

# THE *DRAVSKO PROLJEĆE* FOLKLORE FESTIVAL IN SOPJE

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Croatia and Hungary have a centuries-old relationship, and although political systems have defined their boundaries, shared memories and cultural heritage remain. The river Drava has become a place of such sociocultural sharing, among the Sopje residents on the Croatian side and Podravina Croats on the Hungarian side. In early 2000, cultural artistic societies began to meet informally, culminating in the 2007 official annual shared folklore festival called *Dravsko proljeće* (*Drava Spring/Drávai tavasz*). In this paper I present *Dravsko proljeće* through the pluralism of dichotomies arising from the perspective of festival actors, local policy, regional competitiveness and European cohesion.

Keywords: Dravsko proljeće (*Drava Spring/Drávai tavasz*), folklore festival, Podravina Croats, Sopje

The Sopje municipality is located in the north-eastern part of the Virovitica-Podravina County, and in terms of population and area, it is one of the largest municipalities in the County.<sup>1</sup> And yet Sopje is an “untouched” and “authentic” municipality. The aura of otherness and distinctiveness compared with other places in the County may be a result of its tangible heritage as demonstrated by the collaboration of the local museum in the nearby city of Slatina and the Institute of Archaeology in Zagreb during the 1980s and 1990s, whose research describes the long and significant historical continuity of this municipality. From its notable beginnings in the 11th century through stagnancy during the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century to its revitalization in the 17th century, Sopje was known for its

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is an abbreviated version of the ethnomusicological study that I conducted for my Master's Thesis entitled *Etnografija smotre folklor: Dravsko proljeće u Sopju/Ethnography of a Folklore Festival: Dravsko proljeće in Sopje* defended in 2014 at the Department of Musicology of the Academy of Music, University of Zagreb, under the advisorship of Dr. Mojca Piškor, to whom I would like to extend my gratitude for her guidance and support. Discourse analysis for this research, later revised and incorporated in the thesis, was conducted during the course *Ethnomusicological research* taught by Dr. Naila Ceribašić (Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb). Therefore, I would also like to thank Dr. Ceribašić for her valuable comments during the analysis and her comments on the first draft of this paper.

sacred buildings, notably, as they are currently called, St. Mary Magdalene Church, and St. Florian statue from 1906 located at the junction of roads leading to the city of Slatina and the neighbouring Čađavica and Suhopolje municipalities.<sup>2</sup> Starting with the second half of the 20th century, Sopje started to develop a sociocultural reputation and secular status, as represented by the Folk Dance Group Sopje during the 1950s and 1960s and, later, the Podravac Cultural Artistic Society in the 1980s. Sopje earned its status through its folk ensemble publicly performing folk music, in particular at the first International Folklore Festival in Zagreb in 1966 and thirty years later, in 1996, as well as their performances at the regional folklore festivals *Vinkovačke jeseni* (Autumns of Vinkovci) in Vinkovci and *Đakovački vezovi* (Embroideries of Đakovo) in Đakovo during the 1990s. Eagerly retold even today by the senior members of the Podravac Cultural Artistic Society and elderly residents of Sopje, these three performances are the greatest achievement of the Cultural Artistic Society and have helped form the high esteem in which Sopje is held locally and regionally.

Folklore activities over the ten years following these three performances were sparse in Sopje. It could be claimed that its cultural heritage was forgotten by the local and regional authorities, on the one hand, and its own bearers, residents of Sopje and members of the Cultural Artistic Society, on the other. The distinctive aura surrounding Sopje, however, brightened and expanded from 2007 onwards, as a result of the *Dravsko proljeće* (*Drava Spring/Drávai tavasz*) cross-border folklore festival.<sup>3</sup> Today the festival has resulted in Sopje's new (but shared) qualification as a unique "treasure trove of folk wisdom" of The Virovitica-Podravina County, where the Podravac Society functions as the "key" which allows access to this forgotten and once well-known treasure trove.

My interpretations of the *Dravsko proljeće* folklore festival are based on my personal connections to Sopje, the place and its people, and participant observation data collected from November 2013 to May 2014. My mother has passionately retold her experience of growing up in Sopje, attending mass in St. Mary Magdalene Church, attending rehearsals and performances of the Cultural Artistic Society and preparing the famous Sopje folk costumes for performances. I used to spend holidays at my grandparents' home in Sopje and visited places described by my mother. In this way, I had the opportunity to learn how the Sopje residents live and perform their heritage daily and on special occasions through the Podravac Cultural Artistic Society. This previous knowledge of the place and its socio-cultural activities shaped my research path and the first selection of informants. The first ambitious draft was corrected to the final list of nine informants I could interview – the first founders of the Podravac Cultural Artistic Society in Sopje, its active and inactive members, members of the festival organizing committee, members of the audience, and a person involved in writing about *Dravsko proljeće* in the context of the project *Spring and autumn events on both sides of the Drava river* (*Drava events*). With two informants,

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<sup>2</sup> On the status of Sopje and its economic changes during the Ottoman Empire see Sršan (2001).

<sup>3</sup> From here on, I will use the term *Dravsko proljeće*.

rather than conducting face-to-face interviews, I communicated via email. My interviews extended beyond the events before and during the actual festival. The bridge of friendship between the residents of Sopje in the Virovitica-Podravina County and the Croatian minority in the Hungarian region of Podravina is the central idea behind *Dravsko proljeće* and is reflected in festival venues in Sopje and Drávasztára (Starin), in Croatia and Hungary. Unfortunately, I was only able to interview one member of the Hungarian Croatian minority. Consequently, my interpretations of *Dravsko proljeće* deal with the conceptual framework of the two-sided connection reflected in the festival activities, but mainly consider the perspectives of the Sopje residents.<sup>4</sup> This motivated me to reassess the correctness of my interpretations, which may be qualified as limited and hybrid. Limitations certainly arose from the fact that I could not reach some important people involved in the process of organization or connected with the cultural artistic societies from both sides. Hybridity is also reflected in the fact that I needed to draw conclusions relying on other non-oral sources (i.e., social media comments, especially web pages and unattributed articles). The difficulty of my research position – as I have realized, and as I have been warned by one of my informants – is that I never lived in Sopje or, for that matter, experienced *Dravsko proljeće* completely and bodily from its official beginning in 2007<sup>5</sup> (I experienced the festival in Drávasztára in 2014). Yet I believe that my personal history with the place and people who are, as it turned out later, involved within the folklore festival and the materials that I could access – video recordings of the events of the *Dravsko proljeće*, recorded by Željko Felbar, the owner of the former local radio station in Slatina,<sup>6</sup> and materials on Sopje and the activities of the Cultural Artistic Society showing performances at folklore festivals stored in the archive of the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb<sup>7</sup> – constitute a good foundation. The thickness of my interpretations and descriptions are complemented and juxtaposed by the dynamic testimonies of my informants.<sup>8</sup> In this article I discuss *Dravsko proljeće* as a product of, at least, two lines of ideas. The first is based on striv-

<sup>4</sup> I experienced *Dravsko proljeće* in Sopje in 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Although I am quite familiar with the important loci (festival venues) of *Dravsko proljeće*, my knowledge of their significance for the place and the people did not seem to correspond with their actual significance within the festival.

<sup>6</sup> One part of the material is available on the Felbar Studio *YouTube* channel. See <https://www.youtube.com/user/felbarstudio> (accessed 30 December 2017).

<sup>7</sup> All videos were recorded by Naila Ceribašić at different folklore festivals: IEF video 290 (*20. Miholjačko sijelo/20th Folklore Festival Miholjačko sijelo*, Donji Miholjac, 1994), IEF video 354 (*21. Miholjačko sijelo/21st Folklore Festival Miholjačko sijelo*, Donji Miholjac, 1995), IEF video 373 (*27th Đakovački vezovi*, 1995), IEF video 416 (*Bogdanovačke folklorne večeri/Bogdanovac Folklore Evenings: Povratak/A return 1996 – 3. izvorna smotra folklorne, Slatina/3rd Authentic Folklore Festival, Slatina*, 1996), IEF video 417 (*Bogdanovačke folklorne večeri/Bogdanovac Folklore Evenings: Povratak/A return 1996 – 3. izvorna smotra folklorne, Slatina/3rd Authentic Folklore Festival, Slatina*, 1996), IEF video 430 (*30. međunarodna smotra folklorne, Zagreb*, 1996), IEF video 527 (*23. Miholjačko sijelo/23rd Folklore Festival Miholjačko sijelo*, Donji Miholjac, 1997), IEF video 538 (*Druga slatinska smotra folklorne/2nd Folklore Festival in Slatina*, Susret s članovima KUD-a "Podravac" iz Sopja/Meeting with the members of the Podravac Cultural Artistic Society, 1996), IEF video 539 (Susret s članovima KUD-a "Podravac iz Sopja" – dodatak/Meeting with the members of the Podravac Cultural Artistic Society, 1996 – addition), IEF video 1176 (VHS-C) (*22. Miholjačko sijelo/22nd Folklore Festival Miholjačko sijelo* in Donji Miholjac, 1996, second part).

<sup>8</sup> I use initials to represent the identities of my informants.

ing for a “better past” and, the second reflects the current trends in economic – (local, regional and European) – and (socio)political beliefs.

## FROM THE BRIDGE OF FRIENDSHIP, *DRAVSKO PROLJEĆE* AND BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION OVER DRAVA TOWARD A CULTURAL BRIDGE?: AN ATTEMPT TO DECONSTRUCT (LATENT) FESTIVAL DISCOURSES

At the time of writing, *Dravsko proljeće* is a decade-old local folklore festival.<sup>9</sup> The first *Dravsko proljeće* was held in Lakócsa (Lukovišće) and Drávasztára, Hungary, on April 13 and 14, and in Sopje, Croatia, on April 15, 2007. The idea of the festival rests on a holding the festival in two places, on both banks of the river Drava, the Croatian and the Hungarian bank, as well as on it taking part in spring, if possible, on the Octave of Easter.<sup>10</sup> *Dravsko proljeće* has a typical sequence of events for a Croatian folklore festival – a catholic service,<sup>11</sup> a street procession of cultural artistic societies,<sup>12</sup> performances by cultural artistic

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<sup>9</sup> Discussions of the notion of *festival* mainly focus on the difficulties of defining it (Abrahams 1987; Antić 1974; Falassi 1987 and 1997; Getz 2008; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998; Picard and Robinson 2006; Richards and Palmer 2010; Stoeltje 1983; Young et al. 2001). Petra Kelemen and Nevena Škrbić Alempijević proposed a definition which allows large public events to be called festivals. At its core variable and fluid, the definition provides further answers to the phenomenon of the festival (Kelemen and Škrbić Alempijević 2012: 47–48). In my field research on the *Dravsko proljeće* folklore festival, the term *festival* did not generate a discussion for at least three reasons. Firstly, many folklore festivals are held today. Secondly, the term is present in the everyday speech of a large number of those who participate in folklore festivals (they nostalgically evoke pleasant moments spent at folklore festivals). Thirdly, cultural artistic societies are a synonym for folklore festivals as the primary medium of representing folk music today. However, in spoken and written/media discourse on *Dravsko proljeće*, the event is presented differently. In the media discourse it is called a cultural event, a (cultural artistic) manifestation, old Croatian tradition days, Croatian heritage days. Spoken discourse and my informants used the term *folklore festival* which I also use throughout the text. Terminological issues on festivals/public event are reconsidered in Kelemen and Škrbić Alempijević (2012: 25).

<sup>10</sup> The idea was, in line with the initiative by the Tanac Cultural Artistic Society from Pécs, to regularly organize a festival on both sides of the Drava, two days in a row, as in 2007. This was achieved only in 2008. Due to financial issues, in 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2017 *Dravsko proljeće* was held in Sopje, and in 2010, 2012, 2014, and in 2016, it was held in Drávasztára. In 2014, because of financial issues the folklore festival was held in May, not respecting the initial time concept.

<sup>11</sup> The catholic service is a particularly important impetus for the participation of the residents of Sopje. The elderly are particularly excited because of the sound of the church organ which is not played at regular Sunday services.

<sup>12</sup> A street procession passes along the main street, King Tomislav Street, from St. Mary Magdalene Church to the statue of St. Florian. Here the procession stops and *kolo* is danced around the statue. After this, the procession returns to the main stage, which is usually set in the *Mjesni dom* (Community Hall), a place where all other major events are also held. When the festival is held in Drávasztára also it follows the same sequence.

societies on the main stage,<sup>13</sup> and informal gatherings after the main performances.<sup>14</sup> However, an interesting feature that distinguishes it from other “quite ordinary local folklore festival(s)” (I. G. in personal communication with the author) is the centuries-old friendship between the residents of Sopje and Podravina Croats, residents of villages and towns in the Hungarian Podravina,<sup>15</sup> which is symbolized through the festival. This symbolism is primarily reflected and revived by boat transport of the festival participants, and sometimes of the audience across the Drava both to and from the Croatian and Hungarian river banks (see figure 1). Additionally, the symbolism continues at the river bank where the first physical contact, an intimate shaking of hands, is solidified through the ritual of eating bread and salt and is commonly blessed by the local priest who says that “salt also symbolizes something permanent. A lasting agreement. [...] that we will always be friends” (the priest of the Sopje Parish, *Dravsko proljeće* 2007) (see figure 2).



Figure 1. Arriving on the Croatian side of the river Drava<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> The choice of participants, both in Sopje and Drávasztára, relies on the friendly connections between the host cultural artistic society and other cultural artistic societies. Alongside the Podravac Society and the Tanac and Baranja Societies from Pécs, the manifestation in Sopje and Drávasztára primarily gathers local or regional cultural artistic societies. For instance, this includes societies such as *Dika* from Slatina, *Matija Gubec* from Donji Miholjac, *Kolo* from Donja Bebrina, *Seljačka sloga* from Bogdanovci, *Virovitica* from Virovitica, *Šokadjia* from Stari Mikanovci, *Drava* from Lakócsa, *Kor(i)jeni* from Felsőszenmárton (Martinci), the Tamburica group *Vizin* from Pécs, the *Biseri Drave* ensemble from Drávasztára, etc. The choice of non-local performers, on the other hand, depends on festival funding. However, the main aim in Sopje is to be attractive. For instance, this includes introducing the performers of the *Biograd na moru* Cultural Artistic Society from the coastal town of Biograd na moru, which performs *klapa* singing or the *Vila Velebita* Cultural Artistic Society from Jasenice who perform *ojkanje*.

<sup>14</sup> The organizers in Sopje argue that this informal part, is as important for the audience as the formal one. Therefore, their aim is to host prominent national, regional or local *tamburica* bands, such as *Najbolji hrvatski tamburaši* or *Suhopoljski tamburaši*.

<sup>15</sup> These villages and towns are Lakócsa, Drávasztára, Potony (Potonja), Felsőszenmárton (Martinci), Drávakeresztúr (Križevci), Szentborbás (Brlobaš), Révfalu (Dravljanci), and Tótújfalu (Novo Selo). The term Podravina Croats determines the Croatian minority in Hungarian Podravina and is a part of the spoken or written discourse on *Dravsko proljeće*. I will, accordingly, use it in the text.

<sup>16</sup> Screenshot from a video of the 2007 *Dravsko proljeće*.



Figure 2. Sharing bread and salt after the priest's speech<sup>17</sup>

The *Dravsko proljeće* folklore festival is based on several relations: the relation between Croatia and Hungary; the relation between the Virovitica-Podravina County, the Baranya County, and the Somogy County; the relation between the left and the right bank of the Drava; the relation between Sopje and places in the Hungarian part of the Podravina region where 5000 Croats live today; and the relation between the Podravac Cultural Artistic Society from Sopje and Croatian cultural artistic societies from Hungary, primarily with the Tanac Cultural Artistic Society from Pécs, the main organizer of the festival alongside the Podravac Society. The reasons for these multiple relations can be interpreted in several ways, referring to the attributes of *Drava* and *proljeće* (spring) within the festival conceptual framework.

Firstly, in terms of the attributes of *Drava*, it may be claimed that the centuries-old relationships between Croatia and Hungary, beginning from the year 1102, and the agreement concluded between Croatian and Hungarian nobility, represent this “timeless relationship”. Here, Drava had a unifying role which officially/politically lasted until 1918. Secondly, from 1918 onwards the Drava river was a natural barrier and a border between Croatia and Hungary (between Sopje and Croatian municipalities in Hungary) that had to be bridged; because the driving distance to two international border crossings over the Drava, in Terezino Polje close to the city of Virovitica and in Donji Miholjac was too far, approximately 80 kilometers. According to some historical resources, interpretations, and my informants, a bridge over the Drava once existed between Sopje in Croatia and Sellye in Hungary.<sup>18</sup> The *Dravsko proljeće* folklore festival, therefore, could serve as an impetus for the revival of these new/old ideas to (re)build the bridge, which consider “apartness” during the 20th century and rapprochement in the 1990s.

<sup>17</sup> Screenshot from a video of the 2007 *Dravsko proljeće*.

<sup>18</sup> Sellye is not a major district as far as the Croatian minority is concerned, but it has the best infrastructure in the region of the Hungarian Podravina, so it could guarantee the success of future development for the whole region. Moreover, the bridge would benefit not only the rural parts of the two Podravinas, but also its urban centres, the city of Slatina near Sopje and Pécs in Hungary.

In 1997 there was a possibility to reconnect Croatia and Hungary. During the Homeland War in Croatia, the connection was their assistance in purchasing arms. It worked well. After that, we came to the idea of constructing a bridge over Drava. And, that idea is very topical at the moment. (I. G. in personal communication with the author)<sup>19</sup>

Thirdly, neighbourly and friendly relations between the Croatian and the Hungarian Podravina, the residents of Sopje and the residents of Lakócsa, Drávasztára, Potony, Felsőszentmárton, Drávakeresztúr, Szentborbás, Révfalu, and Tótújfalu, emotionally recalled by my informants, were the most important motivation for establishing the folklore festival. The remnants of that connection were certainly pilgrimages by the residents of Sopje to Holy Mary in Máriagyúd (Đud) and to Nagyharsány (Haršanj/Aršanj) to buy the cloth to make folk costumes, as well as marriages between Croats and Hungarians, and Hungarian surnames in Sopje.<sup>20</sup> Fourthly, such activities could serve to single out the minority status of Podravina Croats from the other minorities in Hungary.<sup>21</sup> The beginnings of this attitude held by the Sopje residents and the Croat minority in Hungary dates back to 1996, when the priest in the Sopje Parish, Vlado Škrinjarić, encouraged the establishment of a *Little School of Croatian* in Sellye, whose aim was to teach Croatian culture, and thus improve knowledge on it.<sup>22</sup> This initiative, along with the event entitled *Podravske večeri* (Podravina Evenings) held in Sopje in 2001, may have given impetus to the beginning of *Dravsko proljeće* in 2007,<sup>23</sup> because of the need for wider sociocultural recognition of these connections.

Then we, to reinforce the relations between us and the Croats [in Hungary], insisted on this manifestations. With the aim that the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Hungary see those close connections. (I. G. in personal communication with the author)

The importance of all levels of relations mentioned above was a particularly relevant part of spoken discourses of local and regional politicians in *Dravsko proljeće* introductory

<sup>19</sup> The idea is to connect Sopje and Révfalu, not Drávasztára, which is the festival venue.

<sup>20</sup> I became aware of these connections while communicating by email with a representative of the Tanac Cultural Artistic Society. The informant especially emphasized that the origin/family background and the connection with a specific place in Croatia led to increased interest in the Croatian language and tradition, and specific research into these levels of relations.

<sup>21</sup> According to my informant, Hungarians are not a threat to the Croatian minority, Podravina Croats. However, the process of assimilation is extremely strong, and something needs to change. Minority status could be interpreted as the existence of some interest by the youth to cultivate the tradition of their ancestors. On the status of the Croatian minority in general, and Podravina Croats in particular, see Vidmarović (2008).

<sup>22</sup> During the summer holidays, starting in 1996 and a few years after that, children from Sopje and children from the Hungarian Podravina gathered in the Drašković Castle in Sellye, and performed many activities (for instance, they danced Croatian dances, with an emphasis on dances from Sopje) and spoke Croatian.

<sup>23</sup> Since the 1990s, the event entitled *Podravske večeri* is frequently held in Hungarian Podravina. The event usually included performances of the Podravac Cultural Artistic Society from Sopje, the Tanac and Baranja cultural artistic societies from Pécs, other vocal and instrumental groups from the Hungarian Podravina, and the performance of bagpiper Pavo Gadany. In 2001, the event was held in Sopje. It is possible that the idea of two event venues was later copied to *Dravsko proljeće*.

speeches. The belief in the intangibility of the centuries-old connections and friendships between Sopje residents and Podravina Croats in Hungary was redirected to an urgent need for its tangibility that could be achieved through the *Dravsko proljeće* folklore festival.

They [Podravina Croats from Hungary] finally merge with their mother country and want to demonstrate that the river Drava is a link which connects rather than disconnecting. (Z. K. at the opening ceremony of the festival in 2008 in Sopje)

The tangibility of the river Drava as a link between these two communities, therefore, is solely, as it seems, feasible if a bridge is constructed. Moreover, at the same opening ceremony, local authorities were encouraged to announce that “when the bridge is constructed, we would be able to visit each other on foot. To make this dream come true, we need the help of the Croatian and Hungarian leadership” (Đ. D. at the opening ceremony of the festival in 2008 in Sopje).

The attributes of *Drava* within the *Dravsko proljeće* framework showed that geographical and historical closeness certainly supported the establishment of *Dravsko proljeće*. However, shared cultural heritage, as a product of geographical and historical closeness and, consequently, a bridge of friendship between the residents of Sopje and Podravina Croats in Hungary, could form a strong cultural bridge which is, in my opinion, more important than the ideas which strongly emphasize and anticipate the construction of a physical bridge over the Drava river. I find this hypothesis valuable in considering the concept of *proljeće* (spring) in the festival conceptual framework.

The first reference to *proljeće* (spring) within the festival framework is the fact that *Dravsko proljeće* is held in spring; ideally at the Octave of Easter. The second reference is sociocultural, with the spring and traditional Easter rituals of spring, which are held after Lent, signifying the beginning of the dancing season, with an emphasis on *Vuzmeno kolo* (Easter dance) (Čapo Žmegač 1997: 189).<sup>24</sup> In addition to being held in springtime, the festival indeed incorporates *Vuzmeno kolo* as its impetus.<sup>25</sup> However, the festival discourse highlights *Vuzmeno kolo* as “traditionally, [...] theirs not ours, authentic on the other side of the river” (I. G. in personal communication with the author). Therefore *Vuzmeno kolo* is not presented as one could hope for, i.e. as mutual and shared heritage, it is exclusively presented as the traditional dance of Podravina Croats from Hungary.

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<sup>24</sup> The spring period, after Carnival and Lent until Pentecost, includes, in addition to Easter rituals, the rituals of St. George’s Day, May Day, and Pentecost. Easter rituals include rituals before Easter (on Palm Sunday, Holy Saturday, and Easter) and after Easter (Easter Monday and Octave Day of Easter) (Lozica 1990: 141–142).

<sup>25</sup> While comparing and analyzing the repertoire performed at the festival, I noticed that *Vuzmeno kolo*, even though it is presented at the festival framework as *theirs*, is rarely performed. One exception was the 2013 *Dravsko proljeće* in Sopje. *Vuzmeno kolo* and the song *Aj je lijepo u našime kraju* (How beautiful it is in our region) were performed by the Women’s Ensemble *Kor(i)jeni* from Felsőszentmárton. It was an introductory sequence, which was followed by a vocal and instrumental performance of the ensemble with the tamburica band *Podravka* from Felsőszentmárton. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bFawW4w1UUs> (accessed 30 December 2017).



This manifestation [*Dravsko proljeće*] of Podravina Croats in Hungary shows that they are keeping their Croatian origins and national identity, safeguarding the language, customs, ethnographic heritage, and religion. Their hundred-years old *Vuzmeno kolo* on Sunday [...] welcomes spring. (Žarković 2008)

This dichotomy of representation of cultural togetherness within *Dravsko proljeće*, primarily taking into account *their Vuzmeno kolo* and, most of all, the absence of shared musical heritage, encouraged me to talk to the oldest residents of Sopje. There was a strong indication of shared tradition of the *Vuzmeno kolo* between residents of Sopje and Podravina Croats from Hungary. One of my informants indicated it when she remembered dancing with Podravina Croats from Hungary during Easter in the 1950s, in front of the church in Sopje.

I remember how they [Podravina Croats] came here across the border. We danced together. They brought Easter eggs, lovely and colorful. It was really nice to see their folk costumes. (J. R. in personal communication with the author)

Taking into consideration the fact that none of my other informants revealed a musical connection, further research steps and attempts to discover it led me to the literature on *Vuzmeno kolo*. *Vuzmeno kolo* is a dance typical of Podravina Croats in the Hungarian Podravina region. It is structured as a women's circle dance, accompanied by women's *a cappella* singing of Easter songs, and danced in front of the church during the Octave of Easter, from Easter Sunday until the Sunday following Easter (Begovac 1984: 120).<sup>26</sup> The songs that are sung while dancing describe a new beginning, fertility of crops and arable land.<sup>27</sup> According to field research by Ruža Begovac, from 1976 to 1981 the singing of Easter songs and dancing *Vuzmeno kolo* was disappearing.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, Begovac's research examining the lyrics and motives of Easter songs supports a shared tradition between Podravina Croats in Hungary and residents along the Croatian bank of the river Drava, and, possibly, including the residents of Sopje. For instance, Easter songs whose lyrics describe geographical toponyms, such as the Sava river or the Kosovo area, were certainly sung during the migrations of Podravina Croats along the Drava during the 16th century. On the one hand, Podravina Croats might have brought songs from their homeland Croatia. On the other hand, Podravina Croats accepted songs from others during their migrations (Begovac 1984: 122).<sup>29</sup> According to the "theory" on inheriting songs

<sup>26</sup> On the detailed structure of the dance see Franković (2011) or Begovac (1984).

<sup>27</sup> The most popular songs were *Ženio se ban Ivane* (Ban Ivan was getting married), *Igralo je divno kolo* (A lovely kolo was danced), *Urodela pisana jabuka* (A colorful apple bore fruit), *Oj, bosiljak bosilj moj* (Oh, my basil), *Carica se* (The empress), *Ajan gore* (Let's go up), *Šeće se* (She is walking), *Oj ti care livadare* (Oh, you emperor of the meadow) (Begovac 1984: 122).

<sup>28</sup> As a part of the repertoire of the Tanac Cultural Artistic Society, *Vuzmeno kolo* was revived during the 1990s. However, it is not performed at *Dravsko proljeće*.

<sup>29</sup> *Sava se je zamutila* (The river Sava grew dim) is a good example of an Easter song incorporated within the *Vuzmeno kolo*, and, a good example confirming the existence of geographical toponyms as motifs in songs. It was recorded in Lakócsa by Ruža Begovac, Antuš Vizin and József Száva. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOdH6MkXEu8> (accessed 30 December 2017).

from the homeland, an additional fact to be kept in mind is, certainly, that the *Vuzmeno kolo* was part of the Eastern celebration and the dancing season from the 19th century in Međimurje and Podravina (Ivančan 1996, 1989; Čapo Žmegač 1997).<sup>30</sup>

In seeking to reconcile the fact that “folklore knows no boundaries” because “boundaries are for politicians” (J. S. in email communication with the author), and the fact that a real musical connection “officially” does not exist/is not recognized, I continued to compare the repertoire of the Podravac Cultural Artistic Society and Croatian societies from the Hungarian Podravina which performed at *Dravsko proljeće*. I did not find any strong and shared musical connections.<sup>31</sup> However, another possible connection that could be as important as the *Vuzmeno kolo* is a wedding song *Ovila se zlatna žica* (A gold string wound around), which still remains a significant part of Podravac Cultural Artistic Society’s stage performances of the wedding ceremony. Apart from its Sopje version, this song was recorded in Rakitovica (near Donji Miholjac) during the 1980s, in Čađavica (a municipality near Sopje), in Gradina near Virovitica, and in Lakócsa in Hungary during the 1950s (Ceribašić 1990).<sup>32</sup> Therefore, like *Vuzmeno kolo*, this could be a strong proof of memories and shared cultural heritage, but is only part of the non-shared repertoire today, the repertoire of the Podravac Cultural Artistic Society, just like the *Vuzmeno kolo* represents only Podravina Croats.<sup>33</sup>

In conclusion, one level of interpreting *proljeće* (spring) refers to the season when the festival takes place and the *Vuzmeno kolo*, being part of the heritage of Podravina Croats in Hungary. However, the present analysis deepened this interpretation. Further levels of interpretation of the term could include a revival of the old and “timeless relationship” between the Sopje residents and Podravina Croats by raising awareness about the *real bridge of culture and shared past* through *Vuzmeno kolo* and/or the song *Ovila se zlatna žica*.<sup>34</sup> This could certainly strengthen the (frail) conceptual framework of the *Dravsko proljeće* folklore festival and could be, in my opinion – which is in (latent) disagreement with some of my informants – more important than the proposed construction of the

<sup>30</sup> For instance, *Vuzmeno kolo* is a local folklore festival held in Virje, Koprivnica-Križevci County. Available at: <https://www.virje.hr/odrzano-tradicionalno-vuzmeno-kolo-u-virju-i-semovcima/> (accessed 30 December 2017).

<sup>31</sup> The repertoire usually included performances of authentic music from the local region of the particular cultural artistic society or standard repertoire from other Croatian regions.

<sup>32</sup> Also see Ceribašić (1991).

<sup>33</sup> In their repertoire, the Tanac Society has the song *Ovila se bela roza oko rastića* (A white vine wrapped around a small oak), which is a version (slightly changed in both text and melodic part) of the song performed by the Podravac Society. However, it is not performed at *Dravsko proljeće* nor as part of the wedding context (as is the case with Podravac’s version).

<sup>34</sup> The festival still relies on non-shared cultural heritage. By contextualizing my research findings within the double ethnomusicological concept, from my current “pure”/academic status I could have an opportunity of an “impure”/applied ethnomusicological intervention by presenting my research findings to my informants. I have not yet been able to share my research with them. Therefore, this could certainly be a new challenge and a research extension in the future. The dichotomy between “pure”/academic and “impure”/applied is borrowed from Hofman (2010).

bridge over Drava, which, even though tirelessly mentioned, remains only a spoken word, embodying the realism of the festival.<sup>35</sup>

## THE PODRAVAC CULTURAL ARTISTIC SOCIETY IN THE CONTEXT OF *DRAVSKO PROLJEĆE*

The first *Dravsko proljeće* in 2007 was obviously very important for both the residents of Sopje and the Podravina Croats in Hungary. Furthermore, from the perspective of my informants, former and current members of the Sopje Cultural Artistic Society, or even those who never joined the society, this event caused emotional reactions to the performance of *their* Podravac after a long period of time. The performance in front of the *Mjesni dom* (Community Hall), the place where the society started its activity in 1981,<sup>36</sup> evoked strong memories on the golden days of the society (and, possibly, announced its revival). In addition to the bridge of friendship and the bridge of culture, which are the festival emblems, as I showed earlier, another significant element is the Podravac Cultural Artistic Society. Almost every conversation I had with my informants for the purpose of the research on *Dravsko proljeće* was oriented toward the past and current activities of the Society, primarily through dissatisfaction and critique,<sup>37</sup> therefore I find it valuable to clarify this reversible relation.

Not only is the Podravac Society a synonym for *Dravsko proljeće*, but it is also its equivalent, moreover, it is the “heart” of Sopje and its residents. I argue that *Dravsko proljeće* is, not disregarding the importance of shared cultural heritage with Podravina Croats from Hungary, a natural continuation of the Society’s former activities. It may be claimed that it was a question of time when Sopje would establish a folklore festival, an event where all the cultural wealth of the municipality would be (re)presented, because Sopje is well known “as a community [...] for its prominent safeguarding of old folk costumes”.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, Sopje has authentic dances and songs and a still present community ideal. Therefore, even before *Dravsko proljeće*, Sopje and its Cultural Artistic Society were an attractive destination for researchers, scholars and amateurs.<sup>39</sup> Initiated

<sup>35</sup> Of course, constructing the bridge over Drava could benefit this part of Croatian and Hungarian Podravina in general economic and transport terms as well as specifically, in terms of the *Dravsko proljeće* festival. Furthermore, one could claim that the statement emphasizing a *real cultural bridge and a bridge of a shared past* is somehow reinterpreted. However, it is a critical observation of spoken and written discourses on *Dravsko proljeće* which made me rethink their resonating momentum in the general festival discourse.

<sup>36</sup> See <http://www.sopje.hr/kultura/> (accessed 30 December 2017).

<sup>37</sup> Even though Podravac, together with the Tanac Cultural Artistic Society, is the organizer of the festival, my informants did not discuss this relation, but rather discussed the past, present and future activities of the Society in Sopje.

<sup>38</sup> See <http://www.sopje.hr/kultura/> (accessed 15 May 2018).

<sup>39</sup> During the 1990s, ethnomusicologist Miroslava Hadžihusejnović-Valašek did extensive research in the Sopje municipality. She shared her experiences from the field during our meeting in June 2014. Furthermore, Dragica Šuvak conducted research on the Sopje folk costume (see Šuvak 1996). To my knowledge,

by Ivan Grgić and Jozo Šantak in 1981, from its inception, the Society started intense activities by safeguarding the authentic tradition of this part of the region with respect to “the work of old ethnographic and ethnological features”.<sup>40</sup>

Considering the fact that they performed at the *great* folklore festivals in Zagreb, Vinkovci or Đakovo, as one of the few cultural artistic societies from the County that did so, Sopje and the Podravac Society gained an enviable local and regional reputation.<sup>41</sup> I believe that this led to the reputation growing into an appropriate and certified heritage of Sopje, with Podravac as its direct representative, creating awareness about the opportunity of the *Dravsko proljeće* folklore festival to be

a step out from everyday life, anonymity, irrelevance, transiency. They [folklore festivals] are and need to be festivities, rituals, structured, stereotyped events which will, relying on ritual, signify the value, importance, pride and then the satisfaction of organizers and participants. (Ceribašić 2003: 20)<sup>42</sup>

A collaboration between local experts on Sopje and Podravac heritage with prominent individuals of the Virovitica-Podravina County has brought about the recognition of the heritage, as well as pride and satisfaction among the organizers and participants. Consequently, recognized by local policy, Sopje was presented as

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amateur research attempts have not been published, but rather form a part of the private archives of researchers.

<sup>40</sup> See <http://www.sopje.hr/kultura/> (accessed 30 December 2017). In my opinion, “the work of old ethnographic and ethnological features” reflects amateur research attempts in Sopje, usually by Sopje residents, and the *applied* work through engagement in different cultural activities in Sopje; for instance, in *Dravsko proljeće*.

<sup>41</sup> The concept of the folklore festival in Croatia, in its beginnings in 1930, was closely linked to politics and played a major role in reviving and/or creating Croatian identity (Ceribašić 2003; Rihtman-Auguštin 2001: 43–54). The enduring legacy of this concept are at least three representatives of the category of *great* festivals of authentic and/or original folklore – the International Folklore Festival which started in 1966, *Vinkovačke jeseni* founded in 1966, and *Đakovački vezovi* founded in 1967 (Ceribašić 2003: 255–257). The legacy also certainly includes regional and local folklore festivals, as well as the tendency to create new places/folklore festivals to present heritage; formal behaviour during the performance and informal behaviour after the performance; how heritage is promoted within cultural artistic societies; and the certificate of excellence earned by the cultural artistic societies for their performances, all of which are of crucial importance today for the continuation of the activity of societies (Vitez and Bagur 2008: 27; Zebec 2008: 46). Today’s understanding of folklore festivals in Croatia is certainly based on the continuity with the past as a product of the present (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 149). The evocation of the past through praises by experts or street processions are oftentimes a pathway towards *great* folklore festivals and a suitable interpretative framework of *authenticity/originality* (Ceribašić 2003: 263), as well as strong motivation for local tradition presented by members of every cultural artistic society. However, in the case of Podravac and the current dichotomy in the society, which is based on generational conflicts on the relevance of safeguarding the local heritage, it seems that the concept of *great* folklore festivals serves as, to use Timothy J. Cooley’s phrase, motivation to achieve a “modern ritual” as a concordant relation in between safeguarding and invention (Cooley 1999, 2001) within the new, which together created the *Dravsko proljeće* folklore festival in Sopje.

<sup>42</sup> The most common dichotomy in defining the term *festival* lies between festivals and rituals. The model of a “modern ritual” (Cooley 1999, 2001) with its emphasis on the complementarity of festival and ritual is relevant here, because “rituality fits folklore festivals, and therefore, suits organizers and participants” (Ceribašić 2003: 21; Ceribašić 2003: 20). However, the festival and the ritual could be incompatible because the attribute of festivity signifies pleasure and entertainment, whereas the attribute of ritual symbolizes sacral intimacy (Abrahams 1987; Stoeltje 1983).

a place of people of good will who, using song and dance, present their homeland. [...] This manifestation is proof that a folk spirit lives in the heart and souls of people who, with patriotism and oral tradition of their ancestors, decided to safeguard the most important thing – our customs. It is from this treasure trove of folk wisdom, that we have the most beautiful samples of folk treasures today, as we can see here [he turned around toward the members of the Podravac Society who on stage at the time]. (T. T. at the opening ceremony of the festival in 2008 in Sopje)

The image of Sopje as a place of humble and hard-working people eagerly living and performing their heritage, therefore, is sustained through the activity of the Podravac Society. During my field research – when I interviewed organizers, participants, and the audience – it became apparent that the external idealized image of Sopje and the Podravac Society, as in the introductory speech of the 2008 *Dravsko proljeće*, differs from the internal one I was exposed to. The image that was commended in the speech was the reflection of the pinnacle of the Society's activity in 1996, when it performed at the International Folklore Festival in Zagreb and at the regional folklore festivals in Vinkovci and Đakovo. Accordingly, 1996 was officially the last year of Podravac's active performances and the period from 1996 to 2007 was the period of the Society's inactivity. The reasons for the Society's dissolution in 1996 are not clear, yet some of my informants claimed that the dissolution had been precipitated by the relocation of the local parish priest, Vlado Škrinjarić, to a different parish in 1996.<sup>43</sup> According to my informants, the Cultural Artistic Society should be a place for safeguarding heritage, as it used to be until 1996. It cannot be denied that the Society still safeguards heritage today, as it usually performs as the first cultural artistic society at the *Dravsko proljeće* when it takes place in Sopje, or performs at local feasts, but there is a great lack of enthusiasm and continuity of work.

We will be forgotten because you can not live with one performance per year. And, I don't know, invite 14 or 16 cultural artistic societies, or *klapa* singers, to the folklore festival, and then when you are invited to return it, you are not available. (K. B. in personal communication with the author)

Unavailability primarily refers to the irresponsibility of the younger members of the society who do not cooperate with the older members, and even with the leadership of the Podravac, which is manifested in disrespecting the material property of the society, which consequently undermines the essentiality of the Podravac Cultural Artistic Society for the community as a whole.

The Podravac Cultural Artistic Society educated youth, they bought them instruments [tamburicas], and these youth play at weddings. When we need them, they are not available. We need to go to perform, and they [tamburica players] have a gig, so we can forget the performance. (I. G. in personal communication with the author)

<sup>43</sup> Priest Vlado Škrinjarić was president of the Society from his arrival in Sopje in 1984 until his departure in 1996.

Even though the image of Podravec is quite idealistic for those unique performances at *Dravsko proljeće*, failure to comply with the *authentic* dress code,<sup>44</sup> no strong desire to rehearse (basically there are no rehearsals) and, as a result, the perceived lack of quality in public performances is sometimes implicitly and sometimes explicitly mentioned to younger members by senior active and inactive members of the Society.

I think our singing was more complex than now. More beautiful than now. They could think that an old woman thinks that they [seniors] used to be better. And it is the same in church, singing used to be better. Those who sang beautifully passed away. Everyone in the neighborhood said that Sopje had most beautiful singing. I do not know, I think that they are not able to arrange their voices. (J. R. in personal communication with the author)

Some of my informants claimed that, despite the fact that from 2007 onwards there was one performance per year at *Dravsko proljeće*, this may even seem to be promising in relation to even lesser activity in the period from 1996 to 2007. However, when comparing those periods with the most prolific period until 1996, the situation seems devastating for all the members of the former golden generation and even the majority of residents of Sopje. Some of the members of the golden generation are still involved in the Society's activities and are emotionally struggling with the reality. When they are reconsidering their current engagement in the Society, their experiences of the past and the "legend" of the golden years of the Society's activity, which has remained deeply engraved in their memories, still serve as a strong motivation.

All of this which has been achieved by the Cultural Artistic Society, which means, its reputation, it has been achieved, I think, in the period when priest Vlado Škrinjarić managed the Society. It is in that period that we attended the International Folklore Festival in Zagreb and *Vinkovačke jeseni* and *Đakovački vezovi*. Everything worked well. For me, it was the most beautiful period of the society. (K. B. in personal communication with the author)

And, furthermore

We danced in the Upper Town and on the Ban Jelačić Square [in Zagreb]. And, that was really nice. And, at the Square, all the participants mixed and danced together. We danced *kolo*, I could not tell who was who. It was a beautiful experience. It would be good if our youth could experience that. (K. B. in the personal communication with the author)

Considering the current state and the quality of their performances, at this time, performing at the *great* folklore festivals would be difficult to achieve. The former success of the Cultural Artistic Society was a result of strict rules for joining the society – "one could

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<sup>44</sup> Senior non-active members usually criticize the dress code by claiming that "today's girls, for the performance, should not dress so uniformly. [...] it should be diverse" (M. G. in personal communication with the author).

not easily join Podravac [...] one had to be talented in singing and dancing or playing an instrument. [...] Not everyone can do it” (I. G. in personal communication with the author). Furthermore, fulfilling their responsibilities,<sup>45</sup> together with dedicated work during rehearsals, gave members an opportunity to perform in public, at folklore festivals or other similar events.<sup>46</sup> The lives of the, for the most part, former members – this rarely applied to current members who are, according to the older members, too young to understand or not interested in understanding the relevance of the society and its tradition – are shaped by the Podravac Cultural Artistic Society even today – “I have been a member of the Cultural Artistic Society since I was born” or “if I had not attended a rehearsal, I would have died of shame” (M. G. in personal communication with the author). Being a member of the Podravac Cultural Artistic Society denoted a status and a role in the municipality.

In general, when speaking about the *Dravsko proljeće*, my informants tried to recall and revive the “better past” and the sociocultural aspects of Sopje through the Podravac Cultural Artistic Society as its major synonym. It seems that it is only through the Podravac Cultural Artistic Society that they, mostly senior members, understand *Dravsko proljeće*; and this is not surprising given that the Society has been involved in supporting and organizing this folklore festival. Furthermore, relying on the Podravac Society, there were two perspectives asserted by my informants. The first one was fascination with the successful story which ended in 1996, a story about “a generation” when the members of the society “lived for each other” (B. G. in personal communication with the author). The second one includes unsuccessful and unfortunate attempts of the younger generation to catch up with the seniors. It cannot be denied that *Dravsko proljeće*, because of the festival venue in Sopje and the opening performance by the Podravac Society, are indeed reminiscent of the past. Therefore, accepting the unacceptable, considering the dichotomies in Podravac, results from being bound to the desired past. Is the *Dravsko proljeće* folklore festival a privilege for the Sopje Society because the municipality “owns” the folklore festival or is it a failed reminder of the first generation? Could it be claimed that *Dravsko proljeće* and the current activity of the Podravac Cultural Artistic Society exist due to nostalgia, because “they should not be forgotten” (M. G. in personal communication with the author)? Or is it the case that, if it was not for the *Dravsko proljeće* folklore festival, the Podravac Cultural Artistic Society would no longer exist, and everything would be forgotten?

<sup>45</sup> This meant serving the society or volunteering in regular activities such as preparing costumes, instruments, or cleaning the room for rehearsals in the *Stara škola* (Old School) building in the former primary school in Sopje, or even organizing parties to collect funds to travel to distant places to perform.

<sup>46</sup> Besides folklore festivals as the *real* occasions for public performance, almost all members, or the other members who did not observe the *rules* or could not perform at the current folklore festival for some other reason, usually performed at feasts in Sopje – St. Florian’s feast in May, St. Vitus’s feast in June or St. Mary Magdalene’s feast in July – or in the neighboring municipalities.

## “OUR HUNGARIANS CAME – HELLO, CROATS”:<sup>47</sup> DRAVSKO PROLJEĆE AS A LOCAL, REGIONAL OR EUROPEAN EXHIBIT?

Since 2007, *Dravsko proljeće* has become the central event in Sopje. It is distinctive because of “spiritual relationships” that it fosters, which are considered the “pinnacle” of the centuries-old friendship between the residents of Sopje and Podravina Croats in Hungary. By safeguarding the heritage of Sopje, the festival also emphasizes safeguarding the identity of Podravina Croats, a Croatian minority in Hungary. Therefore, these “spiritual relationships” and the “pinnacle” of the centuries-old friendship should be manifested in a “material connection”, a bridge constructed over the Drava river.<sup>48</sup> It seems to me that the festival culminated, including all the mentioned elements, in 2013 in Sopje, which was, perhaps, its most significant edition as yet – the performances of the cultural artistic societies were held in the renovated *Mjesni dom* (Community Hall), and financial resources allowed for 15 cultural artistic societies to participate at the festival (for details on the participants from 2007 to 2014 see figure 3). The pomp surrounding the festival in 2013 motivated local and regional politicians to be even more active and more visible at the festival, perhaps because the festival was also supported by the European Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) and marked by Croatian accession to the European Union (EU).

Events that lead towards the culmination of the festival in 2013 in Sopje, and the IPA and the significance of the EU, can be traced back to 2009 when, in the introductory part of the *Dravsko proljeće* in Sopje, the festival host announced that “the manifestation, [...] bearing in mind its uniqueness and tradition and regional significance, is included in [...] *The Master Plan of Tourism of the Virovitica-Podravina County from 2009 to 2019*.”<sup>49</sup> In fact, the history of the *Master Plan* of the Virovitica-Podravina County dates back to 2006, when a project on the *Development Strategy of the Virovitica-Podravina County* was started. Its aim was to (re)establish tourism potential of the County which was, compared with other Croatian counties, below capacity. The *Development Strategy* of the County was, therefore, a basis for the *Master Plan*. The tourism potential of the Virovitica-Podravina County was justified as being “a unique juncture of Slavonija and Podravina, surrounded by Bilogora and Papuk hills and the Drava river, [that] guarantees a unique tourism experience to all potential and current tourists in the County” (*Master Plan* 2009: 2). The river Drava was one of the considerable potentials, not only because of its recreational component, and hunting or fishing but also thanks to its cultural heritage because

<sup>47</sup> J. S. in e-mail communication with the author. The statement is written in the context of a centuries-old friendship between the residents of Sopje and Podravina Croats in Hungary.

<sup>48</sup> “Spiritual relationships”, the “pinnacle” of the centuries-old friendship between the residents of Sopje and Podravina Croats in Hungary, and “material connection” are phrases which were part of the introductory speeches of eminent local and regional politicians at the *Dravsko proljeće* opening ceremonies.

<sup>49</sup> The PDF of the document is available at: <http://www.vpz.com.hr/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Master-plan-turizma-VPZ.pdf> (accessed 30 December 2017).



along the river Drava there is [...] material and spiritual heritage of the Sopje area which is represented by traditional architecture, tools and equipment, folk costumes and jewelry, a way of life, customs and folklore through song, dance and oral tradition which is a basis for tourism development in the municipality. (*Master Plan 2009: 21*)

*Dravsko proljeće* is described as

a manifestation which takes place every year on the Octave of Easter or the Saturday before, [and] is held in Sopje and Drávasztára (Hungary) when folklore troupes gather for two days. The first day they gather in Sopje, the second in Drávasztára, across the Drava. Every year on Sunday boats transport participants to the other side, and this testifies to how Drava connects rather than disconnects. Here, at the two river banks, in two countries, one nation meets – Croats – with their friends, Croatian is spoken here, and cultural treasure which has been created over centuries is kept here. (*Master Plan 2009: 34*)

Accordingly, relying on the extensive analysis in the *Master Plan*, *Dravsko proljeće* could be the County's strength in the future (*Master Plan 2009: 49*). It is also interesting to analyze the *Master Plan* tourist profile made by the Institute for Tourism in Zagreb in 2007 and to see its correspondence with the case made by the Virovitica-Podravina County, which lists *Dravsko proljeće* as its strength. Generally, a potential tourist, who could visit the County, is a highly educated person and a member of a younger generation, in her/his thirties, and comes from Zagreb or other counties in Slavonija, and is interested in cultural and historical heritage and in nature (*Master Plan 2009: 45*). If this is applied to *Dravsko proljeće*, according to my informants, such tourists do not visit Sopje. Its primary "tourists" are the elderly residents of Sopje or the neighboring municipalities. However, the idea of including *Dravsko proljeće* in the Virovitica-Podravina County's ten-year plan encouraged the residents of Sopje to undertake further activities. One of the most important ideas was to establish a tourist board in Sopje which, together with the ethno-association *Podravski vez*, founded in 2009,<sup>50</sup> could increase the tourism potential of Sopje and *Dravsko proljeće*. I assume that, because of several tourist boards that exist in the County, with a main regional one in Virovitica, and local ones in Virovitica, Slatina, Orahovica, Pitomača, and Čačinci, another one tourist board office in Sopje seemed profitless and expensive. Therefore, the idea never came to fruition and *Dravsko proljeće*, with respect to the higher local and regional perspective, has not yet become a desirable tourist destination in the region.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Even today the members of the association are not as active as they could be.

<sup>51</sup> The tourist perspective of Sopje and *Dravsko proljeće* was also revealed in January 2013 when the cover of the official tourist brochure of the County, entitled "Kaj i što" (two versions of the word meaning 'what', characteristic of two regional dialects spoken in the county), was illustrated with the Sopje folk costume.

Drávasztára	Sopje
April 14, 2007: the Biseri Drave Ensemble (Drávasztára), Kolo Cultural Artistic Society (Donja Bebrina), Podravac Cultural Artistic Society (Sopje), Tanac Cultural Artistic Society (Pécs), Seljačka sloga Cultural Artistic Society (Turanovac), Elizabeta Cultural Artistic Society (Jalžabet) [According to the information I collected, the same cultural artistic societies performed in Lakócsa and Drávasztára]	April 15, 2007: Biseri Drave Ensemble (Starin), Kolo Cultural Artistic Society (Donja Bebrina), Podravac Cultural Artistic Society (Sopje), Tanac Cultural Artistic Society (Pécs), Seljačka sloga Cultural Artistic Society (Turanovac)
March 30, 2008: Podravac Cultural Artistic Society (Sopje), Dika Cultural Artistic Society (Slatina), Matija Gubec Cultural Artistic Society (Donji Miholjac), Seljačka sloga Cultural Artistic Society (Turanovac), Matija Gubec Cultural Artistic Society (Gornja Stubica), Kolo Cultural Artistic Society (Donja Bebrina), Virovitica Cultural Artistic Society (Virovitica), Kor(i)jeni Cultural Artistic Society (Felsőszentmárton), Šokadija Cultural Artistic Society (Stari Mikanovci), Biser Slavonije Cultural Artistic Society (Beničanci), Baranja Cultural Artistic Society (Pécs), Drava Cultural Artistic Society (Lakócsa), Ladislav Matušek Cultural Artistic Society (Kukin), Biseri Drave Ensemble (Drávasztára)	March 29, 2008: Podravac Cultural Artistic Society (Sopje), Dika Cultural Artistic Society (Slatina), Matija Gubec Cultural Artistic Society (Donji Miholjac), Seljačka sloga Cultural Artistic Society (Turanovac), Antun Gustav Matoš Cultural Artistic Society (Čačinci), Matija Gubec Cultural Artistic Society (Gornja Stubica), Kolo Cultural Artistic Society (Donja Bebrina), Virovitica Cultural Artistic Society (Virovitica), Kor(i)jeni Cultural Artistic Society (Felsőszentmárton), Šokadija Cultural Artistic Society (Stari Mikanovci), Biseri Slavonije Cultural Artistic Society (Beničanci), Baranja Cultural Artistic Society (Pečuh)
	April 18, 2009: Podravac Cultural Artistic Society (Sopje), Seljačka sloga Cultural Artistic Society (Bogdanovci), Crkvari Cultural Artistic Society (Crkvari), Kolo Cultural Artistic Society (Donja Bebrina), Gradina Cultural Artistic Society (Gradina), Dr. Franjo Tuđman Society (Grubišno Polje), Horvati Cultural Artistic Society (Horvati), Graničar Cultural Artistic Society (Križ), Vila Velebita Cultural Artistic Society (Jasenice), Matica Slovačka Cultural Artistic Society (Miljevci), Sv. Mihovil Cultural Artistic Society (Poljana), Lakócsa Cultural Artistic Society (Lakócsa), Kor(i)jeni Women's Singing Society (Felsőszentmárton), Biseri Drave Ensemble (Drávasztára)
May 15, 2010: Podravac Cultural Artistic Society (Sopje), Drava Cultural Artistic Society (Lakócsa), Podravina Cultural Artistic Society (Barcs), Kor(i)jeni Cultural Artistic Society (Felsőszentmárton), Biseri Drave Ensemble (Drávasztára), Vizin Tamburica Band (Pécs)	
	April 30, 2011: Podravac Cultural Artistic Society (Sopje), Suhopolje Cultural Artistic Society (Suhopolje), Podravina Cultural Artistic Society (Barcs), Biseri Drave Ensemble (Drávasztára), Kor(i)jeni Women's Singing Society (Felsőszentmárton), Felsőszentmárton Cultural Artistic Society (Felsőszentmárton), Drava Cultural Artistic Society (Lakócsa), Sloga Cultural Artistic Society (Sikirevci), Čačinci Cultural Artistic Society (Čačinci), Šokadija Cultural Artistic Society (Stari Mikanovci)
April 28, 2012: Podravac Cultural Artistic Society (Sopje), Plješivica Authentic Folklore Group from Lika (Zagreb), Dr. Franjo Tuđman Society (Grubišno Polje), Suhopolje Cultural Artistic Society (Suhopolje), Biseri Drave Ensemble (Drávasztára), Kor(i)jeni Cultural Artistic Society (Felsőszentmárton), Drava Cultural Artistic Society (Lakócsa), Čačinci Cultural Artistic Society (Čačinci), Podravina Cultural Artistic Society (Barcs), Vizin Tamburica Band (Pécs), Šokadija Cultural Artistic Society (Stari Mikanovci)	
	April 6, 2013: Podravac Cultural Artistic Society (Sopje), Kor(i)jeni Women's Singing Society (Felsőszentmárton), Jasen Cultural Artistic Society (Šaptinovci), Podravina Cultural Artistic Society (Barcs), Drava Cultural Artistic Society (Lakócsa), Croatian Cultural Artistic Society <i>Perušić</i> (Perušić), Biseri Drave Ensemble (Drávasztára), Plješivica Authentic Folklore Group from Lika (Zagreb), Biograd na moru Klapa (Biograd na moru), Hajdenjaki Croatian Folklore Group (Gradišće), Dika Cultural Artistic Society (Slatina), Sv. Ante Cultural Artistic Society (Danilo Kraljice), Matica Slovačka Cultural Artistic Society (Miljevci), Podravina Cultural Artistic Society (Čadavica), Tanac Cultural Artistic Society "Tanac" (Pécs)
May 17, 2014: Podravac Cultural Artistic Society (Sopje), Podravina Cultural Artistic Society (Čadavica), Baranja Cultural Artistic Society (Pécs), Biseri Drave Ensemble (Drávasztára)	

Figure 3. A list of participants at *Dravsko proljeće* from 2007 to 2014<sup>52</sup><sup>52</sup> Cultural artistic societies are listed in the order they performed at the festival.

It is quite clear that this folklore festival has become an ideal resource for the local and regional tourism strategy, certainly because the local heritage is strengthened by a sign of cross-border collaboration.<sup>53</sup> On the one hand, the local and regional tourism strategy did not work as expected, but on the other, *Dravsko proljeće* attracted full attention in the context of cross-border collaboration.<sup>54</sup>

One category of significant Croatian and Hungarian cross-border collaboration started in 2002.<sup>55</sup> At that point, mostly initiated by local politicians, temporary funding supported different cross-border activities.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, from January 2007 the IPA I 2007–2013 project started, which indicated an official and even more significant cross-border collaboration between Croatia and Hungary.<sup>57</sup> IPA I appeared as a set of EU programmes and financial support that replaced former projects which supported candidate countries. The aim of IPA I funds was to increase resources of candidate countries, which would result in modernization and development. IPA I consisted of five components: (1) transition assistance and institution building, (2) cross-border cooperation (with potential candidates and EU members states), (3) regional development, (4) human resources development, (5) and rural development.<sup>58</sup> Croatia (as a candidate member in the period from 2007 to 2013) and Hungary (as an EU member since 2004) participated in the category of cross-border cooperation. The main actors of the cooperation were Međimurje County, Koprivnica-Križevci County, Virovitica-Podravina County, and Osijek-Baranja County in Croatia and Zala, Somogy, and Barany Counties in Hungary (Varaždin County, Bjelovar-

<sup>53</sup> Local heritage and the tourism industry are tools of globalization imbued with the common heritage of humanity. Sometimes they are also politicized and the reciprocity of the local and the global strengthens social dialogue (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 151; Picard and Robinson 2006: 13). Politicization is evident in *Dravsko proljeće*, especially in the introductory speeches of eminent local and regional politicians, as well as in social dialogue and “harmonious” sociocultural satisfaction, especially when the festival was included in the *Master Plan* in 2009, emphasizing that it has the potential to attract a great number of tourists from all over the region.

<sup>54</sup> In the *Dravsko proljeće* discourse there is a shift from the bridge of friendship to bridge construction over the Drava. To understand it, I consider the sustainability/viability of the folklore festival using Owe Ronström’s ideas on three economies responsible for successful festival consumption (Ronström 2001: 60–62). Firstly, “symbolism economy” is represented here through the conceptual framework and the cultural capital of *Dravsko proljeće*. Secondly, *Dravsko proljeće* and the Podravac Cultural Artistic Society are connected to “attention economy” because “the only goal is to attract attention, and, because of the bridge over Drava” (I. G. in personal communication with the author). Thirdly, the combination of the first two economies has managed to achieve “monetary economy” which aims to “build a bridge” because “surely this manifestation is precious and can be a recognizable exhibit of the Virovitica-Podravina County” (A. T. in email communication with the author). This transformation of “local colors” (Greenwood 1977: 130) and the image of Sopje through the Podravac Cultural Artistic Society as a mediator and the notion of a shared past with Podravina Croats from Hungary as enacted in *Dravsko proljeće*, has been recognized by local, regional, and even European policy.

<sup>55</sup> Collaboration between Sopje and Drávasztára officially began in 2002, one year after *Podravske večeri* was held in Sopje.

<sup>56</sup> For further details see [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/croatia/ipa/hr\\_op\\_final\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/croatia/ipa/hr_op_final_en.pdf) (accessed 30 December 2017).

<sup>57</sup> IPA I 2007 – 2013 was replaced by IPA II 2014 – 2020.

<sup>58</sup> For further information see [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/instruments/overview\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/instruments/overview_en) or [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/funding/ipa/how/](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/funding/ipa/how/) (accessed 30 December 2017).

Bilogora County, Požega-Slavonija County, and Vukovar-Srijem County developed interest in the cooperation, and subsequently joined it).<sup>59</sup> The IPA I project and cross-border cooperation in this part of Europe came as a result of previous projects in cross-border areas across Europe. Generally, cross-border areas have great potential for creating long-term collaboration by means of *European cohesion* (Stange, in Autissier 2009: 75). *European cohesion* is achieved by presenting neglected and isolated cross-border areas (i.e., poor road infrastructure and economy)<sup>60</sup> through cultural projects that focus on shared memories of mutual past or national heritage. These projects mainly take place as public events, i.e. festivals. The main intention of cross-border projects is to actively involve the local population and interpret the border not as a place of disunity but rather as a place of unity and friendship. Strong tradition of cross-border collaboration started in 1958 at the Dutch-German border and continued to spread to other areas of Western Europe. From 2000 onwards, mutual cross-border projects spread all over Europe, with emphasis on eastern parts (Autissier 2009: 78; Jelinčić 2006).

Comparing it with the IPA I context, *Dravsko proljeće* certainly took place “at a historically favorable period” (Z. K. at the opening ceremony of the 2007 festival in Sopje). Four years after its foundation, in 2011, the festival organizers invited the Agency for Regional Development of the Virovitica-Podravina County (VIDRA) to participate in project writing and competing for IPA I funding.<sup>61</sup> The project start date was April 28, 2011 (two days before the festival in Sopje) and the end date was March 28, 2012.<sup>62</sup> The lead beneficiary of the project entitled *Spring and autumn events both side of the Drava river (Drava events)* was the Sopje municipality in Croatia, and Drávasztára in Hungary was the project partner. The project was officially announced at *Dravsko proljeće* in 2011 in Sopje.

We started this manifestation [...] with a heart, a lot of will, and a lack of money, as it is today. But, we are persistent and came where we are now, to celebrate this jubilee year and, eventually, to be financed by the EU. I am honored to have here with us our dear guests who came across the Drava river, as usual, and that their parliamentary representative, who promised me last year at the river Drava bank, when we were going there, that he would arrive for this year *Dravsko proljeće*. So, like he promised, he is here. (J. G. in 2011 *Dravsko proljeće* in Sopje)

Even though the expected level of achievement, i.e. the construction of the bridge over the Drava which was favored since 2007, was not fulfilled, it could be argued that it was gradually replaced by EU cross-border cooperation and funding as the peak of the festival conceptual framework. Consequently, European recognition and financial support was a notable suc-

<sup>59</sup> See p. 7, [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/croatia/ipa/hu-hr\\_op\\_final\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/croatia/ipa/hu-hr_op_final_en.pdf) (accessed 29 December 2017).

<sup>60</sup> In the case of Sopje, poor infrastructure and economy is primarily manifested in poor traffic connections with the nearby Slatina (including poor bus connections and no train station).

<sup>61</sup> The Agency proved to be successful in the case of *Dravsko proljeće* and other projects. In 2011, it was declared the most successful agency in Croatia.

<sup>62</sup> See <https://www.keep.eu/keep/project-ext/36975/Spring%20and%20autumn%20events%20both%20side%20of%20the%20Drava%20river> or <http://www.hu-hr-ipa.com/> (accessed 30 December 2017).

cess for the organizers, performers, and the audience of *Dravsko proljeće*. The purpose of the project was to educate and involve youth in the preservation and transmission of the traditional culture in this cross-border area.<sup>63</sup> The project's main objective was to "organize a sustainable cross-border community which is able to help the approach of two nations in the context of European integrations".<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, the aim of the project was to

bring closer the people living on the two sides of the river Drava and to work on creating a joint European future based on the shared cultural heritage, [therefore] a number of joint cultural events were organised within the project, including the annual Drava Spring [*Dravsko proljeće*] festival, held on both sides of the border. The festival included a cooking competition, a sporting event and a number of music and dance performances. Two venues for cultural events were renovated during the project to serve the communities in their future joint events.<sup>65</sup>

The financial support of 114.998,00 euros was sufficient to take major steps in renovating the festival venues in Sopje and Drávasztára. On the one hand, the Sopje municipality got 65.000,00 euros which were invested in renovating the *Mjesni dom* and the venue for rehearsals of the Podravac Society.<sup>66</sup> Hungarian Drávasztára got 49.998,00 euros which were spent for *Dravsko proljeće* in 2012 and for renovating the *Mađarsko-hrvatski dom* (Hungarian-Croatian Home), on the other.<sup>67</sup> Taking into consideration the attention of the media and of policy makers, which was directed toward *Dravsko proljeće* as an effect of the IPA project, it may be claimed that the tangible – financial and material – achievement (the renovation processes) of *Dravsko proljeće* was a considerable success and signifies the peak of festival ideas. The key to the financial success of this project, therefore, may be that the centuries-old relations between the residents of Sopje and Podravina Croats in Hungary was its *prerequisite*:

[the festival is about] true collaboration and friendship [...] The tradition of *Dravsko proljeće* existed on both river banks. Using IPA funds and the cross-border cooperation programme, the issue of a venue for the Podravac Cultural Artistic Society and the Croatian minority in Hungary were tried to be solved. All of this was one good story. (A. T. in e-mail communication with the author)

<sup>63</sup> I did not collect detailed information concerning the education process. However, considering the Podravac Cultural Artistic Society and the dichotomy between the old and the young, it may be claimed that the project's purpose has not yet been completely achieved.

<sup>64</sup> See <https://www.keep.eu/keep/project-ext/36975/Spring%20and%20autumn%20events%20both-%20side%20of%20the%20Drava%20river> (accessed 30 December 2017).

<sup>65</sup> See p. 129 <http://www.hu-hr-ipa.com/uploads/editors/HU-HR%20IPA%20CBC%20Projects%20booklet%202013.pdf> (accessed 30 December 2017).

<sup>66</sup> After *Podravina evenings* in 2001 and especially after the 2009 *Dravsko proljeće*, when the stage built for the occasion collapsed during the performance of the Vila Velebita Cultural Artistic Society (Jasenice), *Mjesni dom* (Community Hall) was the focal point of change for the upcoming festivals in Sopje (the former primary school, the so called *Stara škola* (Old school), later the place where the Podravac Cultural Artistic Society's was located, was considered part of the *Mjesni dom*).

<sup>67</sup> The final conference was held in July 2012 in Sopje where the project success was publicly presented. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V39j7x0uqdo> (accessed 30 December 2017).

The good story incorporated within the conceptual framework of *Dravsko proljeće*, therefore, received its public recognition.

In 2013, after project completion, there was no empty seat in the audience in *Mjesni dom* (Community Hall). I really could not find a seat, but I was very proud because this was the result of project sustainability, which is a dream of every project manager. It means that the project was genuine, it was written with a purpose and it continues to live. (A. T. in e-mail communication with the author)

From 2007 to 2013 *Dravsko proljeće* went through three levels of metamorphosis. The first was establishing recognizability on the local level – in Sopje in Croatia and Drávasztára in Hungary. The second level, two years later, in 2009, was the inclusion in the Virovitica-Podravina County *Master Plan*, which is when the folklore festival outgrew its local context and tried to obtain regional significance because “this manifestation is certainly precious and can be a recognizable showcase of the Virovitica-Podravina County. Actually, it is one already” (A. T. in e-mail communication with the author). Finally, regional significance transformed into its broadest version possible – i.e. the European level – as the climax of local cooperation was reached when IPA I was officially announced in 2011 during the opening ceremony of *Dravsko proljeće* in Sopje. On the one hand, it may be claimed that, in this way, *Dravsko proljeće* as a local and regional and European event, “abundant with song, dance and food opens borders between communities”<sup>68</sup> and is a

unique model of cross-border collaboration based on true friendship [...] because Europe stimulates the creation of unity across the EU, and this [*Dravsko proljeće*] is an example how two neighboring countries can coexist, by safeguarding traditional heritage and transmitting it to the youth. (A. T. in email communication with the author)

On the other hand, the uniqueness of *Dravsko proljeće* on the local and regional level is viable, even ignoring its lack of tourism potential, if we take into account the broader European context – which sometimes slips out of view – where festivals have already been *tested* as a feasible pattern of cross-border cooperation in other parts of Europe. However, could it be claimed that *Dravsko proljeće* is even more European than local or regional, because, since its beginnings in 2007, it was the first cross-border folklore festival in this part of the Podravina region, because it was included in the IPA I project in 2011, and because, in 2013, the procession of cultural artistic societies in Sopje was held under the European Union flag, and the main performance of cultural artistic societies was held in a building renovated using European funds (see figure 4)? Thus, instead of constructing a bridge over the Drava, *Dravsko proljeće* and its dictum “our Hungarians came – hello, Croats” symbolizes a “grand reunion” and the establishment of *European cohesion* between Sopje residents and Podravina Croats from Hungary. A political and economic reunion, rather than a cultural one.

<sup>68</sup> See p. 129 <http://www.hu-hr-ipa.com/uploads/editors/HU-HR%20IPA%20CBC%20Projects%20booklet%202013.pdf> (accessed 30 December 2017).



Figure 4. Folk Costumes under the EU flag (Šantoši 2013)

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The *Dravsko proljeće* folklore festival was established in 2007 and can be considered a product of the present. However, nearly all of my informants nostalgically invoked the past. Their testimonies about *Dravsko proljeće* present the past from two perspectives. The first past is closely related to the mutual friendship between Sopje residents and Podravina Croats from Hungary through the attributes of *Drava* and *proljeće* (spring), which are directly incorporated into the name and the structural components of the festival itself. The second past is associated with the golden years of the Podravac Cultural Artistic Society even though the Society, as the main synonym of the folklore festival and the guardian of the local heritage, is insufficiently respected in the actions of the majority of its current members, who are not involved in safeguarding the heritage in the way that the older active and inactive members of the Society, and even the residents of Sopje, expect. The intersection and the opposition between these two pasts in *Dravsko proljeće*, therefore, forms one level of discourse about this folklore festival.

*Dravsko proljeće* was established as an intangible “bridge of friendship” between Sopje residents and Podravina Croats from Hungary, which, with time, has grown to become a tangible outcome of a shared past, primarily, towards bridge construction, which may lead from local to regional/tourism and European recognizability. Yet, vividly retold stories of togetherness which should naturally be expected in order to revive mutual cultural influences at the main loci of the folklore festival are not recognized and shared. Could it be that the strong and promising conceptual framework reveals its “weakness” and its dichotomies from the inside? What is the mystery behind the coexistence of the Podravac Cultural Artistic Society and the *Dravsko proljeće* folklore festival?

According to Alessandro Falassi, a festival is defined through the elements of certified traditions and nostalgic revival (Falassi 1987: 1). Both elements could be found in

*Dravsko proljeće*. My informants agreed that Sopje has a certified tradition, which was represented at the *great folklore* festivals. Furthermore, the attempt at nostalgic revival is apparent in the attributes of *Drava* and *proljeće* (spring). Yet the concept of rituality, which plays a major role in defining the notion of a festival, seemed promising in understanding the *Dravsko proljeće* folklore festival and its contradictions. Timothy J. Cooley rethinks festivals as “modern rituals” relying on two elements. The first is described as a symbolic representation of beliefs and objects important for the community, and the second as the ability to transform folklore festival participants (Cooley 1999: 31–51). If we apply Cooley’s ideas to *Dravsko proljeće*, the first element may be reflected in the virtually mythologized relationship of the two Podravina regions, in Croatia and Hungary, and the second in performativity whose aim is to preserve nostalgic memories of older Sopje residents and the audience of the festival in relation to their village and the Podravac Cultural Artistic Society.

When I go out, I wait for the procession. [...] I like it. I simply enjoy it. I am so happy to hear that something is happening. [...] I really love to see something I adore. I am so happy to see the procession and all the *folklores*. (M. G. in personal communication with the author)

Lastly, could it be that the rituality in *Dravsko proljeće* in fact refers to performative transfer of symbolic representations of a bridge of friendship (and a cultural bridge) onto bridge construction over the Drava river as well as of local and regional attributes onto European ones? Is *Dravsko proljeće*, therefore, more of a political, economic and European and IPA ritual than a cultural one?

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## SMOTRA FOLKLORA *DRAVSKO PROLJEĆE* U SOPJU

Iako je politički sustav definirao granicu između Hrvatske i Mađarske, postoji stoljetna povezanost kroz zajednička sjećanja i kulturnu baštinu. Upravo je rijeka Drava postala mjestom takvog društveno-kulturnog dijeljenja, i to naročito između stanovnika Sopja na hrvatskoj obali te podravskih Hrvata na mađarskoj. Početkom dvijetisućitih hrvatska i mađarska kulturno-umjetnička društva na tom području započela su neformalna druženja, a sve je kulminiralo 2007. godine *Dravskim proljećem*, službenim godišnjim dijeljenim događanjem. U ovom radu predstavljam *Dravsko proljeće* kroz pluralizam dihotomija što proizlaze iz perspektive festivalskih aktera, lokalne politike, regionalne konkurentnosti i europske kohezije.

Ključne riječi: Dravsko proljeće (Drávai tavasz), smotra folklor, podravski Hrvati, Sopje