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Croatian Migrant Families: Local Incorporation, Culture, and Identity

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Abstract: So far, Croatian migrant families have been predominantly studied within the scope of theoretical questions oriented toward ethnicity and their role as the guardians of ethnic/national identity. Going beyond the ethnic lens of those studies, the article focuses on an exploration of family structures and the social functioning of wider kinship networks in the migration context as well as an understanding of how migrants conceive of ethnic/national identity. By highlighting the complex entanglements of traditional family patterns (patrilocality, seniority, and gender roles), transnational kinship networks and "a little tradition of ethnic/national identity" held by migrants, this article seeks to establish autonomous research into family processes among Croatian migrants and to make a rapprochement between classical anthropological research of family and kinship and migration studies.

Keywords: migrant families; Croatian diaspora; integration; national identity

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1. Introduction

The microstructural aspects of migrant mobilities are informal social networks created by migrants within the diaspora as a means of coping with migrating to and settling in another country. These informal networks include personal relationships, family and household patterns, friendship and community ties, and mutual assistance in economic and social matters. Such kinship, friendship, and community connections provide social capital and vital resources for individuals and groups settling in a new country (Castles and Miller 2003, p. 27). Ever since emigration began increasing, kinship and friendship connections have been crucial parts of Croatian emigrants' migration networks as part of the process of emigration and that of integrating into a new environment.

Clusters of people in Hoboken, NJ who originated from the island of Susak (Živković 1995) and those from the Gorski Kotar in the Strawberry Hills neighborhood of Kansas City, Kansas, USA (Filipović 1998) are examples of compactly settled Croatian emigrant communities originating from the same area that emerged at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. Since they arrived through family chain migration or assistance from friends and did not speak the language, they had no choice but to make strong connections and live close together in the same neighborhoods in which they followed a "Croatian" way of life (Čizmić 1982, pp. 138–39; Filipović 1998, p. 179). They developed their own social and economic infrastructure that, by the beginning of the twentieth century, sometimes extended transnationally, connecting their local lives with places in the old country. Emigrants from Gorski Kotar who settled in Strawberry Hill started out working in a cannery owned by a man from Ribnik. The owner built his workforce by recruiting workers directly from the Gorski Kotar region. The growing community built a church as a place of worship, opened a school that taught in Croatian, and founded an orphanage for children who had lost their parents during the Spanish Flu. When the Croatian sociolinguist Rudolf Filipović visited Strawberry Hill in the 1970s, he found that the neighborhood was still heavily populated by Croatian emigrants (Filipović 1998). Other dense Croatian communities in the United States, however, disappeared. As

living standards improved and they gained command of the local language, there was no longer a need to maintain the original emigrant communities. Their numbers then dwindled as their residents followed the general American trend of moving to the suburbs in search of a better quality of life (Čizmić 1982; Alba 1998).

During the wave of emigration following World War II, family, friends, and neighbors also played an important role in establishing and maintaining migration networks and in the integration process. After they had established themselves in their new surroundings, migrants sponsored relatives and/or neighbors. Groups of horizontally or vertically connected relatives (extended families) were then formed, leading to concentrations of people originating from the same place or region. For example, in the 1950s, the eldest of twelve siblings from a place in Herzegovina first moved to Toronto and later to the Toronto suburb of Mississauga. He then helped eight of his siblings to emigrate. For years afterward, the man's house served as a shelter and temporary home for newly arrived relatives. They lived with their sponsor and his family until they found their footing and were able to support themselves. With around fifty second-generation descendants, the family had become so big that during Sunday mass at the Mississauga Church of Croatian Martyrs or during dances, "they would fill up a quarter of the porch or hall only with cousins", as a second-generation interlocutor from the family commented with a laugh.

Another extended family in California with roots in Imotski originates from a nuclear family consisting of an emigrant, his wife, and their children. There are now over thirty family members, including children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, who have remained in geographic proximity for over five decades due to a shared family business and a tightly woven network of social and financial ties. All the while, they have maintained close contact with relatives and neighbors in their place of origin, which has provided spouses for younger generations, thereby strengthening and expanding transnational ties among migrants and non-migrants and contact with the ancestral home.

Australia is also not an exception to this trend of forming migrant networks among relatives by both blood and marriage. On the island of Korčula, I met several members of a family from Pupnat whose older relatives had emigrated to Australia in the early 1960s, bringing their siblings with them and later their families. In the next generation, one member married someone from a family originally from Pelješac that had arrived in Sydney in 1958. This new family formed in the diaspora continued to develop within a wider kinship community. In the metropolis of Sydney, they lived close enough to both spouses' parents to help and support one another emotionally and financially, and in some phases, they even worked together in the family business.

These stories undoubtedly demonstrate the important role extended family and relatives played in decisions regarding migration and in emigrants' social networks in their destination countries. The significance of extended family for emigrants is one of the main insights I gained during my research on Croatian emigration. Despite this, little in the existing literature has been written about the effects of chain migration on the formation of family and kinship networks and how they function within the diaspora. Existing research has primarily focused on institutional and organizational forms of emigrant associations and especially on religious and ethnic communities and how they operate within the diaspora, on the role of these communities in local social and economic integration and in maintaining emigrants' ethnic and cultural identities, and on engagement in transnationalism from a distance (emigrants' political and humanitarian engagement during the War of Independence in the 1990s) (Čizmić 1982; Winland 2007; Skrbiš 1999; Colic-Peisker 2008; Winterhagen 2013; Božić 2012). In the rare studies of migrant families, the focus was also ethnically defined and directed at the family as "the basic unit for preserving ethnic elements" (Filipović 1998, p. 179; Živković 1995).

The focus of this paper, however, is an understanding of family structures and dynamics within the diaspora. I am interested in what happens to traditional family patterns (patrilocality, seniority, and gender roles) within the migration context and the role of the family and kin/relatives in the socioeconomic incorporation of emigrants into the areas of settlement. I

also explore the effects of the cross-border (transnational) social networks emigrants establish with non-emigrants in their homeland on the renewal of ethnocultural resources within the migration context. Finally, I will deal with migrant families' conceptions of national identity. By highlighting these complex entanglements, this paper seeks to establish autonomous research into family processes among Croatian emigrants and to join classical anthropological research of family and kinship with migration studies (Brettell 2000).

The paper will analyze Croatian families who emigrated between the 1950s and 1970s to various countries, including Germany, Canada, the United States, and Australia. This emigrant cohort originates primarily from rural areas of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and was motivated by political and/or economic reasons. They were less educated, and therefore, employed as unskilled workers within their host societies. The second generation of migrants achieved secondary or higher education. The material was collected over many years of research into topics related to Croatian emigration using qualitative ethnographic methods, observations, and participation, and by collecting personal and family life stories.

2. Migration and Family Studies

A key theoretical issue and research topic within migration studies has been the integration of migrants into host societies. Researchers had more or less viewed the integration of migrants as a question of assimilation, a one-way process in which emigrants' ethnocultural characteristics disappear and they accept the host country's "core values".[1] In the 1990s, researchers moved away from an understanding of integration as a linear, one-way process in which immigrants merged into a society's overall sociocultural matrix and immigrants' ethnocultural characteristics disappeared. Theorists began instead to find more nuanced and precise formulations of the process of integration.

They revised earlier theoretical suppositions in three ways: They postulated that there were multiple processes of migrant assimilation into different segments of society (segmented assimilation); integration processes were studied locally and integration into migrants' destinations was considered within a context of transnational social spaces (Portes and Zhou 1993; Basch et al. 1994; Glick Schiller et al. 1992; Gidley 2014). The theory of segmented assimilation arose as a result of a study on the descendants of emigrants who came to the United States after 1965. Its authors, Portes and Zhou (1993), found that the new second generation of migrants assimilated into three social segments: the white middle class (which was characteristic for the second generation of European immigrants in the first half of the twentieth century), the lower social classes, or into an emigrant ethnic community. The shift of focus in studies of integration from the level of the nation-state to lower levels, to neighborhoods and communities rather than society as a whole, was another novelty in integration research. It grounds the question of integration within the experience of everyday life (see, for example, Gidley 2014; Smith and Guarnizo 1998). From an empirical perspective, it is clear that migrants' paths of integration lie primarily in the local environment in which they live and work, establish their families, and spend their free time (Čapo 2022).

The third new perspective comes from a transnational paradigm. It places the research focus on the social networks emigrants use to connect with people, organizations, and systems in their places and society of origin (Glick Schiller et al. 1992; Basch et al. 1994). One of the many aspects of transnationalism that has been discussed is how it relates to migrants' integration into the host society. Although there is no general consensus regarding this relationship (Bommes 2005), I am inclined to agree with authors who view integration (referred to as incorporation) as a "multilocal" process that occurs parallelly in several societies and is ongoing rather than liminal, while the local incorporation processes can also be a way for migrants to become incorporated into various institutional networks and identities that operate transnationally and globally (Glick Schiller et al. 2004).[2]

Research into Croatian emigrants followed these paradigms and their changes. The incorporation within ethnic enclaves was recognized as the predominant means of integra-

tion for Croatian emigrants in various parts of the world—from Canada and the United States to Australia—for the earlier migrants of the first half of the twentieth century and for those who emigrated after World War II (Čizmić 1982; Živković 1995; Lalich 2004; Mesarić Žabčić 2010, 2014; Šutalo 2010; Božić 2012; Winland 2007; Colic-Peisker 2008; Sopta 2012; Winterhagen 2013; Jurčević 2016). These studies state that Croatian emigrants coalesced around an ethnic culture within tightly knit enclaves, in which most of their needs for social contact, belonging, religion, and spirituality are met, as well as their need for involvement in cultural and athletic activities. Val Colic-Peisker (2008) describes in detail the "ethnic bubble" and "mental ghetto" inhabited by Croatian emigrants who arrived between the 1950s and 1970s from rural areas and lived relatively isolated from Australian society. For these immigrants, life in the Croatian community in "Little Dalmatia/Croatia" was a substitute for their lost homeland that ensured traditional values and ethnic identity would be passed down. The ethnic enclave also validated the status they achieved in their new surroundings. These emigrants attached great importance to ethnic/national identity and engaged in transnationalism from a distance. This intensified in the 1990s during the creation of the Croatian state (ibid.; Skrbiš 1999; Winland 2007). More educated cohorts of urban emigrants who migrated after the 1980s, however, chose non-ethnic forms of incorporation into Australian society (Colic-Peisker 2008).

The study by Živković (1995) is rooted in emigrant families. The authors looked at the extent to which generations born in the diaspora accepted traditional family values and ethnic identity along with the impact of ethnic identity on the psychological aspects of adaptation among adolescents in the United States and Canada in three Croatian communities with different social characteristics. The authors of this sociologically based study fully outlined the topic of family through questions about ethnic forms of emigrant integration and ethnic/national identity being passed down to younger generations. In other studies, topics involving family are only mentioned in passing and within an ethnic context as part of a general inquiry into the role of women and families in passing on traditions and ethnic identity within the diaspora (Čizmić 1982, p. 397; Filipović 1998).

Literature involving Croatian emigrants was thus "blind" (cf. Segalen 2010) to family and kinship. Moreover, when these were investigated, it was within the scope of theoretical questions oriented toward ethnicity and integration. Families were studied predominantly within their role as the guardians of ethnic/national identity and without an exploration of their structure and function or an understanding of how emigrants conceive of ethnic/national identity.

By distancing myself from the ethnic lens of most of these studies, I will instead deal with emigrant family and kinship networks and what their social functions are in the host society without prejudicing ethnicity as the key dimension in how they operate. My interest lies in what happens to traditional family models and values within the diaspora and the role family and self-perpetuating migrant networks play in migrants' processes of incorporation. I use the individual migrant and his or her family/kinship network as the units of analysis. This introduces social and cultural variables into the analytical approach (Brettell 2000, p. 107).

I follow a definition of migrant families as transnational "families that live some or most of the time separated from each other yet hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely familyhood, even across national borders" (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, p. 2). Maintaining family connections (kinkeeping and "doing family"), parenting (especially long-distance motherhood and parent-child relationships), arranging care for vulnerable individuals (children and the elderly) in transnational families have been some of the more prominent topics in contemporary anthropology and the sociology of migrant families (Nedelcu and Wyss 2020; Mazzucato and Dito 2018; Madianou 2019; Baldassar et al. 2016). Although interesting, these studies are only marginally useful for this paper because they almost exclusively view migrant families as transnational families outside the local context of immigration. The objects of study in this paper, however, are the migrant family within the receiving society, the

adaptation of cultural models from the homeland society in the resettlement process, and the creation of family identity and unity. The transnational social spaces migrant families move within will not be overlooked, but neither will they be the primary focus.

This paper builds on my review chapter on family structures in traditional rural Croatian culture at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries (Čapo Žmegač 2000) and from longitudinal studies of Croatian migrant families in Germany spanning from the 1960s to the present day (Čapo Žmegač 2003, 2007; Čapo 2022). Furthermore, it is a continuation of a thesis regarding the existence of "a little tradition of national identity" among Croatian emigrant families that I formulated with Maria Olujić (Čapo and Olujić 2020). Drawing on the work of the American anthropologist Robert Redfield, we refer to the everyday, informal, and non-systematic conceptions that emigrants—the "ordinary people"—have about national identity as a "little tradition" of national identity. We then contrast this with the "great" conceptions that exist among national ideologues and the political elite. This finding led me to reassess the functioning of migrant families independently from the ethnic enclaves in which they often lived.

The thesis presented by Glick Schiller et al. (2004) that migrant families and ethnic communities in a diaspora represent two different paths of incorporation—the family in the private sphere and ethnic communities in the public—also served as a basis for the analyses presented here. It is well-known that Croatian ethnic communities have created a visible presence in the receiving society's public spaces through their places of worship (Croatian churches) and for socializing (Croatian cultural centers and parishes), and through ethnocultural symbols (dress, folk dances, cuisine) that are emphasized in local ethnic festivals and public events organized by the communities. These present Croats as a separate, ethnically connected social group and have incorporated them into the local society as "public foreigners" (ibid.). As will be shown here, the primary purpose of the family's local efforts at integration was not public visibility or the performance of ethnic identity, but rather the preservation of family unity, local socioeconomic integration, and the transfer of cultural values and the little tradition of national identity.

The story of a Croatian family in California serves as the basis for presenting the material that follows, along with narratives from other Croatian migrant families about their family life in the diaspora. The examples are primarily from the most distant overseas destinations to which entire families emigrated. One example deals with a family that migrated to Germany in the 1960s for economic reasons as gastarbeiter, or guest workers. It was commonly believed that these emigrants to Germany were men who came alone and had left their families behind in their home country. Research into Croatians in Germany, however, showed that emigrant families were not uncommon there and that they were, in fact, their key social networks (Čapo Žmegač 2007; Čapo 2022). All of the data presented here were extracted from numerous individual narratives of one or several members of a migrant family from various generations with whom I have spoken during the twenty-odd years I have spent working with Croatian migrants and returnees.[3]

3. Emigrant Family: Patrilocality, Seniority, Gender Roles

Emigrant narratives show that the family is a key social network for emigrants in the diaspora. In some phases of the family cycle, families shared a common residence, while in others they were divided into separate households but maintained close communication between family members. Within these family circles, they assisted one another in practical matters and provided financial, psychological, social, and emotional support (cf. Smollett 1989). Some families also established their own businesses. Depending on their place of destination, families maintained more or less frequent contact with relatives in their place of origin, which regularly involved them in a transnational social field. From this, new immigrants, spouses, and household help were generated.

The Imotski family in California mentioned in the introduction has been there since the 1970s. The husband/father was the first to arrive with the help of his brother, and two years later he was joined by his wife and their four children, aged two to eleven.[4] The first

years spent finding their footing and securing a livelihood without knowing any English were grueling. After about ten years, the couple opened a business that operated private nursing homes. The business was run by two generations of the family. As the business expanded, the entire extended family prospered. Caring for the elderly was a much-needed service that was in high demand, and the family became very well-incorporated into their place of residence and beyond their family and ethnic circles. Moreover, establishing a family business had consequences for family dynamics and processes that resulted in tight bonds among family members, certain residential patterns, and influence from the oldest generation on decisions regarding the family and the business.

The father/grandfather and mother/grandmother built their influence over their descendants on the basis of their financial prosperity, which they generously shared with their children and grandchildren, and on the authority originating from their position as the oldest members of the family. Respect for elders regardless of gender and multiple generations living and working together were values and practices typical of Croatian villages in the past and could be found in this family. Certain ways the family managed and divided up work were also typical of the traditional division of labor in the Dalmatian hinterlands from where this family originated. Male and female spheres of business and management were divided in Dalmatian villages in the past. Women had the freedom to make decisions within their domain (the private domain), and the men had freedom in theirs (private and public domains). Even though the prevailing ideology was patriarchal, male domination in the private sphere was not absolute: It was subject to control mechanisms, and women exercised their autonomy, standing, and power within the family. A principle of age determined the hierarchy of family members, but age alone did not serve as the sole source of a person's authority within the family. Competence in managing affairs within one's domain was the decisive factor and gave one standing and power/authority within the entire family (Rihtman-Auguštin 1984; Čapo Žmegač 2000).

This Californian Imotski family formed relationships among its members based on these cultural patterns yet with a twist: Due to her better command of English and excellent managerial skills, the wife also took on responsibilities in the public domain. The wife/mother took over running the business and all related communication outside of the family, while the husband remained almost exclusively within the family enclave. He depended on communication in Croatian, so he worked in construction with his sons, building or adapting houses into nursing homes, taking care of repairs around the house, and maintaining the garden. The wife/mother thus became the dominant member of the extended family and exercised her influence over the entire family and over certain decisions made by members of all generations through opinions and advice. Younger family members sometimes teased her or laughed when talking about her propensity for micromanagement, advice, and control. It is clear from this example that an individual's capacity and competence to exercise a certain function, regardless of gender, is what would determine that individual's position in the family. As explained above, this was a typical pattern in Croatian rural communities in the past. Moreover, among women (and sometimes men, albeit more rarely), competence could take precedence over age hierarchy. For example, a capable young woman could be chosen from among the women to run the household.[5]

The family's housing patterns were also based on patterns from their place of origin and were supported by a common business strategy. After they got married, the sons brought their brides to live with them in their mother and father's house according to the traditional practice of patrilocal residence typical of most Croatian regions in the past, in which young, newly married couples lived with the husband's parents. "This was the tradition in Imotski. You bring your wife home with you", said the son. During some phases of the family/business cycle, three generations of families would live together until a married couple from the children's generation moved to a new home where another branch of the family business would be established. Newly acquired properties would spread out in a network throughout the same area and often near one another. Not a single

family member moved out of the immediate area where they had first settled, and they instead created a fixed and tightly knit family community.

In addition to helping out with the family business, the pattern of patrilocal residence for newly married couples in the second generation enabled young people to save money when they were first starting out as a married couple/new family. There was also an additional advantage: Since the new partners had come to the United States from Croatia, living in their spouse's home alleviated some of the effects of moving to a new country and not speaking English. There were some other consequences, as well. This meant that there were also other family members in addition to the founding member (the father) who did not speak English well. Croatian was spoken within the family, and when dealing with matters outside the home, those with a weaker command of English could rely on members who were more fluent. For the father/grandfather and the new son- and daughters-in-law, the family served as a safe and protective environment within the receiving society. It offered them a familiar linguistic milieu, emotional support, and necessary/useful information about how the destination society functioned.

4. Cohabitation: An 'Ethnic Syndrome'

During a conversation with two second-generation Canadian-Croatian women born and raised in Mississauga, I learned that they shared similar experiences of living for many years with parents or relatives.[6] One of them came from the extended family mentioned in the introduction. Although they appreciated the "strong unconditionality" within family relationships and the family connection that stems from this unconditionality, these women did not idealize the family communities in Mississauga in which they had spent their youth. A female interlocutor from the Herzegovinian family in which the father had sponsored a large number of his siblings criticized the obligation the father had imposed on his wife and children to house his newly arrived relatives. She identified this temporary cohabitation, the father's authority, and adult children living with their parents as "a cultural thing". Living with her parents for so long—even during college and beyond—was "a weird blessing and curse at the same time. Because there's no question about financing. There's no question about even asking them to pay rent. No. You're well taken care of, but you're tightly under their control", she commented with a laugh. Another claimed that her younger sister was the "most well-rounded because she left the house at twenty".

Even in the mid-1990s, the parents would not accept their adult children living on their own independently. These comments were also found among the younger generations I spoke to in Germany. An interlocutor from Melbourne referred to adult children living with their parents as "an ethnic syndrome".[7] It was completely atypical behavior for Australian society when she was growing up in the 1970s and 1980s. Nevertheless, she and another interlocutor noted that these patterns were changing according to what the female interlocutor from Melbourne called a "liberalization of parental mentality".

5. The Transnational Setting of Emigrant Family

One of the consequences of these years-long processes of bringing over large numbers of relatives and recruiting spouses (for both the second and third generation of migrants) from the homeland to the immigration country was the continual reintroduction of the homeland's cultural values and behavioral patterns (cohabitation, respect for elders, value of family) into the diaspora, which were then transgenerationally reproduced. This can be referred to as "the family's transnational moral economy" (Levitt 2009, p. 1228). It is a practice that prioritizes the stability and functioning of the migrant family by ensuring it is reproduced in the diaspora socially, culturally, and ethnically.

In all of the families mentioned so far, parents never explicitly demanded—only advised—their children to marry Croats, but it was nevertheless expected. "Marry your own" was the advice the father/grandfather gave his children and grandchildren and so far, all of the children in the second and third generations of the Californian Imotski family have done so. Members of each generation found spouses in the homeland. They practiced

local endogamy from a distance (marrying partners from the same town or county), which is yet another traditional cultural pattern. They also implemented this practice within a transnational social field by bringing over partners from their place of origin or from the wider region to their place of destination in the United States. For all intents and purposes, they applied a model of finding a spouse described a century ago by Silvestar Kutleša (1993) in a monograph about traditions practiced in and around Imotski: "An inhabitant of Runovići [a village near the town of Imotski] who lives in America will first and foremost seek to marry a woman from his village. If he cannot find one, he will seek one out in the area around Imotski, and then in Dalmatia. If he still cannot find one, then he will look for a *Rvatica* [a Croatian]. If that proves to be impossible, he will have no choice but to find a wife of a different ethnicity, yet who is at least of the same faith".

A Bosnian Croat family in Germany used their regular transnational contact with Bosnia for other purposes.[8] After one brother emigrated in the late 1960s, a total of five siblings from one family from Bosanska Posavina followed him to Munich, where they still live, along with their descendants. In this case, geographical proximity between the home and host countries allowed some family members to more or less live in Bosnia or Croatia while spending shorter or longer periods of time in Germany, during which they stayed with their siblings. Thus, this family long functioned as a truly transnational family, and it enabled an ongoing exchange of services among siblings living in two countries. At one point after one of the emigrant brothers was widowed with two small children, he arranged for one of his sisters to come over from Bosnia. She was granted an entrance visa and the possibility of temporary residence based on her brother's need for a caretaker for his children. The sister lived with him for years and looked after his children. Since she felt it was her duty, she took care of her brother's household and helped raise his children without remuneration, while also cleaning houses for other families. She eventually managed to obtain permanent residence in Germany and moved away from her brother and his, by then, grown children.

This emigrant's inability to secure permanent residence in Germany independently of her role as caretaker for her brother's children resulted in their many years of cohabitation, which was not without tension and conflict between brother and sister. In this relationship, the traditional patriarchal order of their place of origin and the subordination of women to men took center stage. The sister was in a precarious situation and was unable to obtain a residence permit in Germany outside of the caretaking arrangement, so she accepted long-term unpaid work running her brother's household and caring for his children. Not a single emigrant couple I met in Germany among emigrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina or Croatia, had such an unequal interpersonal relationship. In fact, as the example of the family in California demonstrates, not only did women/wives exercise autonomy in their actions and decision-making, but they were also the dominant members of the family due to their often better command of the language, competence in business, and contributions to the household finances.

6. Family as an All-Encompassing Identity and Path of Incorporation

These practices of cohabitation or residing in close proximity to one another, transnational recruitment of partners and assistance for the family, a family business, and informal agreements about childcare within families resolved crucial existential issues and provided individuals with feelings of safety and security in the host society. It can, therefore, be argued that families have been crucial and primary *paths of local incorporation* for migrants. At the same time, close and continuous family contact resulted in the transgenerational transfer of homeland values and patterns to the younger generations. Within the family, young people were enculturated into the homeland's kinship and generational relationships as well as values of unity, work, and mutual support among all members of the family. Since it was a locus for reproducing and passing on traditions, values, and identity, the family itself was treated in the diaspora as *a value*. In fact, one third generation member of the Californian Imotski family decided to attend college in Croatia rather than in the United

States because she felt there was a lack of appreciation in American society for family and family unity in American society (cf. Fukuyama 1998). She wanted to meet a partner who, like her, had a deep appreciation of family values and would work toward achieving them, and it seemed to her unlikely that she would find a suitable partner in the United States. Her siblings had similar thoughts, but unlike them, she decided to stay in Croatia after starting her own family.

The key factors for the successful incorporation and reproduction of homeland values within the diaspora and transgenerational transfer of identity within the Californian Imotski family were a robust family context (four generations with an average of three to four children per married couple); the constant renewal of the pool of marriage partners from the home country (which ensured homeland values would be passed down, strengthened transnational contacts, and maintained the survival of Croatian as the primary language of communication within the family); regular visits of shorter or longer duration in Croatia for all generations, investments in Croatian real estate, and a successful transgenerational family economic strategy that solidified the elders' authority, patterns of cohabitation, and willingness to assist one another.

The siblings in the Croatian family in Germany functioned for a long time as a transnational migrant family by nurturing close ties in both the place of origin and the diaspora. Unwritten obligations of reciprocity among family members kept this kinship community together for years through the interdependence of some members, and for some, it facilitated local incorporation into their place of residence, while offering others the opportunity to emigrate to Germany. At the same time, the family preserved traditional cultural patterns (family unity and assistance, male domination of female members) within the diaspora.

A Dalmatian family that moved to Sydney, Australia in the 1960s was already mentioned in the introduction. At first, the husband worked various jobs, and during one of these he "built" the iconic Sydney Harbour Bridge. The wife sewed and contributed to the family budget by renting out rooms to newly arrived immigrants. The husband began his own house-painting business, which by the time his son-in-law joined him in the 1980s, had grown to include interior and exterior renovations. In one phase of the family cycle, the parents, a married daughter, and her family were all living together. When they separated, they lived close enough to each other that they regularly visited each other and worked together. Contact was also maintained with the grandmother and grandfather from the patrilinear side and with lateral relatives from the same generation. Here also, close kin contacts resulted in strong family ties and the transfer of traditional culture and language to the younger generations.

There was an emphasis in this family on religious aspects of the homeland culture in the children's enculturation: "All of us in Sydney, we had customs. I mean ever since I was little, I remember, you know, Mom and Grandma prayed with us every evening. I mean, even before I spoke English or Croatian, we knew all the prayers in Croatian. That was every evening before we went to bed", said an interlocutor from the family's third generation.[9] She remembered her "wonderful childhood" with nostalgia and idealized joyful moments from her family life. She pointed out that, unlike "Australians", she had frequent contact with both grandparents and a "close family": "We went to church every Sunday—a Croatian church where there was a Croatian priest. We were there every Sunday, and after that we went to Grandma and Grandpa's for lunch. It was really, really nice. These Australians, they just don't know their grandparents. They don't have that kind of relationship". It is obvious that the family played an inherent role in shaping the younger generations' identity, the way they lived, and their value system. In addition, participation in rites at the "Croatian church" also made an integral part of the children's enculturation into homeland values.

Traditional family and cultural models were reproduced in all of these cases. It can be argued that the "village" and the "rural way of life"[10] immigrants recreated in their destination countries played a vital role in the migrants' paths toward local incorporation. Reciprocity, closeness, interdependence, and the transfer of cultural values have resulted

in a revitalization of the former role of rural families as an individual's "primary point of reference and identification" (Čapo Žmegač 2000, p. 504). In some Croatian regions, this role began fading during the period between the world wars as a result of changes that brought to rural areas a market economy, mandatory schooling, and new means of communication in modern society. By relying on traditions that were already disappearing from the homeland or place of origin, the emigrant context revived the role of the family as a key reference of identity for its members. The previously mentioned interlocutor of Croatian origin born and raised in Melbourne also noted this. She said that many migrants had emigrated "because they were seeking a better life, and that was all they were looking for. They weren't interested in anything else". She pointed out that, in the diaspora, "their identity is their family, they themselves, and what they created in a new world. But they don't have any national leanings".[11]

7. National Sentiment

The first part of the above assertion confirms the argument presented here. The second part, however, requires some additional context and consideration. This interlocutor is part of the generation that grew up in the 1970s and 1980s knowing they were Australians of Croatian descent and without the "preoccupation with one's/her own ethnic identity" that the previous generation had.[12] She was completely uninterested in the issue of Croatian nationalism or in the political activities her father, a political emigrant, took part in. Her mother, a "***mala obična Hrvatica*** [humble, ordinary Croatian woman][13] who went to church, a mother, a homemaker, an ordinary person", never got involved in politics. The narrator lived in "a different world" than her parents did and, apart from her family, had no contact with any Croatian organizations. She was center left within the Australian political spectrum and worked as a community development worker in a tenants association. Her statement that Croatian emigrants' identity was their family rather than their nation was her own experience and that of the women in her family up until the 1990s when Croatian political issues came knocking on her front door.

Were these "humble, ordinary Croatians" in the diaspora truly without "national leanings" as my interlocuter claimed? Or could their alleged lack of interest in national issues be attributed to the specific way they conceptualized national affiliation as an apolitical belonging to family, homeland, and religion? A second-generation member of the Californian Imotski family described the understanding of national identity in his family in this manner:

> It goes back for, I don't know, generations that you marry your own and not anyone else's, respect others, but stick to your own and so on. (. . .) In a way that's, in fact, nationalism. Yes, we're Croats, but we've never been Croats against Serbs or communists. It was never like that. We are Croats, our village, our people, our faith . . . Ok, that's a form of nationalism that could be expressed politically, but politics have absolutely nothing to do with it. I see it more as a traditional relationship. It's not a good thing to lose your traditions. That's why we go to Catholic school. So we won't lose our religion.[14] That's somehow connected to that.

His family is defined by "our village, our people, our religion", as the interlocutor said. Identity is understood as an all-encompassing whole, in which *Imoćanin* [a person from Imotski], Croat, and Catholic are synonymous and conflated into one, rather than seen as concentric circles of ever-expanding levels of identity, ranging from family and local to national and supranational (in terms of religion). Insisting on homeland values in the diaspora serves not only to sustain family unity but also to pass on local, national, and religious affiliations to the younger generations. The older generations of the Croatian family in California wanted to pass on their tolerant and non-aggressive cultural "nationalism" to their children and grandchildren. Even though they did not agree with the Yugoslav political system at the time, they still encouraged their children to visit their homeland

because they did not want them to remain "isolated from Croatian culture": "My parents never stopped us from going to Yugoslavia, and neither have I stopped my children. I never said, 'Don't go there because it's Yugoslavia.' I said, 'Go to Croatia!' And for us, this culture was what was most important. ***This culture is more powerful than all of this political nonsense***",[15] my interlocutor concluded.

Interlocutors described a little, apolitical tradition of national identity (Čapo and Olujić 2020). At the heart of a little tradition of identity are culture and faith, not politics. The person from the third generation of the Sydney Croatian family also discussed this and emphasized the importance of faith in family life. The person from Melbourne also talked about this when she referred to her mother as a "humble and ordinary Croatian woman". The same form of apolitical love of one's homeland that is grounded in values, such as respect, a helping hand, and Catholicism was mentioned by another interlocutor who lived in Zagreb but grew up in Melbourne. An important component of Croatian identity for his father was playing the European (Croatian) version of football (soccer) in Australian society: "I was not allowed to play Australian football! . . . I never played football because Dad said I wasn't allowed. It was awful", he complained during our conversation. This still had an emotional impact on him even forty years later, because his father's stubbornness had separated him from his peers, and he called his father's insistence on their native football tradition "brainwashing".[16]

8. Conclusions: Family as a Total Social Fact

The narratives show that, in the second half of the twentieth century, family and kinship networks were a central part of everyday life for Croatian emigrants in the receiving societies. Families in the diaspora were re-traditionalized through reliance on traditional cultural values and patterns of life from their places of origin. Reproducing the family as a community of homeland culture was a key factor in the successful local incorporation of emigrants and their descendants and in the transfer of specific ideas of national identity to younger generations.

During the process of local incorporation, families have proven to be flexible and adaptive. Residential modes varied and included cohabitation of the nuclear family or cohabitation of two or more married couples during a phase of family expansion through marriage, or even cohabitation of siblings' families. During some phases, they temporarily housed newly arrived immigrants—relatives or friends—whom they had helped to settle down permanently. They also practiced long-term cohabitation of parents and unmarried children, even when the children were financially independent. All of these living arrangements were unheard of in the destination societies. When new families emerged in the next generation, they moved out of their parent's homes but made efforts to reside in close proximity to them. Even after they had moved out, they maintained very close and frequent contact and helped one another emotionally and financially. Family unity and closeness, therefore, were not lost, even when the extended family lived apart. Children were enculturated into a closely knit extended family that instilled traditional cultural values (those of family and family unity, reciprocity and assistance, respect for one's elders, village endogamy, and patrilocal residence) and taught them Catholic doctrine.

The majority of migrant families maintained transnational ties with relatives and friends in the homeland.[17] The transnational extension of the family facilitated the emigration of relatives and others from their towns and villages of origin, which expanded their kinship- and homeland-based social networks in their places of destination. It offered the possibility of finding spouses in the homeland, which in effect relocated the traditional rural endogamy into a transnational space. Consequently, contact with non-migrants and their emigration continually reintroduced homeland values into the diaspora. If the newcomers were more modern in some aspects of family life and values in comparison to those who had arrived earlier, they still were not able to change the "dormant culture" (as one of the interlocutors from Canada put it), in which Croatian families who emigrated between the 1950s and 1970s lived. Emigrants would preserve traditional cultural patterns and

values from their places of origin in order to adapt more easily to the destination societies. Erosion of traditional patterns was not permitted because it might endanger the local incorporation of the oldest members, the pioneers of migration, who made a huge leap in terms of culture and modernization when they arrived in the United States, Canada, or Germany by emigrating from their rural and most often economically undeveloped areas at the periphery of the postwar modernization processes in Yugoslavia. Within familiar cultural surroundings that offered a compact family community, they felt safe, and their dominant position was validated. Newly arrived immigrants, relatives, and spouses were thus incorporated into an ossified culture (Levitt 2009) of emigrant family communities without altering them in any significant way.[18]

Families nurtured specific conceptions of national identity. At the core of their "little tradition" of national identity was the culture of their place of origin and the Catholic faith, along with a self-evident feeling of ethnic/national belonging. In a little tradition, identity is thought of as a cohesive whole, in which family, place of origin, religion, and ethnic identity are synonymous, and what underlies all of these are traditional cultural values and practices. The little tradition of national identity is also apolitical. It can become politicized during periods, such as the Croatian War of Independence in the 1990s. This understanding of identity differs significantly from the political imaginaries of national identity ("great tradition") that emerge in the political programs of the nation-state, authored by political ideologues in the homeland and the diaspora. Understanding the difference between little and great traditions of national identity is key to a more nuanced understanding of the strong ethnonational identification among Croatian emigrants throughout the world.

Since it permeated many aspects of life, the family became, to paraphrase Marcel Mauss, a *total social fact* in the lives of emigrants and their descendants. This was even more pronounced if it operated a family business. For some family members, due to their poor command of the language spoken in the destination society, the family was literally their entire world and "a focus for the total life experience" (Lalich 2004, p. 99). It thus also revitalized its former role as the family members' primary reference for their identity. Due to these very implications regarding family for many aspects of life, there was tension and conflict between generations. "Situated between a variety of different and often competing generational, ideological, and moral reference points, including those of their parents, their grandparents and their own real and imagined perspectives about their multiple homelands" (Levitt 2009, p. 1238), second and third generations resisted this parental "brainwashing" and attempted in various ways to overcome it. This, however, is a topic for another paper.

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Notes

1 National versions of assimilation and integration theories have focused on different aspects and phases of migrants' adaptation processes. See, for example, (Alba 1998; Esser 2000; Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Gidley 2014; Jupp 2007).

2 For the past twenty years, authors have preferred the term incorporation over integration because it is less burdened by connotations of assimilation used by early theorists regarding migrants adapting to the receiving society. Richard D. Alba (1998, p. 1) defined the concept as a process in which the foreigner/outsider becomes "native": "Incorporation here refers to the processes by which immigrants and their descendants change from being outsiders-in-residence, whose participation in the host society is limited to its labor market and who remain in many respects oriented toward their homelands, to natives".

[3] During my many years of researching Croatian migrants and returnees, I have spoken with around two hundred migrants and their children and grandchildren, either in Croatia or in their places of emigration, ranging from Europe to North America and Australia. Emotionally charged commentary about family life was an inevitable part of my conversations with migrants and their descendants, regardless of whether they had grown up in Canada, Australia, the United States, or Germany.

[4] Interviews with a dozen or so family members were conducted on several occasions in 2020 and 2021 through face-to-face meetings in Croatia or online (see Čapo and Olujić 2020).

[5] Researchers of gender equality among migrants started from different premises about past gender relations (patriarchal order and a principle of seniority without restrictions on male authority) and consequently arrived at different conclusions about how they evolved after migration. For example, a study on the status of Yugoslav migrant workers in European countries during the 1980s did not draw a definitive conclusion regarding improvements in status for female emigrants in comparison to their status before emigration (Morokvašić 1987). Although this is not the place to engage in a discussion about the conclusions of this study, I would like to point out that Morokvašić's research premise, methods, and the population she examined differ from those used here, which has resulted in differences between our interpretations.

[6] Interviews took place in September 2015 in Dubrovnik, where they were both living at the time, and were primarily conducted in English.

[7] Interview was conducted in Melbourne in December 2010 (see Čapo 2014).

[8] The first interviews with various members of this family were conducted in Munich in 2002. Up until a few years ago, I was in regular contact with many family members. (v. Čapo Žmegač 2003; Čapo 2022).

[9] Interview conducted in the town of Korčula in June 2014.

[10] From the narrative of one member of the Californian family during a conversation in Primošten in July 2020.

[11] See Footnote 7.

[12] She attended school during the period after a policy of multiculturalism was introduced in Australia in the 1970s.

[13] Emphasis mine.

[14] He attended a Catholic school, as did his siblings and their children.

[15] See Footnote 13.

[16] Interview conducted in Zagreb in November 2014.

[17] Regular transnational contact that included visits to and from migrants and non-migrants and investments in the homeland were common among emigrants in Europe, the United States, and Canada. Since Australia is so far away, maintaining direct contact with the place of origin was difficult.

[18] When the value systems of later and more recent immigrants were so different from each other that there was no longer common ground, their contact within the diaspora became more infrequent. These sorts of situations arose most often in the 1990s, when large numbers of Bosnian Croat refugees arrived in Australia and Germany at the invitation of relatives.

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