



Cultural identity of the Slovenian countryside: Territorial integrity and cultural diversity from the perspective of rural communities¹

Ana Barbič

Biotechnical Faculty, Division for Agriculture, University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Abstract. Cultural identity of rural areas is discussed with some basic concepts such as culture, territory, contemporary globalization, and individuation processes. This case study of cultural identity in the Slovenian countryside focuses on its spiritual culture, of which several components are presented in detail: the language of rural areas, (handy)crafts, nutrition and food culture, co-operation and mutual help among rural residents at work and in leisure, and the art products of Slovenian farmers. In discussing the present status and the future of rural cultural identity, the danger of idolizing (romanticizing) traditions for the sake of selling them to tourists is pointed out and the necessity of traditions being part of everyday life of rural residents stressed. As a part of work and leisure life of rural residents, traditions are constantly changing due to local as well as to international socio-economic processes, to inner and outer stimuli to keep existing traditions and to create new ones.

Key words: Cultural identity, Rural areas, Rural tourism, Slovenian countryside, Traditions

Ana Barbič is Professor of Rural Sociology at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. Dr. Barbič has carried out research and written on topics including family farming, the structure of agriculture, rural development, and the role of women in farming. She is the author of numerous papers, which have been published in several languages, and two books (Farmer's everyday life: The Situation and the future of family farms in Slovenia and The future of the Slovenia countryside). She has served as vice-president of the European Society of Rural Sociology between 1988 and 1993 and on the council of various organizations, and is currently a member of the steering committee of the European Network for Women's Studies, a council member of the Eastern European Countryside, and an editorial advisor for Agriculture and Human Values.

Introduction

Contemporary local developments depend on and are determined by globalization processes that, according to Giddens (1990: 71), cover the following four dimensions: nation-state system, world capitalist economy, world military system, and international division of labor. Modern industrial developments and the developments of transport and communication technologies have affected local life enormously. Globalization, which seems at first sight to be "out there" phenomenon, far remote from the concerns of everyday life, is, as a matter of fact, an in here matter, which affects, or rather is dialectically related to even the most intimate aspects of life (Giddens, 1994: 59). Globalization also alters the definition of space, which was, in pre-modern times, identical with the place by which all social activities of a social entity were determined. Indeed, the distinction between place and space was introduced by the development of capitalism in which, for example, local economic activities were affected by decisions made by distant producers, consumers, and financial institutions (Giddens, 1994: 92–107). Tradi-

tional modes of life co-defined by place have been vacated, but traditions have not wholly disappeared and can be justified as having value in a universe of plural competing values (Giddens, 1994: 100). The question is who controls modern communication techniques, e.g., mass media, and thus determines their contents.

Modern communication technologies diminish physical distances and abolish the information self-sufficiency and information isolation of contemporary societies. Thus, geographical vicinity is no longer a condition of and the guarantee for the existence of relationships or similarities among the residents of a particular locale, nor does physical distance itself imply unrelatedness and diversity (Mlinar, 1994: 11). Furthermore, the mass media (printing and electronic) disseminate information across national and continental borders and literally create McLuhan's global village.

While it is true that contemporary globalization processes connect individuals and groups by including them in an interdependent World community, those very processes de-personalize individuals by transfer-

Table 1. Globalization processes and their local effects

GLOBALIZATION PROCESSES	LOCAL EFFECTS
<p><i>World capitalist economy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • free flow of capital • international division of labor 	<p><i>The transfer of responsibilities from individual/local to state/global levels</i></p>
<p><i>Modern transport and communication technologies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shorten physical/time distances • abolish information self-sufficiency and isolation of states, regions, local communities 	<p><i>Place by becoming space is losing its protective role and reveal local residents to feel responsible for it</i></p>
<p><i>Centralized (political) decision-making</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • states' and suprastates' institutions • the growing power of transnational corporations 	<p><i>The evacuation of traditions as determinants of local identities</i></p> <p><i>Alienation of individual/local communities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the weakening of individual local identities • powerlessness in relation to dealing with local problems and in managing local territories

ring responsibility for action from the individual and local levels to the global level (Table 1). Thus, the residents of a locality feel powerless, for they are not in a position to influence their own lives and actions nor those of their communities, as they were once accustomed to. The resulting loss of self-confidence and self esteem has produced mass feelings of insecurity. Not only are territorial boundaries losing their protective role, but they no longer serve to mark areas of personal responsibility, and at the same time they discharge the residents of the responsibility for their territory. For example, a farmer who pours out the remains of a poisonous liquid on a field, a meadow, or into a nearby stream, is no longer aware that by doing this he endangers not only others but also himself.

Current economic globalization processes are demanding the sort of territorial integration that promotes commonalities and ignores/suppresses the uniqueness of local modes of life and local cultural identities. One can apply the term "local" to a community, a region, a state, or even a continent, depending on the frame of reference and the topic of discussion. However, in any case, the relationship between global and local needs to be analyzed in terms of the hierarchical structure of both. Global and local processes can either ignore/suppress/replace or complement each other. Only the connectedness of both represents the essence of a developmental dynamism (dynamics) and at the same time the basis for understanding the recent

socio-spatial changes in Slovenia, in Europe, and in the World (Mlinar, 1995: 1).

"Modernity," referring to the modes of social life that emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards and that subsequently became more or less world-wide in their influence, (Giddens, 1990: 1) is characterized by discontinuities with traditions of pre-modern times. Even more, it is characterized as a contrast to traditional modes of life.

Individuation as a reaction to globalization (Strassoldo, 1990) is defined by "new localisms" of "post-modern" societies and it is characterized by:

- the growing ecological awareness of residents of a locality, and of their respect of natural environments
- the utilization of local resources for local economic activities
- the increasing role of local self-governments in dealing with local problems and the promotion of participatory/direct democracy
- the "rediscovery" of traditions (values, habits, customs) that are then incorporated into everyday life.

Traditionally, territorial relations have been discussed almost exclusively in terms of urban and rural locations (remember the paradigm of urban-rural continuum) and only in the last decade or so have territorial analyses concentrated on local communities

where spatial characteristics have remained or become an important part of the community's identity and an important part of the social characteristics of community life.

The threat to the production and living resources of communities brought about by a profit-oriented capitalist economy has initiated an interest in traditional economic activities (organic farming, handicrafts), traditional values, and in the traditional way of life. Rural areas have thus become the desired destinations for urban residents and the way for escaping, at least temporarily, from the alienated life in densely populated and polluted cities.

Decentralization of federal states, local self-government (Bennet, 1993), and regional cross-border co-operation provide institutional arrangements for participation of citizens in decision-making at local levels.

It is *individuation* that reveals and utilizes local potential and the creativity of local governments, supported by local residents, thereby bringing new solutions to old problems. The example of the local initiative of the Austrian commune Eisen-Kappel (Železna Kapla), which replaced a cellulose factory as its main economic activity with health tourism, has not been an exception in Europe (Herzog; Wastl-Walter, 1995).

The paper is divided into two sections. The first one deals with the definition of two basic concepts related to the topic under discussion: the concepts of cultural identity and of a rural community. The second part of the paper presents an approach for studying the cultural identity of the Slovenian countryside and discusses some aspects of it.

Definition of basic concepts

The dictionary of the Slovenian language defines **culture** as a "totality of products and values of a society as a result of human activities and creations" (Slovar slovenskega knjižnega jezika, 1975: 526). Bogataj's (1995a) definition relates culture to nature and space by stating that culture is everything in a specific territory, except Nature itself, that is created by humans, including the creating process itself. The aggregation of the past and the present creations of man is, indeed, the total culture of mankind, but an individual or a social group does not identify with all the creations nor with a selection of them over a longer time span. Cultural identity and its components are changing over time in spite of the fact that some, known as traditions, persist for a longer time period. But even the "traditions" are changing. They are taking new forms and incorporating innovations. According

to M. Makarovič, even fairy tales – many of which having international character, have been adapted to the time and the space of their consumers/listeners (M. Makarovič, 1995a: 9). The definition of culture "as the integrated combination of typical spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional characteristics which define a society or a social group" offered by the World Congress on Cultural Politics in 1982 in Mexico City (Bernik, 1997) includes the social identity dimension in the concept of culture.

Territory has a double role as a co-definer of the cultural identity of individuals and social groups and global societies. First, it effects the life-style of the residents living, for example, in mountainous areas, in valleys, or on plains; and second, it conditions the contacts among the residents of a certain geographic area and with the residents of the neighboring communities. The communication patterns at the local/community level are still based on personal contacts (at work, in leisure time, at specific occasions) while the communication above the local level depends heavily on the modern communication techniques (electronic media).

Thus, **cultural identity** in reference to the countryside means that human creations have been put into place in a certain territorial area defined as the countryside, which at the same time codetermines this identity. It is this spatial determination of the cultural identity of the countryside that the literature commonly refers to when it uses the notion of rural identity (Fitchen, 1991: 250–258), thereby avoiding the word "cultural."

Although in modern times there is not as direct a parallel between tradition and nature as in pre-modern societies (Giddens, 1994: 76), the natural environment is still an important determinant of rural life and rural culture. At least some of the economic activities of rural communities are based on local/natural resources (agriculture, forestry, rural tourism) and many traditional social events are still related to the seasonal changes of nature (spring festivals, carnivals).

The role of rural cultural identity as a part of national identity has been changing through history, depending mostly on the predominant mode of production and human products related to it. The cultural identities of pre-modern societies were rural identities, for agriculture, forestry and fishing were the main economic activities. Even the emerging cities with craft and trade activities were closely related to the agricultural production of the time.

The modern era, by promoting industrial production and urban culture, has marginalized rural areas and their cultural heritage to the extent of almost "destroying" it. Some urban residents, especially those who did not feel integrated into their urban environment, as well as those who valued rural culture because

of its integrity and the way of life of rural populations in which the natural environment and the rural cultural heritage were respected, developed a nostalgic view about rural culture. Such views have failed to halt the marginalization of rural culture. What has been required to prevent further marginalization is a recognition on the global level of the value of rural culture, and efforts that aim at the preservation/revitalization of rural natural and cultural heritage must be grounded in this recognition.

The contrast to rural identity is urban identity, which has developed in a different spatial organization and has a different content. Depending on interrelations of rural and urban cultures, several types of cultural identity between the two extremes (rural and urban) have developed. Such "mixed" types of cultural identities might even predominate, especially in the most developed countries of Europe and Japan, which are experiencing the vanishing of any differences between the rural and the urban. This mixing of identities is mostly due to the lack of space within urban areas in addition to the relatively small territories of these states.

For the purpose of this paper, **cultural identity** is defined by those traditions/heritage as well as by those modern human achievements an individual or a group identifies with. It considers them as constituent elements of the culture shared by the residents of a spatially defined area. In order to be able to identify cultural identity of the countryside, the countryside needs to be characterized by a set of indicators distinguishing between rural and urban areas/communities.

For everyday life, neither the definition of rural nor the definition of urban is needed. Everybody has an idea about both, based on personal experiences, knowledge, and needs. Thus, for example, a resident of the outer part of a city who is leaving home to visit the center of a city, usually says: "I am going to the city." On the contrary, a lady departing the city center to visit a friend on the outskirts, names the part of the city by a local name for this city area. By doing this, she excludes that part of the city from the definition of the city. Even village residents, especially those who live in larger or dispersed rural settlements "go to the village," by which they mean the village center or the village meeting point. At the same time, village residents call the nearest town simply "the town" regardless of its name. In other words, in everyday life we know what is a town and what is the countryside.

As in everyday life, experts working in rural areas (agriculture, geodesy, construction) or studying them (geography, sociology, social anthropology) also have not bothered with exact definition(s), for all the area outside of the cities have been considered as the coun-

tryside. In addition, because of the concentration of industries and other economic activities in the cities, rural areas have been perceived as either detached or peripheral (Marsden et al., 1990: 2), that is, as less important, and the division of a social world obviously enshrined in the clearly visible spatial division between the cities and the countryside (Mormont, 1990: 22) is thought as the division between industry and agriculture.

There have been several initiatives to define **rural communities**:

First, according to Mormont, in the 1920s and 1930s, a specific concept or category of the rural evolved in a manner specific to each country, though in all cases there was an attempt to reformulate both the relationship between town and country and the definition of agriculture, as a result of the changes facing the countryside and its inhabitants. The concept of the rural evolved by distinguishing the rural and the agricultural, and by defining the rural in relation to the social and cultural context created by industrial development, now the dominant element of the social system (Mormont, 1987: 20).

Second, the attempts to define rural in the relation to urban arises as the reaction to ever more precise distinguishing of different levels of urbanity in the relation to the center of a city (Figure 1) and as the reaction to the vanishing of the countryside due to the creation of large metropolitan areas.

Third, the fact that some rural societies have resisted the outside world call for some effort to be devoted to studying this phenomena (Mormont, 1990: 21) and by doing this to define some basic indicators of rural.

Contemporary attempts (Marsden et al., 1993; Capo, 1995) to define rural communities have identified different types and/or levels of rurality on the basis of selected qualitative characteristics of rural communities (economic, spatial, political, cultural). On this bases, four ideal types have been defined with the qualification that "they do not refer to specific places; rather, variations upon them overlap and merge into one another in rural space. To seek to map them as discrete categories would be to misrepresent the purpose of identifying ideal types" (Marsden et al., 1993: 187). While such a stand might be quite useful and safe for building a theory, it is of little use to decision-makers either at a global/state or at local levels. For decision-making purposes the indicators of rurality need to be quantifiable (measurable), and different types of rural communities mapped to enable users of the data to deal also with the proportions of identified types of rurality within a defined space. As indicated by Bonanno (1995: 18), even within Global Post-Fordism the fundamental structure of identity has

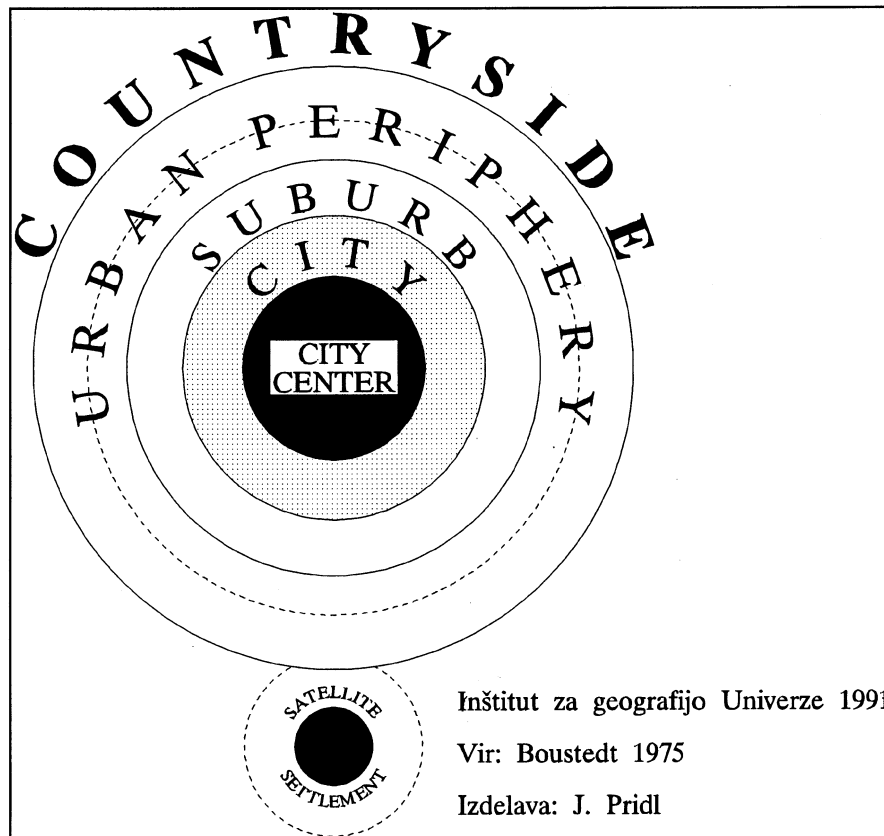


Figure 1. The scheme of a city region of Ljubljana (Kriteriji za oblikovanje mest v Sloveniji, 1993).

remained local and specific (based on family, kin, social, ethnic, or national groups).

In order to provide the information basis for local territorial policies and to secure internationally comparable data for the policy of a broader integration, the group of experts appointed by OECD in the early 1990s, in two years work, prepared a set of rural indicators (Table 2).

The territorial frame for the collection of the data suggested by the OECD expert group are three levels of a state organization: national, regional, and local. The scheme is working on the principle: the larger the territorial unit, the fewer the indicators needed for policy making and vice versa, the smaller the territorial unit, the greater number of indicators are necessary for shaping local policies.

By applying this approach, the types of rural communities can be identified by adequate data processing and analysis as well as the identified types mapped.

Whatever types of rurality are identified, it is obvious that they can misrepresent the reality, for they are based on a selected set of indicators, which are changing in time, frequently due to very specific and/or hardly predictable factors/actors.

Basically, there are two processes that are shap-

ing local life, especially the life of rural communities: economic development on the basis of local resources, and direct democracy as the basic tool/principle of decision-making at the local level.

Local resources include the local nature/environment, existing economic activities, work potentials of residents and cultural heritage. It is the very dependency of residents on local resources that make the residents explore them in ways that secure their sustainability. The political mechanism for decision-making in accordance with the sustainable development paradigm are **direct democracy** and **local self-government** which, according to Naisbitt (1994: 27) has at the local level already replaced representative democracy and this replacement represents one of the megatrends at the turn of the 20th century.

The cultural identity of the Slovenian countryside

The Slovenian countryside through time

Even though half (50.7%) of the population of Slovenia live in the cities, the majority of them have their roots in the countryside in the farm families from which they came one or two generations ago.

Table 2. A basic set of rural indicators (OECD, 1994: 37)

POPULATION AND MIGRATION			SOCIAL WELL-BEING AND EQUITY		
Density	Inhabitants/km ²	Absolute % rural population area	Income	GPD per capita Personal income	Nominal Per capita real disposable (deflated)
Change	Total change	Absolute	Housing	Crowding	Persons per room
	Natural balance	% per annum		Equipment	% households with flush toilets, etc.
	Net migration	% per inhabitant			
Structure	Democratic ratios	% pop. sex/age	Education	Post secondary	Absolutes % pop. (>25)
Households	Size classes	Persons per household	Health	Infant mortality	Per inhabitant
	Single parent	% children			
Communities	Size classes	% pop. by class	Safety	Crime rates	
ECONOMIC STRUCTURE AND PERFORMANCE			ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY		
Labor force	Participation	% pop. (15–64) % females	Topography and climate	Mountains Vegetation period	km ² over 600 m Days per year
Employment	Total change	Absolute total	Land use	Agriculture arable	Hectare % total area
	Unemployment	% age/sex		Forest	Change per annum
Sectoral shares Value added	Employment	% primary agriculture forestry, etc. % secondary % tertiary	Habits and species	Protected areas	km ² % total area % of species known
Productivity	Value added	Total (nat. currency) Growth (constant price) per worker	Soils and water	Erosion risk Nutrient balance Water withdrawal	Risk class % lands N, P, K kg/ha m ³
Investment	Capital formation	Total private % GDP public	Air quality	SO ₂ per capita Emission Immission	Co ₃ per sq. km

The majority of them are in contact with the places of their origin, for they still have relatives there. Thus, although the rural identity persists everywhere in Slovenia, new urban-rural ties are developing. This might be one of the reasons why the Slovenian countryside has remained “unproblematic” in the last 50 years. Little attention has been paid to the countryside in the mass media. The occasional radio and TV programs about agriculture and the countryside reach only specifically intended audiences and are ignored by the more general audience. The same is true in regard to the print media. Few articles about agriculture and the countryside appear in the daily papers, except perhaps some news on regional pages. The only weekly newspaper aimed at farmers, is hardly ever read by urban residents.

Nevertheless, the Slovenian farmers and the countryside is quietly but constantly changing. Rural residents are accepting the challenges of urban life including those who live on farms and are still engaged in farming. Small holdings and the possibilities of off-

farm employment – predominantly in cities – have caused the transformation of full-time farms into part-time and supplementary farms. The great proportion of rural residents have moved from a farmer to non-farmer social strata. Rural residents working in cities have brought home elements of urban lifestyle and urban values that have steadily ousted rural traditions. In addition, the combination of a job and farming, accompanied by technological developments in agriculture, has caused the increased individuation, e.g., self-sufficiency, of individual farm households. As a result, the traditional types of co-operation and mutual help among villagers are being abandoning or are limited to specific occasions in work and in life. In regard to leisure time activities, traditional customs and values are in the process of transformation. Some of them have been abandoned and some adapted to meet new circumstances. Very few have been kept in their traditional forms (Barbič, 1990: 184–192).

The impending crisis in agriculture that will result from the inclusion of Slovenia in the European Union

will push more farmers out of agriculture and speed up those processes that are causing the Slovenian countryside to lose its traditional identity.

These processes can be stopped or even redirected if rural natural and cultural heritage is utilized as a source for local development and at the same time incorporated as a constituent element of a local lifestyle. In addition to the natural beauties and relatively clean environment of the countryside, rural tourism, as a promising economic activity of farm families and rural communities, is exactly the type of economic activity through which the Slovenian countryside can market its rich cultural heritage, and can utilize it for the promotion of Slovenia as a successful state in transition (Adam and Tomc, 1994).

The research project and its goals

The Slovenian Ministry of Science and Technology together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Processing in 1995 launched a research project called "The strategy and the methodological bases for integrated rural development in Slovenia." The project includes all major disciplines relevant to the countryside such as agriculture and forestry, spatial planning, landscape architecture and architecture, geography, economics, rural sociology and anthropology. Cultural identity of the Slovenian countryside was only one of several specific topics of the project. This part of the project was concerned with identifying and presenting the elements of cultural identity and defining its role in the performance and in the development of rural communities.

Parallel to this, the project on the Slovenian agriculture within EU (advantages and disadvantages) had been carried out by another group of experts.

The components of cultural identity of the Slovenian countryside

In the broadest sense, cultural identity is determined by land as its spatial basis and local community as social/symbolic basis of the cultural identity of an individual or a social group in rural areas (Fitchen, 1991: 250–255). The basic carrier of the cultural identity of the Slovenian countryside were farmers up to the end of the Second World War and also in the first post-war decade. There were two reasons for this. Farmers represented a great majority of the residents of rural communities; and rural communities were rather sharply separated from the urban ones with which they had only occasional contacts. After the orientation of Socialist Yugoslavia to industrial development, many farmers got a job in industries located in cities and some of them daily commuted to work in cities where

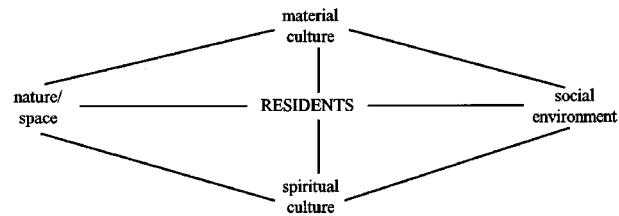


Figure 2. Natural and social environments determine the material and spiritual culture of a local community and its residents.

they were exposed not only to new information but also to the patterns of urban life (Barbič, 1983). In combination with rural patterns, and supported by new agricultural and household techniques, urban life patterns contributed to a higher quality of rural life. At the same time, daily commuters were stretched between urban and rural ways of life, and were frequently rejected by urban as well as by rural residents.

Even though the ratio of agricultural population in Slovenia has been constantly decreasing (from 41.1% in 1953 to 7.6% in 1991), agriculture, forestry, and hunting in 1993 contributed 4.9% to GDP (individual sector alone 3.3%), which illustrates the important role of these sectors in national economy (Fink Hafner, 1995: 113). With the development of the transport and communication infrastructure, in addition to agriculture and some mostly tertiary and quaternary industries, economic activities started to develop in the countryside that stimulated not only agricultural production but also the reintroduction of already forgotten traditions and the revitalization of still existing ones. It is the development of these new economic activities that has supposedly contributed to the "new" identities of rural communities by stressing what is local and unique about them.

Rural identity defined as the material and spiritual culture of the residents of a rural community, is determined by the specific natural and social environments (Figure 2) within which local residents live and interact.

Today, the material as well as the spiritual culture of an area or a community is not an isolated creation but rather a locally interpreted and utilized creation of the kind of people with whom the residents have come into contact, which they have then added to local traditions and adapted/incorporated to local life styles.

In the research project, the material and spiritual human creations are identified as the components of cultural identity of the Slovenian countryside (Figure 3).

Place, in addition to common history, language, and value patterns, plays an important role as co-determiners of local as well as national identity. The spatial frame of national identity is the territory of the state,

while the local identity is usually spatially framed by the territory of a village in which an individual lives (Kučan, 1996: 1). According to the public opinion poll in 1995, most of Slovenians are attached to their settlement (45.5%) and to the state of Slovenia (38.2%), and rather few to their region (9.1%) (quoted from: Kučan, 1996: 36).

The attachment of the Slovenian farmers of both gender to different social spaces was measured in a survey in 1991. The averages of their attachment on 1 (the lowest) to 5 (the highest) point scale show that they are the most strongly attached to their family (average estimation 4.6) followed by the attachment to the state of Slovenia (4.1) and their village/settlement (3.9), and the least to their local community (3.2), region (2.9) and municipality (2.9) (Barbič and Hribernik, 1991: 4).

Since the spatial features of the landscape, together with the material culture within it, and the economic activities that take place in rural areas (agriculture, forestry, supplementary activities of farm families, rural tourism) have been covered by other project themes, the theme of the cultural identity of the Slovenian countryside was consciously limited to its spiritual component, or, more precisely, to those parts of the spiritual culture about which data had already been published. Due to this limitation, only the language, (handy)crafts, food culture, folk art, as well as co-operation and mutual help among village residents were included in the study.

The language of rural areas. Benedik (1995) calls attention to the difference between literary language, which is unique for the whole Slovenian territory, and the spoken language, which is different in almost each Slovenian village. In fact, the residents of a particular settlement can place a person they talk to into the settlement he/she comes from if he/she lives nearby. Recently, a kind of “bilinguality” has developed: people use a local spoken language in communication with the co-residents of a settlement, and the combination of a dialect with the elements of the language spoken/known by persons who come from the areas with different dialects. In regard to the cultural identity of the Slovenian countryside, three findings from the Benedik (1995) study seems to be the most relevant:

First, fifty Slovenian dialects are spoken in rural and urban areas. In the latter, because of the numerous dialects of the residents’ origin, the spoken languages contain more elements of the literary language than in rural settlements. For these reasons, one gets the impression that dialects are typical for the countryside, which is not true at all.

Second, the mapping of the words and their sounds used for the same items (maize – *Zea mais* and the

maize taken off of the cob) illustrates the role of the language as the component of the cultural identity of different rural areas.

Third, the dialects have been changing in sounds, accents, and in the words and their meanings. In addition to the language itself, there are other social processes effecting its changes (immigrations, technological innovations) that demand unification of words and their meanings.

Speaking in a dialect that is characteristic of rural residents has been considered to be of lower value, and the same is true of other characteristics of rurality (clothing, items and buildings, habits). Rural residents who mastered only dialects felt like second rate citizens in their communication with formal bodies and with urban residents, and have been ashamed of their spoken language.

Slovenian national minorities living in the neighboring states (Austria, Italy, Hungary, and in Croatia) due to the modifications of the borderlines, and the Slovenian communities of economic and political emigrants and their off-springs elsewhere are not in all cases in the situation to follow the literary language developments. In fact, many of them had never even fully mastered it. Thus, living in non-Slovenian spoken country, they can try to preserve only the language they knew, which was, in many cases, the dialect spoken in the village/region of their origin. Even more, some Slovenian national minorities try to protect the variety of dialects by intentionally supporting them. The booklet *Vrtec (Kindergarten)* published in 1997 by Beneški študijski center Nadiža (Venetian study center Nadiža), Italy, which includes the selection of short texts of the Slovenian elementary school pupils in [petr, Italy, written in local/Slovenian dialects (Štucin, 1997), is definitely a good example of the importance of living dialects as a component of national as well as local identities.

However, due to the modern spatial, social, and cultural globalization processes, dialects and even languages are not as much territorially based as they are socially and culturally determined. This is why Williams argues that “many individuals are now more autonomous, seeking language contiguity without necessarily expecting that interaction to take place within geographic contiguity” (Williams, 1992: 118).

(Handy)crafts. As a former supplementary activities typical of rural residents, especially of farmers, handicrafts have lately become popular also among urban residents. Even though their handicraft products are modernized and adapted to the needs of life styles, they are still based on traditions developed by rural residents.

Handicrafts, along with other characteristics of

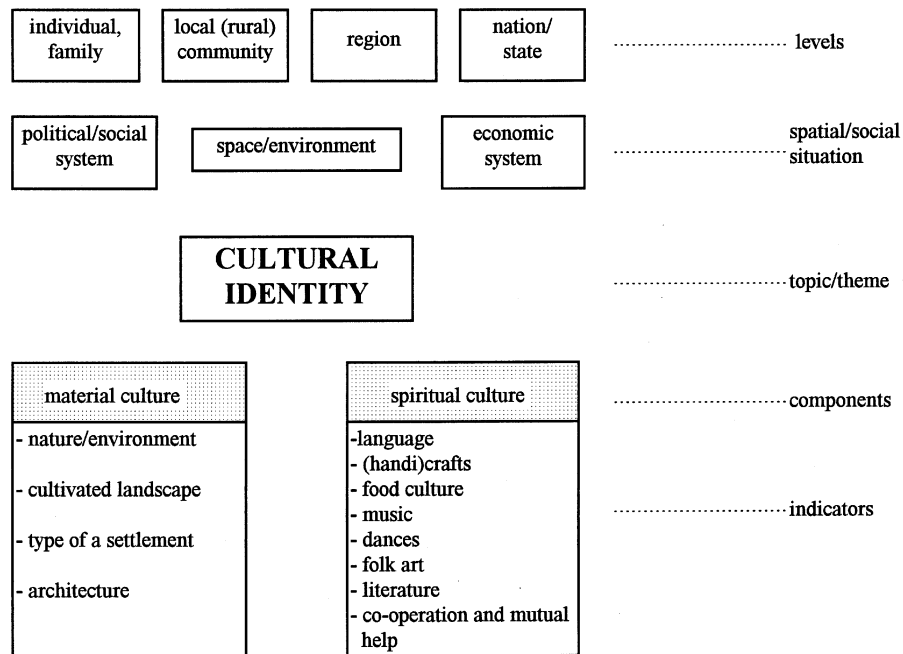


Figure 3. The levels and the components of the cultural identity of the Slovenian countryside.

rural life, have been losing their importance as a source of income as well as the component of rural identity basically for two reasons. One of them was the social derogation of rural traditions, for socialist Yugoslavia in which Slovenia was a constituent republic up to 1991, had been oriented towards industrial development. The second reason, related to the first one, were the options available to farmers and to other rural residents to get a job in industry located predominantly in urban/suburban areas. Among numerous traditional handicrafts – Bogataj (1989) presents in detail 23 groups of them – only a few have remained vital (for example: the production of wood-wares). In many cases, the handwork has been combined or even replaced by machine work. Due to such developments, handicrafts had been losing their role as a component of Slovenian rural cultural identity up to the beginning of the 1980s, when integrated rural development projects had been introduced and co-financed by the state (at that time the Republic of Slovenia within Yugoslavia). Now, many handicrafts have been revitalized and are becoming “new” traditions of Slovenian rural life.

Cuisine. Slovenian ethnologist Bogataj (1995a) believes that the cuisine of the contemporary Slovenian countryside has been influenced by a modern globalized cuisine so much that it can no longer be a component of the cultural identity of the Slovenian countryside. Even though traditional cuisine can still be found among farmers, its central place is in

pubs, especially in combination with rural tourism and “open-door farms.” Just as with handicrafts, traditional rural cuisine has been considered to be an indicator of backwardness, for which farmers are the last to be blamed. Modern tourist development, however, offers a chance to re-evaluate rural/farmers’ nutrition culture and their special dishes. However, the countryside cannot avoid foreign influences such as the presence of Chinese food or pizzas. Rather, it needs to compete with them in a creative coexistence.

The traditional cuisine of the Slovenian countryside consists of breads and farinaceous (mealy) dishes, buns (cakes) and sweets among which *potica* is an original Slovenian cake, milk dishes, vegetable dishes, pork and sausages (Bogataj, 1992). Bogataj is certain that the “Slovenian kitchen” can be enriched and popularized, especially because of the modern orientation towards natural sources of food.

Folk art as a component of the cultural identity of the Slovenian countryside, according to G. Makarovič (1981), lacks any idiosyncratic characteristics, either in form or contents. It is simply a part of the culture of the lower social strata reflecting their limited possibilities. Their art products are characterized by cheap materials and cheap workmanship, which can be, at least to some extent, attributed to the poor skills of the artists/craftsmen. Nevertheless, their products can be defined in terms of the manner in which they express, establish, and surpass the relationships that farmers have with their surroundings by creating “new nature,” or, in the case of the plastic arts, new plastic aesthetic

structures, but they are always expressed as a part of the life on a farm. G. Makarovič (1981) identifies five groups of folk art products:

- Folk art creations on exteriors by which farms turned to the environment (the backyard and house entries, doors, windows, window nets, peepholes, fountains, tombstones, etc.);
- Folk art creations on interiors related to the architectural arrangements of rooms and to their usage (ceilings, fireplaces, stoves, lamps, fretwork and decorated chests, beds, tables, chairs, earthenware, cooking-vessels, paintings on glass, on wood, on fabrics, etc.);
- Folk art creations at work (different work equipment and tools);
- Folk art creations for personal use, especially some items of female and male clothing;
- Folk art creations for holidays and special occasions.

In the past, the products of folk art had, in addition to their aesthetic, also some important social functions. They marked the social status of a farmer/a farm family, contributed to the distinction between work days and holidays, and represented the leisure activities of rural residents. Today, the folk art products have lost their social functions but they keep their aesthetic value mostly as decorations of buildings' exteriors and as traditional art products that are exhibited and/or traded.

Co-operation and mutual help at work and in leisure are more typical of rural/village communities than they are of urban ones, and they are an important component of the identity of the Slovenian countryside.

M. Makarovič (1995b) has investigated mutual help and personal relations within rural families and village communities, paying special attention to the motives for their creation and preservation. She indirectly deals also with the reasons for abandoning this kind of tradition by calling attention to the fact that farm families, by becoming more and more self-sufficient, are getting more and more locked into the family frame.

The most typical forms of co-operation in the Slovenian countryside are the mutual help in farm work, co-operations within individual social groups (neighborhood, relatives' groups, village community), co-operation at feast occasions, and cooperation within different non-governmental organizations.

The tradition of mutual help with agricultural work has been diminishing ever since the middle of the 20th century due to the use of agricultural machines and chemicals. Mutual help has been preserved only where agricultural works have still to be done by hand. Among the modern forms of mutual help in agricul-

tural works, sillaging the fodder seems to be the most widely spread in the Slovenian rural areas. The growth of mutual help after the Second World War has been identified in the field of building construction (M. Makarovič, 1995b).

Daily contacts of adults have been in many cases reduced to greetings. Once frequent contacts of young people have diminished, and once extremely heterogeneous forms of social gathering of boys and girls are now remembered only by the older generation, and with nostalgia. On the contrary, the number of dancing, theater, music, and sports groups has been increasing lately as the compensation for lost informal personal contacts in everyday life.

Slovenian farmers are stretched between the countryside and the city life. Contemporary Slovenian farmers, although living in the countryside, do not automatically identify with rural culture. They see many advantages in living at the countryside, and at the same time see many advantages to living in a town. In the countryside, most of them value clean air/environment and nature (91.2%), healthy life (61.5%), quiet and relaxed life (48.8%), on the one hand, and personal contacts, free life (63.4%), independent work, being his/her own master (54.8%) and being engaged in the profession he/she likes (53.4%), on the other hand.

The advantages farmers see in the city are those related to better infrastructure (78.2%), closeness of the workplace (57.3%), better accessibility to information (50.7%) on the one hand, and to better conditions for satisfying some personal needs such as better possibilities for entertainment (44.2%), for different leisure-time activities (42.2%), better life and higher living standard (34.2%) on the other hand (Barbič, 1993: 49).

The attraction of Slovenian farmers to both sides can be at least partly ascribed to the close relations between the cities and the surrounding rural areas enabled by relatively good communication and social infrastructure and the territorial smallness of Slovenia. Those who live in the countryside, can on the average, reach a nearby town by car in half an hour. If the urbanization of the Slovenian countryside continues at the present pace, the differences between the cities and the countryside will continue to diminish and the characteristics of both will merge into something like a new "rurbanity."

Conclusion

*respect for its past should not fix a garden
for ever at the period of its creation* (Tait, 1996)

Space is loosing its meaning in defining territorial boundaries but it is gaining it in framing the patterns of

natural and cultural characteristics that, in their interactions, determine the cultural identity of a region/a community. The open boundaries of a spatially defined area and an increasingly better communication infrastructure stimulate the contacts of rural residents with the outside world, enabling them to exchange information, experiences, and values. Local cultural identities have, therefore, become less rigid and more loosely defined. Rural identities have been especially susceptible to changes, for rural populations according to Ehrentant (1996: 21), who refers to Mormont (1987) and Pongratz (1990) "are not passive victims of urban appropriation, relegated to be 'gardeners of the countryside,' but are proactively adapting to changing circumstances and evolving new forms of rurality not reducible to the persistence of some frozen traditions." Such changes can be illustrated by the spread of the rock music groups on the Slovenian countryside in 1970s and 1980s. The rural music groups, especially popular in the villages of the Northeast Slovenia, can be defined as modern popular musicians (M. Makarovič, 1996: 16).

Romanticizing rural traditions (Bogataj, 1995b) has been, in modern times, encouraged by the development of rural tourism. Revitalized traditions, which have for a long time not been the part of the life of rural residents and thus not a component of their cultural identity, often represent only a "theater" by which local people entertain tourists and maybe even themselves. If the latter is the case, the traditions can be incorporated into a modern cultural identity of a rural community. Only those aspects of rural tradition that are currently alive, that are an integral part of the work and leisure activities of rural residents, can be efficiently preserved and also presented to others.

A strong cultural identity of rural communities supports the self-confidence of rural residents while the richness of its components represents an important source of their creative work in leisure life. It means that the cultural identity of a rural community is not static. It is constantly changing by giving up some of its components and introducing new ones. The abandonment of traditions does not mean a loss of respect for them. It simply means that rural residents are adapting their life style to new situations and thus building future "traditions."

Two basically contradictory movements characterizing contemporary developments related to Slovenian rural areas and their cultural identities have been identified:

First, rural residents, recognizing their rising living standards, which have been supported by a better communication infrastructure, connecting rural areas with towns, and encouraged by the interest of urban residents in the natural and cultural heritage of rural

areas, started to value their own traditions and natural environment. By becoming the "consumption places," as Urry described it, rural areas are developing rapidly due to numerous jobs in services related to tourism and vacationing (Urry, 1995: 129). Local residents are "rediscovering" rural traditions for the sake of marketing them. In order to increase profit from tourism, they have built "authentic villages," organized "traditional fiestas," and displayed "traditional works." Commercialization of rural life may easily lead to the creation of pseudo-history and a pseudo-culture of rural areas (Verbole, 1995).

Second, the creation of natural, regional, and biospheric parks as the state's actions for preserving natural and cultural heritage tend to persuade locals to respect traditions that support sustainability. Tourists as potential consumers of nature and traditions of rural areas are, within this concept, almost a disturbing element. Such an approach requires almost complete isolation of protected areas and their residents from the outside world, an approach that local residents can hardly accept. They are right in not being willing to be the only one to bear the costs of preserving nature and cultural heritage. Most land preservationists who advocate such an approach usually sit in the comfortable offices of their institutions in the cities and know little about the real life in rural areas, especially in the more remote ones where real people live, people who need to cope with real problems on a daily basis. For them, the problem of survival is far more urgent than the future of natural and cultural heritage.

There seem to be only one option for preserving rural cultural identity, that is, the utilization of natural and cultural heritage as the motor of local development (Kayser, 1994: 5-9). However, traditions must be primarily a component of a local life-style in which local residents are their principle performers and their consumers. Only in such a case is the local culture an authentic one and only as such can it be efficiently marketed in tourism. To market tourism, it is not enough that there is some heritage that still remains or that has been revitalized. There must be those who carry out and live the activities that tourists come to see (Barbič, 1995) and there must be strategies for their presentation (Petrin, 1995).

However, there is neither the need nor the possibility for all rural residents to identify with local traditional culture. Cultural heritage is losing its exclusiveness and it is becoming only a potential that is available and accessible. The chance that someone will take it over completely has been diminishing while the chance of selective and creative combination of traditional and modern elements of rural cultural identity is increasing. The increasing variety of cultural identities of individual rural residents can be to a great extent

ascribed to the changing role of rural space characterized by two developmental processes – unification and emancipation (Mlinar, 1995: 356–360) – that complement one another in the sense of stimulating the diversification of development and cultural identity options for rural communities and their residents. Even more, as Giddens puts it: “In post-traditional context, we have no choice but to choose how to be and how to act” (Giddens, 1994: 75).

In this context, it is necessary to distinguish between globalization as a practice from a global society. While globalization as a process implies expanding in Space both in terms of an economic/corporatist as well as an emancipatory drive (Mlinar, 1997: 24), the notion of a global society refers to the broadest social space an individual belongs to. The expansion/growth of globalization processes does not endanger the identification of individuals and social groups with the global world. On the contrary, according to Mlinar (1997: 1) the empirical evidence for countries around the world indicates that the primary bond for people in the “global times” or “global age” is that of the local, eventually national community, and that hardly anyone identifies with the world as a whole. Thus, instead of diminishing, local (cultural) identities are gaining the importance in everyday life of human beings of the post-modern time.

Note

1. This is a revised paper presented at the International Scientific Conference “European Agriculture and Rural Areas – on Course for Common Future in the 21st Century,” Torun, Poland, September 17–20, 1996. I am grateful to Professor Alessandro Bonanno, Sam Huston State University, Huntsville, Texas, USA, for his valuable comments and suggestions.

References

- Adam, F. and G. Tomc (eds.) (1994), *Small Societies in Transition. The Case of Slovenia*. Družboslovne razprave. Ljubljana: Slovenian Sociological Association and Institute for Social Sciences, No. 15–16.
- Barbič, A. (1983), “The farmer-worker in Yugoslavia: A bridge between the city and the countryside,” *Sociologia Ruralis* 1: 76–84.
- Barbič, A. (1990), *Kmetov vsakdan (Farmers' Everyday Life)*. Ljubljana, CZ.
- Barbič, A. (1993), *Kmečka družina – socialna sestavina družinske kmetije (Farm Family – the Social Component of a Family Farm)*. Ljubljana: Družba za razvoj podeželja, d.o.o. (research report).
- Barbič, A. (1995), *The Development and Promotion of Tourism on Farms in Slovenia*. Joint ECA-ECE Symposium on Rural Tourism. April 2–7, Galilee, Israel, 15 p.
- Barbič, A. and F. Hribnik (1991), *Farm Family*. Ljubljana: Biotechnical Faculty, 12 p. (research report).
- Benedik, F. (1995), “Jezik podeželskih območij – izraz slovenske samobitnosti (The language of rural areas – the expression of the Slovenian originality). Zasnova strategije in metodoloske osnove celovitega razvoja in urejanja podeželja,” *CRP Zemlja: Kmetijstvo in podeželje. Fazio raziskovalno poročilo*. Ljubljana, BF: Oddelek za agronomijo, 8 p. + 2 maps.
- Bennet, R. J. (ed.) (1993), *Local Government in the New Europe*. Belhaven Press.
- Bernik, F. (1997), “Moč in nemoč kulture (The power and the powerlessness of culture),” *Delo*. Ljubljana, December 4.
- Bogataj, J. (1989), *Domače obrti na Slovenskem (Handicrafts in Slovenia)*. Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije.
- Bogataj, J. (1992), *Sto srečanj z dediščino na Slovenskem (A Hundred Cases of the Heritage in Slovenia)*. Ljubljana: Prešernova družba.
- Bogataj, J. (1995a), “Sestavine kulturne istovetnosti (identitete) slovenskega podeželja (The components of cultural identity of the Slovenian countryside),” *Zasnova strategije in metodološke osnove celovitega razvoja in urejanja podeželja. CRP Zemlja: Kmetijstvo in podeželje*. Ljubljana: Univerza v Ljubljani, Biotehniška fakulteta, 6 p.
- Bogataj, J. (1995b), “Kurentland is my land,” *Naša žena*. Ljubljana, junij 1995, pp. 7, 8.
- Bonanno, A. (1995), “Global postFordism: The conditions for rural socio-economic development,” in A. Barbič and D. Wastl-Walter (eds.), *Sustainable Development of Rural Areas: From Global Problems to Local Solutions* (pp. 9–21). Klagenfurt: Klagenfurter Geographische Schriften, Heft 13, Institut für Geographie der Universität Klagenfurt.
- Capo, E. (1995), “Transformation and development in Italian rural society,” *Sociologia Ruralis* 3/4: 297–309.
- Ehrentant, A. (1996), “Globalization and the representation of rurality: Alpine open-air museums in advanced industrial societies,” *Sociologia Ruralis* 36(1): 4–26.
- Fink Hafner, D. (1995), *Slovensko kmetijstvo in Evropa (Slovenian agriculture and Europe)*. Ljubljana: Znanstveno in publicistično središče.
- Fitchen, J. M. (1991), *Endangered Spaces, Enduring Places. Change, Identity and Survival in Rural America*. Westview Press.
- Giddens, A. (1990), *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Giddens, A. (1994), “Living in a post-traditional society,” In U. Beck, A. Giddens, and S. Lash (eds.), *R reflexive Modernization. Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order* (pp. 56–109). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Herzog, D. and D. Wastl-Walter (1995), “The economic restructuring of Eisenkappel/Železna Kapla – a case study of a sustainable development of an underdeveloped area,” in A. Barbič and D. Wastl-Walter (eds.), *Sustainable Development of Rural Areas: From Global Problems to Local Solutions* (pp. 126–147). Klagenfurt: Klagenfurter Geographische Schriften, Heft 13, Institut für Geographie der Universität Klagenfurt.

- Kayser, B. (1994), "Culture an important tool in rural development." Leader: *Quarterly Journal of the Community Programme* (Winter) (8): 5–9.
- Kriteriji za opredeljevanje mest v Sloveniji (1993), (*Criteria for Defining Cities in Slovenia*). Ljubljana: Inštitut za geografijo Univerze v Ljubljani.
- Kučan, A. (1996), *Dejavniki nacionalne prostorske identitete v Sloveniji. Doktorska disertacija (Slovenian Landscapes: Aspects of their Perception in Relation to National Identity. Dissertation thesis)*. Ljubljana: Univerza v Ljubljani, Biotehniška fakulteta.
- Makarovič, G. (1981), *Slovenska ljudska umetnost. Zgodovina likovne umetnosti na kmetijah (The Slovenian Folk Art. The History of the Folk Art on Farms)*. Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije.
- Makarovič, M. (1995a), "Tudi pravljice se spreminjajo (Even fairy tales are changing)," *Delo*. Ljubljana, June 20, p. 9.
- Makarovič, M. (1995b), "Medsebojna pomoč, medsebojni stiki in povezovanja na podeželju (Mutual help and personal relations in the countryside)," *CRP Zemlja: kmetijstvo in podeželje. Fazno raziskovalno poročilo*. Ljubljana, BF: Oddelek za agronomijo, 16 p.
- Makarovič, M. (1996), "V lep in drag spomin na rok moje mladosti (To the pleasant memory on the rock of my youth)," *Delo*. Ljubljana, July 11, p. 16.
- Marsden, T., P. Love, and S. Whatmore (1990), "Introduction: Questions of rurality," in T. Marsden, P. Lowe, and S. Withmore (eds.), *Rural Restructuring. Global Processes and Their Responses* (pp. 1–20). London: David Fulton Publishers.
- Marsden, T., J. Murdoch, P. Lowe, R. Munton, and A. Flynn (1993), *Constructing the Countryside*. London: UCL Press.
- Mlinar, Z. (1994), *Individuacija in globalizacija v prostoru (Individuation and Globalization in Space)*. Ljubljana: SAZU.
- Mlinar, Z. (1995), *Uvod. Mlinar, Zdravko, ur. Osamosvajanje in povezovanje v evropskem prostoru (Emancipation and unification in the European space)* (pp. 1–22). Ljubljana: Fakulteta za družbene vede, Znanstvena knjižnica.
- Mlinar, Z. (1997), *Globalization as a Research Agenda. Semi-Plenary Theme Lecture*. European Sociological Association. Third Conference. University of Essex, Colchester, August 27–30.
- Mormont, M. (1987), "Rural nature and urban nature," *Sociologia Ruralis* 27(1): 3–20.
- Mormont, M. (1990), "Who is rural? or, how to be rural: Towards a sociology of the rural," in T. Marsden, P. Lowe, and S. Withmore (eds.), *Rural Restructuring. Global Processes and Their Responses* (pp. 21–44). London: David Fulton Publishers.
- Naisbitt, J. (1994), "Megatrendi in globalni paradoks (Megatrends and global paradox)," Quoted according to: Meršol, Mitja. Držav bo tisoč, meje pa simbolične. *Delo*. Ljubljana, 12.11.1994, p. 7.
- OECD (1994), *Creating Rural Indicators for Shaping Territorial Policy*. Paris, OECD.
- Petrin, T. (1995), *Rural Tourism Development Strategy - A Tool for Achieving the Maximum Possible Impact of Tourism on the Revitalization of Rural Areas*. Joint ECA-ECE Symposium on Rural Tourism. April 2–7, Galilee, Israel.
- Pongratz, H. (1990), "Cultural tradition and social change in agriculture," *Sociologia Ruralis* 30(1): 5–17.
- Slovar slovenskega knjižnega jezika, druga knjiga* (1975), (*The Dictionary of the Slovenian Language*). Ljubljana: Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti ter Državna založba Slovenije.
- Strassoldo, R. (1990), "Lokalna pripadnost in globalna uvrstitev (Local belongness and global placing)." Družboslovne razprave, *Ljubljana, Slovensko sociološko društvo in Inštitut za sociologijo* 10: 64–76.
- Stucin, J. (1997), "Natečaj narečnih besedil Moja vas (The competition of texts in dialect My Village)," *Delo*. Ljubljana, Nov. 6, p. 50.
- Tait, A. A. (1996), *In My Opinion. European Gardens* (Summer) (pp. 32–39). London, Sherwood Press.
- Urry, J. (1995), *Consuming Places*. London: Routledge.
- Verbole, A. (1995), *Pros and Cons of Rural Tourism Development: Sustainability – A Possible Way Out*. Joint ECA-ECE Symposium on Rural Tourism. April 2–7, Galilee, Israel, 17 p.
- Williams, C. H. (1992), "Identity, autonomy and the ambiguity of technological development," in Z. Mlinar (ed.), *Globalization and Territorial Identities* (pp. 115–128). Avebury.
- Zavod, R. (1993), *Slovenije za statistiko (The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia)*. Gradivo za statistiko ZN.