Jasna Čapo: *"The world is my oyster*: Well-educated Australian-Croatian citizens in the era of global mobilities"

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Abstract

By pointing to the limitations of "*the teleology of the homeland return*" and 'ethnicity' in explaining the post-migration generations' move towards the country of their ancestors, the paper attempts to give mobility *per se* a place within interpretations of migration processes. Specifically, it addresses the case of the relocation of the descendants of Croatian immigrants to Australia to the country of their parents, Croatia. Mobility (hi)stories of the descendants of Croatian immigrants to Australia do not speak in favour of the thesis that by coming to Croatia they respond to existential longing or diasporic yearning for home in today's unstable world. Nor do they indicate that ethnic/national belonging is at the core of their motivation to relocate to Croatia. They point out that their prime motivation embraces travelling — given shape by both the regional and global mobility patterns of their peers, specifically by the culturally shaped tradition of 'overseas experience' or 'working holiday' practiced by young Australians. Since travelling of the descendants of Croatian immigrants to Australia takes place against a background of transnational ways of being and belonging sustained across generations between Australia and Croatia, it has eventually brought them to a decision to relocate to Croatia. Therefore, rather than motivating the relocation itself, ethnic ancestry appears as its facilitator.

No matter whether it is categorized as migration for economic or political reasons, migration is usually viewed as a kind of involuntary move imposed upon an individual on either of the above-mentioned grounds, rather than as a personal choice. We frequently think about migration as an act that nobody would have undertaken had he/she not been forced to do so, either for lack of economic resources or for want of political and/or religious freedom, and the like. With widely documented migrant nostalgia for the abandoned homeland, the dream of eventually returning and the plan of an idealized future in the homeland regained, migrants themselves are contributing to such a view of migration. Adventure, travel, the wish for change and freedom, for getting to know different worlds, escape from family control, search for individuation, and similar, are rarely mentioned as motives for migration. They are attributed to exceptional individuals, elite groups, those that can indulge in such an 'unmotivated' mobility. It is quite inconceivable that people would *want* rather than *be coerced* to migrate. The rhetoric of sedentarism[1] that underlies such views is fairly widespread and familiar; even contemporary transnationally mobile elites cannot escape the widespread narrative that everyone eventually has to find (or to return to) one's harbour, refuge, or "*a tree on which to lean*".[2] Sedentarist logic might explain why migration scholars tended to dwell more on the migrants' "*homing desire*",[3] than on their mobilities as such.

Within such a conception of migration, return to the country of origin, also referred to as "*homecoming*"[4] or even "*profound homecoming*"[5] is viewed as 'desirable' and 'normal'; it is the final act of closing the migration cycle by returning to the starting point.[6] Return is conceptualized as an antipode to the (presumably) mobile life that a person has led.[7] Migration literature even suggests that, if not achieved by the migration generation, the closure is deferred to post-migration generations[8] who realise by this act the

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[1] Comp. Malkki (1992); Brettell (2000); Stefansson (2004).
[2] Čapo Žmegač (2010a).
[3] Brah (1996).
[4] Markowitz & Stefansson (2004).
[5] King & Christou (2010): 111.
[6] Čapo Žmegač (2010b).
[7] Wessendorf (2007); King & Christou (2010).
[8] I will be using this term to indicate that I am dealing with people who were born to the (im)migrant cohorts in the countries of immigration. They themselves do not have a migration history (at least until they resettle themselves). I include under this term people who migrated with their parents while still very young children, but have barely any memory of the life before migration.

unfulfilled dream of their parents.[9] This implies that return to the homeland — but also coming to a "*reconstructed homeland*" where one has never actually lived[10] by the post-migration generations — is not only 'normal' but also 'natural'. It is assumed to be natural because of the seemingly natural, self-evident and strong tie between a person and her/his homeland: the land of origin — or the land of ancestry for post-migration generations, in which encounter that tie will be confirmed and strengthened, or, re-discovered among post-migration generations. That presumed tie is part of taken-for-granted ways of thinking, which root personal identities in particular places and thereby naturalise the relationship between people and the soil of their birth.[11]

The presumption of the lasting link with the homeland is also due to approaching and understanding migrants with an 'ethnic gaze', i.e. taking ethnicity as the central lens for analyses of migrant identities and behaviour.[12] This is the line of thought that was widely criticised as exhibiting methodological nationalism[13] or methodological ethnicity.[14] It assumes that migrants primarily belong to their community of origin, with which they share ethnicity, culture and identity. This belonging is allegedly transferred onto post-migration generations, who, like their parents, are also analysed within this essentialising paradigm.

The ethnic gaze has been criticized for neglecting ways of being as opposed to ways of belonging.[15] It also underestimates other aspects of people's incorporation into the society in which they live: e.g. the *emplacement* of both migration and post-migration generations in their places of residence, in the spaces which go beyond the narrow "*ethnic bubble*"[16] that migrants are sensed to create. Discussions of the hybridity and multiple belonging of post-migration generations have questioned the received viewpoint of stable, unitary, straightforward and exclusive conceptions of their (ethno-national) identity, which bind them to the ancestral country, showing that the actors themselves might reject any ethnic/national labelling.[17] Authors like Floya Anthias have warned that

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[9] King & Christou (2010).
[10] Oxfeld & Long (2004): 4.
[11] Gupta & Ferguson (1992); Malkki (1992); see also Čapo Žmegač (2010b).
[12] Glick Schiller (2005); (2006); (2008); Levitt & Glick Schiller (2004).
[13] Wimmer & Glick Schiller (2003); Glick Schiller (2005); (2006).
[14] Glick Schiller (2008).
[15] Levitt & Glick Schiller (2004); Povrzanović Frykman (2010).
[16] Colic-Peisker (2008).
[17] Čapo Žmegač (2005); King & Christou (2010).

ethnic essentialism remains residual even in the idea of fragmented and multiple identities and have proposed operating with the notions of location and positioning rather than identity.[18] It is therefore surprising that the ethnic factor reappears surreptitiously in academic writings explaining the post-migration generations' settlement in the country of their ancestors as a kind of 'return', 'roots' or similar type of mobility. This paper is a contribution to anti-ethnicised explanations of post-migration generations' mobilities. It suggests that the mobility of the post-migration generations can be seen as part of "*the new map of global mobility*"[19] rather than as a type of 'ethnic(ised) return'.

By pointing to the limitations of "*the teleology of the homeland return*" and 'ethnicity' in explaining the post-migration generations' move towards the country of their ancestors, it attempts to give mobility *per se* a place within interpretations of migration processes. Specifically, it addresses the case of the relocation of the descendants of Croatian immigrants to Australia to the country of their parents, Croatia. The argument is based on considering the life histories of several such individuals, with university diplomas, more or less experience in the Australian and/or British business world, prone to travelling and discovering new worlds, who upon repeated visits to Croatia – and after submitting it to careful scrutiny – decided to move there, independently of their parents who remained in the country of their immigration. The paper is then about Australian-Croatians or Croatian-Australians, the citizens of both Australia and Croatia, who consider "*the world to be their oyster*", the place of opportunity that they are invited to explore and take advantage of.

'Return': ancestral, roots, deferred and/or counter-diasporic migration

How should we conceive of the relocation of the descendants of Croatian immigrants to Australia to the country of origin of their parents? Rare qualitative analyses dealing with European migrants and diasporas, consider such a move to be "*the somewhat unusual circumstance of the 'return' of the second generation to the land of their parents*"[20] and an "extreme case" of migration.[21] Scholars have named such a relocation 'return' and 'ancestral' or 'roots migration'.[22] These labels imply that descendants of migrants settle

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[18] Anthias (2002).
[19] King & Christou (2010).
[20] King & Christou (2010): 104.
[21] Wessendorf (2007): 1084.
[22] King (2000); Christou (2006); Wessendorf (2007).

in their parents' (or more broadly ancestors') homeland, in which they have never lived before, but which they reconstruct and imagine as their own homeland and place in which roots can be discovered and unravelled.

Specifically, Wessendorf accounts in the following way for the decision of the descendants of Italian immigrants in Switzerland to come and live in Italy: "*notions of belonging and homeland can have a powerful influence on the choices members of the second generation make regarding their place of residence.*" They were forged through transnational and trans local practices by way of which the descendants were regularly exposed to contact with their parents' country of origin; they were also nurtured by "*their parents' longing for, and fantasies about, Italy*".[23] A third explanatory factor for the relocation to Italy is suggested to be a reaction to the intensely mobile lifestyle of their childhood and adolescence.[24] The latter interpretation gives another layer of meaning to the label 'roots migration': it not only reflects that migrants 'return' to where their parents come from but also their aspiration to settle in just one place, to 'root' themselves and cease to lead mobile lives.[25] I suggest that these explanations contain a sedentarist bias, equate the ways of belonging and ways of being of post-migration generations, as well as they misunderstand the conceptions of 'homeland' and belonging of the descendants of migrants.[26]

Another relocation, that of Greek diaspora offspring to Greece, has been interpreted as a "*cross-generational deferral of return*".[27] Since it is in 'the second generation' — among those that can be called 'the children of diaspora' — that the migrant dream of return is fulfilled the authors suggest what they deem to be a more appropriate label for such mobility — "*counter-diasporic migration*".[28] However, occasionally they still call it

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[23] Wessendorf (2007), the quotes from 1084 and 1088.

[24] Wessendorf (2007): 1091. This is a surprising statement when applied to Italians in Switzerland, reiterated by King & Christou (2010) for the Greeks in Germany. My experience and research with Croatians in Germany does not allow for a similar conclusion, and yet there are a lot of similarities among these migration cases. The migrant generation emigrated and stayed in Germany for more than 30 or 40 years; together with their descendants they became emplaced in the German setting (they would rarely change it at some point in their life), although they regularly visited the migrant generation's homeland once or twice a year for more or less extended periods. Only those migrants who had family (e.g. wife and children) in the homeland might be termed highly mobile, for they visited the family at regular intervals, sometimes as frequently as twice a month.

[25] Wessendorf (2007): 1091.

[26] See e.g. Čapo Žmegač (2005).

[27] King & Christou (2010): 116.

[28] The language of the 'first', 'second' or 'subsequent' generations, though most widely used to describe the descendants of migrants, can be misleading, Gardner (2012): 900. While it may be

'second-generation return'. Their argument revolves around notions such as 'belonging', 'identity', 'place', and 'search for home' and involves finality, ethnic essentialism and sedentarism in understanding both the 'returns' in question and the implications of the above-mentioned notions for the mobile people. This is exemplified in the suggestions that "*second generation returnees*" seek "*a final resting-place against their existential anxiety about their in-betweenness and where they belong*" and that theirs is "*an act of resistance against hypermobility and dislocation.*"[29] Interestingly, individual voices, which intersect the authors' interpretations, seem to speak in favour of more complex analyses of their experiences.

With the help of Jill Ahrens, the same authors have somewhat extended their argument in another paper.[30] They identify three main motivations for the relocation of persons with Greek ancestry to Greece. The first — "*emotional attachment to Greece and the Greek way of life*" resonates with an essentialised presumption of "*strong ethnic-community identity*", which creates an "*affective bond with the Greek homeland* ", while the third — high education-seems to be rather a 'facilitator' than a 'driver' for the relocation.[31] By recognizing another possible factor — a life-course event or "*the wish to detach from an oppressive family situation*" — the authors step out of the current mode of interpreting the post-migration generations' relocation to the country of their ancestors as a kind of "*ethnic return*"[32] and 'rooting'.

This short review more or less sums up existent ethnographic approaches to the phenomenon of the relocation of post-migration generations to the country of their ancestors in the European context. Significantly, none mentions global mobilities and adventure, or considers that the country of ancestral origin might be chosen as a place to live after other places had been given a try. This paper argues that what has brought a number of Australians and South Africans with Croatian ancestry to Croatia

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controversial to what generation a person exactly belongs (for an explanation, see Gardner, *ibid*.), I find it more problematic that this label describes young people who are native-born, raised and educated — and maybe have never even moved out of their country of birth — first and foremost as the descendants of immigrants and thus a sort of migrants themselves, the label which has derogatory and exclusionary societal overtones. By using such a vocabulary the scholars are unintentionally contributing to the tagging of native-born individuals as a special group of people, indeed as a group that needs special study and attention.

[29] King & Christou (2010): 109-10.
[30] King *et al.* (2011).
[31] King *et al.* (2011): 499.
[32] The notion of 'ethnic return' also appears with regard to the mobility of the descendants to the ancestral country. See Tsuda (2004) and my critique Čapo Žmegač (2010c).

is a mixture of the desire to travel, search for adventure and contemporary global mobilities. At the core of their relocation to Croatia is not their ethnic ancestry and belonging. That country is made *available* as a destination for their relocation by *the coincidence* that the parents or grandparents, or even great-grandparents were born there. This fact brought them to Croatia in the first place, among other travel and living arrangements that they undertook in various countries. This does not mean that they did not have any emotional tie to Croatia; they did have a sense of Croatian ancestry — and felt 'foreign' in an Australian context — but rather than accepting this as a given that would drive them to Croatia, they took it as an opportunity to check if their wish to move could be satisfied in Croatia. That is why they compared the lifestyle and opportunities it offers with other countries and that is why they tried living there before eventually deciding to settle in Croatia.

I do not claim that these persons are in any way *typical* of young people with Croatian ancestry who relocate to Croatia, or of any other diaspora group. Admittedly, those individuals of post-migration generations, who relocated earlier in the 1990s to participate in the Croatian war for independence and building of the State, had other major motives for doing so: they came out of a mix of motives: attachment to Croatia, curiosity, a sense of adventure, by accident, etc.[33] A myriad of motives, themselves in different relationships and hierarchies, were guiding their decision to become combatants in the war taking place in the country that they knew only from their parents' narratives. However, to decipher theirs and the motives of those who have arrived within the last decade uniquely within an ethnic lens would be deceitful. I suggest that we need to pay heed to the complexity and heterogeneity of the individual subject positions and realities of the relocation of post-migration generations at different times and in different contexts, allowing for the presence of an ethnic factor but not neglecting others.

In tune with these remarks, I do not use the language of 'return'. The denomination 'counter-diasporic migration' is no more appealing, because it

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[33] This paper is part of an ongoing project on documenting the migration trajectories of migrant-returnees and their descendants who, independently of their parents or with them, relocated to Croatia after it proclaimed independence in 1991. The idea is to document ethnographically their motives for resettlement, ideas held about Croatia prior to and after resettlement, future plans, ways of integration in the society, etc. Due to its long-established and worldwide diaspora, Croatia provides a laboratory for comparative research into migration and settlement (more extensively see Čapo Žmegač (2010b). The project presumes that heterogeneous articulations of the Croatian diaspora worldwide breed equally complex and divergent experiences of relocation processes to Croatia.

implies the finality of relocation and the cessation of the diasporic condition. Neither the first nor the second can be substantiated by the data discussed here. In addition, when speaking of the diasporic condition, it is legitimate to ask which diaspora are we talking about: the Croatian or the Australian one? If speaking from the Croatian point of view, the relocation under discussion qualifies as 'counter-diasporic migration'; but from the equally relevant Australian viewpoint, it results in an emergent Australian diaspora in its own right.

The subjects of this paper are Australians/Croatians — the descendants of Croatian immigrants to Australia who have come to live in Croatia. It is the stories of six such persons, one of whom re-migrated to Australia, as well as meetings with several other persons in Zagreb and in Melbourne with Australian-Croatian backgrounds that are the basis of this paper. I met my interview partners on several formal and informal occasions and I used Skype to talk to the person who re-migrated to Australia. All interviews were done in Croatian, which my interlocutors speak very well, though sometimes with a foreign intonation and occasionally making a mistake or two or introducing an English word or expression. Croatian — or better, a dialect thereof spoken by parents — was the language used at home in Australia, so that upon arrival in Croatia they had a rather good knowledge of it. Occasionally, I shall refer to two persons with Croatian ancestry who come from South Africa.[34] These grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Dalmatian emigrants to South Africa share similar circumstances and motivations for settling in Croatia as do their Australian counterparts.

Mobility and location

My Australian interlocutors are five women and one man, between the ages of 30 and 50. Four were born in Australia to parents of Croatian origin: two came to Australia with their parents as very young children.[35] They are architects (two), an electronics engineer, a social scientist, a language teacher, and a communications specialist by occupation; they all finished university education in Australia (Sydney, Melbourne, Perth). Except for one person who, after 12 years spent in Croatia relocated to Australia in 2011, they have all lived in Zagreb between three and fifteen years. They came to

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[34] In distinction to the Australian-Croatians, the interviews were carried out in English; in one case the person did not speak Croatian, in another the conversation spontaneously started — and remained — in English, with occasional Croatian insertions.

[35] In migration research, there are referred to as the '1.5 migrant generation'.

Croatia in their late twenties or early thirties. One person has a family, one is divorced with a grown-up child, and the others are single.

The parents of my interlocutors—four of whom belong to two sibling sets — originate from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia; except in one sibling case where the parents had university degrees, they belong to the post-WW II workers' cohort of Croatian immigrants to Australia.[36] In one case, the father fled Yugoslavia via Austria in the 1960s and became politically active in Australia. Visits to Croatia or Herzegovina were practically inexistent (it could have been once in a lifetime, during the Yugoslav period, that part of or the whole family would go for a visit), but contacts with relatives were kept up in spite of the distance and, before the introduction of the Internet, quite expensive means of communication. The parents would tell the children about their birthplaces overseas, some would convey an image of modest village life, which seemed romantic and hard to fathom to my interlocutors; allegedly none of the parents dwelled on the idea of returning, though there were some hints at it after Croatia gained independence. As is often the case, it was the father who wanted to return to Croatia, while the mother wanted to stay where the children and grandchildren were.[37] None of the parents has returned; in one case it is the children who have been a catalyst for the parents' decision to envisage the return. The children grew up knowing they were Croatians and recognizing that, because of their ancestry, they were in some way different from their schoolmates; this was especially the experience of those who attended private schools (five of them). The transnational experience of my interlocutors was an integral part of their growing up, but rather than being corporeal and direct, it was mediated by parental narratives and visual materials, such as pictures.

The interviewees visited Croatia for the first time at the end of their teenage years or in their early twenties. The first visit might have been a family trip undertaken by the whole family before or after Croatia became independent. Or it might have been an individual one, as when a then-young Australian-Croatian won a competition to attend a course of Croatian language in Croatia and decided that, in spite of the war, she would take this opportunity to get to know the parental country. Another person was engaged as a journalist in the early days of the foundation of the Croatian state. That brought her to Croatia for the first time in 1992, at the age of 22. Since the

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[36] Comp. Colic-Peisker (2008).
[37] Comp. Čapo Žmegač (2004).

first visit to the parental homeland came rather late, impressions were stark and unforgettable.[38]

Except in one case, in which coming to Croatia was linked with the person's engagement in 'the building of the State', it was the perception of the geographical isolation of Australia ("*It's far away, you feel trapped, you can't get out*") and a desire for travelling that brought the interviewees to Croatia later, either as part of a backpacking tour[39] across Europe or maybe as part of attending a football championship somewhere in Europe. During high school or university education, they were working part-time and saving money that would enable them to travel to Europe; during university studies they were more flexible in arranging travel:

> "*When I started the university, I started working and calculating about how to travel. I was not only attracted to Croatia, I wanted to travel everywhere. I was interested in travelling. (...) At the end of the second year of university, in 2002, I came. It was summer over there. I stayed for two months. I travelled to Ireland, Germany and Croatia for Christmas and New Year, also Bosnia and Herzegovina, and then went to Canada where my dad has an aunt.*"

Securing a job in England was another way of getting to the travelling goal — Europe. The interviewees either held jobs in Australia which enabled them to work in England, or they looked for a job over there in their capacity as Commonwealth citizens.[40] While in some cases this was linked to a plan of moving to Croatia, or at least of being close enough to visit it more often and travel around Europe, working in the UK was for some a project in itself, with the goal of gaining more work experience or being exposed to interesting and exciting professional projects. An architect claims that one has to leave Australia in order to enhance professional knowledge in one's

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[38] Comp. Vathi & King (2011): 504.

[39] Backpacking as a way of landing in Croatia appeared in several conversations. In one, it served as a metaphor of how one comes to Croatia and eventually stays. However, except in the case of a male from South Africa who indeed came with a backpack to see what it was like — and stayed — people more often decided to settle in Croatia after rather long deliberations and careful preparations (see below).

[40] Due to historical ties between Australia and the UK, young Australian citizens are entitled to privileged, albeit temporary (one year), working stays in that country.

field.[41] With no previous plan of moving to Croatia, after regular visits to it from England where he came on a working visa in order to gain professional experience, he saw work opportunities in Croatia, started a project there and has been living there for more than ten years. The decision to move from England to Croatia was different for another person: she and her husband, also of Croatian origin, decided that Croatia would be a better place to start a family than England, where they had been living for two years. The person who had been engaged in Croatia since the early 1990s and who settled there some seven or eight years later, claims that her basic motive for both was "*the adrenalin involved in this adventure.*"

Most of my interlocutors had been deliberating on settling in Croatia, and did not make this decision abruptly, but took their time. The attractive summer aura encouraged them to make repeated visits to Croatia every second year, if they still lived in Australia or more frequently if they were already in the UK. After each visit the country appealed to them more and more. However, realising that the summertime might not be representative of life in Croatia, some undertook visits at other times of the year. One person was visiting Croatia from Australia every two years, staying for a month or two, and every time "*it would not be enough*", that is, she wanted to stay longer and would ask her boss in Australia for permission to prolong her vacation. One year she stayed for seven months, and since, again, "*it was not enough*" she stayed for another five and then decided that she would come to live in Croatia. Here is how she explains what attracted her to decide to relocate to Zagreb after a year of living there:

> "*I'm obviously the type of person who loves something new, now I don't know any more, I like that it is… What was is that I liked in that first year? I don't know, I fell one hundred per cent in love with Zagreb, with Europe. I like the fact that the cities have a history, I love it that the city is so small that I can get almost everywhere on foot, I love it that when a city is small you can live more easily, whatever you are doing you end up having coffee, that's what I love. That social way of life has not been lost here. It's healthy for me … people here carry somewhat fewer burdens because they can sit and talk more often. I liked*

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[41] Compare with the Australian and New Zealand concept of 'cultural cringe', whereby things done or achieved overseas are necessarily better than those done at home, Wilson *et al.* (2009): 170.

> *the fact that I could walk around alone at night and not be scared. Sometimes in Sydney I used to run from the car to the house! (...) I had the feeling during that year here that I could walk to my flat at 10 and 11 o'clock [at night]. There's always time to have a coffee, not that the people are lazy but that it is sufficiently important in life that everyone finds the time to do that. I loved it that already at five o'clock in the afternoon you could see children in town with their parents. You can't manage that in Sydney, it's a large city. I have almost a day extra here per week because I don't have to spend time travelling the way I used to [in Sydney].*"

Her sister also visited the country at regular intervals until she was sure she liked it better than living in Australia. After leaving Croatia and returning to Australia, she would start comparing life in the two places, and at one point she realized that "*I was living there, while thinking about the life here*" and that this was not good for her:

> "*Back in Australia and again I would feel that something was missing, I did not like the feeling that I was living there, and thinking only of this here. It's not a healthy life to be yearning for something. I realised that it was not good for me. When you live somewhere then you have a responsibility towards that country, that you love that country. When I am there, I loved this [Croatia] more, that's not fair to Australia, to live somewhere, while your heart is elsewhere.*"[42]

That is how she made the decision to start looking for a job in an Australian firm that would have an office in England to which she would apply, and that would bring her closer to Croatia where she wanted to live. Both women took time to get to know Croatia and making a decision to live there — though they are siblings they made their decisions independently; the process of decision-making lasted for about six to eight years; today they do not regret their decisions.

In sum, the decision to leave Australia — for travelling and eventually also (temporarily) living somewhere abroad — was brought once university

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[42] This is probably a parental narrative. A researcher frequently hears from migrants that that is how they live: "*with the body in one place, and the heart in another*." Only some of them manage to reconcile this rift.

education had been finished, opportunities for a good job in Australia exhausted or deemed better in England (or elsewhere), or when interest in living elsewhere won over living in Australia. The prerequisites for eventually making a decision to move to Croatia were gaining work experience, saving money and/or checking if Croatia was a liveable place.

When they arrived in Croatia, some had already found a job — outside or within their profession, others had not yet done so but lived off savings while looking for one. They were prepared to take any job offered, even if it did not match the university degree that they held. Often, this implied teaching English in one of the private language schools in which Zagreb abounds, free-lance translation, taking care of children with whom they would speak English, working at the Australian Embassy, etc. For some, finding a stable, long-term job is still pending, while some are unsatisfied with their current job. Trying to keep up their standard of living, or improving it, some have started private businesses, which have sometimes ended badly. Precarious, unsatisfactory or non-existent employment, together with expensive apartment rental, possibly also family or personal matters, are the main reasons for contemplating or effectuating relocation to Australia. While experiencing almost all of these, the young woman from South Africa who arrived a year ago is still intent on staying and starting her own business. Those whose preparations to settle in Croatia included the provision of an apartment are somewhat more at ease in today's difficult economic situation and less prone to consider leaving.

None of the persons chose the parental region or town of origin as her/his residence in Croatia; those range from the Dalmatian islands and coastal towns to small villages or townships in Slavonia or Herzegovina. For these well-educated professionals settling there was not at all an option, no matter how much those places appealed to them in terms of natural beauty or as an extended family abode: if one was to come to live in Croatia, the capital city was perceived as the only viable solution for finding a job. Zagreb has an additional appeal, for it is "*neither big nor small*", fulfilling a desire for urban living and a certain lifestyle.

All the interviewees like living in Zagreb and enumerate long lists of positive aspects about it and the life in Croatia in general.[43] The common

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[43] This does not mean that they are satisfied with broader societal developments; they are critical about political and economic decisions, doubt the usefulness of Croatia's entry into the EU, wonder at the (dys)functional legal system and a widespread disrespect of law, the use of politics in the service of economic gain, reliance of the country on import in all domains, etc. Most of their comments and opinions on such issues come from having lived in a western-European style

denominator of attractions that made them come and stay, some of which are detailed in a quote above, is the (*leisurely*) *lifestyle*, sometimes referred to as 'European', sometimes as 'Croatian': less necessity for time management, more free time, people taking time to meet and talk ("*drink coffee*"), a possibility to live in the "*middle*" – neither homeless and unemployed nor coerced to running after ever higher salaries, which do not leave one a spare moment for oneself, possibilities for travelling, proximity of other countries, safety, and similar. Fear of a "*monetary shock*" was replaced by a "*positive shock*" because of a more relaxed life that they have. A Croatian South African said that nowhere in the world can one find such a good balance between the quality of life and the amount of money earned; that, coupled with safety issues and an excellent setting for raising a child, are for this and other persons the main reasons for remaining in Croatia.

Definitely, settling in Croatia did not bring them material gain ("*Had I been interested in money, I wouldn't have come here*", said one person); actually if anything, they have a lower economic standard compared to the one they had or would have had in Australia. Since the crisis started, some say that they "*are managing*". A somewhat lower material standard is compensated for by other factors mentioned above, which they prioritise and value more highly than monetary gain:

> "*Although I still have some of what I saved in London, it's not much. And I have changed, too, I realise that I do not have to buy everything that appeals to me, one lives in a smaller flat and as far as money is concerned, yes — I have less, but my [living] standard is still good. (…) The objective differs here from the one there, it is more highly thought of there that you have a permanent job, that you are promoted and have the money to travel more or buy a house, or a new car, blah blah, that doesn't interest me. I don't regret that, but I am still thinking a bit about the future, one day I shall need something more significant…*"

Having lost her job and judging that her potential was not being put to full use in Croatia, one person recently went back to Australia after 12 years spent in Croatia. Together with her husband and children, another one is contemplating such a move. This is a difficult decision to make, because they

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of democracy, i.e. Australia, but are nevertheless shared by other Croatian citizens without migrant backgrounds.

have lived in Zagreb for the past eight years and like it very much. But their inability to secure their own apartment during that time and the unemployment of one spouse, as well as some private issues, might force them to reverse mobility. At the moment of our encounter, the spouses were weighing the pros and cons of such a move. The woman is afraid that that might be a very "*final move*"*,* because Australia is "*such a far-away country*" and because she and the husband are around 40, an age after which she thinks it might become more difficult to migrate and start anew.

That couple chose to live in Croatia to found a family; they did not know whether they would stay for good or not. After long deliberations, another woman claims that once she had made the decision, it was definitive. After three years she has not changed her mind. The others are open-minded regarding whether they would stay in Croatia or not and where they could live in the future. The person who went to Australia said: "*I knew that I could always go back, perhaps that is also why I stayed so long, to see how long I could stick it out in Croatia!*" Another one had the following to say:

> "*Mother and Father don't believe that we will stay, they think we will change our minds, now they see that we won't. My sister told me that she won't, she has been in Australia, has experienced that, now it's time for something new. I never know where I shall end up! I can see that I am a better and healthier person here than I was in Australia and that suits me. Perhaps I shall not live here my entire life, but I think that this way of life in Europe suits me better than life in Australia.*"

JČ: "*But that doesn't mean that you are going to stay here for good?*"

> "*I am not that sort of person by nature, perhaps I shall [stay] but I shall never tell myself that. I like to think that I have a million options, **the world is my oyster** [bolded part spoken in English]. So far, I don't see anywhere else beyond this. It really suits me.*"

Like the person who did go back, she keeps open the option of returning to Australia — "*the land of opportunity*" as another person said — and thinks that if she remains jobless in Croatia she can always go to Australia and find a job. If that were to happen, she wants to be able to show potential Australian employers that the time spent abroad was used for the benefit of learning: "*You can't return with a blank CV.*" Actually, precisely for that

reason, three persons have been enrolled in long-distance graduate programs in Australia or the UK.

The issue as to where he will end up living appears somewhat different for the man in this sample. He has already arranged to live in both countries, with "*one leg*" in each place: the company that he owns operates in both locations, and once or twice a year, for the sake of developing a project, he spends several weeks in Australia. This 'double base' has the function of spreading out the business risk ("*You have to ensure yourself, you can't be on just one market, I can also go to Dubai, to China.*"), but also of keeping in touch with both places and the family who live in both places. Another woman could not "*make the clean cut*" (meaning to leave Croatia and go to Australia): when the economic situation squeezed her in 2011, she decided to stay and enhance her earnings by opening a private business, while retaining her regular job. Her hope is that this will enable her not only to remain in Croatia, but also to spend several months of the year in Australia, visiting her aging parents. Both individuals are thus planning or already realising double emplacement, practicing a transnational style of living, while others keep their options open, and count on going to Australia if economic needs should become a pressing factor. As mentioned, one person has already done this.[44]

The prospects of staying or leaving seem to be open for these people: while Australia appears as a safety net for the Australians, South Africa is not a wishful destination, mostly for security reasons. But this does not mean that South Africans are stuck in Croatia: they choose to live there at the moment, and if need be, can move elsewhere. Having lived in the United States, Korea, Ireland, Italy, etc. they already have a rich mobility history.

Australian/Croatian diaspora makes use of a cultural tradition

Mobility (hi)stories of these descendants of Croatian immigrants to Australia do not speak in favour of the thesis that by coming to Croatia they respond to existential longing or diasporic yearning for home in today's unstable world.[45] Nor do they indicate that ethnic/national belonging is at the core of their motivation to relocate to Croatia. They point out that their prime motivation embraces travelling — given shape by both the regional and global mobility patterns of their peers. Since travelling takes place against a background of transnational ways of being and belonging sustained across

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[44] After the paper was written I found out that the couple contemplating leaving for Australia had indeed left.
[45] Winland (2007).

generations between Australia and Croatia, it has eventually brought them to a decision to relocate to Croatia.

These young, well-educated individuals have a desire for travelling and getting to know the world beyond their country of birth, itself a far-away and isolated continent-island. It is the European continent — part of which is Croatia, the country of origin of their parents — that exerts special attraction, not only to them, but also to other young Australians and the neighbouring New Zealanders.[46] The historical colonial ties of these two countries with the United Kingdom and special provisions for their young citizens allowing them to live and work temporarily in the country "*which not long ago they called the home country*" have given rise to a form of migration by young urban professionals toward the UK, especially to London as a global city.[47] In New Zealand, this 'working holiday', which lasts for two to three years and combines both elements of work and leisure, has evolved into a cultural tradition which is known under the name 'overseas experience'.[48]

As Australian citizens — and as part of the Australian multicultural middle class[49] — the persons with Croatian ancestry who settle in Croatia are not only part of today's Australian emigration toward the UK and Europe — in legal terms, they belong to today's Australian diaspora overseas, but they also replicate the mobility patterns of the Australian multicultural middle class to which they belong. Mobility of this class is selective for young, well-educated and/or high-earning urban professionals, who have become a globally mobile group of people.[50] Their search for work experience and adventure beyond the familiar home country space has components of a rite of passage[51] and/or personal individuation.[52] This rite of passage embraces a physical passage, the crossing of a border and living elsewhere; this is also true for well-educated Croatian-Australians who, after a prolonged period that sometimes extends over several years of travelling back and forth and living in at least three countries (Australia — England — Croatia), make a

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[46] Conradson & Latham (2005); Hugo (2006); Wilson *et al.* (2009).

[47] Hugo (2006).

[48] Wilson *et al.* (2009). The working holiday also works in the other direction since Australia has arranged for a working holiday programme that enables young citizens of arrangement countries to holiday and work in Australia for up to 12 months, Clarke (2005).

[49] Colic-Peisker (2010). She suggests that the descendants of Croatian immigrants to Australia have managed to outgrow the parental 'ethnic bubble' and enter the Australian mainstream society.

[50] Hugo (2006): 110.

[51] Hugo (2006); Wilson *et al.* (2009).

[52] Conradson & Latham (2005).

decision to settle in Croatia. This concludes the passage from one to another life stage in a real and metaphoric sense. The relocation — which at least for some time appears more permanent — makes them different from their New Zealand or Australian peers who do not settle overseas at the end of their travels, but return to their countries of origin.

Had it not been the country of origin of their parents, Croatia would not have shown up on the overseas roadmap of these young Australians. Ancestral ties were indeed a motive and an argument for visiting Croatia, but there is no convincing hint that ancestry and ethnicity played a decisive role in their decision to settle in Croatia. If anything, they opened up the possibility for another destination country in which they could satisfy their desire for travel, exploring the new, gaining experience and living an adventure. These people took advantage of the opportunity to get to know the country, and only once they had familiarised themselves with it and checked whether they liked living there, did they make the decision to settle. Economic considerations do not seem to have had a prominent place at the moment of decision-making, but could become important when the economic situation deteriorates and the person sees no other way out but to re-migrate to Australia or elsewhere. Such a prospect is kept open and actively supported by continuing long-distance education either at Australian or British universities.

All the persons in question exhibit a strong will to 'manage the risk'[53] involved in moving to Croatia. The risk is mitigated to a certain extent by their having Croatian citizenship, which entitles them to settling and working in Croatia for an unlimited period, unlike in other European countries, and facilitates the solving of specific locally defined situations and issues. As we have seen, it is also made less severe by their liking the 'Croatian lifestyle'.

I suggest, therefore, that migration by these Croatian Australians to Croatia is the result of a combination of the above-mentioned factors, with the desire to travel and the culturally shaped 'working holiday' experience occupying the first rank, with ethnic ancestry opening up the possibility rather than motivating the relocation itself. Their mobility and relocation were made possible by the individuals' high potential for mobility,[54] which stems from their age, education, belonging to the urban multicultural middle

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[53] An interlocutor spoke of risk management: "*I came to try it here, it's like risk management. My father prepared me that I would be somewhat different here, that I would not be received with open arms, but he told me I should be patient. So it was!*"
[54] Sometimes called 'motility', Hannam *et al.* (2006); King *et al.* (2011).

class and integration into Australian cultural practices, and transnational ties with Croatia.[55]

Though these people are not in any statistical sense representative of Australian-Croatian citizens who relocate to Croatia — statistical representation is not a methodology suited for anthropological interpretations in any case — the attitudes regarding relocation to Croatia that they share together with their peers from South Africa are not just idiosyncratic and highly individualistic. They reflect worldviews and opportunities of middle-class, well-educated, young people, regardless of nationality whose very characteristics allow for mobile lifestyles in an era conducive to such lifestyles. The existence of such a class of Australian-Croatian citizens of post-migration generations calls for transcending the usual interpretation of their move to Croatia as a response to 'homeland calling' and opens up a possibility for its understanding within the present day global mobilities. In this case, they are embedded in certain cultural traditions linking the global South with the North.

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[55] Along with all of these factors, except for the last one, parents' empowerment for mobility is very low, which, among other things, might explain why they do not initiate the relocation.

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Sažetak

Upućujući na ograničenost čimbenika kao što su 'teleologija domovinskog povratka' i 'etničnost' pri tumačenju kretanja poslijemigracijskih generacija prema zemlji njihovih predaka, ovaj

radi želi dati mobilnosti *per se* mjesto unutar interpretacija migracijskih procesa. Konkretnije, bavi se preseljenjem potomaka hrvatskih imigranata u Australiju u zemlju njihovih roditelja — Hrvatsku. Rad se bazira na razmatranju životnih priča nekoliko takvih individua, sa sveučilišnim diplomama, s manje ili više iskustva u australskom i britanskom poslovnom svijetu, osoba sklonih putovanjima, koje su se nakon ponovljenih posjeta Hrvatskoj — i nakon što su je podvrgli strogoj procjeni — odlučile u nju doseliti, neovisno o svojim roditeljima koji i nadalje žive u Australiji, zemlji u koju su imigrirali prije nekoliko desetljeća.

Priče i povijest mobilnosti potomaka hrvatskih imigranata u Australiju ne govore u prilog tezi da ti ljudi dolaze u Hrvatsku potaknuti 'egzistencijalnom čežnjom' za domom i domovinom, čežnjom za koju se pretpostavlja da gaje dijaspore u današnjem nestabilnom svijetu. One ne potvrđuju ni tezu da je etnička/nacionalna pripadnost u središtu njihove motivacije da se nastane u Hrvatskoj. Želja za putovanjem i upoznavanjem novih svjetova, posebice onih u Europi, pokazuje se kao primarni čimbenik mobilnosti ovih osoba.

Njihova su putovanja između ostaloga oblikovana regionalnim obrascima mobilnosti, posebice kulturnom tradicijom tzv. 'prekooceanskog iskustva' ili 'radnog odmora' — koju prakticiraju njihovi australski i novozelandski vršnjaci uslijed povijesnih veza koje imaju s Ujedinjenim kraljevstvom. Budući da se putovanja potomaka hrvatskih useljenika u Australiju odvijaju u sjeni njihovih transnacionalnih načina bivanja i pripadanja što su generacijama održavani između Australije i Hrvatske, razumljivo je da su putujući u Europu posjetili i Hrvatsku, te da su se neki od njih tamo odlučili naseliti. No, autorica smatra kako je ta činjenica sekundarna u odnosu na glavni motiv njihove mobilnosti — putovanje.