Walter V. Lalich: "From diaspora to transnational flows"

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Croatia has felt the deep impact of its dynamic migrations, voluntary and involuntary, economic and political, to neighbouring and New World countries. Diverse migration flows preclude any uniform analysis of the process, starting with the creation of its early diaspora communities centuries ago, which was followed by economic migration to overseas and European countries, with political and renewed economic migration over the last decades. Major technological and communication changes over the last several decades have had an impact on the dynamics of diverse links established with the country of origin. The independence of Croatia and the breakdown of ideological barriers did not eliminate emigration but provided a new stimulus to the development and expansion of personal and business links, as well as contacts and networks of migrants and their descendants with the place of origin. These global and local structural changes have brought about new dynamics with regard to transnational social spaces grounded in institutional frameworks established from below by migrants. However, it encounters new challenges due to aging demographic structures both in Croatia and among its migrant community. This article analyses complexities of the transnational aspects of the migration process experienced by diverse migrant generations.

Key words: migration flows, diaspora, dynamics, transnational, Croatia, Australia, Croatian-Australians

From diaspora to transnational flows

This contribution reflects on the complexity of Croatian migration experience in a range extending from late medieval diaspora to the second generation community in a dynamic transnational social space generated from below by more recent migrant flows. In the classical interpretation, diaspora implies deterritorialisation,[1] migration and settlement in a foreign land far from the place of origin. Diaspora signifies 'construction of home away from home' as a consequence of some form of human displacement.[2] It implies not only the breakdown of the immediate spatial and organisational links with home but also a yearning for the lost homeland. The centuries-old Croatian diaspora now identified as an ethnic minority in neighbouring European countries continues to uphold transmitted customs and use its ancestral language, or part of it, in everyday communication.[3] However, the contemporary comprehension of diaspora has to account for the global dynamics underlined by the prevalent communication and technological revolution, or 'time-space compression'.[4] Moreover, the end of the Cold War initiated new social and political dynamics that generated interaction across a transnational space, between home and abroad, which is of major relevance for Croatia and some other European countries. The migration process was instrumental in the production, expansion and continuity of a transnational social space generated from below by migrants.[5] The dynamics of interaction are further enriched by new agents in a vivid transnational social space: migrant descendants or the second generation. They are taking the place of their parents, but under different circumstances and often with an identity crisis and questions of belonging.[6]

Although some migrants never return and even break links with home, migration is not a one-way process. It is very often followed by continuous communication with the place of origin and through diverse exchanges such as money remittances, private and public investments, as well as involvement in public life and visits. Such links persisted throughout the modern Croatian migration experience too, despite disruptions that were

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[1] Deleuze & Guattari (1992): 141-45.
[2] Totölyan (1996): 8; Clifford (1997): 244; Vertovec (2009): 4-5, 128-37; Glick Schiller (2010): 30-31; Faist (2010): 73-74.
[3] Holjevac (1968): 9-16.
[4] Harvey (1989): 240.
[5] Guarnizo & Smith (2003): 3; Vertovec (2009): 137.
[6] Harvey (1996): 246.

mostly caused by spatial, political and material reasons. The development of a transnational social space as a major feature of migration was followed by diverse institutional inclusions, either through migrant created institutions or diverse official ones from the country of origin. The fluidity of social space across the globe, diminished spatial distances, and increased institutional involvement and agency transfer in the post-migration era expands grounds for interaction within a dynamic transnational social space.

Croatian migration to Australia is diminishing. The aging of the post-World War II migrant generation also changes the intensity of transferred social capital,[7] while the hybrid second generation is identified by multiple loyalty and belonging.[8] Australia has experienced major immigration, cultural, economic and even political changes that include the application of multicultural policies and practices.[9] Together with the reduction of spatial barriers[10], these developments reframe the morphology of transnational social space with opportunities unknown until recently. The dynamics of interaction across spatial distances has changed, while the hybrid second generation appropriating a major role within the expanding transnational flows. The application of these key conceptual tools provides a basis for further analysis on the interaction between Croatia and its migrant community, with particular reference to Australia.

The experience of Croatian overseas migrants far away from their country of origin greatly differs from that of the Croatian national minorities and contemporary guest workers, or *gastarbeiters*, who first went to western European countries in the late 1950s.[11] A brief historical introduction to the Croatian migration experience provides a framework for the analysis of the interaction between the home and periphery (migrants), displaying diverse intensities and dynamics, in a range extending from diasporic nostalgia, transnational flows, circular migration and visits to the second generation feeling of 'neither here, nor there'.[12]

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[7] Putnam (1993):163-76; Portes (1995):12-16.
[8] Bourque & Duchastel (1999): 195; Papastergiardis (2000): 4, 143.
[9] Jupp (2002): 83-104.
[10] Harvey (1996): 245.
[11] Holjevac (1968): 357-61.
[12] Prusac (2006); Totölyan (1996): 29-30.

From diaspora to transnational flows

The existence of various spatial, political, social and economic hindrances presupposes the appearance and existence of diaspora communities as a result of human movements. Their communal space is a product of the reterritorialisation of people and their detachment from the source, except through memory and culture transfers. The diaspora historically implied not only spatial discontinuity but also prevailing difficulties in crossing barriers to communicate with and actively participate at home or even to return. This experience is, to diverse degrees, shared by some other related forms identifying consequences of human spatial movements: immigrants, refugees, exiles, expatriates, guest workers and ethnic communities.[13] Various Croatian migrations over different periods and under diverse circumstances, either collectively or individually, forced or voluntary, can be identified within such a broad spectrum of human experiences.

The diaspora is a product of developments in two different social environments, in a country of origin, or home, and in a country of settlement, or host, hence the emphasis is placed on its spatial duality where "*the agency is in the diasporic group*".[14] It is often a major and sometimes the only medium of interaction between two different and distant localities. However, the diaspora is inevitably influenced by social conditions in the place of settlement, such as its own fragmentation due to diverse factors, including locality of origin, politics, social and class structure. Also, the encounter with forces of acculturation and assimilation, as in Australia until recently,[15] impacts deterritorialised cultures.[16] The application of multicultural policies and practices was concurrent with contemporary global dynamics identified by radical communication and technological developments,[17] which further influenced the creation of distant proximities in a transforming world.[18] While accommodating to the prevailing economic conditions in Australia and dealing with social and cultural discrimination, pre-World War II Croatian migrants, and others from the former Yugoslavia, generated a rich cultural life within the intensive parallel public sphere that was attuned to the events at home despite huge spatial distances and hindrances.[19]

Political, ideological and social changes experienced by many European countries towards the end of the last century eliminated reasons

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[13] Kalra, Kaur & Hutnyk (2005): 2, 12-16; Clifford (1997): 245, 247-48.
[14] Kalra, Kaur & Hutnyk (2005): 3, 17.
[15] Jupp (1991): 103-07.
[16] Papastergiadis (2000): 115-18.
[17] Hutnyk (1997): 128; Clifford (1997): 247.
[18] Rosenau (2003): 4-5, 409; Sassen (1999): 135.
[19] Price (1963): 241, 303; Tkalcevic (1988): 22-33.

for the existence of a politically and ideologically defined diaspora that was strongly identified with the "*foreign homeland beyond the borders*" of the host-state.[20] The blockages to return[21] have vanished but certain other difficulties remain, which are mostly personal (family reasons, aging, health), social (community life, social security) and economic (finances, investment, housing) reasons. A politically defined contemporary diaspora existed for a much shorter period, unlike the preceding economic migrant community from Croatia that traces its origins to the 19th century. Nevertheless, it was also regenerated by expanding transnational connections through which new forms of interaction are created in conjunction with contemporary global changes.

Upon settlement in a new environment, *hybrid identities* emerge through everyday encounters, differences and transformations.[22] Cultural hybridity or a sense of identification with, and belonging to, different cultures and localities is a major consequence of migrations and diaspora life. It is generated at the point of interaction between different public spheres[23] through the process of "*intercultural mingling*",[24] and represented by self-identification of being in-between. It can be considered as a product of ruptures and discontinuities, integral to the process of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'.[25] Cultural hybridity has its own history and, as a dynamic construct, is undergoing continuous transformation and fusion.[26] A multivocality of belongings is hence being emphasised rather than a simple affiliation to ethnicity or nation.[27] This is of particular significance to the second generation that, although it has inherited culture and transferred social capital, nevertheless has weaker direct links and social capital with the place of origin. On the other hand, their aims and possibilities differ from the former migrant generation within the wide scope of opportunities generated in the transnational social space beyond the 'myth of return'.[28] Within such developments the initial points of departure often become a potential destination, either permanent or temporary. In his analysis, Hesse applies Derrida`s concept of 'near and far'[29] to analyse the diasporic disjuncture of 'comings and goings', or home and abroad, that is being deconstructed within the dynamics of transnational social space.

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[20] Friedman (1997): 71.
[21] Kalra, Kaur & Hutnyk (2005): 10.
[22] Hall (1990): 235.
[23] Papastergiadis (2000): 143; (1997): 259; Werbner (1997): 1-26.
[24] Pieterse (2004): 54, 110.
[25] Hall (1990): 225.
[26] Friedman (1997): 75.
[27] Kalra, Kaur & Hutnyk (2005): 10.
[28] King (1986): 12-13.
[29] Hesse (1993): 176.

Transnational social space

The migration process and the consequent deterritorialisation of cultures generates a transnational social space from below, in other words by the migrants themselves. Migrants, individually or collectively, generate diverse links between the place of settlement and their home through their own activities, including continuous flows of ideas, symbols, money, goods and services.[30] The established nodes of transnational social space generate new opportunities across space within the global communication revolution that is identified by changes in the nature, intensity and density of communication flows.[31] Similarly to transnational space generated from above by diverse public bodies, government, religious institutions, business and media activities,[32] it transcends spatial and political boundaries with diverse intensity. Such migrant activities impact on both social environments: the countries of origin and settlement. Transferred ancestral languages are a major medium of exchange in the transnational social space generated from below. They will be replaced by the host country language (English in this case) in a later stage through intergenerational changes and gradual disappearance of the transferred maternal languages.

Changes in social environments at both ends also have implications on the nature and dynamics of transnational social space. Australia accepted a multicultural policy, opened doors to non-European migrants, and incorporated into the mainstream many aspects of the cultures brought by diverse European and other migrants. Croatia became an independent state. However, Croatian emigration to Australia has radically decreased over the last decades, while return migration is accompanied by the flow of investment and tourists. Trips to and from Australia to Europe now take a day or two, not weeks, an important factor if viewed in comparison to much closer European migration destination countries where much larger number of Croatian migrants settled. The telephone and internet have replaced letters, while TV programs are being transmitted globally. Migration extended social space, while dramatic communication changes created new proximities that facilitate dynamic transnational flows.

The development, existence and sustainability of a transnational social space depend on people, their needs, activities, and social capital, including the established networks at home and in the place of settlement. People arrive with their own cultural needs and customs, and desire to satisfy and maintain it irrespective of circumstances. They send money and diverse goods to the ancestral home, but also satisfy certain needs by importing goods and ideas unless they are found locally. However, because of cultural

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[30] Faist (2000): 240; Portes (1998): 47; Light & Gold (2001): 151.
[31] Castells (1991): 167, 350.
[32] Guarnizo & Smith (1998): 3.

differences migrants often experience scarcity of opportunities and suitable places where they can satisfy their perceived social needs. With their own, and often very scarce means, migrants create their own environment or habitus[33] while adapting to new social environments.

To satisfy their diverse collectively perceived social needs, migrants often mobilise human and bonding social capital, as well as organisational and material resources to establish formal organisations with the aim to appropriate critical physical resources, e.g. buildings, that can satisfy a perceived collective spiritual and secular need. Migrants' willingness to contribute to a collective good is determined by diverse factors, such as the experienced settlement constraints, the availability of close substitutes, unknown alternatives, communication networks, as well as the strength of personal ties and mutual dependency that include the cost of leaving or not joining a group.[34] Collective homogeneity, the intensity of the felt need, and the degree of commitment and compliance also impacts on the appropriation of needed collective goods.[35] According to Rex[36] a sense of identity and belonging, as a major ethnic resource, provides an advantage in forming community infrastructure in comparison to 'mainstream' community groups and social movements. The experience of many migrant groups that appropriated their own communal place underlines a point raised by Simmel[37] and Olson[38] that small homogeneous groups can much more easily respond to perceived needs and mobilise resources than larger and latent groups.

Secular and spiritual communal places appropriated by migrant collectives are a major channel of communication towards other segments of the ethnic group, host society and home. Such communal mobilisation affects community life over a longer period and generates a social space with dynamic local and transnational relations that are mutually interlocked and constitutive in a communicative process.[39] These places facilitate continuous communication between social actors, i.e. migrants with the outside world, enabling cultural maintenance and intensive exchange with the place of origin. Such culturally and symbolically defined communal places are major symbolic, material and communication nodes of a transnational social space. Their importance is emphasised by the endeavour of over 450 ethnic collectives that have appropriated their spiritual and

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[33] Bourdieu (2000): 157.
[34] Hechter (1987): 47.
[35] Frank (1997): 240.
[36] Rex (1994): 3-12.
[37] Simmel (1964): 9.
[38] Olson (1971): 28.
[39] Smith (2001): 92.

secular communal homes in Sydney since World War II.[40] The pre-war Croatian migrants had a key role in the creation of the now extinguished *Yugoslav Migrant Association*[41] with thirty branches throughout Australia. The post-World War II Croatian migrants appropriated 70 spiritual and secular communal places across Australia.[42] These historically and socially diverse institutional frameworks had a crucial role in the development of the Australian–Croatian transnational social space generated from below despite diverse hindrances.

The new interactive social space is being created as a consequence of human movement transcending cultural, spatial and political boundaries. However, its structure and dynamics are influenced by diverse internal and outside factors. Besides the aging and subsequent weakening of transferred social capital, intergenerational changes in both social environments also create certain limitations to the configuration and dynamics of transnational social space. The perception of migration is changing at home too, and with it the response to the changes in the diaspora. Such developments inevitably change the perception of a transnational social space within which new opportunities appear that were not perceived until recently. The aspirations of the second or 'new' generation differ from their parents, as they seek new opportunities for themselves that differ also according to the place where they could be realised, which for some could mean in the ancestral country. The coming mid-century will see new challenges, emerging within a transnational social space generated by the former migrants, of interest to both the ancestral and new home country.

The independence of Croatia and the breakdown of political and ideological barriers did not eliminate emigration but provides a new stimulation to the development and expansion of personal and business links, contacts and networks of migrants and their descendants with the place of origin. The transnational social space established from below and grounded in migrant appropriated institutional frameworks acquired new dynamics due to major global, communication and local structural changes. However it encounters new challenges due to aging demographic structures, both in Croatia and its migrant community. The mutuality of the interests of the new generations in both environments is more diffuse and differs from the intensive social capital prevailing among the older generations, either transferred or developed during settlement in the new environment. These disparate developments will continue to occur within the process of the further transition of Croatian society inside the European Union.

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[40] Lalich (2004).
[41] Alagich & Kosovich (2001): 236; Tkalčević (1988): 46.
[42] Lalich (2004/05): 95, 118.

The Croatian migration experience

Croatia has felt the deep impact of voluntary and involuntary migrations, economic and political, to neighbouring countries and the New World. Current post-independence transition difficulties following the social, political and economic structural changes since independence in 1991 have generated the latest emigration. The country's diverse migration experiences, centuries apart, preclude any uniform analysis. Croatian diaspora communities were established in neighbouring countries as the outcome of the several centuries of wars against Ottoman Turkish invasions, beginning in the late fifteenth century. These communities were detached from the home country for centuries, but have preserved the customs and language in their original form in localities that even bore Croatian names. The classical interpretation of the term diaspora applies to the estimated number of 186,000 members of Croatian minorities in neighbouring countries, such as Austria, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovakia and Czech Republic.[43] These communities share the diaspora experience of the much better known Greek, Jewish and Armenian diasporas.[44]

Croatians living in other parts of the former Yugoslavia are either autochthonous to the area or had settled there in search of better living conditions over the last several centuries and decades. In neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Croatian national segment is one of three constitutive population national bodies, alongside the Serbs and Bosniaks. A much smaller number of the autochthonous Croatian population live across the borders in Montenegro and Serbia,[45] while many migrated to Slovenia for employment and career reasons after the Second World War. Their status is a consequence of political upheavals and continuous border changes until recent times. However, despite such political disconnections, these entities are much more integral to the social, political and cultural life in Croatia proper than the Croatian minority communities in other European countries. Moreover, many share their lives, including dual citizenship, between two countries, the home country and Croatia.

In the early decades of the 20th century, industrialisation opened employment opportunities to several generations of economic migrants to European and overseas countries from impoverished Croatia, which was considered one of the economically most backward parts of the Habsburg Empire.[46] This was followed by emigration from Yugoslavia between two world wars, and from the post-war communist-run state, in spite of its own

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[43] Holjevac (1968): 14.
[44] Clifford (1997): 249.
[45] Agičić *et al.* (2000): 160.
[46] Good (1984): 244-46, 278; Holjevac (1968): 32-34, 37-38.

industrialisation efforts.[47] Moreover, some migrated even before the Great War because of political reasons, including to Australia.[48] Political migration continued from royal Yugoslavia between the wars and greatly expanded during the communist Yugoslav regime, leading to the creation of a major Croatian political diaspora. There were some five hundred thousand Croatian migrants before World War II, but only approximately one percent settled in Australia by 1947; that is at least 5,020.[49] Still, this was a fivefold increase since 1921 making them, after Germans, Italians and Greeks the fourth largest group of continental European settlers in Australia at that stage. However, the post-World War II migration dynamics involving the arrival of refugees and displaced persons revived chain migration and increased economic migration after Australia signed an immigration agreement with former Yugoslavia in 1970.[50] This development had a deep impact on the numbers, as well as the social and political orientation of Croatian migrants in Australia.

There was a significant voluntary return migration from overseas countries to Croatia throughout this period.[51] Often it was a circular migration back to the place of former settlement or even change in migration destinations. However, there were two major return migration events that have few parallels in modern migration history. The first was the forced repatriation from Australia in 1919 of around 574 Croatians who, as Austro-Hungarian citizens, were interned during the War.[52] Despite this experience some returned to Australia during the 1920's. The second was the return of 8,320 Croatian migrants and their families from overseas between 1945 and 1951,[53] making up 52% of all returnees to communist-run Yugoslavia. Croatian returnees from Australia made up 14% of all Croatians who returned over that period. Also, they made up 90% of all returnees from Australia, a ratio that approximately corresponds to their share among all migrants from Yugoslavia on this continent.[54] Return migrations had a major impact not only on migrant communities, but also on the increased awareness of Australia as a potential migration destination in many parts of a country that had no such migration experience. Such diverse movements significantly influenced the rapid increase in increased Croatian migration in the post-World War II period. There was continuous individual return migration in later decades, but its significance increased during the war for

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[47] Holjevac (1968): 360-65.
[48] Darveniza (1986): 30.
[49] Holjevac (1968): 33, 51; Price (1963): 11.
[50] Jupp (1991): 77.
[51] Holjevac (1968): 51, 55-57; Wyman (1993): 10-11.
[52] Budak & Lalich (2008): 91.
[53] Šegvić (1953): 18.
[54] Lalich (2010): 68.

independence and in later years, when it overshadowed emigration to Australia.

The Australian –Croatian transnational social space
Migrants created the first communication bridge between Croatia, including its regions and villages, and Australia, with its mining centres and suburban market gardens, lasting for many decades. Migrant departures, return visits, letters and remittances introduced Australia to their families and neighbours at home. The Australian-Croatian transnational social space generated by migrant actions had overcome not only the spatial, but for decades many other hindrances, including material, ideological and administrative ones. It is a product of human labour generating new perspectives in a changing world. As a consequence of changes in the profile of migrants, transport and communication modes, the patterns and dynamics of the established linkages evolved over time as well.

Migration from Croatia to Australia began after the opening of the Suez Canal. The first migrants came mostly from the coastal region of Dalmatia and other littoral areas, arriving initially as Austrian and later as Yugoslav citizens. Consequently, they were for decades identified either as Austrians or 'Yugo-Slavs',[55] although the second attribute also incorporated other migrants from former Yugoslavia. The post-World War II migration originated from diverse parts of the country and included political migrants too. With it begins a clear identification according to national background (and not current citizenship) on the part of the majority of the Croatian migrants. Moreover, this arrival further contributed to community fragmentation and even internal animosities.

Migration to Australia
The number of Croatian migrants to Australia increased quickly after the war; around 10,500 arrived within the initial five year refugee program.[56] Very soon chain migration was revived as well. The 2001 Census records 51,909 persons born in Croatia, besides those born in Bosnia and Herzegovina and other parts of former Yugoslavia.[57] The increase in numbers is very much indicative of post-war changes in Australian immigration policy, migration patterns and consequently of the country's demographic structure. The new immigration policy was very much supported by the signing of immigration agreements with various European countries with the aim of attracting migrants, including with former Yugoslavia in 1970. According to the 2006 Census data, at least 118,046

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[55] Price (1963): 239-43; Darveniza (1986): 35.
[56] Kunz (1988): 43; Drapac (2001): 246.
[57] DIMA/CRC (2003): 21-27.

persons claimed Croatian origin in Australia,[58] (though some observers indicate much larger numbers),[59] of whom 30,000 persons have at least one parent born in Australia. Recent migrations did not contribute significantly to an increase in their numbers, but the increased awareness of a Croatian background after independence by many who had earlier identified as Yugoslavs very likely did have an impact on reporting ethnic origin. In comparison, there were 105,747 persons of Croatian origin Australia-wide in 2001, ranking at that stage as the eleventh largest among the non-English speaking ethnic communities. Unlike the pre-war migrants who went inland, mostly to mining centres like Boulder-Kalgoorlie and Broken Hill, or to Mildura and the cane-cutting fields in northern Queensland, post-war settlers mostly settled in major coastal capital and industrial cities.[60] Despite renewed chain migration, housing and prevailing employment opportunities, no significant spatial concentration of Croatian settlers emerged. Their largest concentrations in the Sydney metropolitan area in 2001 is dispersed across the western suburbs of Fairfield, Blacktown and Liverpool, where nearly 8,000 Croatian-speaking persons made up only three per cent of all settlers who use a language other than English at home.[61] Although as many as five social clubs and two churches were established throughout the vast Western Sydney area, the dispersed spatial settlement made it difficult to sustain social and cultural activities.

The Australian-Croatian transnational social space is framed not only by distance, but also by demography, its aging structure, decrease in new arrivals, language use and maintenance, and by the political and social changes in Croatia. The following indicators on language usage are indicative: the 2006 census identifies 69,851 persons who speak the Croatian language at home in different degrees (a decrease of 6,014 since 1996), including 22,962 persons in Sydney, and 21,688 members of the second generation.[62] This indicates not only the decrease in language retention but also the perceived future potential within the established transnational social space, indicating how the English language will appropriate a major role in communication with the ancestral home.

In his analysis, Škvorc[63] underlines that as little as a third of the first generation uses Croatian language regularly while another third uses it occasionally. Out of an estimated 41,179 members of the second generation, fifty per cent have only limited knowledge of the language. The decrease in

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[58] ABS (2008).
[59] Drapac (2001): 246; Hoško (1996): 5; Tkalčević (1992): 40; Škvorc (2005): 190.
[60] Tkalčević (1988): 75.
[61] DIMA/CRC (2003).
[62] DIMA/CRC (2003): 14, 128; ABS (2008); ABS (2003); EAC (1988).
[63] Škvorc (2005): 28.

language use is no surprise, as language use and maintenance decreases with the intergenerational changes in migration. On the other hand, Alba[64] claims that although 50% of those who feel their ethnicity (in the USA) use a re-territorialised mother tongue to some degree, they do not consider it to be of exclusive importance in their identification. However, language retention is just one of the transnational social space indicators as it is also identified through various everyday activities and the less visible symbolic representation. Probably, the most significant one is the experience of a sense of home, belonging to different places, being in-between, leading to the willingness of migrant descendants to acquire second or dual citizenship, even if they have little knowledge of both the language and the country of origin. Although many members of the first generation appropriate such a diffuse sense of belonging through a process of acculturation, the future transnational social space provides a basis for the second and coming generation to find themselves within its fluid scope. The aspirations and paths of the younger generations are not necessarily the same as those of their parents who left home in search of a better life. Among the reasons for this difference is the educational gap between the diverse generations' prospective professional and career aspirations and potentials.

Australian population dynamics

A major feature of contemporary Australian demographic dynamics is the increasing number of its inhabitants living abroad for an indefinite time period.[65] Such developments identify Australia as a migration or expat source country as diverse population segments leave the continent without an expressed plan to return in the near future. However, not only former migrants return to the country of origin. Over the last three decades the ratio of permanent departures to arrivals increased from 21.7% in 1979-89 to 50.5 % in the first decade of this century. According to the age structure from 1959-60 to 2008-09, the active working age group from 25 to 64 made up nearly 61% of all permanent departures in comparison to over 13% of persons over 65. Dependants up to 14 years represented 17% of all permanent departures, while there were 9% in the group between 15 and 24 years. This data concurs with findings by Hugo and his collaborators,[66] according to which the vast majority among a researched sample of 2,070 permanent departures were due to career, professional development and higher wages. Life style changes, marriages and job transfers followed in significance, well ahead of education and various personal reasons such as a desire to join family and friends, divorce and expand business opportunities.

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[64] Alba (1990): 79.
[65] Hugo *et al.* (2003).
[66] Hugo *et al.* (2003): 44.

The background of people leaving Australia permanently and their destinations in continental Europe is also very indicative. Among 81,000 departures in the year 2008-09, over half were born in Australia, but only 1.2% in South-Eastern Europe, including 133 persons in Croatia. Of those born in Australia nearly 68% were in the active age group from 24 to 54 years, but among those born in South-Eastern Europe, including Croatia, persons older than 55 years make up over 50% departures in comparison to 6.6% born in Australia and 11% of all permanent departures. While the Australian-born are leaving in search of career and employment opportunities, the South-Eastern European-born mostly leave because of retirement. According to various estimates, approximately 4,000 persons from Australia now live in Croatia, and probably half are retirees, representing around 3-4% of the estimated Croatian settlers in Australia.

It is recorded that, out of about 9,850 persons who left Australia with the intent to settle in one of the South-Eastern European countries over a ten year period starting from the 1998/1999 statistical year, 17% departed with the intent to remain for good in Croatia. Of the 2,919 persons who were born in Australia, 11% planned to stay in Croatia, while 19.7% of those born outside Australia had the same intent. This indicator can be compared with the historical data by Price,[67] who claimed that 45% of inter-war migrants returned to former Yugoslavia, while Šegvić[68] was more circumspect, indicating a return of 17.7% migrants. In the largest ever collective ethnic departure from Australia, nearly 20% of all pre-war Croatian settlers left for Yugoslavia in 1948-49, but only 14 % were older than 55 years of age.[69]

Transnational social space: a new landscape

Recent political and social changes in Europe reignited links between the involuntary older diasporic minorities in neighbouring countries and the country of origin after a long-time gap. A spatial proximity facilitated expanding communication and generated new exchanges. The effects of such spatial proximity are shared by the post-1950s economic migrants or 'guest-workers' in Western European countries. Despite larger spatial distances, migrants in overseas destinations also benefited as major contemporary transport and communication/technological changes made major inroads into the sense of spatial distances. Those communities became spatially closer to the country of origin. The last segment of this article is about the changing transnational perspectives for the deterritorialised but heterogeneous overseas migrant communities.

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[67] Price (1963): 102.
[68] Šegvić (1953): 8.
[69] Lalich (2010): 98.

The migration story is a history of settlement and of various paths and degrees of inclusion in the host society. Also, many migrants, despite diverse hindrances, kept some form of connection with the home country besides the emotional one. Migrants and their particular collectives are included in transnational social space in different modes marked by diverse activities, density and intensity. However, Croatian and many other European emigrants are aging, and many who arrived in their early twenties during the 1970s are already close to retirement.[70] To some it could mean retirement in Croatia, but probably not for the majority, since they do not want to, or cannot, part from their families, descendants and perceived advantages of the social system to which they have become accustomed. It is very much indicative that, though the number of retirees who returned to Croatia since independence doubled within a decade,[71] it still represents a small proportion of Croatian migrants in Australia. The vast majority of persons who travel to Croatia with the intent to remain permanently are retirees. This indicates the current reluctance of people of working age to go to Croatia for a longer time period.

The war for independence during the first half of the 1990s had a major role in mobilizing the Croatian diaspora and re-energizing the transnational social space; this led to the enhanced participation of migrants during the war and post-war transition. This was accompanied with a flow of funds, experience and ideas. Something similar occurred in the post-1945 years, with active migrant involvement through aid collections and their return to help families, rebuild the country and participate in the development of a new social system.[72] A new discontinuity was then caused by the grave economic crisis and hardline communist politics in Yugoslavia that soon brought return migration and active participation to an abrupt end. Also, the breakdown of Yugoslavia's relationship with its former major ally, the USSR, confounded many migrants and led to the breakdown of the supportive institutional network. However, even before independence various agencies had appropriated a major role within the migrant developed transnational social space. Among such important institutional involvements was the establishment of a Roman Catholic network in Australia, *Croatian Heritage Association* media and cultural activities, and cultural and sport exchanges. Similarly, the SBS media program in Australia had a significant role in expanding transnational social space.

Both former Yugoslav and Croatian governments had an active role in expanding transnational space, by opening diplomatic and consular representations, promoting return, tourism, and even investment. Moreover,

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[70] Peiskar (2009/10): 54-55.
[71] Hugo *et al.* (2003): 23.
[72] Lalich (2010).

the Australian authorities also appropriated a major role through diplomatic recognition of Croatia, immigration policies, dual citizenship, establishment of diplomatic and consular representations, migration agreements, pension transfer accords, acceptance of the Croatian language in the education system, and the initial support for the Croatian language program at Macquarie University. To this could be added inter-University agreements signed with diverse Croatian universities, by Macquarie and some other Australian universities, participation in financing Croatian Studies by the Croatian government, Summer schools in both countries, scholarships and other activities. Various Croatian sporting and cultural representations at international events had a major impact on the migrants' sense of belonging and led to public representations of multi-vocal belonging during important international sporting events.[73] Such developments are indicative of continuous dynamics and changing patterns well beyond the initial migrant activities in a transnational social space established from below.

Among exogenous agencies that impact on the nature of the earlier established transnational social space are media in both the English and Croatian languages, and in particular segments that promote Croatia as a travel destination.[74] Foreign investment in this transition country is still very low, though some major investment was made by migrant entrepreneurs, including those from Australia. Likewise, the official recognition of Croatia as an independent state in 1992, and UN and NATO membership, had an important symbolic effect on the transnational social space by expanding its scope and providing a new impetus. A similar impact came through the establishment of Croatian diplomatic and consular representations throughout the world, and even by the participation of migrants in providing necessary facilities for such purposes, like the construction of the embassy in Canberra and purchasing consular offices in Melbourne, Perth and Sydney. EU membership from mid-2013 is expected to further expand opportunities that could be of particular interest for the second generation holding dual citizenship. Such diverse influences, compounded by major political events and social changes, brought the home country closer to migrants and their descendants, expanding the potential of the transnational social space generated through the migration process.

New generations in the transnational social space
The major landmark in modern Croatian history will be its forthcoming EU membership. The post-war migration generation welcomed independence; however, the forthcoming event, though politically gratifying to many, is

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[73] Tadić (2007): 148-49.
[74] Anonymous (2008); Crouch (2012).

nevertheless an event within which the second or subsequent generations could look forward to new opportunities. To the first generation, such a perspective is primarily of symbolic significance, but to their descendants such an event has the potential to impact on their lives, experiences and open career fields beyond the confines of the limited Australian social and market potentials. It comes as no surprise that a significant number of the second generation have acquired dual citizenship, irrespective of their inadequate knowledge of heritage, history, culture and language. Such decisions indicate that contemporary Croatia is already considered by a section of the new generations as a place where alternative opportunities could be found.

Various endogenous and exogenous factors could nevertheless impact on the second or new generations' inclusion in the dynamic transnational social space. The most obvious endogenous influence comes from the degree of successful intergenerational transfer of heritage, culture and social capital within the family and immediate community, including the transfer and use of the ancestral language. The exogenous factors are located in social environments in both countries and in the role of governments in creating a positive climate and policies, such as multicultural policies and practices in Australia, and in the pursuit of policy measures and channels of communication with migrants and their descendants on the part of Croatia. Among various practices is the support of language education and culture transfer in Australia, which is to a very large degree left to the aging local community, in comparison to the emphasis given by Greek and Italian government policies on language maintenance.[75] Another major consideration is found in the growing awareness in Australia of its own large expatriate community and the suggested need to develop adequate policies to keep in touch with it and procure national benefit out of its overseas experience.[76] Considered as Australian expatriates, the hybrid second generation would more likely, but not necessarily, be much more inclined to turn their attention to the ancestral home than other segments of the expatriate community.

It comes as no surprise that a well known former footballer of Croatian descent, Tony Popovic, declares in the *The Sun Herald*[77] regarding his travel plans that "… *My family is from there and I enjoy the history of the place; ... old and new... But I admit I am* biased..." Many belonging to this generation probably will not change their place of residence, but to some the symbolic attachment will define their favourite travel destination,

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[75] Giorgas (2008): 62-63.
[76] Hugo *et al.* (2003): 14-15.
[77] Anonymous (2009): 6.

as it is in his case, Dubrovnik and Croatia. Aging migrants are leaving behind a symbolic cognisance of their heritage, origin, place of birth, and some words and idioms. With exceptions, such inheritance leaves a mark on the second generation. Helped by strong feelings of symbolic attachment, the appropriation of the Croatian language or some words is within reach, as it will confirm the feeling of being at home whilst making a visit or pursuing some other life opportunities.

The effects of such dynamic changes have replaced in significance the former large scale migration from Croatia to Australia. These developments are further accompanied by the flow of investment, tourism and even return migration to Croatia. Such developments generate new perspectives for the Croatian language in this transnational social space established from below. Despite the disappearance of some other small community continental European languages at Macquarie University, the number of students enrolled in Croatian language studies has been well sustained despite intergenerational changes,[78] though there is continuous increase in the proportion of students coming from other ethnic backgrounds and mixed marriages. This offers positive expectations about the perspectives for this language as an important medium of communication in transnational social space.

However, such expectations are constrained by a decrease in the numbers of students of schoolage studying the Croatian language and the intergenerational transfer of a local dialect and vernacular language that causes difficulties in contact with standard Croatian language speakers. The other major constraint in language transfer is the inadequate institutional support for language teaching. Despite securing financial support from the Croatian government and inter-University agreements for the tertiary Croatian language studies, little has been done to support such measures with the needed teaching staff.

To the first generation, the transnational social space formed through their own diverse individual and collective activities was a mode of survival and continuous pattern of inclusion at home, and also in the receiving country. It was an important channel through which many secured a possible retreat from diverse difficulties and obstacles encountered in the place of settlement. To the new generations it has a different meaning as it provides additional dynamics or a 'playing field' in a new world of communication. The transnational space of the first generation fades away, but the dynamics of social, political, communication and technological changes impacts on trans-national social space morphology and opens new possibilities for second and subsequent generations on a scale unknown to

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[78] Budak (2008): 177-84; (2002/03): 370.

their parents. However, like any entrance in a new communication field it is not necessarily a smooth process, since difficulties could emerge from different sides. Among such hindrances are the unresolved property ownership issues in Croatia that are an outcome of emigration. This could cause not only a certain disadvantage to migrants and their descendants, but also ill-will among relatives who used the land in their absence. Similar tensions could also surface in dealings with other segments of ancestral society, and in particular at the time of economic crisis the country is experiencing.

A very recent Croatian government decision, imposing strict language, culture and heritage knowledge test requirements for citizenship application,[79] without providing assistance, would pose a major obstacle to many applicants. Such a decision is made despite many publicly voiced problems in the relation of the home country to its own overseas migrant community or diaspora. It tells us that the decision makers did not make consultations before making such legislation. Least of all did it take into account that a weekly, *Hrvatski vjesnik* (Croatian Herald) from Melbourne, is now published by the second generation; its rich English-language supplement *The New Generation* is published regularly, and has already seen 775 editions. Such decisions would cause unnecessary pain and expense to individuals who may have desires to return and would also have a negative impact on the goodwill of migrants and their descendants. This could have negative effects on transnational perspectives and on aging Croatia facing major social and economic issues. The transnational context is changing with the inevitable loss of the first generation, when migrant remittances will fall and when tourist visits will replace family visits and connections. Hence a need for this small country with a large migrant population to go beyond its borders and take into account the potentials of its large deterritorialised population segment, towards which it would have to show much greater flexibility than has been indicated so far.

With such a stringent move Croatia is taking an adverse attitude towards positively oriented migrant descendants on distant shores. Good advice can be derived from a warning made at the height of the current global financial crisis by the president of the leading Italian cultural institution in Australia, *CO.AS.IT*, that a major decrease in the financing of Italian language classes overseas would not only have a negative impact on Italian economy through a decrease in tourist visits.[80] There is a need for more openness by the mainstream Croatian society towards its scattered diaspora and a better understanding of its migrants; and even more so when

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[79] MUP (2012).
[80] Comastri (2009):8.

the number of emigrants is still higher than that of immigrants to Croatia.

The ancestral home is in a position to adapt to current global changes and to gain better understanding of migrants and in particular the complexity of issues encountered by their descendants. The significance of the Croatian language as a medium of exchange in transnational social space inevitably gradually diminishes through decline in the numbers of its speakers due to a decrease in migration and aging. The fortunes of the Croatian language primarily appropriates a role of identity representation in a culturally diverse society while decreasing in significance in cultural and commercial exchange, except where the first generation still has the main role. It is a medium of identification within a dynamic social environment as the English language is spoken by the second generation. To a culturally hybrid second generation and other travellers, the Croatian language is a *companion* or second language to a major global language in an ever expanding communication space. It is noted by Alba[81] that a knowledge and occasional use of several words inherited from their migrant parents serves as symbolic identification within the wider community. This statement identifies the symbolic significance of transferred cultures through the migration process and the seeds of a transnational social space, irrespective of intergenerational shifts and the weakening of bonding social capital with the ancestral home.

Concluding remarks

The dynamic Australian-Croatian transnational social space built by migrants is at the point of major changes. The new configuration appears due to current global changes and the perceived mobility of the hybrid second generation. Croatia, like other former European emigration source countries, has an aging population and it could be expected that it can find its own economic and demographic interest in attracting the attention of the *new generations* of Croatian descent beyond their symbolic identification, acceptance of dual citizenship, and support for its national sports teams. It is a complex process that is outside the scope of aging migrants who generated such potent communication opportunities with the ancestral home, which still has to discover opportunities arising out of former migration. Additional ingenuity by all concerned parties is required if the Croatian language is to continue to keep its role as a medium of exchange in a dynamic transnational space. In this respect, the transnational space established by the overseas migrants differs from the local European transnational space generated through the centuries old diaspora and guest workers that will be further supported by the forthcoming EU membership.

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[81] Alba (1990): 84.

Inevitably, the sustainability of ties made through migration and transnational dynamics is a matter of a personal, cultural and economic interest alongside the public interest of the place of origin and the home country of a new generation. Sustainability of dynamic transnational ties would benefit both countries. The prospective further social and economic changes in Croatia would benefit from a proactive policy of language education and maintenance beyond its shores.

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[82] Last access to all cited websites 14/05/2014.

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Sažetak

Hrvatska dugo osjeća utjecaj migracijske dinamike, dragovoljne i prisilne, gospodarstvene i političke, prema susjednim zemljama i Novom svijetu. Migracija je i dalje nazočna premda se politička i gospodarstvena struktura Hrvatske izmijenila od neovisnosti 1991. godine. Različita migracijska kretanja prijeće jednostranu analizu procesa, počevši od stvaranja dijaspore stoljećima unazad, koju je slijedila ekonomsko iseljavanje u prekomorske i Europske zemlje do političke i obnovljene ekonomske migracije tijekom zadnjih desetljeća. Prisutna povratna migracija, uključivo i većih grupa, imala je znatan utjecaj na domicilno i iseljeničko okruženje. Velike tehnološke i komunikacijske promjene tijekom zadnjih desetljeća utjecale su na dinamičnost različitih spona iseljenika s domovinom. Samostalnost Hrvatske i lom ideoloških prepreka nisu zaustavili iseljavanje, ali su utemeljili nove poticaje za razvoj i širenje osobnih i poslovnih spona te izmreženosti kontakata iseljenih i njihovih potomaka s maticom. Transnacionalni društveni prostor utemeljen na društvenoj infrastrukturi uspostavljenoj odozdo od strane iseljenih dobio je novu dinamiku s evidentnim globalnim i lokalnim strukturalnim promjenama. Međutim, suočava se istodobno s novim izazovima podstaknutim i starenjem demografskih struktura Hrvatske i iseljeničkih zajednica. Zajedništvo novih generacija oba okruženja je uvjetovano raspršenošću njihovih interesa i razlikuje se od jakog društvenog kapitala koji je postojao kod starijih generacija. Ovaj novi proces nastaviti će se tijekom daljnje tranzicije hrvatskog društva unutar Europske Unije. Ovaj rad analizira složenost transnacionalnih aspekata iseljeničkih iskustava različitih iseljeničkih generacija.