

Interpreting Leisure in Diasporic Communities: Motivation and Impact

Date: December 4 – 5, 2025

Place: Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar

Marulićev trg 19, Zagreb, Croatia

The aim of the conference is to explore the relationship between leisure and identity formation in diasporic communities. According to Burdsey („Leisure and Diaspora“, 2017) this topic, which is full of potential, is relatively under-researched and thus conference seeks to address a significant gap in the literature.

Examining the leisure activities of diasporic communities provides insights into the very concept of 'diaspora' which is highly contested. To better understand the concept analytically, it is crucial to study diaspora through the scrutiny of practices that lead to the (re)construction of a collective identity among migrants and their descendants (Brubaker, „The ‘diaspora’ diaspora“, 2005). Many of these practices comprise leisure activities embarked upon freely and routinely and may encompass such pursuits as music, craft, dance, sport and so forth. Finding joy or fulfillment is a key motivating factor in the pursuit of such activities. But it is also the case that the dominant forms of leisure activities within any community are a consequence of the social and cultural characteristics of the group and the context within which it has been formed. Thus if we observe closely the everyday practices and leisure pursuits of migrant groups we are better placed to evaluate the interaction between those behaviours and identity formation. The variables to take into account in such an evaluation include the relationship between migrant groups and their country of origin as well as the process of acculturation or otherwise in their new home. Within this context diasporic identity is negotiated and contested across borders and across continents. It can thus be argued that the process of production and consumption of leisure contributes through discourses, practices and (self-)representation to the constitution of diaspora identity formations as a transnational phenomenon.

The conference represents the closing stage of the five-year research project „Exploring emotions in the (re)construction of diaspora identity: Croats in Australia and New Zealand (1945-1991)“, funded by the Croatian Science Foundation. The research conducted within the project revealed that leisure activities have been among the most important elements in the

construction and maintenance of a Croatian identity within these communities. The research also confirmed that leisure is an important avenue for adaptation and integration into the host society. In this context, the conference will provide an opportunity to compare the results of research on the Croatian diaspora in Australia and New Zealand with other diasporas around the world and in different time periods.

The conference aims to facilitate discussion between scholars from diverse disciplines across the humanities and social sciences. We encourage submissions from individuals at all stages of careers, including doctoral students and early career researchers. We welcome papers based on innovative research which may include but are not confined to the following areas:

- role of diaspora leisure as an embodied and spatialized cultural practice
- leisure as a space of in/exclusion for diasporic communities
- leisure as a mechanism of adaptation and integration in the host society
- leisure as a mechanism of reconstruction of the home country identity
- organization of diaspora leisure spaces
- media representations of diasporas / immigrants communities in leisure
- influence of leisure constraints in the (re)construction of diaspora identity

Proposals, limited to 300 words, along with a brief biographical statement, should be submitted by June 1, 2025 to Ivan.Hrstic@pilar.hr. Applicants will receive notification of the acceptance of their proposals by July 1, 2025.

The conference will take place from December 4-5, 2025 at the Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar, Marulićev trg 19, Zagreb, Croatia. The working language will be English.