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Cultural Life of the Immigrant Community: Factors of Dynamics[1]

SUMMARY

This article explores the conditions that are required for a fully developed cultural and artistic activity (production, consumption and reception) going on within or in vital connection with the immigrant community. Drawing on the experience of Slovenian emigrant communities in other European countries, Australia, Argentina, Canada, the United States, Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, and the experience of the largest immigrant communities in Slovenia, that is the Bosniak-Muslim community, the Serbian, the Croatian, the Macedonian, the Montenegrin, the Albanian, and most of the Romany community, the author summarizes, from the viewpoint of literary and cultural historian, the most evident sets of factors that have been found relevant in terms of shaping those conditions in the case of the abovementioned communities. Relying on an information grid extracted from a most diverse selection of sources, the author attempts to point to some relevant aspects that have been largely neglected in the field of cultural historiography.

KEY WORDS: migrant community, migrant culture, ethnic cultural-artistic activity, cultural-artistic motivation, cultural integration, cultural segregation/marginalisation

Introduction

In some European countries such as Slovenia, Croatia, Portugal and Norway, an accelerated immigration had long been an evident fact before the bulk of migration researchers in these countries, who until recently had mainly been focused on emigration history, finally realized this "new" situation and became interested in it. As a result, a partial transition occurred in research groups (for example within some member institutes of the Association of European Migration Institutions – AEMI) from more historically oriented European emigration studies to more topical European immigration studies. This transition may prove valuable for current European migration studies because it can contribute well-organized historical material immediately ready for comparison with results of the topical research. This kind of comparison can help find simila-

rities in past and present European migration experience, understand the causality indicated by those similarities, preview some of the future processes, and place the present moment into a broader historical context.

Meanwhile, integral research approaches that have emerged at the juncture of migration theories and intercultural studies have provided exuberant theoretical grounds for the research into the on-going migration and the related cultural processes. In view of the fact that the theoretical treatment of this subject-matter has become abundant and dispersed, students, researchers and project groups throughout Europe have attempted to review, select and summarize the most relevant theories, apply them on national empirical research, and "translate" the findings into the educational and political language. The aim is not only to provide immediately applicable material for (immigration, integration and cultural) policy-making and intercultural educational contents but also to help reduce the public impact and lifetime of a number of counter-productive stereotypes that have impeded the promotion of intercultural concepts and principles in modern societies at large.

In spite of the fact that migration and intercultural studies represent a pronouncedly interdisciplinary research field, the theoretical foundations and methodological tools do not equally cover the aspects and needs of all the disciplines involved in these studies. For this reason economists, sociologists, social and cultural anthropologists, geographers, historians, ethnologists, psychologists, philologists, literary and art historians, etc. often find themselves entrapped within the theoretical or methodological boundaries of their primary discipline as soon as they attempt to take a more detached view of the discussed processes and phenomena. A problem arises when they fail to recognize these boundaries and take a chance of jumping at conclusions that are more general than the limited aspects of their research methods could possibly allow. Stereotypes stemming from such conclusions (and largely determining not only public opinion but also various policies) are vividly reflected for example in current perceptions of demographic policy (Josipovič, 2005) as well as cultural and integration policies in Slovenia (Komac and Medvešek, 2005).

Among countless topics within the framework of migration studies that usually require a more complex treatment is the assessment of migrants' cultural-artistic "input" and "output": interests, motivations, activities and achievements, and finally, the functions and the impacts of the latter. Such assessment is usually required in the process of designing a State strategy of co-financing and supporting migrants' cultural-artistic activities. A synthetic comparison between the experience of Slovenian emigrant communities in other European countries, Australia, Argentina, Canada and the United States, the United States, Africa and the Arabian Peninsula,[2] and the experience of the largest immigrant communities in Slovenia, that is the Bosniak-Muslim community, the Serbian, the Croatian, the Macedonian, the Montenegrin, the Albanian, and most of the Romany community,[3] has shown certain characteristics in the dynamics of cultural and artistic activity of

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[2] Bibliography covering the research of that experience until the year 2000 is partly included in *Dve domovini / Two Homelands*, no. 4, 1993: 44–146, partly in Žitnik (2000), and partly in works included in those two bibliographies.

[3] A somewhat random bibliography of research results in that area is included in Komac and Medvešek (2005: 761–791).

these communities, and confirmed the relevance of some of the factors that create the conditions of cultural life in emigration. The synthetic comparison was primarily based on selected results of two of this author's accomplished research projects (*Slovenian Emigrant Literature* and *The Position of Cultural-Artistic Activity of Slovenian Emigrants and its Place in Contemporary Slovenian Culture*) on the one hand, and on partial results of her current applied research project *Literary and Cultural Image of the Immigrants in Slovenia* (2004–2007), including the results of qualitative fieldwork that has been carried out in 2005 in the aforementioned immigrant communities in Slovenia, on the other hand. The latter included a questionnaire on the indicators and factors of cultural position of the immigrants in Slovenia in which 250 immigrants from 26 Slovenian (mostly) urban centers provided exhaustive information (facts, opinions, observations, and testimonies). The type and the structure of the sample are presented in detail in the first published partial analysis of the inquiry results (Žitnik, 2006a: 111–120).

Figure 1: Model of research (qualitative)
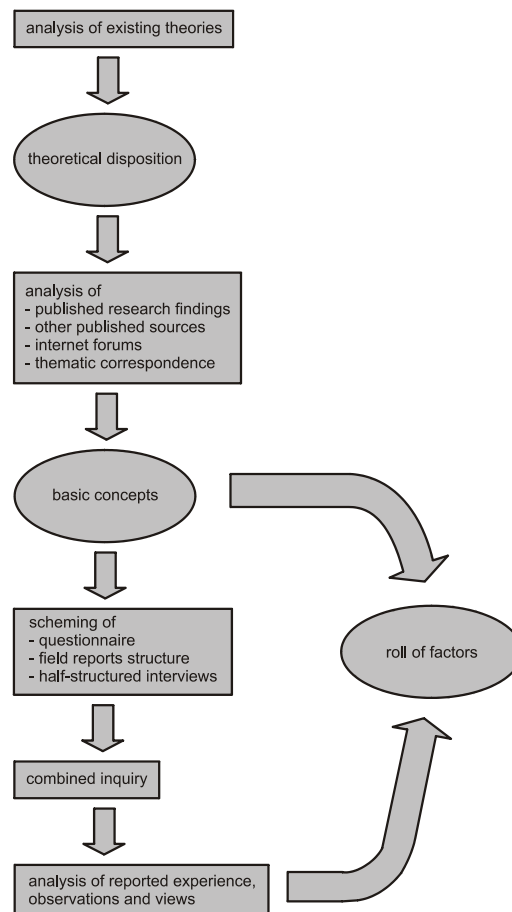
The method and the sources for this study are shown in Figure 1. Preparatory work included conceptualization of a theoretical disposition in which the polysystem theory developed and revised by Even-Zohar (1997) turned out to be partly applicable in the context of this study. This was followed by a selection of relevant findings from this author's previous research as well as from other published sources (other research findings, reports, interviews, published discussions). Although it seemed necessary to quote authors working in other disciplines (sociologists, anthropologists, ethnologists, geographers, etc.), this paper is clearly not a result of a sociological (or anthropological, etc.) procedure. Instead, it is an attempt to point to some relevant aspects that have been largely neglected in the field of cultural historiography. The sources for preparatory work included this author's extensive correspondence with a number of central figures of cultural life of the Slovenian diaspora as well as of the immigrant communities in Slovenia (representatives of cultural societies and associations, individual writers and artists). Preparatory work for the designing of the questionnaire included a close examination of the immigrants-related contents of 28 Slovenian Internet forums.

The next step was the design of the abovementioned questionnaire for the systematic inquiry (combined with interviews and field reports); the latter was carried out by eleven students of the Ljubljana University. The first part of the questionnaire was dedicated to the ethnic, sex, age, educational, etc. structure of the inquired population; the 15 questions that followed were open.

The sources for the research into the cultural position of Slovenian emigrants and of the immigrants in Slovenia were organized according to six aspects (the references indicate published results):

1) cultural position of Slovenian emigrants: indicators and factors (Glušič and Žitnik, 1999 – cultural-historical introductions to each chapter; Lukšič Hacin, 2001; Žigon, 2001b);

2) cultural position of the immigrants in Slovenia: indicators and factors (Žitnik, 2006b);

3) integration principles and the experience of Slovenian emigrants (Žitnik, 2004);

4) integration principles and the immigrant experience in Slovenia (under review procedure);

5) factors of expressing and suppressing ethnic/cultural identity (Žitnik, 2006a);

6) cultural-artistic activity of the immigrant community: factors of dynamics (presented in this article).

The first section of this article is dedicated to the dynamics of cultural and artistic activities of the immigrant community, and the central part of the article deals with the conditions that are required for a fully developed cultural life in emigration. The most evident sets of factors that have been found relevant in terms of shaping those conditions in the case of Slovenian emigrant communities in different parts of the world as well as in the case of the immigrant communities in Slovenia are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Cultural life of the immigrant community: factors of dynamics
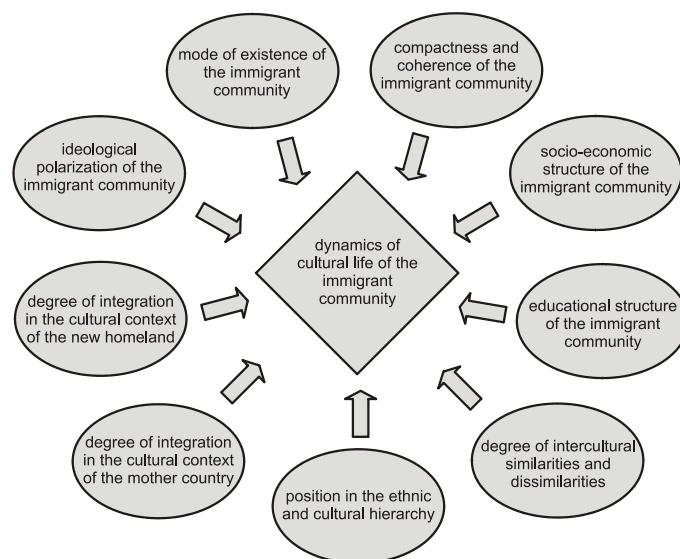
It may seem unusual that four major aspects, namely the size of the community, its territorial concentration or dispersal, the length of its presence/existence, and the geographical distance separating it from its mother country are not listed among the above sets of factors. The synthetic comparison has shown that these four factors have certain impact within each of the above-listed sets of factors that are briefly discussed below.

Terminological notes

Migrant

In modern literature on the topic, the noun "migrant" is taking the place of the nouns "emigrant" and "immigrant", while the adjective "migrant" (i.e. relating to migrants or migration) is equally taking the place of the adjectives "emigrant" and "immigrant". Since migrants are emigrants from the point of view of their native land and immigrants from the point of view of the country of immigration, the use of the term "migrant" in the complex contemporary treatment of the issues connected to international migrations is certainly more rational – since the expression can be considered to cover both points of view. Unfortunately, however, the general understanding of the concept of migrant does not give equal weight to the two points of view but instead emphasizes the act of migration itself, an act which, as we read in most European dictionaries, is normally understood as a repeated one, for example in the latest edition of *Slovar slovenskega knjižnega jezika* (Dictionary of Literary Slovenian): "migrant – someone who repeatedly changes [*spreminja* in Slovenian] his or her permanent or temporary place of residence, particularly for economic reasons"; "*selivec* [another word for migrant] – someone who

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repeatedly migrates (likes to migrate)" [*se (rad) seli* in Slovenian]. The use of the imperfective verbs *spreminjati* and *seliti se* instead of the perfective forms *spremeniti* and *preseliti se* places an unambiguous emphasis on the constant mobility of migrants, which on the other hand accords perfectly with the *improper* yet general understanding of the concept of migrant. Since such an erroneous understanding can have long-term impact on the attitude of the national majority towards immigrant minorities and even on the State's attitude towards them (social policy, cultural policy, integration policy), the substitution of the expressions "immigrant" and "emigrant" with the expression "migrant" seems to me to be risky, and for this reason I have avoided it as much as possible.

Clearly the arguments for such reduced use of the term "migrant" seem irrelevant in terms of anthropological and sociological migration theory. From the viewpoint of the latter it may not only be pointless but also unacceptable to doubt the validity of this term on account of the problematic public impact of its general use.

Cultural life of the immigrant community[4]

Here, "cultural life of the immigrant community" means cultural and artistic production, consumption and reception going on within or in vital connection with the immigrant community. Naturally, those immigrants who are in no sense functionally integrated in any immigrant community live their own cultural lives as well. In fact, most of the nationally renowned immigrant writers and artists in Slovenia fall under this category, which is also indicative of the conditions of cultural life of the immigrant communities in Slovenia. But when we talk about cultural life of the immigrant community, we are for the most part focused on those cultural activities that take place within a more or less connected immigrant community, regardless of whether this community operates in isolation from other cultural life in the new homeland or is closely involved in it.

Dynamics

Here, the word "dynamics" (of cultural life, of cultural-artistic activities) means the movement of the intensity, i.e. of quantity and ramification (scope) but not necessarily of quality. Synthetic literary analysis of the immigrant literary production in Slovenia for example has shown little or no dependence between the intensity of that production and its literary value (Dimkovska, 2005, 2006; Mugerli, 2005).

Cultural integration

When is an immigrant writer integrated? The moment she or he starts writing in the majority language, which makes it possible for their work to appear in the mainstream media and publishing houses? The moment their work has been translated and made accessible to nationwide readership? Or is it the moment when the mainstream media and publishing houses are ready to publish their work in their native languages? The moment a national writers' society is ready to grant them membership on the grounds

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[4] On the use of the term "immigrant community" in this context, see "1st set of factors: mode of existence of the immigrant community" in section "Conditions for a full-blooded cultural life".

of their work published in their mother tongues?[5] The answer depends on the degree of democratic principles comprised in the underlying integration philosophies.

The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Multiethnic American Literature (Nelson, 2005) was a remarkable project, and so was for example the three-volume historical overview of Slovenian emigrant literature worldwide (Glušič and Žitnik, 1999). But how can such works – with their separate, exclusive, non-integrated treatment of either the immigrant literature or the emigrant literature – contribute to the integration of that literary production into the corpus of the US national literature on the one hand and that of the Slovenian national literature on the other?

There is no unanimous understanding of the term "integration" in European migration studies. Some German authors, e.g. Rolf Wörsdörfer (2004) or Peter Graf (2004), along with a number of their kinsmen still understand integration almost in the sense of assimilation, i.e. as social absorption of immigrants on the condition that they first adapt in a way that is most convenient and comfortable for the receiving society. Most of the recent authors however understand the integration of immigrants in the sense of their inclusion on an equal footing in the receiving society. They view integration as a mutual process in which all parties involved must equally adopt the necessary mechanisms of adaptation. Cancedda (2005: 28) for example views integration – in accordance with the related documents of the European Commission and the Council of Europe – "as a *two-way process* requiring mutual efforts between immigrants and their receiving societies." She observes: "One should, however, consider that, with a view to a two-way conception of integration, there is also the problem of a *lack of intercultural skills* on employers' part" (Cancedda, 2005: Annex 2: 18) and points out that the very term "integration" does not actually envisage any subordination on the part of the immigrants but, on the contrary, their insertion with equal dignity. Integration may be taken to mean a completion of what a society already possesses with what it *lacks*, with new values, identities, models and cultures (Cancedda, 2005: 27–28). The *Merriam Webster Online Dictionary* defines integration as "incorporation as equals into society" (http: //www.m-w.com/), and this is also how the term is viewed by the European Commission and the Council of Europe.

Here, "the immigrants' cultural integration" is therefore understood as full inclusion on an equal footing and full affirmation of the immigrant's cultural-artistic output, languages, identities, norms and values, patterns of behavior, and way of life in the context of the national culture of the new homeland.

The dynamics of cultural and artistic activity of the immigrant community

In the first years following the immigrants' arrival in the new homeland, most of their efforts are directed towards ensuring themselves the expected initial level of their socio-economic security. When this is achieved, motivation can begin to grow for cul-

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[5] The day I am writing this, the managing board of the Slovenian Writers' Society is discussing this very question.

tural activity within the context of the community. If before a given wave of immigration, an immigrant community of the same ethnicity with its own ethnic organizations, societies and press already existed in the new homeland, the cultural activity of the new immigrant community often relies at least partially on the cultural media of its predecessors; if this is not the case, it begins to establish its own organizations, societies and media. If after the end of the main wave of immigration of a community there is no longer an appreciable influx of new immigrants of the same ethnicity, be it continuous or at least occasionally significantly increased, cultural activity in the community begins gradually to decline as the first generation ages. The number of cultural organizers, tutors, mentors, writers, editors and correspondents grows smaller with every year that passes, as does the number of consumers, subscribers to immigrant periodicals and people buying immigrant books, for which reason those writers who persist in writing in their mother tongue may turn increasingly frequently to publishing houses in the mother country. In the mother country, however, interest in emigrant literature depends on numerous factors. First among these is the current political interest of the country. This is followed by the general state of original literary publishing in the country, increased interest among readers in emigrant authors as the result of the earlier unavailability of works of this type – or, in the opposite case, market saturation as the result of a marked increase in the amount of emigrant literature available in the homeland. When even publication in their native country becomes problematic, even writers of the first emigrant generation increasingly frequently begin writing in the language of their new homeland.

The period of the peak of the cultural activity of the immigrant community grows proportionately longer with the arrival of new immigrants if these get involved in the cultural activities of the existing ethnic organizations, societies and groups. In this case greater inclusion of members of the second generation in the cultural life of the community is more likely to occur since they find, in the young first generation of new immigrants, contemporaries with similar interests – or with an even greater need to preserve and develop the original culture than that which they feel themselves – and this can have a powerful influence on the members of the second generation of earlier immigrants. On the other hand this is also affected by an extensive complex of specific factors that act in different ways not only on each community but also on each individual. Mikola (2005: 124), for example, summarising the results of her fieldwork, observes: "One of the basic findings in this study is that in the ethnically defined context in Australia, the Slovenian ethnic component is flexible, symbolic, and is open to free-will in the second generation."

Among the factors that can either increase or hinder this flexibility in a certain measure are the level of acculturation (Lukšič-Hacin, 1999: 150) and the degree of structural assimilation. A community can impede structural assimilation for as long as autonomous social and economic networks are still operational in it, while the need to establish them and the nature of their operation are once again dependent on the conditions for the full entry of members of the community into this or that class of the wider society. Contemporary literature on the theme of the ethnic group states that an absence of acculturation and structural assimilation among immigrants encourages the growth

of social networks and institutionalised forms of collective action. When the members of ethnic networks manage to acquire resources such as access to jobs in the wider community, ethnic borders become more porous, since important spheres of life become more dependent on the contributions of the external, wider community. When the role of social networks is no longer so much that of border guards protecting ethnically generated resources and becomes more that of bridging and encouraging greater inter-group connection, then the influence of the ethnic group on the preservation of ethnic identity begins to wane (Sanders, 2002; Razpotnik, 2004).

Irrespective of the differing needs and capabilities of an ethnic community with regard to the establishing of its own social and economic network that affect the intensity and time span of the preservation of ethnic identity and original cultural traditions, the length of the period that represents the heyday of the cultural life of an emigrant community is also dependent on the length of the period in which the mass immigration of this community took place. The longer the period of mass immigration of a given ethnicity, the more consecutive first generations this wave brings to an individual country. This can significantly extend and enrich the cultural flowering of the community in the new homeland. We may therefore talk about a whole series of first immigrant generations born in the old homeland, which usually identify themselves with different symbols of identification and which operate in the new homeland in very different conditions. In the case of there no longer being an appreciable influx of new countrymen to a given country after the end of the last massive wave of immigration of a given ethnic group, the "immigrant" community usually ceases to exist as such with the third generation.

The various multicultural and integration policies introduced by many countries in the last thirty years cannot prevent the prevailing cultural assimilation of the third immigrant generation, but they can facilitate the creative incorporation of the ethnically-signed cultural and artistic activity of the first two immigrant generations into the cultural mainstream – although the experiences of some individuals suggest the exact opposite: that in places a policy of multiculturalism can even intensify the ethnic segregation of cultural creation (Žitnik, 2004: 230) rather than promote cultural integration, i.e. the creative, pluralist and democratic incorporation of ethnic cultural contributions into the national culture of the new homeland: its main cultural media, publishing houses, theatres, concert halls, galleries, libraries, archives, museums, etc., and, of course, national science and education. As long as the so called "multiethnic" cultural and artistic production does not self-evidently include the production of the dominant ethnic group (the national ethnic majority) and as long as these two need to operate through their separate media, the integration is still in its earliest stages, struggling to eventually supplement the alternative choice of either prolonged segregation or ultimate assimilation with a third option.

Conditions for a full-blooded cultural life of the immigrant community

Emigrants of the same ethnicity living in different countries or different periods and even immigrants of the same ethnicity in different cultural environments of the same country (or in the same cultural environment of a country but in a different phase of immigration) experience very different conditions for the development of the cultural life

of their community. The sets of factors determining these conditions that have turned out to be relevant both in the case of Slovenian emigrants and in the case of the immigrants in Slovenia are the following:

1st set of factors: mode of existence of the immigrant community

An immigrant community can exist on different levels of self-identification. It can also exist on different levels of inter-group recognition. The existence of an immigrant community is usually recognized when its self-identification becomes (statistically or otherwise) visible. And finally, an immigrant community can merely exist on the level of outdated perceptions. Hypothetically, in still active legal documents and acts an immigrant community can be referred to as existing when it has already ceased to exist.

Some authors question the term "ethnic community" as it is generally accepted and utilized in popular language as well as in the scholarly literature (Skrbiš, 1994). My own empirical research has led me to the conclusion that an immigrant community exists irrespective of the number of its members and irrespective of the geographical distance that separates them from each other, if the immigrants in a given region, country or at the global level (the case of *Slovenska kulturna akcija* – Slovenian Cultural Action) form a functional mutual connection and have common interests, objectives and activities. In my judgment the immigrant community exists if a part of the immigrant population of a given ethnicity experiences its internal connections in the sense of a community.

2nd set of factors: compactness and coherence of the immigrant community

An economist will probably consider the degree of economic autonomy of the immigrant community and the degree of its internal economic interdependence as the most decisive factor of its compactness. For a sociologist, the degree of closeness (and closedness) of an ethnic group, or the extent to which ethnic identity persists in plural communities, is dependent on the capacity of ethnic networks to provide ethnic communities with valuable social resources. These are of course to a great extent a matter of the wider involvement of an ethnic community in a given environment (Razpotnik, 2004: 45). In humanities, a decisive role in whether emigrants experience their ethnic community as something compact or as something loose is played by collective memory. In the construction of collective memory, the so-called "emigrant tales" occupy an important place, whether they are written down or conserved via oral tradition. Lukić Krstanović (1996) explains how emigrant stories contribute to the formulation of collective norms and values, which in turn create various hierarchies within the immigrant community, among other things in the sense of belonging (e.g. those who do such and such are most "ours", those who do not do it are least "ours").

Almost all writers dealing with the ethnic and cultural identity of emigrants make the point that had they stayed "back home" their autobiographies would be less burdened by issues of ethnic/cultural identity (Čebulj Sajko, 1999: 154). Autobiographical testimony, memoirs, biographical accounts, chronicles and jubilee retrospectives on the one hand record and at the same time mythologize the history of the immigrant com-

munity and its milestones, while on the other hand they create legendary emigrant heroes and antiheroes, be they historical or "microhistorical" figures or anonymous examples of the typical destinies of emigrants who become myths and stereotypes. Emigrant historiography, art and, above all, original literary work created in the diaspora can have a central role in the creation of the historical self-image of an ethnic community. When these activities are weakly developed, they can be very effectively replaced by the identification of the community with any other type of emigrant heroes who are (or have been) successful at an international level in the fields of sport, politics, entertainment or any other sphere of public life in the new homeland. This is vividly expressed in the Serbian, the Croatian, and the Bosniak immigrant communities in Slovenia, who are extremely proud of their internationally recognized immigrant sportsmen. The results of our questionnaire show that in members of the second generation, one such factor – if strong enough – can help their ethnic and cultural self-identification to surpass the symbolic level.

3rd set of factors: socio-economic structure of the immigrant community

According to Haralambos and Holborn (2001: 138) people can be classified as poor when they lack resources not only for variegated food but also for all those activities and forms of entertainment that are regarded as usual by the society they belong to. Their resources are so much scarcer than those of the average family in the country that they are virtually excluded from the usual life patterns, habits and activities.

When considering the cultural life of immigrants we cannot avoid the causal connection between the socio-economic position of immigrants on the one hand, and the vitality of their cultural life – or the proportion of the immigrant population which participates in it in some way – on the other. Culture with a weak economic basis does not have the same conditions and prospects for vital, continuous development as culture with a stronger economic basis. Material hardship and social marginalization of a specific section of the immigrant community, which cannot itself provide social security for its members, can also be reflected in inadequate conditions and a lower degree of motivation for cultural participation (creation, communication and consumption of cultural achievements).

In accordance with the understanding of economic migrants as a reserve workforce, and the rather radical comparison of economic migrations to development aid from less developed countries to more developed ones, the assumption holds that immigrants in the country of immigration will for the most part occupy worse paid and socially less valued jobs, or those that the domestic population do not want. Immigrants will therefore be assimilated into the new environment as workers in the worst paid and least valued professions. Both for them and for their offspring, dimensions of life in the material, cultural and symbolic spheres that do not fall into the "substandard of living" will be inaccessible and closed. As a result of the weight and the insurmountability of being born into a specific environment, a breakthrough not burdened by class is therefore more difficult for the second and subsequent generations as well (Razpotnik, 2004: 45–46).

The results of our questionnaire confirm that among the majority of socially at-risk families and individuals, the struggle for survival, in other words the effort to achieve and maintain a socio-economic position above the official and real threshold of social risk, takes priority over interest in participation in the cultural life of the community. Just as the cultural activity of the national community has, among other things, the function of outward and inward connection, so does the cultural activity of an ethnic community have a dual role of the same type. But when the possibilities for any kind of cultural activity of an ethnic community are very modest or do not exist, it is actually fruitless to attempt to identify the degree and extent of current interest in it, since we are only talking about potential interest. In countries where the social structure of the population largely coincides with its ethnic structure, this causality is even more accentuated and characteristic of almost the entire ethnic community and thus evident even at first glance. In the case of those immigrant communities which have a clearly unequal position in the spheres of the economy, politics and education, we observe, within the framework of their cultural life, an unbridgeable gulf between the so-called cultural elite, which enjoys this prominent status either exclusively within its own ethnic community or has managed – through an independent penetration into the majority media – the integration of its own original cultural contribution into the national culture of the new homeland, and the bulk of emigrants, who only belong to the ethnic and national communities in the demographic/statistical senses, since they are unable to tear themselves away from their cultural margin and approach the centre of cultural life, at least within their ethnic community if not in the mainstream culture of the new homeland.

4th set of factors: educational structure of the immigrant community

The motivation of immigrants to participate in cultural activities can also be conditioned by their educational structure. Among the first generation of immigrants this is not necessarily conditioned by their socio-economic status in the new homeland, especially in the case of those immigrants (e.g. Slovenian political refugees after World War Two) who achieved a high level of education and a respected social status in the old homeland, but who, because of the sudden decision to emigrate, have to survive in the new homeland by means of work that is considered more humble. Despite this, the education they have already attained is very often an extremely important factor affecting their self-confidence, their sense of their own cultural potential and the related motivation to participate in the cultural activities of the immigrant community.

A similarly loose connection between the immigrants' educational structure and their socio-economic status has been observed in the Montenegrin, the Macedonian, the Serbian and the Croatian immigrants in Slovenia. The educational structure of these four groups is above the educational structure of ethnic Slovenians (Josipovič, 2005), yet this is rather weakly (or in some cases not at all) reflected in their socio-economic status. This indicates the significance of all those socio-economic factors that are specific for immigrants, a number of which have been pointed to in the answers to our questionnaire.

The causal connection between the level of an immigrant's education and his or her motivation for cultural participation within the community can work in two opposing directions. On the one hand the low level of education of an immigrant, if con-

nected to his or her continued social hardship, can be reflected by less interest in (and fewer opportunities for) any kind of cultural participation, either inside or outside the immigrant community (Žitnik, 2006a). On the other hand, in the case of emigrant intellectuals we observe a characteristic duality: to simplify somewhat, emigrant intellectuals are either the main players in the preservation of the original culture in emigration or they are not included in the cultural life of the emigrant community at all. Lenček (1990: 218; 1992: 21–22) explains the ambivalent influence of education on the cultural identity of Slovenian intellectuals in the USA: "The higher the education that Slovene emigrants brought to the USA, the longer they cling to the Slovene language and ethnic identity. The higher their level of education attained in English, the more easily and rapidly they are americanised." Naturally this rule does not apply to all emigrant intellectuals, since their inclusion or non-inclusion in the cultural life of the emigrant community to which they may or may not choose to belong is also conditioned by other factors such as the existing level of cultural life of this community at the time of arrival of the individual intellectual, and the possibilities of successful integration of the immigrant intellectual into the mainstream and broader, national culture of the new homeland.

A somewhat different causality between the level and the language (or rather place) of education and the persistence of a writer's literary bilingualism has been observed in the case of the finest Slovenian Canadian writers: L. Potokar (1923–1965), T. Kramolc, I. Marinčič Ožbalt, I. Dolenc, T. Ložar, F. Šehovič, C. Kocjančič, and D. Dolenc. They are all members of the first generation of post-Second-World-War immigrants to Canada. Except for I. Dolenc, who took his degree at the University of Ljubljana, they are all graduates from North American universities. Most of them hold an MA or PhD obtained in North America. Most of them studied languages and literatures. All of them – except one – were (and those who keep writing still are) bilingual writers, equally known for their work created in Slovenian as that created in English (Žitnik, 2004).

Does the abovementioned causality between the level of education and the persistence of one's bilingualism work in the opposite direction as well? Significant differences have been noted in this respect between different ethnic communities in the same environment as well as between immigrant communities of the same ethnicity, but in different countries or areas. Golash-Boza (2005: 750) observes:

… the only community in this study in which bilingual ability led to consistent academic advantages was also the most privileged immigrant community. Perhaps the political and economic power of Latinos in Miami, as compared to Latinos in other parts of the country, allows them to resist Anglo conformity and still succeed academically.

The educational structure of immigrants at the time of arrival is not however only reflected in the possibilities of the first generation for participation in the cultural life of the community and their related motivation. Several authors report, on the basis of empirical research, a shortfall in educational achievements even among the fourth and fifth generations of immigrants whose previous generations were poorly educated. In contrast, they have detected higher educational skills and achievements among the second generation of immigrants who had well educated parents. In the opinion of these

authors (Gans, Portes, Zhou), this divergence will further worsen in the future if future economic restructuring supplants opportunities for the middle class (Razpotnik, 2004: 58). The worsening of conditions for education can have as a consequence the stagnation or even regression of conditions for active cultural participation either within the immigrant community or outside it.

5th set of factors: ideological polarization of the immigrant community

The degree of ideological polarization, the influence of radical currents and the relations between them are the factors that decide whether polarization has a stimulating or limiting effect on the cultural activity of the immigrant community. The relatively high level of ideological homogeneity of Slovenian immigrants (self-identified as political refugees) in Argentina after World War Two and their position of ideological opposition to the political regime "at home" had a stimulating effect on the uniting of cultural potentials and the independent creation of conditions for the autonomous cultural activity of this immigrant community. In view of the almost uniform and prevailingly political grounds for the emigration of the entire community and in view of the consequences that this had for the formation of its cultural identity, Žigon (1998, 2001a) even talks about strategies for preserving the cultural-political identity of the community in question. With the Catholic circle of pre-war Slovenian immigrants to Argentina, the new community established a creative collaboration, but the former strength and vigour of the opposing ideological pole of the "old immigrants" had already waned to such an extent by then that, within the context of mutual conflicts and disqualifications, these two communities were no longer able either to stimulate each other involuntarily or to obstruct each other. This situation was also significantly influenced by the fact that later Slovenian emigration in the 1960s hardly included Argentina, for which reason the ageing left-wing circles from the pre-war immigrant community there were unable to rejuvenate themselves with new immigrants. On the other hand the cultural efforts of Slovenians in Canada (Kocjančič, 1998: 152–155) and the majority of other countries after the World War Two were obstructed more frequently than in Argentina by counterproductive attitudes within the framework of internal ideological polarization. This continued to be fed by new immigrants, among whom representatives of the opposing ideological options were more or less equally present.

6th set of factors: inter-group compatibility of social norms, values and way of life of the immigrant community (degree of intercultural similarities and dissimilarities)

If we ignore the current confusion surrounding the ethnological, sociological and anthropological definitions of the concept of *culture* (cf. Vrečer, 2003), we can say that the daily life of emigrants and the way of life in the community and its cells is the central subject of the ethnological treatment of emigration. Way of life is also the focus of the anthropological treatment of culture (Vrečer, 2003: 155). The findings of these two disciplines can shed some additional light on the related factors that condition the degree of active participation in cultural life of the immigrant community. The level of cultural activity (quality level; scope; responsiveness of the immigrant community – par-

ticipation, cooperation; wider resonance of cultural events) is certainly partly conditioned by social norms and (cultural) values adopted by individual segments of the immigrant community, and partly by characteristic patterns of behavior within individual segments of the community (example: as a response to information about a cultural event, in a particular section of the community the predominant response can be to ignore the information or to respond to it in a lively manner which can manifest itself in the own-initiative dissemination of the information among relatives and acquaintances; active participation in discussions in the case of a lecture, topical conference, round table or book presentation; special preparations for participation – particular care of personal appearance, for example, or preparations for a private social gathering in a small group after the cultural event is over, etc.). Among the factors that shape those norms, values and patterns of behavior is the degree of cultural difference.

The results of our inquiry show that on the one hand, a higher degree of intercultural dissimilarity in Slovenia reduces the possibilities for full-blooded cultural activity because it usually arouses a higher degree of suspicion and rejection expressed in various forms by the rest of the local, regional, or national population. On the other hand, members of ethnic groups whose cultures are perceived as "more different" and thus very likely less accepted in Slovenia (unless the groups are small enough to be perceived as interestingly exotic but insignificant for Slovenian national culture), can often develop a higher degree of motivation to preserve those elements of their cultures that they envisage as most endangered. The same applies to Slovenian emigrant communities in different parts of the world. Slovenian communities in Africa and in the Arabian Peninsula for example are the smallest Slovenian emigrant communities. Besides being small, considerably dispersed and for the most part relatively new, they live in a very different cultural environment. Their motivation to preserve their original culture and to develop some organized forms of cultural-artistic activity is much more favourable than the existing conditions of their doing so (Žigon, 2003).

7th set of factors: position of the ethnicity and cultural background of the immigrant community in the (local, regional, national, global) ethnic and cultural hierarchy

It is a widely recognized fact that immigrants, confronted with real or apparent hostility, can reject or abandon their own ethnic identity, while they may also increase the pride of their own cultural group and begin to emphasize mutual solidarity as a way of dealing with the negative attitude of wider society towards them. Obvious or subtle indicators of the grading of ethnicities and cultures by their reputation have been observed in all receiving societies. The influence of this grading on cultural life of an immigrant community is equally dual as in the 6th set of factors: the more disrespected and undesired the community feels to be in the receiving society, the higher degree of motivation it will probably evolve for further development of its authentic culture; and the more rejection the community arouses in the receiving society, the more limited possibilities for that development it may have in spite of its strong motivation. Worse, its possibilities may continue to shrink until it seems pointless to the bulk of the community to persist.

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The position of an immigrant culture in a national context may be largely influenced by the current reputation of its mother culture in the global context. The latter is constantly subject to radical changes due to large-scale international conflicts, wars, conflicting economic interests, etc. In Europe, the position of an immigrant culture in a national context is also subject to the changes resulting from the disintegration of the former states involved in the migration processes as well as to the changes resulting from the expanding political integration of the "old" and the "new" states.

In other words, the international reputation of its original culture may or may not influence the informal cultural status of the immigrant community, depending mostly on the *contemporary* (local or international) political atmosphere. The famous Portuguese history for example, or the international reputation of Portuguese culture as such will have weak or no impact on the reputation of the Portuguese community, say, in Canada. On the other hand, the recent international political conflicts will (and do) affect the reputation of the ethnic Muslim immigrant communities in Slovenia and other European countries. Some of the Muslim immigrants in Slovenia even compare their changed reputation (and the resulting change of conditions) with the effects and reactions that hit German Americans during World War Two, or the Japanese community in the US after Pearl Harbor. In our questionnaire for example, 90 per cent of the answers to question seven, which was, "Do you believe the immigrants in Slovenia are equal in politics, religious life, education and professional career? Where can that be observed?" were related to the tremendous public rejection of the attempted construction of an Islamic religious and cultural center in the Slovenian capital.

8th set of factors: degree of integration of the community's cultural activity and achievements in the cultural context of the new homeland

Two major factors are the nature of intercultural relations and the level of intercultural connection in the country of immigration. It seems obvious that in countries where cultural media, cultural policy and educational syllabuses have a predominantly monocultural orientation and the pressures of cultural assimilation are greater, it is in principle more difficult for minority cultures to survive and develop and incorporate and affirm themselves within the framework of national culture than it is in countries with a widely ramified integration policy oriented towards cultural pluralism, i.e. with the strong participation of the State in co-funding minority/immigrant cultural activities and in stimulating vital intercultural relations in all spheres of public and private life within the national borders. However, before making an assessment of the actual degree of democratic and pluralistic principles in the cultural policy of a given state, whether this policy claims to be multicultural or not, it is often necessary to examine it from a closer perspective. Slovenian State for example takes a great pride in its annual co-financing of several cultural projects carried out by immigrants. A calculation has shown however that the immigrants in Slovenia had been granted for their cultural activities before the year 2004 only about 0.5 per cent of their assessed annual contribution to the cultural budget of the Republic of Slovenia (Žitnik, 2006a: 135–136).

Democratic and pluralistic principles of cultural integration (understood as explained in the opening terminological note, i.e. in the sense of "incorporation as equals")

of course require the systematic intercultural education of children, adolescents and adults (including the introduction of the so-called intercultural pragmatics method in the language teaching as well), a high status for translation activity, inclusion on an equal footing of immigrant languages and cultures in the central national cultural media and other effective methods of the fight against xenophobia, racism and the economic, social, religious, cultural and political marginalization of immigrants.

9th set of factors: degree of integration of the community's cultural activity and achievements in the cultural context of the mother country

Experience has shown that the complex integration of immigrant culture in the country of the new homeland and at the same time in the cultural context of the mother country (together with the satisfactory material, organizational and political participation of the two countries) can contribute to the further development of immigrant culture and to the preservation of the original cultural identity, which in the diaspora can survive as a complementary constituent element of the cultural identity of the second generation and, at least at the symbolic level, of later generations too. For this reason the synthetic treatment of the cultural life of an immigrant community is inadequate if it does not take into account the aspect of the integration of the cultural activity and cultural achievements of the immigrant community not only in the national culture of the country of immigration (i.e. in national cultural programmes, mainstream cultural media, national research contents in the domain of humanities, and syllabuses), but also in the cultural (programmes, projects, media), scientific research and educational contents of the mother country. The more the current stages and future prospects of the integration of emigrants' cultural efforts in the culture of the mother country are being researched and discussed in the mother country, the faster the level of this integration begins to shift upwards. This is clearly supported by the manifold results of an extensive research into the integration of Slovenian emigrant literature in the culture, literary science and education system of the mother country (Žitnik, 2003).

With the strengthening of contacts between emigrants and the mother country, there is also increasing development of cooperation in the fields of literary and other artistic creation (calls for applications and competitions in the mother country, bilateral visits, exhibitions, guest performances and tours), cultural animation, publishing activity, ethnic education, and activities involving libraries, concerts, exhibitions, archives and museums (invitations for applications for co-financing and seminars organized by the mother country for those involved in these activities in the emigrant environment).

The aspect of double-rootedness and the resulting need of bilateral integration of the literary production of emigrants and other fruits of their cultural-artistic creativity requires, in both countries, the equal treatment of verbal creativity (literature, journalism, radio and television programmes, vocal music, theatre and film) in the mother tongue and in the majority language of the country of immigration. Knowledge and use of the mother tongue of one's parents or grandparents is one of the indicators of cultural valence (Kloskowska, 1993, quoted in Smolicz, 1999: 55). It is only one of the possible factors of cultural identity and is not decisive. This is most convincingly reflected in those literary texts by emigrants and their descendants which are created in the lan-

guage of their new homeland but which contain a whole series of elements deriving from the culture of their native country. Through original works created in the mother tongue, emigrant writers put their own intimate and social experience of the foreign land that has become their home into both their original culture and their adopted culture. On the other hand, those who write in the language of the new homeland (for the most part members of the second and subsequent generations), and whose works are also incorporated into the mainstream national culture of their new homeland through language, bring to this culture conscious or unconscious elements of their original cultural traditions. By including either unconscious elements or even subject matter, motifs and creative methods and techniques that partly derive from original traditions and projecting them into another literature, theatre, film, etc., they add new roles and meanings to the mother culture and in this way they actually supplement it. For this reason, they remain at the same time a constituent part of it as well. Whether the emigrant cultural production is a constituent part of the original national culture merely in principle (at the theoretical level) or is actually present in the cultural space of mother country depends on the level of institutional and functional connection between the culture of the mother country and its diaspora.

The relevance of a complex treatment

In the case of partial, comparative and even synthetic treatment of a specific sphere of cultural life in emigration, we naturally limit ourselves to just a few of the aspects presented above. We therefore need to be aware that this type of selective approach – like every selective approach to any subject – can only lead to relative conclusions. Applicable general conclusions could be arrived at if we were able to take all the relevant aspects into account. In the present paper I have attempted to summarize those sets of factors which have had the most decisive influence on cultural life of the Slovenian diaspora and of the immigrant communities in Slovenia, and which contemporary studies in the spheres of migrant cultures, cultural integration/segregation and the linking or bridging roles of cultural/artistic activity deal with most frequently, although usually in a more dispersed manner, i.e. in the sense of specialized disciplinary treatment of individual sets of factors.

Within the context of the treatment of individual sets of factors, writers recognize certain rules (which I have also partly recapitulated here). But even at this level it is necessary to be aware that established rules likewise only apply under certain conditions. If the conceptual and methodological starting points of an individual piece of research and the discussions deriving from it do not include all the relevant aspects of a more complex treatment of a subject, their conclusions should also remain relative, in other words they should limit themselves to applicability within the criteria considered. Statements such as, for example, "the literary work of Slovenian emigrants is second-class",[6] or "Slovenians are traditionally multiculturally aware, and have been at least since

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[6] This kind of general judgement has been put forward by a whole series of Slovenian authors from the 1970s onwards, even though their research work has only covered specific segments of Slovenian emigrant literature.

the times of multicultural Austria-Hungary; therefore contemporary debate on Slovenian multiculture is superfluous";[7] or (if I may illustrate a mass of similar judgements from other countries with a single example): "in the various parts of the world where they live, young Portuguese and Portuguese-descendants share this characteristic in common: they are the heirs to *a culture which, by not valuing education*, lacks the ability to motivate its members …" (Oliveira, 2004: 166–167),[8] should therefore be phrased differently. If not, they remain pointless.

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[7] Drago Jančar, the leading contemporary Slovenian novelist and playwright, in: "Razprava o književnosti Slovencev po svetu" [Debate on the Literature of Slovenians around the World], hall of the Slovenska Matica, Ljubljana, 7 June 2004.

[8] The quoted observation is part of the following context: "historically, *education has never been highly valued by the large majority of the Portuguese population*. /…/ It is to be assumed that *this particular aspect of the Portuguese culture* has, throughout the course of History, represented an important handicap for the country" (Oliveira, 2004: 166–167; stressed in italics by the author of this article). In my judgment, Oliveira's understanding of this causality is a reversal of the actual causality since the author has neglected to consider the whole set of factors determining the socio-economic status not only of the Portuguese emigrants but also of the majority of the Portuguese population in their mother country – historically and in present consequence.

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KULTURNI ŽIVOT IMIGRANTSKE ZAJEDNICE: DINAMIČKI ČINIOCI

SAŽETAK

U članku se istražuju uvjeti potrebni za odvijanje potpuno razvijene kulturne i umjetničke aktivnosti (proizvodnje, potrošnje i recepcije) unutar imigrantske zajednice ili u tijesnoj vezi s njom. Kao povjesničarka književnosti i kulture, autorica sažima najočiglednije sklopove činilaca koji su se pokazali važnima za oblikovanje tih uvjeta na temelju iskustva slovenskih iseljeničkih zajednica u europskim zemljama, Australiji, Argentini, Kanadi, Sjedinjenim Američkim Državama, Africi i na Arapskom poluotoku, kao i na osnovi iskustva velikih imigrantskih zajednica u Sloveniji: bošnjačko-muslimanske, srpske, hrvatske, makedonske, crnogorske, albanske i najvećeg dijela romske zajednice. Uzimajući u obzir mrežu informacija dobivenu iz veoma raznolikih izvora, autorica pokušava ukazati na neke relevantne aspekte koji se u kulturnoj historiografiji nikako ne bi smjeli zanemariti.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: migrantska zajednica, migrantska kultura, etnička kulturno-umjetnička aktivnost, kulturno-umjetnička motivacija, kulturna integracija, kulturna segregacija/marginalizacija

Janja Žitnik

DEJAVNIKI DINAMIKE KULTURNEGA ŽIVLJENJA PRISELJENSKE SKUPNOSTI

POVZETEK

Članek obravnava pogoje za polnokrvno kulturno in umetniško dejavnost (produkcijo, konzumacijo in odmevnost) znotraj priseljenske skupnosti ali v vitalni povezavi z njo. Avtorica povzema – z vidika literarne in kulturne zgodovinarke – najočitnejše sklope dejavnikov, ki so se v primeru obravnavanih skupnosti izkazali za pomembne pri oblikovanju teh pogojev. Povzema jih na osnovi izkušnje slovenskih izseljenskih skupnosti v drugih evropskih državah, Avstraliji, Argentini, Kanadi, ZDA, Afriki in na Arabskem polotoku na eni strani, na drugi strani pa največjih priseljenskih skupnosti v Sloveniji, tj. bošnjaško-muslimanske skupnosti, srbske, hrvaške, makedonske, črnogorske, albanske in večine romske skupnosti. Upoštevajoč mrežo informacij, ki jih zajema iz kolikor mogoče raznolikega izbora virov, poskuša opozoriti na nekatere relevantne vidike, ki jih kulturna zgodovina priseljenskih skupnosti nikakor ne bi smela spregledati.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: migrantska skupnost, migrantska kultura, etnična kulturno-umetniška dejavnost, kulturno-umetniška motivacija, kulturna integracija, kulturna segregacija/marginalizacija