

SPORT AS A MEDIUM FOR
MULTIDIMENSIONAL SOCIAL
INCLUSION: THE ROLE OF RUGBY
IN THE (RE-)CONSTRUCTION
OF THE IDENTITY OF NEW
ZEALANDERS OF CROATIAN ORIGIN¹

DOI: 10.17234/SEC.35.5

Original scientific paper

Received:

3rd May 2023

Accepted:

15th September 2023

IVAN HRSTIĆ


Institut društvenih znanosti Ivo Pilar /

Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar

Marulićev trg 19

HR-10000 Zagreb, Hrvatska / Croatia

Ivan.Hrstic@pilar.hr

 orcid.org/0000-0003-2445-3533

MARKO MUSTAPIĆ

Institut društvenih znanosti Ivo Pilar /

Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar

Marulićev trg 19

HR-10000 Zagreb, Hrvatska / Croatia

Marko.Mustapic@pilar.hr

 orcid.org/0000-0002-0087-3325

This paper is open access and may be further distributed in accordance with the provisions of the CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 HR licence.

There are two general approaches to the role of sport in the development of minority ethnic communities. One focuses on the process of assimilation, while the other focuses on maintaining ethnic identity. This paper uses the example of Croats in New Zealand and their descendants to analyse the role of rugby in terms of both approaches. According to the main thesis, rugby played an important role in the process of integrating many members of the Croatian diaspora into New Zealand society, while simultaneously preserving identity elements of their country of origin and finally renewing their ties to Croatia after decades of being relatively poorly connected.

Keywords: diaspora, identity, sport, rugby, New Zealand, Croatia, Yugoslavia

¹ This research has been conducted as part of the CROCEANIA research project (UIP-2020-02-1283) (full title: Exploring emotions in the (re)construction of diaspora identity: Croats in Australia and New Zealand (1945-1991)), funded by the Croatian Science Foundation.

INTRODUCTION

In early 1912, the *Pučki list* newspaper in Split published a letter to the editorial staff from Kleme Milić, an emigrant to New Zealand. In his letter, Milić (1912) describes rugby as one of the most important pastimes in New Zealand, which the local population plays “*from the beginning to the end of their lives*”. Although he uses the term “football”, which was also used for rugby at the time, his description of the rules makes it clear that the game in question is rugby as we know it today. Groups of Croatian emigrants soon joined the local New Zealanders in this pastime. Milić proudly notes that, during 1910, Croatian emigrants in Waiharara formed a team, purchased equipment, and beat the local team multiple times. One hundred and ten years later (2022), the coach of the Croatian national rugby team is Anthony Posa, a New Zealander of Croatian origin. At the moment this paper was written (2023), dozens of players from New Zealand have played for the Croatian national team since the 1990s. This paper will analyse the role of rugby in the multi-dimensional process of (re-)constructing the identity of members of the Croatian diaspora in New Zealand across a long time period—almost through the entire 20th century and in the first two decades of the 21st century.

We claim that rugby played an important role in integrating many members of the Croatian diaspora into New Zealand society, while simultaneously preserving identity elements of their country of origin, and finally renewing their ties to Croatia after decades of being relatively poorly connected. This facilitatory role of rugby in the multi-dimensional social inclusion process of members of the Croatian diaspora is the result of the exceptional popularity of the sport in New Zealand, which Nauright (2007) considers an important element in New Zealand's national identity. With a population of roughly 4.7 million according to the 2018 census, New Zealand is one of the most successful rugby nations in the world; on the other hand, Croatia's clubs and national team have enjoyed no significant success on the international level. With a current population of around 3.9 million according to the 2021 census, Croatia is competing in the third/fourth tier of the European Rugby Union. There are only 20 active rugby clubs in Croatia; while New Zealand has around 500 clubs with roughly 160,000 registered players, both male and female (New Zealand Rugby 2023). These facts indicate the difference in the social significance of rugby in these two countries with similar populations. Contact with the most successful force in world rugby via Croatian diaspora is thus of exceptional importance to rugby enthusiasts in Croatia. The analysis of the role of rugby in the process of (re-)constructing the identity of members of the Croatian diaspora will affirm all three of the main functions of sport in modern societies, as described by James Anthony Mangan (2002):

- 1) as a mechanism of national solidarity promoting a sense of identity, unity, status and esteem
- 2) as an instrument of confrontation between nations stimulating aggression, stereotyping and images of inferiority and superiority
- 3) as a cultural bond linking nations across national boundaries, providing common enthusiasm, shared emphatic experiences, the transcendence of national allegiances, and opportunities for association, understanding and goodwill

This research approaches the concept of diaspora in accordance with Rogers Brubaker's (2005) theory of diaspora as a form of individual practice or expression of an individual or group. There have been a number of theoretical attempts to define the diaspora phenomenon, with the broad use of the term in recent decades even compromising its analytical capacity. In short, diasporas are generally viewed as an entity; the traditional approach to the term establishes group boundaries based on ancestry. Although more recent theories have emphasised the hybridisation and fluidity of diaspora, even with this approach, the distinctiveness of diaspora in relation to the host society and the criterion of group identification is problematic. Therefore, according to Brubaker's concept, we approach diaspora *"not in substantialist terms as a bounded entity, but rather as an idiom, a stance, a claim"*. This equates the term diaspora with *"diasporic stances, projects, claims, idioms, practices, and so on"*. We do not assume that all New Zealanders of Croatian origin are members of the Croatian diaspora or perceive themselves as such. Members of the diaspora are viewed as members of diaspora societies and organisations, i.e., individuals who we have determined through research to consider themselves members of the Croatian diaspora in New Zealand.

When discussing diaspora, we perceive it as a fluid process rather than a fixed group identity. This is especially important considering the long time period during which the Croatian diaspora has been present in New Zealand, as well as the specificities of individual and group experiences and practices within the community. The identity of its members has evolved throughout the time frame of this research, changing under the influence of numerous factors that can be roughly illustrated as the result of intense interaction between the country of origin, host country, and the diaspora itself. This is in accordance with the approach of Senka Božić Vrbanić (2008:21–22), a Croatian academic who has extensively researched issues related to the identities of Croats and their descendants in New Zealand. Drawing on Michel Foucault and Stuart Hall's interpretation of him, she concludes that *"identities are seen as processes of becoming rather than of being"*.

By focusing on rugby in our research on the recent state of the personal and collective identity of descendants of Croatian emigrants to New Zealand, sport is viewed

as a key factor in the process of (re-)constructing the identity of diaspora alongside other determinants such as race, ethnicity, gender, class, etc. In doing so, we do not compare these factors or draw direct interconnections between them, implying that any is more or less important than the other. Considering the information presented here, we claim that rugby was important within the community, as it directly or indirectly involved a significant number of the community's members, thus giving rugby influence over the process of (re-)constructing the identity of the Croatian diaspora in New Zealand as a whole.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Our thesis is built on a case study research model, which will allow us to draw conclusions on the role of rugby in the (re-)construction of the identity of members of the Croatian diaspora in New Zealand. This choice of research method is in accordance with Yin (2007), who concludes that the case study method is appropriate for use in situations in which researchers have little to no control over events when researching a phenomenon within a given context. According to the same author, there are six possible kinds of sources for case study research: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artefacts. Our research encompasses the first three types. The research is based on ten in-depth interviews conducted with five descendants of Croatian expatriates to New Zealand who were involved in rugby, as well as five officials and players on the Croatian national rugby team who have had experience working with rugby players of Croatian descent from New Zealand. Furthermore, three of the five interviewees from Croatia have spent at least some time in New Zealand, during which time they gained deeper insight into the status of rugby in New Zealand society as a whole, as well as among the Croatian diaspora. The interviewees we quote in this paper consented to the publication of their names.

We also analysed 42 audio recordings of lectures given at the Dalmatian Society in Auckland and 10 audio recordings of oral history interviews conducted with New Zealanders of Croatian origin, as well as 81 digitised items from the Dalmatian Genealogy and Historical Society. The latter are primarily exhibition catalogues and photographs of items collected to present the history of Croats in New Zealand to the public. Remote access to the audio recordings and digitized items was provided by the Alexander Turnbull Library (New Zealand National Library) and Auckland Libraries. Analysis of newspaper articles related to Croats in New Zealand printed prior to 1945 was possible thanks to access to digitised newspapers through the Papers Past portal, operated by the New Zealand National Library. A keyword search of digitised materials of Archives

New Zealand was also undertaken. We have also conducted archival research at the Croatian State Archives in Zagreb, focusing on the archival fonds of the Croatian Heritage Foundation, the key organisation tasked with developing relations with emigrants from Croatia since its founding in 1951. The research also encompassed a monthly publication issued by the foundation, entitled *Matica*, from the first issue published in 1951, until the last printed issue in 2022. This research also builds on a press and media analysis of *Vjesnik* newspaper's documentation, a commercial media research agency research report, and the Google search engine (Hrstić and Mustapić 2021). *Vjesnik*'s newspaper documentation is a themed collection of newspaper articles written between 1962 and 2006, held at the Croatian State Archives. The media research agency report included all Croatian print media articles and national television news segments since 2005. In addition to this, we used the Google search engine to establish a broad search string consisting of the key terms "Croatia, rugby, New Zealand", in both Croatian and English. All the collected materials ensured broad, deep insight into the development of the Croatian diaspora in New Zealand, with an emphasis on the role of rugby in this process.

From the perspective of the authors, interest in this topic is not merely of a professional nature; both authors were born and raised in Makarska, one of the few rare cities in Croatia with a long rugby tradition. Although they never actively played the sport, their emotional connection to the local rugby club helped inspire the research. This is particularly important as the absolute majority of Croatian emigrants and their descendants in New Zealand hail from the Makarska Riviera and its immediate surroundings, including the nearby islands and the Pelješac peninsula.

SPORT AND NATIONAL IDENTITY: THE CASE OF RUGBY IN NEW ZEALAND

Collective identities can be determined by various characteristics. What is immanent to the conception of all collective identities is the 'us-them' axis, which contains the emotions and feelings of connectedness of members of the community. One of the best-known communities of this type is the nation. Old sociological theories viewed nations as stable collective identities with clearly defined borders; post-modern theories view nations as fragmented, fluid, and malleable collective identities. According to social identity theory, an important aspect of one's own self-identity is identification with various groups—what individuals are in relation to the groups to which they belong or wish to belong (Turner et al. 1994; Tajfel and Turner 2004).

Scholarly research on the relationship between sport, nationalism, and national

identity confirms that sport has been one of the most important aspects of everyday life in the process of building and promoting national identity in modern society. The most obvious example of this is media coverage of international sporting events, which is dominantly based on a discourse of simulated battle between nations, instead of between sports teams and individuals. Sport is thus a social institution that constructs events, and members of nations identify with the athletes that represent them at the international level. Various theoretical concepts have been used to explain this. Benedict Anderson's (1991) idea of the 'imagined community' is commonly cited, as is Eric Hobsbawm's (1990) claim that sport facilitates the 'invention of tradition' and becomes a key tributary of secular nationalism. Furthermore, Michael Billig's (1995) theory of 'banal nationalism' posits that sport has an important integrative role in the process of sustaining nationalism. Within this broader context, the role of sport in everyday life is also analysed as a tool of the political elite (Bartoluci and Perasović 2008; Bartoluci 2013; Brentin 2019).

Norbert Elias and John Scotson's (1994) concept of established and outsider groups is highly influential in research on the role of sport in the (re-)construction of the identity of members of ethnic minorities. It offers a framework for the study of social dynamics, or rather the distribution of power and its constant renegotiation within a society. The basic criterion in forming two groups is the "length of residence". The most important part of the Elias-Scotson approach suggests that dominant social groups are in a position to present themselves as "having superior human value" and set the standard of acceptable behaviour to outsider groups. When imposing their standard, the established group uses a set of exclusion measures, ranging from shame and stigmatisation to discrimination. Studies based within this theoretical framework show the importance of sport in the creation of migrants' formal and informal networks. Also, the insights gained—particularly in the case of dominant British immigrant societies—prove the importance of sport in power relations, especially for "gentleman's" sports, one of which is rugby. Sport has been used to confirm the civilised status of an established group. Engh, Agergaard and Maguire (2013) claim that "*questions of power, culture and control are thus at the heart of global sport processes*". Various aspects of the Elias-Scotson approach are apparent in the role rugby played in the development of the Croatian diaspora in New Zealand, as will be shown below. Members of the Croatian diaspora, especially those born in New Zealand, accepted the norms and social values of their host country, which included the special status of rugby in everyday life. As an outsider group, they accepted the standards of the dominant social group; however, in a later phase in the development of this community, rugby became a key tool bringing together members of the diaspora and reconnecting them with their country of origin, which directed the process of the (re-)construction of identity for a number of diaspora members, as well as the community as a whole.

In New Zealand, sport is a very important social institution. High participation in sports activities is a basic characteristic of New Zealand's society. According to available data, in 2019 (prior to the Covid-19 pandemic), 94% of young people and 72% of adults played some kind of sport (Active NZ 2019). Rugby, which is considered the national sport, holds an especially prominent place in this context. The roots of modern rugby are found in traditional games popular on the British Isles since the Middle Ages. The first specificities of the sport as we know it today appeared in the early 19th century; the rules had been regulated and unified by the turn of the 20th century. The first records of rugby being played in New Zealand date to 1869 or 1870. Twenty years later, in 1890, there were 700 active rugby clubs throughout the country. By 1924, rugby clubs had twice as many members as the second most popular sport, tennis; roughly 20% of the total male population aged between 10 and 29 played the sport. Rugby clubs and the national team helped to develop and strengthen local, regional, and national identities. The strong influence of rugby in building national awareness first became apparent during a tour of the national team in Great Britain, France, and the United States in 1905. The team played 35 matches, losing only one; they scored a total of 976 points, with only 59 scored against them. The name "All Blacks" for the national team, which is still used today, also began with this tour. This was also New Zealand's first significant international sporting success (Palenski 2015; Ryan and Watson 2018; Wall 2020).

Through the 20th century, the All Blacks became one of the most recognisable sporting brands in the world and a symbol of New Zealand. Furthermore, James Belich (2001:388), a historian from New Zealand, concludes that rugby was used to "*powerfully assert a strong and distinctive New Zealand collective identity*". There have been numerous interpretations and attempts at explaining this role of rugby; they take into account the basic rules of the sport and the values propagated through rugby, which were in accordance with the dominant social norms and values of New Zealand throughout the majority of the 20th century. In the context of the basic principles of rugby, Dunning and Sheard (2005) emphasise the amateur nature of the sport, which they connect with the class structure of British society and the importance of the idea of "gentlemanly values". The heads of rugby union at the international level insisted on the sport retaining its amateur nature until 1995, when practically all other popular sports were already in an advanced phase of commodification and professionalisation. This ensured all actors involved greater income, and resulted in commercial sports growing in popularity. On the other hand, even after its professionalisation in 1995, rugby union has continued to resist full commercialisation. This is also confirmed by the fact that players in the All Blacks must be active players in New Zealand; the number of foreign players in domestic clubs is also limited. Similar regulations (with certain variations) also exist in other top rugby

federations, such as in England, France, Wales, Ireland, South Africa, and Australia. However, the social status of rugby in New Zealand is practically incomparable with these countries. This was also confirmed by our interviewees:

Antony Sumich: "...growing up in Auckland in the 1960s and 1970s like all New Zealand boys you just... most of them just played rugby, that was the norm."

Milan Yelavich: "Back then in New Zealand that was all we did. There was no other sporting option... In New Zealand, when you turn one, when you have your first birthday, or first Christmas, back then, when I was growing up and even my kids, you got a rugby ball... The first sports jersey was an All Black rugby jersey... Rugby was our social outlet back then. Every town had a rugby club... If you go to any park, any playground, any beach there will be someone with a rugby ball."

In the context of the aforementioned social values promoted through rugby, this status of rugby was certainly aided by the fact that the basic premise of social development in New Zealand until the 1970s was the idea of building a more British society than that in Great Britain itself, while New Zealanders created an image of themselves as "better Britons" (Belich 2001). In addition to other circumstances, especially the national team's international successes, the final result was the special status of rugby in the pyramid of social values in New Zealand. One of our interviewees summarises this notion: "*The captain of the All Blacks is in New Zealand more important than the prime minister*". The rest of our analysis of the role of rugby in integrating members of the Croatian diaspora into New Zealand society should be viewed in this context. Given the research focus and limited space, the presentation will be partly linear, as it will not take into account contested moments in the development of New Zealand society that are also reflected in sport, such as issues of the marginalisation of minority groups, racism, etc. A simplified approach is taken to illustrate broader trends in the development of New Zealand society and the position of the Croatian diaspora within it. The starting point of this approach is the arrival of the first settlers at the turn of the 20th century, who were discriminated against on many levels in their daily lives, while the end point is modern New Zealand society, which recognises and acknowledges the contribution of immigrant Croats.

THE ROLE OF RUGBY IN INTEGRATING MEMBERS OF THE CROATIAN DIASPORA INTO NEW ZEALAND'S SOCIETY

New Zealand is one of a small group of countries—including the United States, Australia, Canada, and Israel—that are regarded as the classic immigrant societies, or traditional settlement countries (Spoonley and Bedford 2012:9). The emigration of Croats to New Zealand began in the second half of the 19th century. The absolute majority of emigrants came from the region of Dalmatia on the Adriatic coast, mainly from the relatively small area of central Dalmatia, which consists of the coast and hinterland of Makarska, the Pelješac peninsula, and the islands of Korčula, Hvar, and Brač (Trlin 1979; Čizmić 1981; Jelich 2008). At the time, Dalmatia was one of the least economically developed provinces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, so the main reason for emigration was the poor economic situation. In the period from 1891 to World War I, over 5,600 Dalmatians came to New Zealand, but many of them returned after some time (Mataga 2015:68). These settlers were mostly less-educated young men who, upon their arrival, found work mainly in digging kauri gum—the fossilised resin of the New Zealand spruce, known by its Maori name kauri. It was a very hard life. The resin had many industrial uses, mostly in producing oil-based lacquers and linoleum, making it exceptionally sought after on the international markets until the discovery of synthetic alternatives in the 1930s. In the New Zealand censuses, immigrants from Croatia usually identified themselves as Dalmatians (Jelich 2008). Their poor social position became even worse with the onset of World War I (Trlin 1979). As citizens of Austro-Hungary, the Croats were declared “enemy aliens”, although the majority of them had spoken out against the Empire. Accordingly, they supported the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in 1918 (renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929). In New Zealand, the establishment of the new state resulted in the absolute majority of emigrants beginning to identify themselves as Yugoslavs. It is estimated that there were up to 9,000 of them in New Zealand before World War II, including the second generation (Čizmić 1981:109).

Croatian immigrants were not viewed very favourably until the second half of the 20th century. They faced discrimination and, like other non-British ethnic minorities—particularly Southern and Eastern Europeans, they were placed under strong social pressure to assimilate as quickly as possible. Asians were in an even worse position (Trlin 1979; Greif 1995; Belich 2001; Spoonley and Bedford 2012). In the view of New Zealand's social elite of the time, assimilation meant accepting the “British way of life”. Immigrants integrated relatively quickly. By the end of the inter-war period, a significant percentage of the second generation of immigrant Croats already had poor knowledge of the Croatian language (Čizmić 1981:139). This trend became even more apparent in the decades

after World War II. The interviewed rugby players of Croatian descent also testified about their immediate or extended family members insisting on speaking only English even at home in order to help their children integrate more quickly. A similar practice is noted in the majority of interviews held at libraries in New Zealand. Assimilation became especially apparent in the second and third generation, considering the extreme distance between New Zealand and Croatia, the financial impossibility of regular visits, and poorly developed communications systems prior to the development of the internet. Aside from this, after World War II, New Zealand placed strong limits on large-scale immigration, which means the inflow of new Croatian immigrants was very low.

The children of non-British immigrants born and raised in New Zealand primarily adopted the local norms, values, and social forms. This also included interest in rugby, especially amongst young boys. Prior to arriving in New Zealand, Croatian emigrants were unfamiliar with rugby. Rugby only began developing in Croatia after World War II, and to a very modest extent. The first rugby club, Hrvatski Akademski Rugby Klub Mladost, was founded in Zagreb in 1954. Rugby in Croatia remains an amateur, non-elite sport that draws little public attention. In this context, it should be noted that among the Croatian diaspora in New Zealand, football is the most popular sport, not rugby. The children of Croatian immigrants in the mid-20th century often began playing rugby despite complaints from their parents, who considered rugby a very rough sport. However, this did not stop them.

Joe Posa: *"...especially in Auckland, because that is where most of the Croatians were. There was always lots of Croatians playing rugby."*

A few decades later, after these children grew into adults, they supported their own children—the third generation of diaspora—when they decided to play rugby. Boys began playing at an early age, usually by the age of 10, and some even at age four, like some of our interviewees.

Anthony Posa: *"Growing up, rugby was everything... I started at four-five years old. Rugby in New Zealand is like football in Croatia—it's like religion. My dad was a good player, and every son wants to be like his dad. Everybody in New Zealand growing up, every boy wants to be in the All Blacks... For example, if you get the All Blacks now on TV, it's not just rugby people... my grandma Poša, she passed away, she knew who was the captain of the All Blacks. You turn on the TV, newspapers, All Blacks everywhere."*

Rugby played an immeasurable role in the integration of those who played it into New Zealand's society. Ivan Botica testifies to this in his oral history interview conducted

in 2015 for the Dalmatian Genealogy and Historical Society collection, which is held at the Auckland Council Libraries. As he was a versatile athlete, everyone knew him, which opened many doors for him in the local community. Furthermore, the sporting successes of individuals had a great impact on their acceptance in the community. This is confirmed by an analysis of the digital archive of the Dalmatian Archive and Museum at the Dalmatian Cultural Society in Auckland, which is the oldest organisation of Croatian immigrants in New Zealand. The material is accessible via "Kura Heritage Collections Online", also part of the Auckland Council Libraries portal. Dozens of surviving photographs and documents bear witness to the collective participation of members of the Croatian diaspora in sporting activities throughout the 20th century. Rugby holds a special status in this context; one of the exhibitions features photographs of thirteen rugby players of Croatian descent who have played for the All Blacks, thus confirming the community's success.

Immigrants were involved in interactions with individuals, groups, and organisations outside their ethnic group through rugby. Rugby thus enabled them to forge close ties with broader, more diverse swathes of society than they might have otherwise. These interactions demonstrate that the Croats involved in rugby were not "inward looking". This confirms Jay Coakley's (2021:285) conclusion that sport, in addition to having the potential to amplify racial and ethnic conflicts, also has the potential to overcome them. Sport can promote ethnic inclusion and contribute to improved ethnic relations within a given society. We claim that this was the case with the integration of some Croats in New Zealand.

THE ROLE OF RUGBY IN (RE-)CONSTRUCTING THE IDENTITY OF DIASPORA IN NEW ZEALAND

Aside from the successful integration of numerous individuals who played the sport, rugby also played an important role in the development of collective identity of Croats in New Zealand as a diaspora. This is already apparent from the aforementioned letter sent to Split in 1912, in which Kleme Milić cites that Croats formed a team in order to compete with the local populace. The letter ends with a reference to the sporting successes they enjoyed:

"Let the English know who the Croats are, and even the English newspapers wrote about it, so it has been heard far and wide. And so may you in the old homeland also know that we weren't born on rocky soil for nothing."

In the post-World War II era, most Croatian immigrants turned from kauri digging to

agriculture, especially fruit farming, viticulture, and fishing. Their success in these fields helped to establish them as an accepted element in New Zealand's society. In practice, the attempt to build a 'better British society' resulted in a unique New Zealand identity. As part of this process, ethnic minorities developed their own identity and typical social forms (Brooking and Rabel 1995; Belich 2001). Antony Sumich illustrates this through his childhood memories:

"They [older generations of immigrants] did [follow the news from Croatia], but the only time they ever spoke about it was when they were gathered together with others who could speak Croatian. When they were around their children, their grandchildren, it was New Zealand... Growing up in the 60s and 70s, 90% of my life was as a New Zealander, but whenever there was something family, it was... I didn't consider myself Croatian, I didn't speak any Croatian, but whenever there was a family get together, the Croatian picnic, Dalmatian picnic, funerals, weddings, something like that, all of a sudden, even though you were in New Zealand, all of a sudden you were in an environment (and you only spoke English) that was entirely Croatian. The briškula, the buće, the lamb on the spit [briškula - traditional card game; buće - bocce; lamb on the spit - traditional method of preparing lamb for festivities, typical of the eastern Adriatic coast, including Dalmatia, and other parts of the Mediterranean], all of the food, all of the drink, everything was Croatian, except for the language. We as young New Zealanders, we recognized that our friends don't do this... We were living in a little bubble, 5 or 10% of your life was this cultural enclave whereby you held onto something you didn't fully understand, but you held on to it because it was part of your upbringing and who you are and what you are... Growing up, you start to realize I have the same idiosyncrasies; I have the same traits as my grandparents. Even though you consider yourself totally New Zealander you realize you are not. You realize that you are a New Zealander but you have this blood in you and you are proud of it."

This personal description of interviewee Sumich's personal and collective identity—and there were other such descriptions in the sample—affirms the findings and analysis of Senka Božić Vrbančić (2005), who focused on the identity of people born of relationships between Croats and Maori in New Zealand. She emphasises the influence of multiple cultures on children of immigrant parents: the influence of the culture from the originating country of one's parents, and that of the social values and culture of the host country, especially in the framework of the education system. The failure of the

attempt to create a unified monocultural society based on traditional British norms and values became especially apparent during the 1970s, when a large number of previously marginalised groups in New Zealand began to strongly express their dissatisfaction and seek equality. The most active among them were the Maori; however, the second and third generations from the immigrant communities also became politically active. This resulted in an expansion of the definition of the New Zealand identity, which shifted from a monocultural perception to a bicultural one (Maori and *Pakeha* – the Maori term for European immigrants, but which is absolutely dominated by the British aspect of identity), and later to a multicultural one (Mitchell 2003; Božić Vrbanić 2008). In this context, rugby appeared in the 1970s as a new domain for the activity of Croatian diaspora and a highly important factor not only in connecting members of the diaspora, but also in connecting Croats in New Zealand as a whole with their country of origin.

Beginning in the 1970s, the community established an annual tradition of bringing rugby players together in matches between regions, mostly Auckland against teams from the north, from Dargaville and Kaitia, where many Croats settled. Some New Zealanders also took part in these matches, but the primary goal was to celebrate the identity of the country of origin; the result was not as important. Additional activities involved all-day socialising with traditional dance, music, singing, cooking, etc.:

Milan Yelavich: *“These games were more a celebration of who we were.”*

Joe Posa: *“That kept the community together. That kept all Croatians together and we used to get to know each other.”*

Beginning in the 1970s, one key person involved in organising all rugby-related activities among Croatian diaspora in New Zealand was Rade (Ray) Vukšić. A successful entrepreneur, he was president of Waitemata rugby club in Auckland. The club is based in the Henderson suburb of Auckland, which is home to a large number of Croats, many of whom were members of the club. As a part of Waitemata's European tour in 1975, Vukšić organised a tour of Croatia (Zagreb, Kumrovec, Stubica, Split, Makarska, and Vrgorac); they played matches in Zagreb, Split, and Makarska, also visiting Belgrade before departing. The excellent reception of the tour by Croats in New Zealand, as well as new connections made with rugby clubs in Croatia and Yugoslavia, inspired Vukšić to begin organising rugby tours in Croatia (with visits to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia as well) with teams consisting exclusively of players of Croatian or Yugoslav descent. He continued by founding the New Zealand Yugoslav Sports Club in 1975. He organised four tours of the club (1978, 1982, 1986, and 1990); in addition to the players, dozens of family members and friends came along each time. Vukšić was also involved in organising a

tour for the Nada rugby club from Split in New Zealand in 1976, which was in essence the converse of Waitemata's tour in Yugoslavia; he also organised a tour of the Energoinvest rugby club from Makarska in 1979 to celebrate the centennial of the arrival of the first Croats in New Zealand. For his work in building ties between Yugoslavia and emigrants in New Zealand, Vukšić was awarded the Order of the Yugoslav Flag with Golden Star; in 1988, he was awarded the Queen's Service Medal (Vuksich Family n. d.) in New Zealand for his contribution to the development of sport and cultural clubs. Visits to Croatia left a strong impression on the identities of many young members of the Croatian diaspora, as illustrated by one of the 1982 tour members, Drago Jelavić: *"We live on opposite ends of the world, but we're the same nation, the same blood"* (Greblo 1982).

The highlight of these tours were visits to Vrgorac and the towns of the Makarska Riviera and the nearby islands, where the majority of the players' families were from. Meeting family members they had never met before or seeing the houses in which their parents or grandparents were born were exceptionally emotional experiences. However, the guests from New Zealand stated that they consider New Zealand their first home, while Croatia and Yugoslavia were "yours", or the country of their hosts (N. G. 1978). On the other hand, tours of Croatian clubs in New Zealand were presented in Croatia as events of a broader nature than mere sports competitions, as concluded by Nenad Gol (1976) in his report on Nada's tour for the Croatian Heritage Foundation's magazine:

"Not to detract from the sporting successes of Split's rugby players on this tour, which are not to be underestimated, we can say with satisfaction that the results these young men achieved outside the stadium were far greater."

It should also be noted that the players were housed in the homes of members of the diaspora, which allowed them to develop life-long friendships; in many cases, the hosts and guests shared family ties, considering the narrow regional origins of the absolute majority of members of the diaspora in New Zealand. A large party was organised after every match; one of the participants of Nada's tour reported that, when they left for the north of New Zealand, they were stopped multiple times by emigrants who had set up impromptu roadside stands with food and drink. Ron Urlich, who had played for the All Blacks, showed the guests from Split a special honour:

"He said that blood is thicker than water, and that he felt belonging to our nation and was proud of it. You should also know that his father was born in New Zealand, and that his mother is Maori. On parting, Urlich gave us the black uniform he had played in against England with the All Blacks, and that is an honour rugby players show to those who are truly their best friends" (Gol 1976:33).

The high point of Nada's tour was their victory in the last match against Marist rugby club in Auckland, as witnessed by one of our interviewees:

Tonči Cvitanović: *"I don't know who was prouder, us or the emigrants who were hosting us. They were happy we had beaten their team."*

For members of the Croatian diaspora in New Zealand, playing rugby and being involved in activities related to the sport served as a kind of catalyst for integration into New Zealand's society. However, the popularity of rugby also provided a channel for resistance to full assimilation. The matches held, followed by the creation of the Yugoslav New Zealand Sports Club and the resulting connections with Croatia and Yugoslavia as their country of origin, strengthened the awareness of participants as to their shared origins and facilitated the (re-)construction of the diaspora identity. These collective visits as part of rugby tours were the first opportunity for members of the diaspora to gain first-hand knowledge of their country of origin. The long-term impact of these tours was apparent upon their return to New Zealand, when a new wave of activities began. This was also the case with the tours of Croatian rugby clubs in New Zealand. The logical result of these relationships established by the rugby community were strong relations between rugby players in Croatia and the Croatian diaspora in New Zealand immediately after the war in Croatia (1991-1995). New Zealanders of Croatian origins played the most prominent role in Croatian rugby's greatest success, when they helped the national team nearly qualify for the world championships in 1999.

THE ROLE OF RUGBY IN CONNECTING THE DIASPORA WITH THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

The collapse of socialist Yugoslavia played a great role in developing the modern collective identity of the Croatian diaspora in New Zealand. In this context, it must be noted that the Croatian diaspora in New Zealand is quite unique in relation to other Croatian diasporas elsewhere in the world. The pre-World War II diaspora dominated the social life of immigrants in New Zealand until the collapse of socialist Yugoslavia, as the number of new emigrants to New Zealand was relatively low. The majority of the old generation nurtured good relations with communist political structures in Yugoslavia, while all other emigrant communities across the world after the 1950s and 1960s were dominated by a new, strongly anti-Yugoslav generation of emigrants. In the wake of the collapse of socialist Yugoslavia, a significant number of people from the diaspora in New Zealand refused to accept the Croatian national identity, instead turning primarily to their regional (Dalmatian)

identity (Trlin and Tolich 1995). A part of the community in Auckland split off and founded the Croatian Cultural Society in 1991. The Yugoslav Cultural Society in Hamilton was renamed as Croatian in 1992. In Wellington, the Yugoslav society changed its name to "Dalmatian" in 1991, but then they changed it to "Croatian" in 1996. Yugoslav Cultural Society in Kaitaia and the Whangarei Yugoslav Society were renamed to "Dalmatian" societies in 1993, as well as the Dargaville Yugoslav Club, which became the Dalmatian Club. The Yugoslav New Zealand Sport Club changed its name to the New Zealand Croatian Sports Club. In terms of support from rugby players for Croatian independence, Antony Sumich and Michael Vuksich, New Zealanders of Croatian descent who lived in Europe in the early 1990s and participated in the tours in the 1980s, joined players from Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina on a tour in Scotland, Wales, and England with the slogan "Rugby for Peace – Stop the War in Croatia". The team also included Jerome Blanc from France and Nigel Melville from England (Vuković 1991).

In the broader social framework of the collapse of Yugoslavia and Croatia's struggle for independence, in which the Croatian diaspora played a significant role, the leadership of Croatian rugby decided on a stronger initiative. At a session of the rugby federation in February 1991, while still a part of the Yugoslav Rugby Federation, a decision was made to contact emigrants in Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Argentina, and South Africa to solicit aid. However, the initiative failed; the idea appeared once more in 1995. With support from the Croatian Olympic Committee, the leadership of the Croatian Rugby Federation decided to hire rugby coaches of Croatian origins from New Zealand to quickly develop Croatian rugby. A "diplomatic sports tour" for the national team in New Zealand was also planned (Hrستیć and Mustapić 2021). At this time, Brendon Winslow came to Split to coach and play for Nada rugby club. Shortly thereafter, Antony Sumich came to Makarska from Ljubljana, where he had been playing for Koloys; in agreement with the heads of the rugby federation and the national team, he began to approach players of Croatian origin in New Zealand, who had the right to play for the Croatian national team, to take part in the qualifying round for the world championships in 1999. This meant that one of their grandparents had to have been born in Croatia. As it was not necessary for them to obtain citizenship, this practically meant players were immediately available to play for the national team. The following three years are considered the golden age of Croatian rugby in terms of national team success, realised primarily thanks to the involvement of a few dozen players from New Zealand, the most prominent of whom were ex-All Blacks Frano Botica and Matthew Cooper. All of these players played without financial remuneration. Some even donated sports equipment to the Croatian Rugby Union and to clubs. Prominent businesspeople of Croatian origins from New Zealand also became some of the largest sponsors of the

national team. In the end, all this was not enough for the team to qualify for the world championships in 1999; their greatest success came in the same year, at the prestigious Hong Kong Sevens tournament. The failure to qualify for the world championships had a negative impact on multiple levels; in the following years, cooperation between the Croatian Rugby Federation and the diaspora in New Zealand lessened. The position of Croatian national team selector was taken over by Richard Borich, a New Zealander of Croatian origin, from 2001 to 2004; however, the number of players approached by the Croatian Rugby Federation grew smaller and smaller. A new initiative came about in the 2010s, but with a different goal (Hrstić and Mustapić 2021). Quick success was no longer the focus, so the number of players involved was significantly lower than in the late 1990s. Greater importance was placed on developing Croatian clubs and young players with support from representatives of the diaspora; national team coaches and selectors of Croatian origin, such as Milan Yelavich (selector 2011-2021) and Anthony Posa (national team assistant coach, 2014-2021, selector 2021-), played a more significant role.

Many players from New Zealand played for the Croatian national team and for Croatian rugby clubs (mostly for Makarska rivijera) for extended periods, from a few months up to three or more years; the time spent in Croatia had a strong influence on their personal identity.

Anthony Posa: *"I grew up as a Kiwi... I didn't appreciate the history of my family till I actually went to Croatia myself... If I wasn't a rugby player, I don't think I would have as strong a Croatian link."*

Other respondents also confirmed this in conversation; after their experiences in Croatia, they feel much more Croatian than they did previously. This phenomenon also had an impact on the Croatian diaspora in New Zealand as a whole. At the Croatian Cultural Society in Auckland, a framed Croatian national team uniform hangs alongside a New Zealand All Blacks uniform signed by Botica and Cooper. A tradition of organising benefits to collect funds for the Croatian Rugby Federation has also been established; Antony Sumich concludes that the entire community is much more active than it was until the 1990s thanks to rugby. He believes this is because, until the 1990s, the connections between New Zealand and Croatia were based on relations that were 50 years old, mostly maintained by infrequent written correspondence. Beginning in the 1990s, these contacts were new and constant, especially with modern forms of communication and the ease of travel. The diaspora's feelings of belonging were deepened after they became more familiar with the homeland of their ancestors, which also indirectly influenced their family members and their broader social circles. Considering the relatively small total number of Croats in New Zealand, these connections had a very broad reach among the community.

CONCLUSION

Sport is an important medium through which identities and communities are constructed and experienced at the local, regional, national, and global level. Of course, this also holds true in terms of the identity of members of diaspora/ethnic minorities, which was the focus of our research. However, in their case, sport—like other key factors in the development of personal and group identities—carries the potential to influence the (re-)construction of manifold national or ethnic identities that essentially overlap. In accordance with this, research on how sport influences the development of minority ethnic communities has resulted in two general approaches. One focuses on the process of assimilation, while the other focuses on maintaining ethnic identity. We approached the example of Croats in New Zealand and the role of rugby in developing the community with the theory that these two processes are inseparable, as they are inherently connected, and should thus be analysed simultaneously. The research affirmed that rugby expedited the integration of the diaspora (primarily on the individual level), while also ensuring conditions to strengthen the collective identity of the community through the involvement of individuals. This confirmed the basic theory of the research, which was that rugby served as a medium for the multidimensional social inclusion of Croats in New Zealand. This also affirms Brubaker's theory on the fluidity of the identity of diaspora as one of the starting points of the research.

Today, the estimated number of Croatian emigrants and their descendants in New Zealand exceeds 100,000; the 2018 census lists only 2,936 Croats and 5,886 South Slavs, among which the majority originates from territories located in modern-day Croatia (New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade n. d.; Stats NZ 2018). This is partly the result of the assimilation process, which leads to the second, third, and subsequent generations identifying themselves primarily as New Zealanders. However, given the bicultural/multicultural nature of the New Zealand identity, it can be argued that self-identifying as a New Zealander does not imply a negation of immigrant/diasporic identity per se, as was evident in the case of New Zealanders of Croatian origin. They identified themselves first and foremost as New Zealanders, but were aware of and maintained their cultural and national background. In this context, the sport of rugby—which served their ancestors as a way to quickly integrate into their new home—plays an important role in their everyday lives. However, despite the relatively small number of people who identify as Croats, the diaspora in New Zealand provided Croatia with the most systematic influx of athletes who performed for the Croatian national team in any sport. This chain of events tied to rugby and diaspora in New Zealand was in no way coincidental. Rugby in Croatia is a non-elite, amateur sport that neither draws significant public attention, nor has enjoyed remarkable

international success. Ties with a country at the very peak of the sport internationally meant a great deal to rugby enthusiasts in Croatia, who endeavour to ensure the connections established continue. The relatively low status of the sport in Croatia means the Croatian Rugby Union clearly has fewer options than federations of more popular sports, such as the Croatian Football Federation, the success of whose national team offers talented players from the diaspora the opportunity to both prove themselves in the sport and gain financial benefit. Playing for the Croatian national rugby team wins players from New Zealand no professional advancement nor financial gain. On the contrary, coming to Croatia most often means time away from work and a number of other complications in their everyday lives. Clearly, they are motivated by emotions arising from their family roots. However, this relationship should not be romanticised through interpretations of love for one's homeland in the primordial sense, as it has often been presented in the media. Numerous other factors in each individual case were vital in players' decisions to play for the Croatian national team, as our respondents described during our research; these can be viewed as a kind of adventure, fun, curiosity, or simply love of rugby. Some of the traditional principles of rugby present since the very beginnings of the modern sport also certainly played a role in this decision. Nevertheless, the influence the experience of playing for Croatia had on the personal identity of a large number of individuals is the phenomenon at the core of this research. Through their involvement with Croatia, these individuals became active participants in the process of (re-)constructing the identity of the diaspora in New Zealand. Collaboration between the Croatian Rugby Federation and New Zealanders of Croatian origin thus had a much deeper impact than simply sporting results. We do not wish to claim that rugby is the most important aspect of the development of the Croatian diaspora in New Zealand. This is merely insight into a small part of this development; it is not possible to make generalisations about the entire community on the basis of this research. However, this type of insight is highly important, as it contributes to an understanding of the role of sport in the development of diaspora, both in the process of integrating into the host society and in preserving the identity of the country of origin. This contributes to a better understanding of the phenomenon of diaspora; this insight also contributes to research on the most popular sport in New Zealand, as well as on sport in immigrant societies in general.

REFERENCES

- Active NZ. 2019. "Active NZ survey 2019". URL: <https://sportnz.org.nz/resources/active-nz-survey-2019/> (accessed April 10, 2023).
- ANDERSON, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso.
- BARTOLUCI, Sunčica. 2013. *Uloga vrhunskog sporta u oblikovanju nacionalnog identiteta u Republici Hrvatskoj: usporedba devedesetih i dvijetisućitih*. PhD Dissertation. Zagreb: University of Zagreb, Faculty of humanities and social sciences.
- BARTOLUCI, Sunčica and Benjamin PERASOVIĆ. 2008. "National identity and sport: the case of Croatia". In *Sport, culture & society: An account of views and perspectives on social issues in a continent (and beyond)*, eds. Mojca Doupona Topič and Simon Ličen. Ljubljana: University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Sport, 187–191.
- BELICH, James. 2001. *Paradise reformed – A history of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the year 2000*. Auckland: Penguin Books.
- BILLIG, Michael. 1995. *Banal nationalism*. London: Sage Publications.
- BOŽIĆ-VRBANČIĆ, Senka. 2005. "After all, I am partly Māori, partly Dalmatian, but first of all I am a New Zealander". *Ethnography*, vol. 6/4:517–542.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1466138105062477>
- BOŽIĆ-VRBANČIĆ, Senka. 2008. *Tarara: Croats and Māori in New Zealand: memory, belonging, identity*. Dunedin: Otago University Press.
- BRENTIN, Dario. 2019. "Ambassadors of memory: 'Honouring the Homeland War' in Croatian sport". In *Framing the nation and collective identities political rituals and cultural memory of the twentieth-century traumas in Croatia*, eds. Vjeron Pavlaković and Davor Pauković. London: Routledge, 160–176.
- BROOKING, Tom and Roberto RABEL. 1995. "Neither British nor Polynesian – A brief history of New Zealand's other immigrants". In *Immigration & national identity in New Zealand: one peoples – two peoples – many peoples?*, ed. Stuart W. Greif. Palmerston North: The Dunmore Printing Company, 23–49.
- BRUBAKER, Rogers. 2005. "The 'Diaspora' diaspora". *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 28/1:1–19. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0141987042000289997>
- COAKLEY, Jay 2021. *Sports in society: issues and controversies*. 13th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Education.
- ČIZMIĆ, Ivan. 1981. *Iz Dalmacije u Novi Zeland*. Zagreb: Globus.
- DUNNING, Eric and Kenneth SHEARD. 2005. *Barbarians, gentlemen and players: a sociological study of the development of rugby football*. London: Routledge.
- ELIAS, Norbert and John L. SCOTSON. 1994. *The established and the outsiders: a sociological enquiry into community problems*. London: Sage.

- ENGH, Mari Haugaa, Sine AGERGAARD and Joseph MAGUIRE. 2013. "Established – outsider relations in youth football tournaments: an exploration of transnational power figurations between Scandinavian organizers and African teams". *Soccer & Society*, vol. 14/6:781–798. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14660970.2013.843907>
- GOL, Nenad. 1976. "Nadin' put nade". *Matica*, May 1976.
- GREBLO, Mirjana. 1982. "Ista smo krv". *Matica*, December 1982.
- GREIF, Stuart W., ed. 1995. *Immigration & national identity in New Zealand: one peoples – two peoples – many peoples?* Palmerston North: The Dunmore Printing Company.
- HOBBSAWM, Eric. 1990. *Nations and nationalism since 1780: programme, myth, reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- HRSTIĆ, Ivan and Marko MUSTAPIĆ. 2021. "Sport and the emigrant identity: an analysis of media discourse regarding New Zealanders of Croatian origin playing for the Croatian national rugby team". In *9th International Scientific Conference on Kinesiology*, eds. Sanja Šalaj and Dario Škegro. Zagreb: University of Zagreb, Faculty of Kinesiology, 497–500.
- JELICICH, Stephen A. 2008. *From distant villages: the lives and times of Croatian settlers in New Zealand, 1858-1958*. Auckland: Pharos Publications.
- MANGAN, James Anthony. 2002. "Introduction". In *Tribal identities: nationalism, Europe, sport*, ed. James Anthony Mangan. London: Frank Cass & Co., 1–9.
- MATAGA, Des. 2015. *Red wine to kauri gum: the history of Dalmatian emigration to New Zealand's kauri gumfields prior to World War 1*. Auckland: Opuzen Press.
- MILIĆ, Kleme. 1912. "Englezi i Hrvati". *Pučki list*, February 1.
- MITCHELL, James. 2003. *Immigration and national identity in 1970s New Zealand*. PhD Dissertation. University of Otago.
- N. G. 1978. "U domovini svojih predaka". *Matica*, May 1978.
- NAURIGHT, J. 2007. "Rugby et identité nationale en Nouvelle-Zélande" [Rugby and national identity in New Zealand]. *Staps*, vol. 28/78:101–114.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3917/sta.078.0101>
- NEW ZEALAND FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE, n. d. "Croatia". URL: <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/countries-and-regions/europe/croatia> (accessed April 10, 2023).
- NEW ZEALAND RUGBY. 2023. "New Zealand Rugby". URL: www.nzrugby.co.nz (accessed April 10, 2023).
- PALENSKI, Ron. 2015. *Rugby – A New Zealand history*. Auckland: Auckland University Press.
- RYAN, Greg and Geoff WATSON. 2018. *Sport and the New Zealanders – A history*. Auckland: Auckland University Press.
- SPOONLEY, Paul and Richard BEDFORD. 2012. *Welcome to Our World? Immigration and the reshaping of New Zealand*. Auckland: Dunmore Publishing.
- STATS NZ. 2018. "Croatian ethnic group". URL: <https://www.stats.govt.nz/tools/2018-census-ethnic-group-summaries/croatian> (accessed April 10, 2023).

- TAJFEL, Henri and John C. TURNER. 2004. "The social identity theory of intergroup behavior". In *Political Psychology*, eds. John J. Jost and Jim Sidanius. New York: Psychology Press, 276–293.
- TRLIN, Andrew Drago. 1979. *Now respected, once despised: Yugoslavs in New Zealand*. Auckland: Dunmore Press.
- TRLIN, Andrew Drago and Martin TOLICH. 1995. "Croatian or Dalmatian? Yugoslavia's demise and the issue of identity". In *Immigration & national identity in New Zealand*, ed. Stuart William Greif. Auckland: The Dunmore Press, 217–252.
- TURNER, John C, Penelope J. OAKES, Alexander S. HASLAM and Craig MCGARTY. 1994. "Self and collective: cognition and social context". *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, vol. 20/5:454–463. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167294205002>
- VUKOVIĆ, A. 1991. "'Jaje' u drugom planu". *Sportske novosti*, November 8:11.
- Vuksich Family, n. d. "Ray Vuksich". URL: <https://kura.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz/digital/collection/localhistory/id/6647/rec/30> (accessed April 10, 2023).
- WALL, Jamie. 2020. *Brothers in Black – The long history of brotherhood in New Zealand Rugby*. Auckland: Allen & Unwin.
- YIN, Robert K. 2007. *Studija slučaja. Dizajn i metode*. Zagreb: Fakultet političkih znanosti.

Sport kao medij za višedimenzionalnu društvenu inkluziju: uloga ragbija u (re)konstrukciji identiteta Novozelanda hrvatskog podrijetla

Ivan Hrstić

Marko Mustapić

Dva su klasična pristupa istraživanju uloge sporta u razvoju etničkih manjinskih zajednica. S jedne strane fokus se stavlja na proces njihove asimilacije, dok se s druge strane pozornost usmjerava na održavanje etničkog identiteta. U ovom radu se na primjeru Hrvata u Novom Zelandu analizira uloga rugbyja u oba smisla. Prema osnovnoj tezi, rugby je imao važnu ulogu u procesu integracije velikog broja pripadnika hrvatske dijaspore u novozelandsko društvo, ali istovremeno i u njihovu očuvanju elemenata identiteta zemlje podrijetla te u konačnici u njihovom ponovnom povezivanju s Hrvatskom nakon više desetljeća relativno slabih veza.

Ključne riječi: *dijaspora, identitet, sport, rugby, Novi Zeland, Hrvatska, Jugoslavija*



Articles published in this journal are Open Access and can be distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons license Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>)