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The Yugoslav Diaspora in Australia:  
from Long-Distance Nationalism  
to Disengagement

*Adriano Remiddi*

*IECOB - University of Bologna*

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from Long-Distance Nationalism to Disengagement**

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IECOB - University of Bologna**

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## Abstract

The Yugoslav diaspora constitutes a highly relevant phenomenon in the history of Australia, having contributed to altering the socio-cultural landscape of the country. Settled during four main immigration flows, over time Yugoslav immigrants witnessed the fostering of their respective ethno-national identities, leading to the rise of animosity and rivalry, especially among the royalist, anti-communist and secessionist fringes. The isolation from the homeland proved to be a “nursery of ethno-nationalism”, and the term diaspora itself assumed a disparaging and politicized connotation. Nevertheless, challenging the classical theories of long-distance nationalism, this paper argues that, in the aftermath of the disintegration of Yugoslavia, diaspora members gradually redefined their priorities, opting for disengagement from homeland affairs and softening of inter-ethnic tensions. This dynamic is evident in the Serb and Croat communities and can be understood as a result of the shift from assimilation policies to multiculturalism which occurred in the 1970s-80s, and the arrival of a new immigration cohort in the 1980s-90s; the interplay of these two factors has been reshaping the identity of the communities through the advance of dynamics of cosmopolitanism, hybridization, fluidity and acculturation.

Migration flows have been shaping history since antiquity as a major agent of change, provoking huge displacement of people and allowing for entire continents to be populated. Migration dynamics are particularly relevant for Australia, a country almost entirely peopled by migrants, second only to Israel in having the highest proportion of overseas-born in the total population.

Massive overseas migrations have also characterized the contemporary history of Southeastern Europe, where economic instability, wars, tyranny and political persecution have sent waves of expatriates abroad in search of safe shelter (Djordjevic 1989, 115). Particularly, the territory of what we today call former Yugoslavia has a legacy of more than a century and a half of international migration, in which Australia played a great role being one of the most relevant and attractive destinations (Ulrik 1995, 285).

Following an initial quiet coexistence experienced by the first immigrants in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, however, the settlement of the Yugoslav diaspora in Australia has often been problematic since it got nourished by political exiles and by the exacerbation of radical long-distance nationalism after World War II. Especially from the 1960s, anti-communist fringes of *émigrés* adopted violent behaviors, and particularly the Croat and Serb extremists were the authors of several terroristic undertakings directed against the Yugoslav government. These circumstances provoked the spread of a certain degree of prejudice against Southern Europeans in the Australian society, which are still very frequent and provoke misleading understandings of the real level of inter-ethnic clash today, in the wake of multicultural policies for diversity management, and the arrival of a younger cohort of immigrants.

The paper initially provides an essential socio-historical background of the Australian immigration process, and the settlement of the Yugoslav *émigrés*, also presenting an illustrative set of data on the composition of the different national communities. Subsequently, it focuses on the attempts of the Yugoslav establishments (over the decades and the different statehoods) to exploit the emigration flows in order to foster internal ethnic homogeneity and the nation-state building process. The paper later investigates the features of

long distance nationalism, how it affected the intra-ethnic relations of the Yugoslav migrants in Australia and their attitudes toward the homeland. Finally, it is analyzed the impact of multiculturalism and the demographic shift on the ethno-nationalist orientation of the diaspora, also resorting to the paradigmatic cases of the Serb and Croat immigrant communities.

This paper argues that the Yugoslav diaspora in Australia has recently been losing its identitarian feelings towards the homeland, disengaging from political participation and activism; it further explains how Australian multicultural policies proved to weaken possible threats linked to radical nationalism through measures of conflict prevention shaped so as to favor peaceful coexistence and social harmonization among the communities. It is however evident that these measures lead to widespread dynamics of cosmopolitanism, acculturation and social-conformism, which act against cultural relativism and entail a substantial identitarian loss.

### Australia as a Land of Immigration

The Commonwealth of Australia is the sixth largest country in the world, at the same time characterized by one of the lowest population densities on earth: only around 22 million inhabitants live on a surface of 7,682.300 square kilometers, less than 3 per km<sup>2</sup> (Jupp 2000, 73). Considering other major cities and towns, 86% of Australians live in urban areas, which makes Australia the most urbanized and, at the same time, depopulated country in the world, a place in which demographic growth through new arrivals has always represented the main alternative in the struggle for legitimation (Elder 2005, 98).

British captain James Cook's 1770 expedition marked the first settlement of Europeans on the Australian continent, which appeared to the British Empire as a "sort of gigantic social laboratory where to experiment with whatever kind of nation-building process

through human engineering" (ibidem, 103). Its first settlement was established in 1788 and, according to the logic of land appropriation, Australia was considered a *terra nullius*, which meant that the Aboriginals were recognized to be merely occupying the land and denied ownership, consequently being cut off from any power within the colonial system. During the first decades of colonization, the majority of settlers were prisoners and convicts, since until 1868 Australia was used as a detention colony of the Empire (ibidem, 100). From the late 1830s, the number of free settlers to the colony started to balance the number of incoming convicts thanks to the Gold Rush: a massive spontaneous immigration connected to the search and exploitation of gold mines which reshaped the social and economic development of Australia (Manning and Clark 1995, 259): at its apex in the 1870's, the overseas-born population increased from approximately 405.400 to 1.456.000 (Borrie 1994, 67).

The legacy of the Gold Rush was also a large Chinese community, the second ethnic group after the British component. According to the census of 1901, Australia was a predominantly British nation with a total population estimated around 3.770.000 inhabitants; of these, 2.939.000 were born in Australia by British ancestors, 685.000 were born in Britain, 74.000 in other European countries and 57.000 were Asians coming from China or the Pacific islands (ibidem, 145). Of all the different cultural groups which arrived in the colony, the Chinese were in fact perceived as "unsuitable to the white race" and a threat for the new independent Australia (Elder 2005, 106). The fear of an Asian invasion in Australia was reflected in a series of colonial legislation aimed to regulate the arrivals, a strident radicalized nationalism with the goal to protecting Australia from "undesirable outsiders", aimed at preventing what could somehow replicate the "original British invasion". This sort of repression was not only directed at Asian or Pacific immigrants, but also to other categories of "non-white" populations, which included Southern Europeans, such as Italians, Greeks, Balkan people and Middle-Easterners (Rutherford 2000, 10).



## The Key Inflows from Eastern and Southeastern Europe

The approach to foreign immigration faced a radical shift in paradigm in the aftermath of World War II, when the old fears about an invasion from Asia into the vulnerable Northern shores materialized after the Japanese bombing of Darwin: Australia was very close to being invaded and it was understood that a rapid increase in population was dramatically needed. Consequently, soon after the conflict the rhetoric in favor of building a “White Australia”<sup>1</sup> policy became redundant and anachronistic (Jupp, 1991, 95). Moreover, the 20<sup>th</sup> century not only marked the beginning of the economic shift from an agricultural-based society to a manufacturing power-house, but also the period when Australian government was put under international pressure to accept higher quotas for millions of displaced persons. These factors resulted in selective immigration becoming a central issue for the federal government. In the early post-war period Australia opened its doors to attract about 70.000 incomers annually. In such a context, the Minister for Immigration Arthur Calwell, who had formerly<sup>2</sup> expressed his deep commitment to the White Australia policy, “famously declaring that he hoped that for every foreign migrant there would be ten migrants from Britain” (Sherington 1980, 128), had to reconsider the inflow of targeted displaced persons initially from the Baltic and Eastern and Southern Europe (ibidem, 132). In fact, a successful compromise was found to avoid popular concern over a massive non-British immigration while addressing European pressures to let in war refugees: Calwell decided to admit to Australia a sample of “deliberately selected blue-eyed and blond-haired immigrants” from Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, which perfectly matched Australians’ expectations. The strategy turned out to be a success and led to Australians being more

1 The ‘White Australia policy’ was a piece of legislation established with the adoption of the Immigration Restriction Act in December 1901, to limit non-British migration to Australia and allowed for the deportation of ‘undesirable’ immigrants who had settled in any Australian colony prior to its federation.

2 Department of Immigration and Citizenship (nd), Immigration Timeline; <http://www.immi.gov.au/about/anniversary/immigration-timeline.htm>

open to the very idea of non-British settling due to benefits they brought to the country. This paved the way for broadening the scope of acceptable ethnic groups and opening to a massive inflow of migrants from a wider set of countries such as Poland, the Balkans, the Mediterranean basin and eventually also the Middle East (Elder 2005, 109).

In the following period, between 1948 and 1957, only less than 30% of the arrivals were from the United Kingdom, and the main non-Anglo-Saxon intakes were from Yugoslavia, Italy, Greece and Malta (Birsá 1994, 1). This wave mirrored the victory of geostrategic and economic needs over the vision of a “white nation”. The post-war immigration program proved to be a gigantic achievement for the Australian governments: in less than 20 years, by 1966, the total population had increased by five million people and, at the beginning of the 1970s, the new immigration policies had completely reshaped the features of the Australian population (Jupp 2000, 75). Over two million people characterized by a wide ethnic diversity had arrived in the country, thanks to the inflows from Asia and the Pacific, and the bilateral or multilateral agreements established with European governments, the last of which was signed with Tito’s Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the 1970s (ibidem, 75).

Despite being a success in quantitative terms, the massive immigration driven by *assimilation* principles had generated substantial inequality and lack of economic integration. Large portions of the migrant population remained economically, socially and politically disadvantaged compared to the British component, resulting in significant numbers of immigrants who returned to their homelands frustrated with the life-style offered by Australia (during the 1960s approximately 50.000 people left every year)<sup>3</sup>. On the other hand, the gradual shift to the multicultural approach (adopted in the early 1980s) led to a significant shift in public opinion against the massive immigration policies, with the spread of ideas that the change in agenda had been too rapid (Castless 1992, 171). Such a discontent culminated in 1996 when the newly established political party *One Nation*, inspired by conservative and rightist thought, reached the apex of its popularity, reflecting the conviction that certain categories of immigrants were too far from the Australian way of life to be

3 Ibidem

integrated. Despite the harsh debate, conservative resentment did not impede the implementation of open immigration policies during the 1990s, which opened the door, among others, to large numbers of refugees from the Yugoslav wars (Elder 2005, 111).

### Yugoslavia(s)<sup>4</sup> as a 'sending' country

The history of the Yugoslav emigration overseas can be classified into four distinctive flows: the first dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century until the Balkan Wars of 1912-13; the second from the Balkan Wars until the end of World War I; the third beginning with the interwar period and World War II until the 1970s; the last generated by the 1990s Yugoslav conflicts.

Migrations in 19<sup>th</sup> century were caused by profound crises which seized the Ottoman empire and by agrarian-national revolutions giving birth to the modern Balkan states. Migrations in these years were sporadic<sup>5</sup>, disorganized and spontaneous reactions of the population to abuses and pressures coming from foreign authorities (Djordjevic 1989, 124). Southern Slavs appeared in Australia in noticeable numbers<sup>6</sup> just at the end of the century, reaching 3000 people up to 1914. (Kosinzki 1978, 315)

4 Here is considered the historical space which included the rule over the Western Balkan region of the Ottoman Empire and of the Austro-Hungarian Kingdom from mid-19<sup>th</sup> century; the subsequent formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (SHS) from 1918 to 1929; the Kingdom of Yugoslavia from 1929 to 1945, and finally the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from 1945 to 1991, with its successor states.

5 According to the written evidence available, the first Croat who arrived in Australia in 1852 was named Bartul Mirkovic from Trpanj, on the Peljesac peninsula (Sutalo 2004, 104).

6 In the first period over 3000 people arrived in Australia up to 1914. There is, however, a substantial lack of reliability over data about emigration in Australia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, because of the naturalization records as a source of information concerning the settlers. Moreover, it is estimated 30% of arrivals had left again and did not settle permanently due to unsatisfactory integration also due to the lack of policies on gender balance that had undoubtedly influenced this return (Price 1963, 98)

The larger wave began with the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 and lasted until around the mid-1920s. This emigration flow was the result of wars and the new adjustments of the Balkan political maps (ibidem, 318). This was the time of the first systematic migration flow organized by state authorities and documented for the first time (Sundhaussen 2011, 172). In this period, 10.4% of the Balkan population was affected by migratory movements in 1912 and nearly 6% of the post-World War I Balkan states. At the end of the war, more than 8000 people who had fled the Balkans were living in Australia: the majority were Croats (80%), with significant numbers of Macedonians (8%) and Serbs<sup>7</sup> (8%) (Djordjevic 1989, 118).

However, substantial emigration began after WWII, when Australia opened its doors to war refugees and displaced people. The first post-war waves consisted mostly of Catholic Croats and Slovenes, as well as minority members (Italians, Hungarians), while Serbs constituted one quarter (Kosinzki 1978, 333). This period was also characterized, among other things, by the Nazi resettlement and expulsion actions in the Yugoslav sphere of influence (including Slovenes, Germans, Bosnians) the ethnic cleansing in the Independent State of Croatia, especially against the Serb population and the persecution of minorities in the territories of Yugoslavia annexed to Hungary and Italy (Sundhaussen 2011, 173).

In the third period, between 1948 and 1952, about 25,000 Yugoslav nationals arrived in Australia as displaced persons. Between 1953 and 1960 there was a steady stream of several thousand leaving Yugoslavia annually, as well as persons permitted to join their families, or sponsored by relatives in Australia. Starting with the 1960s, migration for mainly economic reasons increased as a direct initiative of the Government of Yugoslavia: the government regarded emigration as a necessary stage in the socio-economic development of the country, and the eventual return of these emigrants was perceived as an important element in the transformation of the economy (Birska 1994, 19) This was the most dynamic immigration period in terms of the influx of settlers from Yugoslavia which reached its peak of more than 50,000 people over the course of two years, from July 1969 to June 1971 (ibidem, 54).

7 The reference to the ethnicity (Croat, Serb...) will be prioritized in this paper instead of the one on nationality (Croatian, Serbian...) as the main focus here is the role of primordial belonging and loyalty to the ethno-national cause.

The fourth period followed the conflicts of the 1990s, and the independence of the SFRY successor states. The number of refugees in this phase was even larger than in the previous one, as over 4 million people were affected overall. This relevant outflow has re-shaped the identity of the post-Yugoslav communities in Australia as we see them today (Sundhaussen 2011, 174). However, diasporic movements from the Balkans to Australia and overseas remain a vivid ongoing process, as countries of the former Yugoslavia continue to be lands of emigration, both permanent and temporary.

**Table 1 - Main sources of immigration to Australia 1949-2000 (%)**

Computing together the several components of the Yugoslav emigration to Australia we see how in the period considered, this is the sixth main flow of immigration, the first among Southern European countries, as well as the first among Eastern Europeans.

<i>Countries of Origin</i>	<i>1949-50</i>	<i>1959-60</i>	<i>1969-70</i>	<i>1979-80</i>	<i>1989-90</i>	<i>1999-'00</i>
New Zealand	1,9	1,3	2,7	16,3	9,2	237
United Kingdom	28,2	36,1	41,6	21,5	21,1	10,8
China	0,8	0,4	0,2	1,6	2,5	7,4
South Africa	0,3	0,4	0,2	1,6	2,5	7,4
India	0,7	0,4	2,1	1,0	2,5	5,0
<b>Former Yugoslavia</b>	<b>0,8</b>	<b>6,0</b>	<b>14,2</b>	<b>2,1</b>	<b>1,6</b>	<b>4,6</b>
Philippines	n. a.	n. a.	0,1	2,5	5,0	3,5
Malaysia	0,4	0,2	0,5	2,0	5,3	1,9
Vietnam	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	16,0	9,2	1,6
Hong Kong	0,3	0,0	0,2	1,0	6,6	1,6
Germany	34,5	9,0	2,2	1,5	0,9	0,8
Netherlands	1,7	8,9	1,5	1,5	0,4	0,5
Poland	3,0	1,8	0,3	1,7	1,4	0,2
Italy	9,3	15,4	5,6	1,3	0,3	0,2
Austria	3,7	1,9	0,5	0,3	0,2	0,1
Greece	1,1	5,9	5,9	1,1	0,3	0,1
Other	13,3	12,2	21,9	25,4	31,5	31,7
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>184,9</b>	<b>105,9</b>	<b>185,1</b>	<b>80,7</b>	<b>121,2</b>	<b>92,3</b>

*Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2011*

**Table 2 - Top 10 national groups per country of birth**

In this chart, incomers from Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia are computed together.

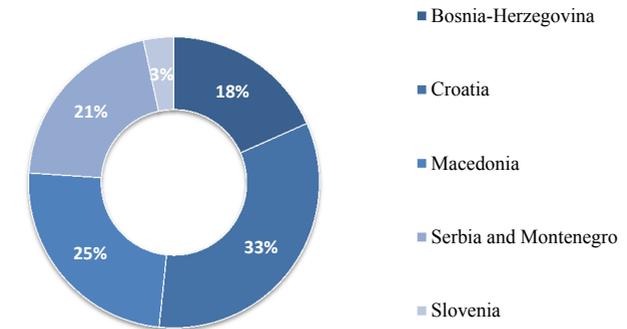
	<b>Country</b>	<b>Population</b>
1	United Kingdom	1180160
2	New Zealand	564920
3	People Republic of China	391060
4	India	343070
5	Vietnam	212070
6	Italy	209750
7	Former Yugoslavia	200236
8	Philippines	183010
9	South Africa	157630
10	Malaysia	137690
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3579596</b>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2011

**Table 3 - Estimated resident population by country of birth**

	Male	Female	Total
Bosnia Herzegovina	9207	9251	18458
Croatia	59308	58743	118051
Macedonia	42566	41412	83978
Serbia	47932	47432	95364
Montenegro	632	539	1171
Slovenia	7929	8156	16085
<b>Total</b>	<b>167.574</b>	<b>165.533</b>	<b>333.107</b>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2011

**Figure 1 - Current composition of the Yugoslav diaspora by country of origin**

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2011

## Creating a Yugoslav Diaspora

The word diaspora has Greek roots. It derives from the verb *spiro* (to sow or to scatter) and the preposition *dia* (over). The origins of its contemporary use lie in the Jewish tradition and the idea of the “Babylonian exile” connotated by expulsion, persecution, enslavement and implying the prospect of return. By definition, those in exile are to cultivate their native traditions and culture in preparation for a return to the ‘promised land’ (Hockenos 2003, 8). However, the Babylonian model presents the narrowest possible identity for diaspora groups. More recently, in fact, the lively discourse that has arisen around the notion of global diaspora, the Babylonian “victim typology” is deemed inadequate to make sense of today’s heterogeneous transnational communities, as it discounts other kinds of migrations such as economic emigration or voluntary expatriation (ibidem, 9). The purpose here is

to employ a flexible definition which includes immigrant families and their subsequent generations, as ultimately a diaspora is made up of individuals who define themselves as such, and are accepted as its members, but also diaspora will be considered as a top-down creation, by political elites in both current and historical terms.

It was during the interwar period that the Yugoslav elites had turned their attention to emigration. They were primarily impressed by the sheer number of what they considered Yugoslav emigrants, therefore it was considered to make emigration useful for the nation (Brunnbauer 2012, 607).

There were two main political reasons for implementing nationalized emigration policies: ethnic homogenization of Yugoslavia's population, and long-distance nation building.

Homogenization was driven by the will to realize a single Yugoslav state which embodied the political manifestation of the South Slavs' historic aspiration to unity and independence (ibidem, 609). In such a way, pressures were made to facilitate the permanent emigration of non-Slavs, while discourage the emigration of members of the tri-national group (Serbs, Croats and Slovenes). As reported by the director of the Emigration Commissariat in Zagreb, Fedor Aranicki in 1926: "almost half of the emigrants were a-national elements: One of the tasks of our emigration policy is to exert influence over the emigration of the "a-national" minorities (...) in order to return the affected regions to their original national character" (ibidem, 614).

On the other hand, and this will be the focus of this article, those emigrants of "Yugoslav" extraction were considered "dislocated members" of the nation and therefore had to be turned into a Yugoslav diaspora by policies of long distance nation-building. The need to create transnational policies of nation-building was moved by the will to take advantage of a united Yugoslav Diaspora (ibidem, 611) with the purpose to create a sense of attachment to the Kingdom and the identification as Yugoslavs. The policy addressed particularly those emigrants who had left before the Kingdom was created, and had never been exposed to the notion of Yugoslavism. In such cases, in fact, emigrants did not possess any sense of national identity and used to primarily identify themselves as members of the single ethnic groups or rather use a regional

identity, describing themselves as Dalmatians, Herzegovinians (Price 1963, 98).

Moreover, another collateral aim of the emigration policies in the post-WWII period was the adoption of political exile programs shaped for "counterrevolutionaries", "provocateurs" and rightist-fascist heroes who fled to Argentina, Canada, America, South Africa and Australia, cultivating the dream of a "triumphant return". Political exiles were considered a "reactionary sixth column that schemed to overthrow the socialist state" and there is ample evidence that these overseas communities had mobilized due to ethno-nationalist issues (Hockenos 2003, ix) to the extent that on the margins of the Cold War, agents sent by SFRY president Josip Broz Tito, commissioned agents to track down hostile exile agitators in the USA, Australia and Western Europe, infiltrating their organizations and eliminating their leaders (ibidem 2003, 2).

## Diaspora and Dynamics of Long Distance Nationalism

What are, in fact, the features of long distance nationalism in an émigrés community? How did they affect the intra-communities' relations of the Yugoslav migrants in Australia? Did they reach any significant violent outcome? And finally, what is its legacy today? We will answer these questions primarily using the case of the dichotomic relations between Serb and Croat immigrant communities.<sup>8</sup>

Long-distance nationalism is a theory authored by Benedict Anderson<sup>9</sup> in 1992, which moves from the idea that the "exile is a nursery

<sup>8</sup> The emigration of Slavs from Macedonia for instance proven to be particularly challenging too: many of them joined pro-Bulgarian or anti-Yugoslav nationalist organizations in America and Australia, supporting the separation of the Serb-controlled part of Macedonia from Yugoslavia and its accession to Bulgaria.

<sup>9</sup> The theory was initially published in "Long-distance nationalism: World capitalism and the rise of identity politics" as part of the working paper series of the Amsterdam based Center for Asian Studies, and later expanded and applied to the regional context in "The Spectre of Comparison: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World." Published in 1998 by Verso, London

of nationalism”. This connotes a strengthening of the perception of national borders and is connected to the idea that emigrants are more conservative and nationalist than their fellow compatriots at home. In this sense, the theory confronts us with the paradox that migrants, though physically loosening their ties to the homeland, at the same time engage in the imaginary process of re-approaching it from a distance: while leaving home and becoming a part of a new society in a new country, émigrés tend to grow the imaginary of national purity, despite being away from the homeland (Colic-Peisker 2008, 16). Consequently, members of the diaspora are well seen as part of the political nation, therefore they are allowed (and expected) not only to vote from abroad, but are also called upon for financial and political support. Diaspora communities, in fact, often function as a source of ideological, economic and political aid for national movements in the homeland, also able to influence foreign policy (Winland 2004, 77).

Long-distance nationalism traditionally arises in times of crisis or conflict and is specifically characterized by a discourse on historical injustice and violence (Colic-Peisker 2008, 22). Turbulent developments in the homeland confirm and reinforce the ethnic community through a process of “nationalist” imagining and consciousness raising. This circumstance is evident among the Balkan immigrant communities overseas, whose substantial early equilibrium was definitely altered by the outcomes of World War II (ibidem, 175). In fact, until the mid-war years, there was no relevant barrier between the various ethnic groups settled on the continent, including the State of Victoria and its capital Melbourne, where the largest Balkan component was settled. However, the situation drastically changed in the mid-1940s and after World War II, when ethnicity and political consciousness became key issues (Radmanovic 1990, 134), leading to the eruption of an “identitarian awakening”, and the (self)recognition of expatriates in an epic and common “we” (ibid, 48).

Especially from the 1970s onward, political engagement in homeland issues has become a central feature in the Croatian diaspora life, being traditionally linked to the struggle for an independent Croatian State. The great majority of Croatian diaspora initiatives were dedicated to lobbying host governments and awareness-raising through protests and press, but Croat expatriates overseas were also found responsible

of several terroristic activities<sup>10</sup> through which they gained attention all over the globe (Winland 2004, 78). This kind of radical political activism of diaspora Croats was faithful to anti-Yugoslavism and anti-Titoism (Hockeonos 2003, 56). The main Croat nationalist organization in Australia was the *Ustasha*<sup>11</sup> ideology inspired Croatian Liberation Movement (HOP), which had its headquarters in Buenos Aires and 4 other branches all over the world, including Australia. The main activities of HOP were the promotion of ultra-nationalist sentiment through the continuous propaganda and recruiting newcomers; the organization of military trainings in preparation for terrorist raids (Jurjevic 1973, 42).

Similarly, anti-communist sentiments were the foundation of Serb diaspora nationalism. Serb immigrants seriously challenged the Communist regime in Belgrade, since a relevant component of Serb expatriates in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was conservative royalist, or in any case anti-Titoist. During the Cold War era, royalist emigrants joined radical organizations such as the Serbian National Defense Council (SND) nurturing *Chetnik*<sup>12</sup> ideals (Hockeonos 2003, 116). Occasionally a radical fringe of the diaspora would imitate the “kamikaze stunts” of their Croat counterparts<sup>13</sup>.

Both cases of strong political activism among Croats and Serbs during the post-World War II period, show how the diaspora embodied a problem rather than a tool for the “Yugoslav homeland”, to such an extent that the term “émigré” assumed a highly politicized meaning and was used by the Yugoslav authorities as a disparaging epithet to refer to enemies of the state (Colic-Peisker 2008, 78). It is meaningful that despite president Tito’s interest in strengthening ties with emigrants

10 In 1972 two members of the Croat diaspora assassinated the Yugoslav ambassador to Sweden and in later in the same year a crowd of Croatian exiles belonging to the radical organization Croatian National Defense hijacked a civil plane to raise international awareness of alleged Yugoslav repression of Croats. Another notable examples during the same period are the explosion of bombs at the Yugoslav Embassy in Milan, at the Central Station of New York City and at the Kennedy Airport.

11 The Ustasha is a pro-fascist far-right movement organized in Vienna at the beginning of the 1930s by the radical wing of Croat anti-Yugoslav exiled, and led by Ante Pavelić.

12 The Chetnik is Serb nationalist paramilitary organization created after the surrender of the Yugoslav Royal Army in 1941 and driven by reactionary, strong anti-communist and royalist ideology. The movement was headed by Dragoljub Mihailović.

13 In 1975, an SNDC’s component bombed the suburban home of the Yugoslav consul in Chicago, the first of a spate of attacks against Yugoslav state targets in the United States and Canada between 1975 and 1978.

and his meetings with diaspora leaders in Mexico, Bolivia, Chile, and the United States, he never traveled to Australia, where the “hostile emigrants” were supposedly dominant (Vuckovich 2000, 74). At a later stage, due to such degree of antagonisms, Yugoslav emigration policies did not substantially impact the creation of a Yugoslav national sentiment across the overseas communities, and just a minority of emigrants of Yugoslav extraction actually identified with the Yugoslav common nation (Brunnbauer 2012, 619).

It is only in the late 1980s that overseas expatriates regained a privileged place in the official political discourse in Yugoslavia. The word “emigrants,” was ostentatiously replaced by the word “diaspora”, to emphasize the ethnic connection with the homeland of all those living abroad. The political and politicized use of such a word emphasized the primordial naturalness of “blood and soil” connection and became connotative of a highly emotional, sentimental, and uncritical relationship to the homeland. (Colic-Peisker 2008, 159). During the disintegration of Yugoslavia, nationalist leaders highlighted the Diaspora’s willingness<sup>14</sup> to participate in the nation-building and matched it with expectations that those “dislocated members” would help in the time of need. Both Franjo Tuđman and Slobodan Milošević, respectively leaders of Croats and Serbs nationalists, had intuited that these compatriots would be instrumental to their plans.

A great example of how the long-distance nationalism can play a central role is represented by the celebrations of the sixth centennial of the Serbian kingdom’s defeat against the Ottoman Empire in 1387, organized by Slobodan Milošević on St. Vitus Day in June 1989, marking a radical change in Serbia’s relations with its diaspora since thousands émigré joined the estimated one-million pilgrims who gathered on legendary Kosovo’s field (Hockeonus 2003, 5). On the same path, the first “Croatian World Congress” was held in 1992 with the purpose to raise political participation and funds for the new independent Croatian nation from the notable diaspora members, following a mobilization for the granting of the right to vote from distance at the first free elections (ibidem, 174)

14 This call was especially successful among the working-class cohort.

## The Generational Shift

Undoubtedly, the abovementioned theory according to which conflicts and wars in the homeland awaken patriotism among expatriates, perfectly matches the case of the Croat and Serb communities in the broader picture of the Yugoslav diaspora in Australia, which responded to a double call from the homeland with an outburst of double nationalistic frenzy. The public displays of inter-community ethnic hatred and rivalry happened in these decades were phenomena that Australian media invariably picked up and amplified. This has contributed to the creation of a still vivid image of Yugoslav immigrants and their descendants as a “fiercely nationalist and generally ideologically extremist community” (Colic-Peisker 2002, 64).

However, such a portrayal is nowadays deceptive and does not take into consideration the transformations and developments which occurred in the 1980s and 1990s, namely the impact of the arrival of a new cohort of immigrants, and the outcomes of multicultural policies.

The first great change that reshaped the identity of the Balkan minority in Australia is the generational shift which occurred between those who arrived in the 1960s-1970s and the newcomers of 1980s-1990s. Those two migrant cohorts do not form a single ethnic community: the former is a traditional community of the working-class, low-skilled and -educated, based on common place or region of origin, common religion and dialect, while the latter is unavoidably much more modern, secular, professionally based, highly skilled and educated, thus more open-minded (Colic-Peisker 2008, 172). The communities of the 1960s-1970s cohort conformed in many ways to the traditional definition of diaspora, incorporating the “emotional–nostalgic” and often political connections to the homeland. whereas the 1980s-1990s professional cohort do not follow such patterns. The communities of the 1960s-1970s cohort conformed in many ways to the traditional definition of diaspora, incorporating the “emotional–nostalgic” and often political connections to the homeland, whereas

the 1980s-1990s professional cohort do not follow such patterns. This more educated and skilled group migrated at a time when communist myths were being deconstructed and replaced by nationalist mythology, many left the complex, “myth-saturated homelands” looking for a more stable environment and were reluctant to accept another grand-mythology, the one of the diaspora (ibidem, 178). Instead of looking at the past, they preferred to invest into their integration within the host country, and establish themselves there financially. This is why, in this migrant wave, one’s profession and social recognition took the place of traditional, locally defined ethnicity as a primary source of affiliation and identification. They are “transnational in a cosmopolitan sense”, beyond the ethno-national principle, which is why the ideas of ethnic belonging and diaspora are peripheral in defining either their communities or their identities (Colic-Peisker 2002, 31).

As a result, during the 2000s, as soon as the political situation in former Yugoslavia stabilized and political passions subsided among most of the communities, older nationalist-oriented members became less inclined to seek the support of the newly settled compatriots, and consequently the overall communities started to politically “demobilize” (ibidem, 173). The second and third generations are nowadays successfully integrated into mainstream Australian society, and many of them experience significant social mobility compared to their working-class families. The community is gradually becoming increasingly ‘mainstream’, while their ethnic character is constantly diminishing. In such a way, the form and substance of the Yugoslav community activism, image and public representation is rapidly becoming something that the mainstream Australian public can access and appreciate more easily, and the engagement of a new generation represents a precious contribution to Australian multiculturalism (ibidem, 65).

## Impact of the Australian Multicultural Policies

The other crucial element that allowed the substantial softening of the long-distance nationalism and ethnic rivalries, was the late 1980s adoption of multicultural policies, with which the Australian liberal governments aimed to foster the integration of foreign communities into a pluralist society, opening the floor for the normalization of intra-community relations.

At least since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, public debate in Australia has been strictly concerned with the impact of varied ethnicities on social cohesion (Jupp, Nieuwenhuysen, Dawson 2007, 18). Even though Australia is nowadays amongst the most cohesive and harmonious societies, based on stable institutions, high living standards and economic growth its immigration policies have been a struggle between two extremes: assimilation and multiculturalism (ibidem, 9). When each of this was initially proposed and consequently put into practice, they were regarded at that time as being the ideal and ultimate answer to Australia’s immigration problems.

As in other colonial and post-colonial contexts, assimilation was regarded as necessary to fit the immigration into the Anglo-Saxon society, and the mean trough which this would be achieved was the “substantial subordination of the new comers culture” (Jupp 2002, 21). The emphasis on British superiority created direct connotation of racial and cultural discrimination against the non-British people living in Australia, to such an extent that the dominant tone of the Anglo-conformity has been viewed as the main reason why the assimilation policy became highly disputed. In fact, the the assimilation strategy proved for its objectives to be far too unrealistic as non-British migrants were expected to gradually assimilate into existing Australian society, thus becoming fully “Australianized”. It was hoped that this people would eventually become indistinguishable from the dominant culture and this process was intended to be put into effect as quickly as possible without considering that for a migrant it was

difficult enough for example to adjust to a new urban environment, since great cohorts of them came from rural areas, as in the very case of the Southern Europeans (Birsa 1994, 208).

The failure of the assimilation policy in the course of the 1970s provoked the switch to the gradual adoption of multicultural approach (ibid, 205). Multiculturalism was a neologism, coined and developed in Canada in response to political pressure from minority cultures, including the consistent arrival of Ukrainians and other Slavs (Jupp 2002, 86). Following such a model, Australian government opted for proactive interventionist settlement policies, in contrast to the American *laissez-faire* version which led from an assimilation into the so called “melting pot”.

The Australian approach to multiculturalism aimed to answer to the basic question of “how to make sure that non-British immigrants<sup>15</sup> are integrated into Australian society?”. The foundation document of Australian way to multiculturalism is the report presented to the cabinet of prime minister Malcom Fraser in April 1978 by Frank Galbally listing the following pillars: “a) all members of our society must have equal opportunity to realize their full potential and must have equal access to programs and services; b) every person should be able to maintain his or her culture without prejudice or disadvantage and should be encouraged to understand and embrace other cultures; c) needs of migrants should, in general, be met by programs and services available to the whole community but special services and programs are necessary at present to ensure equality of access and provision; d) services and programs should be designed and operated in full consultation with clients, and self-help should be encouraged as much as possible with a view to helping migrants to become self-reliant quickly” (Moran 2006, 44). The central importance of the report lies in its recognition that ultimately ethnic groups themselves must take on the task of advising the government on the needs and priorities of migrants, and ensuring that ethnic cultures are fostered and preserved (Jupp 2002, 88).

<sup>15</sup> The term ‘non-English-speaking background’ (NESB) was coined to describe this target group.

The Galbally report<sup>16</sup> inaugurated a historical shift: it defined the main principle that constituted the multicultural Australian society, based on social cohesion and pluralism of identity. This meant that everyone living there, no matter where they were born, was responsible in some way for the well-being of their country. With a policy of multiculturalism incorporating these principles, Australia’s population was expected to embrace the idea of being community-oriented, so that everyone is perceived as an individual; is encouraged to retain all aspects of their ethnic culture, and to respect one another for the diversity they represent (Birsa 1994, 207).

Since its implementation, Australian multiculturalism has been a strong force governing ideas of community relations and emigration policy, with the country being very proactive in integrating people from many nations and cultures into one plural society, respecting people’s differences and providing opportunities to belong and participate as full members (Andrews 2007, 45). The application of multiculturalism has served to the advantage of migrants and their families by restoring their dignity as individuals and by allowing them the freedom to practice their culture and tradition without any inhibition (Birsa 1994, 219).

However, Australian multicultural policies’ attempt to orient new ethnic communities towards the host culture may account for a dual and conflicting relation, due to the feeling of being in-between the homeland, and the host culture (Kolar-Panov 2003, 108). Such a dynamic of integration into the mainstream-culture and participation in local social and cultural life has often led to process of “acculturation”. Such a dynamic of integration into the mainstream-culture and participation in Australian social and cultural life has often led to process of “acculturation”. Acculturation implies that groups and individuals may retain varied behavior, so long as they do so within the privacy of their own homes or communities (Jupp 2002, 23). In the process of acculturation, immigrants learn the “new culture” (language, behavioral norms, and customs) identified with the host nation “and tend to detach from their one” (Colic-Peisker 2008, 74). Acculturation into the Australian way was not perceived as simply gaining bicultural (or multicultural) competencies, but rather as

<sup>16</sup> This is the first occasion on which a report commissioned by the Commonwealth has been tabled in the Parliament in ethnic languages other than English, including Serbo-Croatian.

a merger into Western norm, perceived as the globally dominant one: familiarity with this global culture and with the English language as the global *lingua franca* allows access to global information, networks and opportunities, something this migrant cohort did not fail to see or use. This process inevitably dissolved, partially or entirely, the community long-distance nationalism, and modernized the ethnic identity in the host country, inevitably changing its traditional style and moving its public representation beyond traditional features (ibidem, 217).

Another dynamic that weakened the community identitarian feelings is the the rising of cosmopolitan orientations, as a detachment from domestic matters and concerns in the homeland (ibidem, 153). Cosmopolitanism is strictly related to the privilege of mobility and implies the forging of a fluid personal identity, due to the intense cross-cultural experiences and to the exposure to different professional contexts, but also being opposed to the constrains of normative ethnic belonging, understood in a primordial way as rooted in blood and soil (ibidem, 11). Cosmopolitanism may lead to the development of a hybrid identity, weakening the emotional impact of the idea of homeland (loss, pain, nostalgia...) and becoming a cultural legacy that upholds cultural, intellectual and artistic creativity (Birsa 1994, 38). What is created in the hybridization process is a new culture which is neither authentically host nor alien. This process not only makes it increasingly difficult for any kind of ethno-separate and ethno-specific culture to be maintained alive across generations, but also ensures that the “cultural hybrid” retains its ethnic dimensions in a form of a mere symbolic ethnicity. Finally in this leveling process, the homeland and the language there spoken often loses the importance it had for the first and second-generation migrants (and less often the third one) since the cultural distance between the host ethnic cultures shrinks and tends to result in a greater degree of self-identification as, in our case, Australian (Kolar-Panov 2003, 10).

## Conclusion

In this paper we argued that, in the absence of conflict in the homeland, and as a result both of the multicultural cohesion policies and the more recent generational shift, the members of the Yugoslav diaspora communities have redefined their priorities, opting for a disengagement from the ethno-national orientations.

In fact, Australian multiculturalism has proven to put less emphasis on cultural maintenance than in the Canadian case (Jupp 2002, 85) and, as a result, younger generations are absorbing the domestic lifestyle and values, which paved the way to an “Australianization” of their behaviours and of the activities undertaken by the several national associations in the country (Radmanovic 1990, 144). In this context it can be stated that multiculturalism has directly contributed to creating a certain progressive cultural loss with each new generation of children and therefore within the communities, where young people born and raised in Australia have more and more chances to successfully fit in with what for their own parents or grandparents was an alien culture (ibidem, 117).

In this sense it is evident that Australian multicultural policies remain “ethnocentric” and immigrants are expected to adopt and share the core values by “displaying social conformism” to the mainstream standard (Colic-Peisker 2008, 76). This has occurred because the Australian kind of multiculturalism has placed a minor focus on cultural relativism, being more concerned with ensuring immigrants a peaceful and harmonious coexistence, lately representing a gentle form of assimilation (Jupp 2002, 121).

Undoubtedly, in terms of homeland security, the outcome of such multicultural policies appears to have paid off, granting Australia great internal stability, though at a substantial indentitarian loss for the foreign communities there settled, as in the case of the Yugoslav diaspora.



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## Short bio

Adriano Remiddi is a graduate research assistant at the Institute for Central-Eastern and Balkan Europe, University of Bologna (Italy), and the Programme Coordinator at the European Regional Master's in Human Rights and Democracy in South East Europe (University of Bologna and University of Sarajevo) part of the Global Campus of Human Rights. From the a.y. 2014/15, he coordinated the Central European Initiative International Summer Schools (21st, 22nd and 23rd editions). Previously he worked as assistant to the director at the CCSDD, Johns Hopkins University SAIS Europe. Mr. Remiddi published academic papers for "Balkan Social Science Review", the "Global Campus Human Rights Journal" and "PECOB/University of Bologna"; also he wrote analyses for "LIMES-Italian Review of Geopolitics" (Rome) and "Foreign Affairs Portal" (Warsaw). His expertise is on post-socialist transition and European integration in CEE and SEE, democracy and human rights, migration and diaspora studies.

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