian national community, but with less participation.

One of the modalities of nourishing Croatian national identity on the territory of NSW is through sport events. Particularly responsible for that are football (soccer) clubs, football tournaments and football games. There are two Croatian football clubs on the territory of NSW: Sydney United and Zagreb Hurstville, which have been active for several decades. Even though sport events are usually frequented by male population, soccer tournaments and matches in NSW are also visited by a significant number of women, who use the occasion to meet, socialize and prepare and serve Croatian traditional dishes and specialties after the match.

In the field of literature and art, the responsibility for preservation of the Croatian national identity belongs to the society HALUD Croatian – Australian literary and artistic society (Hrvatsko – australsko literarno i umjetničko društvo) that published 11 books so far. Anna Kumarich stated on the celebration of the anniversary of HALUD: “We can not be but proud of our achievements nurtured, protected and spread by HALUD. Nation without the cultural heritage and national identity is not a nation...” (Tkalčević 1999).

Of particular significance is AMAC (Društvo bivših studenata i prijatelja hrvatskih sveučilišta), with its mission to promote further cooperation, gathering of former students and friends of Croatian universities, endorsement of Croatian culture in Australian society, organization of artistic exhibitions, festivals of Croatian food and drinks, and concerts of Croatian groups and performers, which raises interest and increases attendance of younger generation of Australian Croats.

Important factors in the preservation of Croatian national identity in Australia are also Australian – Croatian media. There are two main groups: printed and electronic, i.e. newspapers and magazines which have been present in Australia for over a decade, and radio programmes.

In sometimes difficult conditions, the media and numerous Croatian weeklies have brought information and spread cultural, social and political ideas among Croats. From the beginning of the 20th century³⁴ many newspapers have been noting and publishing the most important events and happenings that were of great significance for the Australian

³⁴ First Croatian newspapers (*Borba, Iskra, Naprijed* and *Sloboda*) were duplicated, in difficult con-

Croats. Through Croatian press, the Australian Croats have managed to preserve their most important asset, the Croatian language.³⁵ Numerous educational institutions and organizations in NSW also played an important role in the preservation of Croatian identity.

University teaching of Croatian language in Australia began in 1983. Croatian language was introduced to the University of Macquarie in Sydney,³⁶ which thus became the first university outside Croatia where Croatian language was introduced as an independent university course.

Through support and lobbying (Croatian Studies, Croatian National Schools in NSW and Free Croatian Radio on 2SER-FM), they managed to attract more than 1500 students since 1983 and thus enhanced the interest in Croatian language and national identity of the younger generation of Croats (mostly second generation).

CONCLUSION

Migration policies of countries of immigration and emigration are of great importance for the formation of the Croatian national identity in two overseas countries: Argentina and Australia (NSW). If we take the “historical dimension” into consideration in regard to the formation of the Croatian national identity in those two countries, we may conclude that both Yugoslav and Croatian national identity coexisted. Croatian national identity was preserved thanks to, mostly, postwar political emigrants who fought for national interests in the immigration, and to the active role of Croatian Catholic Church.

Similar process of national identification of Croatian immigrants was taking place in both countries. Economic emigrants, who immigrated before the Second World War, mostly participated in Yugoslav associations, whereas political emigrants established opposite associations with the national names and anti-communist orientation. Unlike to Argentina, Croats immigrated to NSW after 1960 due to the economic – political reasons. After the Croatian War for Independence, numerous Croats with the university degree

ditions, on mimeographs and they reported on cultural, social and political events among Croats in Australia.

³⁵ Four weeklies are published in Australia today (*Hrvatski Vjesnik*, *Spremnost*, *Nova Hrvatska* and *The Croatian Herald*), which write about cultural, social and political events in Croatia. All four are autochthonous Croatian publications. The oldest one-Spremnost-is linked to a party, and the editorial policy in the first forty years of its existence (1952–1990) was based on the idea of the re-establishment of the Independent State of Croatia in its “historical borders”. *Nova Hrvatska* – a Sydney weekly, is an important Croatian-Australian info magazine. *Hrvatski vjesnik* is published in Melbourne. Up to 1991 it was not ideologically defined, but it gave the opportunity for all the ideas and opinions on the forms of the state-creation to be expressed. During the 1990s, they accepted the guidelines offered by the Croatian Democratic Union and today they still stand behind the idea of the “unity of all Croats”. The *Croatian Herald* is considered as the most important and the most politically correct magazine (they promoted the idea of the unity of all Croatian organizations in different activities and interest groups) in Croatian language in Australia.

³⁶ The web-page of the University of Macquarie and Croatian Studies: <http://www.mq.edu.au/MDLang/Slavonic/croatian>

emigrated to NSW which renewed the old Croatian national core. Unlike to Argentina, larger number of immigrants born in Croatia with the knowledge of Croatian language immigrated to NSW. Although there are Croatian national associations in both countries, in Argentina they are mostly led by the descendants of immigrants who wish to stop the process of fast assimilation and deprivation of the national identity, while in NSW, Croatian national identity is recognized at the “higher” level (for example, Croatian studies at the University) and it is led by young Croatian intellectuals. Croatian national associations in both countries strive to connect both countries economically and culturally.

Today, the descendents of Croatian emigrants in both countries consider national identity as relevant for understanding their own identity.

“The promise of homecoming” of emigrants is now conveyed to their grandchildren, great-grandchildren, who return to the motherland to “understand themselves” and what is their identity consisting of. In spite the high level of assimilation, especially with the younger descendents of Croatian emigrants (particularly in Argentina) national identity becomes more a matter of cultural preference expressed in the need to connect both homelands (country of emigration and country of immigration). Croatian political identity in both countries serves as a strong arm in transnational affiliation and representation of the Republic of Croatia, its culture, customs and values outside national frameworks.

REFERENCES

- Bilandžić, Dušan (1999). *Hrvatska moderna povijest*. Zagreb: Golden marketing.
- Bošnjak, Tomislav (2005). Hrvatske škole u Australiji. *Izbliza, Hrvati u Australiji* (ed. Hrvatska matica iseljenika). Zagreb: Hrvatska matica iseljenika, 2–3.
- Budak, Luka (1988). The Conditions of Croatians. *The Australian People: an Encyclopedia of the Nation, its People and their Origins* (eds. James Jupp and Agnus Robertson). North Ryde: New South Wales, 371–382.
- Čizmić, Ivan and Dražen Živić (2005). Vanjske migracije stanovništva Hrvatske – kritički osvrt. *Stanovništvo Hrvatske – dosadašnji razvoj i perspektive* (eds. Dražen Živić, Nenad Pokos and Anka Missetić). Zagreb: Institut Ivo Pilar, 17–25.
- Čizmić, Ivan, Sopta, Marin and Vlado Šakić (2005). *Iseljana Hrvatska*. Institut društvenih znanosti Ivo Pilar, Hrvatska matica iseljenika: Zagreb.
- Čolić-Peisker, Val (2004/05). Australian Croatians at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century: A Changing Profile of the Community and its Public Representation. *Croatian Studies Review*, 3–4: 1–26.
- Holjevac, Vječeslav (1968). *Hrvati izvan domovine*. Matica Hrvatska: Zagreb.
- Jurković, Ivan (2005). Šesnaeststoljetna hrvatska raseljenička kriza i moderna sociološka terminologija. *Društvena istraživanja*, 14 (4–5): 759–782.
- Mesarić Žabčić, Rebeka and Dubravka Mlinarić (2004/05). Some Reflections on the Research Project of the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Affairs (Zagreb) in Rela-

- tion to Australia: Croatian Migrant Communities: Belonging and Multiculturalism. *Croatian Studies Review*, 3–4: 125–141.
- Paric, Linda and Michael Pernar (1991). *Croats in the Australian Community*. Sydney: Bureau of Immigration, Population and Multicultural Research.
- Richmond, H. Anthony (1978). Migration, ethnicity and race relations. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 1 (1): 7–21.
- Rojnica, Ivo (1974). *Prikaz povijesti Argentine*. Published by the author: Buenos Aires.
- Sinovičić, Marko (1991). *Hrvati u Argentini i njihov doprinos hrvatskoj kulturi: pregled hrvatskog tiska objavljenog u Argentini od 1946 do 1990*. Published by the author: Buenos Aires.
- Stanković, Vladimir (ed.) (1980). *Katolička Crkva i Hrvati izvan domovine*. Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost.
- Stanković, Vladimir (2005). Pastoralna skrb za Hrvate katolike u Australiji. *Izbliza, Hrvati u Australiji*. Zagreb: Katalog hrvatske matica iseljenika.
- Škvorc, Boris (2005). *Australski Hrvati, mitovi i stvarnost*. Zagreb: Hrvatska matica iseljenika.
- Šutalo, Ilija (2004). *Croatians in Australia, Pioneers, Settlers and Their Descendants*. Kent Town, South Australia: Wakefield Press.
- Tkalčević, Mato (1999). *Povijest Hrvata u Australiji*. Melbourne: Hrvatski svjetski kongres u Australiji.

POVZETEK

NACIONALNA IDENTITETA HRVAŠKIH IZSELJENCEV V PREKOOCEANSKIH DRŽAVAH: PRIMERI (PRIMERJAVA) HRVAŠKIH EMIGRANTSKIH SKUPNOSTI V ARGENTINI IN AVSTRALIJI (NOVI JUŽNI WALES)

Rebeka Mesarić Žabčić, Marina Perić Kaselj

Članek obravnava narodno identiteto hrvaške skupnosti v Argentini in Avstraliji (Novi južni Wales). Republika Hrvaška kot tradicionalno emigrantska država, je ena izmed evropskih držav z relativno visoko stopnjo izseljevanja. Hrvati in njihovi potomci danes tvorijo nezanemarljivo nacionalno skupnost v čezoceanskih državah, predvsem v Argentini in Avstraliji. Na podlagi ocen argentinskega Ministrstva za zunanje zadeve, živi v Argentini okoli 250.000 Hrvatov in njihovih potomcev, glede na popis prebivalstva v Avstraliji, pa tam živi okoli 150.000 Hrvatov in njihovih izseljencev, od tega 80.000 v Novem južnem Walesu. Čeprav je izseljevanje Hrvatov v čezoceanske države potekalo v štirih fazah, članek podrobneje obravnava tretjo in četrto fazo, obdobje od druge svetovne vojne do danes. Po drugi svetovni vojni je bilo izseljevanje iz Hrvaške pogojeno predvsem s političnimi dejavniki, čeprav so se Hrvati izseljevali tudi zaradi ekonomskih razlogov.

V tem času je bila Hrvaška del Socialistične Federativne Republike Jugoslavije. Četrta faza izseljevanja se je začela sredi devetdesetih let prejšnjega stoletja, v času propada SFRJ in vojne na Hrvaškem.

Pred drugo svetovno vojno se je večina hrvaških izseljencev v Argentini in Novem južnem Walesu opredelila kot Jugoslovani, po drugi svetovni vojni pa so prispeli politični izseljenci in začeli uporabljati njihovo narodno ime pri ustanavljanju hrvaških društev ter se boriti za hrvaške narodne interese. Hrvaški izseljenci v omenjenih državah so bili torej razdeljeni na hrvaško in jugoslovansko narodnost vse do hrvaške osamosvojitvene vojne in mednarodnega priznanja Republike Hrvaške. Med devetdesetimi leti prejšnjega stoletja je hrvaška osamosvojitvena vojna spodbudila proces ponovne opredelitve identitete hrvaške (jugoslovanske) narodne skupnosti v Argentini in Novem južnem Walesu in povzročila veliko senzibilnost hrvaške nacionalne skupnosti za dogajanja v domovini. To se je manifestiralo v povečani uporabi hrvaških narodnih simbolov, iskanju korenin in iskanju pomena njihove narodnosti.

V prvem delu članek preučuje zgodovinsko dimenzijo in pomen hrvaške identitete, nato pa se osredotoči na razloge za izseljevanje in na življenje hrvaških izseljencev po emigraciji. V drugem delu članka je predstavljen pomen in oblikovanje hrvaške narodne identitete v današnjem času, predvsem med potomci izseljencev. Članek se zaključuje s primerjavo podobnosti in razlik pri opredeljevanju narodne identitete v dveh omenjenih državah.

Ugotovljeno je bilo, da so v obeh državah potekali podobni procesi narodne/etnične identifikacije hrvaških izseljencev. Razlike so pri številu hrvaških izseljencev rojenih na Hrvaškem, kajti izseljevanje v Novi južni Wales je potekalo sredi šestdesetih in devetdesetih let prejšnjega stoletja, medtem ko se je množično izseljevanje v Argentino končalo leta 1958. V Novem južnem Walesu prebiva večje število izobrazjenih izseljencev iz Hrvaške z znanjem hrvaškega jezika, ki so izkusili življenje v domovini. To je prispevalo k oživitvi obstoječega hrvaškega narodnega jedra v Novem južnem Walesu. V obeh državah, čeprav na različne načine, je hrvaška narodna identiteta prepoznana in ohranjena. Veliko zaslug za mobilizacijo hrvaške narodne skupnosti in ohranitev kulture in jezika imajo ne le narodne skupnosti same, ampak tudi hrvaška katoliška cerkev. Danes je pri potomcih hrvaških izseljencev v obeh državah narodna identiteta pomemben del razumevanja lastne identitete. Tako je »obljuba vrnitve« prvih izseljencev prenesena na njihove vnuke in pravnuke, ki se vračajo v domovino, da bi bolje razumeli sami sebe. Hrvaška narodna identiteta v obeh državah je danes močna sila pri vzpostavljanju transnacionalnih povezav in predstavitvi Republike Hrvaške, njene kulture, običajev in vrednot, zunaj njenih nacionalnih okvirjev.