

## **Rebeka Mesarić Žabčić: “The Phenomenon of Overseas Chain Migration to Australia”**

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### **Abstract:**

The paper consists of two conceptually related parts that combine historical and contemporary components. The first part aims to show how the elements (language, culture, customs) specific to the region (the island of Korčula, Dalmatia) were transferred by migrants in Australia from one social environment to another, and how these elements are lived, survived and modified influenced by elements of the new social environment. The second part discusses the role and importance of the traditional (local / regional) culture in shaping the identity of the descendants of Croatian migrants from Korčula in a contemporary Australian context.

**Keywords:** chain migration, Croatian migrants, local and regional identity, overseas migration, Australian multiculturalism, diaspora

## **Introduction**

Migration is generally not a new phenomenon and an individual or group of people can constantly move from one state to another and back. They can also be permanently settled in a new country. A general framework for all types of migration encompasses any change of residence of the individual or the larger and smaller groups of people, and one of the major subtypes of migration is chain migration.

The chain migration usually starts with a family member who initially only sends money to other family members to assist their migration to the new location in the new environment. At the same time, a group of people from the same location migrate to the new area which has already been settled by their relatives and fellow community members. In this manner, the chain migration process is initiated by a small number of pioneers who take the first step in establishing the community in the new location. Following the initial settlement, positive information is sent through various forms of media to other community members from the area of origin which consequently stimulates further migration. The study of chain migration is a particularly important aspect of studying migration due to the complexity of the phases that occur and are related to the period of migration. These phases are influenced by technology, the legislative systems of individual countries and accepted and not accepted norms, laws, etc. In order to analyse chain migration and the preservation of local and regional identity, it is important to identify and analyse the processes and influencing factors at work during the periods of migration for the particular community. This paper will discuss and analyse the framework of Croatian migration to Australia to establish a basis for understanding its size and direction. The chain migration of migrants from the island of Korčula, specifically from the municipality of Blato to Sydney is analysed in the context of its impact on the preservation of local and regional identity.

The article aims at demonstrating how the elements (language, culture, customs), specific to the region and the local environment (Dalmatian islands, Dalmatia) of the country of origin were transferred from one social environment to another, and how these elements are lived, survived and have been modified in the community influenced by elements of the new social environment. The second part discusses the role and importance of traditions (local/regional) in shaping the identity of the descendants of migrants in a contemporary context.

### **A note about methodology**

The methodology utilized in this article is based on an analysis of relevant Croatian and English-language sources, the analysis of a few selected experiences of Croatian migrants, that is, the life stories of young and elderly migrants whose origin is linked to Blato on the island of Korčula, and available data from the Internet (websites and social networks). The methods used include: field research interviews, and the life story method of 'oral history'. The discussion also includes three sets of issues: migration, life in Australia, and links with the migrants' homeland. Interviews were mostly conducted in the Croatian language, although it is worth mentioning that the conversations that occurred were not conducted in the standard form of the Croatian language but rather in the language of the local community or parental region of origin including some words from the English language, which these individuals could not translate into Croatian or could not remember at that moment.

The hypothesis is that chain migration and international migration processes can be a valuable contribution to a better understanding of contemporary migration flows. An analysis of chain migration also provides partial insight into the processes of establishing kinship and social networks in places where migrants live, adjusting to the new environment and forging connections through preserving local and regional characteristics as a way of life. An analysis of chain migration through life experience and the perspective of the individual enriches our knowledge and contributes to a broader understanding of the phenomenon of chain migration that opens many new questions and provides impetus for further research on this type of migration.

### **Brief overview of 'push and pull' factors of migration**

The question of why people migrate is one that for years scientists from different disciplines with different areas of focus have offered a variety of different answers to. In general, we can identify several types of 'push and pull' factors that can influence and affect the migration of people (sometimes simultaneously), including:

- a) the environment (e.g. climate, natural disasters),
- b) policies (e.g. war)
- c) the economy (e.g. work)

d) culture (e.g. religious freedom, education).

Considering that 'push or pull' factors are more important in certain migratory periods, the conclusion is that the migration process is very complex and that from its beginning until its end is influenced by a number of factors. It is very difficult to clearly separate the complicated mix of objective and subjective factors pushing the decisions of migrants.

A very simple definition of 'push and pull' factors is provided by S. Lee.<sup>1</sup> Lee's 'push' factors are linked to the country or place of migration (wars, insecurity, poverty, unemployment, etc.) and 'pull' factors for the country or place of immigration (stability, good economic boom, migration policy etc.). The migratory system in general and the role of the state determine the size, direction, composition, and, finally, the duration of migratory flows. If we observe the migratory system, personal decisions are of lesser importance in comparison to structural possibilities due to the fact that countries are mutually linked with regard to migratory flows. In order to straightforwardly understand the migratory system, three key factors linked to the globalization of the world economy contribute, as Saskia Sassen argues, to the growth of international migrations as a global process: 1) the unequal level of development between the countries of origin of migrants and the countries of their destination; 2) the increasing internationalisation of all developed economies; and 3) the main changes in the organisation of economies and labour markets in advanced economies, which have created multiple possibilities for the incorporation of migrants.<sup>2</sup>

### **Examples of Chain Migration to Australia in theory, research and practice**

At the heart of this paper is the overseas chain migration of Croats, in other words, the exodus of people from the same areas (places, regions) and their collective immigration and settlement in another area. Thus, the research focuses only on the larger group of chain migration from the Croatian region of Dalmatia and its local communities of Korčula and Blato and their bulk migration to another area, in Sydney. After a certain time migrant pioneers allow the migration of families, relatives, friends, acquaintances,

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<sup>1</sup> Lee (1966): 11-28.

<sup>2</sup> Sassen (2001): 2.

and fellow countrymen.<sup>3</sup>

The behavior of this type of migrant is, after a certain period of time affected by a range of circumstances in which they find themselves. Eventually, migrants realize that it is more economically beneficial to relocate the whole family, as it is difficult to regularly visit due to the large distance from the mother country, financial demands and the lack of free time, holidays, etc., but also travel expenses. Practical examples show that the greater the distance of migration from the birthplace of the migrants, the easier it is to decide on bringing the whole family to the new location. The second reason is because of the good news and rumors from the new home location provided by relatives, distant relatives, friends, acquaintances and countrymen who have already affirmed their bearings in their new country and have settled in order to ease or improve their position of the social ladder. New migrants are opting for the same environment, that is, an area where there are already well-known 'pioneer' migrants, primarily due to the positive news about the new country given to them by their loved ones. As a result they believe, and it is psychologically simpler for them to do so, that it is easier to start a new life in a new environment in the same area where they already have someone who they know from before, so that the process of fitting in and integration is painless for them. The chain migration of Korčula's migrants in particular enables the development of a transport system, as well as the institutionalization of the role of the 'pioneer' immigrants in the broadest possible sense.<sup>4</sup>

Sources reveal that the first inhabitants of Blato arrived in the suburbs of Sydney in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and mostly involved in the cultivation of vegetables.<sup>5</sup> Over time, migrants (in our case the inhabitants of Blato) realized that it makes economic sense to bring the whole family, but regularly visit Blato, which due to the great distance from the mother country places demands on free time, holidays, etc. Case studies show that the greater the distance of migration from their birthplace, the easier it is for migrants to decide to bring their whole family.<sup>6</sup>

Secondly, potential migrants are influenced by the good news and rumors from the new home of relatives, cousins, friends and countrymen

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<sup>3</sup> Mesarić Žabčić (2014).

<sup>4</sup> Mesarić Žabčić (2014).

<sup>5</sup> Tkalčević (1999): 70-165; Šutalo (2004): 65-270.

<sup>6</sup> Boyd (1989).

who have already affirmed themselves in their new homeland and achieved higher status on the social scale.<sup>7</sup>

New migrants decide on chain migration because of good news from the new country, but also because it is psychologically easier to start a new life in the same area where they already have a local person and the process of adjustment to the new life in the new environment is less painful because of this. The first interconnections, meetings, weddings and sponsorship support among Croats from the same area of migration will later result in the formation of Croatian local and regional associations and a large Croatian community in Australia.<sup>8</sup>

**Figure 1:**

Census in Blato municipality on the island of Korčula 1857-2011

Census Years	1857	1869	1880	1890	1900	1910	1921	1931
Population	3450	4928	4035	4981	5781	7107	8050	8073

Census Years	1948	1953	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Population	5604	5676	5148	5912	3861	4093	3659	3593

Source: Census from 1857-2011, Central Bureau of Statistics, Zagreb

It is believed that today in Sydney there are approximately 6,000 inhabitants and their descendants from Blato, so that more of them today live in Sydney than in Blato. Figures 1 and 2 shows Blato's total population by census during the years from 1857 to 2011. According to the census, we can conclude that Blato recorded the largest decline of population in the period 1931-1948 and the period 1971-1981 which was also characteristic for the settlements of other Dalmatian islands. It is assumed that the proportion of the population emigrated from the island, mostly to Australia and the USA where *Blaćani*<sup>9</sup> today live as the largest community outside of Blato in the world. This paper will not deal with the detailed analysis of demographic

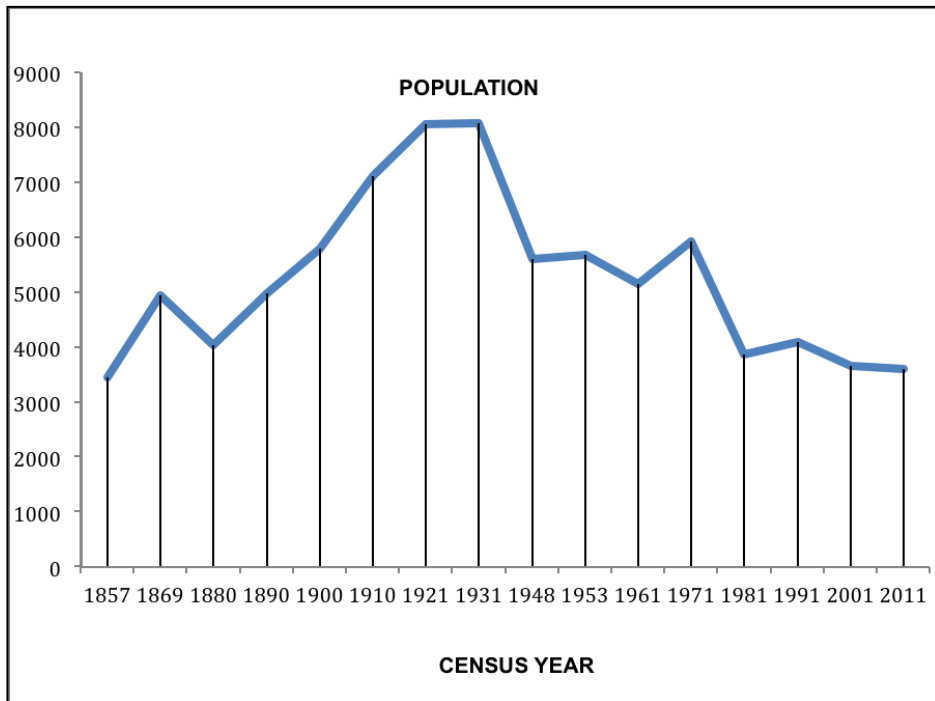
<sup>7</sup> Harbison (1981): 23-64; Boyd (1989); Mesarić Žabčić (2014).

<sup>8</sup> Mesarić Žabčić & Perić (2006): 261-315; Mesarić Žabčić (2007a): 271-87.

<sup>9</sup> The inhabitants of Blato (*Blaćani*, *Blaćanin*, *Blaćanka*) are persons who were born in Blato on the island of Korčula, or whose parents or other ancestors were born in Blato. See Mesarić Žabčić (2014).

data because this is not the primary task of this paper but become the basis for new research of this type.

**Figure 2:**  
Census in Blato on the island of Korčula 1857-2011



### **The opinions of a young man from Blato on the island of Korčula about chain migration and preservation of local and regional customs**

Example 1:

The young man is a second generation migrant from Blato who moved to Sydney as part of chain migration.

He says:

*“... despite their good status and performance in Australian society, young people are not willing to give up their ethnic roots. We have integrated into Australian society, but we are not yet assimilated into Australian society! I was born in Sydney but I went back to live in Croatia in 1996, I spent six years in Croatia and I came back here in 2004. My parents*

*were the first generation to come to Australia. All the citizens of Blato hang out here in Sydney. We have a football club called Dalmatia Sydney and I play for them. The last time I went to Blato was in 2007 and I will go again next summer. I have a great desire to invest in Blato, especially at sea and maintain my father's property for my children. I will graduate in Sydney and if an opportunity came up in Croatia, I would return there...*

The testimony of a young man from Blato provides evidence of the desire and need for investment in the local community in Blato, which can be interpreted as a need but also a desire to maintain a connection with the homeland of his ancestors. In the background of this testimony is a hint of the possible return of the young man to the land of his ancestors, as he already has a desire for investment in his parent's birthplace. Hornstein Tomić explains in detail that the desire to return to the 'homeland', so as to finally reach 'home', is at the same time the motive of the parents projected onto the children; the world of origins illuminated by the 'homeland' is transferred to the descendants for whom there is thus meaning in searching for 'roots', as well as explaining to themselves the question of origins and undertaking that which is called 'migration due to roots.'<sup>10</sup>

*"... Every day I take care to preserve our Croatian identity at home because my whole circle of friends are citizens of Blato or Croats, and I attended Croatian schools and perform the Kumpanija dance from Blato in our Croatian club..."*

This second statement is evidence of the practice of using the Croatian language and fostering local customs from Korčula. The emotional attachment and engagement with the country of origin is present through fostering local identity, regional customs, and practicing to speak Croatian as testified in the prior statement by the young man. His statement also proves how important family and friends, as well as immersion and hanging out with Croatians, are for this young man. He maintains a sense of satisfaction and pride and the importance of cultivating not only the local, but also the Croatian, identity in Australia.

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<sup>10</sup> Hornstein Tomić (2014): 109-31.



## The opinions of a young girl from Blato on the island of Korčula about chain migration and preservation of local and regional customs

Example 2:

*“... I was born in Sydney, but there is no place more beautiful in the world than Blato, my parents are from Blato from Korčula. And my boyfriend is originally from Blato, I brought him from Blato to Sydney. .. It was love at first sight ...”*

Through this example we see how the young *Blaćanka* was in love with the birthplace of her parents, Blato, although she was born in Sydney, and how her love for her boyfriend from Blato led to chain migration to Sydney. This is evidence of chain migration in the case of younger people, which is still continuing in today's modern world due to globalization process.

*“... We have in our house in Sydney many photos of Blato and the entire island of Korčula, so that every day at least once I look at one of the few photos on the desk .... We would like to invest in Blato on the island of Korčula, maybe, a house to live in or a holiday home, we have some savings ... or invest in any business for mutual benefit, and for the inhabitants of Blato and the same for Sydney. We are still thinking about it and working out costs ... Our parents support us in ensuring that we invest in Blato. I like to prepare and eat Dalmatian food and am skillful in the preparation of some dishes originating from Blato. I often prepare fish according to a special recipe of people from Blato. It is popara made from white fish with tomatoes. Also, I like to bake lumbije.<sup>11</sup> It is a sweet bread with raisins and lots of spices ... It is a typical specialty of Blato. It is interesting to note how the same recipe for popara and lumbija is used by the younger generations of the village of Blato in New York.”<sup>12</sup>*

The testimony of the young woman from Blato, whose parents, and later her

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<sup>11</sup> *Lumbije* are prepared on the All Saints' Day, and it is said that the recipe was brought by Napoleon's soldiers, and also that the word *lumbija* comes from the French *no l'oublie pas* - do not forget me.

<sup>12</sup> Mesarić Žabčić (2014).

current boyfriend, settled in Australia through chain migration, and who has lived in Sydney since her birth, and periodically visits Croatia, Korčula and Blato, shows that there exists the ambition to invest one's own capital in the birthplace of her parents, motivated, among other reasons, by the 'continuous obligations of remembering one's parental roots.' Accordingly, one can conclude that tradition and the traditional culture that was cultivated in this family and in the circle of friends of Croatian descent in Sydney, has had, and continues to play, a significant and influential role in her contemporary life. From her testimony, it is possible clearly to see and observe that, in spite of her life in Sydney and all the advantages of Sydney in the widest possible sense, she has not rejected her national, regional or local identity, and, what is more, has devoted great attention to it and tries to cultivate and further maintain it in her home, whether that is through language, customs, cooking, etc.

Through this evidence, it is possible to make two observations. First - that young people are ready and willing to invest in the local communities from which they originate. Second - that the making of different dishes by the Blato younger generation means they want to be connected via local ways of preparing food to the homeland of their parents and relatives.

### **The opinions of an older man from Blato on the island of Korčula about chain migration**

Example 3 (literal translation):

*“... I was born in Blato after the Second World War ... I was 17 when I migrated from Blato, first to Italy and after to Australia. I migrated to Australia in Sydney because I had relatives from Blato who helped me with everything here. A few years later after me, my girlfriend from Blato migrated, here to Sydney. We got married and have children and grandchildren today. With us from Blato came my wife's sister who married in Sydney to our man from Blato ... We are a very good example of chain migration from Blato, we have also helped several other people to come to Sydney, you know they are all gone because of politics or because of hunger of that time. It was a tough time to survive on the island ... ”*

This excerpt from a story is evidence of more than three chain migrations from Blato to Sydney. The testimony of an elderly gentleman from Blato shows us more chain migration from Blato to Sydney. He decided to go to Australia just because he had relatives in Australia who helped him on his arrival with everything that was necessary, which provided him with some kind of feeling of security and confidence. After the old man, it was the turn of his girlfriend to arrive, whom he soon married, and soon after, her sister and some other well-known people from Blato also arrived in Australia.

Thus, it can be concluded that this was the reason that many relatives, friends, fellow villagers, and neighbors from Blato decided to migrate to Sydney as they had in this new living space a known acquaintance from their birthplace.

### **The role of tradition in a contemporary context: the formation of the regional and local identity of the descendants of emigrants**

Research and analysis of several stories presented here has shown us generally that the connection and nostalgia for the 'homeland' is pronounced in people from both the younger and older generations. The young descendants of Blato are also very nostalgic for parental homeland. They are interested in their origins, working on maintaining connections with the youth in the homeland of their parents using all forms of social networks, and thinking about investing in their home region; they are interested in what they could do for the country of their ancestors.

Although the official language in Australia is English, Croatian migrants pay much attention to preserving the Croatian language, along with the traditional regional and local customs. The Croatian language is nurtured at several levels made up of multiple identities including family, local, regional, and so on. The model is characterized by a reference to customs, traditions, songs, etc. Characteristics and forms of the Croatian community are primarily evident in the names of companies and clubs, which along with the prefix 'Croatian', also have the same native (regional) / local prefix. Secondly, it manifests itself in respect for and celebration of local and regional traditions, the veneration of saints, preparing food in the traditional way, and the celebration of important events of national, regional or local importance.<sup>13</sup> Highlighting the increased emphasis on the local and

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<sup>13</sup> Mesarić Žabčić (2014).

regional (Dalmatian) speaks of the effort of Croatian migrants to preserve Croatian (national), regional and local identities in Australia.

### **The traditional community from Blato in modern Australian society**

The inhabitants of Blato originate from rural communities where the primary group mainly lived, and some still do, according to the values of traditional culture, and its rural dimension. Migrating to modern Australian society and culture, the inhabitants of Blato unwittingly bring with them the values and mentality of the traditional society and culture. In pre-industrial society, kinship and local communities determined the life cycle of an individual, whereas in modern society that role also exists within a number of specialized institutions.

A strong commitment to the values of traditional culture leads to extreme susceptibility, familiarism and paternalistic authority.<sup>14</sup> Traditional local communities, in this specific case, the migrants from Blato and their descendants, devote significant attention to preserving the language, alongside all other traditional local, regional and national customs. The language is nurtured on many levels in which one's own 'I' is composed of multiple identities and roles, including family, local, and regional ones. These values are subsequently adopted by their descendants in the family, with the aim of preserving the traditions, culture, language and dances, in Sydney. At the same time, those migrants are put in the service of a new modern society, the other homeland of Australia, because of education, jobs, etc.<sup>15</sup>

### **Integration, Acculturation or Assimilation**

In sociology, acculturation means a process in which members of a community accept the beliefs and behaviors of another community, both through direct contact and through the mass media. In ethnology and cultural anthropology, the process of cultural change is initiated by coming into contact with two or more different cultural systems, or moving individuals from their native societies and cultural environments to a new socio-cultural environment. It is a process that involves downloading and accepting the cultural and social patterns, traits and characteristics of

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<sup>14</sup> Mesarić Žabčić (2007a); (2007b); (2014); Lovoković (2010): 75-137.

<sup>15</sup> Lovoković (2010): 17-207.

another culture/society. These are behaviors that occur when social groups originating from different civilizations and cultures enter into direct and continuous contact, and when it comes to a cultural fusion in an ethno-sociological sense. This has occurred in all cases of migration, when newly-arrived groups accepted, in whole or in part, autochthonous cultures, or in the case of cultural imitation, when one culture has taken the cultural characteristics of another, which occurred for example in the colonial context. Usually, the subordinate cultural group accepts the habits and linguistic patterns of the dominant group, but this can also appear in a reciprocal manner with the dominant group, as is presupposed for the patterns of subordinate groups.<sup>16</sup> When the process is exclusively one-way and includes the complete assimilation and extinction of the autochthonous culture, acculturation in this case includes the loss of a separate cultural, national or political identity. The inevitable assimilation of their descendants today is the biggest problem of Croatian-Australians. Assimilation is a process which involves the expansion and merging of the groups or the environment in which immigrants live.<sup>17</sup>

Many researchers who have dealt with the issue of assimilation of migrants for many years observed several types of assimilation of migrants, and point out that a strong ethnic identification may be due to different mechanisms. One example is reactive identification, which likely arises from repeated experiences of discrimination, and can also contribute to the creation of oppositional attitudes in people and the emergence of a prolonged resistance to assimilation. It is most common among children of immigrants in the lower socioeconomic classes, but may also develop among those in the upper classes. Selective assimilation occurs among immigrants more likely to have children with better resources and socio-economic prospects. Their parents generally have higher levels of education and possess their own businesses. Such families usually belong to ethnic networks and institutions that have sufficient resources to have support available outside the ethnic community.<sup>18</sup>

Symbolic assimilation can occur among immigrants who are already in business largely involved in a major economic corporation. This most

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<sup>16</sup> Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder, (2006): 29-57.

<sup>17</sup> Alba & Nee (2003): 57-98.

<sup>18</sup> Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder (2006): 33-46.

commonly occurs among children of immigrants from the highest class. Such people tend to rely on the ethnic community solely because of ethnic solidarity and belonging to a group, rather than for reasons which will meet their individual needs.<sup>19</sup> Assimilation is thus a process in which an migrant consciously or unconsciously assumes the behavior, thinking, values and culture of his or her new home, and loses or changes their ethnic identity, although the processes of adaptation and integration are not yet observed. The migrant becomes in many ways so similar to the new society that he or she can no longer be identified as a member of an ethnic community.<sup>20</sup> In the book *Ko tujina postane dom* (When foreign land become home) by Lukšič-Hacin, one finds the basic concept of assimilation, which originated in the sociological tradition and is especially important in the analysis of the phenomenon of migration and the process of adjustment of foreigners to the new environment. The anthropological tradition in turn primarily established the notion of acculturation and cultural assimilation.<sup>21</sup>

Acculturation is most often the result of the migration process and/or exchange. The meaning of acculturation is the connection within 'the first or the other', the new culture and/or the encounter between cultures. It is associated with socialization, which affects how we behave, think and feel in the earliest period of our life in the primary and/or another culture. Acculturation values on the one hand the process of learning another culture and assimilation can be understood as a waiver of the primary culture in favor of other cultures in the host country. It is important to note that the process of acculturation and/or assimilation may take place in one generation or several generations, and there are several degrees of acculturation and assimilation.

It can be generally concluded that a number of people (migrants) in another country (the host country) may gradually lose their original culture in favor of other cultures, which results in assimilation. Also, it could be concluded that many migrants, however, can learn and embrace other cultures, but may still prefer to preserve their original culture as well, that is, adopt attitudes and behavior to add to the already primary, and the other existing, culture. Therefore, all migrants and their descendants who were so

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<sup>19</sup> Bean & Stevens (2003): 76-173.

<sup>20</sup> Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder (2006): 36-52.

<sup>21</sup> Lukšič-Hacin (1995): 31-68.

acculturated but not assimilated retain their culture of origin to enjoy with friends and family. Among younger generations one can generally notice different types of assimilation. Cultural assimilation, for example, refers to the acceptance of basic polite values of the country of immigration, and thereby retains the basic features of the immigrant heritage or birthplace. Accordingly, the inhabitants of Blato adopted Australia as their new home, but they kept their language (and accepted English), and to some extent preserved their customs and traditions. Most retained Dalmatian cuisine, while traditional costumes and dress are only occasionally worn at weddings, big parties in their societies and during the ceremony known as *Kumpanije*. Social and structural assimilation refers to the participation of immigrants in the political, educational and other aspects of social life in the new environment. There is also an economic assimilation, where the immigrant is involved in various areas of the economic life of the country. On that note, we learned that migrants are not 'what they used to be', that is, they are no longer poor or uneducated. First of all, today there are educated people, people who send their kids to college, among whom are successful lawyers, economists, doctors, and so on. Hence, a multitude of factors accelerate or slow down the process of assimilation. It is a significant fact that assimilation can very easily become denationalisation or can lead to the loss of national identity. This is closely tied to the concept of 'Australianisation', which mainly marks the joining of migrants with the local population, and is most often achieved through intermarriage between migrants and the domestic population, and complete mastery of the English language. Research has established which factors expedite assimilation. Among the most representative factors are educational institutions of diverse types, and the formation of families with mixed marriages in which children generally do not learn the language and tradition of the parents of migrants.

It is an interesting and linguistic assimilation and the fact that young couples whose children now learn English first, and only later the Croatian language. On the other hand, the process of assimilation is slowed down by gatherings in various organized ethnic, local and regional associations, clubs, gatherings around churches and Catholic missions, as well as the preservation of songs, and the practicing of folklore and music from the home country.

It should be pointed out that assimilation does not have to end completely in the first generation or second, or the third. It often happens that the second generation forgets the Croatian language and customs of their parents from the mother country, but in the third generation there is a re-awakened interest in the cultural heritage and its own origins and identity. From the previous examples we can conclude that Australian Croatians are very well integrated into Australian society (for example, through jobs, different types of documents, etc.). The biggest problem for identity of Australian Croatians is assimilation, because assimilation is the process of the expansion and merging of groups or individuals with the environment in which migrants live.

According to the opinions of young people from Blato living in Sydney one can conclude that, despite being separated by thousands of kilometres from Blato, they nevertheless nurture local, regional and even national identity, culture, customs, etc., and have the desire and willingness to invest in the homeland of their parents. It is also important to emphasize the very important motivations and actions of various types of Croatians in Australia in order to strengthen local, regional, and ultimately national identity with the aim of preventing definitive assimilation.

### **Conclusion**

The inhabitants of Blato have largely moved to Sydney as part of chain migration, as evidenced by a large community of people from the village of Blato in Sydney (approx. 6000). In Sydney the inhabitants of Blato are connected via birthplace, kinship, through local and regional customs and culture. They are interested in investing in Blato and they helped Croatia during the War for Independence in the 1990s.

Also, regardless of the distance, the young generation of the inhabitants of Blato cherishes its identity (local and regional, also ultimately the national identity), culture, customs and language (examples: *Kumpanija* dance, *Evening of Blato* events, Blato wedding ...). The characteristics of Croatian communities are primarily seen in the names of the club, which have Croatian and native regional/local prefixes. The strong emphasis on the local (Blato) and regional (Dalmatia, Korčula) identity speaks of the effort of Australian Croats to preserve not only Croatian identity, but also regional and local identity in Australia. The Republic of Croatia should use the



potential of this group of people because they are willing to come to Croatia to invest, transmit their knowledge and experience, as well as the expansion and economic interests of Australia on Croatian territory.

The younger generation is not burdened by the past as the older generation is, and is also used to business accountability and competition in business. As one second-generation migrant stated:

*“The ‘New Vine’ of the younger generation of migrants is ‘growing’ in Sydney and Croatia needs to make use of us, the young generation (i.e. its social and intellectual capital) in the diaspora and profit from us.”*

The conclusion is that the order for the existing integration and acculturation, as well as the possibility of full assimilation of Australian Croats, it has continued to support important local, regional and national activities of various types in the Croatian community, and to preserve the Croatian identity in Australia for new generations of Croatian-Australians. The assimilation of Croats and their descendants in Australia will not be able to be completely prevented, although it can perhaps be partly alleviated. Therefore, Croats in Australia and Republic of Croatia should develop strategies in order to preserve and nurture the interest of the younger generation of Croatian-Australians in parental homeland in the widest possible sense, considering the fact that they are very likely to completely assimilate into Australian society. Also, it can finally be concluded that Croatia must not dismiss the younger and older generations of the village of Blato and all other Croatian diasporas wherever they exist in the world, because those displaced Croats will possibly be Croatian citizens tomorrow with respect to the global world in which we live.

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## Sažetak

Rad se sastoji od dva konceptualno povezana dijela koji kombiniraju povijesne i suvremene komponente. Prvi dio ima za cilj pokazati kako su kulturni elementi (jezik, kultura, običaji) specifične za regiju (otok Korčula, Dalmacija) preneseni od strane korčulanskih iseljenika u Australiju iz jednog društvenog okruženja u drugo, i kako su ti elementi preživjeli i mijenjali se u zajednici pod utjecajem elemenata novog društvenog okruženja. Drugi dio analizira ulogu i značaj tradicionalne (lokalne /regionalne) kulture u oblikovanju identiteta potomaka korčulanskih useljenika u suvremenom australskom kontekstu.