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Life on Two Locations: „a Sense of Place“ and How to Connect the Old and the New Homes

This paper is based on in-depth interviews with three informants who are living on two locations – in a flat and in a summer cottage, or in a flat and in an old family house respectively. It discusses the qualitative concept of the living space (home). It deals with questions about the relationship between one's identity and living space (home), as well as of the change in roles, quality and the way of life related to the specific location (the old or the new homes), through permanent interfusion and comparability between the old and the new homes. „The sense of place“ (home) is seen as a social construction, as a place of living, feeling, sharing, performing one's rituals, reviving the tradition, as well as a place of one's personal remembrances.

Keywords: primary residence, secondary residence, weekly migration, place of living, Vukovar-Syrmia County

Introduction and methodology annotations

This paper deals with living on two locations (in the town of Vinkovci and in its surroundings in Vukovar-Syrmia County) or, as it is often referred to in today's literature, the secondary residence. The paper analyzes the relationship between one's identity and living space.

The initial research-work questions are the following: Why do people live in two living spaces/homes, one of which is a traditional village environment (an old farm house, its plot, a home in the nature), while the other one is in an urban environment (a house or a flat)? What is the reason for their living on two locations, and what are the advantages/shortcomings of such a way of life? Was the decision about this way of life based on objective and practical reasons, or was it a result of subjective needs?

Our intention is to reveal how our informants define their living place, and what it means to them – their home. How do they, by presenting their home, present themselves to us? How is life on two locations being formed (the old and the new homes), and to which extent are two homes interconnected in the sphere of everyday life, namely are they regarded separately or as a whole?

In order to find the answers, we were looking for informants from the Vukovar-Syrmia County¹ who live on two locations on a weekly migration principle. After a long enquiring and research we were able to interview two women and one man. All three of them live in Vinkovci. We have used the in-depth interview method on a maximum variation model in order to see the problems from different angles. The interviews did not follow a previously arranged form. On the contrary, the informants, after introducing themselves and stating their basic socio-economic parameters (name and surname, the year and the place of their birth, occupation, marital status, etc.), spoke about their home/homes themselves in the manner they felt was most agreeable for them. Researchers were discreetly directing the informants' narration by asking specific or secondary questions. Every interview was recorded by a dictaphone and it lasted for about 50 to 60 minutes. Afterwards, the interviews were transcribed and processed by a qualitative method of content analysis. During the interviews the informants were relaxed and they openly talked about their home/homes. They used local terminology and never tried to make the conversation a formal one.

Our first informant (I1), N. C., was born in 1970. She is unemployed, a widow, and a mother of four children, aged 20, 18, 11, and 10. She moved with her parents from the village Retkovci to the nearby Ivankovo in 1979, where they built a house and settled down. She has finished high school, and her formal occupation is that of a garment technician. She got married in Ivankovo in 1989.

“There is a little bit of everything in me...also Slovak. My grandmother was a *Šokica*, the other one was a Herzegovinian, grandpa was a Hungarian, but I love dearly everything in *šokac* style. I always used to dress up in a folk costume (for local folklore festivals, author's note). I also went to Mikanovci, and Đakovo to participate in contests. I did so when I was a young girl, but also when I got married. Yes, I have won the first, second, and third prizes. My mother-in-law owns wonderful folk costumes of her own ... I did not have my own costumes, so I dressed up in hers”.

She has been living in a flat in Vinkovci² for five years now. Until then she lived with her husba

¹ The lowest number of flats for leisure-time, less than a thousand, was recorded in Vukovar-Syrmia (938), Virovitica-Podravina (581), and Požega-Slavonia (414) Counties (Population, households and flats census, 2001).

² Vinkovci is the town in the outmost North-Eastern part of Croatia, along the Bosut river. According to the 2001 Census, its population was 35.912. This area has been settled ever since the Neolithic times. It has a favourable geographic position, and abundant deposits of various natural resources. Building materials industry is very developed here, especially the brick making and the building trades.

nd and children in Ivankovo,³ at first with mother and father-in-law in their house, while afterwards they transferred to their own, newly built house (Fig.1). She had to move from Ivankovo to Vinkovci because her husband, working as a dynamiter, tragically died while performing his job. Several years after his death, she bought a flat in Vinkovci, and moved there together with her children. She did so mostly for practical reasons. Her father and sister help her out financially. She goes to Ivankovo from time to time on weekends, holidays, as well as during the winter and the summer long school vacations.

Our second informant (I2), who wanted to remain anonymous, was born in 1948. She is married, a mother of two children (a son, employed and married, not living with her, and a daughter, employed, and living with her in Vinkovci), and a high-school graduate, now retired. Her husband has a University degree, and is also retired.

„I have more obligations now, then when I was working. I have 41 years of service and my pension is only 2.200 kuna“.

She is of poor health. In 2008 she underwent hip surgery. She has been living in a house in Vinkovci since 1975. Now she lives in Vinkovci for three days a week, and the remaining four she spends in Ivankovo in her late parents' old house. Her parents were *Šokci*, agriculturists. They had four cows. Their pension was about 400 kuna, so she helped them out financially.

Our third informant (I3), F. C., was born in the vicinity of Varaždin, in 1946. His father was a fruit-grower. When he was a child, his family moved to the village Klokočevac, near Našice. In 1962, when Borinci⁴ were formed, he moved to Jarmina. He used to play football for a football club Dinamo from Vinkovci. He also attended a higher coach school in Zagreb, but he never graduated. He worked as a manager in leather-works. He is retired now. He is married, and his wife is also retired. She worked as a geography teacher. He has two children (both of them married). His son is a lawyer, and lives with his family in Vinkovci, while his daughter is a graduate nurse working and living with her family in Varaždinske Toplice. He lives in the centre of Vinkovci, in a flat on the second floor. From time to time he lives in a summer cottage (Fig.8.02.), which he built in 1980, in a weekend cottage settlement Rokovačke zidine⁵ near the village, Rokovci⁶ which is about 15 kilometres away from Vinkovci, as well as from Ivankovo.

³ Ivankovo is situated to the West from the town of Vinkovci. It is one of the biggest villages of Eastern Slavonia. It developed along the road that ran through this area ever since pre-Ancient times. The settlement and its houses follow along the mentioned road. The houses are constructed on narrow and long plots; they had been built on a regulation line, the backyards being used for agricultural purposes. According to the 2001 Census, there were 8.676 people living in Ivankovo district, which makes up to 4,2 % of total County population. The geographical position of Ivankovo in a valley between the Sava and the Drava rivers contributed to the development of agriculture and cattle breeding. There is a great deal of cultivable land, and a very little arid land (according to Galić and associates, 2003).

⁴ This used to be the largest fruit plantation in Europe. It is situated in Jarmina, near Vinkovci.

⁵ The settlement Rokovačke zidine is situated outside today's village Rokovci, near the Bosut river, in the vicinity of the ruins of one-nave church with a semicircular sanctuary, so called Rokovačka zidina., The church was built in the 15th century, from fire-baked brick. The main entrance had a stone gothic door-post.

⁶ Rokovci is a village near Vinkovci. It was named after the patron of the old St. Roch's church (the newly built church was also named St. Roch's). Administratively it belongs to the Andrijaševci district. According to the 2001 Census, its population was 2.245. It is positioned on the right side of the Bosut river. As well as in Ivankovo, the way of the village formation was so-called „ušoreni“ type – narrow plots with deeply indrawn houses built along the regulation line, with backyards intended for agriculture and cattle-raising.

Secondary residence: vacation house, second home, weekend cottage

According to Croatian Bureau of Statistics (2001), the term *secondary residence* is applied to flats for vacation period, „exclusively for vacation and recreation, whether temporarily or for several months a year“. The term secondary residence understands having two different addresses (or more). The driving forces behind it are considered to be pleasure and enjoyment (Rogić 1990). All forms of „non-primary residence“ are being considered here, namely all forms realized in the „second flat“, the „second house“, and not in the place of one's permanent residence, and also not for permanent, but for temporary residence (Čaldarović 1989:105). The majority of secondary-residence living is based on the relation town – village. In the majority of cases, objects are being used for the purpose of secondary residence in the rural area, in (village)/settlements, often even in their outskirts or outside a settlement in the „intact nature“, (Hall and Muller 2004; Gallent and Tewdwr-Jones 2000). Thus, the users of secondary flats are mostly town population, temporarily moving from the town to the village. Secondary residence thus implies owning a housing object in another living area, outside the place of one's permanent residence, and a temporarily residing there; its motivation is directed towards pleasure, recreation, and comfort.

Regarding the motivation direction of the users/protagonists of the secondary residence, Čaldarović emphasizes one's social status, where he differs groups for which their secondary residence is a result of „abundant overflow of resources ... prolonging of *settling* one's residential problems for themselves or of their descendants ... a source of a monthly money income“, from groups of people whose reasons for looking for another address are mainly „relatively modest manners of spending one's free time ... a way out from the *asphalt jungle* ... a temporary escape from the comfort of a small flat, or *the return to agriculture*“ (Čaldarović 1989: 105). Along with the form *secondary flat*, Rogić uses a term *recreation flat*, because in a secondary flat he sees a way of trying to abolish industrial everyday life, a reflection of nostalgia and continuity. On the one hand, as he states, „we have a renewal of family heritage, and on the other the overcoming of the limitation of a *protective flat*, namely its anonymity and non-domiciliary status“ (Rogić 1990: 96). Kemeny, instead of residence, uses the term *residing*, primarily to emphasize the socio-spatial relationship which takes place also outside the four walls, separating it in terms into three dimensions: household, flat and wider surroundings. He wants to emphasize the relationship of residence and society as a whole, namely the influence of social relations to residential issues.

In modern Croatian scientific literature, most widely used terms related to the secondary residence are vacation (and recreation) house, and vacation (and recreation) flat. The term *secondary residence*⁷ is not used as much. In informal speech people most commonly use the term *summer house* (Opačić 2009).

The term *second home*, which is more acceptable to us, and which we use in our field work, can more often be found in Anglo-Saxon scientific literature. As it can be immediately noticed, the term second home tells us less about an object's functionality (as a living space), but refers more to social and psychological dimensions, and to the meaning of the space as a place.

⁷ In Croatian language the noun *residence*, as well as the adjective *residential* are associated with wealth, luxury. This is to a certain degree different from their English language equivalents' meanings.

The second home: living on more locations or multiple homes

The word *home* as a term in a Croatian language dictionary, encompasses firstly a more narrow meaning of a home as a house or an ambiance where a family lives along with other household members, while afterwards it understands its wider notion as a space outside one's house: homeland, hometown, native country, as well as the term home as an institution of various types: climbers' lodging, pupils' hostel, student hostel, senior citizens' home (Anić 1991: 118). Such a definition of home reveals only its objective meaning. In Croatian language the first and primary meaning of the term *home* is the one of a hearth, representing a family's gathering place, and a place where a family is protected. This word was not transferred to its architectural form *house*, which is in its basic form emotionally neutral (Pintarić 2005: 230). In Croatian language there is no emotionally negative relation towards the word *home*, because it does not determine a building, a house, a structure. It is an abstract term with a positive emotional image of the world as an inner space which offers a person his/her deliverance, comfort, a place where one can associate with others (Pintarić 2005: 229).

The term *second home* is an equivalent to secondary residence, but, as stated above, it includes both emotional and psychological sides, namely a relationship with the living space/residence. In modern society the second home is usually regarded in the context of a greater mobility of people, as a technological breakthrough, or as a consequence of changes in the material dimension of human society – of space and time (Castells 2000). More and more people live or organize their lives in several living spaces/homes (Williams and associates 2004: 112). It can be said that they have a multiple home⁸, because there are more places/spaces, which they consider and feel as their home. Having more homes and developing certain emotional relationships with them is in accordance with multi-locality of human nature (Iyerov 2000 in Mišetić 2006).

From conversations with our informants we can notice how difficult it is for them to draw a line between the first and the second homes, because they both have equally important places in their lives, as if they were parts of the same entity. This makes them difficult to range or qualify them by numbers. The informants have one home in the town, in the urban environment, and the other in a rural community, in the village.

„I live in a comfortable flat in the centre of the town. Primary school is just across the street. A Roman Catholic church is also nearby. The vicinity of the church has a special significance for her. She practices her religion and attends mass every day. The possibility of attending mass daily is an important foothold and support for her in her reflections of existence.

„I attend mass every morning at 7 at St. Anthony's church – this is what keeps me going, if there was not for our dear Lord to look after me ... God and my children are my strength ... Most of all the little one born ten days after his father's death ...“ As she lives alone with her four children, good infrastructure and good spatial connections are important to her in dealing with activities of everyday life.

“The change regarding living in Vinkovci is good for me. It is peaceful here, and much easier for me with children. They attend many activities. Having to drive them there, and

⁸ Technical literature in English language uses the syntagm *multiple homes*.

then back home is much easier. My younger son is very allergic, and if he were to spend a lot of time playing outside in the grass, he would swell up, you know ... it is easy for me here, I can walk with him to a hospital here ... this is what makes it easier for me to live here.”

Except for the good infrastructural connections, she also emphasizes the possibility to choose one's social activities. “I can offer more to my children here. They can attend *Lingua pax*, for example (Foreign languages school in Vinkovci, author's note), football, because it is close, while in Ivankovo it was not. The older son can walk with the younger one to school if I cannot drive him there. “

Her second home is the one in Ivankovo, which she had built together with her late husband, and where they lived with their children for four years. It was built right next to their mother- and father-in-law's house, where all of them had lived together for nine years. The house was built on the foundations of an old house that was torn down. The outer part of the house was preserved, and its appearance is identical to the one of the former old house. In the house's backyard there is an old barn, and a hay-loft (Fig.8.03).

From our conversation with the informant we found out that her moving away did not affect today's appearance of the house, neither from the outside, nor from within. Their moving only enabled them to have a life on two locations, but has not lost the function of their home. „This is a big house and it needs maintaining. I left everything there as it was, and I did not bring anything here, since furniture for the house cannot be used in a flat. Everything is different here. We even left our clothes there. When we travel to Ivankovo we do not have to carry any clothes. There are always enough clothes for changing twice“.

In the house there is also some old *šokac*⁹ style wooden furniture, which has special value for her. We have come to a conclusion that in houses set up in a traditional style, a *šokac* style room¹⁰ has an inevitable role.

“I have an old-fashioned wardrobe in the hall. When we had built our house, we set up the front room right in a *šokac* style. The bed, pillows, wardrobes, we did it all. But then the first baby came, then the second one, the third one, and then, you know how it starts. Every one of them needed a separate room, so we had to empty the one decorated in *šokac* style. Afterwards, we had plans to divide up the attic space and to set up a *šokac* style room there, both of my husband's grandmothers were the ones who handed it all down to him – a glass cupboard (*stakljenjak*), a bed, a table with two chairs, a mirror with a night stand, large crocks, we had a lot of everything, but we gave it all back to his grandmothers. They sold the house ... we have had plans for a great big *šokac* style room with pictures of saints, Sacred Heart of Virgin Mary and Sacred Heart of Jesus. We had serious plans to do it properly ...“.

⁹ Šokci are a local village Croatian population of Roman-Catholic faith. All aspects of their material and non-material spheres of life are named *šokački* (*šokački* spoken language, *šokačka* room, *šokačka* folk costume, *šokački* furniture, customs, „all in the *šokački* way“ etc.).

¹⁰ In a *šokac* style room there is a special accent put on the bed, with embroidered slip-on quilt-cover, and pillows stuffed with goose feathers. A pillow is about one meter long. According to non-written rules, there are supposed to be six pillows. When a girl gets married and has to move to her new home, her pillows are being shown to the entire village to see.

Every weekend she goes to the house in Ivankovo from her flat in Vinkovci, with her whole family. „This is not tiresome for me“ (she refers to travelling from one location to the other, from one home to another). In summer, during the school vacations, they as a family spend more time in Ivankovo, than in Vinkovci. „During summer we stay here even for three to four days. We celebrate children’s birthdays and more important festivities also here in Ivankovo“.

I2 lives in a newly-built two-storey house in Vinkovci’s settlement Kanovci, near the Bosut river, since she married in 1975. This part of the settlement is considered to be the nicest part of the town with family houses. In front of her house there is a terrace filled with flowers, and a garden. She is a person of faith and she regularly attends Sunday mass. In Ivankovo she has an old house (her parents’) of the gable house type (*na zabat*)¹¹ with farm buildings, a well, and a *valov*¹² in the yard. The house is about 100 years old. „The house is equipped for living, cooking, staying, everything “...She spends the first half of a week in Vinkovci, and the other half in Ivankovo. „I go here (she refers to Ivankovo) for Easter, and Christmas also. I regularly go to the cemetery (especially on my mom’s birthday)”. She keeps up the house and the plot mostly by herself. „I cannot allow for the garden to be unattended (potatoes, runner beans, all vegetables)“. Her son helps her out a little. Although her husband had suggested selling the house and the lot, she does not want to do so during her lifetime. She also does not want to sell the old furniture inside the house. She gave two old nightstands (inherited from her mother) to her son as a wedding present. After her death, the house will be sold together with its furniture. Neither of her children has the intention to live in this house permanently, temporarily, nor to keep it in any way.

I3 lives close to the centre of the town in a tenement house with his wife. The town’s only market, café bars, etc. are close to his home. His second home is a weekend house/cottage, which he built in 1980 in a weekend cottage settlement Rokovačke zidine. „People in the settlement had *salaši*¹³ there... It is not far away from the town, but it is very far from civilisation. I have always loved it here. If it had not been so, I would never have built it. I have both location and town-planning licences. It is not worth anything without legal papers.“ He lives there alone. His wife rarely comes to visit, but they keep in contact all the time, regardless of their separate living spaces. „She has her own activities schedule with her colleagues in the town. If she needs me to come there, I can arrive to Vinkovci in ten to fifteen minutes. We have our mobile phones with us. I talk to my wife every day.“ He has an orchard near the weekend cottage (Fig.8.04.). He uses solar power, and also has his own well. „I have planted trees: 10 blue plum-trees (variety Stanley), 10 white plum-trees, 15 pear-trees (variety William). I have a water-well, which we sunked manually. I know an old well-sinker. I also use the solar power“. From summer to winter, he comes here weekly to stay for one to two days. During the active time of the year (agricultural work) he stays for three to four days. During the winter time he does not come here and stays in Vinkovci.

¹¹ House *na zabat*, *zabatna kuća* – a traditional house with a rectangular basis, mostly built along a street regulation line or drawn inside the front yard for several metres, facing the street with its narrower side. The side facing the street usually has two windows, and sometimes an entrance door too. A saddle roof frame has one or two smaller openings on its gable.

¹² *Valov* – metal or concrete trough, placed in the front yard, intended for watering and feeding farm animals.

¹³ *Salaš* is a rural farm household with its outbuildings, mostly intended for agriculture.

Dialectal relationship between urban and rural spheres: connecting two spaces of one entity (home)

A greater interest for the determination of terms concerning urban/rural spheres was shown already in the 1920s and the 1930s, in times of great economic transformation of rural settlements, under the influence of urbanization and industrialisation processes. Since then until today, the rural sphere has been defined according to its relation to the urban one, but with changed meanings. In the beginning a conceptual sociological model of *rural-urban dichotomy* dominated, emphasizing the difference between rural and urban communities. Here we include Tönnies' theory, which deals with the difference between communities based on close relationships, related to the place of living and communal work, and industrial societies where relationships are based on formal contracts and the exchange of goods. Also, Redfield's concept of a *folk-urban society*, together with Tönnies' theory, are typical examples of bipolar typologies and divisions into traditional and modern, which have found the powerful response in the understanding of the rural concept (Johnston and others 2000:721-722; Župančić 2005). After that there appeared a conceptual model of a *rural-urban continuum*, which emphasized that in every settlement we can find a point of continuum between the outmost rural and the outmost urban communities, all the way to theories of the rural as a concept, the understanding of which depends on its material, as well as imaginal, socially construed dimension (more in Lukić 2010). The rural and the urban can carry more meanings depending on the context in which they are being used, and from which discourse they have originated. There is a permanent duality in understanding of rural space as a concrete material geo-space or as a state of conscience, a symbol, etc. In this paper the notion rural/urban is seen in lay terms, namely from personal experiences and beliefs of the informants. One home in the urban community and the other in a rural one, create a united image for our informants, because they are in constant interfusion and completion relations, namely in a dialectical relationship. Depending on life cycles of the informants there appears a change in relationship towards certain rural/urban elements, but there is also a constant addiction and need for defining one's home by including both communities.

When I1 speaks about her home in Vinkovci, she spontaneously reveals its practical side and good infrastructural connections in the urban, town community. According to Žuntić's and Kovačić's research (2010), a low level of equipment in infrastructure and lacking of traffic communication in villages, non-accessibility of public services, etc. are a common reason for dissatisfaction of the local community, and an additional incentive for leaving the village. „Now it is much easier ... You know, when children were ill, driving from Ivan-kovo to the Vinkovci hospital ... Poor weather, snow ... I used to spin around on the road. It is easy for me here, I can even walk to the hospital.“ In this informant's case, practicality is closely related to the feeling of loneliness, and her role as a single mother. Loneliness is more acceptable in an urban community (where everything is accessible). Since she already needs to take care of her family herself, this is, according to the informant, easier in a town, where everything is more accessible and where children are given an opportunity to choose between different social activities. Her interaction with children is also different in urban and rural surroundings. While she compares her previous life in the village, where the amount of work on the land and in the stable dominated the everyday life, with her

life today, there is a visible change in the amount and the way of spending one's free-time. Namely, in the village everyday life there is no free-time and working-time, no division into work and leisure-time. „Working in agriculture is submitted to the rhythms of nature, seasons, animals, the land, day-time and night-time“ (Lefebvre 1959:150). In traditional farm-life there are no visible boundaries between productive working hours on the farm, in the household, and time that an individual uses to carry out family obligations, time for rest, etc. (Šuvar 2005:4-5).

I1: “When my husband was alive, we even had pigs. We lived with my mother-in-law for nine years, and we kept a lot of cows. I did the milking ... We attended manifestations in Vinkovci, as well as in Đakovo,¹⁴ but one cannot afford every evening off when one has to work, and has to milk the cows ... It is different now. We leave everything as it is ... While in the house you could not ... We have more obligations, more work to do ...”

In the town it is different and, as our informant states, it is especially noticeable concerning the possibility of spending free-time with your children.

„I take walks with my children around the town, and if it is not possible, then it is mandatory on Sundays, or we ride bikes. In Ivankovo one does not take walks, since people have a lot of work to do ... When I need to buy something in the village, I just go off and buy it. But now, when I am in the town, I walk around shops and wait for reductions. In Vinkovci we have *karaoke* on Fridays ... In January there are horses, then a children's carnival, while it is different in Ivankovo. I can offer my children more here ... we take walks, see something on posters, and listen to the radio station *Vinkovački radio* a lot ... I hear about everything that is going on. We attend the Health fair.¹⁵”

In the village community there is a restricted choice of social activities and general involvement in social happenings. As it used to be before, in a traditional peasant life there usually existed two institutions for spending one's free-time (the church and the local inn), and they remained centres of social events until today. Our informant has also mentioned Cultural clubs' activities, which we can refer to as the third institution. Although the primary role of a Cultural club is preservation of tradition and customs through folk costumes, songs, and folklore, it also has a wider meaning in terms of creating and preserving permanent friendships, but also it gives people the possibility to meet others, to grow to like someone, and maybe marry a member of a club. „In Ivankovo we were active church and Cultural club members. I used to read in the church. I met my husband in a Cultural club – in Ivankovo... We really loved the club. We have toured entire Croatia with our Cultural club“. Although she is no longer an active member of the Cultural club, her children continue the tradition, thus preserving the village life in its original form. Children's involvement in Ivankovo Cultural club gives her hope that one of them will go back to live in the village. „I am no longer a member of a Cultural club, but my children are. The older one was a member, but is no longer. The middle one was a member of Šumari in Vinkovci, but he has now returned to Ivankovo (she refers to Cultural clubs both

¹⁴ „Vinkovačke jeseni“ (Autumns in Vinkovci) and „Đakovački vezovi“ (Embroidery in Đakovo) are manifestations of traditional culture, which are held every year in towns Vinkovci and Đakovo, respectively. Cultural clubs from entire Croatia take part in their programmes (folklore performances).

¹⁵ „The health fair“ is held in Vinkovci once a year.

from Vinkovci and Ivankovo, author's note). He is *čajo*.¹⁶ Little ones are members of Šumari – in Vinkovci. My daughter has been attending folklore ever since she was five. Then she was member of a Cultural club in Vinkovci ... They attend *Šokačka rič*¹⁷ ... They all dress in folk costumes, they love it. Yes, I am certain that one of them is going to live in the village.“

Festivity days in a rural community hold a significant place. They have kept their relaxation meaning until today, although religious motives have weakened. „In village life days of festivity have crystallized as moments of exceptional living, moments of relaxation, abundance, contemplation, collectivism, freeing oneself from everyday work, as well as concentrating for further slavery to it“ (Šuvar 1988: 134).

II, by moving to Vinkovci, started celebrating *Vinkovačke jeseni*¹⁸ (Autumns in Vinkovci) with relatives and friends from Ivankovo, as well as a *kirbaj* festivity *Sacred Heart of Jesus*, a church festivity of her parish in Vinkovci.

„I do not celebrate *Vinkovačke* in a big manner, just with my children and guests from the Cultural club. I cannot afford to entertain because of the children. I dress them in folk costumes, they are still so young, and we go there together. This is why I cannot have guests over. We attend folklore evenings in Vinkovci every evening. I can also „take it less seriously“ now when we are in the town during the manifestation. When it is time for Autumns in Vinkovci, I bring many things, such as *otarci*¹⁹... (she shows us a photograph of a corner in her flat decorated in *šokac* style, author's note). I celebrate *kirbaj*²⁰ *Sacred Heart of Jesus*. This is my parish.“

From our informant's narration we can also learn about festivity customs, the way of food preparation, and the sequence of food serving, as well as the relation towards the guests who are arriving to the ceremony or towards the ones leaving it. Preparation for the feast lasts for several days, and those are usually days when neighbours are helping one another (baking cakes, preparing the food) in order to make the festivity more abundant.

„I invite guests over for *kirbaj*: my cousins, my sister from Ivankovo. Our house is full of guests all day long, in two or three sittings ... They just exchange seats – in Vinkovci in our flat. It takes me several days to prepare everything, and I do it all in Ivankovo. I bake cakes while children play outside in the front yard. My aunt helps me out (her father's wife, author's note). I also help her when she has guests, so we help each other in that manner. In Ivankovo I cook the soup, meat, make *sarma* (minced meat rolled in sauerkraut leaves), and there is also a meat-roast²¹. Sometimes we have lamb-roast. There are usually about six or seven kinds of cakes: mostly pies, wafers, *bajaderas* (nougat-chocolate sweets),

¹⁶ *Čajo*, *čauš* – leader of a *šokac* style wedding procession.

¹⁷ A cultural and scientific manifestation „Šokačka rič“ keeps *šokac* style speech alive, as well as it studies and cultivates the linguistic heritage of Slavonia.

¹⁸ A manifestation, which has exclusively a secular character. It was held in 1966 for the first time. It is celebrated in September. This is the month when all fruits ripen, as a result of peasants' hard work. It is the best known cultural event of the town Vinkovci, Slavonia, as well as of the entire continental part of Croatia.

¹⁹ *Otarci* are traditional towels weaved on a loom. They can be embroidered in different ways.

²⁰ *Kirbaj* is a religious festivity celebrated on the occasion of the blessing of a certain Christian church.

²¹ Pig/roasted in an oven or on a spit.

small nuts, as well as cakes which can last longer, and are sustaining. We make a cake with a filling as well, because children love it ... and we pack it up for our guests, of course, both meat and cake.”

I2 describes a similar situation to us. She traditionally celebrates Midsummer Day, patron saint's day of her parish, the birth of St. John the Baptist. She prepares for the festivity in June, in Ivankovo – for her son and his family, and for her niece and her family. „I bake a cake, or two. I make some soup, prepare mashed potatoes, baked potatoes, sautéed meat, and loin roast. I come here a couple of days earlier to prepare everything.“

Village communities are mostly homogenous, closed and static, where family and neighbours play an important role, opposed to urban dynamic environment. I1 explains to us the „openness“ of a village community with close relationships with the neighbours, opposed to a „closed“ town environment, where there are rules about how people are supposed to live.

“The little ones really love Ivankovo a lot. It is here where all their friends and relatives are. There is the village, the front yard. They can scream and yell here. They have a table-tennis table. When we come here it is so loud, everybody comes to our house. I like children to socialize with others. I like to see them playing in my front yard. Children always keep friends, they have sleep-overs, they really enjoy Ivankovo, and so do I do, when I am with them. Here (she refers to her flat in Vinkovci), on the other hand, you have to be careful, and from 3 p.m. onwards ... you cannot make any noise. In a house you can yell, be loud until midnight, and here in a flat you cannot, of course. It is so good for us to be in a house there. I am so excited, and now when the weather is good, I can let the children outside to play. In a flat one does not know what to do. If you are noisy, you can have problems with your neighbours. Children can play only in big sheds, big rooms (she means when it is hot, and the children cannot play outside, author's note). In Ivankovo I play games with my children: cities and villages, volleyball, hide-and-peek ...”

The coffee-drinking ritual is different in a village than in a town. Again, the „openness“ of a rural community is visible here, where the „door to a person's home“ is always open. In a town environment the invitation to have a cup of coffee means to go to a café-bar, and meet a person there, at a previously determined hour.

I1: „I have friends, neighbours, in Ivankovo. I can visit someone, and have coffee at their house. I have never went out for a cup of coffee with any of my colleagues here (either I go to her house, or she comes to my house), while in the town I rarely have someone over for a coffee; we mostly get together in the town. Every Saturday I meet my sister for a cup of coffee at the town's market. I enjoy it both.“ When talking to our second informant, we can recognize the same closeness and openness of neighbourly relationships, which are not a characteristic of a town environment. Neighbours have a function of support and backing a person up.

I2: “Here neighbours bring me a cooked meal, lunch. When I go to Vinkovci, they water my flowers, and the garden as well. “

While mobility is typical in an urban environment, village communities are marked as stable. Because of their different experiences, there is a difference in the imagination of peo-

ple living in villages, from those living in towns. „The empiric quality of a peasant’s experience is probably the basis of their point of viewing all things that are complicated and complex as basic, graphic, and terse“ (Lendis in Šuvar 1988: 75). Village environments are spatially small and they function by terms of enlarged families where everybody knows one another, and everyone knows everything about the other. In Slavonian villages, as well as in Ivankovo, it is customary for women and men to gather in front of house gates, where they sit and talk, thus spending their leisure time. I1 reveals to us a kind of these village conversations.

„You know how people can be ... They know who has visited your house, what he was there for ... At my house it is awful ... They are very interested to know when exactly have we arrived, the shutters are pulled up... The washing-machine service man was here and he had stayed for two hours, this makes people gossip immediately ... I have to move myself out of it to simply have some peace of my own. When I do not come to the village for a longer period of time, people ask: Where have you been? Have you gotten married? Have you put on some weight? Oh, you have it going for you in your life so well... I get shocked when I hear all this, and ... if it were not for my children, I would never have come back. Those are personal questions. I would never have dared to ask a person something so private ... They are so informal here, in Ivankovo ... (Their problem is that I have been a widow for ten years now, and I have not remarried. They cannot understand that I live for my children now, and that they mean everything to me. So they live off of these gossips, whether something is going to happen in my life or not. So what if I do get married, this should be a normal thing). Maybe this is the reason why the village has scared me away, because we love it so much in Ivankovo.“

In this example we notice the public note of the village environment’s where it is difficult to have an individual choice and a different kind of life. There are rules about village-life, which offer certain stability to the community, where it is known in every moment what is happening, which kind of behaviour is acceptable, and which is not. As it was stated earlier, village imagination is simple and terse.

When describing her way of life in Vinkovci, despite the fact that she thinks she would not have left Ivankovo, had it not been for her husband’s death, I1 says: „I love Vinkovci, it is the most beautiful town, I would like to live to an old age here“. This example shows us a dialectical relationship between the urban and the rural, the acceptance, the maintenance or even the rejection of certain elements, and gaining new needs and habits because of different life experience.

A positive perception of a village/rural environment as a social community, especially in the segment of „return to nature“, of a more qualitative, peaceful, and healthier way of life, can be perceived in our conversation with I3. According to Žuntić’s and Kovačić’s research (2010), the most attractive aspects of rural life are its spatial and ambiance characteristics.

I3: „I find it monotonous sometimes in my flat in Vinkovci . Sometimes I just need to go outside. My wife usually tells me then to pack my bag and go to Rokovci for a while. Just to come here for one day, it is enough for me. These are habits of life ... I cannot understand how people today live after they retire ... They quickly let go, die ... Here

(he means in Rokovci, author's note) there is a greater possibility to live a healthy life. A person is not closed inside four walls all the time (Fig. 8.05.). You can be active all day long doing this or that, collecting firewood, cleaning the forest. I collect dry wood so that I could stoke a furnace or make my own plum-brandy. We should not cut down oak-trees if they are healthy. I help foresters in their work. This kind of work relaxes me. Then I think about nothing ...”

I2 also has a similar perception of both village and rural communities. „Everything is different for me here (she means Ivankovo, author's note)... Here I have my peace“.

Townsppeople mostly find their liberation and relaxation from dynamics, rush, the flurry of the city in their return to nature, to the land, to the village. Leaving the town and going to the country thus represents a special kind of pleasure and delight for them. Differing from town population, a characteristic of a peasant's life in a village is his work on the land, in the open, where one can feel a direct relationship with nature. Such people are cultivators of fruit, vegetables, cereals, as well as producers of various alimentary food-stuffs based on old recipes, and makers of different kinds of meals that are a characteristic of a certain region. Statements from our informants have directed us to the conclusion that the village community enables, especially for the ones who are not its „permanent“ residents, to express themselves as individuals through recreational and creative work, which is in a close relationship with the perseverance of tradition (agriculture, food preparation and preservation of vegetables, brandy-making, etc.), as well as with ecological consciousness. I1 tells us about making the food provisions for winter and about pig-slaughtering, a characteristic of a rural community. Healthy food from her garden, which is then preserved and put aside for winter-time, as well as homemade smoked and cured meat, dominates the menu of her family.

“I make strip noodles in Ivankovo. I make tomatoe purée, pickle gherkins, jam ... and preserve beetroot, peppers, sauerkraut. We do the pig-slaughtering at my dad's house (who married for the second time, because mom had died) ... I make everything myself: ham, sausages, *pokulence* (a kind of small sausages), and meat. Children love it all. I do not buy any industry-made foods. We slaughter one swine weighing about 200-250 kilos. I have a small freezer in the flat, and a big one in the house.”

The process of growing one's own fruit and vegetables, as well as one's own homemade products gives a person a special feeling of joy and usefulness, something that I3 tells us about. In our conversation with him we have found out that he inherited the love towards fruit-growing from his late father, a fruiter, and how he, despite his living in the town, loves rural surroundings, because it gives him the opportunity to do what he loves and enjoys.

I3: „I have made the still myself. I know well what I drink. I have learned how to distil brandy by watching an old man do it. It is rather hard to learn. It takes a lot of work, labour, wood. The price for 1 litre should not be under 50, 60 kuna. I do not sell my brandy. I do not want to undervalue myself. I also leave a little bit for the following year. You never know how the next year will turn out to be. From 100 kilos of William pears one can make three to four litres of brandy. After the winter has passed one has to prune the trees. It has to be done every year - I have learned this from my father, the fruiter ... one's harvesting is

in the pruning. My fruit is healthy because I spray it just one to two times a year. Others do it much more often. I also used to grow tomatoes, peppers, and cucumbers. Now I have twenty tomato plants, and I have the whole summer. My neighbour grows strawberries and apples, so I buy it from him. I prepare everything myself. My specialty is barbecued meat with potatoes baked in homemade lard.

Identity and the place of living: space as a container of an individual's remembrances and when the old becomes the new home

The relationship between a person's identity and the place of living shows a complex correlation of different social categories and meanings which people give to material objects (houses, flats, weekend cottages). Through these meanings people show their identity, view of life, as well as one's belonging to a certain region and community. Thus some areas, although physically bordered and defined, can „tell us about“ people's history, their lives, destinies. Creating and forming a certain space means (active) living in it, namely filling and forming it with life/lives. Spaces/places of living are a consequence of social interactions and are being created only when someone names, defines, and introduces them. Places are not just physically bordered and defined, they are always „a place for someone and places of something“ (Shields according to Wiborg 2004: 417), they are social constructions, which enable sharing of experiences and events, celebrating rituals and tradition, changing the physical environment, and at the end, gradual construction of a community (Salvesen 2002).

In anthropology, a person's attachment to a place/space means a symbolic relationship that people attach to it, sharing common emotional meanings, which also represent a lever of their collective interaction. In sociology, the feeling of space includes implicitly a subjective perception of a living place and formation of a certain emotional relationship towards it. „A sense of place“ in this paper, perceived as a social construction, would mean living, feeling, and understanding the place. For a specific, as well as for a symbolic creation of space, we also use the term „anthropological place“: it is a „perception which the inhabitants create in their own relationship with the territory, people close to them, and others“ (Auge 2002:50). When we are talking in terms of the anthropological place, we are thinking about a symbolical space creation first.

We can place the space in the context of a container of an individual's memories: „Remembrance forms our relations to the past, and ways how we remember things determine our identity. As individuals and societies, we need the past to construct and strengthen our tradition, form our present identity, and create a vision of the future“ (Huyssen 2000:24).

The space/the second home holds a special place in the consciousness of our female informants, a high level of emotional affection and association towards a part of their lives spent with family members who are no longer alive. When talking about their second home, they spontaneously bring to life memories revealing a very important part of their

identity, which partially answers our question who they really are. Today's dominating role of our first informant as a woman, a widow, and a mother, and the second informant as a retired person of poor health, is transformed into something completely different, showing us a dynamics, family harmony, and social attachment. Sharing communal moments with close people, and a life that used to have different contours and meanings, left a strong mark, forming a special relationship and significance of the second home, known only to them.

I1: “My husband and I did everything ourselves the way we wanted, and we enjoyed it for four years only. (She is talking about her wonderful marriage, author's note) ... I have had a wonderful life. He always came first for me. I loved my children enormously, if you understand ... But for me he was always somehow ... You know that when the children are born, people say that couples grow apart ... No, we were always one, yes, and that is what keeps me going now ... But, it was really wonderful for me. Twelve years were just not enough ... We both enjoyed flowers, we did everything together. Even when he came home from work, he would go to the garden with me. We have never gone anywhere one without another.”

Looking back at our informants' lives on two locations, we can see that their ways of life, roles they played, and their priorities changed, and how the former old home became the new one, and the one considered to be new became old. When we use the adjective „new“, we think of a place/house, which was, from the beginning, both emotionally and physically, built by our informants themselves, and when we say „old“ we think about the place that had a significant role in their lives, but is directly connected with their family inheritance/legacy. A permanent interlacement of physical and emotional ways of living on two locations is visible here. What used to be the old home (parents' house, weekend cottage), due to the change in the living circumstances, for our second and third informants, becomes a new home, as the new home for our first informant, becomes the old, second home. I1, as it was stated earlier, had lived in Ivankovo in a new house with her husband, three children, and the fourth on its way. After she had become a widow with four small children, their formerly harmonious common home became unpractical and foreign to her. In it, despite her children, she felt a big void and loneliness. After her husband's death, who was for her a friend, a support of the family, and father to her children, this space became different. She less and less thought of it as a home. She did not want to continue living there. A big life trauma has caused a strong sense of loneliness. „Had I not become a widow I would never have moved, had it not been for my children I would never have come to live in a flat. Because I enjoyed living in a house, filling it up with flowers, always having something to do ... Loneliness is very difficult.“ First she had stopped working in the garden and the vegetable plot, and after that she bought a flat in Vinkovci where she still lives. Despite all that, she did not break ties with her second home. She goes there whenever she has the opportunity to do so. „It is lovely in the village. I was there for five to six days. It is sometimes very hard for me, because I have had lovely moments there, which are now gone. When children go out to play, I lose myself a little (because she is alone, author's note). When it is time for First Communion and confirmations, I feel like my mind is blown“.

Although she used to go to the village every day to see her parents in the past, the second home for I2 had a function of helping and spending time with her parents. „I used to go

to the village and take care of my parents for 25 years. Their income was only 400 kuna of agricultural pension. I have supported them financially. I have helped my mother by painting walls, doing the washing-up, digging in the garden.“ (her mom went blind very early, and she was very attached to her). In this example we note how harmonious and attached this family members were to each other, willing to help one another and to receive help as well, a close relationship of parents with their child. Certainly this part of the past and her family connections also have had an important role in our informant's decision to keep up and maintain the old family home, thus bringing to life lovely memories of her parents. Although she used to visit her parents every day, also including her children in this way of life, she always came home to Vinkovci, where her permanent home was. „I worked from 7 a.m. until 3 p.m. I used to have lunch at home in Vinkovci, and then I would sit in the car (I had a Fiat 600), and drive to my parents' house in Ivankovo. I used to work there until 8 or 9 p.m., and then return to Vinkovci. I have taught my children to work there. At their grandparents' they used to pick plums, beans, corn“. A house in Vinkovci, which she had built together with her husband and where they both lived together with their three children, was her primary home. After she had met all requirements for retirement, and after her children were all grown-up, had finished school and became independent, her role in life changed, as well as her relationship towards the „second“ home. She started spending more and more time in her old family house (half a week in Vinkovci, and the other half in Ivankovo, where she also spends all holidays), and the house became her new home. In this new home she mostly lives alone. Although she is in an advanced age and of poor health, she keeps-up the house, takes care of its vegetable plot, and fills this space with life. Other family members rarely come here and are not attached to this home/space. Although she had tried to implement love towards this region and space to her children with their early socialization, their lives went in another direction.

I2: “My husband and daughter do not like to come here. My son also did not want to come here, he rather bought a house in Mirkovci, in the suburb of Vinkovci, when he married last year. I collapsed after he said that he had bought a house in Mirkovci (stress). I wanted him to move here. There is a building plot here, stretching onto two streets. It can be divided up into plots. Two houses can be built here. I could leave the other plot to my daughter ...”

A weekend cottage, the second home of I3, also became a new home for him. After he had met retirement requirements, he started spending less and less time in Vinkovci, and when the weather was good he wanted to spend more and more time in a weekend cottage near Rokovci. As a former athlete, he feels very good in nature (forest, river). He is engaged in fishing, fruit growing, and keeping up the garden. He makes his meals himself, and feels himself really „living“ here. Time spent in the weekend cottage physically and emotionally strengthens him. „I used to be an athlete and I am used to this. A person can be active here all day long, doing one thing or another ...“ His friends from Vinkovci visit him by boat in the afternoon or evening. He catches fish for them and grills it. „I love fishing, I love the river ...“. Other members of his family do not share his relationship towards the second home. “My wife comes here only on Sundays in the summer. Then we make barbecue ... That is enough for her, she is a town-child. My son comes here only in the summer on Sundays. He has a lot of work to do. He is a lawyer ... I have a grandson who is 18. He sometimes comes here with his friends to make barbecue“.

Conclusion

From conversations with our informants we were given answers to our start research-questions. Relationships between a person and space, as well as between space and identity are being considered here. When it comes to our informants who speak from a viewpoint of different life experiences and different everyday lives, their decisions to live on two locations were their personal choices, though they were made under the influence of many circumstances. This paper is about a long-term/years-long process of living on two locations, where the relationship towards the space/home changes. The only thing remaining static in a dynamic process of identity construction is the core, the emotional connection towards the space/home. Although their primary home is within the town environment, they show stronger emotional intensity and interest while describing their second homes. It can be easily noticed how their second home, especially for our informants who are older and retired, „emotionally“ becomes their first home. While town surroundings are described as practical but closed and cold, the village is given contrary features. Here is where they feel free, relaxed and satisfied. Here children are given space and company for play all day long, not minding the house rules, while retired people have peace, leisure, and the possibility to grow fruit, vegetables, as well as to make one's own products. Their homes in the urban and rural environments are in a dialectical relationship, in the process of constant intertwining. They are civilians and peasants, producers, at the same time. They cannot give up the comfort of their town life, or the beauty of the nature, air, and their work on the land. This is why we cannot draw a line and create dichotomy between the rural and the urban, especially if the state of human perception and consciousness is being considered. It is also not possible to determine the first and second homes' numeric importance, or to attach primary and secondary meanings to them. Connection with the second home is a complex process for our informants. When they talk about it, they usually evoke memories, permanent remembrances about the moments in life, which have determined them as individuals. When they talk about home, they talk about themselves, people, and events that used to surround them. One cannot escape the impression that this space has created an unbreakable connection with them and is a part of them as well.

As we can see from our informants' stories, this space is filled with life of people who were dear to them, but are no longer alive. With their visits and ways of life it feels as if the family tradition is being kept alive. Home is also an association to the village where they had grown up, with all its festivities and good-neighbourly relationships. Our first informant has included her children in a Cultural club in her native village, and has brought and kept objects from *šokac* style village tradition into her flat, thus showing us how the relationship between the two homes and two environments had not faded. On the contrary, it has strengthened. Slavonia is not the native region of our third informant, but he has gained love towards Slavonian land and fruit-growing through his early socialization. In his return to nature, and in some way also the return to his childhood days, he found his human essence. He also engaged himself in fruit-growing as his father used to do. The second informant, a retired woman, despite the fact that she has a house and a vegetable plot in the town, and it is also more practical for her to live there because of her poor health, lives in an old family house for more than half a week. Here she feels fulfilled and safe. She can visit the village cemetery every day, which is very important to her, because

her parents are buried there. They were very close. Neighbours are also always there to help her. These exact types of situations make this space/place her home.

We can conclude from the above mentioned that human nature is multi-local. People live on several locations, and show interest for combining town life and village surroundings. This is connected with the trend of returning to nature or preserving the village tradition, ecology, etc.²² Home is a house, a space in which a person lives permanently or temporarily, but it is also the village where this house is placed, with all its social institutions, and people who live or have lived there. They are all connected with their home by powerful emotional ties that include relationships with family, friends, and relatives. Home is where the person who creates it, names it, and fills it up with life, lives.

Translated by: Hrvojkica Barlek

²² In Vukovar-Syrmia County, different maybe from other Croatian counties (Zadar, Primorsko-Goranska, Split-Dalmatia Counties) this trend is not as developed, thus our informants and their lives on two locations are rare examples in this region.

8.01 Obiteljska kuća kazivačice i do
nje, kuća svekra i svekrve, (s lijeva na
desno), Ivankovo

*Family house of the interviewed lady, and
next to it, the house of her father-in-law
and mother-in-law (from the left to the
right), Ivankovo*



8.02 Vikendica u vikend naselju
Rokovačke zidine u blizini Rokovaca
*Vacation house in vacation site Rokovci
Walls in the vicinity of Rokovci*

8.03 Stari štagalj u dvorištu, Ivankovo
Old hay-barn in the courtyard, Ivankovo



8.04 Voćnjak pokraj vikendice u naselju Rokovačke zidine u blizini Rokovaca
Orchard next to the vacation house in Rokovci Walls site in the vicinity of Rokovci



8.05 Kazivač peca na rijeci Bosut, u neposrednoj blizini svoje vikendice na Rokovačkim zidinama
Interviewed man who is fishing on the river Bosut, in the nearby vicinity of his vacation house, Rokovci Wall