


KOSOVAR ALBANIAN GOLDSMITHS AND BAKERS IN ZAGREB: MIGRATION AND ETHNIC ENTERPRENEURSHIP (TRANSLATION)

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DOI: 10.17234/SEC.29.11
Original scientific paper
Received: 7. 5. 2017.
Accepted: 24. 7. 2017.

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This paper is based on qualitative interviews with Kosovar Albanians, goldsmiths (Catholics from Prizren) and bakers (Muslims from the Has region) who live in Zagreb. The interviewees are economic migrants and their descendants who, during the coexistence in Yugoslavia, came to the area of the Republic of Croatia, especially to the tourist towns on the Adriatic coast, in order to work. Seasonal migration usually turned into permanent relocations to the city of Zagreb. With the breakup of Yugoslavia, the migrants became members of a national minority in the Republic of Croatia. Using the ethnography of the particular, and basing the research on migration systems theories, the theories of social and cultural integration and the transnational theory, the aim of this paper is to explore their lived experiences as migrants. The paper shows the causes of the migration and remigration, the reasons and the intensity of the (non) transformation of seasonal into permanent migration, the process of learning the crafts and ethnic entrepreneurship. Researching their life in Zagreb, we were interested in their everyday life, the groups from which they choose their marital partner, the language they speak, their connections to the place they came from, their participation in migrant circles, and how they spend their free time.

Keywords: *Kosovar Albanians, Zagreb, bakers, goldsmiths, seasonal migration, national minority*

INTRODUCTION

Walking through the center of Zagreb, one comes across many goldsmiths' stores. The surnames of their owners are often typical Albanian

surnames. From the names of the stores, such as *zambak* (the Albanian word for lily, one of the symbols of the city of Prizren, from which most of the Albanian goldsmiths and filigree makers have moved to Zagreb), it is easy to tell that the owners are Albanians. Further away from the center, scattered all over the city, bakeries often bear the names of villages from the Kosovar Has region¹, where the Albanian owners come from. Forty villages in the Kosovo part of the region gravitate towards the cities of Đakovica and Prizren (Krasniqi 1979:135 as cited in Bardhoshi 2004:99). They are traditionally known for bread-making, and temporary and seasonal migration of men. During the time of coexistence within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), Albanians came to the area of present-day Croatia from Kosovo (mostly Catholic goldsmiths and Catholic or Muslim bakers) and Macedonia (mostly Muslim pastry makers). Eventually, they permanently settled here². With the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, the Croatian and later Kosovar independence, these migrants became members of a national minority. We are inclined to assume that it is the case of seasonal migrants who after the breakup of Yugoslavia decided to request Croatian citizenship. Censuses show a twofold increase of Albanian minority, evident in the data provided by the Croatian Bureau of Statistics (www.dzs.hr). In 1981, there were 6006 Albanians living in Croatia, and 12032 in 1991. Their number increased in the following censuses as well: 15082 in 2001, and 17513 in 2011. They mostly live in and around the city of Zagreb, the area in the focus of this research.

¹ The Has of Prizren region is situated in today's Kosovo and Albania. The Kosovo part is known as *Has valley* (*Hasi i rrafshit*), *Has of Prizren* or *Has of Đakovica*, and the Albanian part as *Hasi i Brisë* or *Dry Has* (*Has ii thatë*) (Bardhoshi 2004:99). For example, it is estimated that in 1947 approximately 600 bakers came as temporary workers from the Hasi villages Zym and Damian (Filipović 1958:13 as cited in Tirta 2013:283).

² There are Albanians living in Croatia who relocated from Albania as well. The oldest Albanian “colony” in Croatia are Arbanasi. Today they consider themselves to be Albanians by ethnicity, and Croats by nationality. In the early 18th century they moved to Arbanasi, which used to be a village, and is now a suburb of Zadar. See more: STIPČEVIĆ, Aleksandar. 2011. *Traditional Culture of Arbanasi From Zadar*. Zagreb: PERIČIĆ, Šime. 1993. *A Survey of Arbanasi Economy In the Past*. Zadar: Local Community Arbanasi.

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH AIMS

Research conducted so far

Silversmithing in Albanian ethnic and historical space reached its pinnacle in the 17th and the 18th centuries, which is also the period when it gained popularity throughout the Balkan peninsula (Mitrushi 1977:371). The first *esnaf* (organization of craftsmen) discovered in Albania, as well as in the Balkans, was the silversmiths' *esnaf* of the city of Elbasan (1662-1900). The greatest craft centers of the time were the cities of Skadar, Prizren, Berat and Vaskopoja (ibid). A document from 1385 (*Acta et diplomata res Albaniae mediae aetatis illustrantia*. Vol. II)³ mentions that merchants from Durrës travelled to Ragusa (present-day Dubrovnik) to sell objects and jewelry made of silver (ibid)⁴. Early Albanian craftsmen used silverworking techniques such as filigree⁵ and *savat* (mixing silver, copper, lead and sulphur) to decorate weapons (Mitrushi 1977). It is estimated that in the aforementioned cities 17% of all crafts were metalworking crafts. The first silversmithing workshops were founded in Prizren, owned by families Vuçaj and Shahta (Shkodra 1977), and later Bashota, Shiroka, Shahini, Laçi, Bisaki, Bytyqi, Oroshi, Lleshdedaj, Nikolov, Spaqi, Gashi, Pali, Kërveshi, Qivlaku, Domniku, Perolli, Simoni, etc (Gashi 2012 as cited in Xhemili 2016)⁶. Most of their descendants in Kosovo and/or Croatia are silver- and goldsmiths today. This information was confirmed by our interviewees, members of these families.

Although goldsmiths and bakers from Kosovo moved to Croatia for higher income during the coexistence in Yugoslavia, these topics have

³ Available at: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5626777t> (access March 22, 2017)

⁴ Goldsmiths from Shkodër started permanently moving to Dubrovnik in the 1920s (cf. Lentić 1984:131)

⁵ "Filigree is a technique of making ornamented jewelry out of thin wire combined with small balls (granules). Granulation is the process crafting small grains of precious metals and decorations by soldering them to the surface of the jewelry... soldering is the procedure of inseparably joining together parts of metal, semi completed and completed jewelry." (Lešdedaj et al. 2015:9).

⁶ Objects and jewelry from the Illyrian times, the Early Middle Ages up to modern times kept in the Kosovo Museum in Pristina are evidence of the long tradition of silversmithing in the area of the present-day Kosovo.

rarely been the focus of research. Some authors suggest that it is due to the strong influence of methodological nationalism within which internal migration between SFRY republics was considered “mostly unproblematic and natural” (Kuti and Božić 2016:122), as well as the fact that the migration was seasonal (Vadnjaj 2014). Albanians from Kosovo who live and work in Croatia are mentioned in the context of seasonal migration and sending financial help to family members in Kosovo (Tirta 2013). Albanians in Croatia are economic migrants and belong to the “old diaspora”, which makes up 14% of total Kosovo diaspora (King and Vullnetari 2009). Contemporary Albanian authors are interested in the migrant economic contribution to Kosovo. They emphasize that one in three Kosovar Albanians lives and works abroad, as well as that every family has a member in the diaspora (Paca 2015), while money remittances from abroad constitute one fourth of national revenue (Hoti 2005:176). Albanians in Croatia have been researched in the context of national minorities in Zagreb (Babić et al. 2011), and transnational practices (Kuti and Božić 2016). Methodologically closest to our research is the paper *Filigree: The Silver Thread From Kosovo To Istria* (Lešdedaj et al. 2015), which gives insight into migration experiences of families and their life in Istria. Apart from aforementioned papers we also used research on Albanians in Switzerland (Dahinden 2005, Heigl et al. 2011; Iseni 2013), Greece (Gregorič Bon 2016) and Slovenia (Vadnjaj 2014), whose authors are interested in economic migrants, migrant networks, informal entrepreneurial help within an ethnic group, i.e. the financial help provided by the extended family or members of the same ethnic group, transnational connections, traditional patterns of sending financial help to the family in the home country, summer visits of migrants and their families to their native region, etc. These papers were useful to us in formulating research aims, as well as in comparing and verifying the data obtained.

Methodology

Research was carried out from March to December 2016, and it is based on quantitative interviews with goldsmiths, jewelers-filigree makers (Catholics from Prizren), and bakers (Muslims from the Has region). We chose interviewees by entering goldsmith shops and bakeries which we

recognized based on the owners' surnames. The interviewees, usually the shops' owners, were born in Kosovo or descend from economic migrants who during coexistence in Yugoslavia worked as seasonal workers in Croatia, especially in tourist towns on the Adriatic coast. The fact that one of the authors is Albanian and that the interviews were held in Albanian contributed to the quality of the obtained material. Altogether eleven semi-structured interviews were held, six with goldsmiths and five with bakers, in their respective workplaces⁷. Although at first we intended to interview both men and women, that proved difficult to do because we found only men in goldsmith shops, and Croatian saleswomen and Albanian bakers in bakeries. We interviewed a woman who recently quit her job as a nurse in Kosovo in order to work as a baker with her husband in Zagreb. Artisan goldsmiths were born between 1938 and 1951, and are therefore aged between 66 and 79. Although they already fulfilled retirement conditions, they love their job and plan to work "until they can", just like their ancestors. Unlike them, bakers are much younger, born between 1962 and 1979. We will mark interviewees with an indication of their gender, M for male and F for female, the first letter of their occupation, G for goldsmiths and B for baker, as well as their birthyear.

⁷ According to the data provided to us by the Zagreb Craftsmen Association (www.obrtnici-zagreb.hr) upon an email request, there are 93 bakeries and 75 goldsmith shops in Zagreb. There are no statistics about the owners' ethnicity, and we could not get access to the names and surnames of the owners so that we could recognize Albanian ones. However, upon request, an official examined the names and surnames, and estimated that 79 out of 93 owners of bakeries have Albanian names and surnames, as well as 7 out of 65 goldsmiths. Since the number of goldsmiths seemed too small, we asked her to check again, and sent her 7 surnames of our interviewees (we contacted one family subsequently, and this data was not included in the paper). Afterwards she sent us new information, that the members of the families with those 7 names own 27 goldsmith shops in Zagreb. We are grateful for this data. Based on our Google search for the names of goldsmith shops and the surnames of their owners, we estimate that Albanian families own most of the goldsmith shops in the city of Zagreb. None of the Croatian institutions we contacted, such as the Croatian Chamber of Economy, the Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts, the Register of Business Names, have data about the ethnicity of craft shops owners.

Research aims and theoretical framework

The focus of our research are migrants and their descendants from two craft groups. The aim of the paper is to show, based on the ethnography of the particular (Abu-Lughod 1991), through lived experiences of migrants and members of a minority, the reasons to migrate and remigrate, ethnic entrepreneurship, and their everyday life in Zagreb. The concepts of the migration systems theory were useful to our research – we observed the macro-, meso-, and microstructures that influenced the decision to migrate (Castles and Miller 2003:28, Brettell 2003:2-6). The macrostructure encompasses the political and economic context of migration (Brettell 2003:2). Migration we dealt with started during coexistence within one country, Yugoslavia, when Albanians from the autonomous province of Kosovo (a constituent part of the Republic of Serbia) migrated to the Republic of Croatia. With the breakup of Yugoslavia, the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia of December 22, 1990⁸, the independence of the Republic of Croatia, and the Constitutional Law on Human Rights and Freedoms and Rights of Ethnic and National Communities or Minorities in the Republic of Croatia (1991), Albanians gained the status of a national minority⁹. In accordance with Article 8 of the Law On Croatian Citizenship¹⁰, i.e. based on their long term residence in Croatia¹¹, a great

⁸ Official Gazette (NN) 56/90, http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/1990_12_56_1092.html

⁹ Official Gazette (NN) 65/91, 27/92, 34/92, http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/1992_06_34_896.html. See also: Perić Kaselj et al. 2015.

¹⁰ *Law on Croatian Citizenship*, NN 53/91, 70/91, 28/92, 113/9 – Decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Croatia, 4/94 – Decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Croatia, 130/11 and 110/2015.

¹¹ Pursuant to the same law, Article 8, at the moment of submitting the request, the person had to be dismissed from their foreign citizenship, or to submit proof that they will acquire dismissal if granted Croatian citizenship. In practice, this means that Kosovar Albanians had to get dismissal from their previous citizenship. That does not mean they could not request it again later, especially after the independence of the Republic of Kosovo. All of our goldsmith interviewees have only Croatian citizenship, except for the one moved to Croatia last (in 1972) and who holds both citizenships. Four of our baker interviewees have dual citizenship, Croatian and Kosovar, and the two bakers who migrated last hold only Kosovar citizenship. One of them has been working in Croatia for 30 years and owns a bakery, and the other has been employed by a relative for 8 years.

number of these migrants requested Croatian citizenship. In the context of mesostructures, we were interested in the relations between family members, among relatives and neighbors, whereas through microstructures we observed informal migrant networks created by migrants (Brettell 2003:6). Migrant networks are firm connections between individuals, sets of familial and friendly relationships, characterized by a high level of trust, communication and help (cf. Klvanova 2010). We were interested to know to what extent they contributed to the decision to migrate, as well as to the early days of life in the new area, i.e. whether migrants provided housing and jobs to one another, opportunities to learn the goldsmith's and baker's craft, whether they found jobs within the family and the ethnic community etc. Furthermore, we were interested in migrant practices and social relations through which migrants connected countries/places of birth to the ones where they live today, which we observed on individual microlevels (cf. Glick Schiller and Caglar 2009:184; Kuti and Božić 2016:19) using transnational theory (cf. Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004; Faist et al. 2013; Čapo Žmegač 2003). Transnational theory implies that migrants, i.e. transmigrants, connect the countries of origin and residence, that they develop and maintain multiple familial, organizational, economic and other connections which go beyond state borders, i.e. they make a bond between countries (cf. *ibid.*). We asked interviewees if they maintain contact with the family in their place of origin, if and how they keep track of what happens in Kosovo, if they visit their birthplace etc. In so doing, our aim was to observe whether transnational existence in two spaces weakens the aforementioned aspects of the integration process (Mügge 2016). Since our interviewees are private entrepreneurs who become self-employed doing crafts transferred through tradition, we were curious to know how this affects their social and cultural integration into the Croatian society (cf. Esser 2001:16, as cited in Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas 2016:13). To explore that, we examined the boundaries of the social communities, i.e. whom they choose for their marital partner, which language they speak, if they participate in minority associations, how and with whom they spend their free time. In doing so, we took into consideration the length of their stay in Zagreb.

MIGRATION OF ALBANIAN BAKERS AND GOLDSMITHS TO CROATIA

Based on the neoclassical approach of the economic theories of migration, the main cause of migration are the geographical differences in supply and demand in the job market: “Regions where there is shortage of work in relation to capital face income inequality. The difference in wages causes a migration flow from low-income regions to high-income regions” (Bauer and Zimmermann 1995:96). Since Kosovo used to be the economically least developed federal unit of Yugoslavia, the migration of Albanian bakers and goldsmiths from Kosovo to Croatia can be viewed in this context (Vathi and Black 2007). Certainly, the respective positions of Kosovo and Croatia in Yugoslavia facilitated frequent internal migration. Other political circumstances in the mid-twentieth century, e.g. the emigration of Italian population, made it possible for Albanian jewelers and filigree-makers to find retail space more easily, as Lešdedaj et al. noticed for Istria (2015:118). Migration to Istria began in the early 1950s, and lasted until the end of the 1970s. The main draw factor was the development of tourism on the Adriatic coast (ibid.:22). The ancestors of our interviewees arrived during the same period, whether in Istria or in other parts of the Adriatic coast.

Early migration was characterized by seasonal arrival of artisan jewelers-filigree makers. The goldsmiths among our interviewees moved to Croatia in their youth, during elementary or high school, or were born here. Before coming to Zagreb, almost all of them had a family member here. We recorded various migrant experiences before their permanent relocation to Zagreb, but it is obvious from the interviews that the most attractive destinations were coastal towns or the capital city: “I came to Zagreb in 1972... There is an old saying: ‘When moving away, either go to the king, or to the sea.’”¹² (GM, 1938). The ancestors of several interviewees worked in Rovinj, and have relatives there still today. Other authors also point out that the migration of goldsmiths is characterized by moving back and forth between the coast (Istria) and Zagreb (Kuti and Božić 2016:152).

¹² “Në rast shpërnguljeje, ose shkoni te mbreti ose te deti.”

Temporary and seasonal workers were men, and when the decision to move permanently was made, the wives would arrive with the children:

“My grandfather came first, with his brother, to sell filigree at the islands of Krk and Rab (sometime in the 1920s, 1930s). In 1939, they decided to move to Zagreb. However, they still had ties with Prizren because the rest of the family was there. I think grandmother arrived in 1942 or 1943.” (GM, 1953).

Our baker interviewees lived in large extended families in Kosovo, from which traditionally only men migrated. They would leave in groups and live together at the new destination, in a rented apartment or house. This was temporary, rotating migration. The men of the family, i.e. of the “community” (Bashkallëk), as they explain, would rotate every couple of weeks or months, come and go home depending on necessity. While the men were away, the women and children permanently resided in Kosovo: “...women stayed at home. That was the tradition. Only men went away to work.” (BM, 1967). According to the same interviewee, the tradition was kept until splitting into nuclear families (parent couples with children), when women would permanently migrate with their husbands. Varying from family to family, gaining such independence would happen as the sons got married. However, such practices still remain. The interviewee who arrived latest, in 2009, confirmed that the pattern of temporary migration of men and dislocated family life was the same. He has a large, multigenerational family. He and his two brothers work for different family members, he in Croatia, and the brothers in Montenegro. Their wives with children, mother and father-in-law live in the same house in a village in Hasi:

“I have been working here with my uncle since 2009. I go back home depending on how we arrange it. Sometimes I work for four months, and then go home for a month and a half. It all depends on my salary and the arrangement with my boss... No, my wife has never been to visit.” (BM, 1979).

Our interviewees and their ancestors moved to Croatia in the period between 1939 and 2009. Migrant networks had an important role when they arrived. All of the migrants had family or close relatives here who found them a job and a place to live. Three interviewees came directly

from Kosovo to Zagreb, whereas the others permanently settled in Zagreb after remigrating from other Croatian towns, mainly coastal, or from other southeastern and central European countries. According to all interviewees, Croatia drew them because it was “the strongest state in Yugoslavia”, and it offered better economic perspective.

From the interviews we can conclude that for both groups of craftsmen migration was encouraged and facilitated through the solidarity of the extended family, as well as members of the same ethnic group. They helped them in finding a job and/or gathering initial capital to buy a retail space. This is the case of *bounded solidarity* – to informal social relations, family and value connections, through various types of help, including financial help from members of the same ethnic group at the beginning of the migration experience (Portes 1998 and Jahnsen 2000 as cited in Dahinden 2005:197, 200). The same practices of Albanian entrepreneurs during the 20th century have been recorded in Slovenia (Vadnjak 2014).

The presented data on the arrivals of Albanians, that is, the labor migration of young men who are only afterwards followed by women, help to interpret the statistics on the average age of the general population being higher than that of the Albanian population, as well as the greater imbalance in the number of men to women identified in this group. In 2011, women constituted 51.8% of the population in Croatia (www.dzs.hr), while in the Albanian minority group women constituted only 44.3%.

ALBANIAN ENTREPRENEURS IN ZAGREB: TRADITIONAL TRANSFER OF SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS, AND ETHNIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP

All bakers said that their business was passed on through several generations of their families, and that other members of the family experienced seasonal or temporary migration, either in Kosovo or in Croatia: “I belong to the 8th generation of bakers and I passed my business on” (BM, 1971). Only one interviewee did the same job in his place of birth. In 2000, after the war in Kosovo and the great financial crisis, he left for temporary work to the Croatian coast, and afterwards his family permanently moved to Zagreb, as the wife explained:

“My husband worked at a state bakery in Kosovo. After it was privatized, he lost his job and decided to move to Croatia. As a family we already had a shop at the island of Pag.” (BF, 1962).

Most jewelers-filigree makers learned their craft within the family, after which they refined their skill at another artisan in Croatia, Austria, Italy or Germany. There was one interviewee who, before coming to Croatia, studied and worked at the Silver Cooperative “Filigran” in Prizren. Upon gaining experience, our interviewees open goldsmith shops in Zagreb. All goldsmiths, except one who was formally educated in Zagreb, learned their craft privately, with other artisans, i.e. they worked as apprentices in several shops. In the last two decades, craftsmen have been receiving both formal and informal education. Interviewees’ children first graduate from college (one of them even studied abroad), then enroll in goldsmiths training part-time, and take only the final exam, which means that they learn on-the-job, informally. When we asked them about the techniques of jewelry making, we found out that some have specialized in specific techniques and/or materials (filigree, silver, gold, jewels...). Even though both crafts used to be learned from relatives or friends of the family, goldsmiths are less prone to that practice today, while bakers still consider it standard routine. They often get help from young relatives who come from Kosovo, gain work experience, open their own shops, and then they too take younger relatives as apprentices. Therefore, the difference between the interviewees in these two groups of craftsmen is that goldsmiths moved to Croatia earlier, while bakers are still migrating here. Since after independence Kosovars need a visa to come to Croatia, labor migration has become more difficult¹³.

Most goldsmiths have already owned a shop in their 20s. The financial basis for opening it was provided by their (extended) family and friends, which categorizes them as *ethnic minority entrepreneurs*, a term relating to formal and informal activities depending on the legal status,

¹³ The Republic of Croatia established diplomatic relations with the Republic of Kosovo on June 30, 2008. See more on obtaining Croatian visas at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and the Embassy of the Republic of Croatia in Pristina websites (crovisa.mvep.hr, ks.mvep.hr).

financial sources, and access to the support networks within the ethnic group (Lazardis and Koumandraki 2003, as cited in Vadjal 2014). Ethnic entrepreneurship is often called family entrepreneurship because one relies on family and other persons within their social network for various kinds of help (Bhalla et al. 2006, as cited in Vadjal 2014). We already said that artisan goldsmiths working in the center of Zagreb are seniors who still proudly do their work because they love it, just like their ancestors did. These private entrepreneurs and master craftsmen choose when to withdraw from active work, which can also be viewed as the ethnic and traditional form of active ageing. Goldsmiths said that their families owned three to seven shops, some in Zagreb, others at the coast¹⁴. One family owns three goldsmith shops in the same coastal town¹⁵. Therefore, despite the formal permanent residence in Zagreb, one part of the family lives in other places during the summer tourist season, i.e. seasonal work and dislocated family life are still practiced today.

Research done among other Albanian migrants show that these practices are not present only in Zagreb. In Switzerland, Albanians rely on other members of their ethnic group both professionally and in family matters. They receive financial and emotional support within their ethnic community, and they spend their free time together (Dahinden 2005:200). The same results have been found in Slovenia as well, although the research did not include goldsmiths, but bakers, pastry makers, fruit, vegetables and fast food salesmen, etc. (Vadjal 2014).

¹⁴ This was confirmed by the Zagreb Craftsmen Association. Interviewees explained that some families own more than one shop in the center of the city. However, they had to adapt to the growing number of shopping malls, so they bought retail spaces there. The owners are their wives and/or children, who in some cases also work there. These shops usually sell factory manufactured and designer jewelry and watches, whereas in the old centrally positioned shops hand crafted objects are sold. Naturally, due to lower purchasing power and the lack of appreciation for finely made jewelry, shops in the center also offer cheaper, factory made jewelry and machine-made replicas of traditional jewelry, even filigree. Although this was not the case with our interviewees, due to the period of transition in post-war Croatia and the long financial crisis, some families stopped making jewelry and opened exchange offices, copy and print shops, other shops or switched to foodservice.

¹⁵ Family shops include shops owned by brothers, sisters, marital partners and children, as well as those owned by members of the extended family, e.g. uncles.

Interviewees moved to Zagreb from other places as well. Those who arrived in Zagreb before Croatian independence did so after they achieved some success and gathered initial capital. However, some worked in other Croatian cities and moved to Zagreb only after the financial crisis broke out, from 2009 on¹⁶, as explained by one baker:

“I worked in Ogulin (Vrbovska) for 27 years and decided to move to Zagreb five years ago because it’s impossible to survive there. The crisis began ten years ago, but the last five years have been a disaster.” (BM, 1971.)

Financial crisis has not only had a role in the craftsmen’s profit, it has also been a factor in inheriting business:

“My brother’s daughter finished the Applied Arts and Design School and afterwards learned the craft in Italy. Today she works here, at my brother’s. My two daughters graduated in IT and economics because the prospects for the craft seemed bad. Now that it has been going well again, my younger daughter got interested.” (GM, 1953);

“My daughter trained as an artist and works here. My son is a precious stone setter.” (GM, 1950).

All the goldsmiths stressed the importance of education and mentioned their children’s university degrees. The children who keep up the family business often get education abroad.

A lot of the baker interviewees said that their children learned how to do the work, but both them and the children considered it difficult and unprofitable:

“In general, the children want a more luxurious life, and baking is a very difficult craft. You need to work a lot, during the night as well, and always be very, very precise.” (BM, 1967);

“...of course, even if I had nothing to leave but my two daughters, I could freely go down there [to Kosovo].” (BM, 1971).

¹⁶ On financial crisis as the biggest problem Albanians in Croatia face see: Babić et al. (2011:265).

As is clear from the quotes above, both daughters and sons learn the two crafts and inherit family businesses. However, in previous periods it was rare for women to practice these professions. Certainly, there have been exceptions. The sisters of two goldsmiths we interviewed, as well as one wife, own goldsmith shops in Zagreb. The brother of one of them said that she was the only woman in Yugoslavia who held the precious stone setter certificate. Some Albanian filigree-makers from Istria talked about their mothers who were artisans or assistants in filigree shops (Lešdedaj et al. 2015:13).

Because of the nature of their work, goldsmiths work alone, while their wives, children or Croatian employees help them with sales. Bakers also prefer Croats as salespeople: “We always employed Croatian salespeople. It’s better because of the language, and legally they are easier to employ.” (BF, 1962). When asked if ethnicity is an important factor in choosing employees, one interviewee said: “I favor Albanians in everything.” (BM, 1967).

From the material presented so far, it is clear that both groups of migrants/craftsmen cultivate the same traditional patterns of family or *ethnic entrepreneurship* and *bounded solidarity*. The only thing that changed is that in the last decades all children, both male and female, can inherit the family business. In the context of the financial crisis in Croatia and lower purchasing power, these craftsmen adapt to the market and supplement or substitute their original activity as craftsmen with commercial activities.

MARITAL LIFE AND FREE TIME

Albanian goldsmiths and bakers are two specific groups of migrants who, depending on their traditionally transferred skills and financial help provided by their families, employ themselves, their families, other members of their ethnic group, and, less frequently, domicile population. Because of that, we wanted to know whether these two groups of craftsmen confine themselves to their professional, ethnic and confessional communities. We tried to find that out by asking them about their choice of marital partners, languages they speak, and people they spend their free time with. Through answers to these questions we wanted to learn about their social and cultural integration. Furthermore, we were interested in

transnational practices and the influence they have (or do not have) on the process of integration, as well as the impact of the change of the political context on these practices.

All the bakers emphasized that it was important for them to “preserve their culture as much as possible”. In order to “preserve their culture” they wanted their children to finish elementary school, high school and/or college in Kosovo, and wished for them to marry Albanians, just like they had.

“I want my daughters and sons to marry Albanians. For me it’s unfortunate if they marry a Croat, a Serb, or a German... I am only interested in nationality, because faith is a private thing, why would anyone be interested in that.” (BM, 1975).

“I didn’t intervene in their decision. All of my three sons decided to marry Albanians. I think it’s best if everybody marries their own people... if they want to preserve the culture and the language.” (BF, 1962).

Aside from emphasizing the importance of ethnically homogenous marriages, one interviewee said that it was crucial that husband and wife belong to the same religious community: “Within a society I don’t mind anyone, but I think religions shouldn’t be mixed in a marriage. The culture is different.” (BM, 1962).

Despite the parents’ wishes, goldsmiths think that children should decide on their marital partner: “It’s not important... My wish is for them to be Albanians and I will express it, but I cannot interfere in love.” (GM, 1943).

Two goldsmiths are married to Albanian women, one of whom was born and raised in Australia, and does not speak the Albanian language. Other goldsmiths are married to Croatian women. They all explained that they had small weddings in Croatia without any elements of Albanian tradition. Only one goldsmiths’ children speak Albanian, although most of them understand it, as their fathers explain. During research we have not encountered any marriages between members of the two groups that we researched.

Catholic goldsmiths’ families usually gather for yearly traditional celebrations such as Christmas or Easter. At these occasions their Croatian

wives prepare Albanian specialties, the guests sing Albanian songs etc. “At Easter we always eat *pogača* and *laknor*¹⁷... yes, my wife who is Croatian makes it, she learned how to.” (GM, 1950). One goldsmith’s family celebrates *krsna slava* (patron saint day). Saint Nicholas has been the patron saint of his family for generations. On that day, his friends and family come to visit, and he sings and plays Albanian songs for them: “Here in Croatia this holiday isn’t celebrated anymore. We still preserve it and celebrate it, like in Serbia and Montenegro, for our house to be blessed.” (GM, 1951).

The eldest of the goldsmiths (b. 1938) mentioned *piri i kujunxhive*, a custom celebrated on September 14. The interviewee remembers how, when he was a young man in Prizren, two silversmiths would visit other craftsmen several days before September 14 and gather money in a *potë* (a bowl in which gold and silver are melted), which they would later give to the priest to distribute to the poor. He says that the humane character of this custom is lost today. The only part of it that remains is the tradition that a group of jewelers and filigree makers gathers at a place in Croatia or Slovenia. Since on September 14 the tourist season is still not over, they gather on the first Saturday of October. Most participants are childhood friends, former members of “Agimi” cultural association from Prizren. When they gather, they sing Albanian songs and share memories of their childhood and youth.

Although Croatia and Kosovo are independent countries today, most bakers lead parallel lives in two places; they explain that their life is “half there”, as it was during coexistence in the same country, Yugoslavia. Most interviewees go to their birth place two or three times a year. They practice all their customs (e.g. weddings and funerals) in their birthplace, and they spend their vacations in the *old country*. These visits have a function in social processes (preserving family connections), cultural practices (getting to know their tradition and “roots”), economic practices (money circulation), and transnational practices (especially contacting relatives who live at different places) (Kadriu 2013:313). Even though they are formally Croatian citizens today, some bakers still practice temporary and/or seasonal migration to Croatia. Their wives and children live in Kosovo. One interviewee explained why he still practices that lifestyle:

¹⁷ *Laknor* is an Albanian specialty similar to Croatian pita. It is made of corn flour dough filled with spinach or leek and sour milk poured on top.

“I spent my youth in migration, and I didn’t want my children to do the same. It doesn’t matter if the education system is good or bad there, I wanted for them to study in Kosovo. That way they won’t forget the language.” (BM, 1967).

Goldsmiths rarely travel to Kosovo. Once in ten years to once a year, usually for All Saints’ Day (November 1), when they see relatives and tend to family graves. The interviewees explain they try to “take their children at least once in their lifetime to see where they come from.” Naturally, the frequency of visits varies:

“I go two or three times a year because my father was buried in Prizren. I try to go once a year, and go again if I have free time... every five years we celebrate my graduation anniversary. Two years ago it was the 50th anniversary. We all gathered and stayed there for a week.” (GM, 1943).

Unlike bakers, goldsmiths do not own property in Kosovo. They consider their life to be exclusively in Zagreb. When asked if they would like to go and live in Kosovo, they say no: “I can’t go back anymore. Maybe for five days, but no... my life is here.” (GM, 1951).

Muslim bakers gather for Eid and New Year’s Eve. For these occasions extended family living in Croatia and Slovenia visits our interviewees. They perform all rituals (engagements, weddings, funerals), including circumcision of boys, in their birth place where, as they say, they practice “all traditions that exist in Hasi”. They say that they practice a more traditional way of life in Zagreb as well, since the Hasi region, in their view, is isolated and “much more traditional than the rest of Kosovo.” That explains the frequency of communal life (several married brothers living with their parents), the influence of elderly family members’ opinions on decision making, the customary law of succession, the solidarity between members of extended family and between different families, etc. One of the “traditions” they practice is sending financial help to the family in Kosovo. This fact is mentioned in all the research on transnational connections of Albanian migrants in Croatia, Slovenia, and Switzerland, as well as Albanians living in Europe and the United States in general, which is a sign of firm connections with the country of origin and the family (cf. Vadjal 2014, Heigl et al. 2001 etc.).

One interviewee said: “Everything is changing now, but among us there is still order somehow because we respect the elders. Here nobody knows anybody.” (BM, 1976) This choice of theirs obstructs integration. Although bakers live in ethnically and religiously homogenous communities, they all said they feel good in Zagreb. None of them mentioned any examples of discrimination. Only one baker said that he feels unequal to Croats. He explains: “You have to be twice as good as any Croat in order to be equal... To do anything.” (BM, 1976)

During the conversation with the bakers we noticed a nostalgia for their native home. They said they missed the air, the “sense of home”, the nature, “cheese and peppers, which do not taste the same here”: “I can eat meat here every day, but just bread and cheese there seems better.” (BM, 1971). Despite the nostalgia and the wish for their children to marry Albanians, only one baker, a seasonal worker who has been here 8 years, shorter than the others, plans to go back to Kosovo. Most of them plan to live in Zagreb permanently, and all of them said it is because they can earn more here. On the other hand, the goldsmiths’ connections to Kosovo are much weaker. None of the interviewees showed any nostalgia. On the contrary, they said that “everything that’s most important to them is in Croatia”, and that their children live here.

Both of the groups we researched follow the media for news from Kosovo, and the development of virtual social networks (such as Facebook) made it possible for them to contact the family in their homeland often. The development of telecommunication technologies (such as Skype, Viber, WhatsApp) turned out to be the most common form of transnational activity in the social and cultural sphere (cf. Kuti and Božić 2016:165-167).

From these accounts it is clear that Albanian Catholic goldsmiths from Prizren are socially and culturally much better integrated in the Croatian society. Our goldsmith interviewees consider themselves to be integrated in Zagreb, i.e. they have a subjective sense of belonging (cf. Esser 2001:16, as cited in Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas 2016:13). During the interview they talked about how very similar they are to Croats, emphasized their Catholic religion, their efforts to adapt, and denied that there was any discrimination. One interviewee explained his view: “It’s not fair, when you move somewhere, you have to adapt to that society. Not all

Albanians here are great... no, nothing ever happened to me that I would call discrimination.” (GM, 1951).

As for free time, all craftsmen say that they have very little. Bakers say they mostly socialize with Albanians, whereas goldsmiths meet with both Albanians and Croatians:

“I have very good relations with other filigree makers, but we don’t see each other much... I meet with Croats more, or with other Albanian friends whom I visit and who visit me for celebrations, birthday parties, dinners, etc.” (GM, 1943)

At family gatherings bakers speak Albanian and practice the same tradition as in Kosovo, e.g. they drink Russian tea¹⁸ the Turkish way¹⁹, they prepare traditional Albanian dishes. When socializing with compatriots goldsmiths also mostly speak Albanian. One of them explained: “Of course we speak Albanian. I still think in Albanian.” (GM, 1951).

There are several Albanian associations and organizations in Zagreb²⁰. However, our interviewees are not active members in any of them. They give lack of time as the reason. Mostly they do not attend minority events. Some of them go to events of some importance²¹, such as Albanian holidays celebrations – Flag Day (Day of Albanian independence, November 28) and Kosovo Independence Day (February 17). Two interviewees were active in Albanian associations only during the Kosovo War (1998-1999), when

¹⁸ Russian tea is how Kosovars call black tea.

¹⁹ Loose tea is covered with hot water in a special teapot. They drink it out of small glasses.

²⁰ On the Croatian Government Office for Human and Minority Rights website, the following Albanian minority associations from Zagreb are registered in accordance with the Associations Act of the Republic of Croatia: The Union of Albanians in the Republic of Croatia, *Shkendija* Albanian Cultural Association, *Queen Teuta* Club of Albanian Women, Forum of Albanian Intellectuals in Croatia, and *Drita* Association of Albanian Women in Zagreb (see more at: <https://pravamanjina.gov.hr/nacionalne-manjine/nacionalne-manjine-u-republici-hrvatskoj/albanci/380>). Apart from these associations, others can be found through a Google search: Zagreb Kosovar Albanians Association, Albanian Croatian Homeland War Veterans Association.

²¹ The Albanian Minority of the City of Zagreb Council organizes numerous events (see more at: www.albanci-zagreb.hr).

they collected material and financial aid for compatriots. Only one baker is a member of the Hasi Association, a cultural-political association with a humanitarian aspect which, among many other activities, provides financial help to the sick and needy in Kosovo.

If we compare the two groups we researched, differences can be seen in the choice of marital partner and connections to the place of birth. There are two groups of migrants whose members have been in Croatia for decades, i.e. two generations of goldsmiths, and bakers, who arrived recently. Their origins are in different parts of Kosovo. Bakers come from the rural part of, as they themselves called it, the traditional region of Hasi, while goldsmiths come from the city of Prizren. Belonging to different religions is also a cause of great differences. On the one hand, Catholics are better integrated with the native Croatian population. On the other, the disconnection between ethnic and religious identity raises the question of the significance of nationality in this case. Members of the two groups we interviewed are not connected through marriage, friendship, or in any other way. In fact, the goldsmiths emphasized their similarity to Croats based on practicing the same religion.

CONCLUSION

There are approximately 5000 citizens of Albanian descent living in Zagreb. They practice different professions, but data provided by the Zagreb Craftsmen Association show that Albanian entrepreneurs own most of bakeries and goldsmith shops in Zagreb. The aim of this paper was to show the similarities and differences between these two groups of craftsmen – bakers whose origin is in the rural areas of the Hasi region, in the southwest of Kosovo, and goldsmiths from the city of Prizren. Certainly, the differences are tied with the time of their arrival and of the decision to move here permanently.

Interviewees from both groups we researched said that the first Albanian migrants to arrive were young men who came here to do seasonal work. Catholic goldsmiths we talked to moved here several decades earlier or were born in Zagreb. They married Croatian women, they made the decision to permanently move to Croatia earlier, they do not own property in Kosovo any more, their transnational practices are less frequent, i.e. they

are well integrated in the Croatian society. Muslim bakers belong to a later wave of migrants. They were all born in Kosovo and they married women from their native home. While the husbands worked in Croatia, the wives lived, and some still live, in traditional communal families in Kosovo. Most wives moved to Zagreb after the husband or the family decided to live here permanently. Their formal move to Croatia was also a consequence of the political context (the breakup of Yugoslavia and the independence of Croatia and Kosovo). These migrants requested Croatian citizenship and became members of a minority.

Despite the change in their legal status, bakers and their families still practice, as they call it, “life in both places” – in one case, the family has been living separately for eight years. Bakers go to their birthplace several times a year. There they spend vacations, educate their children, find marital partners and organize traditional weddings. They send financial help to the extended family in Kosovo, as is the custom. Although they live in Zagreb, Muslim bakers try to preserve “all the traditions” of their native home.

Both groups we have researched are characterized by ethnic, i.e. family entrepreneurship. Both groups have been passing their business from one generation on to another, more or less intensely. Lately they have been passing them on to all the children, male or female, who are interested or inclined. Young members of the researched ethnic group learn their craft within the extended family or among the broader community of relatives²². Through this network they find their first job, and when they are ready to work on their own, family members help them financially to open their first shop, as has been the practice for generations. The same ethnic solidarity and financial help has been shown in the research of other authors dealing with Albanians in Switzerland and Slovenia. The result of such traditional practices and customs is that young people become entrepreneurs already in their 20s, and they decide when to stop actively working. Our goldsmith interviewees say that they work “until they want to/ until they can”, even after they fulfill the retirement conditions according to the Croatian law.

²² Whom Albanian entrepreneurs consider to be part of their broader community of relatives is a topic of some future research.

Before coming to Zagreb, members of both groups had had other experiences in migration. Goldsmiths worked mostly on the Adriatic coast. Aside from the fact that Zagreb is the capital city with a large market, the draw factor for them were previous migrants, i.e. migrant networks. Our interviews show that goldsmiths' families still practice traditional seasonal migration during the tourist season at the Adriatic, but their address of permanent residence has changed – Kosovo has been replaced by Zagreb.

The craftsmen's lives differ most greatly in the private aspect. In bakers' families they speak Albanian, whereas in the goldsmiths' they mostly speak Croatian. At professional and ethnic gatherings both groups mostly speak Albanian. In all the families important life events and yearly celebrations are marked with preparing Albanian food, listening to Albanian music, etc. We can say that these are ethnically and professionally homogenous groups, especially in the case of Muslim bakers. None of the interviewees with permanent residence in Croatia plan to return to Kosovo.

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