AMBIVALENT IDENTITIES EMERGING IN TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATIONS BETWEEN ARGENTINA AND SLOVENIA

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ABSTRACT

Ambivalent identities emerging in transnational migrations between Argentina and Slovenia

The article explores the issue of ambivalent identities in transnational migrations between Argentina and Slovenia. Recent migrations between the two states are historically and causally related to political emigration after the Second World War from Slovenia to Argentina and the formation of a diasporic community that asserted complex symbolic links to its homeland. Due to this connection, contemporary migrants can claim and (re)activate their Slovene origin, 'original' culture, belonging, citizenship and social identities.

KEYWORDS: transnational migration, ambivalent identities, Argentina, Slovenia, identity politics

IZVLEČEK

Ambivalentnost identifikacij pri transnacionalnih migracijah med Argentino in Slovenijo

Avtor obravnava ambivalentnost oziroma premakljivost identifikacij, ki spremljajo transnacionalne migracije med Argentino in Slovenijo. Nedavne »povratne« migracije so zgodovinsko in vzročno povezane s političnim begunstvom iz Slovenije v Argentino po drugi svetovni vojni ter z oblikovanjem diaspore, ki je ohranjala in rekonstruirala simbolne povezave z domovino. Zaradi aktivnega ohranjanja tovrstnih povezav lahko sodobni migranti pri migraciji in oblikovanju socialnih identitet uporabijo slovensko poreklo, »izvorno« kulturo, pripadnost in državljanstvo.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: transnacionalne migracije, ambivalentnost identifikacij, Argentina, Slovenija, identitetne politike

AN ARTIST IN SEARCH OF HER SOCIAL IDENTITY

This article is an account of certain individuals – transnational migrants – crossing political, social and cultural boundaries and forming ambivalent identities. I intend to explore the issue of identity construction and ambivalent identifications by presenting

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past and contemporary transnational migrations between Argentina and Slovenia. The article also highlights the historical causality between political exile to Argentina following the end of the Second World War and the contemporary trend of (re)migration of Argentinean Slovenes to Slovenia.

Before describing the theoretical framework of my research I would like to commence my argument by mentioning a painting entitled 'Longing' by an artist named Cecilija Grbec, whom I met in Ljubljana in 2005. The painting portrays a young Bolivian woman with her two young children, leaving. The oldest child seems to be hesitantly following his mother, firmly holding her hand. She carries a large sack – a wrapped blanket (*manta*) full of their belongings on her back, and the second child in her arms facing backwards.

In this painting and many others she expressed her personal search for belonging, home and social identity. Moreover, her work not only expresses an artistic exploration of the self but also reveals how she perceives the notion of identity. One of her early exhibitions was entitled "Trails of my Roots" and another one "Flames of Searching". Her primary artistic interest in most of her early exhibited works laid in expressing images from her childhood, images of her 'roots', of origin, and her life of searching for social identity.[2] There were depictions and portraits of people from her childhood, representations of landscape and nature, all symbolising specific places where she either lived or felt connected to or even belonging.

The painting 'Longing' expresses memories of her youth spent in lowland Bolivia as images of people and landscape. It also expresses leaving from there, burdened though not sad, leave-taking being simply inevitable. This painting partly portrays her own life experiences, being born to Argentinean Slovenes, but spending most of her childhood in Bolivia. She was born in Buenos Aires to second-generation Slovene migrants and was raised with a strong sense of being a Slovene in exile. Her grandparents came to Argentina in 1948 as post-war political emigrants along with several thousand compatriots. Even though she spent her childhood in Bolivia, the whole family remained closely connected to the Slovene community in Argentina.

When she was thirteen years old, she moved in with her grandparents in Buenos Aires to attend secondary school there, and as I was told, "to participate in the community". She lived with her grandparents, started painting and became actively involved in the social life and cultural activities of the Slovene community in Buenos Aires. She eventually graduated with a degree in fine arts from the university but she also took up several formal and informal roles in the community – teaching young children Slovene, teaching art and painting and managing the secretarial work at the central organisation United Slovenia at Ramon Falcon in the centre of Buenos Aires.

Her early work consists of images of Bolivia, of Argentinean and Slovene landscapes and some special places – the town of Piran, the Trnovo church in Ljubljana etc. Spatial representations of Slovenia include images of landscape, religious objects and towns in

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[2] For relations between artistic creativity and migrations and the role of art among Slovene migrants and their descendants in Argentina see Toplak (2008).

Slovenia. Her artistic expressions are powerfully if not fundamentally influenced by the imagery of connections between multiple places. An exhibition review noticed this transnational connection:

> In her work, two worlds, two homelands, meet. South America is the world of her childhood, the world where she grew up and where she was constantly aware of another world, the homeland of her ancestors.

Not only is her search for social identity apparent in her work, but also the ways of constructing it. At a certain phase of her life she conceptualised her social identity through searching – for origin, original homeland, nationality and Slovene culture, symbolised in various ways – tradition, language, special objects, places. She was divided between actual experiences and no less real imagined collective experiences conveyed by social memories. In the community, social memories of exile and migration, and hence the need to preserve 'Sloveneness',[3] were formalised in publications, art, schools, churches, cultural activities, and festivals, and were symbolically pervasive in most cultural activities in the community.

The interrelation of actual experience and social memories seem to be quite significant in her expressions of the "search for roots". The reviewer also wrote:

> The diversity of [her] works confirms the eternal connection and interweavement of not only two actual worlds and homelands but the interrelation of the experienced world to the vast world of memory.[4]

When we met in Slovenia, only days after I returned from Argentina, where I lived with her family, her life was noticeably divided between her two homelands, Slovenia and Argentina.

Due to her social involvement in both places there appears to be an intriguing ambivalence in terms of belonging, social identity and the interrelations of actual and socially constructed experiences. In order to investigate this question, I will present in brief the theoretical framework used to conceptualise ambivalent identities before returning to the issue of the Slovene diaspora.

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[3] 'Sloveneness' (Sl. slovenstvo) is a rough translation of an emic category often used in diasporic contexts to express the cultural, social and political state or quality of being Slovene; a sense of belonging to and having responsibilities vis-à-vis the Slovene nation and the original homeland as individuals and as a community.

[4] http://www.sodalitas.at/index.php/gallerie/laufend_more_sl/211/ (20. 8. 2007).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: AMBIVALENT IDENTITIES IN TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATIONS

Most Slovene-Argentine migrants could be described as transnational migrants as they maintain various connections across the boundaries of nation-states and hence across the Atlantic (cf. Vertovec 1999: 447; Hannerz 1996). That doesn't imply they are constantly moving between both countries but they regularly engage in social, cultural and economic interactions with individuals, and formal institutions in both countries. Glick Schiller and Basch defined transnational migrants as

> immigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relation-ship to more than one nation-state (see Glick Schiller and Basch 1995: 48).

For example, migrants' public identity is represented in claiming and possessing dual citizenship. Moreover, they also demonstrate a certain ambivalence of their social and cultural identities, as is apparent for example in the construction of the notion of origin and connections to both homelands. Even though they settle down and become incorporated into the economy, political institutions and social life around them,

> […] at the very same time, they are engaged elsewhere in the sense that they main-tain connections, build institutions, conduct transactions, and influence local and national events in the countries from which they emigrated (Glick Schiller and Basch 1995: 48).

Transnationality, though a problematic and contested term, implies an ambiguous relationship to several places in terms of belonging, but also a sense of spatial detach-ment or even a state of uprootedness – in terms of a lack of belonging to a locality and thus possession of culture. Kearny (1995: 557) for example asserted that migrants and migrant communities also have cultures that are deterritorialised and hence independent from specific localities. However, this perception of migration ignores migrants' expe-rienced and socially imagined spatial attachments and their agency in constructing new forms of identifications (Vertovec 2001). Even though we could presuppose a level of deterritorialisation among Argentinean Slovenes, such an assumption would be incorrect. Transnational character implies a notion of transnational social space (see Faist 2000; Povrzanović Frykman 2004) characterised by dynamic networks of transnational relations and independence from national and local contexts. Nevertheless, defining individual and social identities, self-consciousness and a sense of belonging is immanently connected to spatio-cultural concepts such as home and homeland, and the experience of exile.

Being a Slovene in Argentina is a socially constructed identity in the context of transnational migration, pertaining to 'original' Slovene culture and homeland, and em-bodied through practices of diasporic community construction and differentiation from

the surrounding society. It is far from an unambiguous identity, as the majority of Slovene migrants in Argentina and even a large part of their descendants are psychologically, culturally and socially divided between the country of origin and the country of residence. This ambivalence was additionally reinforced with recent and ongoing 'remigration' or more precisely, migration of Argentinean Slovenes to Slovenia.

The issue of ambivalent identities is closely connected to the notions of intercultural contacts, multiculturalism and cultural mixtures, creolization and hybridity (see e.g. Hannerz 1997; Eriksen 1999). Ambivalent identities are social and relational constructs, seemingly a result of a process in which several cultural, social or political traditions form new, mixed and ambivalent ones (see Munasinghe 2006; Stolcke and Coello 2008). They also imply transgressing political, social and cultural boundaries and being involved in different social spaces, as for example in transnational flows. A considerable body of literature on transnational migration demonstrates that by crossing political, social and cultural boundaries, transnational migrants are encouraged or even compelled to redefine their original socio-cultural identities or to establish new, ambivalent identities.

Even though concepts of hybrid cultures and ambivalent identities appear as promoting diversity and multiculturality, they can also reinsert the notion of 'originality' as individuals claim and (re)activate their origin, 'original' cultures, belongings, citizenships and social identities. Among Slovene migrants and their descendants in Argentina, social identities are predominantly established upon notions of origin and originality, which are spatially and culturally symbolised in claiming ties to the homeland, but also on authenticity, belonging, national culture, nationality, language, and on shared experience of exile. The concepts of origin and culture, which are prerequisites to Slovene diasporic identity, no matter how ambiguous they are, can in turn be used to claim citizenship and belonging to the 'original' homeland, thus embodying practices of constructing social distinctions and similarities.

When we talk of culture, we actually refer to 'cultural differences and similarities', thus describing and supporting the idea that certain cultural attributes, attached to an individual or a group can represent those commonalities and differences that matter – cultural features that bring people together or set them apart – and supposedly fundamentally characterize particular groups and identities. However, similarities and differences are relational and thus intentionally constructed as distinctions – differences that make a difference.

In order to clarify this ambivalence I will present the causes and consequences of past and contemporary transnational migration between Argentina and Slovenia.

MIGRATIONS BETWEEN SLOVENIA AND ARGENTINA

Historical overview of migration and causal relations

Argentina is one of those countries that at various times received many Slovenes. Naturally, Slovene immigrants and their descendants comprise only a small part of Argen-

tinean society. From the mid 19ᵗʰ to at least the mid 20ᵗʰ century Argentina was constituted as an immigrant and multicultural society. Even their model of nation state was ingrained with immigration and a level of regularised diversity. Immigration enabled colonisation and governance of the state's territory according to the principle "to settle is to govern" (*poblar es gobernar*). Besides, European immigrants fuelled the economy and were vital to state's industrialisation, urbanisation and modernisation.

Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, the president of Argentina between 1868 and 1874, saw modernisation in the development of urban centres from where civilisation and European culture would disperse to rural areas (Schneider 2000: 72). Until the Second World War, immigration was considered synonymous with modernisation and even Europeanisation. Immigration, but exclusively from Europe, was even supported by the country's Constitution ever since 1860 (Constitucion, Article 25).

Large numbers of economic immigrants were continuously arriving from poverty-ridden Europe between the 1870s and the 1930s. No doubt they had a strong European cultural and social influence and were never considered negatively. As Schneider (2000: 72) noted, ideal immigrants were 'educated, literate and sympathised with liberal policy'.

Before the economic crisis in 1929 Argentina had the world's fourth highest GDP per capita. Social standards were much higher than in many European countries (see Lewis 2002: 17, 56–9; Lynch et al. 2001: 227). The thriving economy was fuelled by rapid development in transport and communications technology and the liberal immigration policy. Europe on the other hand was undergoing difficult times: political unrest, rural exodus, urbanisation and industrialisation, which led to extensive poor areas especially in the south of Europe (Schneider 2000; Palazón Ferrando 1995).

The first Slovenes that arrived in large numbers were mostly migrants leaving their homes due to economic and political issues between the First and Second World War. Around thirty thousand Slovenes settled in Argentina at that time. The majority of them came from Primorska, the westernmost part of Slovenia. After the defeat of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, of which Slovenia was a part, this region had been annexed to Italy under the Treaty of Rapallo in 1920. There they suffered both poverty and repression under Italian fascism.

The first military coup in Argentina in 1930 coincided with the Great Depression and established a long-lasting period of successive military dictatorships in the country. The relatively unrestricted migration policy also ended with the crises. In the 1930s European immigration to Argentina subsided due to the economic crisis, the country's newly imposed restrictive regulation and later due to the Second World War. After the war, Argentina was one of the few countries accepting political immigrants, among them Slovenes, Croats and others escaping communist repression in Yugoslavia.

Argentinean multicultural and identity politics

Argentina was predominantly constituted as a society of European immigrants and their descendants (Schneider 2000: 63), hence its nation state model was rather multicultural. Interestingly, the majority of immigrants never acquired Argentine citizenship

because they enjoyed almost all the rights of the citizens. Between 1850 and 1930, only five percent of immigrants obtained Argentinean citizenship even though it was relatively simple to do so (Schneider 2000: 204).

In the Argentinean inclusive policy toward European immigration we can identify an inclusive (multi)culturalism which enabled the persistence of numerous national and immigrant groups (Schneider 2000: 27–8; cf. Stolcke 1995; Wikan 2002). However, such a positive and inclusive orientation towards European immigrants had its negative, exclusive side. Jews, Africans and Asians (and the indigenous population) were denied entry or social integration. The country's migration policy and often-celebrated cultural pluralism (*pluralismo cultural*) actually functioned as a selective strategy of social inclusion and exclusion.

Slovene emigration to Argentina after the Second World War

Although immigration to Argentina after the Second World War was restricted, some political migrants or refugees were nevertheless accepted. Among them were over six thousand Slovene political refugees (see Rant 1998).

In the days after the war tens of thousands fled Yugoslavia because they had collaborated with the Germans against the communists and the partisans, or were simply afraid of being linked to the collaborators called the Home Guard (*Domobranci*), and feared communist retaliation. Fear of repression, cruelty and death brought about by the communist revolution that took place immediately after the war ended, and drove them across the Alps to Austria or Italy, where they stayed in refugee camps for two to four years. They left everything behind, often including family members or burned homes.

Their fear was not irrational – during the first months after the Second World War thousands were executed and buried in mass graves with utmost secrecy. The Commission of the Slovenian Government for Resolving Issues of Hidden Burials so far has accounted for over 600 hidden mass graves, with an estimated minimum of 12,000 to 15,000 Slovene citizens and many others killed without trial (see Dežman 2008: 388). Slovenes were not the only victims of communist revolution – some estimates of post-war political executions carried out in Slovenia soars to between 80,000 and 100,000 or more (Dežman 2008: 388, 412). A large number of refugees were even repatriated from the refugee camps by the British army and were executed at home.

Already in the refugee camps, Slovene emigrants, who shared a similar traumatic experience of exile, established strong communal relations and relatively sophisticated community organisation (cf. Corsellis, 1997: 137, see also Švent 2007). They organised schools and health care, publications (bulletins and even school textbooks), cultural events and assistance for migration. Eventual emigration was organised and supported by the Roman Catholic Church, the Red Cross, the International Refugee Organisation, and various Slovene immigrant organisations in different countries offering financial help, accommodation and work to immigrants. They left for Canada, the USA, and Australia, and over six thousand Slovenes emigrated to Argentina. Actually, Argentina was the only country willing to accept massive Slovene political immigration at that time, among

other things because their anti-communist political position was favourably received by Peronism.Vlado, who was born in an Italian concentration camp in 1943, told me the story of his parents' flight to Argentina. After they were released from the concentration camp in 1943, they fled to Italy, but left their first-born son Janez with their relatives in Slovenia. Vlado's father returned to Slovenia and helped the Home Guard fight against the Partisans and the Communists. Before the war ended he fled again to Italy and was reunited with his wife and son Vlado. At the end of the war, they wanted to return home where their first-born son lived, but couldn't do so because of the Yugoslav communist revolution that took place during the final days of the war and in the months afterward. They soon realised that return was not possible and started arranging for migration to Argentina. They arrived to Buenos Aires in 1947. For decades they had no contacts with their eldest son or other relatives and friends.

The Slovene community in Argentina

Argentinean cultural pluralism enabled the existence of numerous immigrant or ethnic groups expressing their specific social and cultural identities without being excluded from the surrounding society. In spite of their migration trauma, post-war Slovene political migrants actually found themselves in a very favourable political situation, which, combined with cultural pluralism, resulted in the possibility of organising a strongly introverted ethnic (national) community. They formed a translocal community with a formal central association called United Slovenia and local community centres – seven in Buenos Aires, one in Mendoza and one in Bariloche. They established a sort of ghetto, "a state within the state" (Sjekloča 2004: 175), where they spoke Slovene among themselves, married other Slovenes and often even lived clustered together in urban neighbourhoods. They preserved the idea of exile and Slovene origin and expressed it in local politics and symbols (e.g. street names), cultural activities and formal and informal institutions. They established Slovene schools and churches, sports facilities, associations, etc. In Lanús, a suburb of Buenos Aires, Slovenes bought a larger patch of land and established an urban settlement called *Villa Eslovena*, or Slovene 'village', which still contains a prevalently Slovene population.

Marriages with non-Slovenes were either strictly forbidden or at least strongly discouraged:

> When we were young, our parents didn't allow us to go out with Argentine women. And they were good. But if you only had Slovene friends, it was inappropriate to bring home an Argentine woman… Now it's different, we don't interfere with this matter.

Even though the endogamous rule is no longer as strict, intra-communal marriages are still quite common.

Post-war migrants also maintained a strong anti-communist political stance and constructed a social memory of their diaspora, which was consolidated through schools, social and cultural practices, and regular publications. Their symbols and numerous practices

(e.g. festivals, rites etc.) implicitly connected them to their original home and conveyed the idea of an eventual victory over communism and their return. Countless collective activities such as mass in Slovene, religious festivals and rituals, often ingrained with symbols of Slovene culture, sports events and numerous social, educational and cultural activities maintained social relations and a strong sense of community and Slovene identity. Attending Slovene schools,[5] learning a "*correct version of history*" and mastering the Slovene language were especially important. Marija told me about a trauma in her childhood, when she first attended a formal Argentine school:

> At that time I could barely speak few basic words in Spanish. The other children were mocking me because of that, but my parents never taught me Spanish, nor did they let me use it at home.

The Slovene language is widely used in the community and family life and preserving it symbolised preserving Slovene identification, which is regarded as an obligation:

> To us, preserving our language also meant preserving our Sloveneness, our relationship to our homeland and protecting our community in Argentina. Our community and the existence of our culture here is endangered, that's why we strive to preserve our language and culture.

Many people there stressed that preserving the Slovene language and culture was essential to maintaining Slovene identity: "*Our language and culture are the most important treasures that have to be preserved.*" The Slovene language was preserved with as few changes as possible, so it actually feels a bit archaic compared to contemporary Slovene. They even preserved personal names – their official names being written in the Slovene version but in public life usually used in their Argentinean versions.[6]

Above all, language has an important symbolic place as an identity marker. Children learn Slovene in their families and later in special Slovene schools. Many people simultaneously learn Slovene and Spanish, but the use of both languages depends upon the social contexts: Slovene is used at home and in the community life and represents intimate relations, whereas Spanish is used in their public life.

Another important symbol of identity is the origin. Argentinean Slovenes have predominantly asserted their social and cultural identities upon the notion of origin, represented spatially, culturally and even politically as their true homeland – Slovenia. Assertions of home, original homeland, belonging, and identity are collectively constructed and symbolised through social imagination and sets of social practices. Some individu-

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[5] Slovene schools were not officially recognised and were only held on Saturdays. The number of attendees has been on the rise since 1991 (Rant 1998: 559).

[6] Official names are often in their Slovene versions (e.g. Marija, Tomaž, Jože, France, Janez, Tone (Anton) … whilst in public life the Argentinean versions are used: María, Tomas, José, Francisco, Juan, Antonio etc.

als expressed a deep sense of longing for Slovenia and even a feeling of injustice or loss because they were not born there. Slovenia is not only a homeland to which they feel they belong, it is also a place they claim as their own.

Being Slovene in Argentina is a distinguishing notion, characterising social identifications claiming continuous and durable links to their homeland (cf. Clifford 1997: 284; Safran 1991). It is a culturally constructed and symbolised identification justified by personal or collective experiences of exile. Social identities are far from straightforward as they are overlapping and migrants often mix them or even switch between them (cf. Elwert 1995). I very often heard: "*In Argentina I feel like a Slovene, but when I come to Slovenia, I feel like an Argentinean.*"

Since place is not a static entity, but a result of social imagination, the symbolic geography and meanings attached to symbolised places can be as real as the actual territory. We attach meanings to these symbolic places and create 'our place' where we are 'at home'. Imagined places are experienced only through social memories but can be as real as actual, experienced places. The following statement demonstrates the importance of social memories and the power of social imagination:

> Our parents entrusted us with preserving our Sloveneness. They had suffered greatly […] were exiled, arrived here with nothing. And yet they raised us with love for our homeland… Now we try to pass that on to our children.

The idea of being a Slovene was transferred to younger generations quite successfully, as is apparent in the contemporary 'return' migration or remigration of Argentinean Slovenes to Slovenia. The roles in the ambivalent relationship between Argentina and Europe have been inverted (see Schneider 2000). It is now Europe that attracts migrants searching for a better life. Contemporary Argentine migration to Slovenia is causally connected to migration flows in the past. Because Argentina is in its essence an immigrant society, most Argentines are very familiar with the advantages and possibilities of migration practices. To the parents of Argentinean Slovenes, migration meant a solution to problems of poverty or political repression. In an era of poor economic and social opportunities, prevailing urban danger and violence, lack of employment possibilities etc., many people have left Argentina and returned to their roots and to Europe. "The dream of a better life implied by the term 'America' has been projected back onto Europe" (Schneider 2000: 291).

CONTEMPORARY TRANSNATIONAL OR 'RETURN' MIGRANTS

The inclusive multicultural social context in Argentina that enabled the persistence of various ethnic identities in turn fuelled the process of 'national revival' which accompanied 'return' migration to Europe in times of economic and social crises (see Repič 2006b). National revival has also been evident among Argentinean Slovenes who re-established

ties to their original homeland. One of the popular myths among them is the myth of their eventual return to Slovenia (Repič 2006a: 159). With it the historical injustice of their parents' exile would be corrected. Francisco explained this in a most insightful manner:

> We are all here because of the injustice that our parents had to suffer … I should have been born in Slovenia.

Even though the majority did not intend to move to Slovenia, many perceive Slovenia as their true homeland.

Another person told me:

> After the [Slovene] independence some of us returned to Slovenia. I have returned although I was born in Argentina. However, my spiritual homeland has always been Slovenia.

Most Argentinean Slovenes obtained dual (Slovene-Argentinean) citizenship soon after Slovene independence in 1991. Those who migrated to Slovenia settled there as Slovene citizens. Often they engaged in exactly the same practices of integration and community construction as are present in their community in Argentina. These include formal association of 'return expatriates', attending church with an Argentinean mass and sending their children to Saturday 'Argentinean' school. I was told they participate in such activities because they want themselves and their children to remember their other homeland (*patria*) and their Argentinean lifestyle and 'roots'. The same people who in Argentina spoke Slovene among themselves now often use Spanish in Slovenia.

CONCLUSION: HOW AMBIVALENCE REINSERTS ORIGINALITY

To conclude this paper, I shall return to Cecilija, a transnational migrant, who is simultaneously socially engaged in Slovenia and in her original society. Her daily life transgresses spatial boundaries – she enjoys the benefits of two citizenships and two homes and homelands (see also Portes 1997: 812; Repič 2004). Ambiguity and shifting between the two homelands and social involvements allow an apparent ambivalence of construction of social identities. Notions of being a Slovene in Argentina or an Argentine in Slovenia as well as other aspects of identification became more fluid and ambivalent. Clearly, when such ambiguity of belongings and spatial attachments exists, the issue of imagining one's identity is far from being straightforward. Crossing political, social and cultural boundaries appears to dilute original socio-cultural identities by encouraging or even compelling migrants either to redefine or establish new, ambivalent identities. However, the example of contemporary transnational migrations between Argentina and Slovenia shows that ambivalent identities can in fact reinsert 'original' ones as individu-

als claim and (re)activate their origin, 'original' culture, belonging, citizenship and social identities.

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POVZETEK

AMBIVALENTNOST IDENTIFIKACIJ PRI TRANSNACIONALNIH MIGRACIJAH MED ARGENTINO IN SLOVENIJO

Jaka Repič

Članek obravnava ambivalentnost oziroma premakljivost identifikacij, ki spremljajo pretekle in sodobne migracije med Argentino in Slovenijo. Sodobne migracije med deželama so zgodovinsko in vzročno povezane s politično emigracijo oziroma begunstvom iz Slovenije po drugi svetovni vojni ter z oblikovanjem slovenske diaspore oziroma izseljenske skupnosti v Argentini. Begunci so iz Jugoslavije pobegnili iz strahu pred komunistično revolucijo, ki se je začela ob koncu vojne. Po prečkanju meja so se sprva naselili v begunskih taboriščih v Avstriji in Italiji, od koder so se pozneje razselili po svetu – samo v Argentino se je med letoma 1947 in 1949 priselilo več kot šest tisoč ljudi iz Slovenije. Relativno vključujoč argentinski model multikulturalizma in identitetne politike je omogočal oblikovanje slovenske izseljenske skupnosti, ki je ohranjala in rekonstruirala simbolne povezave z domovino. Povojni imigranti in njihovi potomci so socialno identiteto utemeljevali predvsem na konceptu porekla in domovine ter na kolektivnem izkustvu begunstva.

Sodobne transnacionalne ali »povratne« migracije se močno razlikujejo od povojnih migracij. Večina sodobnih imigrantov iz Argentine kot del migracijske strategije uporabi poreklo in (dvojno) državljanstvo, mnogi potomci prvotnih migrantov pa svojo migracijo razumejo celo kot vrnitev domov, v prvotno domovino. V takšnih okoliščinah socialne identitete postanejo prekrivajoče, a tudi premakljive in ambivalentne. Migranti se lahko prosto premikajo med obema domovinama in so sočasno vključeni v različne socialne mreže in skupnosti. Takšna premakljivost pripadnosti različnim domovinam in skupnostim omogoča oblikovanje ambivalentnih identitet.

Vprašanje ambivalentnosti identifikacij je še posebej zanimivo. Prehajanje političnih, socialnih in kulturnih meja naj bi imelo učinek razkrajanja originalnih socio-kulturnih identitet. Migranti namreč svoje identitete redefinirajo ali oblikujejo nove, ambivalentne identitete. Primer sodobnih transnacionalnih migracij med Argentino in Slovenijo pa kaže na to, da ambivalentnost identitet dejansko vzpostavlja moč »originalnih« identitet, saj se posamezniki sklicujejo na svoje poreklo, izvorno kulturo in pripadnost ter v skladu s tem oblikujejo socialne in državljanske identitete.