

THE ABSTRACT

The subject of this thesis is the issue of Croatian identity and their acculturation after having left their homeland and arriving to the South Cone states, with the emphasis on Argentina and Chile – the countries which host the biggest number of Croats. The aim of this thesis was to find out if Croatians accustomed to living in the new continent, what were the difficulties which they encountered, whether they contributed to the society in any way, and how the descendants of the immigrants are doing today. The emigrational phases from the territory of today's Croatia are analyzed chronologically – beginning with the first, mostly individual, emigrations in the 15th and 16th century to other European countries, and continuing with the first mass migrations in the late 19th century, towards the mostly political ones in the first half of the 20th century. Despite the great distance, very different language, and distinct traditions and customs, Croats in Argentina and Chile gradually accustomed since first migrations until today, passed through almost all phases of getting used to their new lives – they started by living on the margins and in their so-called colonies, but continued adapting and acclimatizing until they have slowly assimilated (which is the mostly visible in the subtle disappearance of the Croatian language). In the present day, Argentinians and Chileans with Croatian ancestry are proud of their origin, and despite the fact that most of them do not speak Croatian or have never been to the motherland of their great grandparents, they gladly join gatherings, societies and clubs celebrating all things Croatian, such as the folklore and some traditions already forgotten in the modern day Croatia.