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TWO
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M I G R A T I O N S T U D I E S

60 • 2024

D V E
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R A Z P R A V E O I Z S E L J E N S T V U

Revija ***Dve domovini / Two Homelands*** je osrednja slovenska znanstvena revija, namenjena objavi izvirnih znanstvenih in strokovnih člankov, ki obravnavajo različne vidike migracij. Revijo je leta 1990 ustanovil Inštitut za slovensko izseljenstvo Znanstvenoraziskovalnega centra slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti in izhaja dvakrat letno v slovenskem in angleškem jeziku. Vsi članki so dvojno anonimno recenzirani.

The journal ***Dve domovini / Two Homelands*** is dedicated to publishing original scientific articles about various aspects of migration. The journal was established by the Slovenian Migration Institute of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts Research Center (ZRC SAZU) in 1990 and is published twice a year in Slovenian and English. All articles are subject to double-blind peer review.

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UREDNIŠKI UVODNIK OB 60. ŠTEVILKI REVIJE *DVE DOMOVINI, RAZPRAVE O IZSELJENSTVU*

Kristina Toplak,^I Marijanca Ajša Vižintin^{II}

COBISS 1.20

Pred nami je šestdeseta številka revije *Dve domovini / Two Homelands*, ki na ZRC SAZU, Inštitutu za slovensko izseljenstvo in migracije, neprekinjeno izhaja že od leta 1990. V naslovu uvodnika, ki ga tokrat piševa novi urednici, imenovani v letu 2024, je namenoma izpisan celoten naslov revije, saj je ta vseh 34 let edini ostal nespremenjen. Revija je v tem času dvakrat spremenila zunanjo podobo (leta 2000 in ponovno leta 2008), izmenjalo se je sedem glavnih in odgovornih urednic, urednikov ter številne urednice, uredniki tematskih sklopov. Ledino je oral Andrej Vovko, ki ga je kmalu nadomestil Marjan Drnovšek, sledila je Janja Žitnik, pa spet Marjan Drnovšek (2001–2007). Potem je vajeti leta 2008 prevzel trojček urednikov Jure Gombač, Jernej Mlekuž in Kristina Toplak, ki so se do leta 2015 izmenjali v vlogi glavnega urednika oziroma urednice. Nato je uredništvo prevzela Mirjam Milharčič Hladnik in po osmih letih (2015–2023) z 59. številko revije delo predala sedanjima glavnima urednicama. Marina Lukšič Hacin, predstojnica Inštituta za slovensko izseljenstvo in migracije ZRC SAZU, je odgovorna urednica.

Ni lahko v besedah ali številkah zajeti številnih člankov, tematskih sklopov, knjižnih ocen in nenazadnje uvodnikov, ki so se v teh letih zvrstili v reviji *Dve domovini / Two Homelands*. Uredniki in urednice so vsebinsko vztrajno izvrševali poslanstvo revije: objavljane kakovostnih in raznolikih razprav o izseljenstvu in priseljenstvu oziroma širše o migracijah. Revija je bila sprva resda namenjena predvsem objavam o slovenskem izseljenstvu, o čemer še vedno priča tudi njeno ime, a z razvojem inštituta in s širitvijo tematskega interesa njegovih raziskovalk in raziskovalcev se je vsebinsko širil tudi spekter razprav v njej. Uredniška usmerjenost revije tudi po treh desetletjih ostaja zavezana objavam s področja izseljenstva in priseljenstva, a v kontekstu epistemoloških in metodoloških pristopov migracijskih študij kot krovnega področja. Vse številke so prosto dostopne v spletnem arhivu revije na strani <https://ojs.zrc-sazu.si/twohomelands/issue/archive>. Novejši članki so opremljeni s šiframi DOI, ki jih dodajamo tudi starejšim objavam.

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Mednarodno vidnost in uveljavljanje revije v periodični publicistiki še vedno zagotavljajo odlični in pogosto citirani članki, ki so praviloma objavljeni v slovenskem ali angleškem jeziku. Angleški z obravnavo številnih migracijskih tematik v obliki tematskih sklopov omogočajo mednarodno primerljivost in prepoznavnost revije, slovenski pa bodisi v tematskih sklopih ali kot individualni prispevki pomagajo širiti vedenje o izseljenstvu in priseljenstvu med slovensko govorečimi bralkami, bralci ter bogatijo znanstveni terminološki aparat slovenskega jezika na področju migracij. Če je revija *Dve domovini / Two Homelands* pot znanstvene periodične publikacije leta 1990 začela kot »zbornik« (po besedah prvega urednika Andreja Vovka), je danes periodična publikacija, ki izhaja dvakrat letno in se ponša z več mednarodnimi indeksi.

Poleg avtoric in avtorjev prispevkov ter urednic in urednikov revije so v tej večdesetletni enačbi kontinuiranega izhajanja nedvomno pomemben člen različni sofinancerji, ki so omogočili, da revija v digitalni dobi še vedno izhaja tudi v (sicer številčno omejenih) tiskanih izvodih. Izhajanje revije so v preteklosti finančno podpirala različno poimenovana vladna telesa s področij znanosti (Raziskovalna skupnost Slovenije, Ministrstvo za znanost in tehnologijo, ARRS in nazadnje ARIS) in kulture (Ministrstvo za kulturo, Javna agencija za knjigo), v letu 2001 pa se je tej podpori priključilo tudi zunanje ministrstvo z Uradom za Slovence v zamejstvu in po svetu. Slednji in ARIS sta zvesta finančna podpornika revije tudi danes, za kar se jima zahvaljujemo.

Naključno, a s kančkom simbolike, jubilejna številka revije *Dve domovini / Two Homelands* prinaša tematski sklop na temo duševnega zdravja in migracij. Na prvi pogled obrobna tema je v današnjem svetu nenadnih sprememb in stresnih situacij, ki zahtevajo skrajno prilagajanje migrantk in migrantov in z migracijami označenih skupnosti, zelo aktualna in nujno potrebna znanstvene obravnave. Gostujoča urednica Sanja Cukut Krilić (ZRC SAZU, Družbenomedicinski inštitut) je izbrala pet člankov, ki z različnih tematskih, metodoloških, epistemoloških in disciplinarnih zornih kotov naslavljajo duševno zdravje migrantk in migrantov. V uvodniku v tematski sklop je urednica sistematično nanizala, zakaj so tovrstne teme za raziskovalke in raziskovalce v družboslovju in humanistiki vse bolj družbeno aktualne, pereče in tudi privlačne.

Poleg tematskega sklopa so v reviji objavljeni še štirje drugi članki, od tega dva v slovenskem in dva v angleškem jeziku. Ti ponazarjajo večperspektivnost in zapletenost migracijskih procesov, saj obravnavajo tako izseljevanje iz Slovenije kot priseljevanje v Slovenijo v različnih časovnih obdobjih (v sedanjosti in preteklosti), na širše migracijske procese po svetu (Bangladeš, Sudan, evropske in arabske države) in na njihovo raziskovanje (kvalitativno in kvantitativno) na različnih področjih (v 60. številki etnografija, zgodovina, sociologija, izobraževanje, ekonomija). Najprej smo načrtovali objavo šestih člankov, a se je za enega izkazalo, da je že bil objavljen v drugi reviji, drugi pa je prejel negativni recenziji in predloge za večje popravke. Oboje ponazarja zahtevnost, odgovornost uredniškega in recenzentskega dela ter

zavezo h kakovosti in izvirnosti objav, ki prispevajo k razvoju migracijskih študij v različnih disciplinah. K temu bomo na ZRC SAZU, Inštitutu za slovensko izseljenstvo, v reviji *Dve domovini / Two Homelands* stremeli tudi v prihodnje.

Kot vedno: vljudno vabljeni k branju!

Sourednici revije *Dve domovini / Two Homelands*

EDITORIAL FOR THE 60TH ISSUE OF THE JOURNAL *TWO HOMELANDS, MIGRATION STUDIES*

Kristina Toplak,^I Marijanca Ajša Vižintin^{II}

COBISS 1.20

Before us is the 60th issue of *Dve domovini / Two Homelands*, published continuously since 1990 at the Slovenian Migration Institute of the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU). The journal's full title is purposely written out in this editorial by the new editors appointed in 2024, as it is the only thing that has remained unchanged for thirty-four years. During this time, the journal changed its external appearance twice (in 2000 and again in 2008), with changes among seven editors-in-chief, managing editors, and editors of thematic sections. The first one to break ground was Andrej Vovko, who was succeeded by Marjan Drnovšek, followed by Janja Žitnik, and again by Marjan Drnovšek (2001–2007). Then, in 2008, the trio of editors Jure Gombač, Jernej Mlekuž, and Kristina Toplak took over the reins and took turns as editor-in-chief until 2015. Mirjam Milharčič Hladnik took over the editorship afterward, and after eight years (2015–2023) with the 59th issue, she handed over the position to the current editors-in-chief. Marina Lukšič Hacin, head of the Slovenian Migration Institute at ZRC SAZU, is the managing editor.

It is not easy to cover in words or numbers the many articles, thematic sections, book reviews, and editorials published in the *Dve domovini / Two Homelands* during these years. The editors persistently carried out the journal's mission in terms of content: publishing high-quality and diverse emigration and immigration studies or, more broadly, migration studies. At first, the journal was intended primarily for publishing articles on Slovenian emigration, as its name still testifies. However, with the development of the institute and the expansion of the thematic interest of its researchers, the range of discussions within it also expanded in terms of content. Even after three decades, its editorial orientation remains committed to publishing articles on emigration and immigration, but in the context of epistemological and methodological approaches to migration studies as an umbrella field. All of the journal's issues are freely available through its online archive at <https://ojs.zrc-sazu.si/twohomelands/issue/archive>. Newer articles are equipped with DOI codes, which we are also adding to older publications.

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Excellent and often cited articles, generally published in Slovenian or English, still ensure the journal's international visibility and promotion. The English version enables the publication to be internationally comparable and recognized by dealing with numerous migration topics in thematic sections. In contrast, the Slovenian version, either in thematic sections or as individual contributions, helps to spread knowledge about emigration and immigration among Slovenian-speaking readers and enriches the scientific terminological apparatus of the Slovenian language in the field of migration. If *Dve domovini / Two Homelands* began its journey as a scientific periodical in 1990 as a collection of "proceedings" (according to the first editor, Andrej Vovko), today it is a periodical published twice yearly and boasts several international indexes.

In addition to the authors of the articles and the journal's editors, various co-funders have undoubtedly been an essential element in this decades-long equation of ongoing publication, making it possible to continue publishing (albeit numerically limited) printed copies of the periodical in the digital age. In the past, the publishing of the journal was financially supported by variously named governmental bodies from the fields of science (the Research Community of Slovenia, the Ministry of Science and Technology of the Republic of Slovenia, the Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS), and finally, the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS)) and culture (the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia, the Slovenian Book Agency). In 2001, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs also added support through the Government Office for Slovenians Abroad. The latter and the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS) are loyal financial supporters of the journal even today, for which we thank them.

Randomly, but with a hint of symbolism, the jubilee issue of the magazine *Dve domovini / Two Homelands* brings a thematic section on mental health and migration. In today's world of sudden changes and stressful situations, which require extreme adaptation of migrants and communities characterized by migration, this seemingly marginal topic is very relevant and urgently needs scientific consideration. Guest editor Sanja Cukut Krilić (ZRC SAZU, Sociomedical Institute) has selected five articles that address the mental health of migrants from different thematic, methodological, epistemological, and disciplinary perspectives. In the introduction to the thematic section, the editor systematically lists why such topics are increasingly socially relevant, pressing, and attractive for researchers in the social sciences and humanities.

In addition to the thematic section, we are publishing four other articles in this issue, two in Slovenian and two in English. These illustrate the multi-perspective and complexity of migration processes, as they deal with both emigration from Slovenia and immigration to Slovenia in different periods (in the present and the past), broader migration processes around the world (Bangladesh, Sudan, European, and Arab countries), and the research (qualitative and quantitative) in various fields (in the 60th issue, ethnography, history, sociology, education, economics). Initially, we planned to publish six articles. However, one had already been published in another

journal, and the other received negative reviews and suggestions for significant revisions. Both illustrate the strenuousness and responsibility of editorial and reviewer work and the commitment to the quality and originality of publications that contribute to the development of migration studies in various disciplines. At the Slovenian Migration Institute at ZRC SAZU, we will continue to strive for this level in the future issues of *Dve domovini / Two Homelands*.

As always, we warmly invite you to a thorough reading!

Co-editors of the journal *Dve domovini / Two Homelands*

T E M A T S K I S K L O P

MENTAL HEALTH IN THE CONTEXT OF MIGRATION
DUŠEVNO ZDRAVJE V KONTEKSTU MIGRACIJ

T H E M A T I C S E C T I O N

MENTAL HEALTH IN THE CONTEXT OF MIGRATION: INTRODUCTION TO THE THEMATIC SECTION

Sanja Cukut Krilić¹

COBISS 1.20

At present, the issue of migration is becoming increasingly socially and politically relevant at national and global levels. Its increasing restrictiveness, securitization, and precarity are among the significant sources of uncertainty and stress that migrants can experience. Therefore, it is not surprising that the question of how to adapt services in this area to the needs of migrants and/or ethnic minorities is also present among professionals and stakeholders in the area of mental health and migration.

Especially in the last few decades, research endeavors to study the topic of migrants' mental health have emerged both in migration studies as well as in more epidemiologically designed studies of prevalence and risk factors for specific mental health difficulties among particular groups of migrants (Crepet et al., 2017 as quoted in Bjertrup et al., 2018). In particular, research in the social sciences and humanities addresses individual and personality factors that could make migrants more vulnerable to mental health difficulties. Additionally, it analyzes the sociopolitical and economic contexts of both emigration and immigration countries, which can significantly determine the experience and coping with mental health difficulties (Arsenijević et al., 2018).

The wider backgrounds of experiencing mental health difficulties by migrants served as a starting point for a consideration of migrants' responses to distress and insecurities before, in the process of, and after migration within the applicative research project *Mental health difficulties among migrants: experiences of recognition and treatment* (see Acknowledgments). The project gathered researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds from the Sociomedical Institute and the Slovenian Migration Institute at the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

From this perspective, we deemed that research on the distress of potentially structurally vulnerable groups, such as migrants, was essential to better understand the seemingly commonplace and unproblematic practices of everyday life. In this respect, for instance, mobility and migration patterns also acquired different contours during the COVID-19 pandemic that could be deemed not only a health

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but a social crisis. For refugees and asylum seekers, the start of the pandemic meant that the usual spatial routes were disrupted, mobility was restricted, housing conditions were cramped, and living spaces were not provided with adequate access to water and hygiene items. Furthermore, the right to enter and leave reception centers was restricted, and temporary registration freezes were imposed, which left people in a constant state of volatility and insecurity (Cukut Krilić & Zavrtnik, 2023; Ramji-Nogales & Goldner Lang, 2020). The first article by Dino Manzoni and Lilijana Šprah, using the method of systematic review, thus explores the mental health of refugees during the COVID-19 pandemic. In all the studies included in the review, the results demonstrated that patterns of stressors exacerbated existing social and economic inequalities, such as poverty, social exclusion, a deficit in access to health services, and the lack of adequate social support. On this basis, the authors argue for greater inclusion of the social determinants of health approach and the social psychiatric model of mental health difficulties in refugee research.

The contribution of Mojca Vah Jevšnik also addresses vulnerabilities and insecurities of migration but focuses on a different group—Slovenians with or without Slovenian citizenship and their immediate family members who were repatriated from Venezuela to Slovenia. The Slovenian government made a formal decision to repatriate this group, which was in line with the legal regulation that foresees the possibility of repatriation of Slovenians from countries with serious economic and political crises. On these grounds, it granted them social security and access to public services for fifteen months. Nevertheless, the research identified various vulnerabilities prior to repatriation, during the fifteen months, and after its expiration. Due to a lack of emotional safety and self-confidence, the overall integration process was most difficult for children and adolescents in primary and secondary schools. However, owing to a lack of language knowledge and a deficit in professional training, the period right after the expiration of repatriate status was most stressful for the working-age populations. The article poses an interesting conceptual and practical question: could long periods of assisted integration be counterproductive and delay language learning, everyday communication, and inclusion into the labor market and consequently contribute to increased distress?

The article also explores the issue of stigma in utilizing mental health services, since despite the availability of these services, repatriates with possible mental health difficulties resorted to other ways of coping, such as, for instance, sharing their difficulties and struggles among themselves. This finding is in line with studies on other groups of migrants that find that even if migrants can access healthcare and are guaranteed the principle of equal treatment within the healthcare system, different factors often result in migrants making less use of (mental) health services than the “local population.” These obstacles are language and cultural barriers, compounded by different layers of discrimination in daily life, and the often inadequate treatment by health professionals, who themselves feel insecure when working with supposedly “culturally different” populations (Lindert et al., 2008).

In this vein, the article of Martina Bofulin discusses the inclusion of non-Slovenian speakers into the mental healthcare services in Slovenia and the way the collocutors perceive and receive such inclusion during psychotherapy and psychosocial support sessions. The study highlights the reluctance and ambivalence of practitioners toward the presence of language assistance providers. The collocutors also emphasize the need for further professionalization of language assistance providers, which could lead to changes in the implementation of language assistance in mental health care and to the additional training of language assistance providers to work in psychotherapy. The contribution also stresses the importance of collaborative work among professionals in the area of mental health and language assistance providers in order to explore the most suitable methods for therapeutic triads. Such collaboration is especially important because working with particular groups of migrants, such as forcibly displaced people, often involves methods that go beyond traditional therapeutic approaches.

The next article by Maja Gostič explores psychosocial support for forcibly displaced people in Slovenia and also highlights the need for alternative approaches in offering such support. The collocutors offering psychosocial support to this group discuss the need to structure the sessions in this process according to mutual expectations. They highlight the importance of openly speaking about differences in cultural traditions, unwritten rules of conduct, and the need for personal boundaries. Gostič also analyzes the challenges of working with an interpreter or a cultural mediator and the role of self-stigma and public stigma in the process of misdiagnosing and under-treating mental health difficulties of forcibly displaced individuals. She concludes that psychosocial support for displaced populations requires not only a culturally aware but also a community-centered strategy that integrates such interventions into broader mental health systems.

The last article in the thematic section by Duška Knežević Hočevar and Sanja Cukut Krilić also touches upon the importance of building community and facilitating access to migrants through mentors and facilitators in designing psychosocial interventions for migrant farm workers in the Midwestern United States. For migrant farmworkers, language and cultural issues, the temporary nature of recruitment policies, little or no safety training at work, logistical obstacles, and difficulties in accessing as well as navigating the available formal mental health support services exacerbate physical risks and other occupational health and safety risks they encounter. In this respect, the authors conclude that migration itself could also be a social determinant of health that mirrors the health effects of social structures on migrant farmworkers (Castañeda et al., 2015), as normalization of exclusion and a sense of powerlessness among migrants could be present when structurally based approaches are absent (Cohen & Caxaj, 2023).

The contributions in the thematic section analyze different layers of vulnerabilities and the complex ways these vary according to, for instance, gender, ethnic group, legal, and migration status, etc. In this respect, the articles point to the need

to analyze the ambiguities and insecurities of migration before, during, and after the process of migration. From the material, it is also apparent that stigmatization and discrimination in the receiving society are among the important factors that negatively affect the lives of different migrant groups. Globally, we are generally witnessing a growing anti-migrant sentiment and increasingly selective and restrictive admission and reception policies for both forcibly displaced people and for other groups of migrants. Furthermore, we can observe the phenomenon of the migrantization of the citizen (Anderson, 2019), which points to the links and similarities between formal exclusions of non-citizens and the common forms of multiple and often informal exclusions of citizens. This phenomenon could attest to the fact that if certain solutions are bad for migrants, it is very likely that they will also be bad for citizens and pose important conceptual as well as practical questions for the structuring and implementation of mental health care across different layers of society.

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THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE MENTAL HEALTH OF REFUGEES: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Mental Health of Refugees: A Systematic Literature Review

As part of a systematic literature search, the authors independently reviewed 256 articles and included 12 papers in the final selection. The synthesis of the results showed that the psychological distress of refugees increased significantly following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The main mental health difficulties of refugees addressed in the analyzed studies were stress, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. The mental health of refugees during the pandemic appeared to be closely related to their poor living conditions and socioeconomic situation, social exclusion, unemployment, inadequate housing, lack of access to health and social services, discrimination, and lack of essential goods.

KEYWORDS: COVID-19, mental health, refugees, systematic literature review, stress

IZVLEČEK

Vpliv pandemije bolezni COVID-19 na duševno zdravje beguncev: Sistematični pregled literature

V procesu sistematičnega pregleda literature smo pregledali 256 člankov in jih 12 med njimi vključili v končni izbor. Sinteza rezultatov je pokazala, da so begunci po izbruhu pandemije COVID-19 doživljali znatno večjo psihološko stisko. Ključne težave, povezane z duševnim zdravjem beguncev, ki so jih obravnavale analizirane raziskave, so bile stres, anksioznost, depresija in posttravmatska stresna motnja. Pokazalo se je, da je bilo duševno zdravje beguncev med pandemijo tesno povezano z njihovimi slabimi življenjskimi pogoji in socialno-ekonomskim položajem, socialno izključenostjo, brezposelnostjo, neustrezno namestitvijo, pomanjkanjem dostopa do zdravstvenih in socialnih storitev, diskriminacijo ter dostopom do osnovnih potrebščin.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: COVID-19, duševno zdravje, begunci, sistematični pregled literature, stres

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INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic, caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, has posed unprecedented challenges to global health, and led to widespread concern and scientific scrutiny. Among the myriad consequences of the pandemic, the impact on mental health has become an important area of study, as vulnerable populations such as refugees have been exposed to particular and increased stressors (Alarcão et al., 2022). Previous studies have already shown that refugees have a higher risk of mental disorders compared to the general population (Steel et al., 2009). In addition, studies by Li et al. (2016) and Porter & Haslam (2005) emphasize the persistent psychological effects of displacement and the complex socio-cultural factors that influence the mental well-being of refugees.

The COVID-19 pandemic was characterized by its scope, scale, and duration. It can be classified as an extreme event with unfavorable, unpredictable, and life-threatening interventions in normal activities over which individuals have no control. This situation led to people around the world experiencing negative stress, mistrust, fear, and uncertainty (Morganstein, 2022). One of the consequences of the lockdown during the COVID-19 epidemic in England, for example, is that around 10% of the population suffered from long-term stress (Fancourt et al., 2021), which is related to the fact that a severe reaction to an extreme event is associated with a greater experience of stress and is more likely to lead to mental health difficulties (Dohrenwend, 2000). Changes in mental health have been observed in many countries, particularly an increase in depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Manchia et al., 2022; Papadopoulou et al., 2021). Shortly after the World Health Organization declared a pandemic on March 11, 2020, concern arose in professional circles about a possible parallel mental health crisis due to the danger posed by the virus itself, which also affects the central nervous system (Pfefferbaum & North, 2020; Taquet et al., 2021), as well as the restrictive health precautions (Haider et al., 2020; Jin et al., 2021).

Refugees, who are already struggling with the psychological consequences of displacement and trauma, face particular challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated. In addition to increasing insecurity, limited access to basic services, and increasing social isolation, the potential deterioration of mental health was one of the main concerns of refugee aid professionals (Hoffman et al., 2023; Kiteki et al., 2022). In addition, a recent report by the World Health Organization indicates that fear of deportation is one of the main reasons why refugees do not seek medical care for symptoms of COVID-19 (WHO, 2020).

The literature shows that there is a link between stressors in the post-migration phase and poorer mental health outcomes in refugees (Li et al., 2016). Resettled refugees often experience severe isolation and loneliness, which affect mental well-being and the adjustment process to life in the host country (Wu et al., 2021). This is particularly evident in exceptional situations such as a pandemic, as shown in

the study by Filosi et al. (2022). Their interviewees, asylum seekers and beneficiaries of protection living in the Trento asylum system, experienced “collective isolation” during the COVID-19 outbreak. Filosi et al. (2022, p. 85) were certain that “staying in a collective facility exposed them more to the virus generated anxiety and distrust among interviewees.” These kinds of difficulties and experiences are specific to marginalized and vulnerable social groups such as refugees or asylum seekers.

In the past, refugees have shown remarkable resilience in the face of adversity, overcoming the complex circumstances of forced migration with strength and perseverance. However, the confluence of pre-existing mental health issues, stressors before, during, and after migration, and the additional stresses of the COVID-19 pandemic raises questions about the well-being of this marginalized population. Understanding the complex interplay between the COVID-19 pandemic and the mental health of refugees is important to develop targeted interventions to promote resilience and prevent the long-term consequences of poor mental health in this vulnerable group.

The present study was motivated by the assumption that the COVID-19 pandemic has a disproportionately greater impact on the mental health of marginalized groups such as refugees (El Tatary & Gill, 2022; Kluge et al., 2020). In this context, a systematic review was conducted to capture the research conducted, summarize the findings from the methodologically and disciplinary heterogeneous body of knowledge in this area, and identify existing knowledge gaps to adequately plan much-needed further research. This review aims to provide a systematic overview of the current literature on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of refugees. In this context, we sought answers to the following questions:

1. Has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the mental health of refugees as a vulnerable group?
2. What were the most common mental health difficulties of refugees during the COVID-19 pandemic?

METHOD

Search strategy, protocol, and eligibility criteria

The databases of the Web of Science were used for the systematic literature search. During the literature search, the Web of Science proved to be a suitable database for conducting a scoping and systematic review of mental health research. However, Scopus has a larger database in the social sciences and humanities (Xiong et al., 2020).

The authors independently reviewed the titles and abstracts of the studies ($n = 256$) from the database search. Studies that were repetitive ($n = 1$) and records that had previously been excluded by the quick filter ($n = 25$) were excluded. Studies were included if they met the following selection criteria: 1) studies published in

peer-reviewed journals between January 1, 2020, and September 8, 2023; 2) studies primarily focused on the refugee population; 3) published in English; 4) mental health studies conducted in any country; 5) related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods studies were included that addressed various aspects of measuring psychosocial problems in refugees. Studies were excluded if they did not fit the conceptual framework of the study and did not focus primarily on the refugee population and their mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The PRISMA flowchart system was used as a reference when selecting the studies. According to the defined inclusion criteria, the two researchers independently performed the title and summary control ($n = 256$), discussed the results, and continuously updated the data collection form in an iterative process. In case of ambiguities, the results were discussed and finally reconciled. The same method was used for the full-text reviews of the included studies ($n = 81$).

Studies that were not directly related to mental health and irrelevant studies that did not meet the inclusion criteria were excluded from the full-text review. A total of 12 studies were eligible for the systematic literature review (Figure 1).

The synthesis of information is the most useful and important contribution of the systematic literature review. Based on the literature, we decided that the most appropriate approach for synthesizing qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method research findings was narrative synthesis (Popay et al., 2006).

Quality assessment

The Newcastle-Ottawa Scale (Wells et al., 2014) and the checklist developed by Kmet et al. (2004) were used to assess the quality of the studies. We used the NOS to assess the quality of cohort studies. Studies can receive a maximum score of 9 from the NOS.

For one study that included mixed methods—both quantitative and qualitative—we used *the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool* (Hong et al., 2018). The MMAT is a critical appraisal tool developed for the assessment phase of systematic reviews of mixed studies. We used only four of five categories of study design, namely Qualitative, Quantitative randomized controlled trials, Quantitative descriptive, and Mixed methods. Together, they resulted in a maximum score of 22 points.

Some studies used cross-sectional designs, and two studies were purely qualitative. A checklist of 10 questions was used to assess the quality of the two study types. We used the *JBI Checklist for Qualitative Research* & *JBI Checklist for Analytical Cross-Sectional Studies* (JBI, 2023). The purpose of this assessment is to evaluate the methodological quality of a study and to determine the extent to which the possibility of bias was considered in the design, conduct, and analysis of a study. We independently conducted a quality assessment of the research articles identified in the study.

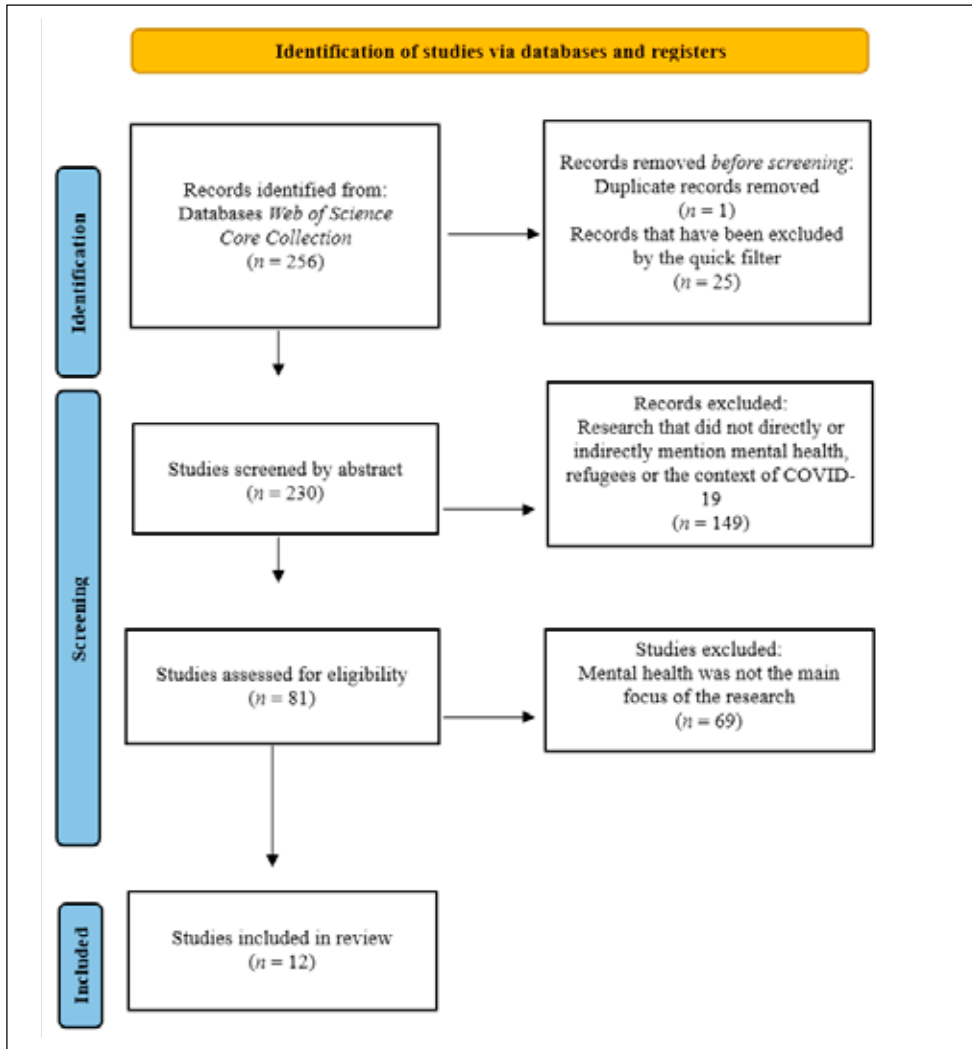


Figure 1: The adapted PRISMA flow diagram system (source: Page et al., 2021).

RESULTS

Methodological characteristics of the studies

Table 1 provides an overview of the studies included in the systematic literature review. Twelve studies were included, conducted in Italy (n = 1), Uganda (n = 1), Jordan (n = 2), Turkey (n = 2), Canada (n = 2), Indonesia (n = 1), Australia (n = 1), and Bangladesh (n = 2). Most of the refugees were from Syria and Myanmar, but there were also refugees from Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Nigeria, etc.

The included studies were quantitative cross-sectional studies (n = 5), cohort studies (n = 4), mixed methods studies (n = 1), and studies that used qualitative research methods (n = 2). In studies using qualitative methods (n = 2), data were collected using a semi-structured interview. Other data were collected using established psychological instruments; only some of these have been validated cross-culturally, with the exception of one study conducted in Canada, which used only the National Community Health Survey Questionnaire. All studies used different scales that measure mental health with high validity and reliability.

Most of the data was collected between 2019 and 2021, i.e., before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, for some studies, the screening and baseline assessment process was already initiated in 2018. Due to COVID-19 measures and restrictions, data was collected online (n = 5), by telephone and/or online (n = 2), by telephone call (n = 1), and in person (n = 4). Three studies examined the mental health of adolescents, and one study examined the mental health of older adult refugees aged 60 years and older. The remaining studies (n = 8) examined the mental health of refugees aged 18 years and older.

One study examined how COVID-19 affects the mental health of resettled Syrian refugee women in the postpartum period, and one study examined mental health difficulties due to the difference between the local population and refugees. One study aimed to investigate and compare symptoms of depression, anxiety, and PTSD in refugees and local patients of End-Stage Renal Diseases receiving hemodialysis during COVID-19. Other studies examine the impact of the current pandemic on the mental health of refugees. Only one study, conducted in Italy, included refugees alongside migrants, asylum seekers, and stakeholders in its sample.

The impact on mental health can be divided into four main categories, namely stress, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), as well as an additional category in which the data is collected under the heading "Other findings." The choice of these categories is logical, as this is the simplest and clearest way to analyze and summarize the most common psychosocial problems of refugees.

Mental health outcomes and effects on individuals: synthesis of results

Category: Stress

Almost all of the selected studies (n = 10) came to results related to stress.

Palit et al. (2022) found that 94.7% of Rohingya refugees living in Bangladesh were already suffering from psychological distress at the beginning of the study. They documented higher levels of psychological distress at baseline in participants who were over 30 years old compared to young adults (≤ 30 years), in married compared to single participants, and in participants with bronchial asthma, ischemic heart disease, or diabetes mellitus (when all participants were included). The results of Part I (items 1–14) and Part II (distress thermometer) were significantly

higher in women than in men ($p < 0.05$). They found that participants with one or more chronic diseases were more distressed. Diabetes, in particular, was associated with higher levels of distress both at the start of the study and at follow-up.

The follow-up survey was conducted around 15 months later, in November 2020, during the pandemic. A total of 342 Rohingya refugees who had participated in the first survey took part in the follow-up survey. A significant increase in stress was found from pre-pandemic to pandemic, as assessed by the RHS-15 scale (RHS-15 Part I: 22.96 ± 8.43 vs. 46.72 ± 1.87 , $p < 0.001$; and RHS-15 Part II: 4.43 ± 1.59 vs. 6.91 ± 1.49 , $p < 0.001$). Participants' mean COVID-19 QoL score was 4.47 ± 0.15 (out of 5), indicating a perceived negative impact of the pandemic on their lives. In the multiple regression analysis, female gender ($\beta = 0.604$, $p = 0.017$) and COVID-19 QoL score ($\beta = 2.537$, $p = 0.003$) were significantly associated with higher perceived distress among participants. At follow-up, all participants had developed psychological distress.

In the study conducted in Indonesia by Hoffman et al. (2023), the stressors most frequently mentioned by refugees from Afghanistan ($n = 227$, 24.9%), Iraq ($n = 224$, 24.5%), Somalia ($n = 162$, 17.7%), Iran ($n = 69$), Sudan ($n = 49$, 5.4), Other ($n = 182$, 19.9%) were concerns about resettlement (70.3%), memories of previous trauma/stressors (60.4%), access to protection from COVID-19 (57.7%), limited access to basic necessities (57.2%), and concerns about childcare (55.9%).

Yalcin et al. (2021) reported in their study conducted in Turkey that the levels of anxiety and traumatic stress were significantly higher in refugee patients than in local patients receiving hemodialysis.

The results of the study conducted by Nakhaie et al. (2022) in Canada show that young refugees and immigrants are exposed to negative stressors such as poverty, unemployment, occupational segregation, downward occupational mobility, inadequate housing, and homelessness, barriers to accessing social services, discrimination, and racism during the pandemic. Food insecurity has had by far the greatest impact on the mental health of newly arrived refugees and young immigrants during the pandemic. 34.5, 23.3, and 21.1 percent of youth in this study reported that nervousness, helplessness, and/or depression affected them "well" and "extremely," respectively, during COVID-19.

Akhtar et al. (2021) documented that among the participants, refugees in Jordan, the most common COVID-19 concerns were the financial impact (82.9%), lack of essentials (72.9%), infecting others (60.8%), the health of family members outside the camp (55.3%), being infected themselves (52.8%), being confined to their own caravan (47.2%), being quarantined (39.7%), the stigma of infection (39.2%), the government's management of the pandemic (36.2%), and the capacity of the local healthcare system (32.7%).

Anwar et al. (2023) found that the overall prevalence of perceived stress among refugees living in Bangladesh was 93%. It should be added that most refugees in the sample also reported difficulties in accessing food (81%), earning money (90%), and routine medical care (73%).

The participants—Syrian refugee women who have settled in Canada—in the qualitative study conducted by Cameron et al. (2021) indicated that COVID-19 has changed their access to and utilization of health services. They reported restrictions in hospital care, restrictions in childcare, changes in service provision, and lack of access to doula services. COVID-19 restrictions also led to the closure of schools and daycare centers. As a result, all participants stated that they had between one and seven additional children at home after giving birth, which they cared for full-time. They spoke about the stress and exhaustion they experienced when they had to organize homeschooling or childcare for their additional children on top of caring for their new baby.

Liddell et al. (2021) found in their study conducted in Australia that the most commonly reported stressors were related to COVID-19 infection, with the most common being worrying about being infected themselves (66.5%), worrying that a loved one is infected (72.1%), or infecting others (47.7%). Social stressors as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic were also common, including school closures (46.7%), restricted social activities (46.6%), and the need to stay at home (41.3%). Of the respondents, 41.1% said the COVID-19 pandemic reminded them of a previous trauma.

The sample of the study conducted by Lotito et al. (2023), which included adult asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants (ARMs), and actors with migration experience, reported increased psychological stress among asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants residing in Italy. They spoke of feelings of pain, sadness, anger, frustration, hopelessness, and worry that they experience in everyday life. The pandemic also triggered strong feelings of anxiety, frustration, and confusion, which exacerbated their already insecure and unstable situation. One of the biggest problems they faced was the precarious living conditions. Restrictions on movement and cuts to services also reduced their employment opportunities. The language barrier led to a sense of isolation as they were unable to express their point of view. The inability to “access services” directly affected their administrative status and prevented them from obtaining a regular employment contract. All public services restricted their access and slowed down their activities, resulting in general disorganization, e.g., in the renewal and release of documents, which caused strong feelings of frustration, anger, and confusion. Due to the pandemic, the “digitalization” of services made access even more difficult, as all activities had to be carried out online. A discussion arose about the language and cultural barriers and the experience of isolation that sometimes results from not being able to communicate your point of view in your native language and include your cultural background. In the individual interviews, racism emerged as a widespread problem. Their difficulties, therefore, encompassed both basic (physiological, safety) and emotional needs (feeling safe, well-being).

The quantitative results of the recent mixed-methods study conducted in Jordan by Jones et al. (2022) show that two-thirds of all adolescents in the sample (66.8%) experienced increased stress at home during the pandemic. The qualitative

findings showed that a number of youth, particularly boys, sought exit options from Jordan—including migration through brokers—due to the extreme vulnerability to which they were exposed. Many youth felt that violence had increased since the start of the pandemic, with more than 50% of youth who had experienced some form of violence stating that it had increased during the pandemic, particularly among unmarried girls. The qualitative findings also show that increased levels of stress in households—due to economic pressures, unemployment, and the fact that fathers and brothers are at home significantly more than before the pandemic—have led to an increase in domestic violence. Qualitative data also revealed the emotional deprivation that young people experience when separated from their peers at work or school. Of the young people surveyed, almost a third (29.4%) had not had any face-to-face or online contact with friends in the last seven days, which is very concerning given the importance of peer interactions in the teenage years.

The results show that virtually all refugees were exposed to relatively high levels of stress during the COVID-19 epidemic, mainly due to poor living and socioeconomic conditions. In the studies, stress levels were measured using various data collection instruments.

Category: Depression

More than half, i.e., seven out of twelve studies, found results related to depression.

The results of a study conducted by Logie et al. (2022) in Uganda showed that the overall prevalence of depression before the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic was 27.5%, with 19.6% reporting moderate depression, 7.1% mild depression, and 0.8% severe depression. In the period after the COVID-19 pandemic was declared, the prevalence of depression was slightly higher at 28.9%; however, there was no significant difference in overall depression in the population between the two periods ($p = .583$). Taken together, these results suggest that a substantial proportion of urban youth refugees suffer from chronic depression. Among urban youth refugees in Kampala, depression was associated with widespread and chronic food insecurity, affecting two-thirds of participants.

Similar results were found in a Turkish study by Yalcin et al. (2021), in which the prevalence of depression symptoms did not differ between the groups of refugees and local patients receiving hemodialysis.

Kurt et al. (2021) found that half of the participants met the criteria for probable depression (52.9%), which was higher than previously reported prevalence rates among Syrian refugees in Turkey. Statistical analysis shows that loss of resources and perceived discrimination during the pandemic significantly and positively predicted depression symptoms among refugees.

In the qualitative study conducted by Cameron et al. (2021) in Canada, young mothers reported that the COVID-19 environment also impacted their mental health in the postpartum period, leading to increased feelings of anxiety, isolation, and

disappointment. The study showed that there is a link between increased depressive symptoms and low levels of social and informal support among refugee women.

Liddell et al. (2021) found that 17.3% of the sample met DSM-5 criteria for probable depression (in the Australian general population, the prevalence of depressive symptomatology is 4.1%). Statistical analysis shows that social difficulties due to COVID-19 specifically predicted increased depression symptoms and disability. The results of a study conducted by Jones et al. (2022) show the following: 19.3% of adolescents in the Jordanian sample had symptoms indicative of moderate to severe depression as measured by the PHQ-8. 34.5, 23.3.

Of adolescents in the study conducted by Nakhaie et al. (2022) in Canada, 21.1% stated that nervousness, helplessness, and/or depression during COVID-19 applied to them “well” or “very well.”

The proportion of people with depression in the quantitative studies ranged from 19.3% to 52.9%. Interestingly, the results of two studies showed that depressive symptoms did not increase during COVID-19. In some studies, different scales were used to measure the extent of depression, and their mean values were reported.

Category: Anxiety

Half, i.e., six out of twelve studies, showed results related to anxiety.

The results of a study conducted by Anwar et al. (2023) in Bangladesh showed that the overall prevalence of COVID-19-related anxiety among participants was 68%.

Kurt et al. (2021) found that almost half of the participants met the criteria for anxiety (42.9%), which is higher than previously reported prevalence rates among Syrian refugees in Turkey.

In the qualitative study conducted by Cameron et al. (2021) in Canada, young mothers reported anxiety related to systemic barriers to postnatal care and loss of informal support. They also reported heightened levels of anxiety triggered by fear of the virus. The women were particularly concerned about their child’s health and felt particularly vulnerable to the virus.

Liddell et al. (2021) found that 23.3% of the sample met the criteria for health anxiety, and 19.8% met the criteria for probable generalized anxiety disorder (in the general Australian population, the prevalence of generalized anxiety disorder is 2.7%). Fears about the future (including visa application processes and future life in Australia) were associated with an increase in symptoms of health anxiety and disability. Fears related to contracting COVID-19 (for self, family, or risk of infecting others) led to symptoms of health anxiety.

Yalcin et al. (2021) found that anxiety levels were significantly higher in the Turkish refugee sample than in the sample of local patients receiving hemodialysis (29.6% vs. 12.9%, $p < 0.05$).

Jones et al. (2022) reported that 12.4% of adolescents in the Jordanian sample suffered from moderate to severe anxiety symptoms, with higher rates in older

adolescents (4.5%, $p < 0.01$) and females (4.5%, $p < 0.001$) than in their peers. It was found that loss of resources and perceived discrimination during the pandemic significantly and positively predicted anxiety symptoms.

The qualitative data showed that anxiety was also associated with strong feelings of social isolation and, in some communities, the breakdown of social cohesion. In the quantitative studies, the percentage of people with anxiety ranged from 12.4% to 68%. In the studies, the level of anxiety was measured using various data collection tools.

Category: Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

Three of the studies came to conclusions related to post-traumatic stress disorder.

The first study by Akhtar et al. (2021) found that refugees hosted in Jordan had less severe PTSD symptoms than before the pandemic (27.69 ± 15.76 vs. 24.92 ± 13.08 , $p = 0.06$). Nevertheless, the data collected shows the following difficulties of the refugees: 1) financial worries (82.9%); 2) lack of basic needs (72.9%); and 3) insufficient capacity of the local healthcare system (32.7%) in Jordan.

In the second study by Yalcin et al. (2021), 33.3% of refugees accommodated in Turkey reported PTSD symptoms and had significantly higher PTSD symptom scores than local patients (16.1%, $p < 0.05$). In terms of psychiatric comorbidity, anxiety and PTSD were more common in refugees than in local patients receiving hemodialysis. Fear of contracting COVID-19 (for self, family, or risk of infecting others) predicted PTSD symptomatology. Among refugees, somatic anxiety and PTSD were the most common psychiatric disorders (33.3% each).

In the study by Liddell et al. (2021), 32.9% of the sample met DSM-5 criteria for probable PTSD (in the Australian general population, the prevalence of PTSD symptomatology is 6.4%). Although it was not the most common problem (41.1%), difficulties due to COVID-19 triggering memories of past traumatic events was the strongest predictor of PTSD.

The percentage of people with PTSD symptoms ranged from 26.65% to 32.9% in the quantitative studies. Interestingly, the results of one study showed that PTSD symptoms decreased during COVID-19.

Category: Other findings

Nakhaie et al. (2022) found that the second most important predictor of mental health is resilience. This finding could indicate that refugees should not be pathologized and patronized, as they, too, have strong adaptive capacities and can cope with adversity. However, sustainable living conditions and access to the universal rights, both socioeconomic and health, that we advocate for in the West must be ensured.

Jones et al. (2022) found that most young people seek solace and guidance in religion to cope with the situation (90.7% in the quantitative survey). This information

is vital for mental health professionals who provide psychological interventions and prevention programs that help improve the mental health of vulnerable populations. Jones et al. (2022) also highlighted the significant role that family relationships played for some young people in managing their psychosocial well-being and mental health during the pandemic. This is also an important protective factor to keep in mind when considering mental health programs or interventions in crises, but of course, only under certain conditions. Young people also pointed out that stress in the household (and economic pressures in particular) had increased since the pandemic, which had translated into an increase in violence in the household, including violence against young people.

Jones et al. (2022) also documented that the patterns of stressors reinforce existing social and economic inequalities, with girls—and particularly married girls and adolescents from the poorest households and those not attending school—being more disadvantaged. More than 15% of the sample—mainly older girls—suffered from moderate to severe symptoms of depression and anxiety. The qualitative data suggest that the higher levels of anxiety among adolescent girls compared to adolescent boys are at least partly due to limited privacy, particularly in relation to menstrual hygiene (which is highly culturally taboo), as male family members are more likely to be at home during confinement. These challenges in terms of cultural norms were compounded by limited economic resources, inadequate water supplies, and a lack of understanding by male family members of the needs of girls, both in terms of privacy and ensuring care, as their mobility is more restricted than that of boys and men. The survey data also confirm these findings: 52% of unmarried women see access to menstrual hygiene products as a challenge, with 60% of these adolescents stating that this challenge has increased during the pandemic.

In the Canadian qualitative study conducted by Cameron et al. (2021), participants stated that they were not provided with interpreters and were forced to navigate the healthcare system in English during COVID-19. Primary care services and home-based postnatal support, as provided by doulas and nurses, were offered virtually. Telehealth appointments presented some challenges for interpreting and had both positive and negative effects on participants.

Year / Author(s)	Country	Type of Study	No. of participants	Sample Data	Data Collection Instruments	Data Collecting Method / Date	Mental Health Outcomes	Quality Assessment
Lotto et al., 2023	Italy	Qualitative	19	Free listing interviews: 12 stakeholders, 7 refugees; Focus group: 12 stakeholders, 8 refugees; Age (mean): 34 years (SD = 7)	Semi-structured interview	Online / Feb–Apr 2021	Psychological distress, strong feelings of fear, insecurity, and frustration, which are also related to unemployment, housing, difficult access to health care, isolation, and racism.	8/10
Ahltar et al., 2021	Jordan	Quantitative (longitudinal)	410	Female: 71.5%, Male: 28.5%. Age (mean): 40.4, SD = 7.1. Married (n = 203), 48.5% of the sample completed follow-up assessments	Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10); Hopkins Symptom Checklist-25 (HSCL-25); PTSD Checklist for DSM-5 (PCL-5)	1) Screening: Aug–Dec 2019; 2) Baseline assessments: Sep 2019–Jan 2020; 3) 6-week online assessments: Nov 2019–Mar 2020; 4) 18-week online assessments: Jan–Jun 2020	Refugees had less severe PTSD symptoms than those assessed before the pandemic. Financial worries (165, 82.9%), shortages of essential supplies (145, 72.9%), local health care system capacity (65, 32.7%)	6/9
Kurt et al., 2021	Turkey	Quantitative (cross-sectional)	345	Female: 165, Male: 10. Age (mean): 33.4, SD = 9.11. Previously diagnosed psychiatric difficulties: 8%	Generalized Anxiety Scale; Patient health questionnaire-9; Multi-dimensional scale of perceived social support; Everyday discrimination scale (short version); The conservation of resources evaluation (modified version)	Online / Sep–Oct 2020	High levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms were reported. Resource loss and perceived discrimination significantly and positively predicted depressive and anxiety symptoms.	6/8
Jones et al., 2022	Jordan	Mixed-method	3311	Two cohorts: aged 10–12 years and 15–17, 1,603 boys, 1,708 girls. Age: 15–21 (n = 1,639), 10–14 (n = 1,672). Qualitative sample: 104 girls, 74 boys	Patient Health Questionnaire-8; Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7 scale; Brief Resilient Coping Scale; Household Food Insecurity Access Scale; COVID-19-related quantitative surveys	Phone call and online / 1) Oct 2018–Mar 2019; 2) May 2020 and Jan 2021	19.3% reported symptoms of moderate to severe depression, 12.4% reported moderate to severe anxiety symptoms, 2.3 reported increasing stress at home.	17/22
Logie et al., 2022	Uganda	Quantitative (longitudinal)	450	Age: 16–24 years. Male (n = 185), Female (n = 182). Age (mean): 20.0, SD: 2.4, 75 (16.7%) were lost to follow-up	Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9)	Face-to-face / Feb–Dec 2020	The prevalence of depression was high, but there was no significant difference before (27.5%) and after (28.9%) the pandemic.	8/9

Year / Author(s)	Country	Type of Study	No. of participants	Sample Data	Data Collection Instruments	Data Collecting Method / Date	Mental Health Outcomes	Quality Assessment
Liddell et al., 2021	Australia	Quantitative (longitudinal)	656	Male: 50.8%. Females: 49.2%. Age (mean): 42.85; SD = 12.22. Married (n = 503; 76.9%)	Patient Health Questionnaire; Post-traumatic Diagnostic Scale; Bodily Preoccupation Scale of the Illness Attitude Scale; World Health Organization Disability Assessment Schedule 2.0; PAS Assessment and Bullying Survey; Harvard Trauma Questionnaire; Generalized Anxiety Disorder Assessment	Online / Jun 2020	41.1% of refugees reported that the pandemic COVID-19 reminded them of past traumas. COVID-19 Memories of past traumatic events were the strongest predictor of PTSD, health anxiety, depression, and disability.	7/9
Nakhaie et al., 2022	Canada	Quantitative (cross-sectional)	244	Age < 19 (60.2%). Male: 43.8%. Female 56.2%	Canadian Community Health Survey Questionnaire - 2017-18	Phone call / Jul 22–Nov 26, 2020	Food insecurity had by far the greatest impact on the psychological distress of newly arrived adolescent refugees.	5/8
Hoffman et al., 2023	Indonesia	Quantitative (cross-sectional)	913	Male (n = 630), Female (n = 281). Age (mean) 30.85, SD = 9.45. Married (n = 411, 45%). Afghanistan (n = 227, 24.9%), Iraq (n = 224, 24.5%), Somalia (n = 162, 17.7%), Iran (n = 69%), Sudan (n = 49, 5.4%), Other (n = 182, 19.9%)	Harvard Trauma Questionnaire; Posttraumatic Diagnostic Scale-IV; Patient Health Questionnaire-8; Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 scale; Dimensions of Anger Reactions-5; Medical Outcomes Survey-Short Form; A list of 12 stressors related to COVID-19, created for this study; social support questions used by Araya et al. (2007)	Online (Key Survey platform) / May 29–Oct 29, 2020	The refugees' greatest concern was how the pandemic COVID-19 would affect resettlement. Fear of deportation may be reflected in the second most frequently cited stressor.	6/8

Year/ Author(s)	Country	Type of Study	No. of participants	Sample Data	Data Collection Instruments	Data Collecting Method/ Date	Mental Health Outcomes	Quality Assessment
Yalcin et al., 2021	Turkey	Quantitative (cross-sectional)	58	Syrian refugee (n = 27), Local (n = 31). Age (mean) 48, SD = 15.2, Male: 44.4%, Female: 55.6%	Patient Health Questionnaire Somatic, Anxiety and Depressive Symptoms (PHQ-SADS); Post-traumatic Stress Disorder Checklist for DSM-5 (PCL-5)	Face-to-face / Jul 2021	Scores for anxiety and traumatic stress were significantly higher in refugee patients. They had significantly higher somatic symptom scores than local patients. They also had significantly higher PTSD scores than local patients.	6/8
Anwar et al., 2023	Bangladesh	Quantitative (cross-sectional)	864	Age \geq 60. Male 57%. The majority of the participants were aged 60–69 years (72%). Married: 79%. Living alone (67%). Currently unemployed or retired (89%). Household size > 4 members: 57%. Currently suffering from any chronic diseases: 50%	Bengali version of the five-point Coronavirus Anxiety Scale (CAS); 10-item Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), validated among the Bangladeshi population	Face-to-face / Nov–Dec 2021	The prevalence of COVID-19-related anxiety was 68%, and perceived stress was 93%. Most participants reported difficulty accessing food (81%), earning money (90%), and receiving routine medical care (73%).	7/8
Cameron et al., 2021	Canada	Qualitative	8	Married (n = 8). 1–2 children: 1.3–4 children: 2. 5–6 children: 3. 7–8 children: 2	Semi-structured interview form made for the purpose of the survey	Telephone interview or online / Mar–Aug 2020	Three themes emerged: systemic barriers to postnatal care, loss of informal support, grief, and anxiety.	8/10
Palit et al., 2022	Bangladesh	Quantitative (longitudinal)	732	Age (mean): 32.25 \pm 14.01 years (SD). Female: 61.1%, Male: 38.9%. 342 participated in the follow-up survey	The Refugee Health Screener 15 (RH5-15); The COVID-19-IMPACT on Quality of Life (COV19-QoL) scale v 1.5	Face-to-face / 1) Base-line survey Jul 5, 2019, and 2) Nov 10, 2020	The pandemic had a significant impact on the quality of life and stress levels among refugees. Women were significantly more affected than men.	6/9

Table 1: Summary of study types, sample characteristics, study design, assessment instruments, mental health outcomes, and quality assessment.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

It is already known that the environment of the epidemic has had a long-term negative impact on people's mental and psychological state, so we must continue to worry about the impact of COVID-19 on mental health (Zhu et al., 2023). It is also very well documented that refugees are a vulnerable group and are more likely to have mental health difficulties than the local population due to the stressful circumstances before, during, and after migration (Alarcão et al., 2022; Li et al., 2016). The most recent World Health Organization report on refugees (WHO, 2023, p. 5) also emphasizes and states that refugees (and migrants) can be "the most vulnerable members of society and often face xenophobia, discrimination, poor living, housing and working conditions, and inadequate access to health services, despite frequently experiencing physical and mental health problems." The prevalence of common mental disorders such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) tends to be higher among refugees than in the host population (WHO, 2023). Furthermore, in crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the system of restrictions and the consequences of crises have a differentiated impact on the population. As Della Puppa & Perocco (2022, pp. 9–10) state in their study: "This new system of restrictions has added the limitation of the movement of the poor (now also considered 'infected') as well as to the war on migrants and the poor that has been going on for years. These groups, considered undesirable, are often confined in buffer zones, liminal zones—a sort of 'new sacrifice zones'—in very harsh conditions and with high health risks."

In this study, a systematic review was conducted to examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on refugee mental health from an international perspective. As a result of the search in the Web of Science database, we compiled the results of 12 studies that met the inclusion criteria.

As explained in the methods chapter, based on the literature, we decided that the most appropriate approach for synthesizing qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research findings was narrative synthesis (Popay et al., 2006). In all of the studies included in the review, the results showed that the patterns of stressors reinforced pre-existing social and economic inequalities. In the refugee context, with pre-existing poverty, social exclusion, hardship, and a lack of adequate immediate social and health support, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly exacerbates the stressors and, consequently, the mental health difficulties of refugees.

In this respect, the study shows that the empirical results on a global level support the hypothesis put forward in the literature. The study shows that these problems arise from indirect situations such as unemployment and precarious living conditions during the isolation and quarantine process. The language barrier leads to a sense of isolation as refugees are often unable to express their feelings and communicate appropriately with those around them, meaning that their social environment does not recognize them. The inability to "access services"—including the

healthcare system—has a direct impact on their administrative and socioeconomic status, as they are also prevented from obtaining a regular employment contract or adequate treatment. During the COVID-19 pandemic, all public services restricted their access and slowed down their operations, leading to a general disorganization. However, the pandemic also served as a political pretext for the isolation, inaction, and inhumane treatment of refugees.

Due to the specific nature of the refugee population, certain specificities must be considered, such as the fact that refugees are, by definition, “on the move.” Studies such as the one by Cukut Krilić & Zavratinik (2023, p. 26) warn that: “The COVID-19 pandemic put people on the move in an additional vulnerable position because the usual spatial routes were disrupted and the restricted mobility—i.e., the lockdowns of societies—further increased the insecurity of continuing the route—although, of course, mobility could not be stopped completely.”

It has also been shown that refugees’ previous experiences with national and international laws, rules, practices, and interventions have led them to visibly distrust the social and health systems of the countries in which they find themselves. Thus, they showed feelings of fear of possibly being left to die. This has widened the gap between the host society and the refugees, pointing to systemic barriers to integration and the resulting structural reinforcement of segregation and discrimination. Research findings on the mental health of children and adolescents show that special attention should be paid to the conditions under which refugees will grow up in the future. They have shown that children and adolescents face extremely difficult situations and, as a result, have difficulties with their mental health (Jones et al., 2022; Logie et al., 2022; Nakhaie et al., 2022). During the pandemic, they have been exposed to deteriorating living conditions, leading to severe stressors such as poverty, occupational segregation, inadequate housing, and homelessness, barriers to accessing social and health services, discrimination, and racism (Nakhaie et al., 2022). Research shows that although we live in the twenty-first century, the lack of essential goods and food insecurity during the pandemic had a significant impact on the psychological distress and well-being of refugees and young immigrants.

The abovementioned extrapsychic problems, as well as social and political oppression, threaten to overwhelm the refugees’ coping capacities. Therefore, the social determinants of mental health should be recognized so that the social causes that exacerbate the symptoms of mental disorders and overall mental well-being can be adequately addressed. We can add that the social psychiatric approach is more appropriate than a purely biomedical model when it comes to the mental health and psychological difficulties of refugees. In fact, social psychiatry is particularly associated with developing therapeutic communities and highlighting the impact of socioeconomic factors on mental illness. “Social psychiatrists strive to pay close attention to their patient’s cultural milieus and to their ‘Idioms of Distress’ which are the characteristic way in which members of different cultures describe what is wrong

and which may differ from the expressions found in mainstream [American] culture," according to the American Association for Social Psychiatry homepage (AASP, 2024).

Interestingly, in one of the studies examined during the pandemic, refugees reported a lower intensity of PTSD symptoms than before the COVID-19 outbreak. This finding was unexpected in the context of numerous studies predicting that pre-existing mental health difficulties would be a major risk factor for poorer mental health during the pandemic (Lancet, 2020). The hypothesis could be that the symptoms of some mental health difficulties, such as PTSD and depression, temporarily subside during a severe crisis and reappear after the state of emergency ends. Akhtar et al. (2021) also hypothesize that the restricted freedom of movement due to quarantine reduces the likelihood of encountering stimuli that trigger PTSD symptoms, such as flashbacks and anxiety due to traumatic events. However, it should be noted that the context of resettlement plays a crucial role in the mental health of refugees. As Hynie (2018) notes, although pre-migration trauma can predict mental disorders and PTSD, the post-migration context can be an equally strong determinant of mental health. Mental health is highly influenced by the conditions in which they live post-migration and is therefore strongly shaped by the socioeconomic factors of daily life (Li et al., 2016).

In addition, two studies (Logie et al., 2022; Yalcin et al., 2021) have shown that although symptoms of depression are more common in the refugee population than in the general population, they did not increase during the epidemic itself. One possible hypothesis could be that the crisis has increased coping readiness, as evidenced by increased anxiety and stress response, and that depressive symptoms—and possibly even suicidal behavior—increase after the epidemic ends, as the body's responses that prepared for the extreme struggle subside and communities move into the recovery or mourning phase. Since social ties or networks are one of the most important protective factors to prevent the development and exacerbation of mental health difficulties, intervention programs and policies should pay special attention to the effects of discrimination and segregation. However, Oliveros et al. (2022) point out that the biggest problem is not the lack of social ties but rather the fact that existing social ties place the affected individuals outside of society as a whole.

Nakhaie et al. (2022) find that the second most important predictor of mental health is resilience. This could suggest that refugees should not be pathologized and patronized as they, too, have strong adaptive skills and can cope with adversity. As refugees' mental health is also determined by the local political climate in the post-migration phase, we find that moral, politically correct victimization and paternalism in the form of pity only portray traumatized people as helpless, passive subjects of events or victims of unfortunate circumstances, isolating the subject's victimization mechanism in its dual function from the actual context (Manzoni, 2023). Nonetheless, sustainable living conditions and access to the universal rights, both socioeconomic and health-related, that we advocate for in the West must be

guaranteed. With the words of Anholt & Sinatti (2019), we add the emphasis that putting refugee resilience into practice depends on the systemic factors, local context, and political interests of the actors involved. With this in mind, refugees should have access to all social services offered by the host country through legislative changes and improvements to the country's bureaucratic and social systems.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The first obvious limitation of our study is that we only considered the Web of Science database. In addition, the systematic review should be extended with articles from the Scopus database.

The second limitation of our study is that the studies included in the systematic literature review were geographically dispersed. This dispersion means that they only provide a global overview of refugee mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. Uganda, Jordan, and Lebanon are the most critical global humanitarian hotspots. Only one study from the geographical area of Europe was added. However, data from two studies conducted in Turkey were also included. Therefore, further systematic literature reviews should focus particularly on the geographical area of Europe, which has a common sociopolitical context and whose numerous political struggles are fought at the expense of refugees' mental and physical health.

The third limitation of our study is that we focused only on the refugee population. The latter are associated with groups that have a different status or are defined differently in different countries, such as migrants and asylum seekers. Researchers Crawley & Skleparis (2017) argue that these dominant categories do not adequately capture the complex relationship between political, social, and economic drivers of migration. Furthermore, the assessment should consider that the measures implemented do not differ from country to country and that the health of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants is affected by the measures at different levels. In complementary systematic studies, an additional focus should be placed on the female population and age-differentiated population groups, such as young or elderly people, as research shows that these groups have specific problems that often remain hidden and unspoken.

Finally, we should add that new research should also examine which factors have had the greatest impact on refugee mental health during the epidemic so that we are better prepared to address them with direct interventions and prevention programs in the future. Considering the evidence that some mental health difficulties only increase after an acute crisis, research should continue for some time after the end of the crisis. A recommendation for practice can, therefore, primarily be to allocate more resources to in-depth research on vulnerable groups, which can be used to develop high-quality prevention programs. In addition to prevention programs and access to health services, sustainable living conditions, access to the material goods

that we collectively produce as a society, and an accepting or inclusive social environment are necessary prerequisites for normal coexistence with people of different cultural and social backgrounds. The recent WHO report on refugees (2023, p. 68), also recommends that policies and programs for refugees and migrants should “recognize and address the social determinants of mental health and prioritize basic needs including food, housing, safety and education or employment.” Such a focus should promote a shift in the treatment of mental disorders, away from the traditional psychiatric biomedical model of mental disorders and their treatment toward a social psychiatric model that explains how social factors contribute to the maintenance of mental well-being. With this type of problem definition, host countries and the various programs can promote the understanding that social factors play a central role in all mental health difficulties. Only in this way can policies and practices be formulated on the basis of which appropriate and effective measures can be taken in the field of refugee mental health.

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POVZETEK

VPLIV PANDEMIJE BOLEZNI COVID-19 NA DUŠEVNO ZDRAVJE BEGUNCEV: SISTEMATIČNI PREGLED LITERATURE

Dino Manzoni, Lilijana Šprah

Pandemija bolezni COVID-19, ki se je začela leta 2020, se je izkazala kot globalni zdravstveni in družbeni problem, ki je poglobil neenakosti in močno zaznamoval domala vsa področja življenja. V tem obdobju je prihajalo do neugodnih, nepredvidljivih ter življenjsko ogrožajočih posegov v običajne dejavnosti, nad katerimi posameznik ni imel nadzora. Zaradi tega je večina ljudi doživljala negativni stres in velike negotovosti. Številne raziskave so pokazale, da je po razglasitvi epidemije in ukrepov za njeno obvladovanje v vseh prebivalstvenih skupinah prišlo do povečane obsega težav na področju duševnega zdravja. Zlasti izrazite so bile povišane stopnje depresije in anksioznosti, posttravmatske stresne motnje (PTSM) ter različne čustvene stiske. Pandemija je imela še posebej negativen vpliv na duševno zdravje različnih ranljivih družbenih skupin, vključno z begunci.

V članku je predstavljena raziskava, kjer smo proučili vpliv pandemije COVID-19 na duševno zdravje beguncev. V ta namen smo opravili sistematični pregled člankov, objavljenih v bazi WOS. V analizo so bile vključene študije, ki so bile objavljene med 1. januarjem 2020 in 8. septembrom 2023, z vključeno ciljno skupino beguncev, osredotočene na duševno zdravje ter povezane s pandemijo COVID-19. Od 256 raziskav, ki so ustrezale iskalnim kriterijem, smo po izločitvi dvojnikov, preglednih člankov, raziskav, katerih glavni namen ni bil proučevanje duševnega zdravja pri beguncih v kontekstu pandemije, ter raziskav, ki niso zadostile kriterijem metodološke ocene kvalitete raziskave, v končno analizo vključili 12 raziskav.

Analiza študij je pokazala, da se je po izbruhu pandemije med begunci znatno povečala psihološka stiska. Ključne težave, povezane z duševnim zdravjem beguncev, ki so jih naslavljale analizirane raziskave, so bile stres, anksioznost, depresija in PTSM. Pokazalo se je, da je bilo duševno zdravje beguncev med pandemijo tesno povezano z njihovim slabim socialno-ekonomskim položajem, socialno izključenostjo, brezposelnostjo, neustrezno namestitvijo, pomanjkanjem dostopa do zdravstvenih in socialnih storitev, diskriminacijo, rasizmom ter s težkimi in negotovimi življenjskimi razmerami, ki jih je pandemija še poslabšala. Simptomi PTSM, anksioznosti in depresije so bili pri beguncih bolj izraženi v primerjavi z avtohtonimi prebivalci. Kot pomemben dejavnik tveganja za težave v duševnem zdravju beguncev se je izkazal negativni stres, ki je bil bolj izražen pri odraslih osebah (nad 30 let), poročenih, obolelih za kroničnimi boleznimi ter tistih s predhodnimi travmatičnimi izkušnjami.

Sistematični pregled literature je pokazal, da je pandemija bolezni COVID-19 dodatno povečala že obstoječe težave beguncev in prispevala k večji ranljivosti slednjih na področju duševnega zdravja. Prihodnje raziskave se bodo morale

usmeriti v prepoznavanje ključnih dejavnikov, ki najbolj vplivajo na duševno zdravje beguncev v času kriznih razmer, kot je pandemija. Tako bi lahko vzpostavili ustrezne intervencije in preventivne programe, namenjene ranljivim skupinam.

NAVIGATING INTEGRATION AND EMOTIONAL DISTRESS DURING VULNERABLE STAGES OF LIFE: THE CASE OF SLOVENIAN REPATRIATES FROM VENEZUELA

Mojca Vah Jevšnik¹

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ABSTRACT

Navigating Integration and Emotional Distress During Vulnerable Stages of Life: The Case of Slovenian Repatriates From Venezuela

Slovenia has been repatriating persons of Slovenian descent and their immediate family members from poverty-stricken Venezuela since 2019. The article explores the innate, situational, and structural vulnerabilities of the repatriates, focusing in particular on the vulnerabilities affecting their well-being and leading to emotional distress. The vulnerabilities are examined through the lens of time, i.e., before, during, and after the acquisition of the status of a repatriate, and in the context of specific age-related integration challenges. The article shows that their preferred emotional support is provided by the close-knit community of Venezuelan repatriates with whom they share the same language, culture, and experience of repatriation and integration and by the Catholic church through mass, confession, and church gatherings.

KEYWORDS: repatriation, vulnerabilities, integration, Slovenia, Venezuela

IZVLEČEK

Soočanje z integracijo in čustvenimi tiskami v ranljivih življenjskih obdobjih: Primer repatriiranih Slovencev iz Venezuele

Slovenija od leta 2019 izvaja proces repatriacije Slovencev iz Venezuele, ki se sooča s hudo humanitarno krizo. Avtorica v članku ponudi pregled in analizo prepletenih (prirojenih, situacijskih in strukturnih) ranljivosti repatriirancev, s poudarkom na tistih, ki vplivajo na njihovo počutje in vodijo v čustvene stiske. Ranljivosti proučuje skozi časovno prizmo, tj. pred in po pridobitvi statusa repatriiranca in po izteku slednjega, ter v kontekstu starostno pogojenih integracijskih izzivov. Kot ugotavlja, si repatriiranci čustveno oporo največkrat poiščejo v tesno povezani skupnosti repatriirancev, s katerimi si delijo jezik, kulturo ter izkušnjo repatriacije in integracije, pa tudi pri Katoliški cerkvi z mašami in spovedmi ter s sodelovanjem pri cerkvenih dogodkih.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: repatriacija, ranljivosti, integracija, Slovenija, Venezuela

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INTRODUCTION

In late 2019, the Slovenian government instigated the largest repatriation in the country's history. They offered to repatriate Slovenians with or without Slovenian citizenship and their immediate family members from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (hereinafter, Venezuela), which had been experiencing severe humanitarian, economic, and political crises. The article explores the vulnerabilities of these repatriates prior to repatriation, during the acquisition of a fifteen-month status that ensures their social security and access to public services, and after the expiration of the status of a repatriated person. The vulnerabilities identified and analyzed in this article are both innate, situational, and structural (Gilodi et al., 2022). In other words, they are analyzed through the lens of intersectionality by taking into account the personal characteristics of the repatriates, the variety of complex situations they are exposed to, and the legal, institutional, economic, and social conditions they encounter. The notion of integration, defined as the process of settlement, interaction with the host society, and social change that follows immigration (Penninx & Garcés-Mascreñas, 2016), is included in the conceptual framework as it is inextricably intertwined with the manifestation of vulnerabilities. Namely, vulnerabilities may develop as a result of migrants' struggles with integration, just as they may conversely have a significant impact on their integration processes and experiences. The article categorizes and groups the identified vulnerabilities through the lens of time, a criterion of classification chosen based on the empirical findings. In particular, the article explores the dimensions of vulnerabilities affecting repatriates' well-being and leading to their emotional (psychological) distress, i.e., "a state of emotional suffering associated with stressors and demands that are difficult to cope with in daily life" (Arvidsdotter et al., 2016). The point of departure is a stark understanding that stressors are always relative to the person they are affecting and, hence, cannot be generalized to the entire population. Nevertheless, the article shows that common situations and conditions, and most notably repatriates' innate characteristics, depending especially on the age-defining stages of life (childhood, adolescence, adult age, old age), may be clustered into groups that share similar vulnerabilities and challenges with the integration.

The article builds on the literature review of relevant academic sources addressing vulnerabilities and integration in the context of migration, policy analysis of legal documents governing repatriation to Slovenia, and statistical information on repatriation and repatriates. Qualitative empirical data includes interviews with six repatriated persons published in the media,¹ in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted with two government officials representing competent authorities,² two

1 See list of references.

2 Semi-structured interview with the Government official 1 conducted on April 21, 2021. Semi-structured interviews with the Government official 2 conducted on May 6, 2021, and November 10, 2022.

integration counselors providing services to the repatriates,³ and three repatriated persons.⁴ The article's scope is limited to the vulnerabilities defined and described by the interviewees. It does not provide an extensive overview of all vulnerabilities experienced by the entire population of repatriates.

The article first outlines the context leading to the decision of the Slovenian government to repatriate Slovenians from Venezuela, i.e., the humanitarian, economic, and political crises in Venezuela spanning throughout the last decade. It then provides an overview of the Act Regulating Relations between the Republic of Slovenia and Slovenians Abroad, which foresees the possibility of repatriation of Slovenians who live in countries where serious economic or political crises have occurred and where Slovenians are subjected to different pressure. The timeline of repatriation and demographic data of the repatriates is presented next. The following chapter moves on to conceptualize vulnerability and integration in the context of migration and provide theoretical criteria for the categorization and evaluation of the stressors leading to vulnerabilities described by the interviewees. Expatriates' navigation of migration and integration is presented in three subchapters, each focusing on vulnerabilities emerging in either the period before emigration from Venezuela, during the fifteen-month period of status acquisition, or right before and immediately after the status expiration.

REPATRIATION FROM VENEZUELA: OUTLINE OF THE CONTEXT AND POLICIES

Humanitarian, economic, and political crisis in Venezuela

In the past decade, more than 7.7 million refugees and migrants have left Venezuela as a result of the political turmoil, socioeconomic instability, and ongoing humanitarian crisis ("Emergency Appeal. Venezuela Situation", 2023). The unfavorable developments, resulting in extensive external displacement, have been described as the most profound crisis of any society in modern Latin America (Bull & Rosales, 2020). In economic terms, the country lost more than 60 percent of its Gross Domestic Product between 2013 and 2019. State infrastructures are collapsing, and the population is facing the precariousness of many services, including electricity and running water (Freier et al., 2022). Public services, especially in the healthcare and education sectors, have been compromised and have significantly deteriorated due to a lack of financing and constant interruption of water, gas, and electricity. In 2019,

3 Semi structured interviews with Integration counsellor 1 and Integration counsellor 2 conducted on October 5, 2022.

4 Semi-structured interviews were conducted on the following dates: Repatriated person 1 (female), July 6, 2023; Repatriated person 2 (male), August 25, 2023; Repatriated person 3 (female), October 10, 2023.

hospitals lacked between 80 and 90 percent of essential medicines and surgical materials (Freier et al., 2022), which resulted in a steep rise in mortality from a range of diseases, as well as in the “skyrocketing” of child and infant mortality. The right to education has been compromised by the lack of teachers, infrastructure deficiencies, and lack of supplies, forcing many schools to remain closed or operate only intermittently (Bull & Rosales, 2020). Furthermore, hyperinflation, declining food production, and food shortages are all contributing to the deterioration that has turned into a persistent humanitarian emergency, as nearly 90 percent of the population was classified as poor by the United Nations (UN) standards in 2019. Corruption, extortion, and human rights violations have also become commonplace (Roekel & De Theije, 2020).

According to Human Rights Watch (2023), authoritarian Venezuelan authorities resort to harassment and persecution of political opponents, human rights defenders, and civil society organizations. They also “stigmatize, harass and repress” the media, closing nonconformist outlets. Security raids and extra-judicial killings, especially in marginalized neighborhoods, have been documented. Horrific abuses have been reported to take place in southern Venezuela by groups controlling illegal gold mines, operating with government acquiescence, where indigenous groups face physical violence, forced labor, and sexual exploitation and are exposed to severe health risks (Human Rights Watch, 2023). According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (“Emergency Appeal. Venezuela Situation”, 2023), the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela has become the second-largest international displacement crisis in the world. The main destinations of Venezuelan migrants and refugees are South American countries and the Caribbean. However, many have been trying to reach Mexico and cross the border into the United States. The European Union has also noted a steady increase in immigration from Venezuela, including an increase in the number of asylum applications being lodged by Venezuelans, mostly in Spain. The increase was most notable in the period 2022–2023 (“Venezuelans, Colombians, and Peruvians”, 2023). However, compared to the other abovementioned regions and countries, the absolute number of asylum applications remains low. Freier et al. (2022) argue that Venezuelan displacement undoubtedly classifies as survival migration, which is defined as the abandonment of a country due to an existential threat for which a solution is not available. Despite the urgency of the situation, however, the political and policy debate on whether Venezuelans should be recognized as refugees continues.⁵

5 Despite the urgency of the situation for the majority, Venezuela is often described as a land of stark social inequalities. Van Roekel and de Theije note that the “complex humanitarian crisis is as much about poverty and scarcity as it is about wealth and abundance” benefiting only a very few (Van Roekel & De Theije, 2020, p. 8). They also bring attention to the Venezuelans who decide not to emigrate but stay and find strategies to cope with scarcity and insecurity. They point out, “Ad hoc solutions [...] depend on alternative economies” in the borderlands that “(un)willingly sustain the crisis” and “do not always fit within the framework of humanitarian aid, human rights, rule of law or democracy, but do provide relief and produce opportunities

Decision of the Republic of Slovenia to instigate repatriation

In 2019, the Slovenian government decided to act and utilize the provisions in the Act Regulating Relations between the Republic of Slovenia and Slovenians Abroad (Uradni list Republike Slovenije, 2006; hereinafter, the Act), which foresees the possibility of repatriation of Slovenians who live in the countries where serious economic or political crises have occurred and where Slovenians are subjected to different pressures.⁶ Repatriation is defined as “immigration of Slovenians to their homeland organized and financed by the Republic of Slovenia” (Article 71 of the Act). The legal determination of the status of Slovenian is not limited to citizenship and includes also individuals of Slovenian descent. Namely, the Act introduces the so-called status of a Slovenian without Slovenian citizenship, which can be acquired based on descent and some other conditions, including an active role in Slovenian organizations abroad.⁷ The Act states that *all* Slovenians abroad are an equal part of the unified Slovenian nation and aims at maintaining and developing Slovenian language and culture, preserving cultural heritage and national identity among Slovenians abroad, as well as facilitating the integration of Slovenian abroad into the social, cultural and political life of Slovenia. The Act, therefore, also guarantees special rights and benefits to Slovenians without citizenship. Moreover, in the case of repatriation, the Act guarantees the acquisition of the status also to the immediate family members, which include the spouse or cohabitant, minor unmarried children, and relatives in the direct line of the repatriated person if these persons are without means of subsistence, dependent on the repatriated person and the repatriated person supports them (Article 77 of the Act).

Based on the decision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the situation in Venezuela constitutes a crisis, the Slovenian government adopted the Action Plan for Repatriation in November 2019. The eligibility for repatriation of individual persons was to be decided by the Government Office for Slovenians Abroad on the basis of citizenship, Slovenian descent, and the opinions of Slovenian diplomatic or consular representations and non-profit private organizations, such as Slovenian Roman Catholic missions and the missions of other religious communities, Slovenian emigrant organizations in Slovenia and abroad, and others (Article 78 of the Act). The status of a repatriated person may last up to fifteen months. During that time, repatriated persons who did not have a guaranteed personal income were to become eligible for a means-tested financial allowance, as well as free health care and Slovenian

along with new inequalities” (Van Roekel & De Theije, 2020, p. 9–10). “Amid collapsing state infrastructures, these transborder economies tie into the global trade of basic supplies, narcotics, drugs, natural resources and human trafficking that operate in the interface of the legal and the illegal” (Van Roekel & De Theije, 2020, Abstract).

6 Those eligible for repatriation are also “Slovenians who can contribute to the development and affirmation of the Republic of Slovenia” (Article 72 of the Act).

7 See Article 59 of the Act.

language classes for them and their immediate family members. Upon the granting of the status of a repatriate person, they were to receive a personal work permit issued by the Employment Service of Slovenia.⁸ The Action Plan for Repatriation, prepared in cooperation with seven ministries, also included practicalities, such as arranging the transport from Venezuela and addressing any personal issues arising after the expiration of the status of a repatriated person.

Slovenia had little previous experience with repatriation. Prior to 2019, only one family was repatriated based on the provisions of the Act due to the outbreak of civil war in Syria.⁹ Moreover, the decision was not fully supported by some prominent political and expert figures, such as the Head of the Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who noted that the decision to commence (and openly publicize) repatriation from Venezuela is not a preferred policy of the European Union and many of their Member States, and questioned the ability of the state to provide decent conditions for integration (Government official 1). Integration was indeed the most pressing issue to address. Initially, the Government Office for Slovenians Abroad was mandated to do the task. However, they later decided that the complexity and variety of difficulties and needs of individual persons required assistance from a specialized outsourced organization. The organization chosen to coordinate and assist with the integration was Karitas Slovenia (hereinafter, Karitas). Karitas has already been active in providing financial and other assistance to Slovenians in Venezuela prior to the governmental decision of repatriation and was chosen also due to their extensive network of offices across the country that could assist with the integration of repatriates, who were planned to be dispersedly accommodated (Government Official 2). Very active assistance was also provided by the non-governmental and humanitarian organization Društvo za razvijanje prostovoljnega dela Novo mesto (Association for Developing Voluntary Work Novo mesto), which provided additional language courses and assistance with integration spanning across different policy areas.

The first repatriates arrived in Slovenia at the end of 2019. The process was suspended from March to September 2020 due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and mobility restrictions imposed to limit the global spread of the virus. For those who arrived before the pandemic, the status of a repatriated person was extended for three months. Repatriation resumed in November 2020.

8 According to Article 66 of the Act, other rights are guaranteed, including the right to more favorable entry requirements determined by the statutes of higher education establishments, access to all public cultural goods under the same conditions as apply to Slovenian citizens, and priority in applying for vacant job positions over third-country nationals.

9 Prior to the adoption of the Act in 2006, however, Slovenia carried out extensive evacuation (repatriation) of hundreds of Slovenians from occupied Sarajevo during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina following the disintegration of Yugoslavia. The evacuation was carried out in November 1992 (Klavora, 2012).

Timeline of the arrivals and basic demographic profile of repatriates

The total number of repatriated persons to date is 121.¹⁰ The highest number of repatriates arrived in 2021 and 2022, 37 in each year. Overall, more women (74) than men (47) were repatriated. 65% (78) of the repatriates fall into the category of a working-age population, 17% (21) are children attending primary and secondary schools, and 14% (17) are aged 65 or older (see Table 1).

Year of arrival	Gender		Age			
	Male	Female	0–5	6–19	20–64	65+
2019	2	4	1	/	5	/
2020	12	25	2	5	23	7
2021	15	22	1	7	23	6
2022	11	17	1	6	18	3
2023	7	6	/	3	9	1
Total	47	74	5	21	78	17

Table 1: Arrivals by year and demographic data of the repatriates (source: own calculations based on the data supplied by the Government Office for Slovenians Abroad).

EXPOSURE TO STRESSORS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE VULNERABILITIES AND INTEGRATION OF REPATRIATES

Conceptualizing vulnerability and integration in the context of migration

Vulnerability is a multifaceted condition that requires careful conceptualization. The term has been consistently and frequently used for a variety of purposes in academic research and in policy frameworks, to the point of often being treated as a self-explanatory condition or phenomenon (Gilodi et al., 2022). Definitions and conceptualizations of vulnerability across different disciplines, and sometimes also within them, vary enormously, and there is no consensus on what the notion stands for or describes. Most often, also in migration studies, it is defined in relation to the concepts of risks, capacity, autonomy, and dependency (Gilodi et al., 2022).¹¹ For the discussion provided in this article, it is important, however, to understand vulnerability wholesomely and comprehensively by taking into consideration multi-level conceptualizations and acknowledging different nuances of meaning given to the concept. The

¹⁰ Data supplied by the Government Office for Slovenians Abroad on November 20, 2023.

¹¹ For instance, migrants may be at higher *risk* of being subjected to discriminatory practices, violence, social disadvantages, or economic hardships than others; they may be vulnerable due to a limited *capacity* to avoid, resist, cope with, or recover from harm; and they may have a diminished level of *autonomy* and thus higher *dependency* (see Gilodi et al., 2022).

vulnerabilities experienced by the repatriates will, therefore, be examined by using a new theoretical and conceptual framework for the research and evaluation of vulnerabilities developed by Gilodi et al. (2022), which proposes three main conceptualizations that characterize vulnerability as 1) the product of innate or natural characteristics; 2) the product of past, present, or future situations and experiences, and 3) the product of structural characteristics and dynamics. Innate vulnerability stems from innate characteristics that are, by definition, inherent and inevitable, such as age, gender, and disability. Situational vulnerability refers to the specific situations and experiences that migrants have been through, are living through, or may be exposed to. Structural vulnerability denotes the unfavorable social, political, and cultural characteristics of the country of origin, as well as the exclusionary policies and practices in the country of destination. The vulnerabilities in the context of repatriation explored in this article will be considered as both innate, situational, and structural. In other words, the identified vulnerabilities will be analyzed through the lens of intersectionality by considering personal and situational characteristics, as well as the legal, institutional, economic, and social conditions. The discussion will be framed around the dimension of time, as it has a significant impact on the emergence of specific vulnerabilities throughout the processes of repatriation and integration.

Similar to the concept of vulnerability, integration is also a multi-level and multi-dimensional concept. It can be defined as the process of settlement, interaction with the host society, and social change that follows immigration (Penninx & Garcés-Masareñas, 2016). This definition encompasses three distinct dimensions. Namely, the legal-political, the socioeconomic, and the cultural-religious dimensions. The legal-political dimension refers to residence and political rights and statuses. The socioeconomic dimension refers to the social and economic position of residents and access to core institutions, such as healthcare, housing, education, and employment. The cultural-religious dimension “pertains to the domain of perceptions and practices of immigrants and the receiving society as well as their reciprocal reactions to difference and diversity” (Penninx & Garcés-Masareñas, 2016, p. 15). Heckmann (2006) also emphasizes the social dimension of integration, which refers to the formation of relationships and the identificational dimension that relates to individuals’ multiple senses of identity and belonging.

Some parallels can be drawn with the categorizations of vulnerabilities, especially in terms of the impact of similar multi-level variables on both processes. For instance, the precariousness of the legal status of migrants in the receiving country and the exclusion from or limited access to the services provided by the state hinder socioeconomic integration and may lead to structural and situational vulnerabilities. Negative perceptions and attitudes of the receiving society have a strong impact on the micro-level integration and may lead to events and experiences that create situational vulnerabilities. Conversely, innate characteristics of migrants, such as age, gender, and disabilities, as well as their personality traits, may have a significant (positive or negative) impact on the social dimension of integration.

There is, therefore, a strong two-directional link between the processes of integration and the development of vulnerabilities that may eventually have an impact on migrants' mental health. Vulnerabilities may develop as a result of migrants' struggles with integration, just as they may conversely have a significant impact on their integration processes and experiences. Bhugra also notes that the process of migration consists of a series of events, "which are influenced by a number of factors over a prolonged period of time, and these phases in return are influenced by other factors at social and individual levels" (Bhugra, 2004, p. 244). For instance, bereavement related to loss of relationships, assets, and support after emigration may have a strong impact on migrants' vulnerability and mental health, and the situation may be exacerbated by a prolonged period of language learning upon arrival that hinders labor market integration and the creation of social networks. Conversely, successful integration may lead to the easing of social risks and better emotional well-being. Needless to note, vulnerabilities experienced by migrants, as well as coping mechanisms developed to overcome them, vary significantly, as stressors are always relative to the person they are affecting.

Expatriates' navigation of migration, integration, and vulnerabilities

Emergence, persistence, and severity of vulnerabilities before, during, and after migration can be attributed to a combination of several factors, including the degree of severity of initial trauma exposures and exposure to secondary stressors after settlement in the country of destination (Rousseau & Frounfelker, 2019). The time dimension turned out to be an important variable in the exploration of vulnerabilities of the repatriates, not only in terms of understanding vulnerabilities in relation to individual migration trajectories but also in terms of developing policies and approaches that would enhance their integration.

Vulnerabilities prior to repatriation

When describing the conditions in Venezuela prior to repatriation, the interviewees' narratives included depictions of all three dimensions of vulnerabilities conceptualized by Gilodi et al. (2022). The most emphasized was situational vulnerability relating to food scarcity, lack of medicine and healthcare, electricity cuts, violence, corruption, and theft.

Food is scarce. You buy what you can get your hands on; you buy whatever is available. There are also a lot of problems with getting the fuel for the car [...] Also, Venezuela is very dangerous. As a woman, past 6 o'clock in the evening, you have to make sure you are not walking on the streets alone. In the evening, you also have to beware where you park your car. You always wonder if someone will steal the tires or the battery, or even the car itself. (Repatriated person 1)

Life in Venezuela is too difficult. Often, we have no electricity or running water. When the water returns, it's brown at first, and it's a long process to get it clean enough to drink [...]. A lot of people are begging for food. Young people cannot become independent, as they have to live with their families to get by. It is emotionally very difficult. (Repatriated person 2)

A Slovenian missionary nun serving in Venezuela also emphasized the lack of security, inflation, and struggles of the elderly to survive, pointing out the age-related innate vulnerabilities.

Because the police and army are not in the service of the people, there is no safety. Bolivar, their currency, has lost its value entirely. One liter of milk can cost up to 2 million bolivars. Meanwhile, the monthly pension is around 400 thousand bolivars, which is not even 40 [Euro] cents. They survive because of the remittances sent by those who emigrated. But the price is high, because emigration means that families become separated. Andreja Godnič (Oprčkal, 2020)¹²

Living under high stress and permanent uncertainties is likely to have a negative effect on mental health, as the stressors affecting the life of ordinary people, i.e., limited economic opportunities, disrupted social networks, and exposure to violence (Rousseau & Frounfelker, 2019), may lead to profound emotional distress. "Every day, we thought that it was so bad that it couldn't get any worse. But every day after was even worse than the previous day. In the end, we lost everything. Like most Venezuelans, we lived off help from our families and friends living abroad." Maria Voglar (Ahačič, 2020)

Structural vulnerabilities that may lead to emigration can also be a cause of non-migration (Gilodi et al., 2022), as a lack of structurally determined resources may prohibit people from emigrating and settling abroad. For many, state-assisted repatriation can, therefore, be the only option for emigration.

Vulnerabilities during the fifteen-month period of status acquisition and mechanisms of coping

According to the interviewed integration counselors tasked with providing assistance to the repatriates, the most notable vulnerabilities in the fifteen-month period after the arrival were bereavement due to loss of relationships, difficulties in learning the Slovenian language, and inclusion of children and adolescents into the education system.

The arrival and initial settlement in Slovenia were not overly stressful, as their legal status was confirmed and social security ensured. Because of the state-funded

12 All quotes obtained from the media were translated into English by the author.

fifteen-month transition period, they were not immediately concerned with existential problems, such as securing housing¹³ or finding employment. In the period immediately after the arrival, the counselors noted primarily bereavement issues related to loss of relationships and homesickness and less concern about their inclusion into the new society. Negative emotions, such as a sense of loss and anxiety about those left behind, were pervasive. One repatriate explained: “I missed my friends, I missed my dog. I constantly wondered how they were doing. I was in a lot of pain” (Repatriated person 3).

The frustrations were initially most notable in relation to language learning, as they noted that the Slovenian language is difficult to learn, and most of them did not have any prior knowledge or understanding of Slovenian vocabulary or grammar. Moreover, since most of them had not been learning any second language in Venezuela, starting with Slovenian was a significant challenge. The frustrations were exacerbated when they realized that written Slovenian differs significantly from spoken Slovenian, and especially from regional dialects, which can be tremendously confusing. One repatriate noted:

It is surprising because Slovenia is so small, but it has about fifty dialects. Language apps do not translate words in dialects. It's so confusing [...] I'm not sure if words that I hear in everyday conversations are correct Slovenian words or merely words spoken in dialect [...] Trying to communicate with my peers who are coming from different parts of Slovenia is truly a challenge. (Repatriated person 2)

Outsourced providers offered Slovenian language courses. They were free of charge but were temporarily disrupted by the pandemic for those arriving during the outbreak of the disease. The Employment Service of Slovenia also provided additional classes for all employment seekers with the intention of accelerating their labor market integration. However, the interviewees noted that language learning is a complex process that depends not only on the accessibility of quality of state-provided courses but also on motivation to learn and personal characteristics.

The provided language classes were not sufficient, but they were a good start. After the classes, I kept learning by myself. I did all the homework. I listened to Slovenian radio; I watched Slovenian cartoons. I remember when we arrived, we did not receive any assistance from Karitas because we were among the first to arrive, and Karitas did not yet provide assistance to the repatriates. But that kept many of us more motivated to learn the language quickly because we had to take care of everything ourselves [...] I think that outgoing people also have fewer problems

13 Housing was provided by the state or relatives of the expatriates and hence there was no immediate need to seek accommodation on the market. Later on, however, lifestyle needs and preferences, and availability of suitable employment opportunities, lead to further mobility and the need for new housing.

with speaking than introverts and perfectionists. That plays a major role in language learning. (Repatriated person 1)

The finding that overly attentive state-provided assistance with integration may hinder language learning has been affirmed by the integration counselors themselves. They noted that many repatriates became too dependent on their support with communication with the authorities and service providers such as social workers, healthcare workers, teachers, and staff at administrative units, which hindered the progress of their language learning. Age was an important factor in the learning process as well, as elderly repatriates, in general, demonstrated less ability and motivation to learn than other age groups. Some, however, understood language learning as simply an intrinsic part of the migration process. Carolina Žibert van Gricken states: “The language is complicated, that’s true. You need time to learn it. But that is not necessarily bad. It’s a basic problem of any migration” (Miklavčič, 2021, 0:47).

In particular, younger repatriates demonstrated a high degree of proactive and resilient agency. They sought (or offered) support with language learning by utilizing social media platforms, where they created their own networks. For instance, the Facebook post from April 2021 posted by the Society for Slovenian-Latin American Friendship (Lipa) invited native speakers to provide Slovenian language classes in exchange for Spanish language classes:

Those who are learning Spanish or would like to practice speaking, we offer Spanish lessons in exchange for Slovenian lessons. Spanish native speakers are situated in Radovljica, Hrastje, Britof, and Črnuče, but the location is not so important as meetings can be held online. These people urgently need to learn Slovenian, they came from Venezuela and will start a new life here. We are appealing to your generosity to help them if you are able to. (Društvo slovensko-latinskoameriškega prijateljstva Lipa, 2021)

Age played an important role in the fifteen-month period of transition and adaptation in general, as vulnerabilities were most noticeable in primary and secondary school children and less in people in old age. Children were enrolled in schools without prior knowledge of the Slovenian language, with different educational backgrounds than their Slovenian peers, and without established social networks. A mother described her daughter’s struggles with the language barrier as follows: “She was sad that others didn’t understand what she was trying to say. It was hard for her to accept that it’s a slow process. I also wish that we could speak well, we learn, and we try, but words just don’t come easily” Amal (Rupar, 2023).

The difficulties with integration into the school environment seemed to be increasing with the age of the child, which is in line with the studies that confirm that “the key importance of the demographic indicator of age results from the fact that a relatively large portion of social capital is gained in the early years, meaning

that the younger the migrant, the higher the probability of successful integration in the new society" (Elder, 1990, as quoted in Strzemecka, 2015). According to the integration counselors, integration of a preschool child is easier than integration of an adolescent who is entering a complex web of already established relationships while still developing their (cultural) identity and dealing with the pains of growing up. They may experience a loss of security and develop a sense of "otherness" that can have a significantly negative impact on their self-esteem, as well as on the learning outcomes. That is why family background and support, as well as support from school, are crucial for tackling migratory experiences that affect peer relationships and school performance (Strzemecka, 2015). Cooperation between schools and repatriated parents, however, was hindered also by the inability to communicate in either Slovenian or English, but only in Spanish. A detachment from "certain models of daily life and lifestyle, and a loss of status and of the specific position which they held in their country of origin" can lead to feelings of non-belonging (Strzemecka, 2015, p. 94) and can have a significant impact on the mental health and well-being of adolescents.

My [name of the family member] is very sad. He is an introvert, and relationships in high school are very difficult. He does not want to talk to anybody. I don't know why. And the schoolwork is not going very well. He might have to repeat the class again. The school subjects are in Slovenian, and he doesn't understand it well. He is trying to find motivation, but kids here are less approachable, and he is an introvert himself. When he comes home from school, he goes straight to his room and doesn't come out. (Repatriated person 2)

Despite the vulnerabilities and struggles observed by the integration counselors, none of the adolescents sought professional help, although the counselors strongly recommended it in at least two cases. This finding is in line with the extensive literature on the mental health of migrants that has repeatedly shown that migrants underutilize mental health services, which can be attributed to a variety of reasons, including stigma around mental illness and linguistic obstacles (Rousseau & Frounfelker, 2019). The latter, in particular, has been outlined by the interviewed counselors as the major obstacle. They noted that sharing vulnerabilities with strangers, albeit trained experts, is a difficult decision to make, even for adults who are proficient in the language spoken during the counseling session. It is unimaginably difficult, they noted, to share your struggles with an adult in a language you are not comfortable with and when you are not familiar with the words that describe your feelings.

Despite the availability of the services, adolescents and other repatriates dealing with mental health issues prefer to resort to some other ways of coping, like sharing their struggles among themselves. The entire community of repatriates is connected via the WhatsApp messaging service, which they frequently use to

exchange information and advice, share concerns and struggles, invite each other to events, and similar. Many also resort to the Catholic church service for emotional relief. Integration counselors noted that confession to a priest often provides relief and comfort, as does socializing with other churchgoers in the church environment and at the community events organized by the church. Karitas organized one such well-attended event in July 2022 at the parish of Podutik. The event started with a mass that was translated into Spanish and was carried out in active cooperation with the repatriated Venezuelan families. Songs were sung in Spanish and Slovenian languages, and later, there was a picnic with Slovenian and Venezuelan food, such as *cachapas*, *arepa*, and *tequeños* (Petek, 2022). According to the interviewees, such church-related events have contributed to the well-being of many religious repatriates and have also been an opportunity to socialize with the local population and thus enhance social integration (Repatriated person 2). They note that emotional comfort is greatest when they come together with members of other ethnicities who have a similar experience of emigration and settling down in a foreign country:

Now we understand the purpose of such gatherings. Venezuela is the land of immigrants who arrived from Europe during the war. They all established their own [ethnic] societies. My childhood friends always attended Saturday gatherings, for example, as part of their Italian community. I never understood why we can't all simply be Venezuelans. But now that I have this experience myself, I understand. I know that we have to integrate, but when we meet people with the same experience, we feel connected, like a family. It means a lot to us to attend mass in Spanish [together], which is held every third Sunday of the month at St. Jacob's Church in Ljubljana. Amal (Rupar, 2023).

Vulnerabilities after the status expiration

Nearing the end of the fifteen-month period during which the basic social security for all repatriates was guaranteed was particularly stressful for the working-age population that was yet to find suitable employment. One interviewee noted:

Finding a job was extremely stressful for me. It was the most stressful time, full of anxiety. The status was about to expire, and I was expected to find a job, any kind of job. The thought that I would have to go out there and talk to prospective employers in the Slovenian language was terrifying. But, honestly, I was also dreading that I would end up with a job that I don't like or that I'm overqualified for. I was seriously stressed out. Much more than when I first arrived in this country. (Repatriated person 3)

Integration into the labor market, generically defined as finding formal and legally protected employment with decent working conditions (Triandafyllidou et al., 2023), is one of the most basic prerequisites for integration in general, as it enables financial independence and provides ample opportunities for socializing with the

local population. A successfully integrated migrant, however, is not one that secures just any kind of job but a well-paid job, is adjusted to their area of specialization, and enables career progress (Baglioni & Isaakyan, 2019). Labor market integration is also a process of establishing yourself as a professional and as a person in a host society. Isaakyan et al. (2023, p. 209) note:

It is a long journey of responding to critical events, undergoing various obstacles, and possibly finding a desired outcome. It is a difficult journey during which the migrant may be lost, depending on how ready they are for it. It is therefore an outcome of migrant agency that follows a scenario, albeit with individualised configurations. It is a process of self-discovery through which the migrant not only finds a better place to live and work but also re-evaluates the symbolic meanings and social relations that they encounter. It is a complex socio-cultural scenario, in which each migrant is both the actor and the director.

Successful entry into the labor market is, therefore, a tremendously important milestone that not only contributes to structural integration in terms of participation in the labor and housing markets, education, and health systems but also to the dimension of social integration in terms of social interaction, creation of relationships and networks, as well as to the dimension of identity. The latter refers in this particular context to the processes “through which individuals may develop a shared identity and sense of belonging with the place, nation, communities and people among whom they live” (Spencer, 2022). It is important to recognize that processes in one dimension may have an impact on another; they do not necessarily take place at the same time, and they may reverse. Penninx & Garcés Mascareñas (2016) give the following examples to illustrate the complex intertwinement of these dimensions: 1) racist attitudes may be impacting the opportunities to obtain employment, 2) social engagement may come before participation in the labor market, and 3) reversal may be observed that is a result of redundancy or a diminished sense of belonging due to repeated experiences of discrimination.

In the case of the repatriates, the intertwinement of the dimensions was observed as well. Experiences of discrimination based on xenophobia were not reported.¹⁴ The main obstacle reported when looking for jobs was poor knowledge of the Slovenian language. Integration counselors advised the repatriates who were not able to find suitable jobs to initially take on employment below their level of education and skills in order to start socializing and using the language in professional settings. In many cases, however, the repatriates decided to wait to find employment until the expiration of the status, which, in the end, caused much stress and anxiety (Integration Counselor 1). Many repatriates were engaging socially before finding employment,

14 For those repatriates arriving early and finding possibilities for employment relatively quickly, the employment was delayed due to incompatibility of regulations stipulated in different laws. However, the issue was later resolved in cooperation with the competent authorities.

especially those who were accommodated in parishes in rural environments and were actively participating in church activities.

Repatriates who gained basic knowledge of the Slovenian language and were educated and trained in the professions deficit in Slovenia were able to validate their university diplomas and find employment relatively quickly. The process was also facilitated for some of those with particular skills and assisted by non-governmental organizations.¹⁵

I was contacted by [name of NGO] if I wanted to have extra Slovenian lessons free of charge. I accepted, of course. Then they asked me if I would organize dance workshops because I'm a professional dancer, I graduated in dance. I said I can't because I don't speak Slovenian very well. They told me all I had to know is how to say left, right, forward, turn, and so on. So, I did it. It was through these workshops that I was able to finally start speaking Slovenian and become confident. They offered me a paying job later, and I'm still working there. (Repatriated person 1)

Support with employment was provided by the counselors at the Slovenian Employment Service and Social Work Centres were providing assistance with social and family benefits and any other emerging issues. Integration counselors noted, however, that the benefits of the services provided by the state varied greatly depending on the users' level of motivation and determination to enter the labor market. This was confirmed by one of the interviewees, who agreed that lack of motivation indeed led to "hibernation" but noted that lack of motivation was due to "introverted personality and anxiety, not aloofness or arrogance" (Repatriated person 3).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The empirical findings presented in this article are in line with the theoretical assumptions developed by Gilodi et al. (2022), which state that each individual experience of vulnerability is always situated in a specific context, time, and developmental phase and is the product of interrelating structural, situational, social, biographical, and psychological characteristics. The findings are also aligned with the writings of Rousseau & Frounfelker (2019), who argue that vulnerabilities that may lead to emotional distress may be more prevalent when immigration takes place during specific periods of the life cycle and are, therefore, age-related.

According to the interviewees, the overall process of integration was most difficult for children and adolescents attending primary and secondary schools as they

15 For instance, José Voglar and his spouse Maribel Briceño, photographers and visual artists, found opportunities to publicly display their art around Slovenia with the assistance of DRPD and other stakeholders (Prva razstava), and are striving to develop and provide photography and visual art courses in Ljubljana (Jež, 2022).

reported a lack of emotional safety, self-confidence, and group belonging, on top of the poor learning outcomes due to the language barrier. The period before and immediately after the expiration of the status, however, was most stressful for the working-age repatriates who were expected to integrate into the Slovenian labor market but were not yet proficient in the Slovenian language and/or were not trained in deficit professions. Interestingly, some interviewees questioned whether the extensiveness of the governmental (social) support provided to the working-age repatriates for the duration of fifteen months could be considered a help or hindrance. Namely, they pointed out that long periods of assisted integration might, in fact, be counterproductive and may delay language learning, everyday communication, and inclusion into the labor market—which can lead to “severe anxiety and existential crisis after the expiration of the status” (Integration counselor 1). This opinion undoubtedly renders further scrutiny and should be taken into consideration when evaluating the existing integration strategies and developing better strategies for multi-level inclusion and, consequently, better emotional well-being of repatriates and other immigrants. Finally, the least vulnerable repatriates, according to the integration counselors, were kindergarten children and the elderly receiving old-age pensions.

Vulnerabilities and emotional distress experienced by the repatriates are mostly discussed among the repatriated families themselves. Practical assistance with the legal procedures and everyday tasks was sought continuously from the integration counselors, but they did not look for any type of psychological counseling. Many of them found solace in the conversations with the other repatriates, with whom they share the same language, culture, and experience of repatriation and integration into Slovenian society. The Catholic church also played a major role in relieving social distress for some repatriates, who managed to find support and consolation at mass, confession, and church gatherings and through involvement in church-organized community activities.

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POVZETEK

SOOČANJE Z INTEGRACIJO IN ČUSTVENIMI STISKAMI V RANLJIVIH ŽIVLJENJSKIH OBDOBJIH: PRIMER REPATRIIRANIH SLOVENCEV IZ VENEZUELE

Mojca Vah Jevšnik

Slovenija od leta 2019 izvaja proces repatriacije Slovencev iz Venezuele, ki se sooča s hudo humanitarno krizo. Avtorica v članku najprej kontekstualizira odločitev države za repatriacijo in oriše zakonsko podlago, ki omogoča repatriacijo, torej Zakon o odnosih Republike Slovenije s Slovenci zunaj njenih meja. Nato ponudi pregled in analizo prepletenih (prirojenih, situacijskih in strukturnih) ranljivosti repatriirancev, s poudarkom na tistih, ki vplivajo na njihovo emocionalno dobrobit in vodijo v čustvene stiske. Ranljivosti obravnava skozi časovno prizmo, tj. pred in po pridobitvi statusa repatriiranca in po izteku slednjega, ter v kontekstu starostno pogojenih integracijskih izzivov. Članek temelji na analizi sekundarnih virov ter na polstrukturiranih intervjujih, opravljenih z repatriiranci in strokovnimi delavci, ki slednjim pomagajo pri integraciji. Izsledki prispevka kažejo, da je proces integracije največji izziv za otroke, ki obiskujejo osnovno in srednjo šolo, po izteku statusa repatriiranca pa se čustvene stiske pojavljajo predvsem pri delovno aktivnih posameznikih ob iskanju zaposlitve. Pri tem se pojavlja vprašanje, ali dolžina statusa vpliva na hitrost vključevanja na trg delovne sile in na druga področja družbe. Repatriirani Slovenci čustveno oporo največkrat iščejo v tesno povezani skupnosti repatriirancev, s katerimi si delijo jezik, kulturo ter izkušnjo repatriacije in integracije, pa tudi pri Katoliški cerkvi z mašami in spovedmi ter s sodelovanjem pri drugih cerkvenih dogodkih. Manj je iskanja strokovne pomoči izven skupnosti, pri čemer je eden najpomembnejših razlogov nepoznavanje oziroma slabo poznavanje slovenskega in angleškega jezika.

THREE'S A CROWD? LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE IN MENTAL HEALTHCARE SETTINGS IN SLOVENIA

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ABSTRACT

Three's a Crowd? Language Assistance in Mental Healthcare Settings in Slovenia

The article addresses the inclusion of non-Slovenian speakers into mental healthcare services in Slovenia by looking at how language assistance is perceived and received during psychotherapy and psychosocial support sessions. Clients of mental healthcare services in Slovenia are increasingly more linguistically diverse, which may add to the existing challenges that the mental healthcare system faces. At the same time, it offers the opportunity to conceive more inclusive mental care for non-Slovenian speakers. The article highlights the main characteristics of language assistance in psychotherapy and psychosocial support sessions. It presents the findings of a study that point to the difficulties regarding implementing language assistance in mental health care in Slovenia, which are consistent with findings in other European settings and beyond.

KEYWORDS: language assistance, mental healthcare, psychotherapy, psychosocial support, Slovenia, intercultural mediation, interpreting

IZVLEČEK

Eden preveč? Jezikovno posredovanje v obravnavah duševnega zdravja v Sloveniji

Avtorica v članku naslavlja vključevanje neslovensko govorečih uporabnikov v obravnave na področju duševnega zdravja v Sloveniji, pri čemer preučuje, kako je zaznано in sprejeto jezikovno posredovanje pri psihoterapevtski in psihosocialni obravnavi. Uporabniki storitev na področju duševnega zdravja v Sloveniji so vedno bolj jezikovno raznoliki, kar lahko še poveča obstoječe izzive, s katerimi se sooča sistem duševne oskrbe, hkrati pa je to priložnost za zasnovo bolj vključujočega sistema tudi za neslovensko govoreče uporabnike. V prispevku so izpostavljene glavne značilnosti jezikovnega posredovanja v psihoterapiji. Predstavljene ugotovitve raziskave, ki so skladne z ugotovitvami v drugih evropskih okoljih in širše, opozarjajo na težave pri uvajanju jezikovnega posredovanja v storitve na področju duševnega zdravja v Sloveniji.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: jezikovno posredovanje, duševno zdravje, psihoterapija, psihosocialna pomoč, Slovenija, medkulturna mediacija, tolmačenje

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INTRODUCTION

As an increasing number of people require mental care services, these must adapt to the growing diversity of contemporary societies. Due to the multiethnic and multilingual composition of these societies, mental care providers and clients may not share the same language of communication. The communication barrier negatively affects access to this type of service, client retention, and diagnostic accuracy, and it may even contribute to distrust toward organizations that do not provide language assistance (Paone & Malott, 2008). While in other medical settings, language assistance is increasingly used to overcome language and other access barriers, the use of persons providing language assistance in mental care has been lagging. I define language assistance as acts of language mediation that lead to overcoming clients' language barriers. These are done by professional providers who may subscribe to being interpreters, community interpreters, or intercultural mediators.

This article addresses the inclusion of speakers with limited Slovenian proficiency into mental care services in Slovenia by looking at how language assistance is perceived and received during the psychotherapy and psychosocial support sessions. The organization of mental healthcare in Slovenia is in the process of transformation, with key documents being adopted or in the process of adoption (The National Mental Health Programme 2018–2028, new Mental Health Act, Psychotherapy Act) ("Duševno zdravje je univerzalna človekova pravica", 2023a), with, at times, contentious public discussion on how to best organize psychotherapy and mental care more broadly in order to provide for the escalated needs for mental care services after the COVID-19 pandemic measures (Presek, 2023). These discussions generally omit the fact that clients of mental health care services are becoming more linguistically diverse, reflecting the composition of Slovenia's population in the twenty-first century, which adds to the existing challenges that the mental healthcare system in Slovenia already faces and at the same time fails to conceive more inclusive services that could support the non-Slovenian speakers, among which are often vulnerable groups including refugees and asylum seekers (Cukut Krilić, 2019).

The aim of this article is twofold; this being one of the first contributions regarding the role of language assistance in mental care in Slovenia, I highlight the extant literature on language assistance in mental healthcare and some key issues it addresses, which reveal a fast-developing subfield at the crossroads of interpreting and communication studies, medical anthropology, psychology, and psychotherapy. I then present the findings of the study *Mental health difficulties among migrants: experiences of recognition and treatment that pertain to the implementation of language assistance in mental healthcare in Slovenia*. While these findings only show the contours of the emerging phenomenon, I hope the contribution to this thematic section will be a catalyst for a more nuanced discussion on the need for an inclusive and client-centered mental healthcare system in Slovenia.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE IN HEALTHCARE

In most general terms, language assistance pertains to facilitating communication between people who do not share the same language by translating or interpreting what is said in the source language into the target language. While these services are used in a myriad of situations (conferences and meetings, courts, public services, etc.), language assistance in the medical setting is a fast-developing subfield that aims to improve access and treatment of persons with limited proficiency in the dominant language in use. According to the systematic literature review by Glenn Flores (2005), bilingual care and professional language assistance positively affect the satisfaction of clients with limited language proficiency, the quality of care, and medical outcomes.

Language assistance in the medical setting is provided by various professional profiles and job titles whose work entails interpreting, that is, mediating spoken messages among people speaking different languages, from medical interpreters to community interpreters and public service interpreters, as well as intercultural mediators and cultural brokers. The definition of their roles in the medical setting is complex and relational and varies from country to country. It depends on the different “traditions” of the development of language assistance and the health care system and organization. Their work is guided by various codes of conduct (e.g., the Code of Ethics for Medical Interpreters (“IMIA Code of Ethics”, 2006), A national code of ethics for interpreters in health care (2004), Guide for intercultural mediation in health care (Verrept & Coune, 2016). They set the main principles of language assistance in the medical setting: accuracy, confidentiality, and neutrality (Bancroft, 2005).

Accuracy refers to rendering the message accurately, not adding or omitting anything, while also ensuring that it conveys both the content and the spirit of the original message, taking into consideration its cultural context. Confidentiality pertains to treating all information conveyed during the medical session as confidential, not sharing it outside of the treating team, and observing relevant requirements regarding disclosure. Neutrality or impartiality is a complex and, at times, contentious principle (Leanza et al., 2014) referring to refrainment from personal involvement, counseling, advising, or projecting personal biases or beliefs (“A national code of ethics for interpreters in health care”, 2004). This last principle, transferred from the ethics of conference interpreting (Leanza et al., 2014) and Western individualist, positivist philosophy (Marianacci, 2022), has important implications for the relationship between professional interpreters and intercultural mediators as well as for the introduction of language assistance in mental care settings. Initially, professional interpreters were strongly encouraged to adhere to “pure interpreting” (Verrept & Coune, 2016) and to focus “on resolving language barriers through mediating spoken messages between people speaking different languages without adding, omitting or distorting meaning or editorializing” (Verrept, 2019, p. 48).

In recent decades, this model of “interpreter as the conduit” is slowly making way for a more interactionist understanding of interpreting (Wadensjö, 2013; Rudvin, 2002) that posits that interpreters convey information that contains both verbal and non-verbal meanings, informed by their personal knowledge and perspective (Wadensjö, 2013). On the other hand, intercultural mediators explicitly aim for patient empowerment and have a “default position that is impartial/neutral but with an additional focus on inequity/inequality” (Verrept, 2019, p. 49). The resolution of language barriers remains a core activity. However, patient advocacy is an important aspect of their work profiles, together with the promotion of practitioner-client relationships and education about the workings of the healthcare system (Verrept, 2019). While there is a lack of empirical research on the roles of medical interpreters and intercultural mediators in medical settings (Verrept, 2019), some research suggests that there is a strong overlap between the two professions in the actual workplace (Verrept, 2012).¹

The challenges of language assistance in mental healthcare

In mental care settings, in particular, the interactionist nature of language assistance is a key aspect to consider. Language assistance providers are not “invisible scribes” (Leanza et al., 2014) as they affect the normally dyadic relationship between the practitioner and the client through their social positioning and personal identities (Leanza et al., 2014). In the research literature, some of the prominent topics, therefore, include the examination of the language assistance’s impact on psychological evaluations and the therapy process and the complex emotional reactions that arise within the therapy process, including therapeutic alliance and the multiple roles persons doing the language assistance play within the therapy process (Miller et al., 2005). According to this research, the impact depends on the interpreting strategy during mental care evaluations and treatments. Often, the decision on the strategy derives from negotiations with the mental care practitioner and sometimes with the client. Despite the above-described development toward the interactionist model of language assistance, mental care practitioners still strive for language assistance where the interpreter or intercultural mediator’s relationship with the client (or practitioner) or the identity of the language assistance provider ideally does not have any bearing on the therapy process. Practitioners strive for a traditional therapist-client alliance and treat the presence of the language assistance provider “as an unfortunate necessity, a potential obstacle to genuine therapeutic contact with the client” (Miller et al., 2005, p. 30), as portrayed in this candid therapist’s quote:

1 For further reading on the relationship between (inter)cultural mediators and community or medical interpreters see Martín & Phelan (2009), Ribas (2017), Wang (2017), Kocjančič Pokorn & Mikolič Južnič (2020).

My rule of thumb is that I get the interpreter out of the room as fast as I can, as much as I said earlier that therapy turns on the nuances, there is a certain point after I have worked with somebody for a while and we have gotten the basic story, if they can understand half of what I am saying after a while and I can understand half of what they are saying, I tell the interpreter to leave (Miller et al., 2005, p. 30).

Many practitioners thus still advocate for the neutrality principle because of the fear of potential errors in language assistance (Leanza et al., 2014), together with other complex emotional repercussions for the practitioner, client, and language assistance provider, as detailed below. These may lead to the implementation of restrictive guidelines or even refraining from seeing clients who cannot communicate through a common language (Leanza et al., 2014).

In contrast, the more interactionist or relational understanding of language assistance strives to include language assistance providers in a three-person alliance, forgoing the insistence on the dyadic relationship between the practitioner and the client. In this approach, the language assistance provider's role is considered an integral part of a three-person alliance (Miller et al., 2005). In this approach, conveying information often entails explaining cultural contexts or systemic characteristics, thus going well beyond what is typically understood as mere language assistance. Depending on the health care system, these tasks may be part of the role of "community interpreter" or involve another type of consultant (e.g., cultural broker, intercultural mediator) (Miklavcic & LeBlanc, 2014) that may or may not also offer language assistance. The tasks of such experts are complex. Next to linguistic skills, they need to possess knowledge of mental issues as conceived and perceived by the client (indigenous knowledge) and the practitioner (biomedical knowledge). This includes understanding the client's idioms of distress and cultural dimensions of practitioner-client interactions, including nonverbal communication (Miklavcic & LeBlanc, 2014). Moreover, they need to grasp the characteristics of the systems (e.g., healthcare, asylum procedures, immigration) that are consequential to the client's predicament.

In this, many issues emerge that are non-existent or at least much less pronounced in the wider field of language assistance in healthcare systems. These pertain to a) the language—its register and accuracy, b) competing or conflicting understandings of "mental" issues and care, c) the possibility of therapeutic alliance, and d) the identity of the language assistance provider. I have already mentioned accuracy as one of the guiding principles in language assistance. Apart from denotation (the literal meaning), the connotations and the language register (conventional associations that the words evoke based on the speaker's identity and the social context) can have greater significance in mental health care than in any other medical field (Leanza et al., 2014; Cambridge et al., 2020). People often use idioms and metaphors, which depend on regional specificities, education, social class, etc., and can be bound to small in-group use. They can be hard to interpret even for fluent

speakers and can be misunderstood if interpreted literally (Crezee & Grant, 2020). Cambridge et al. (2020) discuss the importance of accurately interpreting the “rudeness register,” for example, where swearing can be a symptom of neuropathology. One of the considerable challenges is the language mediation of the communication of emotions. The first aspect pertains to the question of the universality of human emotions and the fact that more complex emotion terms refer to specific situations that may be culturally coded. Certain emotions with a precise name in one language do not have close equivalents in other languages (Russel, 1991 as quoted in Leanza et al., 2014). Moreover, the client’s code-switching during the psychological evaluations or therapy sessions is common (Verkerk et al., 2023) as they are struggling to find appropriate concepts (Verkerk et al., 2021) and support emotional communication (Alhamami, 2020). The research, although inconclusive, shows the importance of choosing a particular language for multilingual speakers to convey emotions or trauma. The intensity of recollections of traumatic experiences seems to be different depending on the language; Szoke et al. (2020) show that using clients’ first language when speaking about trauma may allow clients to reach emotional release faster and thus facilitate healing. On the other hand, Cook and Dewaele’s study (Cook & Dewaele, 2022) demonstrates that using a second language helped some clients detach themselves from the intensity of the recall, avoiding re-traumatization.

The interaction between the practitioner and client is affected by their respective cultural backgrounds. Bhugra et al. (2021) claim that cultural determinants represent a crucial factor in mental healthcare as they contribute to the causation of mental issues, mold symptoms, make certain groups more vulnerable, and affect beliefs and the interpretation of the illness. While the cultural background of clients, especially migrants and minorities, is increasingly considered, the issue that practitioners also operate with a particular set of cultural determinants and are not neutral is often neglected. Moreover, as Jadhav (1996) argues, psychiatry (as well as psychotherapy) itself is not culture-free. Working with Indian clients, for example, he is doubtful about the diagnosis of depression and its cultural validity. He writes: “[...] depression to the culture-free psychiatrist in India is merely a consensus taxonomy among health professionals who share a common (Western medical) epistemology, and this is not the same as being culturally ‘valid’ among the general population” (Jadhav, 1996, p. 281). He also invokes the findings of cross-cultural psychiatry, suggesting that “‘Western psychiatric theory’ has often overdetermined its own cultural distinction, objectified them through empirical data and then received them back as if they were universal objective ‘natural science’ categories” (Littlewood 1990, as quoted in Jadhav, 1996, p. 270). The cultural norms crucially determine what is “normal” and what not in particular time and place, and this needs to be taken into consideration in mental health care. As mentioned, both the client and the practitioner rely on the language assistance provider to interpret these variations, but this is not an easy task. The success of these providers’ interventions depends on their abilities

“to render divergent regimes of interpretation meaningful and acceptable to participants in the clinical encounter” (Miklavcic & LeBlanc, 2014).

An issue most often raised in implementing language assistance in psychotherapy sessions is the possibility of negatively affected therapeutic alliance due to the language assistance providers' presence. The therapeutic alliance² is considered one of the critical factors influencing psychotherapy and has the highest predictive value concerning the success of psychotherapy (Hanft-Robert et al., 2023). While the therapeutic alliance is typically a dyadic connection between practitioner and client, with the language assistance provider's presence, it becomes a triad with three distinct alliances: the practitioner-client, practitioner-language assistance provider, and language assistance provider-client (Hanft-Robert et al., 2023). As previous research has shown (Lipovec Čebren & Škraban, 2022), language assistance providers, in this case, intercultural mediators, may shift allegiances between clients and practitioners. On the other hand, many practitioners fear that a close alliance between the client and the language assistance provider might jeopardize the alliance between the practitioner and the client, especially if, initially, clients form a stronger attachment to the language assistance provider rather than the practitioner. Consequently, the practitioner may feel excluded, incompetent, powerless, and even self-conscious of being watched over (Miller et al., 2005; Hanft-Robert et al., 2023). Clients, too, may at first dislike the presence of another unknown person and may have difficulties establishing trust within the session. However, as demonstrated by Hanft-Robert and colleagues (Hanft-Robert et al., 2022), after a period of acclimatization, clients perceive the language assistance provider (ideally the same person continuously) as an integral part of the therapy: “You could put it like this: I go to a therapist and talk to one therapist, and that's how it is with the interpreter too, it makes me feel good. I always do therapy with one therapist and one interpreter” (Hanft-Robert et al., 2022, p. 194). As concluded in the research by Hanft-Robert and colleagues (Hanft-Robert et al., 2023), language assistance providers are increasingly seen as an integral and active component of the therapeutic alliance, which points to the shift already described above—toward a more relational understanding of language assistance. Still, finding the right amount of language assistance provider's activeness and involvement is challenging and should vary depending on the situation.

The last specific aspect of language assistance in mental health care is the impact of the language assistance provider's identity on the session and the impact these sessions have on the language assistance provider. They are of various genders, ages, ethnicities, education, religions, etc., and this may impact their work or how they are perceived. In conflict situations, one's nationality/ ethnicity may hinder establishing trust and professional working relations despite linguistic

2 Therapeutic alliance refers to both the personal alliance, which is based on interpersonal and affective aspects such as sympathy and understanding, and the task-oriented alliance, which involves joint work on therapy goals and tasks (Hougaard 1994, as quoted in Hanft-Robert et al., 2022).

skills. Belonging to the same, small and close-knit communities can also create barriers to developing trusting relations. At the same time, belonging to the same group can cause the language assistance providers to side more with the client than the practitioner (Lipovec Čebon & Škraban, 2022). Besides the identity of the language assistance provider, the circumstances of their work environment may also impact the triadic relation—precarious employment positions or internationalization of the biomedical views may shift language assistance provider's allegiance toward the practitioners (Lipovec Čebon & Škraban, 2022).

Language barriers in the Slovenian healthcare system

According to a survey among healthcare workers in Slovenia conducted in 2016, 94% of respondents reported regular encounters with non-Slovenian speaking clients, pointing to the fact that such clients are by no means an exception in Slovenian healthcare (Kocjančič Pokorn & Lipovec Čebon, 2019). Respondents also identified areas where such encounters are most common: emergency rooms, family medicine, pediatric medicine, obstetrics, and gynecology. Several other medical areas/fields were also mentioned, including psychiatry (Mikolič Južnič, 2019). Among the most likely health problems for which non-Slovenian speakers seek help were various acute conditions and inflammations (27 %), pregnancy, birth, and post-natal care (16 %), injuries (14 %), mental healthcare problems (10 %), gastrointestinal issues (10 %), and others (Mikolič Južnič, 2019). The survey indicated that most of the encounters with non-Slovenian speakers are with Albanian-speaking clients, but also with speakers of German, Macedonian, Croatian/Serbian/Bosnian/Montenegrin, Romani, Arab, Russian, Chinese, English, and other (Kocjančič Pokorn, 2019).

While the healthcare system itself fails to collect robust data on the barriers non-Slovenian speakers face in the Slovenian healthcare system, several projects³ and smaller-scale research (Bofulin & Bešter, 2010; Morel et al., 2012; Kocjančič Pokorn & Lipovec Čebon, 2019; Lipovec Čebon et al., 2019; Lipovec Čebon, 2021; Božič et al., 2022) highlight that both healthcare workers and non-Slovenian speaking clients face serious day-to-day language barriers. There are several ways in which language affects access and the quality of care received by non-Slovenian speakers. Firstly, healthcare practitioners cannot communicate with clients and inquire or convey often urgent and vital information (Lipovec Čebon, 2021). In case of limited proficiency in Slovenian or "bridge language" (e.g., English, Croatian/Serbian), there is a high probability of miscommunication, which may lead to erroneous diagnosis, inappropriate treatment, or worse, grave medical errors (Lipovec Čebon, 2021). Furthermore, the inability to communicate may harm wider communities (e.g., not understanding instructions in case of communicable disease) (Lipovec Čebon,

3 For example, Healthcare Interpreting in Slovenia (UL, 2010–2013) MoST (NIJZ, 2017–2020), TRAMIG (UL, 2019–2021).

2021). All this results in lower quality healthcare for clients aggravates healthcare practitioners' feelings of alienation toward clients, and leads to racist treatment (Lipovec Čebon, 2021).

The already mentioned survey (Kocjančič Pokorn & Lipovec Čebon, 2019) highlighted common and some worrisome strategies for dealing with non-Slovenian speakers. The most common strategy is using "bridge language," most often English or Croatian/Serbian/Bosnian/Montenegrin (Kocjančič Pokorn, 2019). This strategy is followed by the use of *ad hoc* interpreters, communication using hand gestures and facial expressions, interlanguage communication where each speaker uses their first language, and online and electronic interpreting apps and dictionaries. Healthcare practitioners rarely ask their bilingual colleagues for help or engage professional language assistance providers. Regarding the perceived favorable outcome, the respondents reported that the most successful strategy was the use of *ad hoc* interpreters (Kocjančič Pokorn, 2019). While extant research confirms the widespread and uncritical use of *ad hoc* interpreters, including children (Bofulin & Bešter, 2010; Lipovec Čebon et al., 2019) in Slovenian healthcare, more recent studies point to the increased awareness about the inappropriateness of this strategy among individual healthcare workers (Lipovec Čebon et al., 2019; Božič et al., 2022).

The legal basis for language assistance in healthcare institutions in Slovenia is vague and opaque. The Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia in Article 62 guarantees the right to use one's language and script: "Everyone has the right to use his language and script in a manner provided by law in the exercise of his rights and duties and in procedures before state and other authorities performing a public function ("Constitution", 2016)." However, in practice, this article is interpreted as a person having the right to a court-appointed interpreter only in court and criminal proceedings. In 2021, Article 62a was added to the Constitution, guaranteeing the freedom to use and develop Slovenian sign and tactile sign language (and in constitutional minorities' areas, Italian and Hungarian sign language) ("Constitution", 2016). This positive development may point to a broader understanding of the need to overcome language barriers for non-Slovenian-speaking persons in institutions performing a public function, including healthcare institutions. For now, interpreting outside court proceedings is legally guaranteed only to members of the two constitutional minorities (Italian and Hungarian) and deaf persons (but only for Slovenian sign language). In the case of asylum seekers, the International Protection Act (Uradni list Republike Slovenije, 2016) guarantees an interpreter only in the process of the asylum application, while in other procedures concerning public institutions only in "justified cases decided by the competent authority" (Uradni list Republike Slovenije, 2016). Often, the justified cases include the asylum seekers' healthcare. The Patient Rights Act (Uradni list Republike Slovenije, 2008) explicitly guarantees only communication in the Slovenian language (and in Italian and Hungarian in the areas of constitutional minorities). However, Article 20 of the Act also states that the patient has the right to be informed on their medical condition, which has to be

conveyed by the healthcare practitioner “in face-to-face contact, in a considerate manner, in a way that the patient understands, or in a way that is consistent with the individual’s ability to take in information, in a complete and timely manner” (Uradni list Republike Slovenije, 2008). This provision could, in the future, allow for the interpretation of the right to include language assistance to non-Slovenian speakers entering the healthcare system in Slovenia.

Regarding the provision of professional interpreters, there is currently no formalized training available for medical interpreters or community interpreters specializing in healthcare.⁴ However, there were shorter courses for interpreters working with refugees and asylum seekers organized by the Ministry of Interior. In the case of the intercultural mediators, shorter intensive training courses were organized first in 2018 by the National Institute of Public Health (NIJZ) and the University of Ljubljana’s Faculty of Arts (Škraban & Lipovec Čebren, 2021). These courses have been continuously organized in the subsequent years with support from various institutions and organizations (the University of Ljubljana in joint organization with NIJZ, Public Education Centre – Cene Štupar, etc.). There were also a few one-time-only trainings organized by the NGO sector (e.g., IOM, Slovene Philanthropy, Društvo Up) (Škraban & Lipovec Čebren, 2021). In recent years, however, two National Vocational Qualification (NVQ)⁵ have been developed and approved—NVQ for community interpreters for the Albanian language⁶ and NVQ for intercultural mediators, with three other NVQ in development—for community interpreters for Arabic language,⁷ Farsi language,⁸ and Ukrainian language.⁹ Intercultural mediators have been recruited by individual community healthcare centers (Škraban et al., 2020) through various government-funded programs,¹⁰ although their employment remains precarious and dependent on limited-time funding.

Concerning mental healthcare institutions, no particular systematic or systemic provisions have been made, despite healthcare practitioners identifying mental care problems among more common issues for non-Slovenian-speaking clients. The next chapter details some of the experiences with language assistance in psychotherapy and psychosocial support in Slovenia.

4 In 2013, the University of Ljubljana developed a curriculum for a one-year community interpreting training program. However, the program failed to actualize due to a lack of funds and qualified teachers (Gorjanc & Pokorn, 2013).

5 The National Vocational Qualification is a formally recognized competence-based qualification that reflects the skills and knowledge needed to do a job effectively (“National vocational qualifications”, 2023).

6 For this NVQ, see <https://npk.si/katalogi/8048327>.

7 For this NVQ, see <https://npk.si/katalogi/2842284>.

8 For this NVQ, see <https://npk.si/katalogi/4461446>.

9 For this NVQ, see <https://npk.si/katalogi/5614561>.

10 For example, the program “Skupaj za zdravje” (<https://nijz.si/programi/skupaj-za-zdravje>) and the project MoST (<https://nijz.si/projekti/most>), both lead by NIJZ.

ATTITUDES TOWARD LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE IN PSYCHOTHERAPY AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT IN SLOVENIA: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

As part of the study *Mental health difficulties among migrants: experiences of recognition and treatment*, sixteen interviews were carried out with individuals working with migrants in the healthcare setting. All participants were women: four were intercultural mediators, one was a legal counselor, one was an NGO worker, one was a teacher, four were psychologists, and one was a licensed psychotherapist. Among these, six were psychotherapists who were training and working with migrants as part of this training. Their countries of origin were diverse; one-third were Slovenians, a third were from Russia or Ukraine, and the others came from Kosovo, Jordan, and Turkey. The researchers contacted interviewees via personal networks established through long-term work on migration and integration issues in Slovenia and through the snowball method. The interviews took one to two hours and were conducted face-to-face or on the Zoom platform, primarily in the Slovenian language, between March 30, 2022, and October 30, 2023. The interviews were subsequently transcribed, some translated, and coded by researchers involved in the project. The semi-structured design of the interviews focused on the experience of participants working with migrants in need of mental healthcare support, including a section on their experiences of working with language assistance providers. This is the first study on the reception of language assistance in mental healthcare sessions with non-Slovenian-speaking clients in Slovenia.

Only a handful of psychologists and psychotherapists in training in the study group had experience with language assistance providers present during psychotherapy or psychosocial support sessions. The interviewees also did not differentiate between the profiles of the language assistance provider (community interpreter, interpreter, or intercultural mediator) but rather called them “translators” (Slovenian: *prevajalci*), which is a common everyday expression for all language assistance providers in Slovenia. For this reason, in the direct quotations from the interviewees below, I use the term “translator” if this was a term used in the interview. The use of this term also implies that the profiles of an interpreter, community interpreter, or intercultural mediator are not yet differentiated or professionalized to the extent of being easily recognizable throughout the mental care community. At the same time, the lack of experience working with language assistance providers can also be partly explained by the particularity of the sample; many of the participants had a Russian or Ukrainian background or spoke the Russian language and have predominantly worked with Russian-speaking clients.

The attitudes of those who had experience with language assistance were not positive as they saw the language assistance provider’s presence as a hindrance to developing a productive client-practitioner relationship: “This experience was awful because it is tough to establish an intimate relationship. [...] From a psychotherapeutic view, you cannot establish a relationship. At least we could not, even

with excellent, high qualitative interpreting. I do not know; perhaps there are other experiences out there" (Interviewee P12). Apart from the difficulty in establishing a client-therapist relationship, the interviewees highlighted the question of trust in the interpreting process, the alienation of the therapist, and the doubts about the language assistance provider's neutrality:

[...] how will I know what they have talked about? Here was my distress: he will not understand as I wanted to ask, this is the Arabic way, I have felt uncomfortable because you do not know what was interpreted, you do need to trust, and getting the feedback, I felt we are here somewhere, but it is a special kind of work. And this translator was really willing to talk everything through, we have been checking for understanding a lot, did the client understand, we were going back asking "Is this how you meant it?" [...] but with the one from Eritrea, this did not go well at all. The asylum center does not have a lot of translators, and they assign you somebody from Eritrea who has been here for a while. I had a case where I was not aware he knows my client. I realized this when I noticed the exchange, that they are just talking among themselves. Wait a minute, can we stop for a moment? What are you two talking about? I have explained at the beginning how the communication (among us three) is going to be conducted, so I kindly asked them not to talk among themselves because then I do not have any material, yes? So, it was quite uncomfortable, you have to be really careful. (Interviewee P5)

The issue of trust in what and how it is being interpreted and the therapist's positioning in the therapeutic triad was also present in other interviews. In line with the existing research (Miller et al., 2005), the language assistance provider's confidentiality and neutrality were desired by the therapists: "The trust is a key thing, that you know that this will not go beyond the session, that it will stay here ..." (Interviewee P5). One of the therapists spoke more specifically about the unique nature of the client-therapist relationship, mentioning the processes pertaining to the therapeutic alliance:

[...] it would be hard for these processes of transference and countertransference, which are so essential, that is, transference as the relation of the client toward the therapist and countertransference, let's say, if a therapist feels some kind of uncomfortable feelings, then we can examine where does this comes from, and it is an important source of information. Especially transference, what is actually going on in this therapeutic alliance, and this is not possible with the presence of a translator, so I think ... I do not know for cases where therapy work would be possible in the translator's presence. (Interviewee P15)

While this therapist acknowledged that she did not have any experience with language assistance in the psychotherapy sessions and that she did not believe that

therapeutic alliance is possible in a triadic relationship, she did feel that language assistance can fulfill an essential role in the field of psychosocial support and counseling, pointing out that with asylum seekers, the most important thing is often that they are being heard and that they have somebody to talk to. In general, a kind of a priori refusal of language assistance is common among therapists in Slovenia who believe that an adjustment to therapeutic alliance is not really possible and that *“the third person is really too much”* (Interviewee P3). Despite this, as highlighted in the above quote, few still felt that in some instances, language assistance providers can do valuable work or that sometimes there simply is not any other possibility:

But if there is no other way, I would still use this opportunity if this is the only way to help somebody, although this means a different way of working. In any case, I would need to vet the interpreter, to see how I feel ... This is additional work, but I think it is necessary not to judge or evaluate him ... [...] Also, the client and the interpreter need to get to know each other, and that the client is OK with this, and we would probably need additional hours just to get to know each other and to ensure safety. But OK. (Interviewee P13)

Those study participants who had prior experiences working with language assistance providers also described how they established some ground rules for the session and were careful to keep the attention on the client despite difficulties:

Usually, we were sitting in a circle, and at the first meeting, we had a discussion about how the session would look so that we would not jump into each other sentences. I have always emphasized that in case of any uncomfortable feelings (the client) can always stop, we are not in a hurry ... [...] I have talked directly to the client, always to the client, and it was funny to see how a situation happened when a client was responding to the translator, and you could see how it is lost (therapeutic alliance), it gets lost, but we got back on. I have said, you see what happens ... (Interviewee P5)

One intercultural mediator commented that she has learned how to act in such situations in the interpreting courses: “I was making sure that I am not in the center of attention. So, whenever the person is looking at me, I look to the psychologist. They (the client and the therapist) were having eye contact throughout.” (Interviewee P9) In this sense, therapists mentioned the need to educate language assistance providers to work in therapy sessions. Still, only one intercultural mediator mentioned the need to educate therapists and other medical staff to work with non-Slovenian-speaking clients. Another intercultural mediator mentioned the clients’ expectations of her, for example, to vocalize their needs or to decide on their health-related procedures. Furthermore, while respondents commented on the identity of the language assistance provider as bearing some importance for the session—“the interpreter cannot be just anybody” (Interviewee P13)—only one

spoke of the emotional toll of interpreting: “Because for him (the interpreter), this is very, very hard, because his inner world reacts to that, this is not translating some literal text, what the client shares, also touches the translator, this is inevitable. [...] I have asked him, the translator, will he manage? [...] Can he keep a line between his inner world and the words he hears ...?” (Interviewee P5)

DISCUSSION

The study’s analysis highlighted that only a few participants had prior experience with language assistance in psychotherapy or psychosocial support sessions. Within the sample, the practitioners, both those with experiences of working with language assistance providers, or “translators” as they often called them, and those without, felt that the presence of a language assistance provider negatively affects the sessions, especially the trust relationships and the therapeutic alliance (see also Gostič, 2024). Although the interviewees acknowledged that the language assistance provider is more than just a conduit between the client and the practitioner, thus implicitly subscribing to the interactionist model of language assistance (Wadensjö, 2013), the desired state was still one of impartial and neutral provider that would allow for traditional dyadic relationship thus treating it as an “unfortunate necessity” (Miller et al., 2005) to be used only in unavoidable circumstances.

These attitudes toward language assistance are not surprising or unique; most studies among mental health practitioners highlight the reluctance or ambivalence regarding its inclusion in psychotherapy (Miller et al., 2005; Paone & Malott, 2008; Hanft-Robert et al., 2023). At the same time, some studies suggest (Kline et al., 1980; Hanft-Robert et al., 2023) that clients evaluate the presence of the language assistance providers much more positively than psychotherapists and even feel that they act as “a bridge establishing contact between me [the client] and the therapist” (Hanft-Robert et al., 2022, p. 193). The research by Saskia Hanft-Robert and colleagues highlighted that all—practitioners, language providers, and clients—require a period of acclimatization in the triadic type of sessions. While language assistance providers are seen as necessary at the beginning of the sessions due to language barriers, they are also perceived as disruptive to establishing trust between practitioners and clients (Hanft-Robert et al., 2022). However, well-functioning triadic relationships are dynamic, depending on the therapeutic stage and content (Hanft-Robert et al., 2023, p. 9). In time, the language assistance provider will no longer be perceived as disruptive. Future research should, therefore, focus also on how language assistance is received among mental healthcare clients who are non-Slovenian speakers in Slovenia and whether its use may improve access to psychotherapy and psychosocial support and satisfaction with the sessions and practitioners.

Interviewees who have worked with “translators” in the past also conveyed different experiences depending on the level of professionalism and neutrality. As

we have seen, the training of community interpreters or intercultural mediators in Slovenia is in a nascent state, while the training of specialized medical interpreters is non-existent. As already mentioned (Kocjančič Pokorn, 2019), the second most common mode of dealing with language barriers in Slovenia, after the use of *lingua franca*, is the use of *ad hoc* interpreters (i.e., non-professional interpreters), who often lack interpreting and mediating skills, especially in a demanding and particular setting such as mental healthcare. However, even professionalized interpreters (in the case of Slovenia, most often court-appointed interpreters), community interpreters, or intercultural mediators may not possess the skills needed to integrate into the triadic therapeutic alliance. The interviewees, therefore, emphasized the need for further professionalization of language assistance providers, which should lead to systemic changes at the level of a) implementation of language assistance in mental care and b) additional training of language assistance providers to work in psychotherapy. With regards to the first, the implementation would entail the state/insurance providers shouldering the financial burden and prioritizing continuous work with a particular language assistance provider throughout the sessions with the same client. The second point would mean to have mental care practitioners included in trainings for community interpreters and intercultural mediators, both as instructors of the particularities of psychological, psychiatric, and psychotherapeutic care but also as trainees of working in therapeutic triads instead of dyads. This last aspect is often overlooked in the process of language assistance professionalization in medical settings—the training of health care practitioners to work with language assistance providers is crucial for overcoming language and cultural barriers and improving care for migrants.¹¹ Such collaborative work between mental care practitioners and language assistance providers has been suggested earlier by Miller et al. (2005) and Paone & Malott (2008), who also emphasize the importance of joint and regular debriefing sessions between the practitioners and language assistance providers that would benefit the client and lead to further professionalization. As therapeutic approaches for specific vulnerable groups such as forcibly displaced people may go beyond “traditional psychotherapy” (Gostič, 2024), language assistance providers should work closely with practitioners to explore which are the most suitable methods for therapeutic triads. In the current circumstances of the public healthcare system crisis, the need for the reform of mental care in Slovenia, and the difficulties in finding possibilities for the continuous training of language assistance providers in Slovenian healthcare, the described measures seem almost unattainable. Despite this, the discussions about the system’s reforms to enable better care for users must include the measures of including individuals who face intersecting

11 NIJZ recognized the need for training practitioners to work with intercultural mediators and interpreters in providing interculturally sensitive care. Starting in 2016, the three-day training program “Developing cultural competences of healthcare workers” was part of the already mentioned program “Skupaj za zdravje” and the project MoST.

vulnerabilities, including language barriers, if we are to speak about a professionalized system that is able to respond to the needs of current societies.

CONCLUSION

The article aimed to highlight the characteristics of language assistance in mental care by first addressing the characteristics of interpreter-mediated mental care and then presenting and analyzing the findings of the study conducted among mental care practitioners and intercultural mediators in Slovenia. The study, the first on the subject in the context of Slovenia, reveals attitudes consistent with findings in other settings in Europe (Cambridge et al., 2020; Hanft-Robert et al., 2022) or in other parts of the world (Miller et al., 2005; Hunt & Swartz, 2017). The findings also point to relatively rare experiences of working with language assistance providers, given the frequent encounters with non-Slovenian speakers in Slovenian healthcare. This may be the result of other coping strategies—psychotherapy with a bilingual therapist or psychotherapy conducted in a “bridge language.” Despite other strategies, language assistance remains the only option in cases where the other two options do not exist. In these cases, one hopes the professional language assistance providers, ideally specialized in mental care, will find their way into the Slovenian healthcare system and that practitioners will explore the alternatives to traditional dyadic relationships and not, as mentioned by the therapist at the beginning of this article, throw the language assistance provider out of the room as fast as possible.

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POVZETEK

EDEN PREVEČ? JEZIKOVNO POSREDOVANJE V OBRAVNAVAH DUŠEVNEGA ZDRAVJA V SLOVENIJI

Martina Bofulin

Namen članka je izpostaviti vlogo jezikovnega posredovanja pri storitvah na področju duševnega zdravja. Avtorica najprej predstavi značilnosti psihoterapevtske obravnave z vključenim jezikovnim posrednikom (tolmačem, skupnostnim tolmačem ali medkulturnim mediatorjem), nato pa predstavi in analizira ugotovitve raziskave, izvedene med psihoterapevti, izvajalci psihosocialne pomoči in medkulturnimi mediatorji v Sloveniji. Raziskava, ki je prva na to temo v kontekstu Slovenije, razkriva stališča, ki so skladna z ugotovitvami v drugih okoljih v Evropi (Cambridge et al., 2020; Hanft-Robert et al., 2022) in v drugih delih sveta (Miller et al., 2005; Hunt & Swartz, 2017). Intervjuvani izvajalci, tako tisti z izkušnjami pri delu z jezikovnimi posredniki kot tisti brez njih, menijo, da prisotnost jezikovnega posrednika negativno vpliva na psihoterapevtsko obravnavo, zlasti na odnose zaupanja in transferja. Intervjuvanci so sicer prepoznavali, da je jezikovni posrednik več kot le posrednik med klientom in izvajalcem. Hkrati pa so še vedno preferirali nepristranskega in nevtralnega posrednika, ki bi omogočil tradicionalni diadni odnos. Jezikovni posrednik je tako viden kot »neprijetna nujnost« (Miller et al., 2005), ki je uporabljena le, ko je to neizogibno. Intervjuvanci so poudarili potrebo po nadaljnji profesionalizaciji jezikovnega posredovanja, vendar je le eden omenil tudi potrebo po izobraževanju izvajalcev. Zdi se, da bi bilo treba za učinkovito profesionalizacijo psihoterapije z jezikovnim posrednikom vključiti izobraževanje tako jezikovnih posrednikov kot izvajalcev, ki bi bili deležni posebnega usposabljanja za kolaborativno delo, kot predlagajo Miller in soavtorji (Miller et al., 2005), hkrati pa bi se redno udeleževali skupnih poročanj (Paone & Malott, 2008). Ugotovitve kažejo tudi, da imajo intervjuvanci razmeroma redke izkušnje dela z jezikovnimi posredniki glede na pogosta srečanja z neslovenskimi govorniki v slovenskem zdravstvu (Kocjančič Pokorn & Lipovec Čebren, 2019). To je lahko posledica drugih strategij premoščanja jezikovnih ovir – psihoterapije z dvojezičnim terapevtom ali psihoterapije, ki poteka v *lingua franca* (npr. v angleščini ali ruščini). Kljub drugim strategijam ostaja psihoterapija z jezikovnim posrednikom edini izhod v primerih, ko omenjenih dveh možnosti ni. Upati je, da bodo v teh primerih izkušeni in visoko usposobljeni jezikovni posredniki (skupnostni tolmači, medkulturni mediatorji ali še neobstoječi medicinski tolmači), specializirani za storitve na področju duševnega zdravja, našli pot v slovenski sistem duševnega zdravja in da bodo izvajalci odprti do raziskovanj alternativ tradicionalnim diadnim odnosom v psihoterapiji in psihosocialni pomoči.

MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT FOR FORCIBLY DISPLACED PEOPLE: INSIGHTS FROM SLOVENIA

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ABSTRACT

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support for Forcibly Displaced People: Insights From Slovenia

The article explores the current state of mental health and psychosocial support for forcibly displaced people residing in Slovenia, as they are a marginalized group of special concern and need of support in an intercultural setting. The study collected information through semi-structured interviews with fifteen experts working with forcibly displaced people. The findings encompass specifics, current problems, and what needs to be improved in the field, providing examples of good practices. They underscore the significance of empowerment in an intercultural context and reveal potential challenges linked to state disinterest and inadequate financial support for required services.

KEYWORDS: mental health, psychosocial support, forced displacement, language, intercultural mediation

IZVLEČEK

Duševno zdravje in psihosocialna podpora prisilno razseljenim osebam: Izkušnje iz Slovenije

Avtorica v članku preučuje trenutno stanje na področju duševnega zdravja in psihosocialne podpore prisilno razseljenim osebam, ki prebivajo v Sloveniji. Prisilno razseljene osebe predstavljajo marginalizirano skupino, ki potrebuje posebno pozornost in podporo v medkulturnem okolju. V študiji je zbrala informacije s pomočjo polstrukturiranih intervjujev s petnajstimi strokovnjakinjami, ki delajo s prisilno razseljenimi osebami. Ugotovitve zajemajo posebnosti, aktualne probleme in možne izboljšave na tem področju, pri čemer so navedeni tudi primeri dobrih praks. Izpostavljajo pomen opolnomočenja v medkulturnem kontekstu in razkrivajo potencialne izzive, povezane z nezainteresiranostjo države in neustrezno finančno podporo za potrebne storitve.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: duševno zdravje, psihosocialna podpora, prisilna razselitev, jezik, medkulturna mediacija

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INTRODUCTION

During 2015, Europe and the European Union (EU) faced an exceptional situation characterized by the establishment of humanitarian corridors and the management of migration flows that ensued. This period marked a notable influx of forcibly displaced migrants seeking asylum, particularly from politically unstable countries like Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq. They arrived via routes through Turkey and Greece or Libya and Italy (OECD, 2015). Forced displacement refers to the involuntary movement of people from their homes due to persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations (UNHCR, 2023), excluding those displaced due to environmental factors like droughts or storms.

As of the end of 2022, there were 108.4 million forcibly displaced individuals worldwide, encompassing refugees, asylum-seekers, people in need of international protection, stateless individuals, and internally displaced people (UNHCR, 2023). Historical immigration to Slovenia has largely originated from countries of the former Yugoslavia, notably Bosnia and Herzegovina, and contemporary migration continues primarily from these countries, often as labor migration. This trend is complemented by an increasing number of refugees from diverse backgrounds, including Ukraine, Russia, Burundi, Syria, Afghanistan, Palestine, Venezuela, Cuba, and Gambia (UOIM, 2023a). At the same time, new asylum seekers primarily come from Morocco, Algeria, Pakistan, India, Russia, Afghanistan, Cuba, Ukraine, Tunisia, Bangladesh, and Turkey (UOIM, 2023b).

Forcibly displaced people encounter numerous risks during their journey, including violence and persecution in their home countries, perilous travel, family separation, and disrupted social networks. Many individuals categorized as “people on the move”¹ have been exposed to persecution and discrimination on various grounds, as well as physical, sexual, and psychological violence. In their travels or during their stay in refugee camps, they may have experienced life-threatening dangers, violent pushbacks,² and deprivation (Border Violence Monitoring Network, 2022). These challenges increase the risk of mental health difficulties such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, and psychosis (Miller & Rasmussen, 2017; Porter & Haslam, 2005; Satinsky et al., 2019; Steel et al., 2009). A meta-analysis (Lindert et al., 2009) showed higher rates of depression and anxiety among refugees compared to economic migrants. However, cultural factors may influence how these symptoms are perceived, and mental health difficulties can be manifested differently in Western and non-Western countries (see Ahmad & Koncsol, 2022) young, and highly religious population. Mental health literacy and care in

1 “The goal is to expand on the definition of refugees by considering the impact of, among others, climate change, economic and social inequalities, political conflicts, terrorism, colonial legacies and organised crime” (Border Violence Monitoring Network, 2022, p. 11).

2 “Pushbacks are the informal cross-border expulsion (without due process) of individuals or groups to another country” (Border Violence Monitoring Network, 2022, p. 11).

Pakistan do not meet the population's needs, and mental health stigma (MHS). These symptoms may be mistaken for natural expressions of sadness or loss, and the use of Western mental health diagnostic tools may not be appropriate (Hillel, 2023). Accessibility to adequate mental health care also varies, with fewer individuals in non-Western countries receiving treatment (Bedi, 2018).

Psychosocial support aims to create a safe environment to meet basic human needs, like love and belonging (Maslow, 1943). Mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS) encompass interventions to enhance mental health and psychosocial well-being, taking into account various factors (Tol et al., 2011). The use of the term "psychosocial" is based on the idea that a combination of factors (e.g., biological, emotional, material) is responsible for the psychosocial well-being of people and that these aspects of experience cannot necessarily be separated from one another. Taking the intercultural aspect into account, "culture" refers to shared meanings within specific groups, including ethnic, age, and sexual identity (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). Despite the elevated risk of poor psychosocial well-being in forcibly displaced individuals, there is still a lack of clarity regarding the effectiveness of common psychosocial support interventions. Culturally sensitive approaches are needed to assess and treat mental health issues in humanitarian emergencies, potentially involving intercultural mediators (Verrept, 2019).

International organizations like WHO, UNICEF, and Save the Children have emphasized psychosocial issues in humanitarian emergencies (Williamson & Robinson, 2006). Creative arts-based interventions, individual and group therapies, and community support have shown effectiveness in addressing mental health issues in displaced populations, including depression, anxiety, and PTSD. Verbal processing therapies, whether delivered individually or in a group setting, have been effective in reducing anger (Barrett et al., 2003) and treating traumatic grief (Kalantari et al., 2012). Additionally, creative arts-based interventions have been successful in promoting well-being (Ager et al., 2011) and addressing emotional or relational problems (Rousseau et al., 2009). However, it is important to note that the quality and effectiveness of psychosocial support interventions can vary based on the study design. A study by Nguyen et al. (2023) analyzed evaluations of psychosocial support interventions for forcibly displaced populations and found that over half of the reports (55%) used a single-group study design. Reports with single-group designs were more likely to report positive findings. Conversely, studies that incorporated comparison conditions were less likely to report positive outcomes, suggesting that field-driven program evaluations, particularly those dominated by single-group designs, may contain a significant risk of bias. Another review by Tol et al. (2011) examined 160 reports of MHPSS activities from 2007 to 2010. They identified five commonly reported activities, including basic counseling for individuals, facilitating community support for vulnerable individuals, providing child-friendly spaces, supporting community-initiated social support, and offering basic counseling for groups and

families. Notably, many of these interventions occurred and were funded outside of national mental health and protection systems.

In Slovenia, NGOs such as Slovene Philanthropy, Odnos, Emma Institute, ADRA Slovenia, and Karitas, along with volunteers, primarily address the needs of “people on the move.” Access to MHPSS services for forcibly displaced individuals is available through a psychiatrist in the Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants, as well as a dedicated group of voluntary mental health professionals (psychotherapists) working pro bono under the Slovene Umbrella Association for Psychotherapy (SKZP). However, research on MHPSS for forcibly displaced people in Slovenia is limited. While notable figures like child psychiatrist Anica Mikuš Kos have written extensively on community-based interventions to promote the psychosocial well-being of children affected by war and terrorism (Mikuš Kos, 2015; Mikuš Kos 2016a; Mikuš Kos 2016b; Mikuš Kos et al., 2017), there has been a scarcity of inquiry into the mental health aspects of forced displacement. Prominent studies, like the one conducted by Slodnjak et al. (2002) stress, loss, and bereavement is well known. It was expected that Bosnian refugee adolescents who had fled from war zones to Slovenia would develop higher levels of depression than their Slovenian peers without war traumatic experiences. Two years after the beginning of the war in Bosnia, 265 8th-grade refugee students aged 14 to 15 years were assessed with the Children’s Depression Inventory (CDI, compared Bosnian refugee adolescents who had fled war zones to their Slovenian peers without war-related traumatic experiences. This limited research underscores a gap between the needs of displaced individuals and the legislative framework.

Taking a decolonizing perspective, it is essential to recognize that Western-developed mental health practices like counseling and psychotherapy were designed to address issues prevalent in Western societies, aligning with Western worldviews. These practices are now rapidly exported to other cultures, highlighting the need for a more critical approach.

Ethnopsychiatry, also known as cross-cultural or cultural psychiatry, delves into the role of culture in mental health, an often controversial subject in psychiatric research. In the preface of the English edition of *Ethnopsychiatry* by Ellenberger (2020) who would go on to publish *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic psychiatry* in 1970. Fifty years later they are presented for the first time in English translation, introduced by historian of science Emmanuel Delille. Ethnopsychiatry explores one of the most controversial subjects in psychiatric research: the role of culture in mental health. In his articles Ellenberger addressed the complex clinical and theoretical problems of cultural specificity in mental illness, collective psychoses, differentiations within cultural groups, and biocultural interactions. He was especially attuned to the correlations between rapid cultural transformations in postwar society, urbanization, and the frequency of mental illness. Ellenberger drew from a vast and varied primary and secondary literature in several languages, as well as from his own findings in clinical practice, which included work

with indigenous peoples. In analyzing Ellenberger's contributions Delille unveils the transnational and interdisciplinary origins of transcultural psychiatry, which grew out of knowledge networks that crisscrossed the globe. The book has a rich selection of appendices, including Ellenberger's lecture notes on a case of peyote addiction and his correspondence with anthropologist and psychoanalyst Georges Devereux. These original essays, and their masterful contextualization, provide a compelling introduction to the foundations of transcultural psychiatry and one of its most distinguished and prolific researchers. Henri Ellenberger (1905–1993), it is noted that exiled psychiatrists, often therapists who fled Nazi Germany or the Cold War, found opportunities in North America to pursue their intellectual ambitions. They frequently treated North American patients, including Native Americans, thus reversing roles as foreigners becoming healers. Keeping this in mind, it is crucial to acknowledge the distinction between psychotherapy and psychosocial supportive treatment when working with forcibly displaced individuals. Psychotherapy often involves delving into traumatic past experiences, which may not be suitable when a person is still experiencing survival stress and lacks a sense of safety (Podolan & Gelo, 2023). However, it may be a part of MHPSS interventions when appropriate (e.g., when a client expresses the need, and the practitioner evaluates that they are in a stable state of life and emotions).

Recognizing the significance of MHPSS and the gaps in the evaluation process itself, the purpose of this study was to identify some of the key points in working with forcibly displaced people from the viewpoint of experts in the field and illuminate systemic areas that could benefit from suggested changes. The research questions were: 1) What are the specifics of working with forcibly displaced people? 2) What are the current problems in mental health care for forcibly displaced people? and 3) What could be improved in the system of mental health care for forcibly displaced people?

METHOD

Participants

The study collected information from fifteen experts. Participants were female and came from diverse cultural backgrounds. Their occupations fall in the cross-section of mental health care and providing support to migrants, as seen in Table 1. The participants were psychologists, psychotherapists in training, and intercultural mediators working with migrants in Slovenia. Most of them have been working in the field for years. Their countries of origin were Slovenia, Kosovo, Ukraine, Jordan, Turkey, and Russia.

Code	Date of the interview	Gender	Occupation
P1	30 Mar 2022	f	Nurse, Intercultural mediator
P2	5 Apr 2022	f	Intercultural mediator
P3	12 May 2022	f	Psychologist, Psychotherapist in training
P4	24 Nov 2022	f	Psychotherapist in training
P5	1 Dec 2022	f	Psychotherapist in training
P6	2 Feb 2023	f	Psychologist, Psychotherapist in training
P7	16 Feb 2023	f	Psychologist, PhD
P8	17 Feb 2023	f	Legal counselor
P9	7 Mar 2023	f	Intercultural mediator
P10	7 Mar 2023	f	Intercultural mediator
P11	5 Apr 2023	f	Teacher, Psychotherapist in training
P12	8 Apr 2023	f	Psychologist, Doula
P13	12 Apr 2023	f	Sociologist, Psychologist in training, NGO worker
P14	28 Jun 2023	f	Psychotherapist
P15	8 Jul 2023	f	NGO worker

Table 1: Main characteristics of the interviewees (source: composed by the author).

Instruments

We used a semi-structured interview with questions on experiences in the field of mental health and migration. The majority of the interviews were carried out in the Slovenian language; one included a translator, and another was carried out in English. We covered topics closely tied to the research questions, focusing on the specifics, the current problems, and what could be improved in the system of mental health care for forcibly displaced people in Slovenia.

Procedure

Three researchers conducted interviews from March 30, 2022, to July 8, 2023, either in person or via Zoom, ensuring informed consent and confidentiality. The data is stored securely on a PC in an anonymous form.

Using content analysis within an interpretative paradigm, we coded information on mental health and forcibly displaced people, focusing on context and variations. The analysis followed four stages: decontextualization, recontextualization, categorization, and compilation (Bengtsson, 2016). Once the main categories and subcategories were established in relation to the research questions, the analysis and writing process began.

Considering my personal subjectivity as a psychologist and psychotherapist in training, I acknowledge potential bias in working with qualitative data. To enhance transparency, we discussed results with colleagues from various professional backgrounds, such as anthropology and sociology, and adjusted as needed. The results and discussion sections are based on participants' responses and provide thematic insights into the experiences of professionals working with forcibly displaced people. Literal quotations from interviews are used anonymously, with participants represented by codes (e.g., P6, P meaning "participant" and 6 their consequent number of participation in the study).

RESULTS WITH DISCUSSION

Drawing from the anthropological foundations of cultural psychology, which explores cultural conceptions of self, other, and psychopathology (see Kitayama & Cohen, 2007), we will discuss three main topics regarding mental health care for forcibly displaced individuals: specifics, current challenges, and potential improvements. Subcategories are detailed in Table 2.

	Specifics	Current problems	What to improve
1	Structure of the sessions	Misdiagnosing and stigma	Facilitate access to the labor market
2	Openly speaking about differences in cultural traditions, unwritten rules of conduct	Dispersion of services	Interdisciplinary team in mobile units
3	Language and working with a translator or a cultural mediator	Lack of funding	Focused integration support
4	A need for professionals to take care of themselves		

Table 2: Main categories with subcategories (source: composed by the author).

Specifics of psychosocial support for forcibly displaced persons

As we have mentioned in the introduction, the distinction between psychotherapy and psychosocial supportive treatment is crucial when working with forcibly displaced individuals. Psychotherapy frequently entails exploring traumatic experiences, but this approach may not be appropriate for individuals still coping with survival stress and lacking a sense of safety (Podolan & Gelo, 2023) the role of safety in psychotherapy has not yet been thoroughly examined. In this article, we identify

and integrate the different functions of safety in psychotherapy on a theoretical basis. Method: We made a panoramic overview of the concept of safety across some of the main psychotherapeutic schools that represent major paradigms in contemporary psychotherapy (psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioral, humanistic. Participants in the study shared examples highlighting this challenge:

It seems that they have the most problems when they start to improve their independence, especially in terms of financial stability. They want to take care of themselves and their family, and when they fail to do so, I see that they also have a certain helplessness, irritability, and sometimes distrust of the system. I also notice mourning for their former country, for their former life, for memories that are fading, and perhaps also for their former social status, which now they don't have. [...] Some even admit that it was easier for them in war conflicts and situations when they did not know if they would survive than here. P15

Forcibly displaced people, due to their experiences of violence, both in their home countries and the host country, are at high risk for mental health difficulties (Miller & Rasmussen, 2017; Porter & Haslam, 2005; Satinsky et al., 2019; Steel et al., 2009). Several specific subcategories emerged during the analysis: 1) Structure of the sessions; 2) Openly speaking about differences in cultural traditions and unwritten rules of conduct; 3) Language and working with a translator or a cultural mediator; and 4) A need for professionals to take care of themselves.

Structure of the sessions

Addressing the stigma associated with seeking professional help (Schnyder et al., 2017), participants emphasized the importance of openly discussing expectations with clients. This helps uncover their beliefs, hopes, and fears about the process. Additionally, it is vital to clarify the misconceptions about psychotherapy, such as those often portrayed in movies. Psychoeducational approaches emphasizing reflection play a significant role in the process. Once starting the process, professionals need to highlight their own way of working with clients, the boundaries, the structure of sessions, and establishing a mutual agreement about the process:

I have experienced many times in this work that they definitely see us as an authority in the sense of the country where they came from, and now this country limits them, and there's different responses. I think they also have different demands tied to us. So, this also needs to be communicated very carefully before we get into this relationship. I'm not representing the country; I'm representing myself. We're two on the same level. I'm not the one who's going to decide on something or take care of something instead of them. P5

The experts from the field commonly use the psychoeducational approach as it is considered one of the strongest interventions for promoting the psychosocial well-being and/or empowerment of immigrant women (Silva & Pereira, 2023) based on the PRISMA 2020 guidelines, aims to present a current overview of interventions aimed at promoting the psychosocial well-being and/or empowerment (PWE, where they explain how and why they take a moment for reflection and this helps the client not to take it on themselves:

I told them in advance that I would think about what was said for a bit, that I might briefly stop then, but that does not mean that I am interrupting the conversation, but just that I am collecting my thoughts. This seemed very important to me because sometimes, on the other side, they also say, "Aha, now I would also like to think about how I should formulate something." And I give them space. It seems to me that this is also one part of the process—to stop and think before we say something and this is also a part of psychoeducation, if not more. P14

The majority of psychotherapists in the sample only practiced in-person individual therapy with refugees or asylum seekers. The reasons why online therapy does not provide a sufficient substitute are many in their opinion: some clients do not have an environment where they can confidentially speak for a whole hour without being afraid someone might hear or interrupt them (e.g., a small apartment with children or other people), some of them do not have the necessary equipment (e.g., do not have a phone, computer, or mobile data access) and others simply do not trust the internet, especially those coming from countries where spying might have grave consequences.

Additionally, the participants exposed the importance of in-person human contact, eye contact, and appropriate human touch, such as a handshake. It may represent basic respect and recognition of another human being; as Erskine describes, it is one of the core concepts in relational integrative psychotherapy (Erskine et al., 2023). These theories and methods assist practitioners in understanding human beings, normalizing the functions of psychological processes, and illuminating the power of healing through relationships.

With this group of people, I do not work online. Everyone needs to meet someone live. One doesn't even have a phone, but they love to come. Once you make contact, they really love to come. When they come, I give them a handshake, and when they leave, I shake their hand again. P4

Moreover, there is a need for group therapy, in their opinion, as it provides a safe space for social healing to occur. Human beings are social animals, thriving in groups and forming our identity around our core groups' values and norms (Yalom, 1980). With the current war in Ukraine, some therapists are forming pro bono groups of

people having experienced great loss and tragedy, fleeing from a similar geographical environment at the same time for a common reason. Something is unifying in this, as they are the only ones who can truly understand each other in this experience and offer each other empathic support, as the participants of the study point out. Group therapy proves to be of great use in similar settings (Yalom & Leszcz, 2020) and can provide support to more people versus treating each person individually.

The psychotherapists in training also mentioned that they commonly have an informational or organizational role, directly suggesting which NGO is responsible for which area in question to provide the contact and counsel where to turn for specific help. It is an important aspect of psychosocial support as it encourages and empowers the client to take the necessary steps toward the set goal.

Openly speaking about differences in cultural traditions, unwritten rules of conduct

Working in intercultural settings requires self-reflection on the part of professionals (see Schouler-Ocak & Kastrup, 2020). They need to be aware of their internal dynamics and address intercultural differences that influence thoughts, feelings, and behavior. Exploring unwritten rules of conduct, open communication, and non-verbal cues is also critical to ensure that clients understand the matter at hand.

Of course, it is very important that we pay attention to our internal dynamics because there are such matters that can be related to politics, religion, or the color of our skin. Suddenly, a mountain of prejudices appears in us, which we all thought we didn't have, right? Usually, we're all convinced we don't have them, but within this process, many things speak to you. P5

Having this dynamic in mind, professionals find appropriate ways to address the intercultural differences that influence our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and behavior. Especially engaging are the unwritten rules or norms of behavior, e.g., who enters the room first, how to greet each other—with a nod, handshake, hug, or even kiss on the cheek? This exploration also targets areas where participants recognize additional attention: last-minute cancellations or being late, bringing gifts, and calling the personal phone number outside the sessions. The professional's role is to illuminate the unwritten norms of conduct in a psychotherapeutic setting in Slovenia, e.g., why being on time is important, what might be the consequences of being late, why bringing gifts is usually not recommended in psychotherapeutic settings in regard to coercion and why personal boundaries (such as not phoning after 4 PM except for emergency cases) apply. Having a professional skilled in open communication toward exploring these hidden aspects might help support the client in finding their way in a new society, understanding the underlying expectations or unwritten rules of conduct slightly better.

They [the Albanian-speaking community] don't realize this—that you have to make an appointment, that you have to wait for the appointment, that you have to come on time for the appointment or a minute earlier; that you have to wait, not that they [medical staff] are waiting for you and they don't realize it, because there are no appointments down there [in Kosovo] and then the contact breaks because you're late, because it happens that they sometimes come without a health card and on top of it all the doctor is in a bad mood. P1

With this in mind, paying attention to non-verbal communication plays an important role in the sessions. Noticing signs of confusion or misunderstanding, the professional might openly ask if they understood what was said. Sometimes—especially in some of the more controlled societies with a significant level of government oversight and regulation of various aspects of public and private life, e.g., contemporary Iran—the people are afraid to ask for clarification, and they nod to avoid any possible complications. One of the guidelines for professionals working in Slovenia is most certainly making sure their clients understand the matter at hand. *“Could you repeat what was just said?”* is one of the suitable techniques of clarification that respondents of the study used to make sure their clients truly understood what was said.

Language and working with a translator or a cultural mediator

Multiculturalism, diversity, and cultural competency are vital topics for mental health professionals (Sue et al., 2009). Professionals need to navigate the complexities of working with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds where language plays a crucial role. Some individuals prefer to communicate in their first language. In contrast, others may choose to use English for comfort or due to personal triggers associated with specific words in their first language.

Working with a translator or cultural mediator can be valuable, but it also presents challenges. The dynamic between the translator, the professional, and the client can be influenced by their prior relationship, and there is a risk of information loss in translation:

[...] we talk directly with clients. I had experience with a translator, but it didn't work for me somehow. I didn't manage to establish contact with the client until we realized that we speak a common language, which is not English or Slovenian. It's just, I mean, really a change. When the translator left the room, there was instantly greater confidentiality and a certain focus on me—before he was focused on the translator. P4

Combining work with other techniques, such as art therapy, proves to be useful in multicultural contexts as it facilitates the efforts of therapists to explore their identity as cultural beings and to provide a context for culturally sensitive considerations when using art therapy interventions (Boston, 2015). The therapists who participated

in the study concluded that they prefer working one-on-one. When language is a barrier, they rely on non-verbal communication and art therapy techniques.

Furthermore, individuals who had experience with language assistance expressed negative attitudes, viewing the presence of language assistance providers as an obstacle to developing a productive client-practitioner relationship, which in turn led to challenges in delivering appropriate care (Bofulin, 2024). Effective collaboration with translators or cultural mediators involves choosing appropriate settings and establishing ground rules to ensure effective communication (e.g., the translator and the client not being in a friendly relationship).

A need for professionals to take care of themselves

Working with vulnerable groups inherently makes professionals vulnerable as well. Greinacher et al. (2019) conducted a systematic review of the prevalence rates of *secondary traumatization* in first responders. They concluded that terms such as secondary traumatic stress, vicarious traumatization, and compassion fatigue all fall under the category of secondary traumatization, which is often associated with symptoms of PTSD. Compassion fatigue has been described as the empathic strain and general exhaustion resulting from dealing with people in distress over time (Figley, 1995). It is especially prevalent in those who may be overexposed to others' emotional needs in a supportive role (healthcare workers, nurses, etc.):

Well, whenever a user comes, yes, you resonate. It's not like when you come to work and then go home, you forget. Because they tell you things, and that triggers some feelings related to your husband or family in [country of origin]. P13

The participants of the study reported experiencing symptoms of burnout at least once during working with forcibly displaced people. One of the experts shared her story of burnout:

When I faced the problem of burnout, I worked from morning to night and also closed my private practice for that time [...] I was completely exhausted. I wanted to work, but I had health problems, and I was in the hospital as well. P11

Later on, she shared her opinion on the importance of psychoeducation for professionals, as some are not aware they are experiencing symptoms of difficulties in mental health. Self-reflection and psychoeducation for professionals are essential to recognize and address these symptoms. Professionals sometimes adopt the role of a "rescuer," as described in Karpman's drama triangle (Karpman, 1968). However, it is crucial to empower clients rather than strip them of their ability to take ownership of their lives. One of the experts shared her view on this phenomenon that she ascribes to the role of authority in working with vulnerable groups:

[...] somehow you feel as if you are a savior to that person, in their eyes, and as if now it will depend on you how they will decide [...] Sometimes I really feel like I'm being worshipped, I mean, I know it sounds a little funny, but really, they would do anything for me if I wanted to take advantage of it, and there's a certain power that comes with that, but it's important for me to be the kind of person who knows how to understand this, and to establish a normal distance and somehow tell them that for me they are the ones I admire, for me they are just wow [...] I think it's important to have some healthy boundaries. For example, when we go to court hearings together, I'm not their advocate right away, but I am, first of all, just an intercultural mediator. P10

In contrast to the previous quote, whoever works from a position of “rescuing” their clients is stripping them of their ability to be empowered. Interestingly, empowerment is a key aspect of any mental health treatment. Another expert elaborates on the concept of giving people ownership over their own lives that she adopts in her work:

In practice, it's all about just giving ownership to people over the needs assessment of transparent communication. So, I work as a mediator, not as a trainer. I don't give myself the ownership, like, the authority to teach anyone anything or to decide for anyone anything. I just create inclusive environments where I facilitate. [...] So instead of bringing the concept of hierarchical concepts of experts or expertise, it's more toward community building and peer-to-peer learning through community approaches. P9

Assuming the rescuer role brings about a dangerous belief, *“I know what is good for you—even better than you yourself,”* and can often drive experts to overstep the boundaries of professionalism, e.g., offering goods (clothes, money, food) taken from their own personal lives. Moreover, if a clinician assumes the role of a rescuer, the client's setbacks and successes become theirs as well. The participants of the study reported a wish to offer such goods as seen in activism work, but they were aware of the boundaries of the professional relationship.

People gave their time, also money, and everything, and then these non-governmental organizations said, *“Yes, work for free.”* We are working for free, but they are getting some support, some money, but where is this? Nowhere. P6

Building a sense of community and peer-to-peer learning through community approaches can be more effective than hierarchical expert-client relationships. Continuous supervision, personal therapy, and self-care are essential for professionals working with vulnerable groups to manage challenges and maintain their well-being.

Current problems of psychosocial support for forcibly displaced persons

The lack of clear regulation for psychotherapy and psychosocial support in Slovenia raises ethical concerns when working with vulnerable groups, such as forcibly displaced individuals. There is no independent profession of “psychotherapy” in Slovenia, which can lead to misuse of power or authority. This unregulated environment creates several challenges, including the misdiagnosis of forcibly displaced individuals and the prescription of psychoactive substances (PAS, e.g., pills) as the sole solution. Psychopharmacological treatments target symptoms but may not address the root causes, necessitating the role of psychotherapy in understanding and treating mental health issues. Three subcategories emerged from the data: 1) Misdiagnosing and stigma; 2) Dispersion of services; and 3) Lack of funding.

Misdiagnosing and stigma

One significant problem is the tendency to associate refugee status with PTSD, oversimplifying the complex mental health issues that forcibly displaced people may face (Steel et al., 2002). This oversimplification can lead to stigma and misconceptions about mental health. Stigma remains a challenge, as there is still a certain level of stigma associated with mental health in society. Some individuals break free from this stigma and openly discuss their experiences, while others may experience self-stigma, internalizing societal stereotypes and prejudices.

I noticed that there is a stigma on mental health. Everywhere, in different groups, in different places, I see that there is still, to a certain extent, some stigma on mental health for everyone, but some people are really breaking out of this stigma and talking about it. So, I know two people who want to discuss and talk about it openly; they are taking medications and talking with a wider group. P9

Sociologist Erving Goffman defined the concept of stigma as an “attribute that is deeply discrediting” and reduces the stigmatized person “from a whole and usual person to a tainted discounted one” (Goffman, 1963, p. 3). It can be differentiated into public stigma (labels and stereotypes dominant in society) and self-stigma (the internalization of the public stigma by members of the stigmatized group) (Corrigan, 2004). The problem of stigma is widespread, with varying ways in which it develops in society, which all have implications for MHPSS.

Perceptions of public stigma associated with mental illness can influence the experience of self-stigma, which, in turn, affects help-seeking attitudes and behavior (Vogel et al., 2007). The World Health Organization, WHO (2001) positions stigma as a key barrier to successful treatment engagement, including seeking and sustaining participation in services. A systematic review suggests that a reason for the low utilization of mental health services among forcibly displaced people in host countries

may lie in the stigma associated with having a mental illness and the stigma associated with seeking mental health services (Satinsky et al., 2019). Substantial evidence indicates that mental health-related discrimination has a negative impact on help-seeking behaviors and initial access to mental health care (Clement et al., 2015). Another factor is that stigma and self-stigma influence a person's mental health in many ways (Gärtner et al., 2022). One of the experts elaborates on this topic:

Yes, because maybe people stereotypically think that people with a refugee experience want to live on social support, but that's not the case. We have some cases where everything went to their own disadvantage because they refused social assistance and they immediately found a job without knowing the language, and now they have problems because they work low-paid jobs just so that they wouldn't be on social support, in order somehow to prove themselves to the state or this system, even though it would be easier for them to be on social support for a while, get used to the system, and then start looking for a job. P15

Stigma is socially constructed in relation to many factors (Earnshaw et al., 2022). At a macro level, culture fundamentally shapes stigma processes, given that values and priorities shape the ways and extent to which statuses are stigmatized (Misra et al., 2021). At a micro level, stigma is shaped by social networks, including family, significant others, and school environment, including peers.

When there was a war in Yugoslavia, certain Serbians that are now very anti-Ukraine fled to Slovenia, and children from these families were very against Ukraine. Ukrainian children do not want to go to school because they are being bullied there. It is written on the toilet, for example, "Putin is a force, Putin is winning, Putin will kill you." Such symbols there, well symbols, slogans, they write on the walls, but throughout Slovenia, children are suffering. P8

The experts emphasize the need for public awareness campaigns aimed at preventing stigma rather than intervening after the fact. These campaigns can promote empathy, perspective-taking, and contact between different groups, reducing implicit prejudices and stereotypes. Additionally, programs like these can be implemented in schools to address prejudice and discrimination at an early age (see Gabrielli et al., 2022). Such efforts can help create a more inclusive and accepting society and reduce stigma related to mental health and refugee status (Bellmore et al., 2012).

Dispersion of services

All of the participants highlight the current dispersion of services in the field of working with migrants and asylum seekers:

When I was working, I wasn't in direct contact with the asylum home, and I don't even know if there is a good connection there. I have the feeling that they are not doing a great job; I hear about such bad experiences with them. And the system is not centralized in general. Each does in his own way, especially now when there is this Ukrainian crisis, and in general [...]. P6

Diffusion of responsibility shows a need for a centralized system, where a multidisciplinary team of a medical doctor, a psychologist, a social worker, and a cultural mediator would first assess the initial state of each individual and plan the treatment plan accordingly. One of the participants who works as a cultural mediator identified a lack of personal boundaries, where she adopts many roles, e.g., searching for apartments and health care professionals. On top of it all, it is difficult for them to deny further help, even if it is in the area of personal space, e.g., vouching for someone.

I have to say that my phone number spans from the administrative unit to individuals. They all know me, so I helped with all these statuses, then they communicated with me a lot from the school [...] Otherwise, I'm always available there. I go to health care, and I'm looking for gynecologists, that's where the most problems are, dentists. I was looking for an apartment; I gave my name there as someone who could vouch for them. P2

Lack of funding

Experts from the field, in unison, expose the lack of funding as one of the core challenges of MHPSS for forcibly displaced. An ongoing problem is similar to one identified by Tol et al. (2011)—most interventions take place and are funded outside of national mental health and protection systems. In the case of Slovenia, many of the interventions are carried out by individuals or small groups on a completely pro bono basis, as the governmental bodies do not recognize the need for improvement. Stemming from the statement of the Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants (2023) that supposedly “provides asylum seekers accommodation, support, and psychosocial assistance, and offers integration support to persons granted international protection,” there is a lack of understanding that psychosocial assistance encompasses much more than taking care of one's physiological needs and offering a language course. These are mere necessities for the integration process to begin. In Slovenia, the strategies of integration are sometimes very limiting shares one of the experts:

Well, actually, I think it is definitely connected to these policies that I mentioned before, which are, like, the housing policies, the language exams, currently. I hope it will be changed because it creates a lot of unnecessary pressure on people, which is not, I don't think it makes sense, like, you know, you have to learn the language

and take the exam, or you will lose your social money. I think there are better ways to approach this. P9

What can be done in psychosocial support for forcibly displaced persons

The experts from the field identify good practices and provide concrete propositions. The issues to call upon are: 1) Facilitate access to the labor market; 2) Interdisciplinary team in mobile units; and 3) Focused support.

Facilitate access to the labor market

Up to March 2023, asylum seekers in Slovenia were denied access to the labor market for nine months after applying for asylum.³ In the participant's opinion, this severely impacted their mental health, their motivation, and their hope of creating a future in the host country. Asylum seekers, who, based on the law regulating international protection, have the right to access the labor market, are now able to exercise their right to free access to the Slovenian labor market after three months of asylum seeker status.

Above all, they want to find a job as soon as possible, and that is not available here. For example, it gets complicated when it comes to recognizing education or professional qualifications. Some, for example, shoemakers and blacksmiths, would like to work here. They have all the knowledge, they have all the power, but they can't because the system doesn't allow them. P15

The experts from the field share a similar viewpoint on the importance of facilitating their access to the labor market. They notice a change in the mental state of people who have been waiting for a status and for the ability to work for a long time:

I notice that people really change their mental health, not mental health, but like their psychological well-being really dramatically changes after they find a job. This is something I could see for people who were not employed one year ago and are now employed. It is really a huge difference. P9

Interdisciplinary team in mobile units

The participants recognize the need for interdisciplinary support where professionals from different fields cooperate in forming and adjusting the treatment plan for each individual, e.g., psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, etc. For now, they

3 This regulation did not apply to persons displaced from Ukraine on or after February 24, 2022, as they were granted temporary protection due to the military invasion by the Russian Armed Forces.

report being supportive of the instructions from the psychiatrist, where they offer additional information on possible side effects of the PAS and explore other options for treating the cause rather than isolating the symptom(s). They miss a show of interest from the government or state that could provide funding for their ideas and good practices, e.g., an interdisciplinary team in mobile units:

We have already described this proposition in detail, what it would look like, that is, one mobile unit, which would be all over Slovenia and for foreigners who have problems, provide support by moving, provide help, an occupational therapist, a psychiatrist, a psychotherapist, a psychologist, and one person who must speak Russian. And there, let's say Logatec, we could go to one of the others, just these, once a week we can come to all and see how they are doing, we have programs for them right on the spot, creative corners and we are constantly in touch. And in this way, we could treat as many regions of Slovenia as possible, but apparently, Slovenia does not need it; the Ministry of Health says that they lack nothing. P12

Similar to the Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants, it seems the Ministry of Health does not recognize a need for improvement.

Focused support

Following the good practices from the field, e.g., women's support circles, diaspora meetings, activities preparing traditional food, playing live music, or dancing, experts acknowledge there is a need for more focused support toward integration, e.g., men's support circles intergenerational activities. These activities can provide a safe space where people connect regardless of their cultural background, race, or age.

[...] they accept me very nicely, with gratitude, not that I need to hear it, not at all, but I feel part of all of this. It seems to me that together we can really help, and maybe the child feels it, perceives it there's some energy and all that, some kind of tension, and because of that, I think it's really good if people work together and not in a dismissing way. P10

In general, there is a widely shared view that our state administration should show much more interest in the mental health of forcibly displaced people and provide adequate financial support for the necessary services. In order to achieve these goals, Slovenia would need to further professionalize language assistance providers, which would lead to systemic changes at the level of 1) implementation of language assistance in MHPSS and 2) additional training of language assistance providers to work in psychotherapy (see Bofulin, 2024).

CONCLUSIONS

This study focused on psychosocial support for forcibly displaced populations in Slovenia and identified key findings and conclusions by analyzing expert opinions considering cultural influences on mental health concepts across different contexts. The analysis revealed three main categories: 1) Specifics of psychosocial support, such as session structure, cultural dialogue, language challenges, and professional self-care; 2) Current challenges, including misdiagnosis, stigmatization, service dispersion, and funding gaps; and 3) Proposed solutions emphasizing labor market access, interdisciplinary mobile teams, and targeted support.

Psychosocial support for forcibly displaced individuals necessitates a comprehensive approach beyond traditional psychotherapy, addressing norms of conduct and empowering individuals amidst dual stigmatizations. Centralized systems with multidisciplinary teams are crucial for tailored treatment plans and accessible interventions integrated into national mental health systems. Culturally sensitive practices are essential in humanitarian contexts, involving intercultural mediators and reflecting on applicability in non-Western settings.

In conclusion, effective psychosocial support for displaced populations requires a holistic, culturally aware, community-centered strategy, addressing stereotyping and double stigmatization while integrating interventions into broader mental health systems. Notably, this study's limitation lies in its exclusive focus on professional viewpoints rather than direct beneficiary perspectives, aiming to inform systemic improvements. Nevertheless, given the limited research and state-organized support in this area, such contributions can strengthen the argument for the necessity and methods of developing various practices that effectively address the psychosocial needs of this population group. Proposed changes could help empower displaced individuals in Slovenia to regain control over their lives and build a sense of belonging and well-being in their new environments.

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POVZETEK

DUŠEVNO ZDRAVJE IN PSIHOSOCIALNA PODPORA PRISILNO RAZSELJENIM OSEBAM: IZKUŠNJE IZ SLOVENIJE

Maja Gostič

Avtorica v članku analizira trenutno stanje na področju duševnega zdravja in psihosocialne podpore prisilno razseljenim osebam, ki prebivajo v Sloveniji. Prisilno razseljeni ljudje so zaradi svojih izkušenj z nasiljem, tako v svojih matičnih državah kot v državi gostiteljici, izpostavljeni visokemu tveganju za razvoj težav v duševnem zdravju. V študiji so bile zbrane informacije s pomočjo polstrukturiranih intervjujev s petnajstimi strokovnjakinjami (psihologinjami, specializantkami psihoterapije in kulturnimi mediatorkami), ki delajo s to populacijo.

Psihosocialna podpora prisilno razseljenim osebam zahteva večdimenzionalen pristop, ki presega tradicionalno psihoterapijo. Ugotovitve zajemajo posebnosti, aktualne probleme in možne izboljšave na področju dela s to populacijo, pri čemer izpostavljajo pomen opolnomočenja v medkulturnem kontekstu in razkrivajo potencialne izzive, povezane z nezainteresiranostjo države in neustrezno finančno podporo za potrebne storitve.

Izsledki študije kažejo na pomen strukture srečanj, odprtega pogovora o razlikah v kulturnih tradicijah in nenapisanih pravilih obnašanja ter jezika in dela s prevajalcem ali kulturnim mediatorjem ter izpostavljajo potrebo, da strokovnjaki poskrbijo zase. Številne psihosocialne podpirne intervencije za razseljeno populacijo namreč delujejo zunaj nacionalnih sistemov duševnega zdravja in se v veliki meri zanašajo na prostovoljsko delo. Za večjo trajnost in učinkovitost podpore s strani nevladnih organizacij, ki je pogosto preveč razpršena, si prizadevajo za njihovo financiranje, uvedbo interdisciplinarnih timov ter dostopnost storitev za vse prisilno razseljene osebe.

Avtorica ugotavlja, da je za zagotavljanje učinkovite psihosocialne podpore prisilno razseljenemu prebivalstvu potreben celovit, kulturno občutljiv in v skupnost usmerjen pristop, ki vključuje obravnavo dvojne stigme in napačnih predstav o duševnem zdravju, uporabo ustreznih raziskovalnih metod ter delo v smeri integracije teh storitev v širše sisteme duševnega zdravja. Predlagane spremembe bi lahko prisiljeno razseljenim osebam v Sloveniji pomagalo pri ponovnem vzpostavljanju nadzora nad svojim življenjem ter občutka pripadnosti in dobrega počutja v svojem novem okolju.

MANAGING THE DISTRESS OF MIGRANT FARMWORKERS: LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE MIDWESTERN UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT

Managing the Distress of Migrant Farmworkers: Lessons Learned From the Midwestern United States

In a labor-intensive sector such as agriculture, safety and health-related risks are high. They are particularly pronounced for migrant farmworkers, and various health-related programs tailored to their particular needs have been developed. Twenty semi-structured interviews with health and safety professionals and researchers working on these issues in four US federal states show that the most important issues affecting this group are insecure or undocumented legal status, poor working and living conditions, and inadequate access to support services. The importance of building “communities of migrant farmworkers” and direct engagement with this group was emphasized.

KEYWORDS: migrant farmworkers, agriculture, distress, mental health, support programs

IZVLEČEK

Obvladovanje stisk delavcev migrantov v kmetijstvu: Spoznanja s srednjega zahoda ZDA

V delovno intenzivnem sektorju, kot je kmetijstvo, so varnostna in zdravstvena tveganja visoka. Posebej izrazita so za delavce migrante v kmetijstvu, zaradi česar so bili razviti različni programi, povezani z njihovimi specifičnimi potrebami. Avtorici v prispevku z dvajsetimi polstrukturiranimi intervjuji s strokovnjaki na področju zdravja in varnosti ter raziskovalci, ki se ukvarjajo s temi temami v štirih zveznih državah ZDA, pokažeta, da na migrante v kmetijstvu negativno vplivajo zlasti negotov ali nedokumentiran pravni status, slabi delovni in življenjski pogoji ter neustrezen dostop do podpornih storitev. Izpostavljen je bil pomen vzpostavitve skupnosti delavcev migrantov v kmetijstvu ter neposrednega dela s to skupino.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: delavci migranti v kmetijstvu, kmetijstvo, stiske, duševno zdravje, programi podpore

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INTRODUCTION

In the last two decades, an increasing number of researchers of various academic backgrounds have focused their studies on migrants working in agriculture and the “need for migrant labor” in this sector, particularly in Canada, the United States, and Europe. This may be due to the shift, particularly after World War II, toward increasingly intensive industrialized agriculture, characterized by the growing replacement of human labor with capital-intensive tools dependent on fossil fuels, the consolidation of farmland, and the increasingly centralized control over the distribution of food resources (Thu and Durrenberger, 1998 as quoted in Thu, 1998). The increasing corporatization of agriculture cannot be overlooked. It puts even landowners in a vulnerable position in the context of the agricultural treadmill—the trap of demanding constant and increasing investment to remain competitive (Thu, 1998; Holmes, 2013a; Holmes, 2013b; King et al., 2021; Cukut Krilić & Knežević Hočevar, 2022; Younker & Radunovich, 2022). At the same time, agriculture is inextricably linked to the physical space, the quality of the land, the season, and the climate. The nature of agricultural work largely determines the need for short-term, temporary, and, as a consequence, precarious employment arrangements for farmworkers (Sargeant, 2009; King et al., 2021). In this context, migrant farmworkers are a specific group because they “encounter stressors typically associated with the immigration experience in addition to those specific to a migrant workers’ lifestyle” (Hovey & Magaña, 2002, p. 276). Breaking the bonds to family and friends, various types of discrimination, language difficulties, substandard housing, poor working and living conditions, insufficient access to health and other forms of care, and the lack of social and economic resources are among the most common risks that migrant farmworkers experience (Hovey & Magaña, 2002; Dueueke et al., 2015; Ramos, 2018).

Furthermore, in labor-intensive sectors, such as agriculture, the risks of work-related accidents and the development of health-related conditions and diseases are especially high (ILO, 2022). When attempting to explain such risks, researchers often focus on the question of how specific policies and institutional processes generate and shape individual health experiences and patterns of disease (Parker et al., 2000; Bronfman et al., 2002; Carruth et al., 2021). In this respect, the term vulnerabilities may not be appropriate to describe the heterogeneous experiences of migrant farmworkers, as their vulnerabilities may be contextual and often reversible (Molenaar & Van Praag, 2022). Acknowledging such differences between migrant farmworkers, existing research has also pointed to the need for psychosocial, community, and other health-related interventions and programs tailored to the particular needs of migrant farmworkers, focusing on prevention, assessment, and treatment of mental health difficulties (Hovey & Magaña, 2002).

This article discusses the safety and health-related issues and risks of migrant farmworkers in the United States and the ways various psychosocial and community programs and initiatives are used to manage these risks. First, the authors examine

the conditions of recruitment and legal status of migrant farmworkers that influence their experiences as migrants to examine the main migration-related risks for experiencing distress. Then, we focus on the importance of working and employment conditions in contemporary US agriculture and point to some characteristics of health and safety-related services and interventions available to migrant farmworkers to show how such services might be helpful to migrant farmworkers. Our focus revolves around the question of under what circumstances support programs and initiatives that address health and safety in agriculture might be recognized as beneficial for migrant farmworkers. The empirical section offers the reflections and observations by the interviewed health and safety professionals and researchers on the observed vulnerabilities of migrant farmworkers and their experience of designing and implementing the programs to manage their distress in the US federal states of Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Wisconsin. In the conclusions, the reader will learn about the main dilemmas of such programs that might not necessarily be geared toward improving the structural vulnerabilities of these workers but could improve particularly migrant farmworkers' sense of community and direct engagement of this group in the implementation of such programs and thus indirectly contribute to their health and well-being.

MIGRANT FARMWORKERS: INSECURE RECRUITMENT, STATUS, WORKING AND LIVING CONDITIONS, AND WAYS TO MANAGE THEM

Especially when policymakers and employers perceive workers as “low-skilled,” they often allow them to enter a particular country only temporarily to cover specific labor shortages, thus avoiding the social and economic “cost” of migrant integration (Triandafyllidou, 2022). The conditions of migrant recruitment worldwide increasingly feature enforced transience and temporariness of status, which contributes to limited mobility and the precarious status of migrant workers (Horvath, 2014; Yeoh, 2020).

Historically, in the United States, the *Bracero* program was the established way of recruiting migrants to work in agriculture. Since World War II, it has brought workers from Mexico and Puerto Rico to this country and enabled Mexicans to enter the United States temporarily—for up to six months—to aid farmers. In contrast to previous forms of Mexican migration to the United States to work in agriculture, the designers of the program no longer viewed migration as a private matter and business but as regulated by official recruitment programs of a bilateral nature that also tried to regulate minimal standards of working and living conditions of migrant farmworkers (Durand, 2007). At present, the recruitment system in agriculture is based on the H-2A visa program, which again points to the deficiencies of temporary recruitment schemes that already became apparent during the operation of the *Bracero* program. For instance, when the employer concludes an employment

contract with the worker, he has almost total control over the worker, who must follow his instructions and accept the offered level of remuneration for the work. The H2-A scheme ties the worker to one employer, who can send the worker back to his country of origin if he does not meet his expectations or if he complains. At the same time, workers' access to legal aid is generally difficult or insufficient (Carrasquillo, 2011; Southern Poverty Law Center, 2013). In addition to temporary recruitment schemes, agriculture in the United States is also heavily reliant on undocumented migrant labor. The National Agriculture Workers Survey 2019–2020 has found that approximately 44% of farmworkers are undocumented immigrants who lack legal work authorization and permits. Accounting for the fact that these numbers may be even higher due to fear of self-reporting undocumented status, even according to these modest estimates, around one million migrant farmworkers in the United States are undocumented (Farmworker Justice, 2022). Promoting only temporary and insecure forms of employment for migrant farmworkers also means increasing their structural vulnerabilities, which we can also observe in the creation of hierarchies of working conditions and types of work between different groups of agricultural workers (Holmes, 2013a; Holmes, 2013b).

Such recruitment policies and insecure legal status also affect the working and living conditions of migrant farmworkers and their safety and health at the workplace. A recent review of the literature on the health of migrant agricultural workers (Urrego-Parra et al., 2022) from 1998 to 2021 has focused on European countries. The researchers have found that the most common agricultural accidents—such as falls, cutting, and machinery injuries, which are also commonly associated with animal and pesticide handling—can go unreported due to a fear of deportation, employer retaliation, and unemployment. Migrants have limited ability to access support and services and assert their rights. They generally face poor housing and living conditions, and they often report feelings of non-belonging and alienation from the countries of reception.

In the United States, research findings about barriers to accessing care and support have been quite similar to those mentioned above (Hovey & Magaña, 2002; Holmes, 2013a; Holmes, 2013b). Faced with challenges particular to migrants, service providers and researchers developed different interventions and programs that could improve service delivery in the areas of health, safety, and well-being.¹ Bloss et al. (2022) assessed the US literature on migrant and seasonal farmworkers' health, focusing on health promotion interventions, special populations within these interventions, and the use of community health workers. They found that only 8.2% of the 1,083 studies described or evaluated a health promotion effort to intervene in the well-being of this group. Even a smaller number of studies (4.2%)

1 Prior to 1988, when a significant change occurred as a result of the public policy conference convened by the National Coalition of Agricultural Safety and Health (N-CASH), after which numerous policy recommendations and reports were published, health issues of farmers and farmworkers received little policy attention (Thu, 1998).

examined populations such as Indigenous farmworkers or sexual minority farmworkers. They also identified outreach and community health workers for non-profit organizations and community health centers among the crucial service providers to migrant farmworkers.

In their research of farmworkers from Mexico to the United States, Hovey & Magaña (2002) emphasize the need for programs that target various facets of health to be available at times and places that are convenient to migrant farmworkers. This could mean, for instance, that they are available at labor camps on evenings and weekends or that outreach efforts could be performed during the off-season in agriculture. The migrants from Mexico whom they encountered in their research also expressed interest in the establishment of support groups and informational workshops where they could discuss their experiences and different ways of coping with distress. The migrants also mentioned the importance of *promotoras*—current or former migrant farmworkers—that act as liaisons between community health agencies and migrant farmworkers. They could provide health information and support to the migrant farmworker community. Similarly, in the study of migrant agricultural workers in southern Italy living in informal settlements (INTERSOS in Tagliacozzo et al., 2020), interlocutors often spoke of the need to target existing health services to their needs, such as developing “proximity services” that are provided where the target population lives and works. Mobile clinics or mobile services, such as a health care service bus that takes professionals to workers, could be useful (Hovey & Magaña, 2002; Pysklywec et al., 2011; Tagliacozzo et al., 2020) since the areas where migrant agricultural workers are located are often remote and inaccessible by public transport. According to some studies (Hovey & Magaña, 2002; Donlan & Lee, 2010), local churches could also be considered as potential sites of health prevention and outreach programs and can promote social networking and dissemination of information to migrant farmworkers. Cohen & Caxaj (2022) report on the results of an intervention in Canada, which their research team developed with community partners to meet the various health, social, and health needs of migrant agricultural workers. Both migrants and service providers highlighted the complex and multi-layered nature of the support needs of this population. In addition, migrant workers emphasized the importance of trust and rapport with service providers and discussed the value of face-to-face visits. Nevertheless, the topics of precariousness and risks associated with asserting certain rights and poor living and working conditions emerged consistently during interviews with migrant farmworkers.

Migrant farmworkers are vulnerable, especially due to recruitment policies that condition their insecure and often undocumented status. Different layers of discrimination, language barriers, inadequate access to support services, and generally poor living and working conditions contribute to their distress. Various programs targeting this particular group have been aimed at improving access to various services in the communities where they live and at directly involving them in the implementation of such programs in order to build trust and rapport. In order to examine the

views of health and safety professionals and researchers on support programs for migrant farmworkers, the first author conducted field visits at the Centers for Agricultural Safety and Health in the US federal states of Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Wisconsin.

IN THE FIELD: US MIDWEST SAFETY AND HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AND RESEARCHERS ON MIGRANT FARMWORKERS' SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Field visits at the centers for agricultural safety and health

As part of a bilateral research collaboration between Slovenia and the United States in 2022, the first author spent three months at the Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (I-CASH) in Iowa City. It was expected that the bilateral visits would help to reflect together on the benefits and pitfalls of transferring “best practices”—following the example of I-CASH to address the apparently universal farming stress phenomenon. On the one hand, in the United States, there is a long tradition of agricultural medicine and several programs to support and advise farmers in distress, such as those offered by I-CASH. On the other hand, while Slovenia has an efficient public health system, there is a lack of agricultural medicine or appropriate assistance for the well-being of farmers and farmworkers. This bilateral cooperation aimed to reflect jointly on the effectiveness of culture-specific responses to the seemingly universal farming stress phenomenon.

The first author's host, a director of I-CASH and lecturer in the College of Public Health at Iowa University, prepared a detailed schedule of her activities at I-CASH. She also arranged for her to make brief visits to three other NIOSH² Centers for Agricultural Safety and Health in the Midwest region to learn more about their approaches to reducing the plight of farmers and farmworkers. These were the Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (CS-CASH) in Omaha, Nebraska, the National Farm Medicine Center (NFMC) in Marshfield, Wisconsin, and the Upper Midwest Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (UMASH) in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

During these visits and in Iowa City, the first author conducted semi-structured (in person or online) interviews with approximately twenty health and safety professionals and researchers about managing farmer and farmworker distress, and about half of them focused on the programs or interventions specifically designed for immigrant farmworkers (see Table 1: Research Participants). First, the research participants were informed about the objectives of the bilateral collaboration and gave informed consent. Then, they answered the interview questions about their

2 NIOSH is the abbreviation for the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

observations and understanding of distress in an unpredictable agricultural context and how to deal with it effectively, how they believe farmers and immigrant farmworkers understand their dangers, risks, and uncertainties, and what they do when they are under pressure or in distress, what psychological support (programs) is available to them, and whether it meets their needs. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The collected material was processed according to the principles of thematic analysis (Krippendorff, 2004).

Interviews conducted in Iowa:
Director of I-CASH and lecturer at the College of Public Health, University of Iowa (in person, December 2022)
Member of the staff of I-CASH (in person, November 2022)
Member 1 of the Advisory Board at I-CASH and professor at the College of Public Health, University of Iowa (online, November 2022)
Member 2 of the Advisory Board of I-CASH and professor at the College of Public Health, University of Iowa (in person, December 2022)
Member of Ag Health & Alliance (in person, October 2022)
Professor at Grinnell College, Iowa (online, November 2022)
Assistant professor of Health Management, University of Iowa, and member of the Iowa Rural Health Association (online, November 2022)
The Ohio State College Behavioral Health Specialist (online, November 2022)
Interviews conducted in Nebraska:
Associate professor in the College of Public Health, an ergonomic engineering specialist at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (in person, October 2022)
Professor of Water, Climate and Health in the College of Public Health, University of Nebraska Medical Center (in person, October 2022)
Community outreach specialist, Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (CS-CASH), College of Public Health, University of Nebraska Medical Center (in person, October 2022)
Associate professor and researcher, Center for Reducing Health Disparities, College of Public Health, University of Nebraska Medical Center (online, December 2022)
Member of the AgriSafe network in Omaha (online, October 2022)
Interviews conducted in Wisconsin:
Associate scientist at the National Farm Medicine Center (NFMC) of the Marshfield Clinic Research Institute (in person, October 2022)
Member of Wisconsin Farmers Union, Disparity to Parity and Farmer Angel Network (in person, October 2022)
Farmer from a dairy farm (in person, October 2022)
Farmer wellness program coordinator, Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, Wisconsin Farm Center (in person, October 2022)

Interviews conducted in Minnesota:
Project outreach coordinator in the Department of Agriculture at the University of Minnesota (in person, October 2022)
Project coordinator and instructor for Promoting the Safety and Health of Immigrant Dairy Workers Program Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center (UMASH) (in person, October 2022)
Associate professor, College of Allied Health and Nursing, Minnesota State University Mankato (online, November 2022)
Rural mental health specialist and consultant (online, October 2022)

Table 1: Research Participants

The following themes that emerged from the analysis show why immigrant farmworkers are a reality in industrial agriculture and whether or not they benefit from occupational safety and health programs.

Immigrant farmworkers: reality, visibility, and the fear of speaking up about working conditions

The first observation concerns the direct, indirect, or absent focus of the interviewees on migrant farmworkers. Interlocutors from the Iowa region, working in agricultural health and safety or studying the issue as part of their research projects, do not focus their activities such as mental health resources and literacy, education about hazards and health and safety in agriculture, training programs, suicide prevention, farm stress, etc. on migrant farmworkers, but on rural health, farm operators, farm owners, their family members, people that work with farmers (e.g., pharmacists, physicians, nurses, veterinarians, public health people, safety managers) or farming communities. However, they were all aware of the research and statistics that show immigrant farmworkers at a very high risk of suicide—not a surprising fact, as one behavioral health specialist explains: “What I know is that they have very physically demanding, very stressful jobs. Sometimes, they don’t even speak English, which makes it even harder, and they do not get paid much.”

Indeed, in the agricultural Midwest region, and particularly in Iowa State, industrial agriculture is by far the dominant form of agriculture; only one percent of the land in Iowa is farmed in alternative ways. Characteristics of industrial agriculture include not only the increasing use of heavy mechanization, chemical inputs, and ever-larger acreages or livestock but also the shortage of labor. “Migrant farmworkers are, therefore, a reality in Iowa as well,” observes an assistant professor of health management. Her research focuses on rural health and access to healthcare services. She was not familiar with all aspects of the intersection of race, ethnicity, and agriculture. However, she believed many programs should be open to all, “including workers from Mexico or the Congo or other countries who come to work either as immigrants or temporary migrants.” She mentioned programs at community health

centers that offer services specifically for migrant workers. Like other Iowa interviewees, she pointed to a particular group, Proteus, which works with agricultural workers and has some of the community health centers that provide services to migrant workers. Indeed, Proteus's website assures that the group provides affordable health care, educational assistance, and job training to farmworkers and their families (Proteus, 2023), but this seems only an online promise.

Similarly, a collocator from the Ag Health & Alliance regretted that their international non-profit organization does not focus on migrant farmworkers but on safety culture, including mental health training, for the "next generation of agriculture"—18-to-25-year-olds. They work mainly in college settings where they do not see migrant farmworkers unless, hypothetically, they are the second generation of parents who could afford to send their children to college. They did not see many migrant farmworkers because, she assumed, none of them reached that level of education. She also expected that a Hispanic person who chose to go to college and had parents who were farmworkers would be interested in management and higher positions because they wanted to climb the career ladder. However, she was aware that there are migrant workers in the state of Iowa as well, particularly Mexicans working in hog barns, where farmers are said to have very good relationships with their migrant workers and really value them.

The last interviewee from Iowa who indirectly referred to immigrant farmworkers was the professor at the College of Public Health and the current director of the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health. In one of her international research, she investigated not only pesticide exposure among Syrian refugees working in agriculture in Lebanon but also the psychosocial stressors to which these workers were exposed that led to their chronic illnesses. Using the model of job demands and control, she tried to explain why the worst jobs are those where you have too many demands and no control over how they are carried out. She believed that this model is also applicable to farmers and farmworkers, as the agricultural workplace has shifted from a family farm to an employer or workplace that brings with it new regulations, new rules, and new requirements that can be very stressful in themselves. Alternatively, in her words: "A workplace brings new demands because suddenly you find yourself in a hierarchical structure with a big company that doesn't even come to the work site but is based in another city or even another country and tells you how to manage and what to do. So that's a stressor." She also mentioned the Proteus group working with immigrant farmworkers or with employers but also acknowledged, "We [researchers] don't do as good a job here in Iowa as we did in Oregon, for example, working directly with farmworkers." She emphasized that they are aware that immigrant farmworkers, especially the young ones, do not have the power to say, "We are going to use personal protective equipment or implement a policy to wear seat belts when we are driving around in the truck or on the tractor." So, if you educate them about the dangers in their workplace, they can at least focus

on what they can do and control in these limited circumstances: “They’re told what to do, and if they resist, they could get fired.”

While migrant farmworkers were rarely the focus of the Iowa interviewees’ research and occupational safety and health activities, the opposite was true for the interlocutors from three other agricultural safety and health centers and colleges in Omaha, Wisconsin, and Minneapolis. Cattle feedyards, big farms, and meat-processing industries in these regions are predominantly staffed by male immigrant farmworkers, primarily from Mexico and, to a lesser extent, from Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Cuba, South Africa, etc. A researcher involved in the Feedyard Safety Project explained that migration patterns are changing in the United States. In the past, seasonal workers took three different routes: one group went up the West Coast, then one group went up the East Coast, and one group went up the Midwest. This is no longer the case today. In Nebraska, for example, “point-to-point” migration is replacing “follow-the-crop” migration. In his words: “There are very, very few migrants who move from crop to crop, season to season. We have people who come directly from Mexico to Nebraska to do seasonal work in the cornfields, such as corn ginning or seed sorting, and then go back to Mexico. So, they have an H-2A visa, which is our agricultural guest worker program.”

The interviewees from CS-CASH described the work of farmworkers in the agri-food industry in general as very dangerous and under hazardous conditions. They are exposed to high demands, long hours, great time pressure, and many repetitive tasks. They do not get enough rest breaks between shifts or workweeks, but what makes immigrant farmworkers even more at risk is the fact that they receive little to no safety training from their employers. For example, if they have access to personal protective equipment, they probably have not been told to use it or how to use it. In addition, many of the workers have only a limited level of formal education in their home countries. When they come to a new place, a new life, a new society, a new culture, a new language, and a new system, all these circumstances make it even more difficult for them. A specialist in ergonomic engineering went on to emphasize that immigrant workers usually come from much smaller farms and feed yards in their home countries, and now they have to look after 100,000 cattle:

People come here and want to be cowboys and so on. Ranchers are the ones who do not usually grow crops; they mainly work with animals and often in large areas. When it comes to animal handling, being hit by an animal often does not result in fatal accidents, but there are still a lot of injuries. There is much more material on the safety of machinery than on the safety of working with animals.

According to most CS-CASH interviewees, immigrant farmworkers also struggle with cultural and language barriers, logistical obstacles, and difficulty accessing and navigating services that may be available to them, particularly mental health support. An associate professor in the Department of Health Promotion who has spent most

of her career doing research with immigrant, migrant, and seasonal farmworkers illustrated this very vividly:

Distance is a real barrier. To get from where I live in the eastern part of my state [Nebraska] to the western part of my state is an eight-hour drive just to cross my state. In my state, most of the services are in urban areas. In the rural areas, there is not very much. Therefore, if you want to access services or support, you might have to take a day off work, get a ride into town, and then find someone to go to. I mean, that is a whole lot of challenges. Therefore, I would say that there are not a lot of people who have access to formal mental health support services.

Interviewees acknowledged that people who are different from the mainstream are highly discriminated against, especially if they do not speak the language and have an uncertain immigration status. They admitted that many farmworkers in the agri-food industry do not have US work authorization and are, therefore, considered undocumented. These people fear being arrested and deported because of their immigration status. They fear being seen and speaking out about unfair treatment and dangerous workplace conditions. One researcher who has studied immigrant workers in meat processing plants mentioned that the workforce comes from twenty to thirty different countries, speaking different languages and coming from different African countries where war may be raging. These workers come to the United States because they are not safe in their home country and mostly out of economic necessity.

The first author learned that many migrant farmworkers were very afraid of being seen by the authorities during a visit to a dairy farm organized by her host—a researcher from the NFMC. The farm operator began by explaining that his farm, which has around 450 dairy cows, requires huge investments if it is to survive. He had to hire farmworkers from Mexico to milk cows in two shifts and work in the fields. However, the farmworkers themselves did not want to be officially health-insured and visible for fear of deportation. The farmer explained that working with cows is very dangerous and that if a farmworker is injured, he will cover all the costs of his health, as he cannot survive without farmworkers. When asked if it would be easier for him to hire a local worker without a migrant background, he replied: “I would hire anyone who comes to my door, but they [the locals] are usually gone by lunch.” The farmer confirmed that farmers are desperate for labor these days. If they cannot find US workers, they turn to immigrant labor because they have no other choice. They usually rely on guest worker visa programs and build housing for farmworkers on the farm. The farmer also mentioned that there are numerous requirements that an employer must provide—housing or food or cooking facilities, transportation, etc.—and that he has to plan this into his operating budget. Even though this farm was presented as an example of good relations between a farmer and the farmworkers, the host-researcher emphasized that this cannot be generalized: “Some farms

have really good relations with their workers and try to do their best. They take care of them, get to know them, and sometimes even travel to the workers' home countries to meet their families. Others do not care; they do not play by the rules and try to maximize their profitability at the expense of the workers. So, it's very diverse."

Interviewees from Marshfield (NFMC and the Wisconsin Farm Center mental health group) and Minneapolis (UMASH) listed numerous support services and materials for farmers and farmworkers (e.g., mental health fact sheets, mental health counseling, Agri-Stress Hotline) that are available free in English and Spanish. However, as noted above, undocumented farmworkers rarely access these services and materials. Compared to other US industries where an employer has a number of obligations—overtime pay, minimum wages, permission to organize, etc.—none of this exists in agriculture. However, in the following section, we describe how to reach out to immigrant farmworkers to get them to attend support programs to alleviate their precarious conditions or stress-related illnesses.

Doing the good stuff: building immigrant farmworkers' community

Despite numerous mental health programs developed for farmers and farmworkers, interviewees working directly with migrant farmworkers did not believe that they attended programs such as Mental Health First Aid. Partly for the reasons mentioned above (e.g., the fact that they receive little to no health and safety training from their employers or are not encouraged to use such materials or are not informed how to use them) and largely because they are afraid to speak openly about their working conditions and health. This does not mean, however, that immigrant farmworkers are without any support or are reluctant to participate in programs to address dangerous workplaces and stress-related illnesses. A researcher from the Department of Environmental, Agricultural & Occupational Health at CS-CASH (Omaha) involved an anthropologist in one of his immigrant safety projects to better understand the safety and health of immigrant farmworkers on feed yards and examine their perspectives, needs, experiences, and culture. The main goal of this four-year project was to create safety training materials to use on the ranches and to inform employers and workers about workers' compensation insurance in case of injury and illness. The ethnographer was asked to work directly with people in the feed yard "to get into their heads and figure out why you do this and why you don't do this," according to the interviewee. In the Zoom interview, the anthropologist said that these workers are exposed to very dangerous circumstances and that they have the highest injury rate among other feedyard workers. He talked about his field research and shared photos of their tired hands, stitched injuries on various parts of their bodies, broken ankles, their faces marked by chronic pain or their tired and worried expressions, but also their small gardens with vegetables and chickens around their shelters, small children and pregnant women—everything that makes them proud and happy despite the hard life. He spoke about the importance of safety culture in

the feed yards but emphasized that the positive aspects of their residential communities are even more important for their well-being.

Another researcher and trainer from the Department of Health Promotion and CS-CASH mentioned the *Bienvenido* (in English: Welcome) program, which migrant farmworkers enthusiastically received. She herself had been researching access to health care and health-related issues for more than ten years. Therefore, she already knew that depression and alcohol use were a problem, and anxiety and tobacco use were high. She had had many conversations with the workers but also had long-standing relationships with service providers across the state to document some of the farmworkers' needs or how they were feeling, "If they are feeling a little isolated or lonely because they have left their families, you know, all these myriad things that they are experiencing." The program was not designed as a research program but as a service to the farmworker community, which includes facilitator training. Her group ran the program four times in four different camps for agricultural workers from 2020 to 2022, adapting it slightly to the target group of seasonal workers. Instead of the original nine lessons and nine weeks, they adapted it and condensed it to five sessions in two to three weeks, as their migrant and seasonal workers spent a maximum of five weeks there. Their team reached the program participants at their housing sites, where they picked them up after they finished their work. She could not hide her satisfaction with the program, which was "experienced as a real joy because we bring the workers together, have a meal together, and talk about what good mental health is." Instead of turning to substances or other risky behaviors, the program's questions were: How do you deal with anger? What does assertive communication look like? What resources are out there to help you? How do we make sure we take time for ourselves and our families? How can we manage stress more positively? The program was conducted entirely in Spanish in an interactive group format that brought together only men who were talking about mental health for the first time in their lives:

The guys come with their little books under their arms and their pencils, ready for class, which is really cool. They are excited to be there; they enjoy the class. The feedback we have gotten from them is that they wish the course were longer and that they really like the topics. Originally, they came because they heard we give you a meal and give you \$60 when you finish the program. That gets them in the door, but they come back because they have so much fun, and they really like it.

The trainer believed that the most important effect is the interaction between the participants. During the lessons, the migrant workers find themselves in a group; they are part of their crew, something they never do: "They joke with each other all day, but they don't know each other on a deeper level. This program allows them to get to know even their co-workers better." So, the main benefits are the sense of belonging to a group and the knowledge of mental health. Finally, building a

community through face-to-face interaction challenges their still fatalistic beliefs about their destiny to live life as it should be.

The interviewee from the Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center, who works with dairy workers in Minnesota, explains how to get migrant farmworkers to think about health and safety issues, even if their English or Spanish is poor. As the project coordinator of *La Seguridad* (in English: Safety) and a Spanish-speaking instructor, she said that the dairy farm labor force in the United States is predominantly Hispanic. In the past, dairy farms were mostly family-owned, but now they need to expand, or they are out of business. Family farms or larger farms and corporations can no longer run their business themselves, so they have to hire labor, which is usually immigrant labor. Her job is to seek out dairy farms that have voluntarily chosen to participate in the program; otherwise, access to immigrant farmworkers is impossible. When employers show interest in the safety of their workers, she meets with the workers and discusses possible injuries on the farm and ways to prevent them. She meets workers who work very hard on night and day shifts, usually twelve hours a day, six days a week, and are at high risk of exhaustion and injury due to this workload. Other risks come from working with large animals, machinery, and chemicals—all of which are addressed in their one-hour training course. As many of the workers are not fluent in Spanish, four graphics (units) are discussed with the help of bilingual participants. The first unit is about general hazards on the farm, the second is about handling animals, the third is about machinery, and the fourth is about workers' rights—protecting them whether they have documents or not. "I want them to know about workers' compensation and that they are insured by the law that covers injuries on the farm," she repeated several times.

Her main goal is to get workers thinking and talking by discussing numerous hypothetical examples of risky circumstances in the workplace. Sometimes, they are shy and do not want to talk about their experiences, especially if the owner is sitting over there. In such cases, she gives them examples of other workers in other states: "I just ask them, what do you think happened to them at these dairies? Just ideas, and how do you think it can be prevented? We usually talk this way, but sometimes they do not want to talk because they are tired. But I always try to motivate them." In these conversations, she also learns that an employer usually asks an experienced worker to mentor the new employees and tell them what to do and what rules to follow. Sometimes, newly hired workers have not even worked with cows before, and now that they are working twelve hours a day on a dairy farm, they suffer repetitive motion injuries. So, she reiterated, "It's important that they know that you came here to work, that you want to save money and go home healthy." She concluded by explaining that her activities are always about making workers aware of dangerous working conditions but also about making them feel comfortable either in their workplace or in a discussion group so they can at least build that community.

CONCLUSIONS

While the Midwest interlocutors were aware that not all mental health educational and training programs are focused on migrant farmworkers, but instead on rural health, farm owners, farm operators, farm family members, farming communities, and professionals that work with farmers, they acknowledged the existence of migrant workers as a reality in contemporary agriculture in the United States mainly due to shortages of “local” labor. Particularly, the interlocutors from Wisconsin, Nebraska, and Minnesota emphasized the importance of migrant farmworkers in the context of intensive industrialization of agriculture. At the same time, the interviewees from Iowa spoke about them only indirectly. However, all the interviewees emphasized the shift from family-organized farming to industrial agriculture, bringing about limited control over the performed work and increased work demands in the workplace. Coupled with hazardous conditions of work and exposure to various physical risks, these contribute to increased distress among farmworkers. For migrant farmworkers, language and cultural issues, logistical obstacles, and difficulties in accessing as well as navigating formal mental health support services that may be available to them exacerbate these risks. The interlocutors also mentioned recruitment and other migration-related issues that structurally affect the position of migrant farmworkers. For fear of deportation in cases of undocumented work and/or legal status in the United States, workers may prefer to remain invisible and without any health insurance. In this respect, migration itself could also be a social determinant of health that mirrors the health effects of social structures on migrant farmworkers (Castañeda et al., 2015). The international human rights approach could, therefore, present a valuable legal framework used to advocate for migrant farmworkers and to address their social determinants of health (Ramos, 2018).

In view of the increased competitiveness required in the treadmill of contemporary US agriculture, employers must consider various operating and other costs (such as providing accommodation to migrant farmworkers) to retain these workers. On the other hand, some agricultural employers seek to maximize productivity and profitability at the expense of the workers.

When asked about the main obstacles of migrant farmworkers in accessing (mental) health support services, the interlocutors mentioned farmworkers’ receiving little to no health and safety training and information from their employers and the fear of speaking openly about their working conditions due to their insecure or even undocumented legal status in the United States. Nevertheless, they talked about various incentives that help migrant farmworkers foster a sense of belonging through building a community in their face-to-face educational activities. The result was also their improved well-being not only on farms but also in the communities in which they reside. The interviewees also pointed to the need to work directly with migrant farmworkers to engage in conversations with them, develop interactions, and provide a space where they could open up about their distress. By fostering

such a sense of group belonging, they believed migrants' knowledge of mental health also improved, and sometimes, workers could even act as mentors or facilitators for others in their community. Among others, a goal of such programs was to develop long-standing relationships with service providers and farm owners or operators to ensure they voluntarily participate in such programs and facilitate access to migrant farmworkers. In this respect, one of the study's limitations is that it only covers the perspective of health and safety professionals and researchers on how migrants perceive their health, safety, and community issues, while the migrants' perspective is lacking.

The interlocutors also addressed the effect that physical harm (such as pesticide exposure or various body injuries) had on migrant farmworkers' feelings of distress. One of the directions worth exploring might also be the interplay of mental and physical health since distress might have an impact on physical health and vice versa. In this regard, one of the challenges is for physicians and other professionals to understand the link between physical symptoms (for example, those that result from pesticide exposure for farmworkers) and mental health difficulties of this group, which remains an under-explored topic (Hovey & Seligman, 2006).

Finally, it seems that the complexity and heterogeneity of the needs of migrant farmworkers also require policy commitments. The interlocutors indirectly referred to structural obstacles, mentioning the inadequacies of the temporary recruitment programs for migrant farmworkers that enhance their various vulnerabilities. When structurally based approaches are absent, "exclusion may be normalized or a sense of powerlessness among migrant agricultural workers and their supporters may be instilled" (Cohen & Caxaj, 2022, p. 144). As Thu (1998) has observed, when research and intervention programs simply assume the existence of industrial agriculture and fail to address the role of political, economic, and social factors in the health issues of farmers and farmworkers, educational interventions are hailed as the prevailing solution to these issues despite their often questionable results. On the other hand, it is also worth examining the resilience and agency of migrant farmworkers in the face of their exposure to such structural conditions that often keep them in poverty and are detrimental to their mental health (Dueweke et al., 2015).

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POVZETEK

OBVLADOVANJE STISK DELAVCEV MIGRANTOV V KMETIJSTVU: SPOZNAVANJE S SREDNJEGA ZAHODA ZDA

Duška Knežević Hočevar, Sanja Cukut Krilić

Kmetijstvo je eden od gospodarskih sektorjev, kjer so zdravstvena in varnostna tveganja za delavce še posebej visoka. Ta panoga se pospešeno industrializira in modernizira, zaradi česar so tudi delovni aranžmaji v njej vedno bolj fleksibilni in začasni. Posledično se kmetijstvo sooča s pomanjkanjem delovne sile in vse pogostejšim zaposlovanjem delavcev migrantov. Pri slednjih so poleg običajnih zdravstvenih tveganj za stiske prisotni še pomanjkanje socialnih mrež, različne oblike diskriminacije, jezikovne ovire, pogosto neustrezni delovni in bivanjski pogoji ter pomanjkljiv dostop do zdravstvenih in drugih oblik oskrbe in pomoči. Ni naključje, da je vedno bolj prisotno vprašanje, kako lahko obstoječe programe na področju varnostnih in zdravstvenih tveganj ustrezneje prilagodimo zaposlenim migrantom v kmetijstvu.

Prispevek temelji na tematski analizi dvajsetih polstrukturiranih pogovorov s strokovnjaki in raziskovalci na področju varnostnih in zdravstvenih tveganj v štirih ameriških zveznih državah: Iowi, Minnesoti, Nebraski in Wisconsinu. Avtorici se osredotočata na okoliščine ranljivosti delavcev migrantov v kmetijstvu in na dileme, ki so jih sogovornice in sogovorniki poudarili ob presoji programov za zmanjševanje njihovih stisk. Četudi so se sogovorniki strinjali, da se vsi izobraževalni programi na področju duševnega zdravja ne osredotočajo na migrante, so slednje prepoznali kot resničnost v sodobnem kmetijstvu v ZDA, ki se sooča s pomanjkanjem delavcev. S prehodom na industrijsko kmetijstvo se je dodatno zmanjšal nadzor nad delom, povečale so se delovne zahteve in različna fizična tveganja v delovnem okolju, s tem pa tudi stiske delavcev v kmetijstvu. Ena od temeljnih ovir za delavce migrante je njihov neurejen oziroma negotov pravni status v ZDA, zaradi česar pogosto želijo ostati nevidni tudi službam za zagotavljanje pomoči in se bojijo spregovoriti o svojih delovnih in življenjskih pogojih. Sogovorniki so v zvezi s tem poudarili, da ni pomembno le izboljševanje delovnih pogojev te skupine, temveč tudi neposredno delo v skupnostih, kjer ti delavci živijo, ter omogočanje pogovorov o njihovih stiskah. Izpostavili so tudi pomen dela z lastniki in upravljalci kmetij, ki so lahko pomemben člen pri zagotavljanju dostopa do delavcev migrantov. Sogovorniki so se dotaknili tudi strukturnih omejitev, zlasti pomanjkljivosti začasnih programov zaposlovanja delavcev migrantov v kmetijstvu, ki prispevajo k izključenosti in nevidnosti te skupine delavcev.

Č L A N K I
A R T I C L E S

KONGRESNIK JOHN BLATNIK V BOJU ZA DRŽAVLJANSKE PRAVICE V ZDA

Milan Mrđenović,^I Matjaž Klemenčič^{II}

COBISS 1.01

IZVLEČEK

Kongresnik John Blatnik v boju za državljanske pravice v ZDA

Avtorja v prispevku obravnavata delovanje Johna Blatnika, ameriškega kongresnika slovenskega porekla v predstavnikiškem domu, med letoma 1963 in 1964, ko so sprejemali temeljni zakonski predlog o državljanskih pravicah, ki je odpravil formalno diskriminacijo temnopoltih Američanov. V prispevku je povzeta korespondenca med Blatnikom in volivci 8. kongresnega okraja v Minnesoti, kjer je živelo veliko slovenskih Američanov. Avtorja na kratko povzameta tudi zgodovino rasne diskriminacije v ZDA.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: zakon o državljanskih pravicah, predstavnikiški dom, peticija za odpoklic, odbor za poslovniki, obstrukcija

ABSTRACT

Rep. John Blatnik in the Fight for Civil Rights in the United States

The paper focuses on the activities of US Rep. John Blatnik (D-MN 8th District) in the House of Representatives between 1963 and 1964, when the landmark Civil Rights Act was passed that finally eliminated lawful discrimination against black Americans. The paper summarizes original letters from constituents in Minnesota's 8th Congressional District, where many Slovenian Americans lived. The paper briefly summarizes the history of racial discrimination in the United States.

KEYWORDS: Civil Rights Act, House of Representatives, discharge petition, Rules Committee, filibuster

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UVOD

V članku je predstavljeno delovanje Johna Blatnika, kongresnika slovenskih korenin, v času sprejemanja zakona o državljskih pravicah v ZDA v letih 1963 in 1964. Ta zakon je imel pomembno vlogo pri odpravi segregacije in rasne diskriminacije na jugu ZDA in predstavlja mejnik v novejši ameriški zgodovini. Gradivo za članek sva avtorja črpala predvsem iz njegove korespondence, ki jo hrani arhiv Minnesota Historical Society. Na podlagi korespondence lahko sledimo stikom z Blatnikovimi volivci, jugoslovanskimi voditelji in drugimi pomembnimi osebnostmi.

KRATKA PREDSTAVITEV POLITIČNEGA DELOVANJA JOHNA BLATNIKA

John Blatnik je bil rojen leta 1911 v mestu Chisholm na rudarskem območju Iron Range v Severni Minnesoti. Rojen je bil v družino slovenskih priseljencev; njegova starša sta bila rojena na slovenskem etničnem ozemlju. Med letoma 1947 in 1974 je bil član predstavniškega doma ameriškega kongresa. V aktivno politiko je vstopil leta 1940, ko ga je podprla nestrankarska liberalno usmerjena skupina volivcev. Takrat je bil prvič izvoljen v državni senat Minnesote; leta 1942 je bil ponovno izvoljen za štiri leta. Med drugo svetovno vojno se je kot prostovoljec javil v ameriško vojsko. Razporejen je bil v obveščevalno službo vojnega letalstva ZDA in Urad za strateške službe (Office Of Strategic Services; OSS), ki je bil predhodnik današnje Centralne obveščevalne agencije (CIA). Tudi zaradi obvladovanja osnov slovenskega in srbohrvaškega jezika je bil imenovan za člana vojaških misij pri Narodnoosvobodilni vojski (NOV) in Partizanskih odredih Jugoslavije (POJ). Od oktobra 1944 je nekaj časa preživel v glavnem štabu hrvaških partizanov, od januarja 1945 pa je deloval v glavnem štabu NOV in POS v Beli krajini. Od maja 1945 je bil v italijanskem mestu Caserta posrednik med ameriškim vojaškim poveljstvom in jugoslovanskimi partizani.

Po končani vojni se je vrnil v politiko. Na volitvah novembra leta 1946 je bil prvič izvoljen za člana predstavniškega doma ameriškega kongresa. Kandidiral je na listi demokratske kmečko-delavske stranke Minnesote, ki je bila del demokratske stranke, ob podpori obeh sindikalnih central, AFL (American Federation of Labor) in CIO (Congress of Industrial organizations), ter Huberta Humphreyja (takratnega župana Minneapolisa ter kasnejšega zveznega senatorja in podpredsednika ZDA v času predsedovanja Lyndona B. Johnsona). Blatnika je podpirala večina pristašev Ljudske fronte (Popular front) oziroma tistega dela politike, ki je med vojno spodbujal vojaška prizadevanja ZDA zoper nacizem in fašizem. Kasneje je naklonjenost levičarskih volivcev pridobil z nasprotovanjem Trumanovemu programu za podporo grškemu vojaškemu režimu, ki se je boril proti komunistom. Hkrati je podpiral predsednika Trumana v večini drugih stališč, da se ne bi izneveril demokratski stranki. Svojo politično spretnost je dokazal s tem, ko je bil na volitvah deležen podpore protikomunističnega sindikata United Steel Workers of America.

V kongresu je deloval zlasti kot zagovornik državljskih in delavskih pravic. Kot je razvidno iz njegove korespondence v prvi polovici šestdesetih let 20. stoletja, se je aktivno ukvarjal še z zakonodajo na področjih javne uprave, okoljske problematike in državnih investicij ter pomagal pri sprejemanju 23. in 24. amandmaja k ustavi ZDA, s katerima so omogočili večjo samoupravo glavnega mesta Washington ter prepovedali odvzem volilne pravice državljanom zaradi neplačevanja katerih koli dajatev. V korespondenci naletimo še na pozitivne in negativne odgovore na številne prošnje za priporočila za vpis na vojaške akademije, ki jih je dobival. Med korespondenco najdemo številne stike z vlagatelji in lokalnimi skupnostmi. Blatnik je veliko truda vlagal v sprejemanje zakonodaje za zagotovitev zveznih skladov za gradnjo lokalne infrastrukture (Klemenčič et al., 2020, str. 200–205).

V predstavniskem domu je Blatnik v obravnavanem obdobju predsedoval Študijskemu združenju demokratske stranke (Democratic Study Group – DSG). DSG je bila ustanovljena leta 1959 in je igrala osrednjo vlogo pri mobilizaciji liberalnih demokratov v ameriškem kongresu za zagovarjanje liberalne zakonodaje in politik. Nastala je kot odziv na konservativno pristranskost institucionalnih procesov v predstavniskem domu. Tako je bil cilj DSG okrepiti liberalne sile znotraj demokratske stranke za bolj učinkovit vpliv na zakonodajne procese. Osrednje dejavnosti skupine so obsegale zbiranje informacij o trenutno obravnavani zakonodaji in njihovo distribucijo članom, njihov namen pa je bilo podpiranje liberalnih politik, vključno s tedenskimi poročili o zakonodaji, podporo pri kampanjah in usmerjanjem novih članov. DSG je razvila mehanizem za spodbujanje udeležbe svojih članov na glasovanjih, predvsem v odborih, kjer glasovanja pogosto niso bila evidentirana; vključno z obveščanjem članov o ključnih glasovanjih po interni komunikacijski mreži. Blatnik je imel kot izpostavljen predstavnik DSG ključno vlogo pri sprejetju zakonodaje o državljskih pravicah v obdobju 1963–64, kar še dodatno potrjuje vpliv skupine na glasovanje o zakonodaji (Stevens et al., 1974, str. 667–681).

Med letoma 1971 in 1974 je Blatnik vodil odbor za javna dela predstavniskega doma ameriškega kongresa. Med njegovimi glavnimi zakonodajnimi dosežki velja omeniti zakon o financiranju infrastrukture v manjših mestih v gospodarsko slabo razvitih predelih ZDA ter zvezno pomoč pri čiščenju odplak za zmanjšanje onesnaženje vode, odprtje plovbnega kanala Sv. Lovrenca (St. Lawrence Seaway), ki je omogočil pomorske mednarodne povezave od Velikih jezer (Great Lakes) do oceanov ter denar za meddržavni avtocestni sistem (Interstate Highway system) in gradnjo mostu, ki se danes imenuje John Blatnik Bridge in povezuje mesti Duluth v Minnesoti in Superior v Wisconsinu. Podpiral je demonstracije proti vojni v Vietnamu in zagovarjal nadzor nad jedrskim orožjem. Zavzemal se je za razširitev narodnih parkov in večjo samoupravo, v 50. letih 20. stoletja pa je nasprotoval protikomunističnemu lovu na čarovnice, ki ga je vodil razvpiti senator Joseph McCarthy iz Wisconsinu (Klemenčič & Šeruga, 2019, str. 318–329).

V času političnega udejstvovanja Johna Blatnika so slovenski Američani predstavljali pomemben segment volilnega okraja, ki ga je zastopal. Po podatkih

popisa iz leta 1940 je v Minnesoti živel 13.920 oseb slovenskega izvora – večina jih je živel v severovzhodnem delu, vključno z osmim kongresnim okrajem. Do leta 1980 se je število slovenskih prebivalcev zmanjšalo za 6.968 oseb, pri čemer je okraj St. Louis beležil 3.254 oseb slovenskega porekla. Pred tem je pomemben delež slovenske etnične skupnosti v določenih mestih omogočal ustanavljanje etničnih društev in župnij, ki so služile tako socialni in kulturni integraciji kot tudi ohranjanju etnične zavesti (Klemenčič & Šeruga, 2019, str. 126–166).

V vsaki od slovenskih etničnih naselbin so se prebivalci organizirali v društva bratskih podpornih organizacij, v etnične katoliške župnije, med drugim so gradili tudi slovenske narodne domove. Blatnik je bil aktivni katolik, ki je v mladosti obiskoval slovensko katoliško cerkev Sv. Jožefa v Chisholmu, ko se je preselil v okolico Washingtona, pa je bil član katoliške kongregacije v washingtonskem predmestju (Klemenčič & Šeruga, 2019, str. 235–278). Slovenski Američani so tudi aktivno sodelovali v lokalni politiki, zlasti v mestu Ely, kjer so od začetka 20. stoletja zasedali pomembne položaje mestnih svetnikov in županov. Ta aktivnost je bila še posebej izrazita v času Blatnikovega političnega delovanja, kar priča o tesni povezavi med slovensko skupnostjo in lokalno politično dinamiko (Klemenčič & Mrdenović, 2023).

DRUŽBENO-POLITIČNI POLOŽAJ TEMNOPOLTIH AMERIČANOV DO SPREJETJA ZAKONA O DRŽAVLJANSKIH PRAVICAH LETA 1964

Ameriški jug je bil dolga desetletja pred sprejetjem zakona o državljanskih pravicah leta 1964 zaznamovan z nasiljem in politiko rasizma oziroma segregacije, ki je kršila osnovne človekove pravice temnopoltega prebivalstva. Po koncu državljanske vojne leta 1865 je bila v obdobju rekonstrukcije (1865–1877) dosežena formalna enakopravnost temnopoltnih in belopoltnih Američanov. To enakopravnost so na jug države prinesle in jo tam vzdrževale zmagovite severnjaške armade, ki so tam ostale vse do leta 1877. V tem obdobju je bil v kongresu leta 1875 sprejet prvi zakon o državljanskih pravicah. Kmalu po vključitvi južnjaških držav v delovanje zveznih organov so se razmerja sil obrnila v korist nasprotnikov pravic temnopoltnih. Takrat vladajoča republikanska stranka je predstavljala interese ekonomskih elit, ki so želele vzpostaviti prosti trg z zemljišči in delovno silo ter vlagati v industrijsko ekspanzijo. Za zagotavljanje nemotenega razvoja industrijskega gospodarstva so potrebovali sodelovanje južnjaških demokratov, ki so s političnim obvladovanjem juga omogočili severnim vlagateljem dostop do naravnih virov, zlasti premoga, ki je bil pomemben za ekspanzijo industrializacije (Caro, 2012, str. 8–10). Demokrati so imeli omejeno politično moč v kongresu, ki so jo vedno ponudili republikancem v zameno za uveljavljanje posebnih interesov južnjaških demokratov, na podlagi katerih so na jugu vzpostavili zakonito segregacijo (t. i. zakoni Jima Crowa). Tako so s pomočjo rasistične politike utrdili avtonomijo zveznih držav, zaradi česar je rekonstrukcija ostala nedokončana. Zvezna vlada v Washingtonu dolga desetletja

ni posegala v južnjaško ureditev in ni poskušala zagotavljati enakopravnosti svojih državljanov. Prav tako ni vlagala nobenih naporov v izvajanje politike integracije temnopoltih prebivalcev v družbo, saj slednji niso predstavljali nobene resne grožnje, še manj pa so se jim zdeli koristni za bodoči razvoj države. V času industrijskega vzpona na prelomu iz 19. v 20. stoletje, ko se je Amerika odpirala svetu, so priseljenci iz Evrope predstavljali pomembnejšo delovno silo. Postali so glavna politična tema v državi in tako potisnili problematiko temnopoltih Američanov na rob družbe (Zinn, 2021, str. 193–207; Lewis & Lewis, 2009, str. 11–39; Foner, 2014).

Za poslabšanje pravnega položaja temnopoltih Američanov po koncu obdobja rekonstrukcije sta pomembni dve razsodbi vrhovnega sodišča iz let 1877 in 1883. V njih je slednje odločilo, da deli zakona o državljskih pravicah iz leta 1875 niso v skladu z ustavo ZDA. Po mnenju sodnikov je omenjeni zakon preveč posegal tako v avtonomijo zveznih držav kot tudi v osebne svoboščine, ki so izhajale iz lastninskih pravic. Tako so demokrati na jugu uspeli legalizirati segregacijo ter tako otežili vključevanje temnopoltih v družbo, pa tudi njihov dostop do dela, stanovanj, izobrazbe in udeležbe na volitvah. Ustvarili so poseben institucionaliziran rasizem, ki se je globoko utrdil v zavesti ljudi in ga je bilo desetletja kasneje težko izkoreniniti. Poleg tega so s tem utrdili svojo oblast in avtonomijo v odnosu do zveznih oblasti. Čeprav so ustavni amandmaji po državljski vojni sprva jamčili temnopoltim Američanom pravico do udeležbe na volitvah, da so lahko v kratkotrajnem obdobju rekonstrukcije do leta 1877 izvolili v kongres prve temnopolte predstavnike (dva senatorja in dvajset kongresnikov), so južnjaški demokrati s političnimi ukrepi na jugu omejevali pravico temnopoltih do udeležbe na volitvah. Pri tem so jih podprli severnjaki v zameno za podporo interesom ekonomskih elit. To so delali s strogim preverjanjem pismenosti in sprejemanjem davčnih pristojbin za registracijo državljanov pred glasovanjem. Revni in večinoma nepismeni temnopolti državljanji so tako izgubljali možnost politične participacije, izvoljeni temnopolti predstavniki pa posledično sedeže v kongresu. Tako so do začetka 20. stoletja temnopolte povsem izrinili iz zakonodajnih in sodnih vej oblasti na zvezni in državni ravni (Zinn, 2021, str. 195–196; Sinha, 2024; Foner, 2014).

Bogati belski veleposestniki niso nikoli preboleli izgube svoje »premične lastnine«, kakor so razumeli črnske sužnje, zaradi česar so postali nekonkurenčni v razmerju do svojih industrijskih tekmecev na severu. Da bi onemogočili kakršnokoli politično angažiranost temnopoltih državljanov, so spodbujali okrutno politiko linča vseh temnopoltih oseb, ki so jih prepoznali kot nevarne belski družbi na jugu. Tako je nastala ekstremna rasistična organizacija Ku Klux Klan (KKK), ki so jo sestavljali predvsem nekdanji pripadniki poražene vojske konfederacije ter nekateri njihovi demokratiški politiki na jugu. Posledično so se črnski Američani zaradi varnosti raje umaknili na obrobje družbe, v mestne četrti (gete) in na podeželje, kjer so živeli pozabljeni v revščini in pomanjkanju, kar je še dodatno olajšalo njihovo ekonomsko izkoriščanje in poglobljalo revščino (Zinn, 2021, str. 185–207; Sinha, 2024).

Šele gospodarska kriza leta 1929, ki je oslabilo interese ekonomskih elit ter poslabšala položaj vseh Američanov, je naznanila prihod velikih družbenih

sprememb. Politika nevmešavanja države v tržne zakonitosti in gospodarstvo je bila začasno opuščena. Javnost je pričakovala večjo angažiranost zveznih oblasti pri iskanju rešitev za odpravo in preprečevanje revščine na račun javnega zadolževanja. Na površje so priplavale ekstremne politične ideje in organizacije, ki so za obstoječo krizo iskale »grešne kozle« ter jih našle bodisi v obliki črncev in priseljencev bodisi v obliki »požrešnih kapitalistov«. Prihod novega predsednika ZDA Franklina Delana Roosevelta v Belo hišo leta 1933 je poleg politike *New Deal* (»Novi dogovor«) naznanil premike v demokratski stranki, katere pripadniki so začeli razmišljati o rešitvi črnske problematike in odpravi segregacije. Tako je leta 1941 Roosevelt s podpisom prve zvezne odredbe prepovedal diskriminacijo temnopoltih delavcev v državni veji orožarske industrije. Vladajoča demokratska stranka je bila v tem času še preveč razpeta med rasisti na jugu, kjer so imeli tradicionalno zagotovljeno večino glasov, in zagovorniki desegregacije na severu, t. i. *new dealerji*, ki so želeli z okrepitevijo zveznih pristojnosti odpraviti ekonomske vzroke za revščino in s tem gojišče za politične ekstremizme (Zinn, 2021, str. 390–405).

Najštevilčnejša politična organizacija, ki se je zavzemala za pravice temnopoltih, je bilo Nacionalno združenje za izboljšanje položaja temnopoltih (The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People – NAACP), ki je nastalo leta 1909. Združenje se je s pravnimi sredstvi in obujanjem civilne družbe zavzemalo za odpravo segregacije na ameriškem jugu kot tudi nasploh v državi (Verney & Sartain, 2009). Vendar pa so imeli tudi konkurenčno politično organizacijo, ki je bila v črnski skupnosti dokaj uspešna pri novačenju agitatorjev za svojo agendo. To je bila Komunistična partija ZDA. Omeniti je treba še sindikate, ki so v panogah, kjer so temnopolti delavci predstavljali pomemben delež zaposlenih, zagovarjali njihova stališča, a so se pri tem omejevali na delavske in socialne pravice. Prav zaradi načina delovanja komunistične partije, ki je izrecno sledila navodilom Moskve, črnsko prebivalstvo v obdobju med obema vojnama in nekaj let po drugi svetovni vojni ni imelo resnih političnih sogovornikov za uveljavitev pravic oz. enakopravnosti, saj so njihove politične akcije pasivni Američani in podporniki segregacije razumeli kot sovražno delovanje proti ameriškemu načinu življenja (Hall, 2009, str. 75–86; Solomon, 1998, str. 112–128).

Šele Trumanova administracija se je po drugi svetovni vojni resneje spoprijela s problemom pravne neenakopravnosti in diskriminacije temnopoltih državljanov. Tako se je začela počasna formalnopravna odprava ostankov segregacije, rasizma in predsodkov na zvezni ravni. Leta 1948 je Trumanova administracija z zvezno odredbo najprej odpravila segregacijo v ameriški vojski, saj so v prvi in drugi svetovni vojni njeni temnopolti pripadniki že večkrat dokazali svojo lojalnost ameriški domovini. Sledila je postopna zakonska prepoved linčanja. Vse to je sprožilo prvi upor demokratov na jugu zoper predsednika Trumana, ki pri svoji politiki desegregacije ni popuščal. Pojavilo se je tudi splošno gibanje za državljske pravice, ki je povežalo več različnih organizacij, nagovarjalo širšo javnost ter lobiralo pri politikih v Washingtonu. Najbolj prepoznaven obraz tega gibanja je postal mladi pastor Martin

Luther King, ki je vodil zmerno linijo mirnih protestov za dosego pravic (Ling, 2009, str. 59–74).

Prve ključne premike v smeri zagotavljanja formalnopravne enakopravnosti je naredilo vrhovno sodišče, ki je leta 1954 odpravilo rasno segregacijo na ameriških šolah. Sledili so protesti belskih staršev, ki so izpisovali svoje otroke iz šol, da ti ne bi sedeli skupaj v razredu s temnopoltimi otroci. V mnogih južnih zveznih državah do desegregacije v šolah sploh ni prišlo, saj so lokalne oblasti poskušale ignorirati navodila oziroma zavračati implementacijo zveznih odredb. Zvezna vlada je aktivirala svoje ukrepe in kmalu so morale lokalne oblasti popustiti. Ker je bila segregacija še globoko zakoreninjena v zavesti prebivalstva ameriškega juga, so v nevladnem združenju NAACP začeli izvajati organizirano kampanjo ozaveščanja javnosti o problemu rasizma in njegovem neskladja z osnovnimi ameriški vrednotami, zapisanimi v ustavi ZDA (Frederickson, 2001, str. 21–25; Glennon, 1991, str. 59–112).

Leta 1955 je temnopolta aktivistka Rosa Parks iz protesta zasedla prvo vrsto sedežev v avtobusu, čeprav so morali temnopolti sedeti zadaj. V odgovor na njeno aretacijo je sledil avtobusni bojkot, ki je postopno odpravil segregacijo v javnem prometu. Organizirani so bili podobni protesti, ki so postajali vse nasilnejši. Na protestih v Birminghamu v Alabami maja 1963 so policisti uporabili prisilna sredstva, policijske pse in gasilsko vodo, da bi razgnali mirne protestnike, ki jih je vodil Martin Luther King. Vendar so protestniki kljub policijskemu nasilju dosegli svoj cilj, saj so mestne oblasti kmalu za tem opustile politiko segregacije na javnem prostoru. Vrhunec napetosti je bil dosežen junija leta 1964, ko so v Misisipiju, eni izmed najbolj rasističnih južnih zveznih držav, izginili trije mladi aktivisti gibanja za državljanske pravice, ki so nagovarjali temnopolte, naj se registrirajo za prihajajoče volitve. Julija 1964 je vrhovno sodišče sprejelo naslednjo pomembno rzsodbo, s katero je podjetnikom prepovedalo izvajati segregacijo ali kakršnokoli obliko diskriminacije na podlagi rase, religije, spola in etničnega porekla. To je pomenilo, da lastniki restavracij, točilnic, hotelov, kinodvoran in drugih podjetij javnega značaja niso smeli ločevati gostov ali zavračati postrežbe na podlagi barve kože (Aiken et al., 2013, str. 383–399).

Ravnv v tem času so v ameriškem kongresu sprejemali nov zakon o državljanskih pravicah, ki bi dokončno uredil politični in pravni položaj temnopoltih Američanov. Čeprav sta se zamenjala dva predsednika, J. F. Kennedy z liberalnega severa in L. B. Johnson s konservativnega juga, kjer so imeli rasisti svoj vpliv, to ni vplivalo na proceduro sprejemanja zakonodajnega predloga o državljanskih pravicah. Nasploh je Kennedyjeva administracija na področju državljanskih pravic veliko obetala, saj je predsednik Kennedy junija 1963 podprl vložitev predloga zakona o državljanskih pravicah v predstavniskem domu ameriškega kongresa. Avgusta leta 1963 se je zgodil najbolj množičen pohod temnopoltih Američanov na Washington (250.000 udeležencev), kjer je prisotne nagovoril M. L. King in s svojim znamenitim govorom zahteval odpravo segregacije ter vzpostavitev enakopravnosti za temnopolte po vseh ZDA. Nekaj tednov za tem, 22. novembra 1963, so v teksaškem mestu Dallas na

ameriškem jugu ubili ameriškega predsednika Kennedyja, ki ga je nasledil Lyndon B. Johnson. Slednji je obljubil, da bo v počastitev spomina na Kennedyjevo dediščino nadaljeval s politiko desegregacije ameriške družbe in zagotovil podporo predlogu zakona o državljanskih pravicah (Caro, 2012, str. 430).

V nadaljevanju bomo spoznali, kako je kongresnik John Blatnik podpiral enakopravnost temnopoltnih, čeprav so mu nekateri iz njegovega osmega volilnega okrožja v Minnesoti očitali, da je zakon o državljanskih pravicah preveč škodljiv za ameriško družbo, saj naj bi jo razdvajal. Pripadniki slovenske etnične skupnosti večinomoma niso nasprotovali sprejemanju liberalne zakonodaje. Nastavke zakona so v kongresu sprejeli že leta 1957 in 1960, šele leta 1964 pa so ob pomoči omenjenih razsodb vrhovnega sodišča dokončno odpravili vsa neskladja in omogočili temnopoltnim državljanom lažjo integracijo v ameriško družbeno in politično življenje. Ameriške oblasti so poskusile zaradi čedalje večjega nezadovoljstva temnopoltega prebivalstva preusmeriti njihovo delovanje v volilne skrinjice, peticije in javna zborovanja, čeprav slednja že dolgo niso potekala mirno (Caro, 2012, str. 8–10).

SPREJEMANJE ZAKONODAJE O DRŽAVLJANSKIH PRAVICAH

Predsednik Kennedy je 11. junija 1963 zaradi nasilja in slabih razmer v državi nagovoril državljanke in jim predstavil rešitev rasnega problema. Čez teden dni je luč sveta ugledal predlog zakona o državljanskih pravicah. V predstavniškem domu ga je za demokrate vložil liberalni newyorški kongresnik Emanuel Celler, ki je takrat predsedoval odboru za pravosodje (Judiciary Committee) (Risen, 2014, str. 84).

Predlogi zakonov morajo biti v predstavniškem domu in senatu potrjeni v raznih odborih. Zakon o državljanskih pravicah je bil najprej potrjen na odboru za pravosodje, kjer je dobil večinsko podporo. Ko dobi predlog zakona zeleno luč v pristojnem odboru, ga uvrstijo na dnevni red odbora za poslovnik (Rules Committee), ki je najpomembnejši v predstavniškem domu, saj predlagani zakoni v njem po navadi obtičijo, če člani odbora ne dosežejo soglasja o načinu in času razprave v predstavniškem domu, ki je za razliko od senata omejen. Če v Odboru za poslovnik ne dosežejo dogovora, obstoji možnost zbiranja podpisov peticije za odpoklic (angl. *discharge petition*), ki jo mora podpisati večina članov predstavniškega doma, kar predstavlja 218 od 435 kongresnikov. Tako lahko predlog zakona kljub nasprotovanju odbora za proceduro uvrstijo na javno obravnavo v predstavniškem domu, kjer ga mora podpreti absolutna večina kongresnikov (Risen, 2014, str. 135; Caro, 2012, str. 346).

Postopek sprejemanja zakona v senatu je podoben predstavniškemu domu, saj ga najprej obravnava ustrezni senatni odbor, potem pa gre na javno obravnavo in glasovanje. Edina razlika med predstavniškim domom in senatom je v tem, da imajo senatorji neomejen čas razprave, kar pomeni, da ne potrebujejo odbora za poslovnik, ki bi določil čas in način razprave. V obeh domovih, senatu in predstavniškem domu,

se izkušeni politiki poslužujejo raznih oblik zavlačevanja, t. i. obstrukcije. V predstavnem domu najpomembnejšo vlogo obstruiranja opravi odbor za proceduro, ki lahko določen zakon zadrži, preden ga pošlje naprej na glasovanje. V senatu obstrukcijo izražajo v obliki obstrukcijskega govora brez možnosti prekinitve (angl. *filibuster*). Namen obstrukcijskega govora je zadržati sprejetje zakona do volitev in novega razmerja sil v kongresu, ki bi nato določen zakon zavrnil ali spravil nazaj v čakalno vrsto (Risen, 2014, str. 8–12).

Blatnik je bil kot član predstavnškega doma v času vlaganja zakona o državljan-
skih pravicah predsedujoči Študijskemu združenju demokratske stranke (Democratic Study Group). Združenje je predstavljalo liberalne demokrate, ki so takrat s pogajanjem z naprednimi republikanci velikokrat dosegli alternativno večino za svoje zakonske predloge (Blatnik, 1964a). DSG je bila skupina mladih demokratskih politikov, ki so se odločili prekiniti s takratno tradicijo demokratske stranke, ki je v zameno za podporo zvezni vladi na jugu ohranjala segregacijo in rasizem. V 60. letih 20. stoletja je prišlo do preloma. Podporniki rasističnih politik v demokratski stranki so dobili naziv Diksikrati (angl. *Dixiecrats*), kar se je nanašalo na južnjaške države, ki so se leta 1948 prvič uprle Trumanovi administraciji, ko je ta začela z desegregacijo ameriške vojske (Frederickson, 2001, str. 21–25, 324–325). John Blatnik jih je omenjal v pismu Fredericku S. Grahmu in je z njim celo soglašal, da bi jih bilo najbolje izključiti iz stranke, a menil je, da to ne bi bila najbolj modra politična poteza in da bi jih bilo treba najprej omejiti pri sodelovanju v pomembnih kongresnih odborih (Graham 1964; Blatnik 1964b).

Na položaju predsednika Študijskega združenja demokratske stranke je imel kongresnik Blatnik pomembno vlogo pri prenašanju zakona o državljan-
skih pravicah iz odborov za pravosodje in za proceduro na razpravo v predstavnem domu. Medtem ko zakon v odboru za pravosodje ni imel posebnih težav, se je zatikalo v odboru za proceduro, saj je tega vodil južnjaški demokrat iz Virginije Howard W. Smith. Tako so na Blatnikov poštni naslov začela prihajati številna pisma, v katerih so ga državljani prosili, naj kot vpliven liberalni demokrat sproži pobudo o peticiji za odpoklic. Poleg preprostih državljanov, ki so budno spremljali dogajanje v predstavnem domu, velja na tem mestu omeniti, da se je Blatniku oglasil sindikat delavcev gume, plute, linoleja in plastike Amerike (United Rubber, Cork, Linoleum and Plastic Workers of America) oziroma njegov predstavnik George Burdon iz Akrona v Ohio, ki je v imenu 180.000 članov sindikata zahteval sprožitev peticije za odpoklic, da bi zakon o državljan-
skih pravicah čim prej poslali na glasovanje (Ash, 1963; Burdon, 1963; Carter, 1963). Blatniku se je s podobnim predlogom oglasil tudi Fredrik A. Schi-
otz, ki je kot predstavnik ameriške luteranske cerkve podpiral peticijo za odpoklic. Blatnik mu je 27. januarja 1964 odgovoril, da je akcija omenjene peticije že stekla, a da niso zbrali dovolj podpisov, saj so nekateri člani republikanske stranke preveč omahovali. Vendar je že glas o peticiji v javnosti dosegel svoj učinek, saj je omogočil izvajanje javnega pritiska na predsedujočega odboru za proceduro, kongresnika

Smitha. Ta je na koncu moral popustiti in poslati zakon na obravnavo in glasovanje (Kimball, 2021, str. 232–238; Blatnik, 1964a; Schoitz, 1964).

Zakon o državljskih pravicah je bil 10. februarja 1964 naposled sprejet v predstavnem domu z večino: z 290 glasovi proti 130. Blatnik je na zahvalna pisma, ki so prihajala na njegov naslov, odgovarjal s Kennedyjevim citatom, da so s tem dosegli veliko zmago, s katero so zagotovili »prvorazredno državljanstvo za vse Američane ne glede na njihovo barvo kože« (Blatnik, 1964c). Blatniku se je zahvalil tudi strankarski kolega Arne E. Ahlgren iz Minnesote, ki je bil sekretar lokalnega strankarskega odbora v okrožju Grand Lake. Pri tem je Blatnik v odgovoru poudaril, da je šlo za zmago z veliko razliko v korist zakonu. Vsi so namreč pričakovali tesen rezultat. Po Blatnikovem mnenju je bila tega dne dosežena pomembna zmaga na področju človekovih pravic, najpomembnejša v zadnjih sto letih. Na ta način se je Amerika približala idealu svobode in pravičnosti za vse (Ahlgren, 1964; Blatnik 1964č). Predlog zakona o državljskih pravicah je bil 19. junija 1964 naposled sprejet še v senatu s 73 glasovi proti 27 (Caro, 2012, str. 568–569). Nekateri južnjaški senatorji so poskušali pred glasovanjem odlagati sprejetje predlaganega zakona s podaljševanjem oz. obstrukcijo razprave, ki je prišla v zgodovino kot najdaljše zavlačevanje v kongresu, vendar so na koncu popustili, saj so liberalni demokrati senatorji pod vodstvom Huberta Humphreyja iz Minnesote predlagali kompromisni amandma, ki je nekoliko omilil zvezna pooblastila pri implementaciji zakona na ravni zveznih držav. Uporni južnjaški demokrati so bili zadovoljni z izplenom, zato so prenehali z zavlačevanjem in obstrukcijskim govorom. Predstavniški dom je moral z dodanim amandmajem še enkrat potrditi zakonodajni predlog. Tako so 2. julija 1964 kongresniki v predstavnem domu z 289 glasovi za in 126 glasovi proti potrdili predlagani zakonodajni predlog, ki ga je predsednik Lyndon B. Johnson še istega dne podpisal, da je stopil v veljavo (Risen, 2014, str. 309; Kimball, 2021, str. 253–254).

POZITIVNI KOMENTARJI DRŽAVLJANOV OB SPREJEMANJU ZAKONODAJE O DRŽAVLJSKIH PRAVICAH

Državljsani so se pogosto obračali na Blatnika z raznimi dopisi, vprašanji in prošnjami za pomoč. V času sprejemanja zakonodaje o državljskih pravicah so se oglašali tudi s svojo podporo in spodbudnimi besedami. Na njegov naslov so tako prihajale izjave cerkvenih organizacij, ki so izrekale podporo njegovemu delu v času sprejemanja zakonodaje o državljskih pravicah. Civilna družba in verske organizacije, s katerimi je bil Blatnik v stiku, so predstavljale temeljni kamen civilnega gibanja za državljske pravice.

Katoliško združenje za svetovni mir (Catholic Association for International Peace – CAIP), ki je imelo sedež v Washingtonu, je bilo prvo večje združenje, ki se je obrnilo na kongresnika Blatnika in mu ponudilo pomoč v obliki argumentov za razpravo, ki bi jih lahko uporabil v kongresni razpravi o zakonodajnem predlogu o državljskih

pravica. Posrednik pri omenjeni komunikaciji je bil profesor Terrence J. Murphy iz katoliškega kolidža St. Thomas v St. Paulu, Minnesota. V spremnem pismu je profesor Murphy Blatniku zagotovil, da katoliške organizacije v ZDA podpirajo zakonodajni predlog o državljanskih pravicah. Zapisal je še, da svetovni mir ne bo mogoč, dokler ne dosežejo enakopravnosti in odpravijo vseh oblik rasne diskriminacije v ZDA (Murphy, 1963). V priloženem pismu je katoliško združenje navajalo, da so ameriški škofje že leta 1958 sprejeli posebno deklaracijo »Diskriminacija in krščanska vest«, v kateri so ameriško javnost opozorili na breme rasizma. Problem je bil po njihovem mnenju rešljiv samo s pomočjo moralne vzgoje. Škofje so v deklaraciji obsodili posameznike, ki so se sklicevali na krščanstvo in obenem opravičevali rasizem. Zapisali so, da krščanstvo ni združljivo z nobenim sovražnim govorom in rasizmom ali s kakršnokoli obliko diskriminacije človeka kot posameznika. Tako so že leta 1958 ugotovili, da glavno oviro za odpravo rasizma predstavlja »vsiljena segregacija«, ki jo lahko odpravi le nova zakonodaja o državljanskih pravicah. Škofi so poudarjali, da so bili temnopolti Američani zaradi vsiljene segregacije močno prikrajšani za kakovostno izobrazbo, pošteno plačilo za delo, ustrezno stanovanjsko nastanitev, udeležbo na volitvah, dostojanstvo in najosnovnejše človekove pravice do nedotakljivosti življenja (CAIP, 1963).

Katoliške organizacije, ki so podpirale sprejetje zakonodajnega predloga o državljanskih pravicah, ni toliko skrbela morebitna nevarnost izbruha nasilja, izguba ugleda ali ekonomsko osiromašenje države v primeru neuspešne implementacije zakona. Najbolj jih je skrbelo moralno breme samega obstoja segregacije, ki je ameriško družbo kot celoto oviralo pri njenem razvoju (CAIP, 1963). V tem smislu je združenje CAIP citiralo »Pastirsko pismo«, ki so ga ameriški škofi objavili 23. avgusta 1963, le nekaj dni pred največjim črnskim pohodom na Washington. V »Pastirskem pismu« so škofi izrecno poudarili, da se Rimokatoliška cerkev s papežem na čelu zavzema za pravično in enakopravno ureditev, ki bo odpravila vse oblike diskriminacije ljudi na podlagi barve njihove kože. Profesor Murphy je Blatniku v zaključku spremnega pisma dodal, da je katolikom druga najpomembnejša vrednota bratstvo med ljudmi, ki bo odpravilo rasizem in segregacijo (Blatnik, 1963a). Kongresniku Blatniku je pisala tudi Roberta Braddock iz Minneapolisa, ki je ob nedeljah redno hodila v tamkajšnjo katoliško cerkev na pridige župnika Websterja Barnetta. Slednji se je udeležil pohoda na Washington 28. avgusta 1963, kjer se je zbralo četrto milijona zagovornikov gibanja za državljanske pravice. Braddockova je Blatniku napisala, da jo je angažiranost duhovnika Barnetta prepričala, da je treba problem segregacije v ZDA čim prej rešiti, zato je podpirala Blatnikova prizadevanja za sprejetje zakonodajnega predloga o državljanskih pravicah v predstavnem domu (Braddock, 1963; Blatnik, 1963b).

S podobnim pozivom so se na kongresnika Blatnika obračali tudi predstavniki protestantskih verskih organizacij. Ko je zakonodajni predlog o državljanskih pravicah zastal v odboru za proceduro, so se v 8. kongresnem okrožju v Minnesoti angažirali člani metodistične cerkve. Pastor John C. Blackford je decembra 1963

začel zbirati podpise za čimprejšnje pošiljanje zakonodajnega predloga na glasovanje v predstavniki dom (Blackford, 1964). Skoraj istočasno se je angažiral še predsednik ameriške luteranske cerkve, pastor Fredrik A. Schoitz, ki je predlagal, da se morajo kongresniki čimprej organizirati, da zberejo podpise za pripustitev zakonodajnega predloga, ki je obstal v odboru za proceduro, v nadaljnji postopek (Schoitz, 1964). Podpisniki peticije metodistične cerkve so menili, da je treba spremeniti zakon o reparacijah, saj bi morali pripadniki temnopolte skupnosti v ZDA zahtevati odškodnino za njihovo načrtno diskriminiranje. Podpisniki so zahtevali sprejetje učinkovitejše socialne zakonodaje, ki bi pomagala utrditi družbeno-politične pravice, ki so izhajale iz zakonodajnega predloga o državljskih pravicah. Pripadniki metodistične cerkve v Minnesoti so kot državljani upali, da bo v bližnji prihodnosti prišlo do harmonije in spoštovanja med ljudmi. Bali so se, da bo Amerika v nasprotnem primeru izgubila svoj ugled na mednarodnem prizorišču. Blatniku so napisali, da bo uspešen rezultat odvisen od njegove energije, poguma in resnosti (Blatnik, 1964d). Blatnik se je pastoru Blackfordu in članom njegove kongregacije v Minnesoti zahvalil za podporo in odgovoril, da so bile njihove molitve nazadnje uslišane, saj je bil zakonodajni predlog v času, ko je Blatnik prejel njihovo pismo, že sprejet v predstavniki domu (Blatnik, 1964e).

Poleg že omenjenega združenja sindikata ameriških delavcev v gumarski in plastični industriji so se na Blatnika obrnili tudi predstavniki drugih večjih sindikalnih organizacij v ZDA. Tako se je na kongresnika obrnilo vodstvo konference o državljskih pravicah (Leadership Conference on Civil Rights), ki je delovala v okviru največje sindikalne organizacije v državi, AFL – CIO (American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations), in je združevala več kot 60 različnih delavskih organizacij po vseh ZDA. V imenu vodstva omenjene konference so Andrew Biemiller, Jack Conway, Clarence Mitchell in Joseph L. Rauh štiri dni pred glasovanjem o zakonodajnem predlogu v predstavniki domu prosili kongresnika Blatnika, naj nikar ne kloni pred pritiski in naj stori vse, kar je v njegovi moči, da preprečijo obstrukcije in druge oblike zavlačevanja pri sprejemanju zakonodajnega predloga (Biemiller et al., 1964). Blatnik je sindikalnim predstavnikom konference odgovoril, da se je kot predsedujoči Študijskemu združenju demokratske stranke potrdil pri koordiniranju naprednih sil demokratske in republikanske stranke v predstavniki domu, ki so zakonodajnemu predlogu naposled zagotovili večinsko podporo. Prav tako je v odgovoru poudaril, da je koordiniral vse pomembne akcije pri zavračanju številnih amandmajev, s katerimi so želeli oslabiti zakonodajni predlog (Blatnik, 1964f). Po končanem glasovanju 10. februarja 1964 se je sekretar konference o državljskih pravicah Arnold Aronson vljudno zahvalil kongresniku Blatniku za njegov trud in delo, ki ga je opravil v predstavniki domu (Aronson, 1964). Blatnik se mu je za kompliment zahvalil in v odgovoru posebej poudaril, da so z izglasovanjem zakonodajnega predloga o državljskih pravicah dosegli največjo zmago na področju državljskih pravic v ZDA v zadnjih sto letih (Blatnik, 1964g).

Da je imel Blatnik pomembno vlogo pri uspešnem sprejemanju zakonodajnega predloga o državljskih pravicah v predstavniškem domu, dokazuje tudi posebno pismo Emanuela Cellerja, predsednika odbora za pravosodje, ki se je v njem zahvalil Blatniku kot predsedujočemu Študijskemu združenju demokratske stranke (Celler, 1964). Blatnik se mu je zahvalil za pismo in poudaril, da je bilo zadnjih deset dni razprave pred sprejetjem zakonodajnega predloga stresnih in napornih. Vendar pa boja še ni bilo konec, saj je moral zakonodajni predlog predstavniškega doma prestati še obravnavo in glasovanje v senatu (Caro, 2012, str. 558–559; Blatnik, 1964h).

Na Blatnika sta se obrnila tudi dva člana združenja NAACP, Anita Belka in Andrew R. Larson, ki sta živelata v njegovem 8. kongresnem okrožju v Minnesoti. Oba sta v času sprejemanja zakonodajnega predloga spodbujala vse kongresnike, še posebej pa Blatnika, naj v razpravi vztrajajo pri ohranitvi izvirnega zakonodajnega predloga, saj so želeli nasprotniki z amandmaji oslabiti njegovo učinkovitost (Blatnik, 1964c). Blatnik se je v pismu obema prizadevnima članoma najpomembnejšega združenja v gibanju državljskih pravic posebej zahvalil in pojasnil svojo pomembno vlogo ter izrazil upanje, da bo zakonodajni predlog po sprejetju v predstavniškem domu enako uspešen tudi pri sprejemanju v senatu (Larson, 1964). Podobno je Blatnik odgovoril Fischerju Braunu, predstavniku Ameriške zveze za državljanske pravice (American Civil Liberties Union) iz Minnesote. Tudi njemu se je zahvalil za spodbudne besede in poudaril, da so v predstavniškem domu uspešno zavrnili najmanj 100 amandmajev nasprotnikov, ki so želeli zakonodajni predlog oslabiti (Braun, 1964; Blatnik, 1964i).

V celotnem obdobju od junija 1963, ko je bil zakonodajni predlog o državljskih pravicah vložen v predstavniškem domu, do njegove potrditve 10. februarja 1964 so se na Blatnika obračali tudi številni posamezniki in simpatizerji iz Minnesote. Pisma posameznikov so bila kratka, večinoma ročno napisana ali poslana v obliki telegrama. Tako se mu je 4. septembra 1963, ko je bil zakonodajni predlog v obravnavi odbora za pravosodje, oglasila Catharina S. Boyles iz St. Paula v Minnesoti. Pisala mu je v upanju, da bo poleg podpore omenjenega zakonodajnega predloga zagotovil tudi dostop do javnega stanovanjskega sklada, brez katerega po njenem mnenju sprejeti zakon ne bo imel zagotovljenega uspeha (Boyles, 1963). Blatnik ni podal konkretnega odgovora glede omenjene stanovanjske problematike, a je poudaril, da bo predstavniški dom s sprejetjem zakonodajnega predloga o državljskih pravicah naredil pomemben korak naprej pri reševanju številnih drugih socialnih problemov povprečnih Američanov. Kennedy in kasneje tudi Johnson sta namreč dajala prednost reševanju socialnih težav povprečnih Američanov (Blatnik, 1963c). 8. septembra 1963 je kongresnika Blatniku v pismu podprla tudi Marian Christensen iz Dulutha v Minnesoti, v upanju, da ga bo opogumila, za kar se ji je Blatnik zahvalil in pojasnil, v kakšni fazi je zakonodajni predlog v predstavniškem domu (Christensen, 1963; Blatnik, 1963č). Zanimivo je tudi pismo Rexa Hudsona, ki je bil na kolidžu St. Scholastica v Duluthu zaposlen kot predstavnik za stike z javnostjo. Njegovo pismo izraža podporo zakonodajnem predlogu o državljskih pravicah, za kar se mu je Blatnik tudi zahvalil (Blatnik, 1964j).

Na kongresnika Blatnika so se obračali tudi predstavniki lokalnih skupnosti iz Minnesote. Iz enega izmed teh pisem je mogoče razbrati, kako jih je skrbela zdravstvena in zaposlovalna politika zvezne vlade. Leo G. Dominic, predsednik mestnega sveta Minneapolisa, je Blatniku pisal, naj poskrbi tudi za nadaljnjo obravnavo drugega pomembnega zakonodajnega predloga, imenovanega King-Anderson oziroma H.R. 3920, ki bi s financiranjem zdravstvene oskrbe iz pokojninskega sklada omogočil brezplačno zdravstveno oskrbo za upokoјence, starejše od 65 let. Vendar pa predlog ni bil nikoli poslan na razpravo v predstavniki dom, saj ni dobil zadostne podpore pristojnega odbora. Takrat zvezna vlada še ni mogla zagotoviti jasne sheme za financiranje takšne zdravstvene oskrbe. Blatnik je v pismu Dominicu odgovoril, da je za prvi korak najpomembnejša odprava segregacije v ZDA, ostali pomembni zakonodajni predlogi, ki zadevajo socialne in zaposlovalne politike, pa naj bi prišli na vrsto kasneje (Blatnik, 1963d).

NEGATIVNI KOMENTARJI DRŽAVLJANOV OB SPREJEMANJU ZAKONODAJE O DRŽAVLJANSKIH PRAVICAH

Večina negativnih odzivov na delovanje kongresnika Johna Blatnika v času sprejemanja zakona o državlјanskih pravicah je bila posledica predsodkov in pomanjkanja razumevanja zakonskega predloga. Analiza korespondence ne kaže na prisotnost organizirane skupine, ki bi nameravala spremeniti Blatnikovo mnenje ali ga prisiliti k umiku podpore zakonu. Šlo je predvsem za posameznike, ki so izražali svoje pesimistične in kritične poglede na dogodke v ZDA in tudi širše.

Najpogostejši argument proti zakonodajnem predlogu o državlјanskih pravicah se je nanašal na nasprotovanje poseganju zvezne vlade v pravice zveznih držav, da same odločajo o svoji notranji politiki. Tako sta menila tudi poslovneža John A. Buxton in John Billy iz Minnesote, ki sta spomladi let 1963, ko je bil predlog zakona v obravnavi v senatu, pisala senatorju Hubertu H. Humphreyju, v vednost pa je bilo njuno pismo posredovano tudi kongresniku Blatniku (Blatnik, 1964k). Buxton je v pismu zapisal, da se zakonodajni predlog nanaša večinoma na zvezno intervencijo proti državam, medtem ko naj bi se na državlјanske pravice nanašalo samo 10 odstotkov vsebine zakona. Predlagal je, naj se razmerja vsebine predlaganega zakona obrnejo v prid državlјanskim pravicam, ne pa v prid povečanja pristojnosti zvezne vlade (Buxton, 1964). Kritiki so v tem pogledu kritizirali vmešavanje zvezne vlade v podjetništvo državlјanov, saj je zakonodajni predlog predvideval visoke kazni za podjetja, ki ga ne bi spoštovala. Namenoma je bil napisan tako, da so lahko zvezne oblasti ukrepale proti upornim državam in posameznim podjetnikom, pa tudi proti lokalnim in mestnim oblastem, ki ne bi upoštevale zakona in bi še naprej diskriminirale temnopolte Američane. Za te posameznike so bili argumenti o pravicah držav in osebnih svoboščinah priročen izgovor za nadaljnje formalnopravno ohranjanje segregacije v ameriški družbi (Blatnik, 1964l).

V tem smislu je Blatniku pisal Francis M. Geary iz St. Paula v Minnesoti. Kongresniku je v pismu izrazil skrb, da je zakonodajni predlog zaradi poseganja zvezne vlade v pravice držav in osebne svoboščine podjetnikov neustaven. Bal se je tudi, da bi Amerika z implementacijo takšnega zakona postala »socialistična ekonomija« in »komunistični režim« (Geary, 1963). Podobne skrbi je izrazil William R. Hussey iz Dulutha, ki je protestiral proti zakonodajnem predlogu zaradi njegove »neameriške« naravnost, saj naj zakonodajni posegi spodkopavali ameriški način življenja (Hussey, 1963). Najbolj zanimiv je bil predlog gospe Marry Brayden iz Minnesote, ki je glede na pomembnost odločitve za prihodnost države predlagala, naj se o zakonodajnem predlogu izreče ljudstvo na volitvah oziroma referendumu (Brayden, 1964). Blatnik ji je odgovoril, da se morajo takšni problemi reševati v kongresu, saj bo zakonodajni predlog odpravil neustavnost in krivično diskriminacijo temnopoltih, ki so bili dolga desetletja obravnavani kot drugorazredni državljani (Blatnik, 1964m).

Svoje skeptično in provokativno mnenje o zakonodajnem predlogu je Blatniku poslal tudi Robert W. House, uslužbenec oddelka za glasbo na Univerzi v Minnesoti. Motila ga je sporna določba zakonodajnega predloga, ki je posegala v osebne odločitve navadnih državljanov. House je dobil vtis, da je bil zakonodajni predlog napisan v korist vladajoče demokratske stranke, ki naj bi v zameno pričakovala glasove temnopoltih Američanov. Spomnil je na primer evropskih priseljencev, ki so se ob prihodu v ZDA znašli v podobnem neenakopravnem položaju, a so premagali vse ovire, saj so vlagali velike napore v samoizobraževanje in politično delovanje. Po Housovem mnenju so bili temnopolti Američani premalo zainteresirani, da bi si z izobraževanjem in političnim delovanjem sami zagotovili svoje pravice. Podpiral je »naraven proces integracije«, po njegovem edini pravi način, medtem ko naj bi zakonodajni predlog o državljskih pravicah uvedel prisilno politično integracijo, ki je želela problem rasizma rešiti po hitrem postopku. House se je bal, da bi s predlagano politično integracijo začeli v javne, državne in zvezne ustanove načrtno zaposlovati samo temnopolte Američane, s čimer bi povzročili diskriminacijo belcev, zato bi morali Američani obdržati osnovno pravico svobodne izbire in izobraževanja. Menil je, da dokler lahko Američani sami odločajo o tem, v kateri trgovini bodo kupovali določene izdelke, v katerem ekonomskem razredu bodo potovali, kakšen avto bodo kupili, s kom se bodo družili itd., bo proces integracije temnopoltih potekal naravno in postopno, brez nasilja in večjih protestov. Po njegovem mnenju zakonodajni predlog ne bi smel posegati v svobodo izbire večine Američanov, kar ga je spominjalo na iluzijo o brezrazredni družbi. To naj bi bilo podobno, kot če bi sprejeli zakon, ki bi zahteval, da morajo revne ljudi sprejemati v ekskluzivne klube, čeprav storitev ne bi mogli plačati. Po njegovem si ZDA v tistem obdobju mogle privoščiti politične integracije, ker bi to lahko družbo pahnilo v še večjo krizo in nasilje. Na koncu pisma je poudaril, da podpira odpravo segregacije in diskriminacije, ampak s premišljenimi ukrepi. Predlagal je iskanje pozitivnih načinov reševanja diskriminacije, kar bi vključevalo izobraževanje. Po njegovem je bilo na koncu vse odvisno od temnopoltih državljanov, saj ameriška družba temelji

na ideji, da se mora vsak posameznik boriti za svojo srečo, in to naj bi bilo vodilo za reševanje problema diskriminacije (House, 1963).

Blatnik je skrbno preučil Houseve predloge in mu odgovoril, da je politična enakopravnost nekaj povsem drugega od ekonomske. Ni se spuščal v podrobnosti, ampak je na splošno zapisal, da temnopoltim niti ekonomska moč ne pomaga rešiti problema diskriminacije, saj bi jih lahko zaradi državne zakonodaje, tradicije ali predsodkov kljub najvišji možni ponudbi zavrnili. To je bil po njegovem le eden izmed mnogih primerov tega, kako blaginja ne rešuje problema rasne diskriminacije, čeprav naj bi pregovorno denar in posli ugajali vsem. Blatnik je še dodal, da zakonodajni predlog nikjer ne določa, da je treba vse belce v javni upravi čez noč nadomestiti s temnopoltimi. Če želi Amerika predstavljati demokratični model, po katerem naj bi se zgledoval preostali svet, je morala po njegovem najprej rešiti problem politične in pravne neenakopravnosti svojih temnopoltih državljanov (Blatnik, 1963e).

Podobno slabo razumevanje zakonodajnega predloga je odražalo pismo delavca in sindikalista Russella Howella, ki je v njem trdil, da bi se morala zvezna vlada ukvarjati z reševanjem revščine, ki pa po njegovem mnenju ni bila posledica politične neenakopravnosti, temveč krivičnih družbenih razmerij med kapitalom in delom. Menil je, da se politični problem temnopoltih ne more rešiti na pošten način, saj so boj temnopoltih mnogi razumeli kot orodje komunistične partije, ki naj bi želela spodkopati politični in družbeni sistem ZDA. Zato je izrazil skrb nad dogajanjem v državi. Howell je obsojal rasizem v vseh njegovih oblikah – izrazil je tudi zgražanje nad policijskim nasiljem, do katerega je maja 1963 prišlo v Birminghamu v Alabami, ko so policisti razgnali mirne protestnike – a je kljub temu menil, da bo sprejetje zakonodajnega predloga o državljskih pravicah Ameriko pahnilo v še več nasilja, državljsko vojno ali morda invazijo Rusije in Kitajske na oslabljene ZDA. Na koncu je dodal, da bo vseeno volil za demokrate in Kennedyja, ker morajo ljudje, ki so določen proces začeli, tega tudi zaključiti (Howell, 1963). Zaradi odsotnosti Blatnika je Howellu odgovoril njegov administrativni asistent in kasnejši kongresnik James L. Oberstar, ki je obljubil, da bo nekatere vidike pisma posredoval kongresniku takoj, ko se vrne (Blatnik, 1963f).

ZAKLJUČEK

Osebna korespondenca omogoča poglobljen vpogled v politično delovanje Johna Blatnika v času sprejemanja zakona o državljskih pravicah, ki je odpravil pravno diskriminacijo temnopoltih Američanov. Iz dostopne korespondence je razviden njegov doprinos kot predsedujočega Študijskemu združenju demokratske stranke. Nanj so se s pozivi za sprejetje zakona obračali številni pomembni predstavniki ameriškega javnega življenja, pa tudi navadni ljudje. V korespondencah se je osredotočal na bistvo problema, ki je bilo po njegovem mnenju slabo poznavanje vsebine zakona. Blatnik je imel dostop do vseh pomembnih virov informiranja ter vplivnih

politikov in skupin, ki so delovale v korist sprejemanja zakona. Lahko domnevamo, da je Blatnik večino pisem iz korespondence osebno narekoval tajnici. V tem prispevku je bilo prikazano, da so bili kongresniki v ZDA primorani odgovarjati volivcem svojega okrožja, tudi če se z njimi niso strinjali. Primer zakona o državljskih pravicah ni bil izbran naključno, saj se predsodki na podlagi barve kože, rase, vere ali etnične pripadnosti pojavljajo še danes. Blatnik je kot Američan slovenskega porekla odigral pomembno vlogo pri odpravi zakonsko utemeljene diskriminacije v ZDA, kar je temnopoltim Američanom (zlasti na jugu ZDA) omogočilo več možnosti za doseganje višje stopnje izobrazbe ter dostop do zdravstva, stanovanj in dela. Seveda pa se s sprejetjem zakona ni spremenila tudi miselnost ljudi, zato je bilo pomembno nadaljnje osveščanje javnosti o pomenu enakopravnosti. Omenjeni zakon je vse to tudi omogočil.

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SUMMARY

REP. JOHN BLATNIK IN THE FIGHT FOR CIVIL RIGHTS IN THE UNITED STATES

Milan Mrđenović, Matjaž Klemenčič

This article on the activities of Congressman John Blatnik was prepared based on archival materials housed at the Minnesota Historical Society in St. Paul. Congressman Blatnik's personal collection includes over 100 archival boxes. A brief introductory review of the material revealed that Blatnik was a very active congressman who must be researched in more detail. In his personal correspondence, Blatnik maintained many important contacts, especially with his constituent base, while also responding to critics who wrote to him regularly. In this context, the article also sheds light on the lesser-known side of John Blatnik's activities during the passage of the important Civil Rights Act between 1963 and 1964. During Blatnik's political activity, Slovenian Americans constituted a significant part of his 8th Congressional District.

The article shows how Congressman John Blatnik publicly sided with the supporters of rights for black Americans despite accusations by some critics that the Civil Rights Act would divide American society. On June 11, 1963, because of the extremely aggravated conditions in the country, President John F. Kennedy addressed the nation and presented them with his solution to the racial problem that existed in the South: He proposed legal desegregation of the United States. Thus, a week later, the first Civil Rights Bill saw the light of day but had to overcome all the obstacles of congressional committees and debates.

As chairman of the Democratic Study Group, John Blatnik tried hard to be a link between influential politicians in Washington and Democratic members of Congress while appealing to his constituents back home. In his correspondence, he explained to each of them the positive consequences that would result from the passage of the Civil Rights Act. As an American of Slovenian descent, John Blatnik thus played an important role in ending legislated discrimination against black Americans in the United States.

MEDNARODNO KROŽENJE IN IZMENJAVA NAJVIŠJE IZOBRAŽENIH ALI BEG MOŽGANOV?

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IZVLEČEK

Mednarodno kroženje in izmenjava najvišje izobraženih ali beg možganov?

Z izseljevanjem mladih, ki so vse bolj izobraženi, se je v zadnjih letih okrepil javni diskurz o begu možganov. Avtorice v članku osvetljujejo stanje na področju izseljevanja najvišje izobraženih v Sloveniji in s statističnimi podatki prikažejo njihovo migracijsko dinamiko v zadnjih desetih letih. S kratkim pregledom rezultatov raziskav od šestdesetih let dvajsetega stoletja naprej primerjamo današnjo situacijo z razmerami v preteklosti. Z rezultati najnovejše opravljene raziskave na temo bega možganov predstavimo, kako na razloge za odhod iz Slovenije, možnosti za vrnitev in mednarodno sodelovanje gledajo tisti, ki danes živijo v tujini ali pa so se iz tujine vrnili v Slovenijo.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: kroženje znanja, kroženje možganov, beg možganov, mobilnost, doktor znanosti

ABSTRACT

Brain Circulation and Brain Exchange or Brain Drain?

In recent years, the emigration of increasingly educated young people has intensified the public discourse on brain drain. This article sheds light on the situation of emigration of the most highly educated in Slovenia and uses statistics to show their migration dynamics over the last ten years. By briefly reviewing the results of research since the 1960s, we compare the situation today with that of the past. Based on the results of the latest survey on brain drain, we present how those who currently live or have lived abroad and have returned to Slovenia see the reasons for leaving Slovenia and the prospects for return or international cooperation.

KEY WORDS: circulation of knowledge, brain circulation, brain drain, mobility, PhD

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UVOD

V zadnjih letih se v Sloveniji vse več govori o t. i. begu možganov, s čimer je mišljeno odhajanje najbolj izobraženega kadra, med njimi tudi znanstvenic in znanstvenikov, v tujino. V javnost prihajajo podatki o množičnem izseljevanju, ki so naravnost osupljivi. Je situacija res takšna, kot se zdi na prvi pogled? Ali je beg možganov nov pojav? Smo na področju izseljevanja najvišje izobraženih naredili dovolj v smislu naslavljanja te problematike in iskanja odgovorov, kako v tujini obogateno znanje pridobiti nazaj? Problem ni preprost in zahteva celovito obravnavo. S pričujočim člankom želimo predstaviti kontinuiteto soočanja s tem izzivom, pri čemer obravnavamo predvsem vprašanje, kako preprečiti dolgoročne negativne družbeno-ekonomске posledice tega pojava.

Naslavljanje (ne)odhajanja za znanost ni enostavno, saj je pridobivanje novih znanj in izkušenj v tujini nujnost v sodobnem globaliziranem svetu, predvsem v kontekstu znanosti, ki je sama po sebi nujno mednarodno strokovno področje. V tem pogledu je treba spodbujati odhajanje kadrov v tujino, a na načine, ki ne vodijo v beg možganov, ampak zagotavljajo pogoje za »kroženje možganov« oziroma najširše razumljeno kroženje znanja.¹ Kljub temu je v določenih kontekstih potreben razmislek o izzivih odhajanja za stalno in njegovih posledicah, saj lahko večja intenzivnost bega možganov negativno vpliva na domače gospodarsko in družbeno življenje in v okviru tega razvoj znanosti.

O nujnosti internacionalizacije znanosti v povezavi z begom možganov se je pri nas govorilo že pred več kot tridesetimi leti, v drugi polovici osemdesetih let dvajsetega stoletja, najpogosteje v povezavi z načrti o mednarodni, a v Sloveniji institucionalno utemeljeni Tretji slovenski univerzi:²

Znanost je po svoji naravi nujno internacionalna. [...] Tretjo slovensko univerzo moramo zato začeti graditi doma. Kakršnokoli sodelovanje s slovenskimi izobraženci v tujini v okviru Tretje univerze bo ostalo na obrobju znanstvenega razvoja, če se ne bodo hkrati doma urejale razmere, ki beg možganov oziroma intelektualne migracije sploh povzročajo. [...] Zato pa postaja danes imperativ znanstvenega razvoja znanstveno-raziskovalna politika nacionalnih vlad oziroma preiščljeno, za družbeni in nacionalni razvoj relevantno usmerjanje znanstvenega razvoja, ki se mora odražati zlasti v ustvarjanju takšnih družbenih pogojev, ki znanstveno-raziskovalni sferi zagotavljajo nemoten ustvarjalni razvoj. (Sorčan, 1989, str. 5)

Zgornji zapis je tesno povezan s situacijo, ko na področju Slovenije, takrat ene od jugoslovanskih republik, vse od šestdesetih let dvajsetega stoletja naprej niso bili

1 Za več informacij o definicijah glej Mulec (2011), Lukšič Hacin (2020, str. 114–119), Kožar Rosulnik (2022).

2 Več o programu Tretje slovenske univerze v Lukšič Hacin (2022, str. 213–219).

(pravilno) naslavljeni izzivi in posledice odhajanja visokokvalificiranega kadra v tujino. T. i. beg možganov je danes torej zgolj navidezno nov pojav, saj je v zgodovini migracijske dinamike našega prostora prisoten in širše poznan že od šestdesetih let dvajsetega stoletja naprej, čeprav pri nas danes razprave potekajo tako, kot da se v preteklosti s sorodnimi izzivi še nismo soočili. Poleg tega ta pojav ni značilen le za naše prostore, ampak tudi širše, in je odvisen od mednarodnih odnosov, še posebej globalnih ekonomskih razmerij moči (Šter, 1974, str. 1075; Klinar, 1976, str. 48; Nakamuro & Ogawa, 2010; Lukšič Hacin, 2020, str. 115–117; Lukšič Hacin, 2022, str. 208–210).

Sedanje izseljevanje najvišje izobraženih iz Slovenije torej ni nekaj novega, ima pa svoje posebnosti. V pričujočem članku bomo najprej opredelile pojme in koncepte, ki predstavljajo izhodišče za nadaljnjo razpravo o izseljevanju najvišje izobraženega kadra v Sloveniji, s katero želimo osvetliti stanje in odgovoriti na naslednja vprašanja: Ali se današnja situacija razlikuje od razmer v preteklosti? Kakšna je v zadnjih desetih letih migracijska dinamika najvišje izobraženih v Sloveniji? Kako na razloge za odhod iz Slovenije, možnosti za vrnitev ali mednarodno sodelovanje gledajo tisti, ki danes živijo v tujini ali pa so se po določenem obdobju iz tujine vrnili v Slovenijo?

Na ključna vprašanja članka bomo odgovorile 1) s kratkim pregledom rezultatov raziskav, ki so obravnavale vzroke oziroma motive za izseljevanje najvišje izobraženih ter potencialne rešitve za države izvora od šestdesetih let dvajsetega stoletja naprej; 2) s statističnim prikazom migracijske dinamike po izobrazbi za obdobje 2011–2021 ter 3) z ugotovitvami kvalitativnega dela raziskave, opravljene v okviru ciljno-raziskovalnega projekta »Omilitev posledic bega možganov in krepitev mehanizma kroženja možganov« (V5-1928), ki smo ga na Inštitutu za slovensko izseljenstvo in migracije ZRC SAZU izvajali v obdobju 2019–2021 v sodelovanju z Inštitutom ASEP za izobraževanje in raziskovanje.

OPREDELITEV POJMOV

Pred tematizacijo izbranega izziva v kontekstu današnjih razmer v Sloveniji moramo uvodoma opredeliti osnovne kategorije, ki jih uporabljamo v razpravi. Na področju selitvene dinamike visoko izobraženih in usposobljenih ljudi obstajajo različni pojmi, ki se nanašajo na podobne, a pomembno različne selitvene prakse. Razlike se lahko kažejo že na individualni ravni analize, ko govorimo o različnih razlogih in motivih med posamezniki. Po drugi strani pa so si razlogi in motivi za selitev pri posameznikih lahko zelo podobni. Razlike med njimi se bolj jasno pokažejo šele, ko analizo nadaljujemo na drugih (skupinskih in skupnostnih) ravneh, vse do vprašanj o globalnih relacijah med državami izvora in sprejema ter o prihodnjih razvojnih učinkih te specifične migracije za obe strani. Največkrat uporabljena kategorija je beg oz. odtekanje možganov (angl. *brain drain*). Slednje ni opredeljeno zgolj kot (vsako) individualno odhajanje izobraženih posameznikov v tujino, ampak kot pojav izgube

človeškega kapitala brez vsakršne kompenzacije za gospodarsko manj razvito državo izvora oziroma odtekanja človeškega kapitala kot strateškega ekonomskega akterja, ki bi lahko prispeval k domačemu razvoju in blagostanju. Najbolj je to prisotno v deficitarnih poklicih. Iz domače, izvorne države odteka človeški kapital v države in ekonomije sprejema, ki so globalno že tako najrazvitejše in dobro preskrbljene z visoko izobraženim (znanstvenim) ter visoko usposobljenim kadrom, s čimer se izgublja inovacijski potencial. Pri tem gre za organizirano in selekcionirano migracijo, pri čemer so poglavitni regulacijski mehanizmi v domeni držav sprejema (angl. *brain gain*), ki načrtno mednarodno rekrutirajo najbolj izobražene kadre, medtem ko države izvora zaradi asimetričnih globalnih ekonomsko-političnih razmerij moči lahko le delno (če sploh) vplivajo nanje. S tem se povečujejo že tako velike razlike v stopnjah gospodarske razvitosti, prihaja do izgube na področju večletnih investicij v izobraževanje kadra, razvojni potencial izobraženih kadrov pa se z njihovim odhodom brezplačno seli v že tako razvitejša gospodarstva.³

Danes večina avtorjev izpostavlja, da moramo na področju selitev visoko izobraženih in usposobljenih kadrov uporabljati različne pojme, in to zelo natančno glede na različne kontekste, v katerih se ti pojavi odvijajo. Tako se pojem »beg možganov« nanaša na situacije, v katerih v izvorni državi prihaja do izrazito značilne izgube visoko izobraženega in usposobljenega kadra, čemur sledijo pomembne (negativne) posledice za domače gospodarstvo in celotno družbo. Pri analizah, ki ugotavljajo, ali gre v konkretnem primeru resnično za beg možganov, je treba poleg potencialnih izgub, do katerih je prišlo zaradi odhoda, upoštevati tudi morebitne pridobitve v obliki vračila prek posrednega ali neposrednega sodelovanja tega kadra z izvorno državo s stimuliranjem rasti in razvoja domače ekonomije (Castles & Miller, 1998, str. 91–93, 156–157; Lowell, 2003, str. 1–2). Hkrati se moramo zavedati, da je opredelitev pojma »beg možganov« (angl. *brain drain*) povezana s pojmom »priliv možganov« (angl. *brain gain*). Oba sta medsebojno povezana skozi diadno logiko, ki jo postavlja model odbojnosti in privlačnosti (angl. *push-pull*), v okviru katerega sta bila razvita za analizo specifične populacije visoko izobraženih in usposobljenih migrantov. Za drugačne (globalne politično-ekonomske) kontekste Lowell (2003, str. 2) ter Castles & Miller (1998, str. 91–93) definirajo druge kategorije.⁴

3 Več o tem v Lukšič Hacin (2020, str. 115–117).

4 Druge različice raznovrstnih (sorodnih) pojavov so še: *high skilled mobility* – gibanje visoko usposobljenih oseb, običajno z višješolsko in visokošolsko, včasih pa tudi s srednješolsko izobrazbo; *brain waste* – nezaposlenost visoko izobraženega in usposobljenega kadra v državi sprejema ali v državi izvora; *brain circulation* – kroženje možganov, pri katerem prihaja do začasnega odhajanja kadra v tujino in pozneje do njegovega vračanja v izvorno državo; *brain exchange* – odhajanje visokokvalificiranega in usposobljenega kadra v tujino, ki je nadomeščano s priseljevanjem primerljivega kadra iz drugih držav; *brain globalization* – globalna poklicna mobilnost visoko izobraženega in usposobljenega kadra v okviru globalne ekonomije in multinacionalnih korporacij; *brain export* – aktivna politika izvorne države, v okviru katere je načrtno izobraževan kader z namenom zaposlovanja v tujini in kasnejšega ekonomskega povračila, npr. v obliki nakazil (angl. *remittances*) (Lowell, 2003, str. 2).

Sočasno s polemikami o begu možganov se je v devetdesetih letih 20. stoletja začelo pojavljati vse več razprav o pozitivnih učinkih odliva visokokvalificirane delovne sile, s spremenjenim dojemanjem izseljevanja najvišje izobraženih – od pogleda na njihovo izseljevanje kot na izgubo do zamisli koncepta kroženja možganov (angl. *brain circulation*). S tem se je začelo mobilnost visokokvalificiranih kadrov obravnavati kot normalen, celo zaželen proces, ki ga ne smemo zaustavljati, temveč ga moramo znati čim bolj upravljati. O kroženju možganov govorimo kot o kontinuiranem, nezaključenem procesu, v katerem prihaja do začasnega odhoda visokokvalificiranega kadra v tujino in pozneje do njegovega vračanja v izvorno državo. Čeprav ta koncept ne izključuje nobene vrste migrantov, posebej poudarja visokokvalificirane osebe in njihov prispevek k izmenjavi, širjenju, kroženju in prenosu (znanstvenega, tehnološkega in gospodarskega) znanja (Williams & Baláž, 2008; Keim et al., 2023).

V zvezi s kroženjem znanja se v literaturi pojavljajo še nekateri drugi sorodni pojmi, kot so prenos, širjenje, izmenjava in mobilnost znanja. Glavna razlika med omenjenimi koncepti izhaja iz osnovnega pogleda na znanje.⁵ Kljub temu je krovni pojem za raziskave na to temo v različnih disciplinarnih razpravah postalo kroženje znanja, ki poudarja, da gre za kontinuiran, nezaključen proces, pri katerem mobilnost povzroči reakcijo – transformacijo posameznika (Östling et al., 2018; Keim et al., 2023), kar združuje prej omenjene koncepte.

BEG MOŽGANOV – VZROKI, MOTIVI IN REŠITVE

Za primerjavo današnje situacije z razmerami v preteklosti potrebujemo najprej kratek pregled rezultatov raziskav, ki so se v preteklosti ukvarjale z vprašanji o vzrokih, motivih in potencialnih rešitvah za države izvora. V šestdesetih letih dvajsetega stoletja, obdobju globalnega procesa, ki ga je Adams (1968, str. 6–8) opredelil kot beg možganov, so bile v številnih državah izvora v ospredju intenzivne družboslovne raziskave o vzrokih za ta proces. Nekoliko kasneje, v prvi polovici sedemdesetih, je takšna raziskava potekala tudi v Sloveniji (Šter, 1974).

Šterova raziskava o vzrokih in motivih za beg možganov v Sloveniji je izhajala iz Adamsove teorije bega in priliva možganov (Adams, 1968), ki temelji na Leejevi teoriji faktorjev privlačnosti in odbojnosti (Lee, 1966),⁶ in iz Otiezove teorije razlik (Otiez v Šter, 1974, str. 1082). Na teh osnovah je Šter tvoril štiri skupine dejavnikov: razlike v dohodkih med državami, razlike v dohodkih strokovnjakov v odnosu do drugih zaposlenih, razlike v družbeni obravnavi strokovnjakov ter druge razlike. Rezultati o

5 Nekateri izmed omenjenih konceptov znanje objektivizirajo (razumejo ga kot objekt, ki se ga lahko deli, izmenjuje, kroži), v okviru koncepta prenosa znanja pa je slednje definirano kot subjektivna konstrukcija – sprejemnik ga interpretira in konstruira glede na kontekst, v interakciji in komunikaciji z okoljem (Kožar Rosulnik, 2022).

6 Več o modelu in teorijah glej v Lukšič Hacin (2010).

vzrokih za beg (slovenskih) možganov v šestdesetih in sedemdesetih kažejo, da so bile najpomembnejši vzrok za odhode organizacijske slabosti. Sledili so medčloveški odnosi na delovnem mestu in konflikti v delovnih organizacijah (nemožnost poklicnega napredovanja; konflikti v kolektivu; v tujini so bile pomembne sposobnosti, in ne formalnosti; v tujini so bile boljše možnosti za strokovno izpopolnjevanje itn.). Šele potem so sledili materialni vzroki, predvsem višji absolutni in relativni osebni dohodek. Na koncu so bili še drugi vzroki, npr. brezposelnost, poroke in stanovanjsko vprašanje (Šter, 1974, str. 1082–1086).

Podobne rezultate kažeta raziskavi, ki sta bili izvedeni deset oz. dvajset let kasneje: raziskava iz leta 1985 (Pirher, 1985, str. 49–51) in raziskava iz leta 2004 (Bevc et al., 2004, str. 155). Raziskovalke in raziskovalci so v obeh raziskavah kot pomembno izpostavili dejstvo, da so bili glavni motivi za začasen ali trajen odhod boljše možnosti za napredovanje v poklicni dejavnosti, za razvoj kariere, za (mednarodno) projektno delo ter za (do)izobraževanje in dodatno usposabljanje, šele za tem pa boljši zaslužek. Enake vzroke in motive za selitev najvišje izobraženega kadra kažejo tudi rezultati zadnje opravljene raziskave, ki bo predstavljena v nadaljevanju.

V več desetletji trajajočih razpravah o begu možganov na Slovenskem so se porodile različne ideje o tem, kaj bi morali storiti, da bi preprečili dolgoročne negativne družbeno-ekonomske posledice. Prvi predlogi so bili, da je treba sprejeti ukrepe za omejevanje in preprečevanje izseljevanja izobraženega in visoko usposobljenega kadra, a ti niso dosegli zelenih rezultatov. Sledili so načrti o nujnem spodbujanju vračanja oziroma o povratništvu, ki so se z leti izkazali za neuspešne (Šter, 1974, str. 1088). V drugi polovici osemdesetih let dvajsetega stoletja pa je prišlo do spoznanj, da odhajanja naših kadrov v tujino ne moremo zaustaviti, lahko pa spodbujamo vračanje, a da to ni dovolj.

Izpostavljeno je bilo, da je treba z aktivnim mednarodnim sodelovanjem zadržati, nadgraditi ali vračati znanje. Ta ideja je bila konec osemdesetih let dvajsetega stoletja v jedru predloga za realizacijo t. i. Tretje slovenske univerze. Klinar (1989, str. 1064) izpostavlja, da Slovenija zaradi svojega polperifernega ekonomskega položaja znotraj globalne strukture (ne)moči različnih držav ne more preprečiti bega možganov in da ji zato ne preostane drugega, kot da spremeni odnos in išče rešitve v kombinaciji dveh nujnih alternativnih skupin ukrepov za spopadanje z izzivi bega možganov. Prva skupina ukrepov se je nanašala na korenite strukturne spremembe, ki bi izboljšale razvrednoteni položaj znanosti v Sloveniji, kar vse do danes še ni razrešeno, čeprav je od Klinarjeve razprave preteklo že več kot trideset let. Druga skupina ukrepov se je nanašala na sodelovanje z našimi strokovnjakinjami in strokovnjaki, ki živijo po svetu. Z njimi moramo organizirati alternativne oblike mednarodnega sodelovanja, tako da bo prišlo do kroženja znanja, pri katerem povratništvo ni potrebno. Uvesti je treba bolj odprt odnos in odhajanje sistemsko urediti tako, da odhod ne bi predstavljal odliva znanja, ampak njegovo oplemenitenje. To bi lahko dosegli s transnacionalnimi mrežami povezovanja, po katerih znanje kroži in se tudi vrača.

Še več, menimo, da je treba kroženje znanja povezati z mednarodno mobilnostjo – ne le z odhajanjem naših strokovnjakinj in strokovnjakov na izobraževanje v tujino ter njihovim kasnejšim vračanjem v Slovenijo ali strokovnim sodelovanjem z njo, ampak tudi s privabljanjem najvišje izobraženih strokovnjakinj in strokovnjakov iz drugih držav v Slovenijo. Mednarodno mobilnost najvišje izobraženih bi bilo treba spodbujati, saj bi se tako zmanjšale razlike v gospodarski razvitosti med državami. Ustrezno bi jih bilo treba nasloviti v državni strategiji migracij, na slovenskih raziskovalnih in univerzitetnih organizacijah ter v povezovanju odgovornih ministrstev, ki bi lahko z ustrezno spremenjeno zakonodajo olajšala birokratske ovire za preseljevanje.

MIGRACIJSKA DINAMIKA PO IZOBRAZBI

V nadaljevanju predstavljamo analizo statističnih podatkov priseljenih in izseljenih za obdobje 2011–2021 (prim. Vižintin et al., 2023), ki je je bilo izhodišče v ciljno-raziskovalnem projektu »Učinkovita mobilnost za znanstveno odličnost Evropskega raziskovalnega prostora: primer Slovenije« (št. V5-2282; 2022–2024). Z njo želimo prikazati objektivne podatke o izobrazbi priseljenih in izseljenih,⁷ pri čemer med terciarno izobraženimi izpostavljamo osebe z doktoratom znanosti, med njimi pa mednarodno mobilne.

Pred statističnim prikazom je treba poudariti, da ima trenutna slovenska statistična metodologija svoje slabosti, ki onemogoča natančne opredelitve »selitve možganov«. Iz statističnih podatkov, dostopnih na SURS, ne prepoznamo niti dinamike pojava niti motivov in razlogov za odhajanje posameznikov v tujino. Poleg tega ni jasno, ali priseljeni z doktorsko izobrazbo v Sloveniji opravljajo delo, skladno z njihovo izobrazbo, in ali potemtakem ob pozitivnem selitvenem saldu sploh lahko govorimo o t. i. prilivu možganov. Vsi omenjeni podatki bi bili potrebni za celovite analize o dinamikah pojava, ki so zelo pomembne za načrtovanje državnih politik.

V Slovenijo se je v obdobju 2011–2021 skupaj priselilo 227.181 ljudi, izselilo pa se jih je 169.684. Med nameni priselitve prevladujeta zaposlitev (50–60 %) in združevanje družine (30–40 %), drugi razlogi (npr. študij) so bili redkejši (Vižintin & Toplak, 2023, str. 7). Pri izobrazbi obravnavamo populacijo, staro 15 let ali več, zato so v nadaljevanju številke nižje.⁸ V obdobju 2011–2021 se je v Slovenijo priselilo skupaj 198.563 oseb, od tega 29,5 % z osnovnošolsko izobrazbo (OŠ), 56 % s srednješolsko izobrazbo (SŠ) ter 14,5 % s terciarno izobrazbo. V isti starostni skupini se je v obdobju

7 Statistični podatki, uporabljeni za številčni prikaz selitev v obdobju 2011–2021, so bili za posamezna leta objavljeni na spletnih straneh Statističnega urada Republike Slovenije (SURS), večinoma pod naslovi »Socioekonomske značilnosti meddržavnih selivcev, Slovenija« / »Selitveno gibanje«. Nekatere podatke za poročilo Vižintin & Toplak (2023) smo pridobili iz prosto dostopnih statističnih podatkov SURS-a (SURS, 2023). Za dodatna pojasnila pri mednarodni mobilnosti doktoric in doktorjev znanosti se najlepše zahvaljujemo Barici Razpotnik in Mojci Zlobec (Razpotnik & Zlobec, 2023).

8 Vsi podatki v nadaljevanju se nanašajo na starostno skupino 15 let ali več.

2011–2021 iz Slovenije izselilo skupaj 151.023 oseb, od tega 27 % z OŠ, 54 % s SŠ in 19 % s terciarno izobrazbo (Preglednica 1).

2011–2021 (15 let ali več)	Priseljeni			Izseljeni		
	OŠ ali manj	SŠ	Terciarna	OŠ ali manj	SŠ	Terciarna
Število oseb	58.518	111.340	28.705	41.035	81.836	28.152
Delež (%)	29,5	56,1	14,4	27	54	19

Preglednica 1: Izobrazba priseljenih v Slovenijo in izseljenih iz Slovenije v starostni skupini 15 let ali več, obdobje 2011–2021 (vir: Vižintin & Toplak, 2023, str. 7; SURS, 2023).

Slovenija ima pri populaciji v tej starostni skupini pozitiven selitveni prirast (+ 47.540 ljudi). Tako med priseljenimi kot med izseljenimi v obdobju 2011–2021 prevladuje srednješolska izobrazba, ki jo ima okoli 55 % populacije. Slabih 30 % te populacije ima osnovnošolsko izobrazbo ali manj, najmanj ljudi pa ima terciarno izobrazbo, kar velja tako za priseljene (14,4 %) kot za izseljene (19 %). Gledano v odstotkih je izseljenih s terciarno izobrazbo več kot priseljenih, gledano številčno pa se je s terciarno izobrazbo priselilo 553 ljudi več, kot se jih je izselilo.

Priseljeni in izseljeni z doktorsko izobrazbo

Med terciarno izobraženimi se osredotočamo na ljudi z doktorsko izobrazbo. V obdobju 2011–2021⁹ je bilo priseljenih z doktorsko izobrazbo 1.381 oz. 4,8 % od 28.704 vseh priseljenih s terciarno izobrazbo. Izseljenih z doktorsko izobrazbo v enakem obdobju je bilo 1.365 oz. 4,8 % od 28.152 izseljenih s terciarno izobrazbo. To pomeni, da se je med doktorsko izobraženimi priselilo več ljudi, kot se jih je izselilo, in da je bil v Sloveniji v obdobju 2011–2021 pozitiven selitveni saldo (+ 16) tudi pri ljudeh z doktorsko izobrazbo (Preglednica 2).

2011–2021 Priseljeni	Število	Delež (%)	2011–2021 Izseljeni	Število	Delež (%)
Ženske (Ž)	594	43	Ženske (Ž)	587	43
Moški (M)	787	57	Moški (M)	778	57
Priseljeni skupaj	1.381	100	Izseljeni skupaj	1.365	100
Selitveni prirast	+ 16				

Preglednica 2: Priseljeni in izseljeni z doktorsko izobrazbo po spolu, obdobje 2011–2021 (vir: Vižintin & Toplak, 2023, str. 6; SURS, 2023).

⁹ V opazovanem obdobju se je najmanj ljudi z doktorsko izobrazbo priselilo leta 2013 (59), največ pa leta 2020 (313); najmanj ljudi v tej skupini se je izselilo leta 2011 (70), največ pa leta 2017 (162).

Razmerje med moškimi in ženskami pri priseljenih in izseljenih z doktorsko izobrazbo v obdobju 2011–2021 je enako, se pa v obeh procesih preseljuje več moških (57 % oz. 787 priseljenih, 778 izseljenih) kot žensk (43 % oz. 594 priseljenih, 587 izseljenih; gl. Preglednico 3).

2011–2021 Priseljeni Državljanstvo	Število	Delež (%)	2011–2021 Izseljeni Državljanstvo	Število	Delež (%)
Ž slovensko	286	52	Ž slovensko	446	72
M slovensko	436		M slovensko	539	
Skupaj SLO	722		Skupaj SLO	985	
Ž drugo	308	48	Ž drugo	141	28
M drugo	351		M drugo	239	
Skupaj DRUGO	659		Skupaj DRUGO	380	
Priseljeni skupaj	1.381	100	Izseljeni skupaj	1.365	100
Selitveni prirast	+ 16				

Preglednica 3: Priseljeni in izseljeni z doktorsko izobrazbo po državljanstvu, obdobje 2011–2021 (vir: Vižintin & Toplak, 2023, str. 6; SURS, 2023).

Če primerjamo priseljene in izseljene z doktorsko izobrazbo v obdobju 2011–2021 glede na državljanstvo,¹⁰ ugotovimo, da je bilo med priseljenimi z doktorsko izobrazbo 52 % (722) ljudi s slovenskim državljanstvom ter 48 % (659) z drugimi državljanstvi. Med izseljenimi z doktorsko izobrazbo je bilo 72 % (985) ljudi s slovenskimi državljanstvom ter 28 % (380) ljudi z drugimi državljanstvi.

Mednarodna mobilnost doktoric in doktorjev znanosti

Slovenija je pri mednarodnem statističnem raziskovanju o karieri doktoric in doktorjev znanosti prvič sodelovala leta 2010 (Razpotnik & Zlobec, 2023; Vižintin & Toplak, 2023, str. 57–58). Opazovali so osebe z doktoratom znanosti, ne glede na to, ali so doktorat pridobile v Sloveniji ali v tujini, v starosti do vključno 69 let, ki so imele stalno ali začasno prebivališče v Sloveniji, po stanju 31. 12. 2009. Mednarodno mobilna doktorica ali doktor znanosti je oseba, ki se je po doseženem doktoratu v obdobju od 1. 1. 2000 do 31. 12. 2009 za najmanj tri mesece preselila v državo, v kateri ni imela svojega običajnega prebivališča, in je tam opravljala podoktorski študij, delala ali izvajala raziskovalno dejavnost. Leta 2009 je bilo mednarodno mobilnih 920 doktoric in doktorjev znanosti, leta 2012 pa 1.181.

¹⁰ Podatki o meddržavnih selivcih z doktoratom znanosti so razdeljeni po tipu selitve, spolu in državljanstvu. Podatki o državljanstvu so zaradi spoštovanja statistične zaupnosti predstavljeni samo na agregatni ravni (slovensko/tuje državljanstvo) (Vižintin & Toplak, 2023, str. 6).

Leta 2020 je bilo oseb z doktoratom znanosti v starosti do 69 let 11.319, ne glede na to, v kateri državi je bil pridobljen doktorat. Med njimi je bilo mednarodno mobilnih 2.167 oseb (19,1 %),¹¹ kar pomeni, da se mednarodna mobilnost doktorjev in doktoric znanosti v Sloveniji povečuje. Zanimivo bo opazovati, koliko med njimi jih bo v naslednjih letih mednarodno mobilnih. Če upoštevamo porast med letoma 2009 in 2020, bi lahko sklepali, da bo v letu 2030 več kot 3.000 mednarodno mobilnih doktoric in doktorjev znanosti. K mobilnosti z namenom kroženja znanja jih spodbujajo tudi mehanizmi mednarodne mobilnosti, npr. Marie Skłodowska-Curie, ERC, Cost, Erasmus, program meduniverzitetne izmenjave CEEPUS, bilateralni in medorganizacijski meddržavni sporazumi idr., pri čemer so krajše mobilnosti stalnica, daljše pa predstavljajo organizacijske in finančne izzive.¹² Pri mednarodni mobilnosti ni pomembna le osebna motiviranost, ampak tudi organiziranost slovenskih univerzitetnih in raziskovalnih organizacij ter njihova podpora posameznicam in posameznikom, da ti dejansko lahko odidejo v druge države in se okrepljeni z novimi znanji vrnejo v Slovenijo, ali da v Slovenijo privabljajo strokovnjakinje in strokovnjake z doktoratom znanosti iz drugih držav.

OMILITEV POSLEDIC BEGA MOŽGANOV IN KREPITEV MEHANIZMA KROŽENJA MOŽGANOV

Kako sistemsko omiliti posledice bega možganov ter to nadgraditi s krepitvijo mehanizmov, ki bi procese preobrazili v kroženje znanja? Kako na to gledajo sami udeleženci procesov in kje vidijo boljše alternative? Na ta vprašanja, ki že desetletja angažirajo družbeno (kritično) misel pri iskanju odgovorov na izzive časa, je skušala odgovoriti tudi raziskava ciljno-raziskovalnega projekta »Omilitev posledic bega možganov in krepitev mehanizma kroženja možganov«.

11 Mednarodno mobilna doktorica ali doktor znanosti v letu 2020 je bila oseba, ki se je po doseženem doktoratu v obdobju 1. 1. 2011–31. 12. 2020 za najmanj tri mesece preselila v državo, v kateri ni imela svojega običajnega prebivališča, in je tam opravljala podoktorski študij, delala ali izvajala raziskovalno dejavnost. Enote opazovanja so bile osebe z doktoratom znanosti (ne glede na to, ali je bil ta pridobljen v Sloveniji ali tujini) v starosti do vključno 69 let, ki so imele stalno ali začasno prebivališče v Sloveniji (Razpotnik & Zlobec, 2023).

12 Spoznanja projekta »Učinkovita mobilnost za znanstveno odličnost Evropskega raziskovalnega prostora: primer Slovenije« (V5-2282), ki še poteka na Inštitutu za slovensko izseljenstvo in migracije ZRC SAZU (2022–2024), bodo prinesla vpogled ravno v to področje.

Metoda

Raziskava je potekala v dveh zaporednih delih, kvantitativnem in kvalitativnem. V prvem delu smo oblikovali anketo, zbrali podatke in na podlagi dobljenih rezultatov¹³ sestavili polstrukturirane intervjuje za razširitev razumevanja pridobljenih informacij. V kvalitativnem delu raziskave smo kot osrednji vir informacij izpostavili subjekt pripovedovanja, to je v naši raziskavi posameznik oziroma posameznica z izseljensko izkušnjo. Le nosilec, nosilka te neposredne izkušnje in iz nje izvirajoče vednosti lahko posreduje izčrpno, celovito in neposredno informacijo o fenomenu raziskovalnega zanimanja, ki bi sicer brez njegove oz. njene aktivne vključenosti v raziskovalni in spoznavni akt ostala skrita in neupoštevana. Opravljena kvalitativna raziskava deloma dopolnjuje in osvetljuje zgoraj predstavljene statistične podatke, potrebne pa bodo še nadaljnje raziskave.

V nadaljevanju povzemamo ključne ugotovitve drugega dela raziskave, vezane zgolj na posameznike z doseženo najvišjo stopnjo izobrazbe – doktoratom znanosti. V okviru kvalitativne raziskave smo z izseljenimi v obdobju med 1. 3. 2021 in 19. 4. 2021 opravili 11 poglobljenih intervjujev, od tega 8 z moškimi in 3 z ženskami; med njimi so bile 4 povratnice oz. povratniki. Na podlagi opravljenih in transkribiranih intervjujev smo opredelili 6 kategorij, relevantnih za ciljno-raziskovalni projekt: 1. izobrazba, 2. dejavniki za izselitev, 3. delo, 4. povratna migracija, 5. sodelovanje s Slovenijo in 6. predlogi za državo. Po opravljeni analizi smo za večjo zanesljivost izvedli triangulacijo interdisciplinarnih raziskovalk in raziskovalcev, v kateri so tri strokovnjakinje, vsaka s svojega področja, podale strokovna mnenja o rezultatih.

Opređeljene kategorije predstavljajo tematske sklope, v okviru katerih bomo predstavile ugotovitve raziskave. Te bodo podkrepjene s ključnimi izjavami intervjuvank in intervjuvancev, ki predstavljajo in povzemajo dobljene rezultate. Skozi prizmo izkušenj in stališč naših sogovornic in sogovornikov bomo osvetlili trenutno stanje na področju mednarodne odprtosti trga raziskovalk in raziskovalcev, njihove mednarodne mobilnosti in mehanizmov krepitev kroženja znanja v Sloveniji.

Rezultati

Izobrazba

Devet od enajstih intervjuvanih je imelo v času izvedbe intervjujev doseženo najvišjo stopnjo izobrazbe, doktorat znanosti, dva sogovornika pa sta bila doktoranda. Večina intervjuvanih je doktorski študij opravljala v tujini, za kar so navajali različne razloge – neuspešno iskanje zaposlitve v Sloveniji, predhodne izobraževalne izkušnje v tujini, željo po doktorskem študiju s področja, ki je v Sloveniji še nerazvito, slabe izkušnje na fakulteti, ambicioznost, vedoželjnost, raziskovalno priložnost,

13 Celotna prečiščena baza podatkov, pridobljenih na osnovi ankete med slovenskimi strokovnjakinjami in strokovnjaki, ki bivajo v tujini ali so se že vrnili v Slovenijo, je obsegala 2.036 udeleženk in udeležencev.

željo po spremembi in izkušnji življenja v tujini. Skoraj vsi sogovorniki so imeli pred odhodom na doktorski študij v tujino že predhodne izobraževalne izkušnje izven Slovenije v obliki študijske prakse, poletne šole, magistrskega študija ali izmenjave v okviru programa Erasmus.

Pri meni se je vse skupaj začelo z Erasmusom, z izmenjavo na Danskem. To je bil četrti letnik faksa, dodiplomskega. Potem sem med absolventom šel še za pol leta v Nico, oziroma zraven Nice, en *internship*, se pravi, študentsko prakso. In potem sem šel na magisterij. Torej najprej štiri mesece, pa koliko je trajala izmenjava, ene šest mesecev, delavna praksa potem eno leto, magisterij, pa še vsaj tri leta doktorata. (Intervju 3)

Trije od enajstih sodelujočih so svoj doktorski študij zaključili na Univerzi v Ljubljani, vendar so tudi oni del doktorskega izobraževanja opravili v tujini. Dva od teh sta nato svoje podoktorsko usposabljanje v celoti opravila na tujih izobraževalno-raziskovalnih ustanovah.

Med mladimi, ki živijo v času, ko so potovanja ali študij v tujini del življenja in veljajo za neprecenljive dogodivščine, želja po spoznavanju in preizkušanju novega in drugačnega ni presenetljiva, temveč je kvečjemu logična posledica čedalje bolj globaliziranega in dostopnega sveta (Kožar Rosulnik, 2022). Prav zato avtorji zadnjih opravljenih raziskav (Kožar Rosulnik, 2022; Valentinčič et al., 2022; Núñez et al., 2022) ugotavljajo, da je izseljevanje visoko izobraženih mladih običajno intenzivnejše še pred zgodnjo fazo poklicne poti, tj. na stopnji doktorskega študija ali celo na stopnji dodiplomskega in/ali magistrskega študija.

Dejavniki za izselitev

Vsi intervjuvani so kot glavni razlog za selitev izpostavili formalno izobraževanje in izpopolnjevanje, največkrat s področja, ki v Sloveniji še ni (dovolj) razvito, v povezavi z nekaterimi drugimi dejavniki potiskanja iz Slovenije in dejavniki privlačenja v tujini. Kot vzgibe za selitev so najpogosteje navedli željo po osebnem razvoju, spoznavanju kultur in osamosvajanju, kakovost študija na prestižnih univerzah, boljše zaposlitvene in raziskovalne možnosti, višji življenjski standard, boljšo raziskovalno infrastrukturo in strokovno izpopolnjevanje. »Glavni razlog za selitev je bil predvsem to, da sem si želela nabrati mednarodnih izkušenj in priložnost je prišla ob pravem času, zdela se mi je odlična priložnost za pridobitev več raziskovalnih znanj, za razširitev svojega raziskovalnega področja, za spoznavanje novih ljudi, raziskovalcev, sodelavcev na tem področju« (Intervju 10).

Kot potisne dejavnike, ki so jih spodbudili k odhodu, so sogovornice in sogovorniki navedli neambiciozno okolje in slovensko negativno mentaliteto, neuspešno iskanje zaposlitve ter pomanjkanje priložnosti v slovenskem akademskem prostoru. »Slovenski akademski prostor je izredno majhen. Po doktorskem študiju biti potem na isti univerzi kot docent ... Dobil sem občutek, da ni bilo razvoja. Počasi pa tudi

začnejo v ta politična kolesja notri vlačiti, in nekako sem v sebi začutil, in zasebno in karierno, da je v bistvu čas za en premik« (Intervju 4).

Le ena intervjuvanka se je iz Slovenije izselila po zaključenem formalnem izobraževanju, in sicer zaradi zaposlitve na tuji izobraževalni ustanovi. To je bila tudi edina sogovornica, ki se je izselila skupaj z družino. Vsi ostali intervjuvanci so se selili sami.

Delo

Vsi sogovornice in sogovorniki so izpostavili, da opravljajo delo, ki je skladno z njihovo izobrazbo oziroma s področjem, ki so ga študirali. Večina izseljenih bi podobno delo, kot ga opravljajo v tujini, lahko opravljala v Sloveniji, a so ob tem izpostavljali problematiko pedagoškega in raziskovalnega dela v slovenskem kontekstu ter prednosti pogojev dela v tujini.

V Sloveniji sem imel ponudbo na fakulteti v Kopru, ampak sem potem dobil mesto tukaj v Angliji in raje to vzel. V Kopru je bila ponudba bolj s splošnega vidika, ne z mojega specifičnega raziskovalnega področja. Tudi v Sloveniji bi se marsikaj dalo, če projekt dobi financiranje, se lahko nabavi potrebno opremo itn. V Sloveniji me bolj moti to, kako so stvari zastavljene. Na akademski poziciji je npr. v Sloveniji zastavljenih nenormalno veliko ur za pedagoško delo, te ure se pa tudi ne spremenijo glede na naraščanje akademskega statusa. Tukaj v Veliki Britaniji je sistem drugačen, redni profesorji imajo zelo malo pedagoških ur. Problem v Sloveniji bi torej bil v tem, da ne bi imel veliko časa za raziskovalni vidik mojega dela. Drugi problem pa je v tem, da je v Sloveniji malo podpore, predvsem za mlade raziskovalce. Ne samo s finančnega vidika, ampak tudi z vidika časa in spodbujanja ambicij. (Intervju 8)

Sogovornice in sogovorniki so v kontekstu dela v Sloveniji v primerjavi s tujino izpostavljali slabše delovne razmere, raziskovalno okolje s skromnejšo raziskovalno infrastrukturo, nižji status znanosti, manj stabilno financiranje raziskovalnega dela ter omejene možnosti za sodelovanje s širšimi znanstveno-raziskovalnimi okolji. Sočasno so pripovedovali o prednostih dela v tujini, med katerimi višja plača, zanimivo, ni ena izmed bistvenih. Pomembnejši kot višji prihodki se jim zdijo boljši delovni pogoji, boljša raziskovalna infrastruktura, karierne in raziskovalne priložnosti, stabilnejše financiranje raziskovalnega dela, karierni razvoj ter kvalitativni kazalci uspešnosti znanstvenega in pedagoškega dela.

Plačilo po mojem ni problem, ko se pogovarjam z ostalimi Slovenci na univerzah tu, nihče ne poda plačila kot razlog, zakaj ne more delati v Sloveniji, ampak je predvsem raziskovalna infrastruktura. Na primer, jaz trenutno delam v zdravstveni ekonomiki, kar pomeni, da potrebujem podatke, velike računalniške serverje, na katerih potem delam te raziskave, potrebujem tudi mrežo raziskovalcev, s katerimi lahko sodelujem, to je veliko lažje tukaj kot pa v Sloveniji, ampak predvsem dostop do podatkov.

Večino mojega dela vključuje analiziranje podatkov pacientov in opazujem, če narediš nekaj pacientu, ki ima raka, kaj se potem zgodi, kaj se priporoča, in to se dela v velikih bazah. Dostop do teh baz je proces, v Sloveniji tega procesa ni. Sicer obstajajo baze podatkov, s katerimi bi se lahko naredilo ogromno tudi v Sloveniji, ampak ni procesa, kdo in kako lahko do tega dostopa. (Intervju 9)

Povratna migracija

Sogovorniki so kljub številnim prednostim življenja v Sloveniji, kot so čista in lepa narava, visoka kakovost življenja, občutek varnosti, bližina družine in prijateljev in izjemna geografska lega, opozarjali na številne ovire, ki otežujejo oz. preprečujejo kroženje znanja in vračanje slovenskih visoko izobraženih izseljenk in izseljencev.

Poleg neugodnih pogojev pedagoškega in raziskovalnega dela v Sloveniji, ki so bili omenjeni v prejšnjem tematskem sklopu, so intervjuvanci izpostavili še nekatere druge ovire, ki preprečujejo vračanje oziroma kroženje: birokratske ovire oziroma zapletene administrativne postopke, visoko obdavčitev plač, negativno selekcijo v visokošolskem sektorju, pomanjkanje meritokracije ter netransparentnost pri zaposlovanju. Večkrat so bile omenjene težave s postopki priznavanja in vrednotenja v tujini pridobljene izobrazbe, zaradi česar se povratniki postopku izogibajo in se posledično raje zaposlujejo v zasebnem sektorju; med njimi tudi vsi štirje povratnice in povratniki, vključeni v našo raziskavo. Kot eno izmed ovir pri kroženju znanja so izpostavili kvantitativno ocenjevanje znanstvene uspešnosti oz. točkovanje, ki je specifično za Slovenijo, kar slovenskim kandidatkam in kandidatom iz tujine onemogoča prijave na razpise in delovna mesta. Med drugim jih odvrča tudi negativen odnos do izseljenk in izseljencev v slovenskem javnem diskurzu, v katerem so ti največkrat obravnavani bodisi kot žrtve bodisi kot narodne izdajalke in izdajalci.

Do podobnih ugotovitev so prišle tudi nekatere druge raziskave (npr. Samaluk, 2023), ki kažejo na to, da mobilnost respondentkam in respondentom sicer prinaša nove izkušnje in znanja, vendar pa imajo te v Sloveniji dostikrat zgolj simbolno, ne pa tudi ustrezne materialne vrednosti. Povratnice in povratniki so dostikrat soočeni z migracijskim zaostankom, ki od njih zahteva pridobivanje dodatnih izkušenj in kvalifikacij ter ponovne karijerne začetke.

Kot ključni dejavnik, ki bi lahko vplival na odločitev za povratno migracijo, so intervjuvani izpostavili možnost zaposlitve z enakimi ali boljšimi delovnimi pogoji, kot jih imajo v tujini. Poleg tega je bila med vsemi dejavniki privlačevanja najbolj pogosto izražena želja po življenju v bližini svoje primarne družine in prijateljev. Sočasno pa družina, ki so jo ustvarili v novem okolju, predstavlja enega od največjih zaviralnih dejavnikov pri vračanju, predvsem zaradi neznanja slovenskega jezika preostalih družinskih članov. Znanje slovenskega jezika igra namreč ključno vlogo tako pri vključevanju otrok v slovenski izobraževalni sistem kot tudi pri iskanju zaposlitve partnerja. »Veliko nas, ki smo šli v tujino, imamo sedaj tudi tuje partnerje, in tudi zaradi tega ne razmišljamo o vrnitvi. To je za Slovenijo še dodaten izziv, če

se hoče človeka privabiti nazaj. Najprej mora ponuditi dobre delovne pogoje, da bodo boljši kot v tujini, prav tako pa mora človeka privabiti nazaj kot skupnost, torej upoštevajoč partnerja in otroke« (Intervju 8).

Sodelovanje s Slovenijo

Večina sogovornic in sogovornikov kljub pomanjkanju časa še vedno intenzivno sodeluje z matično državo. To sodelovanje poteka na najrazličnejše načine – od izvajanja gostujočih predavanj, mentoriranja zaključnih nalog, soavtorstva s slovenskimi raziskovalkami in raziskovalci in dela na skupnih projektih do pisanja člankov za slovenske revije, aktivnega članstva v slovenskih organizacijah in članstva v različnih komisijah. Nekateri intervjuvani so izpostavili, da sodelujejo predvsem zaradi občutka odgovornosti do države, ki jim je omogočila brezplačno formalno izobraževanje, ter želje po prenosu znanja na mlajše generacije. Sočasno razočarani izpostavljajo, da je sodelovanje z izvorno državo predvsem rezultat visoke motiviranosti posameznikov, ne pa posledica nacionalne učinkovitosti pri prenosu izkušenj in znanj od slovenskih izseljenk in izseljencev v domovino. »Če nekdo v tujini nima velike motivacije za sodelovanje, se ne bo spravljal čez naše birokratske postopke in tako z nami ne bo sodeloval« (Intervju 6).

Izpostavili so še, da bi bilo v Sloveniji treba spremeniti miselnost ter odnos do izseljenstva in izseljenih, pogrešajo pa tudi učinkovitejšo komunikacijo, interes, pobude in vzpostavljene mehanizme za sodelovanje z domovino. »Imam tudi druge stike s Slovenijo in sem bil pripravljen že marsikaj prispevati v kakršnikoli obliki, ampak se je velikokrat zgodilo, da je moja pobuda in iniciativa padla na neplodna tla. Najbolj zaradi prevladujoče miselnosti, da se nič ne da, pa tudi zaradi pomanjkanja časa profesorjev v Sloveniji. Za te stvari pa imam vedno trši filter, ko vidim, da ni navdušenja in zanimanja, se ne trudim več« (Intervju 8).

Predlogi za državo

V četrtem tematskem sklopu smo predstavili najpogosteje izpostavljene ovire, ki zavirajo kroženje znanja, v nadaljevanju pa predstavljamo konkretne predloge udeleženk in udeležencev raziskave za učinkovitejše sodelovanje države z izseljenkami in izseljenci za uspešnejše doseganje njihove vrnitve. Sogovornice in sogovorniki so pri naštevanju predlogov in rešitev izhajali iz ne prav trdnega prepričanja, da je Slovenija sploh naklonjena sodelovanju s svojimi izseljenimi oziroma vračanju svojih državljanek, državljanov in njihovih potomk, potomcev.

Sogovornice in sogovorniki so največkrat poudarjali nujnost poenostavitve birokratskih postopkov pri vračanju oz. priseljevanju v Slovenijo. To bi lahko dosegli z ustanovitvijo informacijsko-svetovalne pisarne, ki bi usklajevala informacije, svetovanje, urejanje administrativnih postopkov ter dejavnosti na področju vračanja in priseljevanja. Za odpravljanje administrativnih ovir, ki se pojavljajo pri

priznavanju in vrednotenju v tujini pridobljene izobrazbe pri centru ENIC-NARIC, postopkih v zvezi z ustanavljanjem podjetja ter s sistemom SICRIS in COBISS, so sodelujoči v raziskavi predlagali večjo prožnost v postopku priznavanja in vrednotenja formalnega izobraževanja, pridobljenega v tujini, iskanje rešitev za vrednotenje zaključenih izobraževalnih programov, ki niso del slovenskega javnoveljavnega formalnega izobraževalnega sistema, ter omogočanje vnosa bibliografije v sistema SICRIS in COBISS za znanstvenice in znanstvenike, ki si želijo vrnitve. Točkovanje na podlagi omenjenih sistemov, ki je omogočeno le raziskovalkam in raziskovalcem, zaposlenim v Sloveniji, onemogoča prijavo na razpise in delovna mesta slovenskim kandidatkam in kandidatom iz tujine. Udeleženi v raziskavi predlagajo, naj država bodisi poskrbi za pokritje stroškov vpisa vsem tistim znanstvenicam, znanstvenikom oz. raziskovalkam, raziskovalcem, ki bi se želeli vrniti ter prijaviti na domače razpise in/ali delovna mesta, bodisi postopno opusti uporabo točkovnega sistema za vrednotenje znanstveno-raziskovalne in pedagoške dejavnosti.

Med predlogi so bile pogosto izpostavljene potrebe po optimizaciji dela, bolj-ših delovnih pogojih, internacionalizaciji slovenskega visokega šolstva ter večjem spoštovanju izobrazbe, posledica česar bi bilo stabilnejše financiranje raziskovalnega dela in višje plače. Kot ključen vidik pri odpiranju za priseljevanje tujih izobraženih v Slovenijo in doseganju učinkovitejšega kroženja znanja so izpostavili potrebo po spremembi odnosa do izseljenih in priseljenih v Sloveniji. Poudarili so, da bi jih morali dojemati kot ambasadorke in ambasadorje znanosti, kulture, jezika, športa, turizma in raziskovanja, predvsem pa kot koristen povezovalni člen med izvorno in novo državo.

DISKUSIJA IN ZAKLJUČEK

Z vprašanjem bega možganov so se slovenske raziskovalke in raziskovalci ukvarjali že od šestdesetih let dvajsetega stoletja dalje, pri čemer so si postavljali enako raziskovalno vprašanje kot danes, tj. kaj bi morali storiti, da bi preprečili dolgoročne negativne družbeno-ekonomske posledice odhajanja najvišje izobraženega kadra. Že takrat so se zavedali, da Slovenija zaradi svojega polperifernege ekonomskega položaja znotraj globalne strukture (ne)moči različnih držav ne more zaustaviti odhajanja v tujino. Poleg tega se vedno bolj zavedamo, da je znanost mednarodno strokovno področje, zato je mobilnost znanstvenic in znanstvenikov običajen, celo zaželen proces. Tudi zadnji statistični podatki, predstavljeni v članku, kažejo, da se mobilnost doktoric in doktorjev znanosti v zadnjih letih povečuje. Vendar pa statistični podatki niso popolni, saj ne pojasnijo motivov in razlogov za selitve. Iz statističnih podatkov Statističnega urada RS ne izvemo, ali pozitiven saldo priseljenih doktoric in doktorjev znanosti v Sloveniji dejansko predstavlja t. i. priliv možganov, saj nimamo podatkov o tem, ali so se priseljeni zaposlili na delovna mesta, skladna z njihovo izobrazbo. Za dobro upravljanje migracij, ki bi bile koristne za državo, bi poleg osnovnih statističnih

podatkov potrebovali tudi vzpostavitev sistema za spremljanje kvalitativnih značilnosti izseljevanja in vračanja oz. priseljevanja najvišje izobraženih.

Eden izmed odgovorov na izziv izseljevanja najvišje izobraženih, kot so ga videle raziskovalke in raziskovalci pred desetletji in ga vidimo še danes, je tudi spremenjen odnos do izseljevanja ter iskanje rešitev v izboljšanju položaja znanosti v Sloveniji, sodelovanju v smislu kroženja znanja z našimi strokovnjakinjami in strokovnjaki, ki živijo po svetu, privabljanju tujih strokovnjakinj in strokovnjakov ter odpravi administrativnih ovir, s katerimi se vsi soočajo.

Rezultati več raziskav kažejo, da se Slovenija uvršča v skupino t. i. držav širitve (angl. *widening countries*), ki so v preteklih letih sicer izboljšale svoje aktivnosti in uspešnost na področju mednarodne mobilnosti in kroženja talentov, a še vedno zelo zaostajajo za t. i. starimi članicami. Rezultati preteklega ciljno-raziskovalnega projekta »Omilitev posledic bega možganov in krepitev mehanizma kroženja možganov« kažejo, da bo za intenzivnejše kroženje (in ne le odhajanje) talentov in znanja v Sloveniji treba urediti razmere v znanstveno-raziskovalnem prostoru (vse od povečanja ugleda znanosti v državi do neposrednih pogojev za delo), razmisliti o mehanizmih spodbujanja vračanja (pogoji vračanja in reintegracije) ter povečati privlačnost slovenskega znanstveno-raziskovalnega okolja za tuje talente. Slednje je odvisno tudi od širših družbenih pogojev za kakovostno življenje, od možnosti za vključevanje v javni prostor do sproščanja birokratskih postopkov za sam prihod v Slovenijo.

Za konec ponovimo, da je nujen predpogoj za to, da bi res lahko zagotovili razmere za kroženje znanja v vsej širini pomena te kategorije, da uredimo razvrednoten položaj znanosti v Sloveniji ter zagotovimo delovne pogoje za odlično delo znanstvenic in znanstvenikov. Z izboljšanjem položaja znanosti in pogojev dela v znanosti bi uredili domače razmere, poleg tega pa bi ustvarili boljše pogoje za izmenjavo možganov, torej za prihod strokovnjakinj in strokovnjakov iz tujine. Definicija kroženja in izmenjave znanja vključuje tako odhod in beg kot prihod in izmenjavo možganov, poleg tega pa tudi (oz. predvsem) mednarodne mreže znanstvenega sodelovanja. Slednje je vse pomembnejše tudi zaradi globalne digitalizacije, tehnoloških sprememb in strukturnih sprememb v gospodarstvu, ki smo jim danes priča, pa tudi zaradi samega bistva znanosti kot takšne.

ZAHVALE IN DRUGI PODATKI

Članek je nastal v okviru projektov »Učinkovita mobilnost za znanstveno odličnost Evropskega raziskovalnega prostora: primer Slovenije« (V5-2282) in »Omilitev posledic bega možganov in krepitev mehanizma kroženja možganov« (V5-1928) ter programske skupine »Narodna in kulturna identiteta slovenskega izseljenstva v kontekstu raziskovanja migracij« (P5-0070), financiranih s strani ARIS ter Ministrstva za visoko šolstvo, znanost in inovacije.

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SUMMARY

BRAIN CIRCULATION AND BRAIN EXCHANGE OR BRAIN DRAIN?

Klara Kožar Rosulnik, Marina Lukšič Hacin, Marijanca Ajša Vižintin

The emigration of increasingly educated young people has intensified the public discourse on the brain drain in recent years. Slovenian researchers have been working on this topic since the 1960s. At that time, they dealt with the same research question as today, i.e., what should be done to prevent the long-term negative socioeconomic consequences of the emigration of the most highly educated population? Even then, they were aware that Slovenia's semi-peripheral economic position within the global power structure of various countries could not stop the outflow abroad. Moreover, with the increasing awareness that science is an international professional field, the mobility of scientists is a normal, even desirable process. Recent statistics show that the mobility of scientists and researchers has increased in recent years. Therefore, the only solution that researchers saw decades ago and which still holds today is to change the attitude toward emigration and find solutions to improve the scientific position in Slovenia, cooperate with Slovenian experts living abroad in terms of circulation of knowledge, attract foreign experts, and remove administrative obstacles to facilitate the transition of both emigrants and foreign experts. Based on the results of the authors' recent research on brain drain, they present how those who currently live or have lived abroad and have returned to Slovenia view the reasons for their emigration and the prospects for return or international cooperation.

The results of the project Mitigating the consequences of brain drain and strengthening the mechanism of brain circulation show that to increase the circulation of talent and knowledge (and not only brain drain) in Slovenia, it is necessary to regulate the situation in the scientific research area (from raising the profile of science in the country to the immediate working conditions), consider mechanisms to encourage return (conditions for return and reintegration), and increase the attractiveness of the Slovenian scientific research environment for foreign talent. The latter also depends on broader social conditions for the quality of life, opportunities for integration into the public sector and, last but not least, the facilitation of bureaucratic procedures for entry into Slovenia. To ensure the conditions for the circulation of knowledge, it is necessary to regulate the undervalued position of science in Slovenia and create working conditions for the excellent work of scientists. Improving the status of science and working conditions would bring order to the domestic situation and also create better conditions for the exchange of knowledge, i.e., for other experts from abroad to come to Slovenia.

PRACTICING MULTI-SITED ETHNOGRAPHY: REFLECTIONS, STRATEGIES, AND TOOLS FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ON TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION

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ABSTRACT

Practicing Multi-Sited Ethnography: Reflections, Strategies, and Tools for Qualitative Research on Transnational Migration

The article illustrates the multi-sited use of the ethnographic method and the narrative in-depth interview in research on transnational migration between Bangladesh and Italy. Assuming a Sayadian perspective, the author explores the ways of accessing the transnational research field, the dynamics of anticipatory socialization at the interview within the transnational space, and the opportunity for collective self-socio-analysis and construction of a family memory that an in-depth interview implies. Finally, the article deepens the implications that the use of linguistic translators entails in ethnographic work and interpretative research.

KEYWORDS: multi-sited ethnography, in-depth interview, transnationalism, translation, reflexivity

IZVLEČEK

Večprizoriščna etnografija v praksi: Razmisleki, strategije in orodja za kvalitativno raziskovanje transnacionalnih migracij

Avtor v prispevku predstavlja uporabo etnografske metode in poglobljenega narativnega intervjuja na več lokacijah pri raziskovanju transnacionalnih migracij med Bangladešem in Italijo. Izhajajoč iz sayadovske perspektive preučuje načine dostopanja do transnacionalnega raziskovalnega polja, dinamiko anticipatorne socializacije pri intervjuju v transnacionalnem prostoru ter možnosti za kolektivno sociološko samoanalizo in konstrukcijo družinskega spomina, ki jih ponuja poglobljeni intervju. Na koncu se posveti tudi posledicam uporabe jezikovnih prevajalcev za etnografsko delo in interpretativno raziskovanje.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: večprizoriščna etnografija, poglobljeni intervju, transnacionalizem, prevajanje, reflektivnost

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INTRODUCTION

This contribution stems from a three-year research project aimed at analyzing the transformations in masculinity, the processes of gender construction, and the construction of adulthood of Bangladeshi male immigrants in an industrial suburb in northeastern Italy, as well as of their male relatives in Bangladesh. The aim was to analyze the multiple ways in which the process of the construction of male adult identity is inscribed into migration, as well as the ways in which migration contributes to its unfolding. To do this, I examine a pivotal event in the migration experience: family reunification following the stabilization of a migrant's work and residential status.

The research focused on people of Bangladeshi origin residing in Alte Ceccato, a small town in the municipality of Montecchio Maggiore, in the Province of Vicenza, Italy, which is close to the most important tannery district in Italy, and perhaps even in Europe (Della Puppa, 2015; Della Puppa, 2019). On January 1, 2021, Alte Ceccato had 6,802 residents, of whom 2,283 were foreigners, thus accounting for over 33% of the population. This is mainly due to the large number of Bangladeshi citizens who have immigrated there, with 1,484 living in the municipality and 1,206 just in Alte. As well as being by far the largest non-Italian national group represented there, they make up about one-sixth of the total number of residents.

Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor (Goffman, 1956) was adopted in the research process and the interpretation of the data. It proved particularly useful for multi-sited ethnography¹ (Boccagni, 2014; Marcus, 1995; Mikola, 2007), as it helped to "sew up" the scientific and epistemological divide between immigration societies and emigration societies (Sayad, 1999; Sayad, 2006) and to avoid stereotypical approaches when analyzing the *habitus* and strategies of the actors involved. The dramaturgical perspective, developed to analyze the ritualized moments of everyday life and the patterns of social interaction between individuals, is also helpful in framing global phenomena—such as migration and family reunification—which take shape within a complex web of transnational relations between the different geographical poles of migration (Tsuda et al., 2014). The destination society and the migrants' society of origin were understood as the front stage and the backstage of the same representation, alternating according to the positioning of the protagonists and the speaking subjects.

The research involved prolonged periods of participant observation, which lasted almost two years in Italy and more than two months in Bangladesh, and I carried out a total of 74 interviews between the two countries. In Italy, 25 men who had reunited with their wives and 15 key informants were interviewed, and in

1 For the sake of brevity, here, it is not possible to delve into a reflection on multi-sited ethnography, therefore, please refer to Boccagni (2019) and Van Duijn (2020).

Bangladesh, 19 male relatives of those interviewed in Italy, 10 people whose families had had migration experiences, and 5 key informants were interviewed.

Following this brief introduction, I will discuss the theoretical and epistemological perspective used to “sew up” the split between emigration and immigration, inserting this discussion within the rich debate on the subject. Then, the different ways of accessing the transnational research field will be explored. A further section will explore the transnational dynamics of anticipatory socialization in relation to the interviews, as well as the opportunities for collective “social-self-analysis” and the construction of family memory that the methodology offered to the interviewees (Gomberg-Muñoz, 2016). Finally, there will be a reflection on the implications of using language interpreters/translators in ethnographic work and qualitative research. In fact, qualitative researchers have rarely questioned the implications of using an interpreter/translator in the data construction process and in the empirical phase of research (on this, see, for example, Birbili, 2000; Edwards, 1995; Edwards, 1998; Edwards & Temple, 2002; Overing, 1987; Temple, 1997; Temple & Young, 2004).

WHAT IS ETHNOGRAPHY?

The nature and subject of my research prompted me to take up Marcus’s (1995) call for a multi-sited ethnography (Boccagni, 2014; Clifford, 1992; Mikola, 2007). Inserting myself within that strand of research stretching from Thomas and Znaniecki (1920) to Sayad (1999), I made a journey across continents toward my interviewees’ context of origin. There, in a society “other” to my own (Clifford, 1992), I carried out a crucial part of my ethnography: after following the unfolding of my interviewees’ narratives in the country of immigration, where possible, I also traced them backward, looking for family relations played out in the transnational space. I thus ended up in Bangladesh to hear other stories told in male voices, which helped to illuminate further elements of the “family prism” in migration (Gomberg-Muñoz, 2016).

The experience of the journey proved to be crucial to understanding various aspects of my research: the social action, trajectories, and aspirations of the interviewees and their family members; the way in which transnational and long-term historical and social dynamics played out (Saada, 2000); the civic and social stratification enacted through migration; and the social downgrading inherent in crossing the border from south to north and the ways in which this happens (Sacchetto, 2004).

In the study of migratory phenomena, social scientists agree that a perspective is needed that does not artificially separate emigration from immigration. Thus, in order to analyze the family reunifications of first migrant Bangladeshi men “here,” it is necessary to enter their family homes “there,” to “breathe” in their family story, to collect narratives from a perspective that considers that “before starting their immigration the immigrant is first and foremost an emigrant” (Sayad, 1999, p. 16). Thus, what is framed as “family reunification of the spouse following the husband”

in the country of immigration could be perceived in the family of origin as the loss of a daughter or a sister. The way in which the immigration society relates to the immigrant population's stabilization process could create a wound in the emigration context. I have attempted to bridge the political split in the academic work on the subject, in which the analysis of immigration is linked to the arrival society and that of emigration to the departure society, conceiving them as mutually independent. This split partakes in the same relations of domination and power asymmetries that characterize the relations between emigration and immigration countries and that are the underlying reason for migratory movements (Sayad, 1999; Sayad, 2006). It is thus possible to speak of a "boundary ethnography" (Fabietti, 1997) on both an objective and metaphorical level: on an objective level, because the research involved the actual crossing of (political and national) borders, resulting in a multi-sited ethnography (Boccagni, 2014; Clifford, 1992); and on a metaphorical level, because the subjects involved in the research—Bangladeshi migrants—constitute border figures, *atopoi* who are out of place everywhere (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2000), and also because the focus of my research—family reunification—can be read as a collective process while also representing a transition in terms of an individual migrant's status within their biographical journey. In fact, family reunification leads us back to those particular political and social practices defined as "rites of the institution" or creative acts of "social magic" (Bourdieu, 1979) that are typical of borders and make each transition and each threshold into as many limits (which can be crossed only under certain conditions). These limits establish what is to be separated, divided, and defined: an inside and an outside, two groups, on this and that side of a line, "us" and "them," which in this case exists within a further designation and institution that acts on the broader "us-them" binary pair separating and hierarchizing native citizens and immigrants. Dealing with the family also means dealing with borders: limits that separate those who are included in the family network from those who are excluded; liminal constructions that define the status and degree of belonging, ways of having access to it, and the condition of those who are positioned outside it or where its borders are blurred. These borders can either be constructed by the feelings and actions of the members of the family or imposed by policies on family reunification.

THE RESEARCH FIELD

My research field was the social and territorial context of Alte Ceccato—the town where a large number of Bangladeshi people reside, so much so that it is known as the "Bangla capital" by many Bangladeshis in Italy—and its network of relationships, as well as the social and territorial context of the interviewees' families of origin in Bangladesh (Della Puppa, 2015; Della Puppa, 2019).

My first observations were carried out in Alte Ceccato, traversing its spaces, taking advantage of its street furniture, going to its shops and bars, and hanging

out. I became a regular presence in the village, although I should mention some key “turning points” that facilitated my access to the field.

The first was through my participation, as a teacher, in an Italian evening course aimed at the immigrant population and organized by an association offering “inter-cultural” activities in the local area. In this capacity, I managed to create a positive image of myself as someone involved in projects that were of interest to the immigrant population. My involvement in the Italian course created a growing consensus around my presence in the field, giving me a recognizable and not necessarily intrusive identity. The inhabitants of Bangladeshi origin began to greet me in the streets even when I had never met them personally, and while walking through the village, it was normal for me to be asked to go for a coffee or invited into their homes.

My incorporation into the socio-relational fabric of the Bangladeshi “community”—on the borderline between *insider* and *outsider*, thus *inside* my field due to my relationship with the Bangladeshi migrants, but also an *outside* observer with respect to this relationship (Ranci, 1998, p. 51)—became partially apparent the moment my name started to appear on the leaflets of Bangladeshi societies telling their compatriots about the “programs”² organized on civil or religious holidays.

Other “turning points” in the construction of relations with potential interviewees were an interview with a teacher in a nursery who was interested in my research work and introduced me to a wide range of Bangladeshi fathers to interview—trying to comply, as much as possible with my request for heterogeneity in social “types”—and my participation as an observer during the presentation of the electoral lists for the establishment of a new Bangladeshi society in the province of Vicenza. This was not so much because of the event itself but because I met a Bangladeshi worker there, who, due to his similar educational and research path in his country of origin, had no difficulty identifying with me (and also agreed to be interviewed). As he explicitly said:

Look, first thing, you’re working for your education, so I support this. I support you. Also, because I wanted to do a PhD in my country, but I couldn’t finish my MPhil because of ... so ... For this reason, I’ve decided to help you, any kind of help. The second thing I talked to you friendly, frankly and friendly. So ... I’ve no problem. I feel better ... (Tahzeed,³ Alte Ceccato)⁴

2 The Italian word for public festival, *fiesta* (meaning holiday but also celebration and party), does not reflect the nature of those events, for which the word the Bangladeshis use *programma* (program) is much more apt.

3 The interviewees’ names, like those reported in the extracts of the ethnographic diary, are pseudonyms.

4 I have reported the interviewees’ words as faithfully as possible, knowing that they will anyway be my interpretation (Bourdieu, 1993). I decided to report the interviews in the language chosen by the interviewee and leave minor grammatical errors untouched.

I thus now had two valuable “allies” who introduced me to other potential interviewees who saw me as having very high social credentials: a “cultural mediator” (Silverman, 2010) in the figure of the teacher and my first (I would meet others later) Bangladeshi informant with whom I could engage in so-called backtalk (Silverman, 2010), which is a form of dialogue around the appropriateness of my interpretations and observation techniques. As he himself made clear:

If you have any questions or if you want to know something, if you think “I have to know something” just ask me, and I will try to tell you what I think, anyway what people think is not the same. (Tahzeed, Alte Ceccato)

The more interviews I did, the more easily I could enter into the context—I needed increasingly less mediation, and my presence was not only accepted but desired, especially within the thriving Bangladeshi societies. Being a native, a university graduate, a PhD student, and a university “employee” gave me social standing in the eyes of a large proportion of the population of Bangladeshi origin. On the one hand, they saw me as having huge “reserves” of social and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1980; Bourdieu, 1982; Bourdieu, 2003) and, on the other hand, as possessing information, contacts, and knowledge that were crucial for orienting themselves in the immigration society.

The relationships I built and deepened in the migration context made it possible later to carry out narrative interviews in the country of emigration. After completing my empirical work in Alte Ceccato, I asked some of my interviewees for introductions to their relations in Bangladesh in order to initiate similar interviews with them. In this way, I had easy access to the families *left behind* in Bangladesh, following an anticipatory socialization of the interview experience, as many of the interviewees themselves told me:

The day before yesterday, he called me, and he asked me to communicate with you and to talk to you without any hesitation. He explained to me about the interview. (Ahmed, brother,⁵ Faridpur)

You see ... now also ... Yesterday, he called me; he told me about you ... Yes ... he shared with me so many things about you and your work. (Azam, brother, Dhaka)

He ... last night he gave me a call: “How are you? Are you fine?” He told me about you also: “Francesco will come, so please ...”, “OK, don’t worry, he’ll be my guest.” (Khan, brother, Chittagong)

5 The family relationship written after each citation refers to their relationship with the migrant interviewee in Italy.

When entering the Italian homes of my interviewees, I was aware of being seen as a potential friend as well as a resource of social and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1980; Bourdieu, 2003; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) in the sense of being an institutional representative who might improve their social credentials in the migration context. When being welcomed into the homes of those families who were left in the country of origin, on the other hand, I was both the foreign guest, a testimony to the family's migration story, and a representative of the distant family member: I was a thread linking them directly to their emigrated relative across continents and time, connecting the emigrant family member to the family in their country of origin. I would thus be a link to their brother or son who had been away for years, to the father of nieces and nephews who had never been seen, or to the sender of remittances that were often indispensable to the family. I constituted the "proven proof" and evidence of that person's presence elsewhere. The migrants' intermediation not only made possible my physical presence in their place of origin, but also enabled their brief symbolic return to the space-time before migration. My being in Bangladesh while at the same time being connected to Italy transformed the "doubly absent" status implicit in the migration experience (Sayad, 1999) into the synchronic and contingent condition of being "doubly present" (Riccio, 2007; Riccio, 2008). Family members who had emigrated to Italy were both present in the meanings and emotions of the families and presented through me, who, in my interviews, brought memories of them to the surface and located their biographies among those who had stayed behind. My being at that moment and place took family members in the country of origin back to the places and times before migration, making the absence less concrete and temporarily freeing the "presence of the absent" from its abstract or distracted dreamlike nature. This was added to the fact that I came from a context that was "other" to the daily lives of my potential narrators: I was a window onto unknown worlds (Olagnero, 2004). My being there at that moment also confirmed that their loved ones were elsewhere, so remote in space and time as to give an aura of sacredness to any news that arrived from there. By entering the homes of my interviewees in Bangladesh, my mere presence gave them control over the narratives they received from their relatives elsewhere. At the same time, what we called above the "anticipatory socialization of the interview experience" at a transnational level highlighted the trust underlying the relationships, which often became friendships, between me and the interviewees in Italy. Although I was crossing the "curtain" separating the "front stage" and "backstage" of international migration (Goffman, 1956), they were confident that I would not jeopardize their or their family members' reputations and social credentials in their country of origin. That is, they were sure that I would not have "unmasked" the "lies of migration"—constituted by the omissions and exaggerations that reproduce the illusions and idealized and idealizing representations around Italy in Bangladesh (Sayad, 1999; Sayad, 2006)—and neither would I have made any gaffes or behaved inappropriately, either in the private

dimension of the domestic sphere or in the public dimension, which could discredit them in the eyes of their relatives and discredit their family in the eyes of the *Shomaj*.⁶

NARRATION AS INTIMACY, THEATER, AND STORYTELLING

The word “interview” emphasizes the reciprocity of viewing and the object being viewed. This meaning presupposes a more or less symmetrical sharing between the two (or more) subjects involved, even though, during the conversation, the interviewer is often able to see something that the interviewee does not see or of which they only begin to become aware in the moment of its narration (Benjamin, 1962; Benjamin, 1969). In this reflexive process, the stranger and/or foreigner provide an ideal condition for ethnographic and dialogical activity (Hampshire et al., 2014). The stranger is the figure best placed to encourage people to open up, as they are predisposed to listening and can create intimacy based on the contingent exceptionality of the moment (Simmel, 1908). In fact, intimacy is possible between strangers precisely because they do not know each other, so they do not expect anything from each other, as they will presumably never meet again. We, therefore, arrive at the “oblivion of the interview” (Sayad, 1999) as, at the same time, a condition and effect of trust (Douglas, 1976; Silverman, 2010). This implies that the interview constitutes a moment of intimacy and complicity (Oakley, 1981), as seen at various times in my ethnographic work:

I feel a bit ... great. Freedom. I've talked to someone about my whole life. In that way ... in that way, I've never spoken to anyone. The words I have said to you I haven't even said to my wife. I am a person who always laughs, talks, and sings, but in my heart, there is this huge thing, everything I have told you [...], but I have never talked about myself with other people, friends ... if someone is with me I don't speak to them about ... they don't know all these things about me. (Maliq, Alte Ceccato)

In these fifteen years, frankly, I've talked to one person about everything. My imagination, my view, and my things now I told you: I shared all these things just with another person, and now I did it with you so ... I feel better. (Tahzeed, Alte Ceccato)

In Italy, too, my being a foreigner made it possible for people to share intimate experiences and personal secrets without fear of “losing face,” telling me things that would have been received negatively in their social world and community (Wolf, 1996). At the same time, however, the interviews were also pieces of theater in which the actor, ensuring he maintained his front stage position so as not to lose face,

6 This term indicates the “community” and the entirety of social and family relations in your village or, if you are in an urban context, in your neighborhood.

chose which aspect of his social life to narrate. It is through this acting-narrative that the subject is able to alienate and distance him/herself from him/herself in order to create another (representation of) him/herself. Like in theater, in interviews, a relationship is established between (at least) one actor-narrator who acts live on the stage and (at least) one spectator-listener who follows their actions and narratives. Particularly in Bangladesh, the “theatrical” moment of the narratives was often acted out and followed by more people than just me and the interviewee. The rituals and duties of hospitality they enacted in relation to me, the expectations that their relatives in Italy had created about the research involving them, and their curiosity linked to my origin meant the interviews were meticulously prepared and collectively awaited (for days, weeks, or months), with many people belonging to the family and wider neighborhood wanting to take part. Thus, the actors in the interview were not restricted to the interviewer and the interviewee but were a multiplicity of subjects who contributed to the story’s construction through their glances, their consent, their ways of arranging themselves in space, their body language, or, simply, with their silences. On more than one occasion, therefore, the interviewee found himself addressing a composite audience and brought into play various facets of his own identity depending on the different discursive fields and relationships to which he referred. On the one hand, there was the confrontation with the stranger with whom it was possible to share “the most surprising revelations and confessions, even up to the character of the sacramental confession” (Simmel, 1908), while, on the other hand, they had to take into account that their family members, with whom it was more important not to lose face, were listening:

When I meet Shantu, the eldest brother and, therefore, the “guardian” of the family, I explain my research and suggest an interview, which is accepted with great interest. We arrange an appointment for the next day: I am invited for lunch, and in the afternoon, we would be able to talk and do the interview. The lunch would be attended by me, my interpreter/translator Zaeed, Shantu, Shkoat, with whom I am staying, and a friend and colleague of Shantu’s, and we would be served by Shantu’s wife and sister-in-law. His mother does not engage in the domestic activities delegated to her daughters-in-law. The interview takes place in the living room, which also serves as the entrance to the house, where there are armchairs, a sofa, and a small table. The room is separated from the kitchen by an archway closed off with a burgundy curtain that hides the space from view but does not block the sound ... Indeed, from beyond this curtain, laughter can be heard in response to the funniest parts of the story, and clarifications arrive from time to time from a *deus ex machina* with a female voice. (Field notes from the interview with Shantu, brother and nephew, Charmuguria)

The narrative told in the presence of the family by the “guardian of the family” thus also became an occasion for the establishment of a family historical memory and a family identity. Individual events thus became family events, and the authority of

the “head of the family” legitimized to narrate them, crystallized them in time, and presented them to the audience, transforming them into the officially shared history of the family (Gomberg-Muñoz, 2016).

During Sherif’s narration, I watch as his wife, in the shadows, nods at several passages of the story, legitimized by the fact that she experienced first-hand the facts being told by her husband. The rest of those present listen, murmuring under their breath, probably commenting on the story constructed by Sherif, who, heedless of this, keeps going, looking into the eyes of Zaeed, who is translating for me. In the meantime, darkness has fallen, and the room is lit by the usual gas lamp and embellished by curls of pyrethrum smoke. Outside, the sound of a motorbike engine drowns out our voices. Zaeed asks the interviewee to interrupt the story to wait for the noise to stop as the vehicle pulls away, and I sense that this request is met with the implicit approval of the small audience that has gathered there who are intent on not missing a single syllable of the past that is being fixed in time. (Field notes from the interview with Sherif, brother, and Gopalpur, uncle)

The construction of the story provided a perfect opportunity to act out a socio-self-analysis by both the narrator, the interview’s “actor on the stage,” and the listening group, the “audience in the stalls.” In other words, the possibility of narrating oneself and of recounting family events itself became part of the family’s experiences, constituting a meta-narrative that would be fixed in memory:

The interview is finished. I would like to make just one more question about the interview itself: what kind of emotions and feeling has the interview arisen in your heart and mind?

[The wife, who up to that point had listened silently and attentively to her husband’s answers and opinions, cannot contain herself. She lets her emotions out, speaking at length without interruption. Zaeed, somewhat taken aback, looks at me, and after I give a sign of assent, he begins to translate.] Just in a glance I have recalled and gathered my life. At one time, I recalled the past, I tried to imagine the future, and I try to understand the present. It has been an unprecedented experience for me in my whole life. I’ve never done this kind of thing before. As an experience ... this experience is unprecedented. It has given me, I should say, a sort of unspeakable feeling. So ... thank you. Thank you ... (Ahmed, brother, Faridpur)

I organized the interview to respect a chronological sequence that could run through all the topics of interest and direct the narrative, even though it would often change in relation to the context, the situation, and the interviewee. This chronological progression contained a partition that was different in the different contexts. While it was represented by the event of family reunification in the interviews conducted

with migrant workers in Italy, in the narratives of their relatives in Bangladesh, it was represented by the migration of the absent family member. The original outlines for the interviews often contained the request for episodes and anecdotes from which to start in order to then go into more depth on the details of their everyday lives and the meanings attributed to them through “relaunches.” The relaunches were aimed at going deeper, i.e., they constituted a bridge through which to restart the narrative, thus avoiding a “question and answer” dynamic. They could include expressions far removed from any conceptualization, such as, “And you in that situation ...?”, but which, as the narrative progressed, could contract into, “And you ...? In that situation ...?” to simply, “And you ...?”, even if, in the end, it was *silence* that created the best conditions for the narrative (Becker, 1998; La Mendola, 2009). Remaining silent in front of the interviewee creates an empty space between the two subjects, which can feel very awkward, but it is important not to be overcome by this awkwardness and to wait before moving on to the next question. Silence, in fact, may provide a moment of reflection needed by the interviewee for the elaboration of their memory and its articulation; it may represent an implicit request by the interviewer for them to go into more detail, or it may encourage the interviewee to continue with their narration in more detail in order to put an end to the awkwardness. Silence, therefore, may also be a subtle form of violence that renders explicit the power of the interviewer, who can use it in the course of their interaction with the interviewee.

THE INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR, AN ACTIVE RESEARCH SUBJECT

In Bangladesh, I used English with a small number of interviewees who were sufficiently competent in that language to use it to create narratives (Hampshire et al., 2014). With those for whom that was not possible, I made use of an interpreter/translator.

In the latter cases, each of my questions and each of the interviewees’ answers became such only through the filter of Zaeed, the interpreter/translator who guided me through the social, territorial, and cultural fabric of the country. Zaeed was, for me, a linguistic *medium* who, in the process, also provided me with an indispensable “cultural translation.” It was only thanks to his intervention that my voice was able to prompt the interviewees to tell their stories, but he did not limit himself to linguistic transposition. He had to move within two orders of discourse anchored in two different “cultural fields” (Simon, 1996), mine and that of the interviewees, whose rhetorical and discursive constructions often conveyed different “cultural meanings,” which, in turn, were continually being negotiated even within the same sociocultural context (Simon, 1996). Zaeed had to rework my question and convey the respondents’ answers by considering the way the language was linked to local realities, as well as constantly making decisions about the cultural meanings the language carried, thus necessitating the deployment of “a wide and diverse

spectrum of intelligences” (Simon, 1996). Thus, the interpreter/translator’s adaptation of my words to the cultural context did not remain at the linguistic level but also included the management of the context, engaging in a real work of mediation aimed at making the questions I formulated culturally accessible and normatively acceptable, often ignoring certain cultural constructions, as emerges from the ethnographic account:

About half an hour into the interview with Ahmed, I ask a question about the interviewee’s marriage; although the answers up to that point were not very narrative and dialogic, I have by then understood that the couple—unlike most of my research subjects in both Italy and Bangladesh—had come together after a long engagement and not as the result of an arranged marriage. At this point, something unusual happens: Zaeed suddenly stops, hesitates, and addresses the son in a firm manner. The latter suddenly gets up and hands him a glass of water poured from the jug placed on the desk not far from him. I, as well as the interviewee and his wife, observe the situation slightly surprised at the unusual lack of prior warning for this small interruption, but I do not dwell much on the episode and expect the translation to resume shortly after. It doesn’t. Zaeed seems disappointed by the ease with which his request for a drink of water was granted, and he suddenly stands up decisively, walks from one side of the room to the other with confidence, and to the desk on which are placed next to the recently emptied jug, some books, and notebooks. He starts flipping through the pages of one of them without fear of being intrusive or inappropriate. Zaeed asks the couple’s son something, who promptly replies to him. He, in turn, politely responds with a smile. The boy’s mother adds a sentence in a calm and composed manner, and the son obediently stands up and goes out of the door. Then Zaeed says to me as if nothing had happened: “Yes, we can go on ...” I stammer a little, embarrassed. Zaeed, unperturbed, presses on. “The last question ...” Trying to hide my surprise, I rephrase the question, trying in vain to contain a smile that comes out spontaneously without me understanding why—“Now it’s OK.” We resume the interview normally, and from now on, the interviewee’s answers will become much more conversational and wordier.

After about two hours, we decide to take a break. The couple does their prayers, Zaeed takes the opportunity to smoke a cigarette and, in the meantime, explains to me about the interaction with the couple’s son: He first tried to get him to leave by asking him to serve him a glass of water, hoping that he would have to leave the room to do so. When, however, he realized that the jug was at hand, he sought another diversion and asked him if the notebooks on his desk were his schoolbooks. Once he received an affirmative answer, he complimented him on the tidiness of his books and then told him that they would have a chance to talk about his progress at school after the interview and that, therefore, he could (or, rather, should) leave and come back later. The boy took the hint and left the adults alone, and his father was

free to speak without censorship due to his presence. I ask Zaeed why he decided to make him leave since the question about marriage seemed “legitimate.” He explains to me that the question showed—as both he and I had understood—the non-arranged nature of the boy’s parents’ marriage, something that is socially looked down upon, a “love marriage” being considered a less legitimate union since it is seen to be the result of the reckless and irrational desires of a young couple who did not respect parental authority, the fruit of a sensual and irrepressible impulse and, therefore, repeatable (with another partner is possible to fall in love with). (Field notes from the interview with Ahmed, brother, Faridpur)

This practice of “cultural translation” is directly relevant to the issue of ethnographic writing. Reflecting on ethnographic writing entails reflecting on the transformation of facts into text (Larsen, 2014). Often, the thoughts, interpretations, symbolic references, and attributions of the meaning of the interviewees socialized according to sociocultural norms and values considered legitimate and hegemonic in Bangladesh did not coincide, in form and content, with my own, as a researcher with a different cultural and social background. Thus, this translation required a language—and, therefore, a writing—that was appropriate for expressing the various reference systems in which the different interviewees were placed in the world (Larsen, 2014). This language adapted to interpretation—which, as will be seen below, would become more complex through Zaeed’s contribution—has meant that ethnographic practice has frequently been defined as a “literary genre” or “a particular genre of writing” (Dal Lago & De Biasi, 2002). This goes hand in hand with the question of reflexivity, i.e., the relationship between the researcher and the object of their research, thus with the subjects involved in the research, their representations and their practices, and the ways in which the researcher situates themselves in these relationships and in their biography (Bourdieu, 2003; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992; Larsen, 2014; Melucci, 1998), taking into account the inevitable, political, social, and power dynamic (Bourdieu, 2003; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Inevitably, reflexive practice cannot but condition ethnographic writing (Larsen, 2014). In this text, I have maintained my positioning without fear of using personal pronouns and without attempting to “purify” my research practice by removing subjective elements from the empirical results (Crapanzano, 1977; Marcus & Cushman, 1982; Larsen, 2014). Just as the ethnographic method does not lend itself well to “objective” procedures, so too ethnographic writing cannot be considered a “neutral means” for representing the reality objectivized through the method (Larsen, 2014).

In my ethnographic work in Bangladesh, it was more difficult to collect the narratives of those who, although knowing some basic English, had not mastered the language sufficiently to construct complex discursive plots. This type of interviewee, driven by enthusiasm or the desire to enter into direct communication with the Italian researcher, often responded directly without the use of the interpreter/translator, thus exhausting the potential of their answers, resulting in a tendency

to generalize and an inevitable reduction in the complexity of their narratives. On these occasions, therefore, it was necessary for me to lose eye contact with the interviewee and, through my body language and the continuous redirecting of my gaze, to push the interpreter/translator—with whom, from time to time, I made arrangements—into center stage, weakening my positioning within the interaction in order to favor the use of Bangla.

In the course of each interview, my position as a researcher had to shift, as I had to move to the margins of the communicative process and intervene only at the moment in which the questions were being formulated. In fact, in order to give continuity to the interviewee's voice, it was Zaeed who had to manage the use of relaunchees and continuators. Since I could not rely on relaunchees as I was unable to insert myself in the concatenations of the narrators or pick up the expressions they used in real-time—except after the lengthy translations that almost never reproduced the exact lexical form of the signifiers—this might have resulted in a more structured interview, forcing me to formulate the questions exactly as they were written in the original interview outline.

This “dialogical triangulation” could result in the loss of the emotional nuances with which the narrators accompanied their narrative: not having the linguistic channel used by Zaeed and the interviewees (Bangla), it was not always possible to match the voice tones, facial expressions, and non-verbal body language to the discursive constructions that were reported to me by the interpreter/translator, inevitably in the form of a homogeneous, flat, continuous narrative flow.

In the communicative relationship structured around the simultaneous presence of three subjects, the management of silences and the resulting awkwardness that I often use in my empirical research became more complicated. As well as having to think about my own awkwardness and that of the interviewee, I also had to reckon with that of the interpreter/translator, an additional actor who, unable to manage his own positioning, sometimes ended up breaking the silence, causing the emotional effervescence and consequent awkwardness to disappear. Whereas in a conversation between two actors, silence and embarrassment remain locked in a bipolarity that stimulates speech, in a communicative triad, the actors may feel deprived of the responsibility of resolving the situation of suspension, retreating from the relationship, avoiding going into more detail, transforming silence into muteness and preventing the narrative from continuing. Obviously, this is not only a prerogative of multi-sited research, but, more in general, it is an aspect that concerns qualitative research that makes use of an interpreter/translator.

My accounts based on narrative interviews are in themselves narratives of narratives, a double *verstehen*: both the questions and the answers are interpreted. The narrative and the resulting research, therefore, are embedded in a *double* hermeneutic that becomes *triple* when a third “gradient of interpretation” intervenes (Edwards & Temple, 2002, p. 11). This is the “triple hermeneutic” that dominates in the research's restitution/dissemination phase, which—even though

I have chosen to report the words of the interviewees as faithfully as possible—obviously entails a profound work of interpretation and re-writing (Bourdieu, 1993). The “betrayal of translation,” the “dilemma of translated words” (Temple & Young, 2004, p. 162), the linguistic slippage and the elaboration of a third subject who (inter)acts in the data construction process with their “categories of the intellect,” in fact entail a further interpretative double-passage of question and answer and another linguistic slippage. This dynamic clearly emerges in the interview passage and field notes below:

During the interview with Shantu, who has already demonstrated a conservative socio-political attitude, I ask the following question: “What do the people think about people leaving the country and going abroad?”

The interviewee, who has only a basic use of English, uses his native language to answer. The interpreter/translator, attentive to what he considers to be my expectations of his linguistic and ideological performance, steeped in university and progressive culture and imbued with historical-materialist categories, translates the answer: “All the impressions of those who live abroad in mass perception are not that, in most cases usually people from the lower classes use to go abroad ...”

Suddenly, however, the interviewee—who is following Zaeed’s words—interrupts the translation and gently but firmly emphasizes: “No lower classes: I said, ‘poor families.’” Zaeed, disguising his embarrassment, resumes his translation: “People from poor families used to go abroad ...” (Shantu, brother and nephew, Charmuguria)

Zaeed, born and raised in a rural village, socialized in a very religious middle-class Bangladeshi family, but now living in the capital, where he got a university education, also belonged to the national community (the Bangladeshi one) of the interviewees (or a part of it) with whom he shared a universe of meanings and dispositions—albeit with sometimes conflicting interpretations. At the same time, however, he shared a vision of the world and, above all, a set of signifiers used to describe it with me, the researcher. He thus found himself in conflict with the multiple actors in the field for hegemony over authorized languages.

CONCLUSIONS

A theoretical approach aimed at redialing the political and scientific rift between emigration and immigration, often taken as mutually independent phenomena, necessitates a suitable methodological approach: an epistemology and a methodology that go beyond dichotomously attributing the analysis of immigration to the destination society and the analysis of emigration to the departure society.

Multi-sited ethnography is a research practice—and, at the same time, a scientific stance—that can be used to “sew up” this split and to observe the global scope of social transformations connected to international migration, along with the transnational unfolding of the biographical trajectories of migrants and their families (Boccagni, 2014).

If ethnographic and qualitative research already continually highlights and reminds us of the changing character of the field, the researcher practicing multi-sited ethnography must be aware that this changeability crosses national borders, reverberating through and becoming magnified in transnational space. It is the research field itself, in fact, that is transnational, tracing migratory networks, reconstructing social relations, and embracing family ties that extend across continents, linking, in this case, Bangladeshi villages and metropolises to the industrial peripheries of the urban sprawl of northeastern Italy. Thus, access to the research field in Bangladesh was influenced by my initial *gaffes* and missteps but also by the relationships of trust built with the interviewees and the sudden acceleration of my research in Alte Ceccato. For the Bangladeshis in Alte Ceccato, I was a potential resource of social capital, a possible friend or institutional representative. For their family members back home, on the other hand, I represented the distant brother or son, shortening the space-time of migration. As a consequence of this reminder and, above all, of the anticipatory socialization that migrants enacted at a distance on their relatives in relation to my research, the interview took the form of an event that was waited for and prepared: a moment of (a piece of) theatre that could last a whole day.

Given the situation, I did not follow the methodological guidelines often found in the literature regarding the absence of additional listeners during interviews. Unlike in Italy, the interviewees’ narratives in Bangladesh, in fact, frequently took place in the presence of several people—friends, family members, and relatives—thus becoming an opportunity to establish a shared family history. These narrated representations thus offered the opportunity for collective self-social analysis, allowing them, perhaps for the first time, to recount and order the events of migration and the family history, above all to themselves. A shared family history is often taken for granted by all members of a household, but, in reality, there are rarely opportunities to compare the family perceptions and representations about the family itself of each member and even of each generation or gender within the family. The notion of “shared family history” has been used to delve deeper into biographical trajectories and autobiographical narratives of the self, marital and family trajectories (Bietti, 2010; Buyukkececi & Çineli, 2023; Fivush, 2013; McAdam et al., 2023), but it has never been observed as a process emerging from ethnographic and narrative interviews in the migratory and family context.

Ethnographic practice demands flexibility and the ability to adapt to the aforementioned changing nature of the research field and the relationships that unfold within it, and also an awareness that the suggested methodological devices, which

are often difficult to apply, might need to be subverted (Hampshire et al., 2014). This resilience and ability to cope with unpredictability seem all the more necessary in the course of multi-sited research, as made clear by the dynamic whereby an interview that was meant to be individual becomes a collective event, or as revealed even more clearly by the collaboration with a linguistic interpreter/translator. This increases the uncontrollable aspects of the ethnographic experience and calls into question pre-planned methodological practices. Especially in a sociocultural context that is “other” to that in which the researcher has been socialized, the figure of the interpreter/translator necessarily becomes an active subject in the research process, adding a further degree of interpretation to the interpretations, modifying the methodological practices proper to the qualitative interview, engaging in a cultural translation—and not a mere linguistic transposition—of the artifices from which the interviewees’ narratives take their cue.

At times, it seems that telling a family story and a story of migration from a safe position has a therapeutic benefit. I could not discuss this aspect here, but it could be the subject of further work.

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POVZETEK

VEČPRIZORIŠČNA ETNOGRAFIJA V PRAKSI: RAZMISLEKI, STRATEGIJE IN ORODJA ZA KVALITATIVNO RAZISKOVANJE TRANSNACIONALNIH MIGRACIJ

Francesco Della Puppa

Članek je nastal na podlagi triletnega raziskovalnega projekta o migracijah iz Bangladeša v Italijo. Avtor se je v raziskavi osredotočil na Bangladeševce, ki živijo v mestecu Alte Ceccato v italijanski pokrajini Vicenza, pri čemer je uporabil metodo daljšega opazovanja z udeležbo ter opravil 74 intervjujev v Italiji in Bangladešu.

Za teoretični pristop, katerega cilj je preseči politično in znanstveno ločnico med izseljevanjem in priseljevanjem, ki sta pogosto obravnavana kot medsebojno neodvisna pojava, je potreben ustrezen metodološki pristop: epistemologija in metodologija, ki presegata dihotomno pripisovanje analize priseljevanja ciljni družbi ter analize izseljevanja družbi izvora. Večprizoriščna etnografija je raziskovalna praksa in znanstvena usmeritev, s katero lahko presežemo to delitev ter opazujemo globalni obseg družbenih sprememb, povezanih z mednarodnimi migracijami.

Čeprav etnografsko in kvalitativno raziskovanje že samo po sebi stalno izpostavlja in opominja na spreminjanje tega raziskovalnega področja, se morajo raziskovalci, ki uporabljajo večprizoriščno etnografijo, zavedati, da spremenljivost presega nacionalne meje ter se odraža in krepi tudi v transnacionalnem prostoru. Tako so na dostop do raziskovalnega polja v Bangladešu vplivali odnosi zaupanja, ki jih je avtor vzpostavil z intervjuvanci, ter nenadna intenzifikacija njegovega raziskovanja v italijanskem kraju Alte Ceccato. Za Bangladeševce v tem mestecu je bil avtor potencialni vir družbenega kapitala, potencialni prijatelj ali institucionalni predstavnik, na drugi strani pa je za njihove družinske člane, ki so ostali v Bangladešu, predstavljal oddaljenega brata ali sina, ki skrajšuje časovno-prostorski okvir migracije. Zaradi tega opomina in predvsem zaradi anticipatorne socializacije, ki so jo migranti na daljavo izvajali pri svojih sorodnikih v zvezi z avtorjevo raziskavo, je intervju dobil obliko dogodka, ki so ga pričakovali in se nanj pripravljali.

Glede na te okoliščine avtor ni upošteval metodoloških smernic glede odsotnosti dodatnih poslušalcev med intervjuji, ki so pogosto navajane v literaturi. V nasprotju z Italijo so pogovori z intervjuvanci v Bangladešu pogosto potekali v prisotnosti več oseb, kar je bila priložnost za vzpostavljanje skupne družinske zgodovine. Te pripovedne reprezentacije so tako ponudile priložnost za kolektivno socialno samoanalizo, saj so migrantom omogočile pripovedovanje o migracijskih dogodkih in družinski zgodovini ter njihovo časovno umeščanje.

Zdi se, da sta pri raziskavah na več lokacijah še toliko bolj potrebni prilagodljivost in sposobnost soočanja z nepredvidljivimi situacijami, o čemer priča dinamika intervjujev, ki so se iz prvotno zamišljenih individualnih spremenili v skupinske dogodke, še bolj jasno pa se kaže v sodelovanju z jezikovnim prevajalcem. V

družbeno-kulturnem kontekstu, ki je »drugi« od tistega, v katerem je bil raziskovalec socializiran, prevajalec nujno postane aktiven subjekt v raziskovalnem procesu, ki dodatno interpretira interpretacije, spreminja metodološke prakse, značilne za kvalitativni intervju, ter sodeluje pri kulturnem prevajanju konstruktov, iz katerih izhajajo pripovedi intervjuvancev.

SUDANESE MIGRATION AND DESTINATION COUNTRIES: MOTIVATION FACTORS AND THE ROLE OF GENDER

Yassir Ali Mohammed¹

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ABSTRACT

Sudanese Migration and Destination Countries: Motivation Factors and the Role of Gender

The article explores Sudanese migration, destination countries, motivation factors, and gender roles. An online survey was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic between 2020–2021. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods, the findings reveal that the main reasons for migration were lack of jobs and low salaries. Other factors included a commitment to success, corruption, and time consumption in government institutions. Arab Gulf countries were the primary destination for economic migration, followed by Europe. More females, despite the restriction of culture and tradition, are seeing migration as a means to establish their projects to help others. Sudanese migration identified more youth, regardless of migration type. Remittances had a greater positive impact on households than on the country in general.

KEYWORDS: the role of gender, households, push factors, remittances, Sudanese migration

IZVLEČEK

Sudanske migracije in ciljne države: Motivacijski dejavniki in vloga spola

Avtor v prispevku obravnava sudanske migracije, ciljne države, motivacijske dejavnike in vlogo spola. V obdobju 2020–2021, med pandemijo bolezni COVID-19, je izvedel spletno raziskavo z uporabo kvalitativnih in kvantitativnih metod, katere izsledki kažejo, da sta bila glavna razloga za migracije pomanjkanje delovnih mest in nizke plače. Drugi dejavniki, ki so vplivali na migracije, so bili želja po uspehu, korupcija in potrata časa v državnih institucijah. Glavni cilj ekonomskih migracij so bile države Arabskega zaliva, sledile pa so evropske države. Vse več žensk kljub kulturnim omejitvam in tradiciji vidi migracijo kot sredstvo za izvajanje projektov za pomoč drugim. Ugotovitve kažejo, da so pri sudanskih migracijah prevladovali mladi, ne glede na vrsto migracije. Denarna nakazila so imela večji pozitivni učinek na posamezna gospodinjstva kot na državo na splošno.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: vloge spolov, gospodinjstva, dejavniki odbijanja, nakazila, sudanska migracija

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INTRODUCTION

Migration is mostly connected to several factors. For example, push-pull factors from developing countries to developed countries, respectively. Highly educated people prefer to go to developed countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, France, Switzerland, Germany, and Japan (Chiswick, 2005). Highly skilled immigrants prefer Anglo-Saxon countries due to the global influence of the English language (Chiswick, 2005). These preferences come in the form of recommendations from friends and family members to a certain country where potential migrants could relocate (Uddin et al., 2023). For example, Indians emigrate to the United States and the United Kingdom because of the use of the English language and to evaluate the value of their obtained academic degree, whether it be a secondary school diploma (a certificate that indicates the completion of high school) or a graduate or postgraduate degree. This certificate helps migrants find jobs in their host country (Birks & Sinclair, 1980).

The second group is unskilled migrants who seek asylum by any means. For example, individuals from Nigeria or Sudan may choose Libya as a transit country to seek asylum in another country. Therefore, Libya is the first destination nation for migrants from neighboring countries to developed countries (Marchand et al., 2017; Ayalew et al., 2018; Uddin et al., 2023).

Qualified Sudanese immigrants choose Arab states as their common priorities due to the reciprocal language and culture (Abusharaf, 1997; Birks & Sinclair, 1980). However, some qualified Sudanese might relocate to Europe, the United States, Canada, and Australia as a second option. This option is connected to the English language and academic degree (Birks & Sinclair, 1980). In Sudanese migration, males represent a significant percentage of the migration due to cultural and religious viewpoints, which is why Sudanese indicate the Arab States as their first country of destination (Abusharaf, 1997). Moreover, it is easy to find a job there without experience (Galal-Al-Din, 1988). Nevertheless, migrants may not have to work in unskilled jobs if they have a high level of education, which includes medicine, engineering, and information technology (Abusharaf, 1997; Badri & elAzab, 2013).

There are various studies conducted on Sudanese migration (e.g., Elnur, 2002; Ali, 2006; Assal, 2010; Nour, 2011b; Abu-Agla et al., 2013; Abdalla et al., 2016; Malik, 2017). However, these scholarships did not focus on the second alternative country for Sudanese. Thus, this study tries to fill this gap. The second gap is that Sudanese prefer certain countries of destination for economic, regular, irregular, voluntary, and involuntary migration. For example, Sudanese may not migrate to Chad and Central Africa for economic migration. Illegal migrants may migrate to Libya due to its borders, a migration which leads to Europe (Ayalew et al., 2018; Serra Mingot, 2022). In terms of peace, they are more likely to migrate to Arab Gulf Countries. Even though there are reciprocal benefits between sending and receiving countries, the researcher concentrates on Sudanese migration due to youth migration, which

might affect the country in the long term (Dako-Gyeke, 2016). Sending countries benefit in the forms of 1) transfer of technology and 2) remittances that impact the households and the country, while receiving countries benefit in the forms of 1) demographic balance, 2) economic development, and 3) filling the labor shortage to sustain development (McKay, 2003; Uddin et al., 2023).

Hence, this study aims to examine the motivation factors that attract Sudanese to specific nations. Moreover, it compares the role of gender between Sudan and the Philippines, Arab states, and religious beliefs, respectively, alongside culture. It also seeks to analyze the outcome of remittance on households (children) and the country, such as sending children to good schools and offering better health-care. This study distributed the online questionnaire to Sudanese migrants around the globe, and a sample of 135 respondents was collected during the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020–2021. The paper concluded with content analysis, in which the researcher generated data from open-ended questions to demonstrate the reasons for migration (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Uddin et al., 2023). Supporting relatives and children are among the factors that push Sudanese to migrate. While the establishment of new businesses attracts Sudanese migrants to return to their country.

The literature review and research questions are provided below. The methodology and data collection follow subsequently. The empirical data is presented in the results section. The discussion precedes the conclusion and implications.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The researcher applied two different theories; the first one is the new economic labor migration theory, “NELM” (Durand & Massey, 1992; Massey et al., 1990). This theory considers migration as the best option for migrants to enhance their families’ financial status and personal objectives. Moreover, it deals with households’ influence on the migrants’ decisions. Furthermore, migrants persuade non-migrants to think of migration as a way to resolve problems like poverty. The second theory is the “push-pull.” The principle of the theory states the negative factors that push migrants from their country of origin to their country of destination (Lee, 1966). The theory further notes that negative factors such as poverty and war push them away from their country of origin. Pull factors such as security and job opportunities pull them to the destination country. Against this background, the researcher examines the main push-pull factors that influence Sudanese migration to a particular nation. The push factors include a lack of employment, low salaries, and a bad environment. The environment could be a place of work or a place of residence. Whereas pull factors include high salary, employment opportunities, and a good environment. These theories were chosen because of their suitability for Sudanese migrants as well as the country’s structure and its location in Africa (Dako-Gyeke, 2016).

THE MOTIVATION FACTORS FOR SUDANESE MIGRATION AND COUNTRIES OF DESTINATION

One of the reasons that stimulates Sudanese to migrate to seek asylum is war; when war occurs, many people escape to neighboring countries (Vujadinović et al., 2013). Likewise, during the conflict that occurred in April 2023, many Sudanese fled to Egypt, Chad, Eritrea, Libya, and South Sudan seeking shelter. The United Nations Humanitarian Commission of Refugees (UNHCR) reported that the number of Sudanese who applied for asylum in 2021 was 22,402. The second cause of migration is political. In Sudan, like in other African countries, individuals who oppose the government are arrested or forced to flee to another country (Richlen, 2023). These oppositions may escape to neighboring countries that are economically and politically unstable (Abusharaf, 1997; Assal, 2010). There are a great deal of other African countries that have requested asylum in other countries (Uddin et al., 2023).

In terms of voluntary migration or economic migration, several reasons could be explained since the individual has options, which include socioeconomic factors, a bad environment, self-improvement, and unemployment (Abusharaf, 1997; Nour, 2011b). Moreover, children's education could have an impact on emigration and low wages (Vižintin, 2022). Also, the lack of information technology was associated with inadequate internet facilities and the lack of career development, in addition to the long working hours in both public and private institutions (Abusharaf, 1997; Assal, 2010). Furthermore, dissatisfaction with work and the undervaluation of productivity could lead to quitting jobs and migration or stress and inner conflict. These negative factors can result in lower productivity and reduced contributions to the labor market or development of the country, which may cause the country to lose its youth and talented people. However, positive benefits may occur when these migrants transfer remittances or technology.

The qualified or semi-skilled individual selects a country of destination depending on their qualifications and possible employment chances (Badri & elAzab, 2013). Özden & Phillips (2015) examined highly qualified foreign-born doctors who were employed in the United States. The authors revealed that the majority of African physicians were either raised or educated in Africa. The bulk of those African professionals were not born in the continent, and only 15% had received their medical education in Africa. However, after a few years of serving their country of origin, many of their qualified people migrate.

Anderson Adzei & Sakyi (2014) examined the motivation of healthcare workers to return to Africa to contribute to the development. Personal development and spousal consideration, followed by additional factors, including socioeconomic ties to the country of origin, affect an individual's decision to return. Migrants impose restrictions on their return because they anticipate the societal problems that they will encounter when they return to their home country without success (Campbell, 2020). One of the strong reasons considered by migrants as regards returning home

is that if they become successful abroad, the likelihood of returning to their country of origin is higher. This success could be in terms of saving money for the future, purchasing land, establishing the land, or having a business. In contrast to this group, unsuccessful migrants have a lower likelihood of returning due to the same reasons. For Sudanese migrants, helping relatives and friends is a part of success in addition to purchasing land (Abusharaf, 1997).

Good workplace conditions, excellent salaries, employment opportunities, a high standard of life, and political and economic stability are the factors that drive Sudanese to migrate to developed countries (Nour, 2011b). However, to avoid culture shock, a lot of Sudanese migrate to Arab Gulf countries. It is essential to state that the Arabic language is the official language of these countries. This language helps Sudanese to search for jobs and a better life (Norris & Inglehart, 2012). As we stated earlier, some jobs do not require skills or academic degrees (Birks & Sinclair, 1980). Along with comparable pull considerations, the provision of long-term job prospects, flexible working hours, and personal development could motivate other Sudanese to migrate to the United States, the United Kingdom, or Europe. However, it is essential to note that there are some conditions to consider. Conditions such as obtaining a high degree of education and the ability to speak English (Bidwell et al., 2013).

THE ROLE OF GENDER IN SUDANESE MIGRATION COMPARED TO THE PHILIPPINE MIGRATION AND THE RECIPROCAL CHALLENGES

The paper selected to compare the Philippines and Sudan because of numerous similarities in gender migration and the host countries are nearly identical. The second argument is that incentive factors in push and pull factors may be similar. The third point is that many Filipinos work in the medical sector as nurses, medical doctors, and pharmacists, which appears to be typical of Sudanese. The fourth reason this study chose the Philippines, in particular, is to show the impact of gender migration on left-behind children. When females emigrate, they leave their children in the care of relatives or fathers. This issue is common in the Philippines migration (Trager, 1984; Oishi, 2002). Although it is not common for Sudanese females to migrate due to their children, if their children are very small, the possibility of migration is low. In contrast, if their children when their children are a bit older, the likelihood of having a job and migrating is high (Nour, 2011a). Relatives, husbands, or brothers may oppose female migration due to culture, habits, and religious viewpoints (Serra Mingot, 2020; Abuova et al., 2024). Even though this study is not comparative, it is important to compare these two countries to provide a clear picture of Sudanese gender migration.

When the poverty rate was high in the Philippines in the 1970s, many females decided to migrate to escape poverty (Trager, 1984). Filipinos set their sights on

a few specific countries, including Arab states (Rodriguez, 1998). Similar to what happened in Sudan after the separation of South Sudan from Sudan in late 2011, the country was reliant on oil as the primary source of revenue. As a result, many Sudanese families chose to send their daughters and spouses abroad due to economic viewpoint. Therefore, they allow females to migrate to Arab states because of the similarity in Arabic language usage and reciprocal culture. Many Sudanese work as teachers (if they have an academic degree) or in beauty salons (the beauty salons do not require an academic qualification). The vast majority work as nurses or medical physicians. A study investigated the reasons for the transition of the agricultural sector from being used for domestic consumption to commercial objectives in which females engage (McKay, 2005). This is another likely reason for escaping the country of origin during harvest time. The author described how the agricultural sector changed when females migrated from the Philippines to foreign countries or occasionally migrated within the border. If this is the case for agriculture, what about their children?

In Aljazeera, the Kordofan states, and the western region of Sudan, the agricultural sector has a booming female workforce. However, the male workforce dominates it (Alipio, 2019). These rural areas of the country rely on agriculture more than any other sector. That is the rationality in comparing the Sudanese situation to the Philippines (see Table 2). Filipino women invest in agricultural sectors by using their fortune before and subsequent migration (Trager, 1984; Oishi, 2002). Meanwhile, Sudanese women do not invest in the agricultural sectors because agriculture needs more care and time. Another viewpoint is that most of the Sudanese female migrants are from big cities. These differences could reflect the social background of the two nations. Some studies stated that with the rise of female education in Sudan, females have more chances to migrate due to religious and cultural factors (Maglad, 1998; Jack, 2010; Steel, 2021). Earlier, some families did not support gender education; females themselves were less likely to have a job (Maglad, 1998; Nour, 2011a). However, many things have changed due to the economic situation.

The effects of remittances on the micro level and macro level were examined by (Oishi, 2002), who discussed the significance of remittances on families left behind and the country to which females transfer money. Families prefer female migration over male migration since women are more responsible when it comes to remittance transfer. However, recruited agencies might exploit these females to end up with trafficking and sex trade (Rushing, 2006). For this reason, some Sudanese families hesitate to send females abroad and thus prefer to send males overseas.

THE OUTCOME OF REMITTANCES ON SUDANESE LEFT-BEHIND HOUSEHOLDS AND THE COUNTRY

McKay (2003) investigated the role of gender in migration in terms of sending and receiving remittances. The author added the role of the father when the female migrates: the father is planting different crops, so when the migrant is back, this person can rely on some fortune. The second point is that when migrants relocate, they leave their children in the care of their parents, ensuring that these children receive a better education and enjoy better health because their parents are trustees. Another point is that when these left-behind fathers receive remittances, they take care of migrants' children by buying basic items like TVs, phones, personal computers, and refrigerators and saving some portion for the future. This was one of the rational ideas that pushed many young girls to think before migrating. When the country of origin receives remittances, the market will generate more goods, which will lead to economic improvement. In other words, money is spent on migrants' children to educate them, take care of them, and provide better health and well-being.

Another point to consider is how remittances contribute to low-income families more than middle-class families by improving their quality of life. From a macro-economic viewpoint, formal systems, such as "government official banks," are used to transfer money that reserves hard currency for the country of origin, which is subsequently received in local currency to purchase goods. Microeconomics and macroeconomics both gain from this circle (Rodriguez, 1998). However, some African countries, including Sudan, use an informal remittance system to transfer money (Akuei, 2005). Sudanese sent remittances, but they were not transferred formally. Remittances were frequently sent for a variety of reasons, including the Muslim holidays of Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, and Adha (Muslim ceremonies). Even though the professions of these migrants include lawyers, doctors, and academics (Akuei, 2005), they still choose to send money through this informal system (see Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6 in the appendix).

The next framework in Figure 1 presents the theoretical framework applied to the study, including the words and sentences linked to the theories.

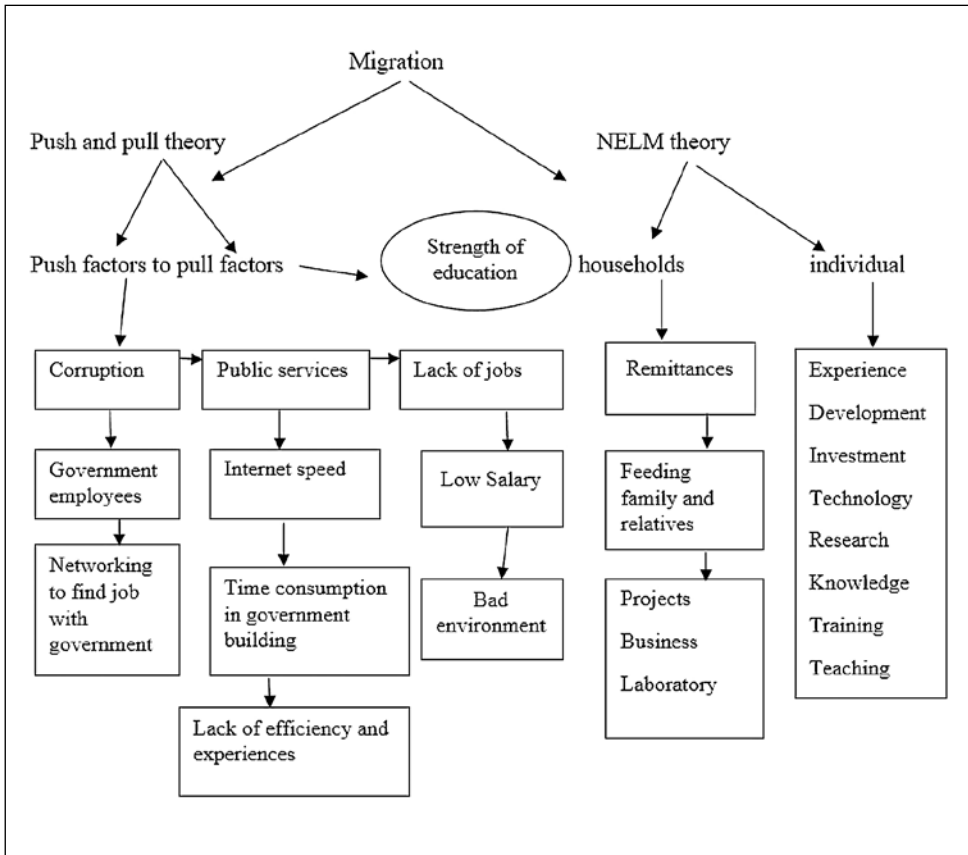


Figure 1: Motivation factors for push-pull and NELM theories.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1: What are the main push-pull factors that lead skilled, unskilled, voluntary, or involuntary Sudanese to migrate?

RQ2: What is the first and second country of destination for Sudanese migrants seeking economic or involuntary migration?

RQ3: To what extent do remittances contribute to the development of Sudan in Sudanese migration, as well as on households?

RQ4: What is the role of gender in Sudanese migration?

METHOD AND DATA COLLECTION

This paper employed both quantitative and qualitative methods of research (Wilson, 1998; Uddin et al., 2023). These methods are convenient to adopt when using open-ended questions in social and psychological science (Singleton Jr. et al., 1988; Uddin et al., 2023).

The survey was designed in two phases. The first stage involved a pilot study of potential participants who were available to the author. After readjusting the participants' comments, the survey was distributed to Sudanese migrants through the Sudanese Research Initiative on Facebook. More so, this group contains a lot of Sudanese migrants around the globe who are considered involuntary migrants or economic migrants, but also the majority are youth.

The survey was to be filled out voluntarily. If participants were not in this group, the author searched for other groups in different countries. To reach more participants, the researcher sent the survey link through other social media platforms such as Telegram, LinkedIn, and others. The online questionnaire took approximately 20–25 minutes to fill in due to some open-ended questions where individuals were expected to explain their viewpoints. The researcher aimed to collect data from 1,200 participants.

It was convenient at that time to use the online questionnaire in 2020–2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Data was collected from a sample of 135 respondents. Even though this sample could not be representative of the general population, it is convenient (Wilkins & Epps, 2011).

The survey consists of 22 sections. The first part involves a few demographic questions, including gender, age, marital status, and place of residence. The second part involves the motivation factors for migration. Questions such as, what was the main reason for migrating from Sudan? What is your current place of residence? The third part involves several socioeconomic factors, such as the influence of the household on migrant decisions and the effect of remittances on the family. Questions related to salary and wages: Do you send money home? How do you send money home? Another question was about the willingness to play a role in the homeland's progress. This last question explored female perspectives on migration and the role of gender. Due to the nature of the open-ended socioeconomic questions in the survey, individuals had the chance to give detailed information regarding the proposed questions (Singleton Jr. et al., 1988). It is also essential to note that some questions were not required to be answered. The study applied a deductive content analysis approach to the open-ended questions in the survey. This allowed the researcher to categorize the data and its theme (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008).

DEDUCTIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

The reason for selecting content analysis as a method of analysis is that it enables the researcher to combine qualitative and quantitative methods, conduct statistics analysis, and data interpretation in determining the meaning of the text. In terms of analysis, the author provides a thorough explanation of the process so that readers understand how the study was conducted and what limitations it has. This supports the choice of content analysis in this paper (GAO, 1996). One of the difficulties of content analysis is that there is no single approach to analyzing data (Weber, 1990). Some information in the content analysis may be related to some classification other than the one the researcher tried to categorize. Hence, the best solution is for the researcher to go back to the text in a repetitive manner (Bush et al., 2020; Sandelowski, 1995; Stemler, 2000).

In terms of deciding the meaning of this group of words for common use in migration, a word might have more than one meaning (Stemler, 2000). The paper preferred to employ word frequency in the text to overcome this barrier. Because of the purpose and questions of the research, the researcher coded the words based on their appearance in the text.

The study employed the first group of words, sentences, or phrases by identifying the push factors that were associated with the country of origin. The factors include a lack of a job, a bad environment, political issues, poverty, low salary, war, and freedom of speech. The second group of words, sentences, or phrases were associated with pull factors such as good environment, job opportunities, high salary, and freedom of speech.

The paper did not employ an inductive technique because this phenomenon is well-known and has sufficient knowledge in the field of migration; if there is little information, a deductive approach is preferable (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). When evaluating hypotheses or research questions through existing knowledge from general to specific, the deductive approach is the best fit (Kyngäs & Vanhanen, 1999; Latvala et al., 2000). Due to a paucity of studies in the paper's current area of interest, this last option was preferred for the research analysis.

First, the study arranged the analysis by preparing and reporting (Guthrie et al., 2004). Preparation is the first step in selecting a unit of content analysis. This classification can be done by theme or by words (Polit & Beck, 2004). It is also necessary to choose which sample to include in the unit of analysis (Cavanagh, 1997). On the other hand, the unit of analysis is too narrow, for example, one word, as this paper did in most of the analysis (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). This unit of analysis could also be a letter, word, sentence, or portion of a page (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The study made an interpretation of the meaning and the words' appearance or hidden content (Robson, 1993). The next stage was to give the data meaning (Morse & Field, 1995).

RESULTS

The first variable explains the push factors for Sudanese migration, which was the first research question (see Figure 2). The leading reasons for Sudanese migration were low salaries (64.4%) out of the total 100%, lack of jobs (47.4%), political issues (24.4%), and others 25.9%. Sudanese leave their country for economic reasons (Assal, 2010; Nour, 2011b; Abu-Agla et al., 2013). Politics comes next (35%), followed by environmental concerns (33%).

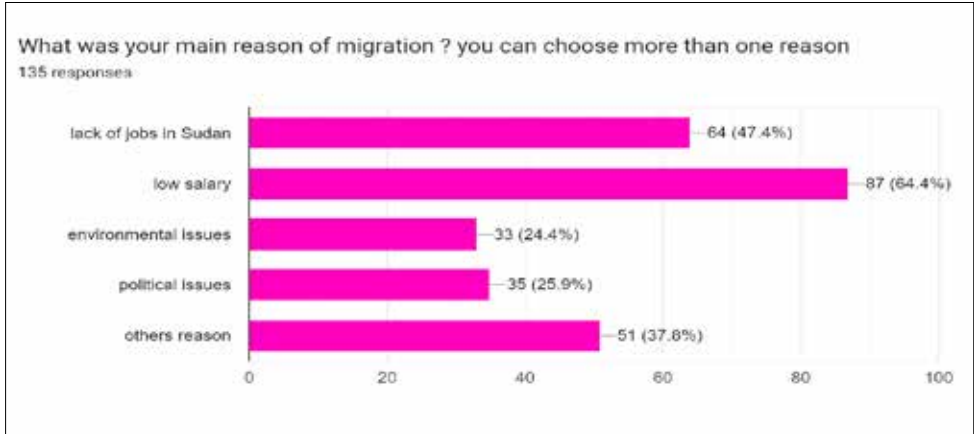


Figure 2: The main push factors that lead Sudanese to migrate.

Table 1 shows the first country of destination in which Sudanese migrants chose to settle, the Arab Gulf countries at 38.5% (52 migrants), followed by Europe at 20% (27 migrants), then other African countries at 17.8% (24 migrants). The remaining migrants were distributed to Asia with 14.8% (20 migrants), the United States and Canada at 5.2% (7 migrants). The smallest share of migrants destined for Australia, New Zealand, 2.2% (3 migrants), and Latin America, 1.5% (2 migrants).

Country of Destination	Number of Participants	Percentage
Other African countries	24	17.8
Arab Gulf countries	52	38.5
Asia	20	14.8
Europe	27	20.0
United States and Canada	7	5.2
Australia and New Zealand	3	2.2
Latin America	2	1.5

Table 1: The country of destination for Sudanese migrants (source: author’s survey, 2020–2021).

The next variable was gender 21% of the respondents were female (28 migrants). The role of gender was the fourth research question. Then, age revealed that the majority of migrants worldwide were young people. There were (43) migrants less than 30 years old and less than 39 years old (63) people. (24) Migrants between 40 and 49 years old, and (5) persons between 50 and 59 years old. 51.9% were married and 47.9% were single.

Do you send money home? 72.7% of migrants replied yes. Meanwhile, 27.3% of singles said no (see Figure 3). These answers predict the outcome of remittances on Sudanese households and the country in general. This is the third research question about remittances.

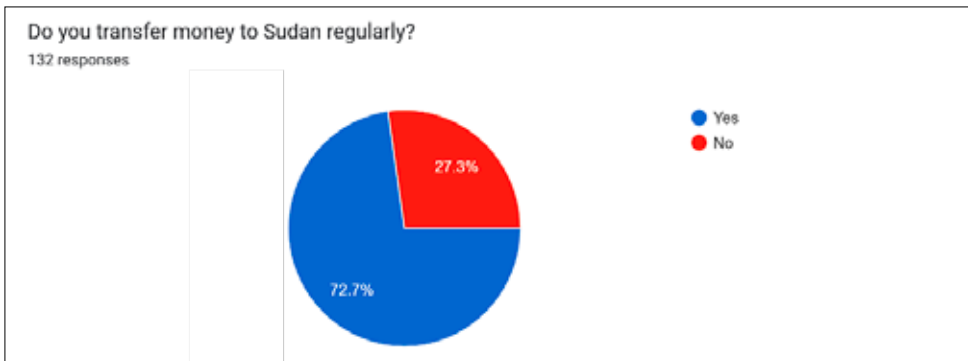


Figure 3: The status of Sudanese migrants in transferring money to Sudan (there were 132 answers because the question was not obligatory).

However, some migrants may not send money through official government banks (see Figure 4). This result is similar to Akuei (2005), who states that Sudanese migrants send money informally.

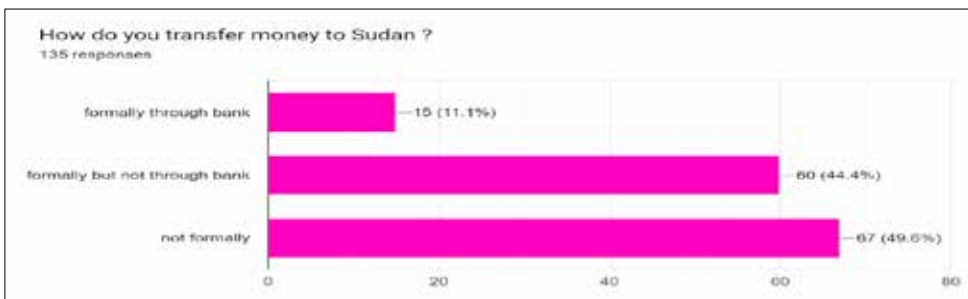


Figure 4: Channel on which Sudanese migrants transfer money.

In the last question about the role of gender, 20.7% out of the total participants, 100% were females (28 migrants).

The following concepts and words appeared in the analyzed text: 11 times the word experience, 6 times the word training, 1 time the word teaching, 3 times the

word gain, 1 time the word health, 1 time the word education, 11 times the word development, 5 times the word developing. The word product appeared 4 times, the word support 5 times, and the word research 4 times.

We linked the same set of words to NELM theory. In terms of the role of remittances, the paper exposed these words: Money appeared 7 times, projects 6 times, businesses 4 times, and laboratories 1 time. In addition, women’s gender was mentioned 4 times, and inequality was mentioned 1 time. The second category of push and pull factors consisted of the following: lack of efficiency and experience appeared 1 time, environment and cleaning 1 time. Time consumption in government buildings and internet speed all 1 time. Networking to find a job in a public organization appeared 1 time. Corruption 1 time and government employees delay 1 time.

Similarities		Differences	
Sudan	Philippine	Sudan	Philippine
Host countries	Host countries		
Arab states, economic migration	Arab states, economic migration	Arabic as an official language	Tagalog as an official language
Depend on agriculture	Depend on agriculture	Males dominate migrants	Females dominate migrants
Educated females work as doctors in Arab Gulf countries	Educated females work as doctors in Arab Gulf countries	45 million total population	113 million of the total population
Young population	Young population	23,454,198 population female	56,879,731 population female
Females in developing country	Females in developing country	Fertility rate 4.54 per woman	Fertility rate 2.78 per woman
Females send remittances	Females send more remittances than male	Islam is the main religion	Christianity is the main religion
Climate +30 degree	Climate +30 degree	Transfer of remittances through unofficial money transfer channels	Transfer of remittances through the official banking system of the state
High unemployment	High unemployment	Political and economic instability	Political and economic stability

Table 2: Comparison of female migration between Sudan and the Philippines (source: The World Bank, 2022).

DISCUSSION

RQ1: What are the main push-pull factors that lead skilled, unskilled, voluntary, or involuntary Sudanese to migrate?

Sudanese migrate due to socioeconomic reasons such as lack of employment and low wages. This result is similar to Assal (2010), who stated that socioeconomic factors motivate Sudanese to migrate. This article adds to the body of literature by stating that corruption and incompetence in the public sector drive Sudanese migrants. Moreover, the internet speed leads to time consumption in this governmental building. This negative result demotivates Sudanese to stay in Sudan. The negative factors were discussed in the literature review section. They play a role in the internal conflict, causing stress for Sudanese who are going to the public sector to obtain a personal identification card. As a result, individuals may be reluctant to visit public service centers to perform certain tasks. These negative causes enhance in Sudanese people, and they eventually decide to migrate. In migration, Sudanese may achieve their personal goals that are connected to family objectives.

Parents and friends motivate Sudanese to migrate to afford a better life for the migrants' children. Relatives and friends are also considered a part of their success. As a result, we witnessed the emergence of some words associated with NELM theory that are linked to households. There are reciprocal benefits between individual migrants and families left behind. The second benefit was the aspiration to succeed as a personal goal.

RQ2: What is the first and second country of destination for Sudanese migrants seeking economic or involuntary migration?

Several Sudanese chose to relocate to Arab countries because it is easy to obtain jobs without qualifications. Sudanese migrants take advantage of the knowledge of the Arabic language, which is straightforward to adapt to the new culture and comparable to Sudanese culture. Therefore, this finding is similar to Birks and Sinclair (1980) and Norris and Inglehart (2012), who stated that adaptation to the culture might be a reason to target a specific country, which is why it was ideal for Sudanese migrants to choose the Arab Gulf countries.

The second contribution is that Sudanese migrants consider neighboring countries in terms of war, such as Egypt, Chad, Kenya, and Eritrea. Of the overall percentage, 17.8% lived in other African countries. This number could indicate that these migrants are considering other African countries as shelters if war occurs. According to the paper's literature review section, when conflict arises, individuals seek shelter first, followed by other items. Shelter should not be chosen just to escape the war in their country of origin. Like the present crisis, which began in April 2023, many Sudanese escaped to neighboring nations, including the ones stated above. However, for economic migration, individuals can be selective. For this reason, they consider Arab Gulf countries and Europe as countries of destination

due to high salaries, job opportunities, and good environment. This result is similar to Assal (2010) and Birks & Sinclair (1980), who indicate that high salaries and job opportunities are among the factors that attract migrants to Arab states.

The words developing and development appeared 16 times in the text, indicating an intense desire from the participants to witness the country to be developed. In general, returnees from overseas bring several benefits, including the transfer of technology and a new experience that can contribute to the development of the country. This result is similar to Rodriguez (1998), who stated that sending countries could benefit from migration circles. Investing, starting one's own business, teaching, and training country counterparts are some of the interconnected benefits in terms of micro, meso, and macro-economic viewpoints between migrants and the country.

RQ3: To what extent do remittances contribute to the development of Sudan in Sudanese migration, as well as on households?

Do you send money home? 72.7% out of the total 100% of migrants replied yes. While 27.3% out of the total 100% of singles said no.

Married Migrants were fully committed to transferring money regularly because of family engagement, as opposed to unmarried migrants, who do not transfer money regularly. Regarding this commitment, money will be sent to Sudan so that both the family and the country can benefit from it. Remittances were used to supplement the family's expenditure on goods such as purchasing land and sending their children to school and finally save some money for future purposes. This circle generally improves the quality of life in the sending countries. This result is similar to Koc & Onan (2004), who showed that remittances could be used to send children to better schools and improve their well-being in general. It is vital to state that the government will have solid currency in its possession because of this money circle. The government cannot save a lot of hard currency to import goods and technology since 11% out of the total 100% send money formally. When all these steps occur, the country will be able to progress. Therefore, remittances have a positive impact on Sudanese left-behind families rather than the country since the majority of migrants transfer money regularly, as we notice in the result section.

In other words, many families might be able to improve their circumstances. This result reflects migrants' commitment to the establishment of new projects and the development of the country. This result is similar to McKay (2003) and Azizi (2018), who stated that productive investment is not only spending on daily needs. The examination and analysis of this paper revealed that Sudanese migration and the impact of remittances had a micro-level outcome on the family rather than a macro-level impact on the state's gross domestic product in general.

RQ4: What is the role of gender in Sudanese migration?

The role of gender remains insignificant in comparison to other countries, with 20.7% out of the total 100%. Gender migration is not high in Sudanese migration, although this result showed some improvements. This result is similar to Galal-Al-Din

(1988), Abusharaf (1997), and Abu-Agla et al. (2013). Due to Islamic beliefs and cultural practices, some families were hesitant to allow their daughters and wives to go abroad. The traditions and culture are reflected in the participant's viewpoints. Some females believe that traditions are unfair since they prohibit many of them from achieving their personal goals. These habits impede their path to success. Both genders complement one another; this is how some females want to perceive society. When females achieve success abroad, they are more likely to support their communities and the country. As a result, females' success contributes to the overall success of the community. The following answers support this statement.

A woman should be respected, not looked down upon as a weakling, a man's plaything, or a sympathetic figure. She is an indomitable spirit, a birthright to be free, and a destiny to stand by the side of man as his equal. A Complementary Relationship: In his words, he states that a woman must voice her needs; she is not different from a man. A man and a woman complement each other; they have the same soul, the same life, and the same rights; they need each other. The ancient concept of a woman as a man's inferior being is strongly opposed. Irrational traditions: Gandhi was not against traditions, but he despised meaningless traditional beliefs such as untouchability, child widowhood, child marriages, and superstitious practices. To him, God was Truth. He believed that traditions should take man closer to God and that humanity should not offend humans. Such practices which offend human dignity should be banished. (male, age 30–39 years old, single, master's degree)

The research revealed some progress in the Sudanese gender migration; the economic crisis that hit the country influenced people to send females abroad, whether for education or work. This result cannot be compared to other countries, such as the Philippines, where the majority of migrants are females. In the past, the situation of Sudanese female migration was even worse. But now there is an increase (20.7% out of 100% compared to the past), which still shows a huge gap compared to the Philippines.

Earlier, many families refused to send their female members abroad. Recently, more families have decided to send their daughters and spouses abroad due to economic reasons. This result is similar to Steel (2021), who states that some females have their own businesses, yet due to certain norms, they created online businesses to access the world economy. However, this result is in contrast to (Nour, 2011a), who stated that women are less likely to be employed. Now, many Sudanese female migrants want to be successful and contribute to Sudan's development. This success could be seen in the context of female education. Many educated women desire to transfer knowledge, experience, and technology to Sudan and help their colleagues and students. Furthermore, female education benefits society and the country. Some of the participants support this statement and indicate their willingness to function as a bridge between sending and receiving countries. This is one of the

benefits of the migratory circle, which the author indicated at the beginning of the paper (McKay, 2003; Uddin et al., 2023).

By transferring the knowledge I gain during my stay in Europe to my colleagues and students in Sudan, I am also planning to build a strong academic scientific network to create further collaboration and agreements between interested researchers, academic professors here, and my home university, to which I am going to return, although I did not get their support properly, we need to be the change to contribute to our knowledge development. (Female, age 30–39 years old, single, PhD)

To volunteer or engage in jobs where I can utilize my experience, and which will enable me to enhance the country in my related fields or other opportunities. (Female, age 30–39 years old, single, master's degree)

I am planning to share knowledge about sustainability and to take advantage of developing Sudan, starting from small communities first, by creating affordable projects to increase opportunities at low cost. (Female, age 30–39 years old, married, master's degree)

Sudanese female migrants also want to start projects to encourage young females to make their own decisions. The participants' viewpoints supported some of these ideas. Gender migrants were ready to help other females to migrate to achieve their personal goals and later help the country by investing in some projects. Despite some restrictions on female migration, females still want to help their relatives, other females, and the country by transferring technology. These answers show their responsibilities toward the community and the country, which are considered positive plans.

Establish businesses that empower young females. (Female, age 30–39 years old, married, master's degree)

I am interested in investing in resources for clean water. (Female, age 50–59+ years old, married, bachelor's degree).

To introduce new technologies and advanced experiences that will develop the country. (Female, age 50–59 years old, married, PhD)

However, when comparing Sudanese female migrants globally, there is still a vast gap. This is because 20.7% requires further study, and the researcher does not know if economic determination would change some values and norms.

The paper's limitation is that, due to several travel restrictions, it was difficult to set up an in-depth interview, a formal interview, or a face-to-face interview during

COVID-19. Those who filled out this questionnaire might not have a concrete answer because of the pandemic in 2020. Globally, people were under quarantine from October 2020 to March 2021. We acknowledge the number of participants who might not be representative. Therefore, future researchers need to increase the number to conduct quantitative research. Many Sudanese migrants were unable to complete this questionnaire due to the language used (English language).

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The paper explored the main push-pull factors that drive Sudanese to certain countries and the outcome of remittances to households and the country. The motivation to succeed and return home to establish business were among the reasons that pushed Sudanese migrants to relocate. Remittances might help the country if they were sent officially. This contribution might reflect on meso-economic and macro-economic levels. Therefore, this paper recommends inspiring people to transfer money officially through government banks as this result inspires policymakers.

Since the result showed that Sudanese migrants are ready to contribute to the development of the country, the paper recommends attracting them back. If these migrants are not ready to return permanently, they might return to spend some time and then go back to the host country. Another suggestion is that the government and NGOs should provide a solution to youth migration by funding projects that would give opportunities to new graduates. This will help to reduce youth migration or adopt a new policy to attract foreign professionals to Sudan.

Another implication is that Sudanese favor economic migration to Arab Gulf countries as their first destination due to the use of the Arabic language and culture. More so, Europe comes second in terms of migration, considering that migration to English-speaking European countries requires English language skills. Consequently, unskilled people need to learn the English language to open new doors to developed countries legally. Gender migration requires more focus, and policymakers may wish to employ the females' planning of responsibility for assisting the communities and the country.

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APPENDIX

Year / Economy	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Sudan	0.2622	0.2608	0.0619	0.3462	0.6408	0.7038	1.4555	0.1514	0.4954
Egypt	2.6960	3.2117	4.2835	3.2260	2.8520	5.0173	12.4531	18.3254	29.6029
Ethiopia	0.0122	0.0142	0.0052	0.0274	0.0532	0.1735	0.4361	1.0870	0.4041

Table 3: Personal remittance distribution in Sudan, 1980–2020, in billions of US dollars (source: World Bank Open Data).

Country Origin	Country Destination	Year flow 2020	Year flow 2021
Sudan	Saudi Arabia	435,810	481,215
Sudan	Qatar	42,000	23,415
Sudan	Kuwait	49,611	49,399
Sudan	Oman	17,724	19,879
Sudan	Egypt	33,459	60,066
Sudan	Libya	14,751	15,400
Sudan	UAE	127,057	133,226
Sudan	Bahrain	14,281	13,982
Sudan	Jordan	2,265	6,010
Sudan	Algeria	3,205	1,566
Sudan	Yemen	27,397	27,044
Sudan	Iraq	3,867	3,826
Sudan	Lebanon	725	2,201
Sudan	Ethiopia	41,734	41,959

Table 4: Sudanese migrants according to country of destination (source: KNOMAD Database, 2020–2021).

Country of destination	Number of applied	Number of accepted	Number of rejected	Ratio of acceptance
Libya	7,172	566	105	84.4%
Egypt	6,071	932	1,048	47.1%
United Kingdom	2,385	892	50	94.7%
France	1,674	968	1,399	40.9%
Kenya	388	237	0	100.0%
Spain	305	119	16	88.1%
Germany	233	80	120	40.0%
Italy	171	57	49	53.8%
Netherland	136	33	33	50.0%
Rwanda	98	133	0	100.0%
Canada	90	438	27	94.2%
United States	89	70	66	51.5%
Belgium	80	40	90	30.8%
Greece	55	38	18	67.9%
Jordan	52	209	141	59.7%
Australia	35	5	5	50.0%

Table 5: Sudanese asylum seekers according to country of application in 2022 (source: WorldData, 2023e).

Country of origin	Number of applicants	Number of accepted documents	Number of rejected documents	Ratio of acceptances
Ethiopia	2,561	815	1,426	36.4%
Eritrea	2,560	488	884	35.6%
Somali	7,528	680	2,106	24.4%
Congo Dem. Republic	6,852	902	3,782	19.3%

Table 6: Other African countries' application for asylum in 2022 (source: WorldData, 2023a; WorldData, 2023b; WorldData, 2023c; WorldData, 2023d).

POVZETEK

SUDANSKE MIGRACIJE IN CILJNE DRŽAVE: MOTIVACIJSKI DEJAVNIKI IN VLOGA SPOLA

Yassir Ali Mohammed

Avtor v prispevku preučuje sudanske migracije, ciljne države, motivacijske dejavnike ter vlogo spola. Pri tem izpostavlja dejavnike, ki vplivajo na to, da sudanski migranti izberejo določene države. Obravnava tudi neprostovoljne in ekonomske migracije iz Sudana ter primerja sudanske migrantke s filipinskimi migrantkami glede na ciljno državo in žensko delo.

Pri tem avtor uporablja dve različni teoriji, novo ekonomsko delovno migracijo ter teorijo odbijanja in privlačenja, kot metodologijo pa uporablja mešane metode. Podatki so bili zbrani prek spleta med pandemijo bolezni COVID-19 v obdobju 2020–2021, in sicer na vzorcu 135 anketirancev. Študija je kot dejavnike odbijanja v Sudanu opredelila pomanjkanje delovnih, negativno okolje, politične težave, revščina, nizke plače in vojna, medtem ko med dejavnike privlačenja sodijo pozitivno okolje, možnosti za zaposlitev in visoke plače. Avtor je za statistično analizo izbral metodo analize vsebine, pri kateri je kot enoto analize uporabil besedo ali stavek.

Sudanski migranti se pogosto selijo zaradi socialno-ekonomskih dejavnikov, kot so nizke plače, korupcija in nekompetentnost v javnem sektorju. Ti dejavniki prispevajo tudi k notranjim konfliktom, še dodatno otežuje situacijo. Sudance k selitvi spodbujajo starši in prijatelji, da bi svojim otrokom omogočili boljše življenje. Sudanski migranti se pogosto odločajo za selitev v arabske države iz ekonomskih razlogov, in sicer zaradi dobrih zaposlitvenih možnosti in lažje prilagoditve na novo kulturo zaradi arabskega jezika. Sosednje države, kot so Egipt, Čad, Kenija in Eritreja, vidijo tudi kot zatočišče v primeru vojne. V primeru ekonomskih migracij se sudanski migranti zaradi visokih plač, delovnih priložnosti in pozitivnega odločajo za arabske zalivske države in Evropo.

Izsledki študije kažejo, da 72,7 % sudanskih migrantov redno nakazuje denar domov. Denarna nakazila se uporabljajo za financiranje družinskih nakupov blaga, za prihodnje naložbe v zemljišča in šolanje otrok ter za varčevanje za prihodnost. Ugotovitve so pokazale tudi, da nakazila vplivajo na družine na mikroravni, ne pa tudi na bruto domači proizvod države na makroravni.

Migracije na podlagi spola v Sudanu niso obsežne, saj predstavljajo samo 20,7-odstotni delež. Nekatere družine zaradi islamskih prepričanj in kulturnih praks svojim hčeram in ženam ne dovolijo odhoda v tujino, kljub tem omejitvam pa družine vse pogosteje pošiljajo svoje hčere in žene v tujino zaradi ekonomskih razlogov. Tovrstne spremembe so v nasprotju z ugotovitvami dosedanjih študij, ki so pokazale, da so ženske manj pogosto zaposlene. Številne sudanske migrantke želijo s prenosom znanja in tehnologije prispevati k razvoju Sudana, nekatere med njimi delujejo tudi kot vezni členi med državami pošiljateljicami in državami prejemnicami. Prizadevajo

si za projekte, ki mlade ženske spodbujajo k samostojnemu odločanju in vlaganju v projekte, ki pomagajo državi. Kljub omejitvam migrantke še naprej pozitivno prispevajo k svojim skupnostim.

Navodila avtorjem za pripravo prispevkov za revijo

Dve domovini / Two Homelands

Najnovejšo verzijo navodil lahko najdete na spletni strani <https://ojs.zrc-sazu.si/twohomelands/prispevki>.

1. Usmeritev revije

Revija *Dve domovini / Two Homelands* je namenjena objavi znanstvenih in strokovnih člankov in knjižnih ocen s področja humanističnih in družboslovnih disciplin, ki obravnavajo različne vidike migracij in z njimi povezane pojave. Revija, ki izhaja od leta 1990, je večdisciplinarna in objavlja članke v slovenskem ali angleškem jeziku. Letno izideta dve številki v tiskani in elektronski obliki na svetovnem spletu (<https://ojs.zrc-sazu.si/twohomelands>).

Prispevke, urejene po spodnjih navodilih, pošljite uredništvu v elektronski obliki na naslov dd-th@zrc-sazu.si. Članki so recenzirani. Avtorji so odgovorni za jezikovno in slogovno dovršenost člankov. Rokopisov, ki jih uredništvo sprejme v objavo, avtorji ne smejo hkrati poslati drugi reviji. Avtorji se strinjajo, da se objavljeni članki v tiskani reviji *Dve domovini / Two Homelands* objavijo tudi v elektronski obliki na svetovnem spletu.

2. Sestavine prispevkov

Celoten članek je lahko dolg največ 60.000 znakov s presledki (vključno z literaturo) in mora vsebovati sestavine, ki si sledijo po naslednjem vrstnem redu:

- Naslov članka (okrepljeno) naj bo kratek, jasen in naj vključuje ključne pojme iz članka.
- Ime in priimek avtorja. Priimku naj sledi opomba pod črto, v kateri so s podpičjem ločeni štirje elementi:
 - avtorjeva izobrazba (na primer: ‚dr. zgodovine‘);
 - ime avtorjeve institucije: Ustanova, Oddelek, Mesto (na primer: ‚ZRC SAZU, Inštitut za slovensko izseljenstvo in migracije, Ljubljana‘);
 - avtorjev elektronski naslov;
 - šifra ORCID.
- Predlog vrste prispevka (izvirni, pregledni ali kratki znanstveni članek oz. prispevek)
- Izvleček: do 700 znakov s presledki
- Ključne besede: do 5 besed
- Izvleček v angleškem jeziku (Abstract): do 700 znakov s presledki
- Ključne besede v angleškem jeziku (Keywords): do 5 besed
- Glavno besedilo, po potrebi razdeljeno na poglavja in podpoglavja
- Zahvale in drugi podatki: Informacije o projektu oz. financiranju (če je članek nastal v okviru projekta) ter morebitne zahvale avtorja oz. avtorjev (neobvezno)
- Seznam literature (urejen po spodnjih navodilih)
- Angleški povzetek prispevka (Summary) s prevedenim naslovom (ameriško črkovanje): do 3.000 znakov s presledki

3. Oblika

- Celotno besedilo naj bo označeno s stilom »Normal« – brez oblikovanja, določanja slogov in podobnega;
- Robovi strani: »Normal« (2,5 cm na vseh štirih straneh)
- Oštevilčenje strani: z arabskimi številkami spodaj desno
- Dokument naj bo oblikovan brez prelomov strani
- Pisava:
 - Glavno besedilo: pisava Times New Roman, velikost 12 pt, obojestranska poravnava, razmak med vrsticami 1,5
 - Sprotne opombe: pisava Times New Roman, velikost 10 pt, obojestranska poravnava, razmak med vrsticami 1, oštevilčenje z arabskimi številkami

- Med odstavki naj ne bo razmaka ali praznih vrstic. Vsak odstavek (razen za podnaslovi, slikami, tabelami in izpostavljenimi daljšimi citati) naj se začne z zamikom prve vrstice za 1,25 cm.
- Naslov in podnaslovi naj bodo označeni (Headings), oblikovani polkrepko (bold) in z malimi tiskanimi črkami. Podnaslovov oz. (pod)poglavij ne številčite.

V besedilih se izogibajte podčrtovanju besed oz. delov povedi ter okrepljenemu in poševnemu tisku; s poševnim tiskom označite le navedene naslove knjig, časopisov in revij. Izpust znotraj citata označite s tropičjem v oglatih oklepajih [...].

Knjižne ocene morajo imeti sestavine, ki si sledijo po naslednjem vrstnem redu: ime in priimek avtorja ali urednika knjige, ki je predmet ocene, naslov knjige, založba, kraj, leto izida, število strani. Besedilo naj obsega 5.000–10.000 znakov skupaj s presledki, na koncu sledita ime in priimek avtorja ocene.

4. Citiranje in sprotno navajanje virov

- Citati, krajši od petih vrstic, naj bodo v narekovajih in v pokončni pisavi (ne v kurzivi).
- Citati, dolgi pet ali več vrstic, naj bodo v posebnih odstavkih, zamaknjenih v levo za 1,25 cm, brez narekovajev ter v pokončni pisavi (ne v kurzivi).
- Viri naj bodo v besedilu navajani v skrajšani obliki, v celoti pa na posebnem seznamu v podpoglavju »Literatura« za glavnim besedilom (glej Točko 5). Avtorji naj tako pri sprotne navajanju virov v besedilu kot pri oblikovanju seznama literature sledijo [7. verziji standardov Ameriškega psihološkega združenja \(APA7\)](#).
- V besedilu naj bodo viri navajani v oklepajih, in sicer po sistemu (*priimek avtorja/naslov vira, letnica dela, str. stran oz. razpon strani*), pri čemer je lahko priimek avtorja oz. naslov vira, če avtor ni znan, naveden tudi izven oklepaja – npr. »kot navaja Anderson (2003, str. 19) ...«.
- V primeru dveh avtorjev istega vira priimka ločimo z znakom, &' – npr. (Vah & Hacin, 2011).
- V primeru treh ali več avtorjev istega vira navedemo samo prvega avtorja in dodamo kratiko ,et al.' – npr. (Besozzi et al., 2009, str. 12).
- V primeru navajanja več virov naj bodo ti med seboj ločeni s podpičji in razvrščeni naraščajoče po letnicah izdaje – npr. (Vah & Hacin, 2011, str. 251–253; Hladnik et al., 2019).
- V primeru navajanja več virov istega avtorja iz istega leta letnicam dodamo male tiskane črke – npr. (Anderson, 2003a, 2003b).

5. Urejanje seznama literature

Revija *Dve domovini / Two Homelands* sprejema strukturirane oblike seznama literature v digitalnih formatih BibTeX, RIS in JATS XML. Za urejanje literature v digitalnih formatih priporočamo uporabo računalniških programov za upravljanje z referencami, kot so Zotero, EndNote, Mendeley, Citavi ipd., s pomočjo katerih lahko seznam v strukturirani obliki prenesete oziroma izvozite kot datoteko v enem izmed zgoraj navedenih formatov.

Če literature ne morete oddati v strukturirani obliki, upoštevajte spodnja pravila in primere. Seznam literature in virov naj bo v posebnem podpoglavju »Literatura« za glavnim besedilom. V seznamu literature naj bodo navedene vse in samo tiste enote, na katere se avtor sklicuje v besedilu. Enote naj bodo razvrščene po abecednem redu priimkov avtorjev (oziroma naslovov drugih virov, pri katerih avtorji niso znani), enote istega avtorja pa razvrščene po letnicah. V primeru več virov istega avtorja iz istega leta letnice posameznih enot označite z malimi tiskanimi črkami (npr. Ford, 1999a, 1999b). Posamezne enote naj bodo oblikovane z visečim zamikom (Hanging Indent) 1,25 cm, med njimi naj ne bo razmakov.

Samostojne vire (npr. knjiga, diplomska, magistrska ali doktorska naloga, film, videoposnetek, glasbeni album, neobjavljen rokopis) pišemo v ležeči pisavi (kurzivi), ostale vire, ki so del večje celote (npr. članek v reviji ali časopisu, poglavje v zborniku, spletna stran, poglavje v enciklopediji, objava v spletnem dnevniku), pa v običajni pisavi.

Polnopomenski elementi v angleških naslovih knjig in člankov se pišejo z veliko začetnico. Enote v seznamu literature naj vsebujejo naslov DOI (<https://doi.org/...>) ali katerega od drugih stalnih identifikatorjev (ARK, URN, Handle, URI), kjer je ta na voljo. Stalni spletni naslov je v bibliografski enoti vedno zadnji podatek (glej primere spodaj).

Primeri:

- a) Knjiga:
Anderson, B. R. (2003). *Zamišljene skupnosti: O izvoru in širjenju nacionalizma*. Studia Humanitatis.
Besozzi, E., Colombo, M., & Santagati, M. (2009). *Giovani Stranieri, Nuovi Cittadini: Le Strategie di una generazione ponte*. FrancoAngeli.
- b) Zbornik:
Milharčič Hladnik, M., & Mlekuž, J. (ur.). (2009). *Krila migracij: Po meri življenjskih zgodb*. Založba ZRC, ZRC SAZU. <https://doi.org/10.3986/9789612541125>
Leitch, M. G., & Rushton, C. J. (ur.). (2019). *A new companion to Malory*. D. S. Brewer.
- c) Poglavlje v zborniku:
Milharčič Hladnik, M. (2009). Naša varuška. V M. Milharčič Hladnik & J. Mlekuž (ur.), *Krila migracij: Po meri življenjskih zgodb* (str. 15–20). Založba ZRC, ZRC SAZU. <https://doi.org/10.3986/9789612541125>
- d) Članek v reviji:
Milharčič Hladnik, M. (2011). Šola kot institucija izenačevanja razlik v precepu multikulturne raznolikosti. *IB revija*, 45(1–2), 13–18.
Dežan, L., & Sedmak, M. (2020). Policy and Practice: The Integration of (Newly Arrived) Migrant Children in Slovenian Schools. *Annales, Historia et Sociologia*, 30(4), 559–574. <https://doi.org/10.19233/ASHS.2020.37>
- e) Članek v časopisu:
Majovski, J. (2021, 9. marec). Testiranje za prehajanje meje ne bo plačljivo. *Primorski Dnevnik*, 5.
Woodman, D., & Power, J. (2018, 16. maj). Internships have much to offer but provisions are necessary to ensure the young truly benefit. *The Australian*, 29.
Carey, B. (2019, 22. marec). Can we get better at forgetting? *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/22/health/memory-forgetting-psychology.html>
- f) Predstavitev na konferenci:
Evans, A. C., Jr., Garbarino, J., Bocanegra, E., Kinscherff, R. T., & Márquez-Greene, N. (2019, 8.–11. avgust). *Gun violence: An event on the power of community* [predstavitev na konferenci]. Srečanje APA 2019, Chicago, ZDA. <https://convention.apa.org/2019-video>
- g) Spletna stran:
Lamovšek, T. (2020, 4. april). *Prišel, videl, spravil Slovence domov – Andrej Šter*. MMC RTV Slovenija. <https://www.rtvsllo.si/slovenija/prisel-videl-spravil-slovence-domov-andrej-ster/519439>
Kochhar, R. (2020, 9. junij). *Hispanic women, immigrants, young adults, those with less education hit hardest by COVID-19 job losses*. Pew Research. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/06/09/hispanic-women-immigrants-young-adults-those-with-less-education-hit-hardest-by-covid-19-job-losses>
Quantum mechanics. (2019, 19. november). V Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Quantum_mechanics&oldid=948476810

Dodatni primeri za druge vrste virov so na voljo na spletni strani <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples>.

6. Grafične in slikovne priloge

- Preglednice oz. tabele naj bodo narejene v programu Microsoft Word in vključene v besedilo. Oblikujte jih čim enostavneje (zanje ne uporabljajte posebnih slogov).
- Vseh drugih prilog (slike, zemljevidi, ilustracije, grafi ipd.) **ne** vključujte v besedilo.
- Vse preglednice, tabele in fotografije morajo biti označene v besedilu (npr. Tabela 1, Slika 1). Točno lokacijo v besedilu navedite po naslednjem vzorcu: ... (Slika 1) ... (Preglednica 1).
- Vse preglednice in drugo slikovno gradivo mora imeti pripis, ki naj se vedno začne z naslovom Slika/Preglednica (in zaporedna številka), npr.:

Slika 1: Kuharica Liza v New Yorku leta 1905 (avtor: Janez Novak, vir: Arhiv Slovenije, 1415, 313/14)

Preglednica 1: Število prebivalcev Ljubljane po popisu leta 2002 (vir: Statistični urad RS, *Statistične informacije*, 14).
- Pripisi k slikam in preglednicam naj ne vsebujejo opomb.
- Datoteke slikovnega gradiva poimenujte s priimkom avtorja in zaporedno številko gradiva, npr. „Novak1.jpg“, „Novak2.jpg“ itd.
- Velikost slike naj bo takšna, kot bo natisnjena, ali večja. Fotografije naj bodo v enem od naslednjih formatov: TIF, EPS, SVG, JPG, PNG v polni kakovosti in s tipografijami v krivuljah. Ločljivost slik naj bo najmanj 300 dpi.
- Za grafične in slikovne priloge, za katere nimate avtorskih pravic, morate dobiti dovoljenje za objavo in uredništvu predložiti dokazilo.

Instructions for Authors Preparing English Articles for Publication in *Dve domovini / Two Homelands*

For the latest version of instructions for authors, please refer to website <https://ojs.zrc-sazu.si/twohomelands/prispevki>.

1. Editorial Content

Dve domovini / Two Homelands welcomes scientific and professional articles and book reviews from the humanities and social sciences focusing on various aspects of migration and related phenomena. Established in 1990, the journal is multidisciplinary and publishes articles in Slovenian or English. Two volumes are published annually in print and online digital format (<https://ojs.zrc-sazu.si/twohomelands>).

Articles should be prepared according to the instructions below and sent to the editorial board at the e-mail address dd-th@zrc-sazu.si. All articles undergo a peer-review procedure. Authors are responsible for language and style proficiency. Manuscripts accepted for publishing by the editorial board should not be sent for consideration and publishing to any other journal. By publishing their articles in *Dve domovini / Two Homelands*, the authors also grant permission to publish them online.

2. English Article Elements

The length of the entire article can be up to 45,000 characters with spaces (including the References section) and should contain the sections below in the following order:

- Article Title (Title Case, bold): should be clear and concise and include the article's keywords.
- Name and surname of the author. The surname should be followed by a footnote with the following four elements, each separated by a semicolon:
 - o the author's education (e.g., PhD in history);
 - o the author's affiliation – Institution, Department, City (e.g., ZRC SAZU, Slovenian Migration Institute, Ljubljana);
 - o e-mail address;
 - o ORCID ID.
- Type of contribution (original, review, or short scientific article)
- Abstract: up to 700 characters with spaces (will be translated into Slovenian by the journal)
- Keywords: up to 5 words
- Main text: divided into sections and subsections, if necessary
- Information about the project or funding (if the article was written as part of a project) and any acknowledgments by the author(s) (optional)
- Reference list (References): see point 5 below for instructions
- Summary: up to 3,000 characters with spaces (will be translated into Slovenian by the journal)

3. Document Formatting

- The style of the entire text should be "Normal" – no formatting, defining styles, or similar.
- Please use American English spelling (Merriam-Webster Dictionary) and serial (Oxford) commas.
- Page margins: "Normal" (2.5 cm margins at all sides)
- Page numbering: Arabic numerals, bottom right
- The document should not contain any page breaks.
- Font
 - o Main text: Times New Roman, 12 pt, justified, line spacing 1.5
 - o Footnotes: Times New Roman, 10 pt, justified, line spacing 1, Arabic numerals

- There should be no spacing or blank lines between paragraphs. Each paragraph (except those after subtitles/headings, figures, tables, and long quotations) should begin with a first-line indent of 1.25 cm.
- The Title and Section (Sub-section) headings should be manually formatted: The Title and Level 1 Headings are bold, Title Case; Level 2 Headings are bold, Sentence case. Headings should not be numbered.

Avoid underlining words or parts of sentences, as well as using bold and italics. Italics should be used only when citing titles of artworks, books, newspapers, and journals. Indicate omitted parts of a citation with square brackets and an ellipsis [...].

Book reviews should contain the following elements in the order given: name and surname of the author or editor of the book, title of the book, name of publisher, place of publication, date of publication, and number of pages. Reviews should be 5,000–10,000 characters with spaces and include the name and surname of the reviewer at the end.

4. Quotations and In-Text Citations

The following instructions should be followed for citing sources in the text:

- Quotations shorter than five lines should be included in the main text and separated with quotation marks in normal font (not italics).
- Long quotations (five lines or more) should be formatted in a separate paragraph indented by 1.25 cm, without quotation marks, in normal font (not italics).
- Sources should be cited in abbreviated form in the text and in full in a separate list in the "References" section after the main text (see Section 5). Both for in-text citations and the reference list, authors should follow the 7th edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) standards (APA7).
- Cite sources using In-Text Author-Date citations in parentheses: *author's surname, year of publication: page number(s)*. Examples:
 - o citing a single source: (Anderson, 2003, pp. 91–99);
 - o citing a source with two authors: surnames separated by "&", e.g. (Vah & Hacin, 2011);
 - o citing a source with more than two authors: the surname of the first author followed by "et al.", e.g. (Besozzi et al., 2009, p. 12);
 - o citing multiple sources: sources separated by semicolons and sorted by the year of publication in ascending order (Hladnik, 2009, p. 15; Vah & Hacin, 2011, pp. 251–253; Hladnik et al., 2019);
 - o citing multiple works by the same author published in the same year: years marked with lowercase letters (Anderson, 2003a, 2003b).

5. Reference List

Dve domovini / Two Homelands accepts structured reference lists in digital formats BibTeX, RIS, and JATS XML. For editing the reference list in digital formats, we recommend the use of reference management software such as Zotero, EndNote, Mendeley, Citavi, etc., which can be used to download the list in a structured format or to export the list as a file in one of the abovementioned formats.

If you are unable to provide the reference list in one of the abovementioned formats, please follow the rules and examples below:

A list of references should appear after the main text in a separate section named "References". The reference list should include all and only those sources that are cited and referred to in the text. The entries should be arranged alphabetically by the authors' surnames (or titles of newspapers/articles or other sources where authors are unknown), with multiple references by the same author arranged by year of publication. Multiple references by a single author published in the same year should be separated with lowercase letters (e.g., Ford, 1999a, 1999b). Each entry should be formatted with a hanging indent of 1.25 cm, with no line spacing between entries.

Titles of self-contained and independent sources (e.g., a book, a master's thesis, a PhD dissertation, a film, a video, a music album, or an unpublished manuscript) should be in italics. Other sources that are part of a larger work (e.g., an article in a magazine or newspaper, a chapter in a collection of papers, a website, a chapter in an encyclopedia, or a blog post) should be written in normal font.

English book and article titles (except conjunctions, articles, and prepositions) should be capitalized in Title Case. The entries in the reference list should contain DOI addresses ([https://doi.org/...](https://doi.org/)) or any other persistent identifier such as ARK, URN, Handle, or URI when available. The permanent web address is always the last information in a reference entry (see examples below).

a) Book:

Anderson, B. R. (2006). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso.

Besozzi, E., Colombo, M., & Santagati, M. (2009). *Giovani Stranieri, Nuovi Cittadini: Le Strategie di una generazione ponte*. FrancoAngeli.

b) Edited book / Collection of articles:

Leitch, M. G., & Rushton, C. J. (Eds.). (2019). *A New Companion to Malory*. D. S. Brewer.

Moran, A., & O'Brien, S. (Eds.). (2014). *Love Objects: Emotion, Design and Material Culture*. Bloomsbury Academic. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781474293891>

c) Chapter in an edited book / Article in a collection:

Armstrong, D. (2019). Malory and Character. In M. G. Leitch & C. J. Rushton (Eds.), *A New Companion to Malory* (pp. 144–163). D. S. Brewer.

Mihaylova-Garnizova, R., & Garnizov, V. (2018). Refugee Crisis As a Potential

Threat to Public Health. Defence Against Bioterrorism. In V. Radosavljevic, I. Banjari & G. Be-lojevic (Eds.), *NATO Science for Peace and Security Series A: Chemistry and Biology* (pp. 25–42). Springer. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-024-1263-5_4

d) Journal article:

Scruton, R. (1996). The Eclipse of Listening. *The New Criterion*, 15(3), 5–13.

Dežan, L., & Sedmak, M. (2020). Policy and Practice: The Integration of (Newly Arrived) Migrant Children in Slovenian Schools. *Annales, Historia et Sociologia*, 30(4), 559–574. <https://doi.org/10.19233/ASHS.2020.37>

e) Newspaper article:

Carey, B. (2019, March 22). Can We Get Better at Forgetting? *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/22/health/memory-forgetting-psychology.html>

Woodman, D., & Power, J. (2018, May 16). Internships have much to offer but provisions are necessary to ensure the young truly benefit. *The Australian*, 29.

Majovski, J. (2021, March 9). Testiranje za prehajanje meje ne bo plačljivo. *Primorski Dnevnik*, 5.

f) Conference presentation:

Evans, A. C., Jr., Garbarino, J., Bocanegra, E., Kinscherff, R. T., & Márquez-Greene, N. (2019, August 8–11). *Gun violence: An event on the power of community* [Conference presentation]. APA 2019 Convention, Chicago, IL, United States. <https://convention.apa.org/2019-video>

g) Website:

Price, D. (2018, March 23). *Laziness Does Not Exist*. Medium. <https://humanparts.medium.com/laziness-does-not-exist-3af27e312d01>

Kochhar, R. (2020, June 9). *Hispanic women, immigrants, young adults, those with less education hit hardest by COVID-19 job losses*. Pew Research. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/06/09/hispanic-women-immigrants-young-adults-those-with-less-education-hit-hardest-by-covid-19-job-losses>

Quantum mechanics. (2019, November 19). In *Wikipedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Quantum_mechanics&oldid=948476810

Additional examples for other types of sources are available at <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples>.

6. Graphics and Illustrations

- Tables should be created in Microsoft Word and included in the text. Use simple formatting (no special builtin styles).
- All other figures (pictures, maps, illustrations, graphs, etc.) should **not** be included in the text but should be sent as separate files.
- All figures and tables should be referenced in the main text, e.g. (Table 1), (Figure 1).
- Please add the figure captions at the exact locations where they should appear in the text.
- All tables and other visual material should be captioned, always starting with the title Figure/Table [number], for example:

Figure 1: Lisa the Cook in New York in 1905 (Photo: Janez Novak, source: Archives of Slovenia, 1415, 313/14).

Table 1: The population of Ljubljana according to the 2002 Census (source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, *Statistics*, p. 14).

- Captions to visual material should not include footnotes.
- All digital files for visual material should be named with the author's surname and numbered, e.g., "Brown01.jpg", "Brown02.jpg".
- The size of images should be the same as they should appear in print or larger. Photos should be submitted in one of the following formats: TIF, EPS, SVG, JPG, PNG in full quality and fonts in curves. The image resolution should be at least 300 dpi.
- Permission to publish must be obtained for all copyrighted graphic and illustrative material. Please include proof of permission alongside the copyrighted visual material you submit to the editor.

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