

Saša Božić: “Is There a Croatian Diaspora in Europe? From ‘Gastarbeiters’ to Transmigrants and Ethnics”

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Abstract

The aim of the article is to explore the types of diasporan action and practices and to compare the findings with the existing types of activities, orientations and collective actions of the Croatian migrants and their descendants in Europe in order to determine what types of social forms are generally present and prevail among Croatians in Europe. During the war in Croatia from 1991 to 1995 the practices of Croatian migrants resembled closely the ideal-typical diaspora. However, the intensity and extent of migrants' activities and engagement for the homeland declined in the last decade. The majority of Croatian associations in Europe are focusing presently on the preservation of Croatian identity among Croatian migrants and institutionalisation of Croatian ethnicity as well as ethnic gathering and cultural events in the form of interaction rituals. Croatians in Europe, particularly younger generations, are latent diasporans and only socially and politically important processes in the homeland can reawaken the Croatian diaspora in the new host societies.

Key words: diaspora, Croatian diaspora, Croatian migrant organisations, Croatia, Croatian migrants

Introduction: diaspora vs. numbers

The question in the title might seem dubious considering the number of Croatians in the European countries that is usually mentioned in articles, books and official documents. *The Strategy for the relations of the Republic of Croatia with Croatians outside of the Republic of Croatia*¹ mentions 350,000 members of the Croatian minority in 12 European countries, 400,000 Croats in Bosnia Herzegovina and 3 million Croatian expatriates among which 2 million live overseas. Simple official calculation assumes that there are at least a million Croatian expatriates and at least 1.7 million individuals with Croatian identity in European immigration countries. Yet the question remains – can we count all Croatian migrants and their descendants, members of minorities, as members of a diaspora? Do they consider themselves to be diasporans? Do they gather around typical diasporan platforms and programmes dedicating their time, activities and resources to the homeland or do they have other priorities and act accordingly?

Journalists, social scientists and politicians in Croatia apparently see all members of Croatian minorities in Europe as well as all migrants and their descendants as part of a single Croatian national entity. Such views are usually shared among the communally active who engage in ethnic networking and institutionalisation of Croatian organisations. Within such views the nation evolved into a trans-nation,² i.e. a nation that grew beyond its own state and that now has two major sectors – homeland and diaspora. A simplified view of the nation, homeland and diaspora tends to reify identities and overlooks the complexity of self-identification of Croatian migrants and their descendants, as well as the self-identification of members of Croatian ethnic minorities in the European countries. Even if all migrants and their descendants retained a strong ethnic and national identity it is hardly possible that they all imagine a global Croatian trans-nation as an integrated community. Their activities, or the lack of activities, as well as the scope of ties on a transnational level do not confirm the existence of a Croatian trans-nation.³ Members of Croatian national minorities in the European countries, such as the Burgenland Croats in Austria,⁴ often perceive themselves as a linguistic minority and as ‘distant relatives’ to Croatians, while Croatia as a

¹ MVPEI (2011): 1.

² Tölölyan (2001); Laguerre (1999).

³ Božić (2005).

⁴ Božić (2000).

nation-state is not seen as a homeland. Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina are not migrants who left the homeland but a constitutive nation of Bosnia and Herzegovina who (still) might believe⁵ that Bosnia and Herzegovina, as their homeland, is or should be a part of the Croatian state.

The public actors who proclaim a programmatic division of the Croatian nation into homeland and diaspora sectors and hypostasize a Croatian trans-nation also do not take into consideration the actual orientation and activities of migrants and their descendants. They do not verify whether migrants and members of the Croatian minority in European countries engage in typical diasporan or other types of joint action. Consequently, the mentioned *Strategy of the Republic of Croatia* presumes active participation of diasporans in the social and political life in Croatia⁶ without any reference to the actual goals and activities of the ‘targeted’ population, or their capacity to organize and (re)orientate themselves towards the homeland. The *Strategy* was officially ‘upgraded’ to a law in July 2011.

Official presumptions about the nature of migrant action and the ambitions of Croatian expatriates lack a clear insight into the form of organisation of collective action among Croatians in European countries. The aim of this article is to explore the types of diasporan action and practices and to compare the findings of these explorations with the existing types of activities, orientations and collective actions of the Croatian migrants and their descendants in Europe in order to determine what types of social forms are generally present and prevail among Croatians in Europe. In order to fulfil this aim it is necessary to try to determine the boundaries of diaspora as a social form towards other types of social action and social organisation of migrants and their descendants and to extract clear indicators for the typical diasporan action. It will then be possible to determine whether joint action on the part of Croatian migrants and their descendants in Europe really fits the typical diasporan projects and actions or whether Croatians in Europe chose another strategy for the whole group and engage in other types of activities such as, for example, simple preservation of Croatian identity, social rituals for the fulfilment of basic social needs or political action for the recognition of ethnic minority status from the institutions of the ‘receiving society’.

⁵ This stance is not present within the programmes or public discourse of the Croatian political parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina, nevertheless it might be present among Croatian population in general.

⁶ MVPEI (2011): 7.

Diaspora: condition, population or practice?

Although the number of academic publications dealing with the diaspora phenomenon was extremely low in the mid 1980s, in the 1990s the situation changed and the number of studies on diaspora rose dramatically.⁷ In fact, the proliferation of publications on diaspora created a situation in which the academics could not refer to clear definitions, concepts and theories because the term ‘diaspora’ became ambiguous and oversaturated with different meanings.⁸ Already by the late 1990s at least three different meanings of diaspora were widely spread and included in the existing publications. Steven Vertovec established three connotations of the term: diaspora as a social form, as a type of consciousness and as a mode of cultural production.⁹ Diaspora as a social form refers to specific kinds of social relationships determined by special ties of history and geography, which include engagement of specific actors and collective associations that become politically active in the international political arena but also to economic strategies that result in great economic achievements of certain groups through pooling of resources, transfer of credit as well as investment of capital and provision of services among family and co-ethnic members.¹⁰ Diaspora as a type of consciousness is conceived as a specific awareness which is generated in transnational communities and described as a state of mind and a sense of identity. Individuals who are described as diasporans are aware of decentred attachments and of being simultaneously ‘home away from home’ or ‘here and there’. Fractured memories of diaspora consciousness may produce a multiplicity of histories, communities and selves.¹¹ Finally, diaspora as a mode of cultural production is described as involving the production and reproduction of transnational social and cultural phenomena.¹² It comes as no surprise that academic writers are far from reaching a consensus about the limits and boundaries of the phenomena they describe as ‘diaspora’.

Within public and academic discourse in Croatia it is also possible to differentiate three notions of diaspora.¹³ Beside the notion of trans-nation, which is a single entity with two component parts – homeland and diaspora,

⁷ Brubaker (2005).

⁸ Riggs (2000).

⁹ Vertovec & Cohen (1999).

¹⁰ Vertovec & Cohen (1999): xviii.

¹¹ Vertovec & Cohen (1999): xviii.

¹² Vertovec & Cohen (1999): xix.

¹³ Božić (2012).

there is a widely spread notion of diaspora as a condition of an individual or a population which retains strong feelings for the real or imagined homeland which had to be left behind. The condition itself is seen as problematic because the individual or group perceive their dwelling in the new environment as 'unnatural'. The very fact that there is a discrepancy between the physical space presently occupied and the real homeland causes the state of 'diaspora'. To be in diaspora becomes almost a synonym for being 'out of place' and being in long lasting distress which can be resolved only through movement back to the homeland. Sometimes, such a state is portrayed as an opportunity for the individuals and the homeland to be presented in a favourable light to the world. Diasporans are proud ambassadors of their homeland in the global arena. Yet, the experience of many individuals who would describe themselves as diasporans is mostly not a troubled one or filled with negative emotions such as the feeling of uprootedness or debilitating nostalgia. One can feel quite well at home away from home(land) and use this position to forge new types of identities and experiment with different cultural contents.

The final notion of the term 'diaspora' in Croatian public and academic discourse refers to diaspora as an integrated group or an entity in itself. From such a perspective diaspora is a closed community whose members are culturally, socially and politically near to each other even when they are geographically apart. The Croatian diaspora is imagined as a coherent group with a strong and thick social fibre of closely knit individuals who have the same history and the same destiny. Such an approach suffers from what Rogers Brubaker¹⁴ terms 'methodological groupism', i.e. a tendency to take homogeneous and delimited groups as fundamental 'ingredients' of social life, as the main protagonists of social conflict and as the main units of social analysis. Social groups are, within this perspective, unique and united collective actors.¹⁵ However, diasporas cannot and do not act as such entities.¹⁶ The right to represent and to act on the behalf of the whole group is always contested and it is always very difficult to mobilise socially and geographically scattered diasporans for a singular collective action. Diaspora is not an integrated group with a clear social position nor is it an unified entity with clear boundaries, capable of autonomous social and political action. This is why Rogers Brubaker tries to radically redefine diaspora as an

¹⁴ Brubaker (2002).

¹⁵ Brubaker (2002): 164.

¹⁶ Riggs (2000).

idiom, a stance or a claim – a category of practice which is used to articulate projects, formulate expectations and mobilise energies and appeal to loyalties.¹⁷ Such practice aims at changing and not describing the world. Scholars should therefore leave the notions of diaspora as entities, bounded groups, ethno-demographic or ethno-cultural facts behind and concentrate on research of diasporic stances, projects, claims, idioms, practices etc.¹⁸

Nevertheless, while some migrants and their descendants cannot be described as organised groups who have clear boundaries, representation and the ‘division of labour’ in the organisation,¹⁹ some migrants and their descendants are involved in highly structured collective action and may still fit the criteria posed by authors who believe in a ‘classical’ notion of the term and who posit more structured concepts of diaspora as a social form. Even when the majority of the migrant population of the similar or same ethno-demographic descent do not engage in diasporic stances, projects and practices there are still many migrants who feel, imagine and act according to the criteria of diaspora as a social form. Actually, it is impossible to differentiate diaspora from other types of social phenomena without clear differentiation markers.²⁰ Orientation towards the homeland is a marker that helps to determine whether a particular practice is diasporan and whether individuals who are engaged in such practices primarily belong to the diaspora or participate in other types of collective action. The sense of membership in a diaspora as a group can also be present among a migrant population for generations.²¹ The level of their organisation also gives us a good indicator whether diaspora exists only as an occasional grouping around specific projects or as a durable social form. Therefore it would be premature to completely discard the existing concepts even when they sometimes ‘suffer’ from ‘methodological groupism’.

Concepts and taxonomies of diaspora developed by William Safran,²² Robin Cohen²³ and Fred Riggs²⁴ emphasise important features of diaspora that can always be helpful in determining whether the population in focus can be described and researched as a diaspora. William Safran emphasises

¹⁷ Brubaker (2005): 12.

¹⁸ Brubaker (2005): 13.

¹⁹ E.g. Armenians in the US who gradually distanced themselves from diasporic projects, Tölölyan (1996).

²⁰ Božić (2001).

²¹ Morawska (2011).

²² Safran (1991).

²³ Cohen (1997).

²⁴ Riggs (2000).

six elements that have to be present in a migrant population in order to describe it as a diaspora.²⁵ The first precondition is that there has to be a dispersion of the population from their centre to two or more foreign regions. This dispersed population has to retain a collective memory of the homeland which includes its history and location even when based on myth. A further precondition is that they cannot be fully integrated in the host society, i.e. they feel estranged from the environment that they presently occupy. Consequently there has to be a widely spread idea that they, or at least their descendants, will eventually return home when the opportunities for the return are ripe. They believe that they should be dedicated as a collective to the service of their homeland, its reconstruction and/or its prosperity. Finally, the homeland is constituent of their internal relations and it enables group consciousness and solidarity.

Cohen's features are very similar to Safran but he stresses additional moments such as actual return movement among diaspora members, even when such a movement is not particularly successful.²⁶ He also accentuates the troubled relationship with the host society which additionally re-orientates the diaspora population to its internal relations and towards the homeland. Both authors basically agree on the most important characteristics of diaspora as a distinct social phenomenon. Without dispersion, usually traumatic in some way, there would not be a need for joint action and there would not be a myth of an ancestral homeland which has to be re-taken or re-inhabited. On the other hand, without the reference and orientation to homeland and the dedication to 'the cause of the homeland', there would not be strong internal relations and a group consciousness as well as solidarity. All the above elements are intertwined and give a picture of an integrated collectivity with a high capability for collective mobilisation and durability of internal social ties. The majority of networks, associations and populations that are currently described as diasporas do not display these features. They are too loose and their action is fleeting, while the majority of 'diasporans' are quite well integrated in the host society and do not pose the goals of return to themselves nor to their children. While the criteria given by Safran and Cohen might seem too rigid considering the importance and scope of homeland oriented collective action in different empirical cases, without these features it would be impossible to differentiate between diasporas and other social forms such as ethnic minorities, transnational networks and

²⁵ Safran (1991).

²⁶ Cohen (1997).

communities without primary reference to homeland.

The solution for this conceptual and classification problem could be found in simple change of perspective. Diaspora, as described by Safran and Cohen is an ideal type and in all migrant groups it is possible to find more or less orientation towards the homeland, more or less traumatic experiences with the emigration process, and more or less integration in the host society. All migrant groups are more or less, or not at all, diasporas depending on their orientation as well as intensity and durability of particular kind of practices. This kind of perspective with a more 'quantitative' dimension also resolves the issues of latency, i.e. the fact that a diaspora can emerge, disappear and re-emerge after a prolonged period of time. Diasporans can be active in certain periods of time and dormant²⁷ in others, or their practices may resemble more diasporic ones in certain periods and other types of migrant collective action in other periods of time.

In order to determine whether there is a Croatian diaspora in Europe it will be necessary to at least demonstrate that the majority of Croatian migrants and their descendants still strongly believe that Croatia is their original homeland; that they have strong positive emotions regarding their origin and homeland; that there is considerable organisation of collective action with clear diasporic goals concentrated on the well-being of the homeland; that there is a troubled relationship with the host society;²⁸ and that the diasporic practices are not fleeting and occasional but intense and durable.

Emergence of Croatian organisations and diasporic practices in Europe

Typical diasporan history includes the traumatic experience of the dispersal and emigration caused usually by upheavals and political conflict in the homeland. The majority of the post-World War II Croatian refugees and political migrants left Europe by the 1950s and settled in Canada, USA, Latin American countries and Australia. Nevertheless, emigration caused by economic hardship can also be a part of traumatic diasporan experience and mass Croatian emigration since the beginning of the 1960s is the consequence of a failing economy that could not absorb hundreds of thousands of unemployed persons regardless of high economic growth in the

²⁷ See Riggs (2000) and Shuval (2001): 46.

²⁸ Weak integration in the host society is a good predictor that the migrants will develop diasporic orientation and practices (Safran 1991; Cohen 1997), although there are other possibilities such as insulation and withdrawal (Berry 1992).

late 1950s. The political prosecution that occurred after the breakdown of Croatian national movement in 1971 produced additional waves of emigration towards European immigration countries particularly those that already hosted significant numbers of Croatian labour migrants such as Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Sweden. The economic and political circumstances in the homeland were favourable for the creation of the typical diasporan organisations, while the numbers of Croatian migrants grew in the European immigration countries and the prospects for return were not favourable, which transformed Croatian ‘guest workers’ into permanent immigrants. Yet typical diasporan organisations and activities, including radical political action, were limited mainly to small groups of the post-WWII political migrants, while greater diasporic platforms could not attract typical Croatian labour migrants.

It seems that the emergence and activities of diasporan social organisation among Croatian migrants was highly correlated with the political situation in the homeland. The number of exclusively Croatian (i.e. non-Yugoslav) migrant associations and groupings rose at the beginning of the 1970s and 1990s when the national movement and national emancipation in Croatia were widely spread and seemed to have prospects for success. Although micro-diasporic organisation, such as home-town associations, was present among Croatian migrants, they were usually active in the Yugoslav clubs or not active at all. The only typical diasporic setting emerged within the Croatian Catholic churches and parishes across Europe but they also lacked a clear political mission towards the homeland.

There are indications that point to the fact that Croatian diasporic action and organisations would have emerged in the European immigration countries had they had the same conditions for the free social and political organisation as the Croatian migrants overseas. They tried to organise freely and on an exclusively ethnic basis already by the 1970s but the intervention of the authorities in the immigration countries, subtly (or in many cases less subtly) undermined free diasporic organisation and action.²⁹ The majority of active Croatian migrants experienced intimidation by the Yugoslav embassies and institutions in the European countries and many members of Croatian associations were exposed to open prosecution when they visited their hometowns.³⁰ Tito’s regime had a lot of support within social-democratic governments across Europe and it seems that they not only

²⁹ Even Croatian students’ and poets’ associations were pressured and closed (Božić, 2000).

³⁰ Francesco Ragazzi (2009): 152 calls this practice long ‘distance policing’.

allowed Yugoslav institutions to take over the organisation of all migrants from the former Yugoslavia but also enabled the Yugoslav secret service to operate in their countries without much opposition. Although the majority of migrants probably strongly believed that Croatia was their original homeland and experienced strong positive emotions towards their homeland there was no considerable organisation of collective action with clear diasporic goals concentrated on the well-being of the homeland. Furthermore, the relationship with the host society was largely undefined because the majority of migrants were considered to be guest workers³¹ and their status was not clarified until the 1980s. The diasporic practices among Croatian migrants were therefore fleeting and occasional and not intense and durable.

This, however, changed by the beginning of the 1990s. Croatian clubs, soccer teams, cultural associations and even political parties emerged in all European immigration countries. The interviews with the engaged Croatian migrants as part of the research that was conducted several years ago confirmed that 1990 was the year of proliferation of Croatian organisations across Europe.³² The social and political processes in the homeland were a strong trigger for the networking and political engagement of Croatian migrants at that time. The goals were clearly focused on differentiation from other ethnic groups from the former Yugoslavia, expansion of Croatian identity and culture, but more importantly, on political help to the homeland.³³ The war in Croatia enabled wide mobilisation of Croatian migrants and their descendants across Europe. During the 1991-1995 war in Croatia the practices of Croatian migrants closely resembled the ideal-typical diaspora. The expansion of Croatian migrants' organisations with clear diasporic goals overlapped with the widely spread idea that they or at least their descendants will eventually return home when the opportunities for the return are ripe. The majority believed that they should be dedicated as a collective to the service of their homeland, its recognition, reconstruction and its prosperity. The homeland was constituent of their internal relations and it enabled group consciousness and solidarity. The flow of diasporic platforms

³¹ Many migrants engaged and still engage in weekly and monthly visits to their homes and hometowns in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. They actually behaved as guest workers and transmigrants regularly circulating between two places as described in migration literature (Basch *et al.* 1994).

³² Thirty expert interviews were held with the leaders of Croatian associations in Germany, Switzerland and Sweden as a part of the research *Croatian migrant communities: multiculturalism and belonging* funded by the Croatian Ministry of Science. The leaders answered 70 questions about the foundation, structure, goals and plans of their associations.

³³ Božić & Kuti (2012): 86-7.

and practices was, however, soon replaced by the ebb of wide-spread activities on the behalf of the homeland. In the early 1990s the Croatian state and its territorial sovereignty was recognised. Moreover, it was politically stable and political consensus was achieved on the main strategic goals, such as accession to the European Union. The need for a wide mobilisation of Croatian migrants within a diasporic platform weakened. This is why the question in the title is valid and ever more relevant.

Croatian organisations in Europe today – diaspora or ethnic minority?

The intensity and extent of migrants' activities and engagement for the homeland declined dramatically in the last decade. Beside the affirmation of the Croatian state, there are other factors that influenced the decline of the diasporic platforms and practices among Croatian migrants. Cheap travel and communication technology enabled many migrants to develop strong ties and build transnational social spaces³⁴ on a micro-level with friends and family in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina pluri-locally. Consequently, this weakened the social ties in the places of dwelling. The need to build networks and ties on the local level is no longer a necessity anymore, not only for the migrants, but also for the majority populations of the immigration countries.³⁵ Engagement in the typical migrant association is time consuming and demands a lot of sacrifice while occasional gatherings, ethnic cafes and migrant sporting events offer fast consumption of ethnic cultural contents and emotionally fulfilling ethnic socialising without costs. The vast majority of Croatian migrants are well integrated in the host societies and their descendants experience at least some social upward mobility. Croatian migrants and their descendants in Europe do not have a troubled relationship with the host society but rather are an integral part of it. The social and political forces in emigrant and immigrant countries that (could) curb diasporic activities are increasingly weaker. In such circumstances, Croatian migrant organisations are preoccupied with issues different from the agenda of the 1990s.

One of the main goals today is to ensure the sustenance of the clubs and associations and the leaders are preoccupied with bringing the new members of the second and third generation to participate in the work and gatherings of the associations.³⁶ This proves to be a very difficult task

³⁴ See Faist (2000); Pries (2001).

³⁵ Urry (2007).

³⁶ Božić & Kuti (2012): 93.

because the young descendants of Croatian migrants have to establish their careers, form their own families, which does not leave much space and time for communal and diasporic activities. The main task of the Croatian migrant associations is therefore to enable the continuation of their work or simply to 'survive'. The focus on the homeland in such circumstances becomes less important. Today, Croatian networks and associations have to offer different leisure activities and contents in order to attract new members. Intensive work on behalf of the homeland, which is now an established state entering the European Union, is not an appropriate motivator any longer for the second and third generation. Their engagement is therefore only occasional and fleeting.

The majority of Croatian associations in Europe are focusing presently on the pure preservation of Croatian identity among Croatian migrants and its institutionalisation through school curricula. An important part of these activities is reserved for the recognition of the special status for the Croatian language and Croatian ethnic group, i.e. some form of ethnic minority status in the immigration societies on the local and regional levels. These activities are a strong indicator that the active Croatian migrants fight primarily for the 'survival' of Croatian identity and the sense of 'groupness' among Croatians in the European immigration countries. Furthermore, the organisation that would surpass local and regional levels is almost non-existent. Croatian associations in Europe are not inter-connected nationally and transnationally and joint action is the exception rather than the rule.³⁷ Although the co-operation with Croatian embassies and consulates is relatively well developed, co-operation with the institutions in the homeland is limited to only a few foundations established to develop relations between Croatian migrants and their descendants with the homeland.

It seems that the engaged migrants, almost exclusively members of the first generation, are having great difficulties in securing the continuation of their associations and projects but also feel that Croatian identity in the host society might be lost in the not so distant future. Members of the second and, especially, the third generation develop 'symbolic ethnic identity', as well as hybrid identities³⁸ which cannot be a strong basis for the typical diasporan engagement and organisation. Symbolic ethnicity is a form of ethnic identity, yet it does not require functioning ethnic groups and networks because the feelings of identity can be developed by allegiances to symbolic groups that

³⁷ Božić & Kuti (2012): 89-90.

³⁸ Gans (1979).

never meet or meet only occasionally. The culture itself does not have to be practiced but some circulating symbols are necessary for the preservation of identity and the idea of 'groupness'.

Immigration societies where Croatian migrants in Europe reside are not civic nations but have a strong ethnic component which makes assimilation and upward social mobility very difficult. Symbolic ethnicity in such circumstances is not restricted to the third generation but might persevere for a longer period of time. Interestingly, Croatian migrant associations are already adapting to the new situation even if the leaders are not aware of Herbert Gans' account that most ethnic organisations will eventually realise that in order to survive they will deal mainly with symbols.³⁹ Leaders of Croatian migrant associations are not satisfied with the engagement of the new generations but they manage to preserve a platform for gathering and cultural events that are constituents of interaction rituals,⁴⁰ which are vital in producing collective symbols and ethnic solidarity. Sporting activities, music, dance, picnics etc., are not just 'leisure activities' but important rituals that produce collective effervescence and strong positive emotions that are connected with symbols of the whole group.⁴¹ These symbols can be re-evoked when needed and their circulation will ensure that the idea of the Croatian ethnic group is still alive among Croatian migrants in Europe.

Although joint action of any kind and particularly joint action for the homeland are scarce and occasional, new forms of social relations and new social and cultural phenomena are emerging among Croatian migrants in Europe. They do not fit the criteria for diaspora as a social form but the present activities and the struggle to preserve Croatian ethnic identity, along with strong micro-ties of Croatian migrants and their descendants with the people in the homeland, and the emergence of symbolic ethnicity within younger generations show that Croatian migrants can be mobilised if needed. Croatians in Europe are latent or dormant diasporans⁴² and greater upheavals in the homeland can revive the Croatian diaspora in the new host societies.

Conclusion

The aim of this article was to explore the types of diasporan action and practices and to compare the findings with the existing types of activities,

³⁹ Gans (1979).

⁴⁰ Collins (2004).

⁴¹ Božić & Kuti (2012): 87.

⁴² Riggs (2000).

orientations and collective actions of the Croatian migrants and their descendants in Europe in order to determine what types of social forms are generally present and prevail among Croatians in Europe. The boundaries of diaspora as a social form towards other types of social action and social organisation of migrants are determined by several markers but the most important one is durable social organisation based on orientation towards and engagement for the homeland. All migrant groups can be diasporas depending on their orientation as well as intensity and durability of particular kind of practices. Diaspora as a specific social form can emerge, disappear and re-emerge after a prolonged period of time.

Croatian clubs, soccer teams, cultural associations and even political parties emerged in all European immigration countries in the last several decades. At the beginning of the 1990s there was an expansion of Croatian organisations across Europe. The social and political processes in the homeland were a strong trigger for the networking and political engagement of the Croatian migrants at that time. The goals were clearly focused on differentiation from other ethnic groups from former Yugoslavia, expansion of Croatian identity and culture but more importantly on political help to the homeland. The war in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina enabled wide mobilisation of Croatian migrants and their descendants across Europe. During the war in Croatia 1991-1995 the practices of Croatian migrants resembled closely the ideal-typical diaspora. However, the intensity and extent of migrants' activities and engagement for the homeland declined in the last decade.

The majority of Croatian associations in Europe are focusing presently on the preservation of Croatian identity among Croatian migrants and institutionalisation of Croatian ethnicity through school curricula as well as for the recognition of the special status for the Croatian language and Croatian ethnic group on the local and regional levels. Croatian associations in Europe are not inter-connected nationally and transnationally and joint action is the exception rather than the rule. Nevertheless, ethnic gathering and cultural events organised by Croatian associations are constituents of interaction rituals that produce collective symbols and ethnic solidarity. These rituals produce collective effervescence, strong positive emotions that are connected with symbols of the whole group. They can be re-evoked when needed and their circulation will ensure that the idea of the Croatian ethnic group is still alive among Croatian migrants in Europe. Croatians in Europe, particularly younger generations, are latent diasporans and socially

and politically important processes in the homeland can reawaken Croatian diaspora in the new host societies.

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Sažetak

Cilj članka je prikazati opće tipove dijasporske akcije i praksi te ih usporediti s postojećim tipovima aktivnosti, orijentacija i kolektivne akcije hrvatskih migranata i njihovih potomaka u Europi kako bi se utvrdilo koji postojeći tipovi aktivnosti, orijentacije i kolektivne akcije hrvatskih migranata i njihovih potomaka dominiraju među Hrvatima u Europi te jesu li u skladu s tipičnim dijasporskim akcijama. Granice dijaspore kao društvenog oblika se određuju pomoću nekoliko indikatora među kojima je najvažniji trajna društvena organizacija temeljena na orijentaciji prema i angažmanu za domovinu. Sve migrantske grupe mogu biti dijaspore ovisno o njihovoj orijentaciji kao i proširenosti i trajnosti specifičnih vrsta praksi u različitim periodima. Dijaspore kao poseban društveni oblik može nastati, nestati i ponovo se pojaviti nakon dužeg vremena. Hrvatske udruge, nogometni klubovi, kulturna društva, pa čak i političke stranke nastale su u svim europskim imigracijskim zemljama u posljednjih nekoliko desetljeća.

Na početku 1990-ih godina došlo je do ekspanzije hrvatskih organizacija diljem Europe. Društveni i politički procesi u domovini

bili su snažan poticaj za umrežavanje i politički angažman hrvatskih migranta u to vrijeme. Ciljevi su bili jasno usmjereni na diferenciranje od drugih etničkih grupa iz bivše Jugoslavije, širenje hrvatskog identiteta i kulture te posebice na političku i materijalnu pomoć domovini. Rat u Hrvatskoj i Bosni i Hercegovini omogućio je široku mobilizaciju hrvatskih migranata i njihovih potomaka širom Europe. Tijekom rata u Hrvatskoj 1991.-1995. prakse hrvatskih migranata su se preklapale s praksama tipičnim za dijasporu. Međutim, intenzitet i proširenost migrantskih aktivnosti i angažmana za domovinu su opali u posljednjem desetljeću. Većina hrvatskih udruga u Europi trenutno se fokusira na očuvanje hrvatskog identiteta među hrvatskim migrantima i institucionalizaciju hrvatskog etniciteta kroz školske programe kao i priznanje hrvatskog jezika i hrvatske etničke grupe na lokalnim i regionalnim razinama. Hrvatske udruge u Europi nisu povezane ni transnacionalno niti na nacionalnoj razini, a zajednička akcija je prije iznimka nego pravilo. Usprkos tome, etnička okupljanja i kulturni događaji koje organiziraju hrvatske udruge su temelji za interakcijske rituale koji produciraju kolektivne simbole i etničku solidarnost. Ti rituali proizvode kolektivno vrenje, snažne pozitivne emocije koje se povezuju sa simbolima cijele grupe. Oni se mogu prizvati kada su potrebni, a njihovo kruženje osigurava opstanak ideje hrvatske etničke grupe među hrvatskih migrantima u Europi. Hrvatski migranti u Europi, posebice pripadnici novih generacija su latentni pripadnici dijasporu, a društveno i politički važni procesi u domovini uvijek mogu probuditi hrvatsku dijasporu kao poseban društvenih oblik u novim društvima primitka.