

SLOVENE IMMIGRATION TO ARGENTINA FROM A COMMUNICATIONS PERSPECTIVE: THE SLOVENE MUTUAL ASSOCIATION OF CÓRDOBA

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ABSTRACT

Slovene Immigration to Argentina from a Communications Perspective: The Slovene Mutual Association of Córdoba

This article presents Slovene immigration to Córdoba, Argentina in the twentieth century, its phases and the institutions created under a mutualistic paradigm. However, the main objective of the article consists of introducing a case study which emerged from the problematization of the relation between the organizational culture and internal communication within the Slovene Mutual Association of Córdoba. This institution, established in 1940, was a late expression of ethnic mutualism and it has been maintained over the time with the primary objective of preserving Slovene identity. This relation among the subsystems has created a strong but conservative and dysfunctional organizational culture.

KEY WORDS: Slovene immigration, Argentina, ethnic mutualism, organizational culture, internal communication

IZVLEČEK

Slovensko izseljevanje v Argentino v komunikološki perspektivi:

Slovensko podporno društvo v Cordobi

Avtorji v članku obravnavajo slovensko imigracijo v argentinsko Cordobo v 20. stoletju ter razvoj pod takratno mutualistično paradigmo ustanovljenih institucij. Predstavijo študijo odnosa med organizacijsko kulturo ter notranjo komunikacijo Slovenskega podpornega društva iz Cordobe, leta 1940 ustanovljenega iz želje po etničnem mutualizmu s ciljem ohranitve slovenske identitete. Diagnoza odnosov je pokazala vpliv političnih sprememb na doseganje korporativnih ciljev. Odnos med podsistemi je vzpostavil močno, a hkrati konservativno ter disfunkcionalno organizacijsko kulturo.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: Slovenska imigracija, Argentina, etnični mutualizem, organizacijska kultura, interna komunikacija

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INTRODUCTION

Slovene immigration to Córdoba began in the early twentieth century, when the country witnessed the formation of an urban proletariat closely connected with the arrival of immigrants (Romero 2002). The city of Córdoba was not immune to this double process of influx of immigrants and expansion of the working class. Indeed, in the early years of the past century the city experienced substantial economic growth and urban development, which attracted immigrants (Misetich, Quinteros 1996). Once settled in Córdoba, Slovenes started to establish various organizations for the purpose of mutual aid and gathering. These first institutions included not just Slovenes but also other Yugoslavs. The first attempts at association failed until the creation of the Slovene Mutual Association of Córdoba (SMAC) in 1940.

In this article we undertook research of a descriptive nature. We registered, analysed and interpreted the current state of the SMAC and the historical facts that affected the organization. The approach of this work was from a qualitative perspective, which is closely linked to phenomenological sociology and symbolic interactionism. This view emphasizes the qualitative description and analysis of social phenomena, understanding that social reality is constituted by the meanings, symbols and interpretations built by actors in their interactions. We conducted a communication inquiry¹ following the guidelines proposed by Uranga, Moreno and Villamayor (1997: 2). For this purpose the methodological strategies that were applied included content analysis of primary data (such as the organization's articles of association), content analysis of secondary data (bibliography to complement the theoretical background), open and semi-structured observation carried out at the different events held at the headquarters of the organization and semi-structured interviews conducted among its members.

SLOVENE IMMIGRATION TO CÓRDOBA, ARGENTINA

The arrival of Slovenes in the province of Córdoba began in the late nineteenth century. According to Misetich and Quinteros (1996: 27), although some Slovenes came to Córdoba with Austrian passports before 1919, their arrival in the province increased over time, and occurred in two stages. These phases correspond to different expulsion factors that shaped the specific characteristics of each migratory flow.

The first wave of immigration came to Córdoba in the period 1919–1939 and was characterized by the arrival of Slovenes from Trieste and Gorizia, cities that were controlled by Italy. Many Slovenes entered Argentina with passports of various nations such as Italian or Austrian. The peak period occurred between 1927 and 1930,

1 The diagnostic stage of the analysis was conducted at the headquarters of the SMAC for a year between October 2010 and October 2011.

when 128 Slovenes arrived in Córdoba. These first Slovenes began to settle in the Alberdi neighbourhood, where they lived with other immigrants such as Ukrainians, and where they founded Slovene institutions (ibid.). These Slovenes were economic migrants who came to the province of Córdoba when it was an attractive and growing metropolis for those that were seeking employment. According to their descendants, many found jobs in the city, mainly at the Electric Tram Company, at the Cervecería Córdoba brewery, at the railways and on state works such as the construction of the Arco de Córdoba. Others found jobs in nearby locations such as at the quarries in Malagueño and La Calera, in Dumesnil, in Río Segundo at the local brewery and in the rural areas of Colonia Caroya.

The second wave of Slovene immigration to Córdoba took place at the end of World War II, between 1946 and 1959, upon the formation of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which involved the expulsion of many Slovenes (ibid.: 29). These new families were political migrants, who socialized among themselves, establishing a network for the preservation of cultural patterns outside the institution created in 1940. Some churches in the city of Córdoba and also in the hills of the province operated as meeting points for these families and their children through outdoor activities such as picnics in Colonia San Esteban, organized by Slovene priest Rudolf Hanželič.

The first Slovene institutions and cultural centres in Argentina were established in the 1920s. Even then they were divided by political and ideological differences. According to Rado Genorio (1987: 40) three groups were created: the Ljudski Oder [People's Stage] Cultural Association, which adhered to Marxist ideology, the Christian-democrat group Slovenski Dom [Slovene Home], which was supported by the Church, and a third group which had an intermediate position, such as the organizations Naš Dom [Our Home] and Kranjsko Društvo [the Carniolan Society]. Ljudski Oder, which was originally created in Trieste in 1905 and then moved to Buenos Aires in 1925, was the organization that had the most influence over the Slovenes of Córdoba.

According to the research of Missetich and Quinteros (1996), the first organization was created in 1928 in Córdoba by Slovenes together with other Yugoslavs, and was called the "Yugoslav Society and Library of Mutual Aid", although this institution was soon affected by the economic crisis. In 1930 a second institution was established only by Slovenes, the "Slovenian Cultural Society Spark" (Slovensko Kulturno Društvo Iskra), and later renamed the "Workers Cultural Society Spark" (Delavsko Kulturno Društvo Iskra) in 1934, showing a socialistic orientation and thus becoming a branch of the Ljudski Oder Cultural Association in Buenos Aires (ibid.).

Both these organizations (the Yugoslav Society and Iskra) faced continuous financial difficulties until their members decided to unite on 25th August 1940 under the name "Slovene Workers Mutual Society Unity" (Slovensko Delavsko Podporno Društvo Edinost), without a political or religious orientation. Soon with the members' donations the society bought land and started to build the first rooms of its

headquarters.² Meanwhile, under the mutualistic paradigm this institution started to offer some benefits to its members such as health care services and life insurance. However, as time went by these services began to decrease and finally disappeared. Following Slovene independence, in 1997 this institution changed its name to the “Slovene Mutual Association of Córdoba” (Slovensko Podporno Društvo iz Córdobe), which it continues to use today.

MUTUAL SOCIETIES IN ARGENTINA: FROM EMERGENCE TO DECLINE

Understanding the history of the SMAC requires understanding both the emergence and decline of the mutual societies in the country. Mass immigration, a phenomenon that was characteristic of the demographic makeup of Argentina, brought about the emergence of civil society organizations created by immigrants to meet various needs. In this sense the flood of immigrants helped boost the ties of solidarity between fellow countrymen and was one of the factors that favoured the expansion of what is now understood as the “third sector” or social economy. In the beginning, these institutions grew in parallel with the state and helped to channel the demands and respond to the diverse needs of the immigrants.

Mutualism was developed in Argentina in a close relation with immigrants, mainly Europeans. Between the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century several civil associations emerged in the country, which can be divided into those that took into account the national/regional origin of the members and those that were related to their professional activity (Moirano 2007: 1–11).

Mutual societies began to spread throughout the country, even among native Argentines, because during part of the twentieth century workers (with some exceptions such as state employees) did not have any social protection and were left to their own luck. In the case of the ethnic mutual societies, they met two objectives. On the one hand, they sought to meet the demands for the social protection and health of the immigrants, and on the other they sought to preserve their own cultural patterns of their community of origin. “The truth is that many immigrants looked there for protection against disease, old age and unemployment, and certainly a space for cultural and recreational sociability for themselves and their families. How much more they looked for and how much they found are pending questions difficult to answer” (Sabato 2002: 108).

These institutions faced multiple and diverse issues from the outset. The emergence of mutual associations forced the Argentine government to provide them with a legal framework. While regulating these organizations, the state legitimated them, because they satisfied welfarist needs and provided health benefits that the state itself could not guarantee in the beginning. In this way, the SMAC obtained its

2 The SMAC headquarters consist of 461 m² of built structures on a parcel measuring 1320 m².

status as a legal entity in 1950. The importance of mutual associations at the beginning was to channel and meet the demands of social protection and health of the population, creating some order and balance in society, and providing a sense of containment to a society transformed by immigration.

However, in their historical development, these organizations were modified in the face of new contexts, ever-changing and complex. Many ethnic mutual societies faced problems from the outset arising from a lack of resources to provide benefits to their members.

Mutual aid societies entered a first stage of crisis in 1920 and began to show problems of economic sustainability over time due to the mismatch which had manifested by then between the services offered and the increasingly scarce and defaulting money contributions. Faced with this deficit, the associations proposed leasing social spaces, or increasing the number of partners by giving up their identity, or rather their cultural homogeneity, allowing the entry of anyone. (Sabatella 2009: 421)

In the case of the SMAC, its old infrastructure is a clear reflection of the different projects carried out over the years by the various executive committees, who saw the institution, its direction and activities in different ways. In this sense, the infrastructure still shows evidence of various survival strategies: artistic and cultural activities for children evidenced in the concrete stage built in the backyard, the kitchen linked to the balls and concerts, the construction of the main hall for social gatherings, the practice of sports reflected in the basketball court, etc.

These organizations continued to face obstacles throughout the twentieth century. Gradually they became to be seriously affected by the establishment of social policies outlined under the welfare state model.

Indeed the debacle of the mutual societies reflects the generational change, and their inability to deal with the new social problems. Those problems [...] that could be solved in the new Argentine welfare state, with a labour market that offered full employment and at the same time covered basic needs with its remarkable endowment of hospitals and public schools operating at full capacity. (Sabatella 2009: 423)

In parallel, during the inter-war period the dynamism of the ethnic mutual societies began to decline, which was related to the gradual Argentinization of society. According to Romero "the ethnic or national mutual societies that were consolidated remained, but the initiative was not renewed. Instead those that grouped workers either by community of office or type of employment grew" (Romero 2002: 182).

In an Argentina where the labour movement began to take on increasing importance, the development of mutual associations was also affected by the enactment of Law 18.610 of compulsory enrolment trade union-run medical insurance programmes because:

[...] it was with the state rule 18.610 on trade union-run medical insurance that the mutual societies operating in the field of health care – the largest ones – had big problems and many (such as Española and Obrera) disappeared. It happened that people could not pay both the compulsory contribution for trade union-run medical insurance and the voluntary membership dues of the mutual society. (Moirano 2007: 8)

Thereby, the national organization of the health care system and the emergence of the trade union-run medical insurance programmes worked to the detriment of the mutual societies. The outlook for the following years, between the repressive state and neoliberal policies, continued to be even more daunting for ethnic mutualism.

Since then, some ethnic mutual societies have succumbed, some have opened to the community and continue to provide health benefits, while others have changed their role by becoming spaces of sociability and identity such as the SMAC. According to Alfredo Moirano (2007) of the Social Economy Research Centre (in Spanish Centro de Investigaciones de la Economía Social – CIESO) the number of registered mutual societies in Argentina is around 4000. However, according to the author that figure does not mean that all of them are actually active. Moreover, he points out that the wide variety of services and activities that mutual societies offer makes it almost impossible to list and consider all the services without committing omissions.

THE SMAC AS A SYSTEM AFFECTED BY SOCIO-HISTORICAL CHANGES

The SMAC was analysed from a systemic perspective as a whole, considering the historic changes that have affected its evolution. In order to approach the organization as a complex whole consisting of interrelated components (Arnold, Osorio 1998), it was necessary to make a cross-section of the institutional structure and distinguish analytically the subsystems that comprise it. Thus, the research focused on the internal environment of the organization and the changes that occurred in it over time, specifically those that affected internal communication and organizational culture, following the theory of Horacio Antonio Andrade Rodríguez de San Miguel (2002).

A systemic perspective that understands organizations as open systems, complex and unique (Arnold, Osorio 1998), was chosen in order to link the institutional life and communication processes within it, both affected by variations in the environment. Thus, among the most important changes in the conditions that had a direct effect on the SMAC we find:

In the national context:

- Progress concerning social security and health benefits in the twentieth century. Contributions for trade union-run medical insurance

programmes became compulsory for workers, so many could not keep paying the membership dues of the mutual societies.

- The generational change in society which had begun to integrate the children of Slovenian immigrants born in Argentina. Gradually the new members of the organization were Argentines of Slovene origin, many of whom could not speak Slovene.
- Argentine economic crises and dictatorships. The members of the SMAC were mainly workers, who not only suffered periods of economic crisis, but also several dictatorships which discouraged participation in civil society associations, which were occasionally perceived as dangerous. This is especially relevant considering the organizations were only funded through membership dues and fundraising events, without receiving financial support from either Argentina or Slovenia.

In the international context:

- The difference between the push factors of the first stream of Slovene immigration to Córdoba and the second stream after World War II. The first stream were the founders of the SMAC, while the second stream did not join the organization with some exceptions. Instead they gathered in their own houses or at church, leaving the teaching of the Slovene language as a private task “to be done at home”, which contributed to the shelving of plans to create a school of Slovene language at the SMAC.
- The independence of Slovenia from Yugoslavia. Many non-Slovene members left the SMAC after Slovenia became independent, and Slovene started to be taught in the organization after 1991. This led to a decrease in the institution’s revenues.

The SMAC was affected by all these changes, but could not adapt to them. It was able to survive through the years, but could not provide new answers to a whole new scenario. It has lost many members since the independence of the Republic of Slovenia and has ceased to provide mutualistic services as the organization should according to its articles of association. On paper, the SMAC is a mutual society, but it actually does not provide any of these benefits to its members. The mutual services the SMAC provides according to its articles of association include medical assistance, pharmacy, funeral services, tourism, cultural production and loans. However, its articles of association are more intended to give the organization a legal framework that allows it to exist under Argentine law rather than to set real objectives about preserving Slovene culture in Córdoba. According to our analysis the main objective of the SMAC nowadays is to preserve Slovene identity in Córdoba, and

that is the reason why members³ join it, to in order discover, preserve and feel close to the culture of their ancestors. However, many of them said that the organization has problems in achieving this, and that it is also difficult to introduce new ideas and participate more actively. The objectives of the organization, which are now purely cultural, are actually in conflict with the institution's organizational culture.

Currently most of the institutional life at the SMAC is spent on meetings of the executive committee, which take place weekly or fortnightly depending on the importance of the issues to be addressed. In these meetings many aspects such as paying taxes, assemblies, the budget and how to meet the requirements imposed by both the INAES (National Institute of Cooperatives and Social Economy) and the Department of Cooperative Development and Mutual Societies of the Province of Córdoba are discussed and resolved. During the meetings the board also proposes the creation of fundraising events in order to improve or maintain the building infrastructure. The members of the committee work on a voluntary basis and are the only ones attending these meetings, where everything discussed is reflected in the minutes following the formalities imposed by law.

There are four events per year which are open to all the members and held at the headquarters of the SMAC at 267 Mariano Castex street in the Alberdi neighbourhood in Córdoba. A tea in April, a lunch commemorating the independence of Slovenia at the end of June, a celebration commemorating the anniversary of the establishment of the organization in August and a dinner in December to close the year. The same events are held each year. These occasions are the only events open to all the members of the institution, which includes about 90 people⁴ ranging from 7 to 80 years old, together with the Slovene language lessons taught once a week by Graciela Mravlje.

THE INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE SUBSYSTEMS

The research addressed internal communication as: "A set of activities carried out by an organization for the creation and maintenance of good relations with and among its members through the use of various media to keep them informed, integrated and motivated to contribute their work in order to achieve the organizational objectives" (Andrade Rodríguez de San Miguel 2005: 23). In this way, communication was seen as a key subsystem to achieve corporate goals and for the survival of the organization.

3 In the last few years, especially following the accession of Slovenia to the EU, new members joined the SMAC after reading of its existence on the internet. Many of them are second or third-generation Slovenes born in Argentina whose ancestors had never had contact with the organization.

4 The number of members of the SMAC was approximately 90 at the time of the research. In many cases only one member of a family participates in the institution, which leads us to assume that the Slovene community in Córdoba is larger than the number of members of the institution.

It was noticed that the SMAC has no explicit objectives concerning internal communication; there is no special department for communication nor a person responsible for planning and carrying out the different communications tasks. Communication in this institution is presented as a tool for the simple transmission of information without thinking of it as a fundamental element to strengthen the various organizational areas and meet the objectives.

In its institutional operations the SMAC uses on the one hand highly formalized means/channels of communication that correlate with compliance with legal requirements, such as the minutes, but on the other hand, the use of other means of communication are neither planned nor monitored. So basically each member of the executive board can inform the rest of the members through various means such as phone calls or e-mails, providing inaccurate information that affects participation. This is related to the fact that the organization has no information and communication technologies (ICTs) of its own, nor a proper member database. The information is provided according to the good will of the members of the board, who always receive more information than the rest of the members because of their taking part in the weekly meetings.

The other subsystem considered was the organizational culture, which “[...] provides a common framework that allows a more or less homogeneous conception of reality and therefore, a similar pattern of behaviour when it comes to acting in specific situations” (Andrade Rodríguez de San Miguel 1996).

According to Andrade Rodríguez de San Miguel (2002: 109), the way in which the members of a group act is reflected in its organizational culture, which has its origin in a shared set of beliefs and values. The values and beliefs of the members of the organization are reflected in cultural manifestations, understood as an expression of the cultural system. These manifestations feed and enrich that culture. In other words, the relation between the organizational culture and the cultural manifestations is one of dynamic interdependence.

A STRONGLY DYSFUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE VS. THE PRESERVATION OF SLOVENE IDENTITY

The SMAC was established as a mutual association that responded to the demands of a specific group of immigrants, however, its ultimate goal was no other than the preservation of the ethnic and cultural identity of the Slovenes in the society (Žigon 2001). Thus, against the backdrop of the cessation of various services, the institution continued throughout the years to develop various survival strategies that allowed it to obtain the necessary resources for it to survive. In this sense, the resources were always used for the improvement and maintenance of the headquarters in Alberdi, the neighbourhood where the first Slovenes settled (Misetich, Quinteros 1996). The

conservation of the building acquired a paramount importance for the members of the organization.

The importance of preserving the building as both a meeting place and a place of identification in the city pushed the SMAC to deploy certain strategies to obtain resources, but these strategies failed to crystallize into activities that would reinforce identity. Unlike other Slovene institutions in Argentina, the SMAC has failed to establish a school for the teaching of the language, a dance group or a choir, as an expression of the Slovene identity. It was only with the arrival of Graciela Mravlje after Slovenia's independence that the organization started to teach Slovene language lessons. This means that the position of the SMAC is slightly asymmetrical and isolated when compared to the Slovene institutions in Buenos Aires, which have had larger numbers of both members and resources (Jevnikar 1996). In addition, there is a problem of lack of cooperation among the Slovene institutions:

[...] there are many Slovenian clubs and associations functioning by themselves, with no connection to other Slovenian clubs – because of the lack of information, or because of personal or maybe still even political disputes. The consequence is that Slovenian identity and its presence in the world is losing its strength, many do not know how to represent the whole ethnic community to the dominant/majority society. (Žigon 2001)

All of these aspects suggest that the organizational culture of the SMAC should be understood as strongly dysfunctional, because in this organization "... there are shared meanings, but they do not provide a guide for action in situations of crisis, because the organization is no longer able to get the expected results. A culture which is deeply rooted in tradition generates a great disorientation and resistance to change" (Andrade Rodríguez de San Miguel 1996).

Communication at the SMAC tends to instruct, inform and order. It is considered as a tool for linear transmission of information. The same message is transmitted in the same way to all members without discriminating between target audiences. Moreover, this communication does not have the form of a dialogue, nor does it call for participation. It does not seek to form or exchange ideas. This communication style has accompanied over time the organization's need for stability and balance.

These features that characterize the communication are linked to a particular organizational culture. In this sense, communication at the SMAC corresponds to a strongly dysfunctional type of organizational culture. The analysis of the communication subsystem enabled us to identify the interaction of many manifestations – conceptual-symbolic, behavioural, structural and material – which all together make up the organizational culture as the set of beliefs and values (Andrade Rodríguez de San Miguel 2002).

Over the years, the strongly dysfunctional organizational culture has operated inside the SMAC as a force of resistance to change by generating uncertainty among

its members when deciding how to respond to new scenarios. This organization possesses a deeply rooted traditional culture, in which there are shared meanings, but they do not provide a guide to resolve crisis situations. That is to say, these shared meanings are not conducive to the meeting of institutional objectives.

The SMAC essentially presents a conservative structure (Schlemenson 1998: 138–155). In its historical development, despite modifications and changes in context, the organization has not shown a substantial alteration of its forms. That is, it has not adapted its qualitative aspects to the current environment in which it is operating. Its objectives, mission, values and power structure remained intact although in practice some signs of change can be noticed. The morphostatic structure of the SMAC means that the changes that do arise are predominantly quantitative, for example fluctuations in the number of members (*ibid.*).

From the analysis we can see that the trend of the organization to maintain the status quo is part of its survival strategy, but at the same time the same strategy leads to stagnation and not to achieving the full realization of its institutional goals. This conservative practice does not allow the SMAC to evolve, leading to a loss of variety in its responses (*ibid.*). “Always the same things are done.” In this way, through conservative and centralist practices, the SMAC has defined its institutional style, which has become its survival strategy.

Furthermore, if we think of any institution as functioning within a macro system, i.e. society, the events which occur throughout history will unavoidably affect it. In this way, abrupt changes in the national and international context together with the SMAC's inability to adapt have created an institutional crisis with unresolved implications.

CONCLUSION

The current situation which the SMAC is facing is presenting it with new demands that its old structure cannot address. While we can notice that the association is beginning to open up to changes, it has not yet made any substantial shift. The teaching of the Slovene language is evidence of change, of an understanding that the social component of the organization is no longer the same and that it is now a must to incorporate new strategies. Nonetheless, this is not a well-attended activity; it is not inclusive and fails to be a binder of the entire mass of members. There new projects that take into account the characteristics of the various members and their interests. This is a clear reflection of the lack of variety and diversity in the organization when responding to the needs of the members, who demand more participation, exchange and cultural projects.

The organizational culture of the SMAC is closely related to the way it perceives and reacts to changing environments. That is why in a crisis the organizational culture will condition the way in which the institution reacts. In other words, we can

say that any change that the organization undergoes due to fluctuations in the socio-historical context affects the components of the internal environment such as communication and organizational culture. This speaks of the existence of an interdependence between the communication style and organizational culture that directly or indirectly preserves the status quo.

The SMAC is now facing a period of change which is different from the previous ones. The organization is being seen by its members in a different way. Its conservative nature, which was tacitly accepted in the past, is being questioned, especially by the newest members. To them it is no longer enough that the organization only strives for self-preservation. It is a stage on which the activities proposed by the institution fail to fully satisfy the achievement of the corporate goals and meet the new demands of the members who join it in order to explore Slovenianness as a central element of their identity. This requires that the institution analyse firstly which elements of the organizational culture are necessary to preserve, and secondly which ones should be left out allowing the incorporation of new activities leading to the comprehensive achievement of the corporate goals. Communication is of utmost importance in any process of transition and integration of traditional and new. A strategic plan of corporate communication could help the SMAC move from a communication strategy based in instructing, transmitting and ordering into a new communication strategy focused on participating, including and communicating.

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POVZETEK

SLOVENSKO IZSELJEVANJE V ARGENTINO V KOMUNIKOLOŠKI PERSPEKTIVI: SLOVENSKO PODPORNO DRUŠTVO V CORDOBI

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Članek raziskuje imigracijo Slovencev v argentinsko Cordobo s posebnim poudarkom na njihovih društvenih dejavnostih. Avtorji najprej predstavijo značilnosti posameznih zgodovinskih migracijskih faz ter pod drobnogled vzamejo institucije, nastale po prvem valu slovenskih migracij iz Gorice v Cordobo. Po kratkem zgodovinskem pregledu institucij, ki so jih ustanovili slovenski priseljenci, se raziskava osredotoči na leta 1940 ustanovljeno Slovensko podporno društvo iz Cordobe oz. na njegove zgodovinske spremembe in razvoj.

Institucionalno krizo, s katero se trenutno sooča Društvo, je povzročilo več dejavnikov. Med notranjimi dejavniki izstopajo argentinska ekonomska kriza in diktatura, postopni padec mutualistične paradigme zaradi izboljšanja socialne varnosti, menjava generacij in »argentinizacija« novih članov. Iz zunanje oziroma mednarodne perspektive pa je opazna razlika med potisnimi faktorji prvega migracijskega vala izpred druge svetovne vojne in drugimi povojnimi faktorji ter osamosvajanje Slovenije.

Z leti je Društvo opustilo večino vzajemnih storitev ter se omejilo na ohranitev slovenske identitete. Kljub temu pa strategija, ki naj bi zagotovila zadostna sredstva ter podporo za okrepitev slovenske identitete, ni uspela, pri čemer delovanje Društva v primerjavi z institucijami v Buenos Airesu, ki v zadnjem času beležijo večje število sredstev in članov, lahko označimo kot asimetrično in izolacijsko.

Slovensko podporno društvo je trenutno na prelomnici, saj se z njegovo konservativno politiko ne strinjajo predvsem mladi člani, ki zahtevajo bolj odprto in kulturno bolj aktivno ustanovo. Iz raziskav je razvidna nesposobnost društva za prilaganje spremembam, kar upravičuje močno, vendar konservativno ter disfunkcionalno organizacijsko kulturo. Prav ta Društvu ne dopušča udejanjanja korporativnih ciljev ter lažjega sodelovanja.