On the cold morning of 31 October 1994, the day before All Saints’ Day – which in Croatia is devoted to visiting family graves – I was standing at the arrival platform of Zagreb central bus station for more than three hours. I was waiting for a bus from Frankfurt am Main to bring a package sent by my aunt who has lived in Germany since the early 1960s. My memory of that day is extremely vivid, first and foremost for the feeling of nausea and suffocation due to the continuous inhalation of exhaust fumes, but also for the fact that, although freezing, I did not dare to enter the station building: I was afraid of missing “my” bus. The only way to recognise it among the five buses that arrived from Frankfurt within those three hours was by the number-plate, since the same company ran them all. Not one of them had an exact arrival time. It could not be checked at any of the counters either, but only discussed with more experienced people waiting there with me. Minimum and maximum calculations were made: emptying the bus for a thorough customs check at some of the borders can take hours.

Eventually, a heavy cardboard box containing presents for my children, clothes and household items, was handed over to me. I just had to tell the driver who was sending it, once I had reached him through the excited crowd of people elbowing their way closer to the bus. Those people were leaning over and stepping onto the heaps of suitcases, boxes and bags growing on both sides of the bus, trying to get hold of their luggage and organise their own heaps of overloaded pieces. They were huging their relatives with exclamations of joy, shouting, smiling, sighing and looking tired.

Although I was not then professionally interested in Croatian Gastarbeiter (in vernacular Croatian, the German term has been adopted), I remember my own amazement and mixed feelings over the quantity and the variety of objects being taken out of all the buses’ orifices. Parts of machines needed in peasant households, a roll of wire fencing, a child-size bicycle, huge boxes of washing powder plastic bags containing Made in Germany toys and oversize packages of sweets were appearing, along with immense quantities of suitcases.

My amazement and mixed feelings were not coming from total lack of experience with Gastarbeiter lives. As so many other Croats, I have several extended family members living abroad as economic migrants. It was the number of the buses, arriving one after the other, that “put things in proportion”: it is important to visit the graves on All Saints’ Day, and living abroad is not really an excuse for not doing so. They were the items of everyday use: were they carried from Germany to save money, to express care, to show off, to feel needed, to meet obligations, or to try to balance the living standards of post-war Croatia with that of Western Europe? My mixed feelings also included pity: the one long-distance bus trip I experienced myself made me understand that it can be difficult to endure. My own physical discomfort, due to the long waiting, suddenly seemed complementary to the travellers’ obvious exhaustion – we were all engaging in a single project of connecting places, which can leave unpleasant bodily memories.

Transnationalism, Transmigrants, Transnational Social Fields
The aim of this article is to shed light on some aspects of situating identities within

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a transnational framework. The practice of personal travel as a means of maintaining transnational social fields is focused upon. A micro-ethnographic study is presented of a bus ride between Sweden and Croatia. I argue for the central importance of fieldwork in ethnological/anthropological understandings of transnational practices and their implications, and discuss some methodological concerns.

The material I am using refers exclusively to people who can be classified as immigrants; here conceptualised as transmigrants. It includes labour migrants and their families, as well as people who came to Sweden as refugees. Their transnational practices are connected to some aspects of ethnic identification processes as I see and explain them in the frames of research on the construction of identities in diaspora and exile, which deals with Croatian immigrants living in Sweden since the 1960s and Croats who came to Sweden as refugees (mostly from Bosnia–Hercegovina) in the 1990s. This article, thus, touches upon a topic that is marginal to the main purpose of my research, but nevertheless central to numerous immigrants’ efforts to connect to distant places. It is in those places, but also in the very practice of connecting them, where their identities are situated.

From the perspective of my research, transnationalism is a useful concept, although its appropriation within different disciplines has been accompanied by an increasing ambiguity. A systematic presentation of the relevant literature in the field of transnationalism is beyond the reach of this article. I will just concisely define the terms employed here.

Aihwa Ong’s (1994: 4) distinction is adopted, of transnationality as the condition of cultural interconnectedness and mobility across space and of transnationalism as referring to the cultural specificities of global processes. As I argued elsewhere (Povrzanović Frykman 2001a), transnationality is the significant context of identity formation in diaspora and exile, while transnationalism is “a process by which migrants, through their daily life activities and social, economic, and political relations, create social fields that cross national boundaries” (Basch et al. 1994: 22). People who connect significant elements of their social and cultural lives across national borders have been named transmigrants, and the social spaces and networks of their everyday life – transnational social fields or transnational social spaces. Differentiating between “space” and “field” and deciding which term might be more accurate, is not crucial in this article. I am aware of the problems with analytical conceptualizations of how transnational relations take place (cf. Guarnizo and Smith 1998: 27), but, together with Linda Basch and co-authors (1994), I use the term field for its metaphorical implications in the context of discussing the practices of covering the geographical distance. In this article, transnational social fields can be seen as interchangeable with transnational social spaces as defined by Thomas Faist:

Transnational social spaces consist of combinations of sustained social and symbolic ties, their contents, positions in networks and organizations, and networks and organizations that can be found in multiple states. These spaces denote dynamic processes, not static notions of ties and positions. Cultural, political, and economic processes in transnational social spaces involve the accumulation, use, and effects of various sorts of capital, their volume and convertibility: economic capital, human capital, such as educational
credentials, skills and know-how, and social capital, mainly resources inherent in or transmitted through social and symbolic ties (Faist 2000: 199–200).

The notion of *diaspora* needs to be discussed briefly, too. For their transnational existence and for making efficient use of many up-to-date communication possibilities, diasporas have been regarded as “the exemplary communities of the transnational moment” (Tökölyan 1991: 4). Yet, diaspora implies a group identity, or even a community, while transnational experiences do not necessarily depend on belonging to a group. It is precisely the community-building potential of a transnational practice I am going to discuss in this paper.

Further, the salience of political attitudes (and often political activities) for diaspora groups may not be shared by some transnational individuals and communities. However, some experiences coming out of, along with, or because of transnational practices might politicise identities.

Finally, the “mythical” relation towards the ancestral country characteristic for many diasporic groups (cf. Safran 1991) is of different quality than the homeland experiences based on regular connections (although, sometimes with a paradoxical twist, they do not necessarily exclude each other).

As explained by Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen (1999b), the notion of diaspora provides useful analytical tools, since it can be conceptualized as a social form, as a type of consciousness, and as a mode of cultural production. *Diaspora as a type of consciousness* encompasses a sense of identity based on a variety of experiences generated among contemporary transnational communities. *Diaspora as a mode of cultural production* is best described in terms of syncratism, creolization, bricolage, cultural translation and hybridity. When referring to *social forms*, the notion is suited to the investigation of social relationships, political orientations, economic strategies, but also sub-national and supra-national networks and patterns of power, communications and conflicts that are *not governed by the modern nation-state*.

I presented an extensive list of references and discussed definitions of “diaspora” and the use of “diasporic” elsewhere (Povrzanović Frykman 2001a). Yet, it is important to state here that using the adjective instead of the noun hints at processes of people’s identity formation, and keeps the research interest open towards a wide range of experiences that “interrogate and undermine any simple or uncomplicated sense of origins, traditions and linear movement” (Chambers 1994: 16–17).

Research in diasporas and the history of migration shows that the precursors of present immigrant transnationalism have existed for centuries. Yet, it is the regularity of activities, routine involvement and critical mass that distinguish contemporary examples of transnationalism (cf. Portes et al. 1999: 224–225).

Alejandro Portes and co-author(s) (1999: 221) distinguish *economic, political and socio-cultural transnationalism*, thus offering a useful working typology that helps in organising and interpreting what otherwise would be a chaotic set of activities collected in empirical research. A second distinction they propose is between *transnationalism from above*, i.e. transnational activities initiated and conducted by powerful institutional actors, such as multinational corporations and states, and *transna-
tionalism from below," which is the result of the less institutionalized initiatives by immigrants and their home country counterparts.

Many of the activities encompassed by the notion of transnationalism from above "are well known and have been examined from alternative conceptual focuses, including economic globalization, international relations, or cultural diffusion" (Portes et al. 1999: 223). Thus, the emergent literature on transnationalism has focused on experiences "from below", at the grass-roots level of initiatives of "ordinary immigrants". The condition of disadvantage to the dominant logic of the world economy – theirs as well as of the people in their home countries engaged in transnational practices – is *differentia specifica* of their position.

In this article, I will present a micro-ethnography of a bus journey between two destinations which definitely belongs to "transnationalism from below" as defined here. At the same time, the metaphor of a position "from below" also seems appropriate in relation to the bodily experiences of covering the physical distance between places of social and emotional attachment.

**The Presence of State**

In an obvious way, the terms transnationalism, transmigrants and transnational social fields imply that research interest in migration issues shifted from the integration paradigm to the transgression paradigm. The states’ borders are transgressed in manifold ways, on a regular basis. As shown in detail by Linda Basch and co-authors (1994), crossing and transcending territorial borders in keeping their familial, economic, social, and political relations, people challenge the claims of cultural and political self-sufficiency made by states. The nation-state is seen as "weakened from above" by transnational capital, global media, and emergent supra-national political institutions. "From below" it faces the decentering "local" resistances of the informal economy, ethnic nationalism, and grassroots activism" (Guarnizo and Smith 1998: 3).

However, the ethnography-based literature on grass-roots aspects of globalisation is filled with insights as to the presence and dominance of states as the inescapable framework (cf. Vertovec and Cohen 1999a).

"By living their lives across borders, transmigrants find themselves confronted with and engaged in the nation building processes of two or more nation-states" (Basch et al. 1994: 22). States do define the rules, by establishing physical borders and mechanisms of control, political systems of rights and restrictions, legal systems and policies regarding the labour market and social mobility, etc. Scholars focusing on the "deterritorialized nation-state" are aware of global relations between capital and labour, as well as of state-imposed hegemonic relations. Their use of postmodernist metaphors of "deterritorialization" and "unboundedness", does not imply that transnational practices take place in an imaginary "third space" abstractly located "in-between" national territories. States still hold the coercive power within their borders, and the social construction of place is still "a process of local meaning-making, territorial specificity, juridical control, and economic development, however complexly articulated these localities become in transnational economic, political, and cultural flows" (Guarnizo and Smith 1998: 12).

The celebratory attitude regarding the empowering potentials of transnationalism
that is present in some of the (earlier) writings, can be understood in the context of "discovering" the "high intensity of exchanges, the new modes of transacting and the multiplication of activities" (Portes et al. 1999: 219) that migrants sustain across borders. Namely, their exchanges became visible as they gained a systematic quality and an unprecedented range due to the modern technology-based possibilities of communication via telephone and e-mail, travel and transport of money, goods, news, and accessibility of all kinds of media products. On the one hand, in the literature on diasporic identities, multiple identification and manifold cultural competence are seen as promising alternatives to essentialist definitions of identity and their dangerous political outcomes. On the other hand, researchers of transnationalism often point out the new potentials of economic and political empowerment of the underprivileged, as well as to the alternative forms of non-localized community. Vered Amit-Talai (1998) criticizes the latter attitude, and by shifting the interest in the migrants marginalized in the capitalist economies to the well-paid trained expatriate contractual workers, makes her argument even more convincing. Much of the literature on globalization and transnationalism promotes the vision of mobility, migrancy, and transnational identities as offering new sites and prospects of resistance to the power of the multinationals and the national state. These claims, she argues, "appear to speak more often to the disorientation of many intellectuals in the face of fin-de-siècle economic and political shifts than to persuasive empirical accounts of popular resistance" (Amit-Talai 1998: 56).

In relation to this general critique, it should be noted that "the literature on globalisation" and "the ethnography of transnationalism" encompass a range of very different interests, approaches and research results. In regard to the research in transnationalism from below, it is quite obvious that Cultural Studies’ "sweeping invocations of fluidity" are of a different character to the transnationalism researchers’ "faith in the imminence of radical resistance". However, I fully agree with the demand for research into "the very nature or the sources of the very real insecurities produced both within and across state borders by recent economic restructuring" (Amit-Talai 1998: 45). Research, indeed, should "bring back into focus the enduring asymmetries of domination, inequality, racism, sexism, class conflict, and uneven development in which transnational practices are embedded and which they sometimes even perpetuate" (Guarnizo and Smith 1998: 6). Seen from a micro-ethnographic perspective, the imposed aspects of identity construction frames, the limits of negotiation and the restrictions of choice, are central to this article.

To conclude: anthropological and ethnological research in transnational migration cannot be criticised for underestimating or dismissing the importance of states. It is the transgressing, challenging, and undermining phenomena that are interesting, but the nation-state, indeed, is perceived as the reality of transnationalism. Michael Kearney’s (1991) article, based on the ethnography of the illegal crossing of the U.S.-Mexico border, is the most illuminating analysis of the correspondence between transnationalism and the political economic and sociocultural ordering of late
capitalism that brings about the reordering of the nation-state. Directly related to my concerns in this article, Kearney’s invocations of Foucault in the explanation of the definition-undermining potentials of “border areas”, are valid. Kearney shows that the surveillance activities of the Border Patrol are not intended to prevent people’s entry into the United States to work, but are a way of disciplining them to work hard and to accept low wages. He also shows that it is the incongruity of cultural (transnational), and political spaces (delineated by state borders) that makes “border areas” ambiguous zones, in which the social person of “the alien” is constructed. There, identities are assigned and taken, withheld and rejected. The state seeks monopoly on the power to assign identities to those who enter this space. It stamps or refuses to stamp passports and papers which are extensions of the person of the traveller who is ‘required’ to pass through official ports of entry and exit (Kerney 1991: 58).

Seen from a perspective of my own work (cf. note 2), it seems highly improbable that any scholar doing field research in transmigrants’ experiences could remain ignorant of the presence of both “host” and “home” states in people’s narrations on everyday issues, as well as on carefully planned financial moves or political concerns. Although their relationship to the Swedish state is not the focus of my research, in their elliptic, marginal remarks, people reveal the important presence of the state as a legal frame in their everyday life. In various contexts, the official state representatives are readily turned into “them, the Swedes”, disclosing some of the dynamics of narrative constructions of difference from the immigrant point of view.

The awareness of national belonging as imposed and invoked in the course of a long bus ride across European borders, is one of the concerns of this article.

**Limits and Constrictions, Abstract and Concrete**

An authentically migrant perspective would, perhaps, be based on an intuitional that the opposition between here and there is itself a cultural construction, a consequence of thinking in terms of fixed entities and defining them oppositionally. It might begin by regarding movement, not as an awkward interval between fixed points of departure and arrival, but as a mode of being in the world. The question would be, then, not how to arrive, but how to move, how to identify convergent and divergent movements; and the challenge would be how to note such events, how to give them a historical and social value (Paul Carter, *Living in a New Country. History, Travelling and Language*, London: Faber & Faber 1992: 101, quoted in Chambers 1994: 42).

Movement between distant places of attachment certainly is “a mode of being in the world” for people living in transnational social fields. The “challenge” of giving the movements “historical and social value” is already met by the very existence, the ways of functioning and the meanings of those social fields – not only for their active participants, but also for all people affected by them.

James Clifford (1997) has warned about the tendency to equate “diasporic identities” with disaggregated, positional, performed identities in general. Only if historicized, the notions of diaspora and transmigrant can escape the status of a master trope or “figure” for modern, complex, or positional identities. If Clifford’s (1997: 268) theoretical claims about the relevance of identifications and not identities, acts of
relations and not of any pre-given forms, of networks of "partially connected histories, a persistently displaced and reinvented time/space of crossings" are operationalized into research questions, qualitative methodology is a must. To historicize the notions of diaspora and transmigrancy means to try to understand when, why and how they are shared by larger groups of people, thus becoming a base for certain types of identification. Here the strength of ethnographic experience is supreme, especially when it comes to the limits and constrictions relevant for identification processes:

The breadth of our ethnographic experience offers a scope for imagining political possibilities and social formations that others have not yet considered. But the depth of our ethnographic experience provides a sobering index of a gap between imagining and actualizing these possibilities (Amit-Talai 1998: 56).

Research has shown that there are numerous ways of maintaining a transnational social field, i.e. of connecting places within it. When it comes to travelling between distant places of attachment, these ways significantly depend on migrants' financial possibilities. It is true that travel has become a mass commodity and is cheaper than it was some decades ago (not to mention the times of European migration to the Americas, when transatlantic travel was a life-project). Yet, among the many people eager to continue being transmigrants, whom I am meeting in Sweden, only bus rides, not air connections, are considered to be cheap, i.e. affordable. For example, a return ticket from Malmö to Zagreb costs 1 095 SEK and from Jönköping to Zagreb 1 295 SEK.

Croatian passport holders needed a visa to enter Denmark in 2000 (as well as in the late 1990s) even if having permanent residence in Sweden. Some people told me that the practical problem involved in acquiring the Danish visa (time that has to be taken off work, or the costs for travel to the nearest Consulate) was not the main reason for the bus route avoiding Denmark. It was the VSA’s price: 250 SEK for a year of multiple entrance. "People find it expensive", I was told in a matter of fact way. For a widowed mother of three whom I met on the bus, it almost amounted to one return ticket.

Although, or rather because, travel has become a mass-commodity, it clearly reflects class relations of today’s world—in economic, social and all possible metaphorical senses of class as classification (from business-class waiting lounges to “non-EU citizens” entrances at airports; from diplomats’ limousines to Gastarbeiter buses). On the one hand, travel stands for freedom of movement in a literal sense, as well as for metaphorical transgressions, growth and change. On the other hand, hunger and fear have been among the chief motivations for “travel” in the twentieth century. “Historically many people have been recruited or coerced to travel neither for leisure, nor interest nor choice” (Curtis and Pajączkowska 1994: 214).

In the literature on transnationalism, travel stands for an active choice of keeping (through face-to-face contacts) transnational social relations. Yet, what happens to, with, and around their bodies is seldom under the control of the travellers themselves. Recent examples of people smuggled into Western European countries and who died before even getting a chance to develop their own versions of transnationalism, cannot give a relevant comparison in
the framework of this article. Still, such extreme examples of travel with tragic outcomes have a common link with the less dramatic bus rides discussed here, that is the restriction of choice and the harsh bodily experience.

By agreeing to become a passenger in a certain type of vehicle and run by a company with a particular profile, one is acquiring not only a matching bodily experience — of seating, temperature, (non)conditioned air, toilets, food, music, treatment by the personnel, but also a whole package of labels — materialised at the state borders — which make one wonder if any “taking off” of ascribed identities is easy (or possible at all). While travel anecdotes usually thrive on stereotypes, minute ethnographic insights can reveal deeper imprints of difference.

What follows here is a presentation of my impressions and observations made during two trips, from Malmö to Zagreb and back, in November 2000. I was accompanied by my children and travelling from the place in Sweden where I have lived and worked for the last three years, to my hometown in Croatia, where my closest family and friends live. Hence, I was not positioning myself as a researcher, but as a (trans)migrant traveller holding a Croatian passport as were most other people on the bus. However, I planned and prepared myself for making a double use of the trip, as both transportation and a fieldwork possibility. I did not approach people in the bus with questions about their travel experiences, but opened my senses to what was happening around me, and to how I felt myself. I wrote down some observations during the travel; others have been noted later, or simply — remembered. Smells, for example, or the chill, do leave imprints in memory. The idea of such a fieldwork trip came about in the context of my research (cf. note 2) yet the salience of the bodily experiences of such travel became obvious to me only after being involved in it. This article is thus based on fieldwork that consciously relies on observations of non-discursive aspects of the experience of travelling, which are otherwise “hidden from history”. It is a post festum effort to theorise that experience.

Many of the utterances that I overheard were meant to be overheard; people are aware of physical proximities in the bus. Also, for many, talking is the favorite pastime during the travel. It seems to be usual that a more talkative person “amuses” people sitting nearby. Several stories have been told to “wider” bus audiences on peoples’ experiences of bus rides, smuggling, and encounters with customs controls; approaching a border is the usual context for such kind of narration.

The only things that I asked people about were their reasons for travelling to Croatia. Otherwise, I engaged in conversations primarily as a co-passenger, trying to affect the situation as little as possible. I answered personal questions straightforwardly. It was in the area of personal information, where my difference from “standard bus traveller” was soon noticed. I was different because of being an academic, and for not belonging to either of the groups equally represented on the bus — of people who came to Sweden as refugees in the 1990s, or of Croatian labour migrants who came to Sweden in the 1960s.

No private or otherwise delicate issues are touched upon in this text. Everyone — even the bus — is kept anonymous (I did not ask for people’s names anyway). I met
three people on the bus whom I knew from before. The conversations I had with them, on matters other than those concerning transnational travel, are not included in the material used here.

**Bodily Experiences and Other Insights**

The embodiment of experience can be a vantage point for rethinking the human existential situation. In connection to the processes of national identification in wartime, I argued (Povranović 1997) that it is crucial in the analysis of the cultural outcomes of the lived encounters with violence, when the body “appears as a threatened vehicle of human being and dignity” (Csordas 1994: 4). In the situations in which violence constitutes a new reality, people focus on the here and now and prioritize the physical aspects of body before the social ones. Such a here-and-now presence excludes the persons exposed to the same deprivations and fears, from those from the “outer world” who do not share their experience. At the same time, it creates a space recognised as being authentic and providing a sense of community (Povranović 1997: 159).

I believe that something similar, although less extreme, is happening during the long bus rides through Europe. An important contextual moment should be noted: the buses operating between Sweden and all former Yugoslav republics are “ethnic” in the sense that people of the same ethnic affiliation tend to ride the same buses, most often driven by and owned by their co-ethnics. It happens that Muslim people from Bosnia-Hercegovina ride in the “Croatian” buses and vice versa, but I have not heard of Serbs doing so. The reasons are practical (the final destinations are different), but to a great extent also due to ethnic differentiation being one of the results of the wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Hercegovina in the 1990s. 10

So, what does a bus trip from Malmö to Zagreb look like? Or rather, how does it feel?

Two unpleasant memories are striking when thinking of the bus ride a couple of months later: the darkness that prevented me from reading when I was awake and people around me were sleeping, and the smell from the toilet in the lower part of the bus. There was no running water, and the bucket used for flushing it was refilled far too seldom.

I was forced to stay awake, because the chair which was supposed to be folded into an improvised bed above my seat was broken. So, on my way to Zagreb, I spent the night hours half-sitting on a flattened-out double seat with my legs cramped between my two sleeping children, and a man lying next to me on the upper level. Since the “bed” was as wide as a chair, his body was literally a few centimetres away from my head, touching it whenever the man moved in his sleep.

This was one of the last rides the company made with that particular vehicle, before purchasing a new one. It was obvious that no repairs and improvements had been made to the bus for a long time. There weren’t any pillows and only three blankets were available (I had taken my own pillows from Sweden and also decided that we should carry our own blankets on the way back from Zagreb). The tiny kitchen in the lower part of the bus was out of function, too. So, no cooked sausages were available, but only coffee and beer, sold for any European currency, but at high prices (that, at least,
was how people around me regarded the prices, remembering that coffee was included in the ticket when a Swede owned the company). The hostess just stated the obvious; she did not apologise once. A few people loudly shared their disgust and disappointment, but my general impression was that people accepted anything, knowing that excitement and anger cannot change the circumstances. Most refugees from Bosnia-Hercegovina did not leave Sweden for five years; as that was a precondition for acquiring Swedish citizenship. So, today they are not only the most frequent travellers (every tenth ride is free), but maybe also not very demanding ones. Being able to travel is very important so that people do not consider leaving the bus in protest just because there is no water for the toilet. Although there are at least seven regular lines to Croatia starting from different Swedish towns (plus several “Muslim” lines, heading to Bosnia-Hercegovina; some are owned by Swedes and some by Croats and Muslims), there is no real market competition between the companies. All buses seem to be pretty full all the time.

An elderly woman who had come to Sweden as a refugee in the early 1990s fell down the stairs when trying to reach the toilet in the night, when no light was on. In some other circumstances and for some other person, it could have been a reason to sue the company, but it was seen (by her, as well as by the people around her) as bad luck — or even as good luck, for she only hit her face. Returning to Sweden a week later, she had a bruise under her left eye. In the meantime, she attended a wedding in Bosnia, but had to return to Sweden so soon afterwards in order to collect her social care money on a certain date.

A story that I overheard, but could not check, about a young woman who died shortly after such a bus trip due to blood-circulation problems (better known in relation to intercontinental flights), and the falling of the chair under which I was supposed to sleep, made me aware of the physical dangers involved in bus rides. The fact that I, as well as two other people sitting at the front of the bus, hit our heads violently against the TV set while trying to pull things from the luggage which was piled on the floor, confirmed that. A man whom I knew from before told me that he did not travel on the upper deck as he hit his head against the same TV set so hard that he had concussion.

He was on sick leave in Sweden and had to go to Croatia because his old father needed to be taken care of at home during the first few weeks after an operation. Some other people’s reasons for travelling included: visiting relatives who had come to Sweden as refugees; visiting relatives in Croatia or Bosnia-Hercegovina; spending a month with a daughter (a refugee to Sweden) who had given birth to her first child; attending a relative’s wedding in Bosnia, being the representative of the part of the family that had lived in Sweden since the 1990s; returning to Sweden after having done some repairs in the summer house by the Dalmatian coast; the husband coming later by car, while the wife was hurrying to see their newly born Swedish-Croatian grandchild. A young Croatian woman from Bosnia, now living in Sweden, was travelling in order to collect her husband who finally got a residence permit for Sweden; a Swedish born Croat of similar age was travelling with his father to pick olives in the family olive groves in Dalmatia. A
middle-aged Bosnian refugee to Sweden had buried her father in Bosnia and now returning. A Croat who had been living in Norway(!) for thirty-five years had gone to Croatia to sell some property and to have dental treatment at a much lower price than in Norway. A Croat now retired in Sweden had been to his home-town in Dalmatia to spend a month in his eleven-room summer house and wait for his Swedish-born children and grandchildren to join him at Christmas. Another man had to check the three empty family houses in his home-village in central Croatia: one of his own, and the other two remaining after his and his wife’s parents had died. Three young siblings, accompanied by their mother, travelled in order to spend two weeks with their grandparents who had also come to Sweden as refugees, but had returned to Bosnia two years ago. Births, deaths, war events in their home-towns, life in Sweden, good and bad wages in Swedish factories, reminiscences from former bus rides… those are some of the topics that I heard about. Stories about small-scale smuggling seem to be the favourite genre. (They are deliberately shared and not seen as a source of moral concern; cf. also Haller 2000).

“People are suffering”, a man said, referring to the very bus ride. There was, however, a humorous tone to it, a kind of a getting-along-with-destiny. When we were half-an-hour away from Zagreb, the atmosphere changed: there was the feeling of celebration happy laughter, as if an energy-shot had been pumped into each and every one. When the first Zagreb houses came in sight, people started to pack, put their coats on, stretch their arms and legs – preparing to leave the “monodimensional” space of the bus and start moving in their own directions, on their own accord.

“Difficult, narrow, wrinkled, stinking – but producing a kind of ‘we are in this together’ feeling”, was what I wrote in my notebook during the trip from Malmö to Zagreb. The togetherness and the feeling of community were striking. Although the lack of space and the lack of sleep could bring about conflicts, people were patient and helpful. Everyone seemed to be caring for the children, addressing them, offering them food. The only disputes I witnessed were caused by some people who didn’t want to sleep, i.e. in keeping their beds in the seat position they thus forced the ones behind them to remain sitting upright through the night. The rules were uttered loudly (“If you don’t want to sleep, buy a seat downstairs!”), in an expectation of “public” support. The hostess did not interfere: “You make a deal”, she said, and went downstairs.

Two men who had met on the bus, gradually became more and more tipsy and sang very loudly for at least two hours. Several people around them were not very pleased, but did not say a word. These two people – coming from Dalmatia and Slavonia respectively (two culturally distinct Croatian regions) and living abroad for more than thirty years – were comparing each other’s competence in Croatian folk songs. (A Croatian woman from Bosnia joined in when the one who had been working in Sarajevo in his youth started to sing Bosnian songs.) There was a constant half-tense mocking between these two men who wanted to prove their superiority, through somewhat depreciating undertones based on stereotypes about the two regions they were coming from. One of them sang a
“Croatian nationalist” song for which he had ended up in jail thirty-five years ago. Politics was suddenly present when he, to a melody of a folk song, improvised the text about Radovan Karadžić, the Bosnian Serbs’ leader indebted to the International War Criminal Court in The Hague.

In another way, politics was also present in the moments when we had to show our passports. The hostess suddenly acted as a competent – initiated – messenger of authority: “All of you, have your passports ready!”, “Beds up – they want you to sit straight!” At one of the borders, we were sitting with our passports open, showing the photos to the Austrian police officer, who was looking at us carefully. Walking by in silence, he did not even cast a glance at the few passengers holding Swedish passports; he only uttered: “OK”. “Austrian policemen are dangerous”, a man said afterwards. (He was experienced, having travelled this route three times a year. After having been scared to death on a bumpy flight from Zagreb to Gothenburg, he decided never to fly again.)

A man in his fifties, holding a Bosnian passport issued in Banja Luka, and having a permanent residence permit in Sweden (and in Australia, where his children had lived since the early 1990s), was not allowed to pass through Austria because he did not have the “Schengen Visa” in his passport. “We can’t leave the man on the road”, the hostess said. It seems to be a border-police established rule that a passenger that is not allowed to cross the border, must be taken back to some petrol station.

Other passengers were angry with him, or perhaps felt pity for him. The man himself was angry and very stubborn, talking loudly about his two permanent residence permits and claiming that, in his case, asking for the visa was absurd. Instead of paying a certain sum and getting the visa on the spot, he decided to demonstratively leave the bus and proceed from Slovenia by air. Anyway, we all had not only an extra half-an-hour of waiting because of this episode, but also an extra hour of driving back to Slovenia, and then again to Austria. At the border, our passports and our faces were checked once more by the police-officer who boarded the bus. Someone commented the next morning: “Did you see that yesterday? Hajderović (Haidar-supporters) – not even ‘good evening’, nothing!”

After yet another border had been passed, the hostess returned our passports, previously collected so that they could be handed to a German police officer: she yelled out our first names only. Every passport was then handed over from person to person, until it reached its owner. No one was anonymous any more, and we all had indisputable Croatian names.

Many passengers addressed the two drivers by their first names, too. They were regulars, or maybe they had met a Croatian club in Sweden. During the ride, after the “ritual” asking for permission, some people who did not know each other, started addressing each other by ti (the Croatian equivalent of German Du). To my great surprise, the hostess used this familial way, too: such a trespass into privacy is hardly imaginable in a bus operating within Croatia. But is “privacy” a relevant notion in a bus like this at all?

The longer the travel lasted, the more things seemed to pile up in the gangway; the less tidy it became. Things changed
from being well-packed into a loose – and thus more voluminous – state. Food was
taken out; people had home-made (or at least home-packed) meals with them. Sav-
ing money is one reason (the stops in Ger-
many were long enough to be able to eat a
full meal in the restaurants at the resting
places, besides being hygiene halts), but
food prepared by someone who cares pro-
vides the ones consuming it with a pleasant
homely feeling, too. And so did the Turkish
coffee – the only kind that could be bought
on the bus.

Small transparent plastic bags for the
rubbish were hanging on the armrests: a
jolly installation as they moved to the rhythm
of the road. The scent of mandarin orange
peels was a counterpart to the smell from
the toilet below.

Tiny “private” spaces could be created
only on, around and under the seats. Some
young people had Walkmans to cut them-
selves off from the surroundings. I thought
that reading would serve as a shield of
privacy, but the persistent Croatian folk-
pop music from the tape, the talking, sing-
ing, and too dim a light, proved it to be a
rather inefficient kind of shield.

Sleeping next to strangers was men-
tioned above. But people do not feel like
strangers after spending a night in such
circumstances. “We are in this together” is
a shared feeling, I suppose. Gender is the
last, basic differentiation category – people
shift places according to their gender, but
only if it is possible. Family members are
privileged, for they can sleep next to each
other more comfortably.

People were moving about in the bus,
not only in need of the toilet or simply in
need of movement (posing a question to the
hostess was an “excuse” for going to the
lower part of the bus). “Why don’t you
come and visit?” and “Here I’ve come to
visit you”, was uttered rather often; people
visited those they knew or the ones with
whom they had made friends with at some
of the stops. Others made space for them
to sit down on the armrests, or they leaned on
the seats while standing. Home-made
schnaps brought from Croatia or Bosnia,
beer and whisky bought along the way,
were offered. The six hour ferry trip between
Rostock and Travleberg provided the op-
portunity for playing cards, treating friends
or bus-acquaintances with coffee or beer, of
sleeping and of sitting in pairs or small
groups and talking. I heard two men who
had met on the bus, disputing at length the
age of an acquaintance in a Croatian village
whom they discovered that they had in
common. I was asked if I knew a particular
person in Malmö, Croatian, of course.

When shopping in a dingy little tax-free
shop in Rostock’s industrial harbour, I was
given spontaneous tips about what (drink)
was a bargain. On the other hand, the wom-
en queuing next to me did not “let” me buy
a package of small bottles of Underberg,
claiming that they were far too expensive.

“We’ll be in luck – we just don’t know if
it will be good or bad!”, a man said when we
were entering Sweden again, hoping dearly
that the police would not empty the bus in
order to check what has been brought along,
and thus delay us for another hour or two.
We reached Malmö at you can say 10 p.m.;
he was proceeding to Gothenburg – another
three and a half hours away – and had to be
at work in his factory at 7 a.m. the next
morning.

On reaching Slovenia, a fifteen-year-old
girl telephoned her granny in Bosnia sever-
alf times, informing her about how close to
Zagreb we were getting. She seemed to know the exact schedule of the connections to the Bosnian town she was heading for. After sitting in the bus from Jönköping to Zagreb for thirty-three hours, she only had another six to go.

Time is a part of the value of travel. The “time out” of the travel intensifies and extends subjective temporality. Or, travel functions to delay or interrupt the otherwise irrevocable passage of time (cf. Curtis and Pajaczkowska 1994: 201). On a week’s trip to Croatia, the stay is literally counted in hours. That is why the waiting at the state borders, i.e. treating people’s time as worthless, is a particular form of humiliation (see Löfgren 1999: 19, and esp. Haller 2000: 62, on queues as border measures that create most physical and psychological strain). People were angry when the wait at the German border made us miss the ferry to Denmark (we saw it leaving the harbour), but there was nothing we could do about it. The grey afternoon hours of waiting at a parking lot in Rostock harbour felt similar to the early morning hours I had spent looking at the dim landscape by the highway somewhere in Germany, just wanting the time to pass. Time out of time, the empty time of waiting, is a burden to be endured.

To conclude: at the very beginning of the journey to Croatia, the hostess made a statement that at first seemed to be a slip of a tongue, but, indeed, confirmed the transmigrant character of these bus rides. She namely told the passengers with open return tickets that they would have to make the reservation ten days before “going home” – to Sweden. Otherwise, the mention of “home” was always with reference to people’s homes in Croatia and Bosnia-Herce-

govina (although for many it literally meant only their relatives’ homes).

In this chapter, a systematic description was not intended, but rather a collection of auditive, olfactory and visual experience constituting a kaleidoscopic image. From another seat in the bus, or on some other date, this image could have been different, but most probably only in the details.

**Multi-sited Identities: Methodological Concerns**

In an important analysis of epistemological and political implication of the discourse of “identity” in the US academy, Roger Rouse (1995) recognises the novelty of anthropological analyses of multi-local identities situated in transnational social spaces. They are understood neither as markers of transition (towards assimilation) nor as signs of pathology (in the limbo of in-betweenness), but “as lasting and intelligible responses to the varied pressures people face” (Rouse 1995: 354). However, he points out that, “in many cases, (im)migrants continue to ground politically important claims in the assertion and revalorization of identities that are both singular and localized” (Rouse 1995: 355). From this perspective, those who celebrate migrants as exemplars of multiplicity and de-territorialization are guilty of bad ethnography because they fail adequately to listen and observe, and bad politics because they privilege the allure of current intellectual fashion, especially the metaphors of post-structuralist theory and the imagery of a literary postmodernism, over the practical realities of (im)migrants’ lives and struggles (Rouse 1995: 355).

The “celebrating” of migrants as examples of multiplicity and de-territorialization can be challenged by depicting a distinct transmigrants’ practice such as travelling by
bus. Within my research, the notion of transmigrants and transnational social fields is of great analytical value. Yet, some aspects of their transnational lives, like border crossings which reduce people to “wrong” passports, might have “essentializing” consequences for their self-understanding. It goes without saying that the ethnography presented here does not provide material that is complex enough for grounding a thorough analysis, but the intention was only to provide insights. It also opens up for discussion some important methodological questions.

If “one of the most complicated components to investigate is that of the micro-dimension of transnationalism” (Guarnizo and Smith 1998: 26), I believe that here lies the possibility of a specific ethnological contribution, relying on qualitative methodology and focusing on the grass-roots aspects of transnationalism and the individual experiences thereof.

In talking about “unorthodox ethnographic methods”, “ethnographic nomads” (ibid.) or “methodological pragmatists” (Wahlbeck 1999: 192), researchers stress that only fieldwork – necessarily multi-sited and preferably long-term – enables insights into non-homogeneous practices within transnational groups. Within the context of such fieldwork, “field trips” (understood literally, like the ones described here) are of great value. Identification and bodily practices assessed in situ provide ethnographic material that is complementary to the material gained through interviews.

An outline of a “multi-sited ethnography” has been proposed by George Marcus (1995). He suggests that researchers “follow the...”: people (migrants/exiles), thing (commodities, gifts, money, works of art, and intellectual property), metaphor (signs, symbols and images), plot, story or allegory (narratives of everyday experience or memory), life or biography (of exemplary individuals), or conflict (issues contested in public space). Marcus suggests the tracing of a cultural formation across and within multiple sites of activity around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of locations. He thus stresses the need to locate the discussions within a transnational framework where changes involve many locations at the same time.

A micro-ethnography of a situation (or rather, a sequel of situations) presented here might therefore be understood as being an “entrance” or “starting point” of several different trails of insights: through the travellers’ personal histories and the stories that bus drivers might tell about their passengers; through the objects that are brought along, bought during the course of the journey and planned to be brought back – in both directions; through the situations of togetherness and of conflict in the bus; and finally, although the list is far from exhausted, through the narratives of everyday experience or memories that are shared between people during the bus rides. The “starting point” character of these hints should be stressed here, for any such “trails”, of course, need elaboration.

With regard to the specificity of transnational experiences, a wider methodological concern may be mentioned in conclusion. Not only multi-sited ethnographies, but also transnational collaborative research projects are needed:

Transmigrants from the same county of origin are now leaving from more regions and are following a more diverse and more diasporic migra-
tory path than in the past. More often than not, these migrants are moving to more than one location in the countries of destination making their geographical dispersion more intense and more difficult to track by lone researchers. To counter these limitations, the ethno-centric and sometimes even imperialistic approach traditionally used by scholars from core countries should be revised and transnational, collaborative projects with scholars in countries of origin should be explored (Guarnizo and Smith 1998: 30).

Borders and Communities

The relationship between transnational and community cannot be taken for granted; it has to be explored in each research situation. It is those links that transnationalism from below is really about. It is in the very practices of connecting distant places where transmigrant identities are entrenched.

I propose the existence of an ad hoc community of bus travellers. It is rather obvious that “ethnic” buses can be interpreted (and experienced) as being bits and pieces of real ethnic territories moving through Europe. The ad hoc community of bus travellers is thus “place-bound” with regard to the very bus, yet created by people’s interaction during the journey. The shared immediate bodily experiences, as well as the shared codes of behaviour and of wider (self)understanding, make it a community in spite of its “on the road”, highly contextual, and temporary character.

It does not make sense to simply assume that people are part of a community. “It makes more sense to ask how it is that groups and communities are constituted as significant at different times and what the significance and participation of different people and practices in these processes implies” (Turner 2000: 56). Such a complex question is able to capture the tension between the notion of identity as essential, fundamental, unitary and unchanging, and the notion that identities are constructed and reconstructed through action.

A reminder of the fact that migrants from the same country form heterogeneous groups of people, who came for different reasons and under different circumstances, with different personal and social endowments is never out of place. Ethnic groups in diaspora and exile are often seen as “ethnic communities”, but some intra-communal differences are visible even in the loose interaction patterns in the course of bus rides, and especially in more or less loudly uttered remarks intending a differentiation from within, a confirmation of self-ascribed distinction. Not only “old” immigrants tend to see themselves as somewhat more refined and have more objections to the discomfort of the bus, in comparison to the people who came to Sweden as refugees in the 1990s (cf. Povrnzanić 2001b). The former also seemed to be eager to point out their sharing of the Swedish living standards and standards of behaviour: the bus and the service were much better, many said, when the owner was a Swede. Some repeated rather loudly that that was the first and only time they were going to take that bus.

At the state borders, the a priori categorising on the basis of ascribed (national) belonging acquires a paradoxically a-personal quality when people must show their passports, all at the same time. The presumed perception of their passport as being “low-ranking” or suspicious by the passport passport control representatives (cf. Löfgren 1999: 25), might re-confirm their emotional attachment to what the passport represents,
and thereby enhance its symbolic value. I do not believe that any of the bus passengers despise, or are ashamed of their passport at the moments of border police control (although they know that with some other passport they might have had a swifter and more comfortable passage). On the contrary: since forced to hold, look at and think about their passports, people tend to re-confirm their emotional attachment and positively re-evaluate their national symbols. I believe that the interviews focusing on these moments would reveal a remarkable grass-roots expertise in the paradoxical nature of passports:

Many documents that mark people as distinctive individuals, identity cards for example, simultaneously constitute them as members of specific, horizontal collectivities and, in so doing, they underline that sustained possession of a distinctive individuality depends ultimately on the kind of collective legitimation that the state claims to embody (Rouse 1995: 362).

Discussing “the nationalization of anxiety” through “the rituals and practices of border crossings”, Orvar Löfgren (1999) offers a number of historical and recent examples of feelings of guilt and discrimination instilled at the borders. Löfgren stresses the striking role of the “pedagogy of space” among the different ways of organising experiences, identities and communities.

Dieter Haller (2000) focuses on the community-organising aspect of the borders. He explains how the border between Spain and Gibraltar influences bodily experience which, mediated by local discourse, becomes a productive element in the habitualization of a Gibraltar national identity. Writing about people’s narratives of controls, measures, queues, heat, and harassing experiences around the border crossing, Haller traces their experiences of uncertainty, insecurity, tension, stress, impotence and vulnerability. He then explains how these individual experiences – communicated by the Gibraltarians as a part of their collective experience – generate a feeling of solidarity.

Haller’s interpretation strengthens my claim that the axiomatic understanding of identities as (always) being negotiated can hinder the perception of their imposed aspects. The cognitive approach reflected in “believing” and “imagining” communities has to be combined with the phenomenological approach of bodily “feeling”, bridging the gap between discourse and body (cf. also Povrzanović 1997). National identification cannot be fully understood if the habitualizing effects of national power on the bodies and emotions of individuals are not considered. Neither can the importance of arduous bodily experiences of people moving within transnational social fields.

To illustrate my community-creating point, the similarities and the differences between the advertisement flyers should be mentioned, too, printed by both the former Swedish and the actual Croatian owner of the same bus.

The only common traits are grammatical and spelling errors, and the fact that no web-sites or e-mail addresses are printed on either of the flyers – a fact worth noticing in Sweden, where most commodities are provided with Internet-addresses, not to mention all the possibilities of booking travels via the Internet. A potential passenger has to telephone and talk to the person responsible for reservations. (Tickets are sent home by post or collected and paid for in cash on the bus. They can be paid for in Sweden and collected on the bus by e.g. the
relatives travelling from Croatia to Sweden. Saying the name is enough, no written confirmation is required.) Here another important community-invoking detail is striking: as when booking air flights though an “ethnic” tourist office, or when reserving bus tickets, people are usually addressed by their first name – by _ti_ (equivalent with German _Du_), and not by _vi_ (German _Sie_), which in Croatian denotes a social distance in any formal contact.

The “Swedish” flyer presents the bus – with several colour photographs of an attractive, blond hostess – as a regular tourist charter line. The text is written in both languages, and accompanied by small Swedish and Croatian flags. (The Slovenian flag and the EU stars are also represented.) The professional image is confirmed by the facsimile of the company owner’s signature.

The only (black-and-white) photograph on the “Croatian” flyer shows the actual owner’s face. Presented by first name only, he welcomes the passengers. Along with a single line in Swedish, the rest of the written information is in Croatian. The text is minimal; mostly the flyer consists of the schedule and the price list. The white paper and the red details in the logo suggest red and white as being the Croatian national colours, but perhaps they were just the cheapest variant. The target group is so obviously pre-defined that there is no need to expose national symbols.

Not only can “ethnic” buses be interpreted as bits and pieces of ethnic territories moving through Europe, re-confirmed as such at international border controls. They might be experienced as such from the inside of the bus, too. There is a link between the community-making processes described here and the nationalist tendency of turning physical space into cultural space (cf. “the cultural grammar of nationalism” in Løfgren 1996). The travel experience is shared with co-ethnics, which implies the exclusive use of mother-tongue and provides the most important grounds for community-feelings among people otherwise surrounded by and forced to use a foreign language. Further, the travellers “feel at home” in sharing the codes of behaviour, and, not unimportantly, for the music accompanying much of the travel.

Finally, the last stop is Zagreb, but the contract made with a local bus company makes it possible for the passengers from Sweden to reach any destination within Croatia free of charge. Once reached, the national territory is equated with _home_ in an important symbolic, but also in a practical sense, which puts forward the physical moment of homecoming.

**Conclusion**

During the mild evening of 6 January 2001, at the central bus station in Rijeka, the biggest Croatian Adriatic port, I witnessed the boarding of the buses leaving for Amsterdam, Basel and Frankfurt am Main. I could not see the luggage already stored in the buses, but I saw people in the gloomy cabin light, folding their coats and preparing for a long night. There were a lot more people around the buses. Last words, final hugs: Christmas was over, it was time to start working again.

A scene repeated all over the country, a standard sight. Large numbers make people and things more visible. The seeing off at the bus station in Rijeka was not purely individual and private; some kind of collectivity created by the tradition of migration
as "common destiny" had been confirmed. A part of national experience: ambivalence produced by dual attachments, by seeing clearly what is better at the other end of the transnational field—which always seems to be the place one is not occupying at the moment of consideration.

If this topic was to be explored further, a more encompassing comparative ethnography of situational relations among the transnational travellers would be required, of travelling to other destinations and by different means of transportation. Community-producing moments during the bus ride itself would be related to the subsequent narration about the journeys. A collection of personal narratives on those bus rides, compared to the narratives of people staying behind, would be a precondition for more complex insights.

The aim of this article, however, is limited to suggesting the explanatory potentials of micro-ethnographic studies of transnational practices such as travelling back and forth. Such studies can provide insights that are lacking in interpretations of ethnic and national identifications as processes of negotiation. They can namely hinder the perception of their imposed aspects.

Identities "are not free-floating, they are limited by borders and boundaries" (Sarup 1994: 95). We need to know what is going on from the perspective of people who experience these limits. The metaphor of "border crossing" often seems to imply the ease of movement and the disruption of relations between place and identity. If seen against the background of experiences attainable through fieldwork, the border crossings might appear as being shadowed by imposed identities. I hope to have shown the specificity of ethnological contributions to knowledge within the field dominated by other disciplines.

Finally, togetherness as an outcome of shared bodily experiences, is important not only in situations of extreme hardship, but also in "trivial" situations such as a twenty-six-hour bus ride. The shared bodily experiences of physical proximity and restrictions, uneasiness and pain, of controlled movement and exposure to the power of state authorities on different borders, are cohesion-producing forces. Although temporary and not a basis for further social intercourse of the very individuals gathered in the bus, their travels do affect much larger groups of people at both (or all) sides of transnational social fields. They may not be formative experiences, but they add to people's self-understanding in terms of belonging to an ethnic or national group. Thus, micro-ethnographic insights gained by such experiences might add to the understanding of how transnationalism, "far from erasing the local identifications and meaning systems, actually relies on them to sustain transnational ties" (Guarnizo and Smith 1998: 15).

The embodied geography of physical distances and national borders is just one element of transnational individuals' and groups' identification processes. Nevertheless, it is central to ethnographic accounts on the multiple and often burdensome experiences of connecting places. Such accounts are indispensable in the joint interdisciplinary effort of locating and historicizing transnationalism from below, in order to promote it as a useful scholarly concept.
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Notes
1 According to the figures from The Croatian Statistics Yearbook for 1995, 53.39% of ethnic Croats live in Croatia, and some 11.86% live in Western European countries. Most of them (6.43%) live in Germany. Some 30,000 Croats (0.43% of ethnic Croats worldwide) live in Sweden.

2 The project entitled “Seeds of War: Narrative Construction of Identities in Diaspora and Exile” is financed by the Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HSFR) in 2000 and 2001 (see Povrzanović Frykman 2001b).

3 Many of the articles published in the 1990s are collected in Vertovec and Cohen 1999a. For a broad overview of research engaging the notion of transnationalism see Basch et al. (1994), Ong (1999), and Faist (2000), as well as the collections edited by Glick Schiller et al. (1992) and by Smith and Guarnizo (1998).

4 On the dignifying aspect of the very term diaspora, widely and eagerly adopted by the Croats formerly labelled as Gastarbeiter, see Povrzanović Frykman 2001b.

5 The term, appearing in Guarnizo 1997, was promoted as a title of the collection edited by Smith and Guarnizo in 1998.

6 Roger Rouse (1995: 359) claims that for Linda Basch and co-authors cited here, “it seems axiomatic that people living within the terrains that national and colonial governments have sought to dominate are fully caught up within the logic of identity that state agencies deploy”. This critique has to be understood in relation to Rouse’s focusing on personhood and collectivity in transnational migration. He namely contests the tendency “to examine struggles over collective identities, without reference to the related processes by which people are made individual”, as well as “the widespread view that (im)migrants already possess collective identities in the places that they leave” (Rouse 1995: 352–353). Yet, Basch et al. (1994: 22) claim that transmigrants are not only engaged in the nation building processes but also confronted with them. That leaves open various possibilities of personhood and collectivity politics and practices.

7 The telephone is the oldest technology enabling direct communication and defeating physical distance. By mentioning it first, I am pointing out the fact that “phoning still is the most democratic, the most accessible and the most widely used entry to transnational social fields from both (or all) sides. Considered from e.g. a Swedish perspective where large parts of the population have access to the Internet at home, it might be easily forgotten that the wide everyday use of the telephone is the latest novelty in many localities from which labour migrants and refugees originate. For example, in a region some 60 km south-west of Zagreb, people living in the villages some 10 km from the local centre, were connected to the Croatian telecommunication system only in the late 1990s, at high private expense. These were often paid for by the money earned by their children and relatives in Austria and Germany.

8 Luis E. Guarnizo and Michael P. Smith (1998: 5–6) explain that “given the declining political influence of working-class movements in the face of the global reorganization of capitalism, all sorts of new social actors on the transnational stage are now being invested with oppositional possibilities, despite the fact that their practices are neither self-consciously resistant nor even loosely political in character. . . . While transnational practices and hybrid identities are indeed potentially counter-hegemonic, they are by no means always resistant. . . . The liminal sites of transnational practices and discourses can be used for the purposes of capital accumulation quite as effectively as for the purpose of contesting hegemonic narratives of race, ethnicity, class, and nation”.

9 Such meanings are importantly related to tourism as the “most profoundly privileged and subjective form of modern travel . . . one of the principal symbolic experiences available to the modern self. The imperative to travel signifies the quest for the acquisition of knowledge and desire to return to a utopian space of freedom, abundance and transparency. Psychic desires are displaced in partial and vicarious participation in another set of relations (another place and time), and the self becomes realized as the hero of its own narrative of departure and return” (Robertson et al. 1994: 5).
10 In contrast to that, the airport of Brnik, Slovenia, as well as the check-in counters at Kastrup, Copenhagen, are becoming true "Yugoslav" places a couple of times a week, always at very late or very early hours: they might be the only remaining places where all South-Eastern European languages can be heard at the same time. The Slovene national air-company is offering the only direct connection from Copenhagen, which happens also to be cheaper than any other air-connection - some 2500 SEK (depending on the season) for a return flight. So, people from all parts of former Yugoslavia use it, and continue their journey from Ljubljana.
11 Equally problematic as the grand theories' overgeneralisations, is the pitfall of starting analysis at the microstructural level and privileging "personal knowledge" that "may develop a kind of solipsistic tunnel vision that altogether fails to connect the human intentions to social structure and historical change" (Guarnizo and Smith 1998: 25–26).

References


Povrzonovčić Frykman, Maja 2001b: Construc-


