

Images of Immigrants in Slovenia: Insights from Public Opinion Research

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SUMMARY: The article deals with the Slovene public's perception of the issues of migration, integration of immigrants, and multiculturalism. It is empirically based on the research survey "Migration, integration, and multiculturalism – empirical data collection" which was performed in 2007. The first topic of the article addresses the public's general attitudes to migration and migrants: migrants as a threat and/or an economic corrective of the labour market. The data shows support for two negatively toned statements, which imply that immigrants are a factor of unfair competition for the domestic population and a burden for the taxpayers. The second theme concerns positioning Slovenia in contemporary migration trends. Here, the public opinion favours segmented admission of immigrants, based on both geographical origin and socio-economic background. The public opinion also brings forth two conflicting statements: a more restrictive asylum and migration policy is required versus Slovenia should work towards a tolerant and multicultural society. The third topic deals with integration policies and thus with the internal social borders between immigrants and the majority population. The respondents considered the following factors as the most important for successful integration in Slovene society: knowledge of the language, adequate education and employment; skin colour and the Catholic religion were considered less important factors.

KEYWORDS: MIGRATION, INTEGRATION, PUBLIC OPINION, SURVEY RESEARCH.

Introduction:

Contemporary Migration Through Empirical Opinion Surveys

The article deals with the Slovene public's perception of the issues of migration, integration of immigrants, and multiculturalism. It is empirically based on the research survey "Migration, Integration, and Multiculturalism – Empirical Data Collection", which measures the opinions of a representative public in a local context, and is in many aspects comparable to similar European surveys. The survey was conducted with a representative sample of adult inhabitants of Slovenia in 2007¹. The survey is comparative to similar European research instrument, which is an important methodological starting point for comparative monitoring of the general public's attitudes on the EU level. The latter represent an important point of reference in the context of common European processes in managing migration.

¹ See more in chapter on methodological background.

Since public opinion plays an important role in the process of shaping public policies, i.e. in achieving social cohesion, we take it as our point of departure in addressing the question of the public's perceptions of migration and migrants' integration through empirical evidence. In the article we address three migration topics. The first addresses the public's general attitudes to migration and migrants: migrants as a threat and/or an economic corrective of the labour market. The second theme concerns positioning Slovenia in contemporary migration trends. Here, the public opinion favours segmented admission of immigrants, based on both geographical origin and socio-economic background. The third topic deals with integration policies, and thus with the internal social borders between immigrants and the majority population.

On the basis of current attitudes towards migration and immigrants we try to point to possible developments or expected future trends in public opinion. Empirical research gives a basis for different scenarios that might occur in local but also in broader regional contexts. Fears and negative attitudes are evident across Europe and worldwide, however, empirical research indicates some opposite tendencies as well.

Migration trends in Slovenia: a short overview

Before contextualizing the empirical results in contemporary migration processes we should present some basic data concerning migratory trends in Slovenia. After World War II, both international migration and internal movements of people within the borders of the federal state of Yugoslavia presented an important part of social dynamics with reference to migration movements in the territory of Slovenia (more: Zavratnik Zimic 2004).

The key milestone is the year of independence in 1991; after this year the entire process of creating migratory policy started, although it could not be stated that Slovenia had no previous experience with migration outflow and inflow. On the contrary, Slovenia was the territory of immigration from other parts of Yugoslavia (mostly from Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also Serbia and Croatia), and at the same time, many Slovenes emigrated to western countries as "guest workers" (mostly Austria and Germany). These processes of economic immigration, although within a common state, have influenced recent policies of immigrant integration, since many immigrants from Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia stayed in their new environment and today form the second and the third generations.

In the years after 1991 Slovenia faced different types of migration, most important of which was forced migration as a consequence of war conflict in the republics of former Yugoslavia. Refugees left war areas first in Croatia (1991, 1992), soon after in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992 and later), and lastly in Kosovo. In this period, new challenges were posed to migration authorities: definition of asylum policy, questions of refugee protection, and management of forced migration. The reaction to the mass influx of refugees was similar to those in other European countries, namely the pragmatic solution was group protection for refugees introduced on a temporary basis.

One decade later, Slovenia faced another, different type of immigration; this time immigrants came from more distant non-European countries and they were more diversified than ever before. First reactions to these so-called “illegal immigrants” were not positive, but rather, quite the opposite. In public images, including media discourses, immigrants were described as “the others”, “those with different identity” (mostly religious) and those who could be a “threat because of high numbers”. Threats, produced on the basis of populist use of identity difference have resulted in manifestations of xenophobia and intolerance towards immigrants. These sentiments were oriented both to “new” immigrants from the world over and to “old” immigrants from the formerly common territory.

Lastly, we should mention processes of European integration that formed new frames for migration movements; on one side the borders were opened toward the north (Austria) and the west (Italy) and on the other, borders were closed towards the south (Croatia and the Balkans). The latter is important, as the majority of immigrants in Slovenia come from the region south of the Schengen border. Their entrance is limited by visa requirements and work permits.

Data of the Statistical Office shows that foreign citizens represented 4% of the total population in Slovenia in the year 2010. Analysis (see Pajnik and Bajt, 2011: 100) shows basic characteristics of the migrant population: male migrants represented 73%, most of them coming for the purpose of finding employment, while 27% were female, mostly connected to family reunification purposes. In the year 2010 the vast majority of the foreign-born population had citizenship of Yugoslavia's successor states, which represents 88% of Slovenia's total foreign population, and only around 3% of migrants came from countries outside of Europe (ibid). Data from the Employment Office on valid work permits in the beginning of 2011 presented by Pajnik and Bajt shows “that a good half of the entire foreign population is from Bosnia-Herzegovina (38,263 or 52% of all valid work

permits), with a further 11,5% from Croatia (8,489), 8,9% from Kosovo (6,548), 8,6% from Serbia (6,328), 6,9% from Macedonia (5,103) and 6,2% from Montenegro combined (4,617)” (Pajnik, Bajt, 2011: 101). The authors pointed out another important figure: citizens of the former Soviet Union (mainly from Ukraine with 1,164 work permits and the Russian Federation with 536 permits) represent the second largest group of foreign residents in Slovenia (ibid.).

Conceptual and methodological framework

The issue of contemporary global migration and changed migration trends² brings new aspects into sociological studies on contemporary migration. Global migration is a key feature of modern societies and a factor of extensive social change that involves the entire spectrum of social issues, ranging from the incorporation of migrants into the new society and policies of recognizing multiculturalism and citizen rights, to the challenges of achieving social cohesion in the microcosm of everyday life and preventing the construction of parallel, ghettoized worlds of migrants and the majority population.

Contemporary migration trends have led to changes in identity policies and disparate responses – including populist ones – to the issues of coexistence with foreigners, i.e. people of different identities. Since ethnic/cultural differences are factors of exclusion, the essential question is how to construct a different “we” that would include migrants as new members of our society in the “we” field.

Within social sciences, the latter is considered a challenge to achieving social cohesion. In his work, *Migration and Social Cohesion* published in 1999, Steven Vertovec wrote that social cohesion was critically deficient and that within social sciences there was a consensus on its deficit rather than content. Vertovec (ibid.) further argued that the minimum requirement for the definition of social cohesion is cooperative social interaction and a common value system, where the key question is what in reality constitutes cooperation processes and a common value system, and how these should be maintained. Crucial here is the author’s view that the definition and achievement of common values are primarily political issues which should be grounded in political concepts such as national state, ethnic/national identity, the welfare state, civil

² See more in: Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: international population movements in the modern world* (1998). The authors describe modernity as a period of migration that has become global in scope, diversified in structure and extent, and intensely politicised. The key change appears to be the increasing political importance of migration; from a marginal economic issue, contemporary migration has turned into a paramount political issue.

society, cultural capital etc.

The main challenges posed by contemporary migration are challenges to the liberal national state, and the main question is how liberal policies will tackle the issue of citizenship, including migrants' social citizenship, participation, tolerance, minority rights, multiculturalism, xenophobia, and hate speech, to mention only some of the most important aspects. This is the socio-political context within which I examine the question of how the frameworks for integration policies are formed in new societies that have been stirred up by global migration, and on which foundations concrete political strategies for migration management will rely.

Despite criticism of public opinion surveys, which ranges from their undemocratic nature to concerns about observing vs. "manufacturing" public opinion³, empirical research of public opinion has remained one of the central focuses of sociological reflection on issues that are socially relevant to the wider public. We use the notion of "public opinion" to refer to an institutionalised public opinion, recorded in the form of empirical public opinion polls – the most common form of sociological empirical research of public matters. Concerning the inclusion of public opinions in empirical research, our approach is based on the position of Splichal (1997: 17) who emphasises that the idea of 'public opinion' is "inseparably linked with techniques, means and institutions of expressing and representing the (public) opinion." In designing the empirical survey research on the perceptions of migration, we began with the assumption that a "consensus" exists in the public and that it is familiar with the issue⁴, regardless of (expectedly) conflicting individual opinions.

In the local Slovenian environment, issues concerning the integration of immigrants are treated extensively in scholarly literature⁵, however we are lacking a systematic answer to the question of public attitudes to diverse migration phenomenon. This was the main reason leading to designing the survey

³ For detailed information on the debate about public opinion polls, see: Splichal 2005: 279–333; 1997: 17–38.

⁴ Consensus on the issue of social relevancy is given through verification of the opinions of individualised proponents in the public debate; e.g. individual actors from civil society, individual proponents of key (positive or negative) opinions from local communities, parliament, etc.

⁵ See in particular: *Percepcije slovenske integracijske politike*, Komac in Medvešek (eds.), Ljubljana, INV, 2005. Some authors address specific populations of migrants and integration policies focusing on these groups of, e.g., refugees (Vrečer; Zavratnik; Pezdir, and others), asylum seekers (Pajnik, Gregorčič, Lesjak-Tušek; Lipovec-Čebtron; Medved, and others), economic migrants (Medica, Lukič and Bufon; Pajnik, Bajt and Herič, and others), or specific topics, e.g. the issues of minor migrants, female migrants (Lukšič-Hacin; Zavratnik; Pezdir; Pajnik, Bajt; Knežević Hočevar, Cukut; Milharčič Hladnik and Mlekuž, and others).

research “Migration, integration and multiculturalism – an empirical data collection”⁶, which was designed by the research team at the University of Primorska as a measuring tool of the opinions of a representative public.

The population we studied and to which the findings refer – also in our article – were adult citizens of Slovenia. Sampling was performed with the method of simple random sampling in the 2006 telephone guide of Slovenia – the sample included inhabitants of Slovenia, who live in households with at least one stationary telephone. The sample included 1000 respondents, of which 838 people responded to the survey. We designed a structured questionnaire that included 35 questions, 8 of which were demographic variables. Before carrying out the telephone survey we performed a pilot survey on a sample of 50 respondents. The telephone survey poll was carried out by the Scientific Research Centre, University of Primorska, Koper, between September 25 and October 15, 2007. It was conducted by twelve trained interviewers under the supervision of a methodologist, a member of the project team. To ensure representative data, the answers in the survey database were statistically weighted (by demographic variables of gender and age). The data were representative by gender and age and comparable with the population’s characteristics by education structure⁷.

The questionnaire consisted of the following topics: opinions on migration processes in Slovenia and Europe, attitudes toward the integration of migrants, multiculturalism, social distance, xenophobia, human rights, and the role of various institutions in migration management.

In this article we bring some of the most important images of immigrants (and migration processes) that were produced through the public opinion survey, and we will try to contextualise these results in the frame of contemporary attitudes towards migration and immigrants in the broader European environment. All results in the article - unless indicated otherwise - relate to this survey, which was abbreviated as “Integration Policies 2007”.

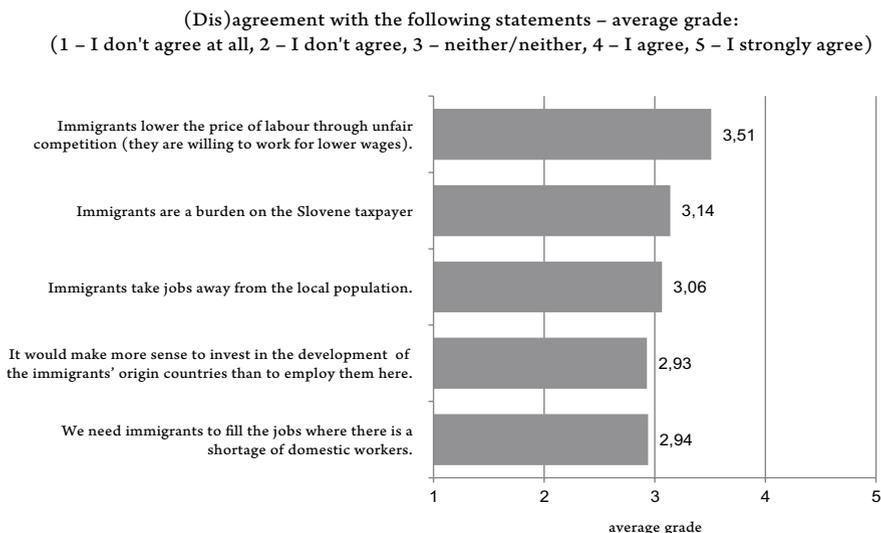
⁶ The survey was performed under the national research programme “Competitiveness 2006”, the project: “*Integration policies – establishing an evaluation model and instruments of longitudinal monitoring*”, at University of Primorska, 2006-2008. The survey was financed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Slovenian Research Agency.

⁷ See more on the methodological approach and the executed sample in the report: “*Integration policies – establishing an evaluation model and instruments of longitudinal monitoring*”, UP ZRS, 2008: 6-14.

Migrants as a Threat and/or Economic Market Corrective

Managing migration flows is becoming a central issue on the political agenda of national states and supranational integrations, and this (re)defines the perceptions of the (positive/negative) role of international migrants in the transit and target countries. In this context, one question has become particularly important in the recent period, that of so-called economic migration and the inclusion of immigrants in the labour market. The demographic trends in the member states of the European Union, which are characterised by a low birth rate, increased life expectancy, and an aging population, bring about changes in the labour market structure, because the share of people in employment is falling, and migration is supposed to be a satisfactory response to the “demographic crisis” in the EU. Slovenia is not considered to be an exception in this case. However, the results of the FEMAGE research, which, among others, analyses the relation between birth rate and attitudes to migrants, have yielded an unequivocal answer concerning migrants as “actors” in solving the demographic deficit: the “inhabitants of Slovenia” do not associate migration with solving the effects of the low birth rate (Knežević Hočvar, Cukut, Černič Istenič 2009: 37).

Including migrants in the labour market is often accompanied by intense public debates; an often voiced opinion is that immigrants take away jobs from the domestic population or that they are unfair competition to the domestic labour force. Our survey in 2007 used a set of statements on economic migration to verify the public's attitudes to employing migrants and their role in the Slovene environment. In the prevailing perceptions of the public, immigrants function as a labour market corrective; they take the jobs the domestic population doesn't want, and at the same time they do not compete for the socially desirable jobs, which are “meant” for the domestic workers. Regardless of the fact that immigrants contribute to augmenting the value of, and in a way “save” specific economic sectors, the political discourse often depicts them as a threat to the welfare state. Even though empirical data shows a different reality, immigrants remain a ready-made scapegoat, serving the political ambitions of nationalist parties (Vah, Lukšič Hacin 2008). Another important argument is that in addition to the categories of race, ethnicity or nationalism, reflections on solidarity should include or, rather, re-include the concept of social class.

Graph 1: Opinions on the economic effects of migration

Source: Integration policies, 2007

The survey results show proclaimed support for the two negative statements depicting immigrants as a factor of unfair competition to the domestic population and as a burden on the welfare state and taxpayer. In the opinion of slightly more than half the respondents (54.5 %), immigrants reduce the price of labour because they are willing to work for lower wages, and are thus unfair competition to the domestic workers. A further 43% of respondents agreed with the statement that immigrants are a burden on the Slovene taxpayer. Concerning the statement that immigrants take away jobs from the local population, there are no major differences between the positive and negative answers, but the share of answers slightly shifts in favour of those who agree with the statement (42.3 %), compared to those who do not agree with it (36.5 %). The average values (levels) of agreement are nearly identical for the statements about employing immigrants in deficit branches and for the statement that prefers investment in the development of the immigrants' countries of origin instead of employing them in Slovenia. For the latter statement the answers are quite evenly distributed: the highest share is undecided (31%), though agreement with the statement is slightly higher than disagreement. Regarding the employment of immigrants in the sectors of the labour market where there is a deficit of domestic workers, the opinions are quite evenly distributed as well. Such distribution is connected with at least two contextual factors around which

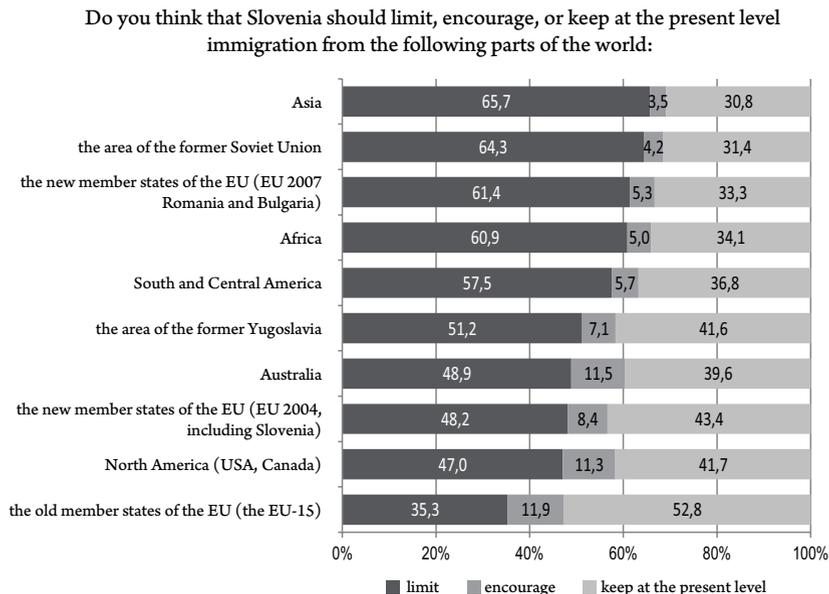
the public's opinions form. The first one is indicative of people's awareness of the real needs of the labour market to fill the gaps in certain occupations and branches, and this is a purposive - rational motive, whereas the second factor is indicative of the wish to protect the domestic workers against immigrants, and this is an emotional motive, deriving from deep-rooted fears and stereotypes.

The above-mentioned results indicate that the inclusion and participation of immigrants in the labour market causes at the very least an uneasiness and a feeling of being threatened among the domestic population. Empirical data shows that the attitudes toward immigrants are closely connected with the economic conditions in the country. The latter dictate a higher or lower level of acceptance, desirability or tolerance of foreign workers. Public opinions often reflect trivial discussions of immigrants as a threat to the national economy, culture and state – factors related to national identity and the moral panic produced by politicians and reproduced by the media. The position in which, according to the general public opinion, an immigrant finds himself in Slovenia is therefore closest to that of a permitted “labour market corrective”. Consequently, the status of such an immigrant is situationally dependent and completely open to both economic and cultural impulses, which continuously (re)define it.

Contemporary immigration: positioning Slovenia in global migration trends

The empirical research “Integration policies 2007” shows that public opinion is in favour of segmented acceptance of migrants, both in the sense of their geographic or social-economic origin, and that the attitudes to integration policies are connected with such segmentation. The opinions of the Slovene public toward immigrants, based on their geographical origin, are in general negative, and this is particularly indicative of immigrants from the area of the former common state of Yugoslavia – the majority of immigrants in Slovenia. The negative attitudes to these immigrants, realistically seen as the only numerically significant group, reveal strong negative perceptions about “a real threat”, while the negative perceptions of immigrants from poor and culturally different (non-European) countries are indicative of the proverbially introverted Slovene society towards cultural differences, and as such represent an “imaginary threat” to our cultural identity.

Graph 2: Attitudes towards regulating migration based on the immigrants' geographical origin



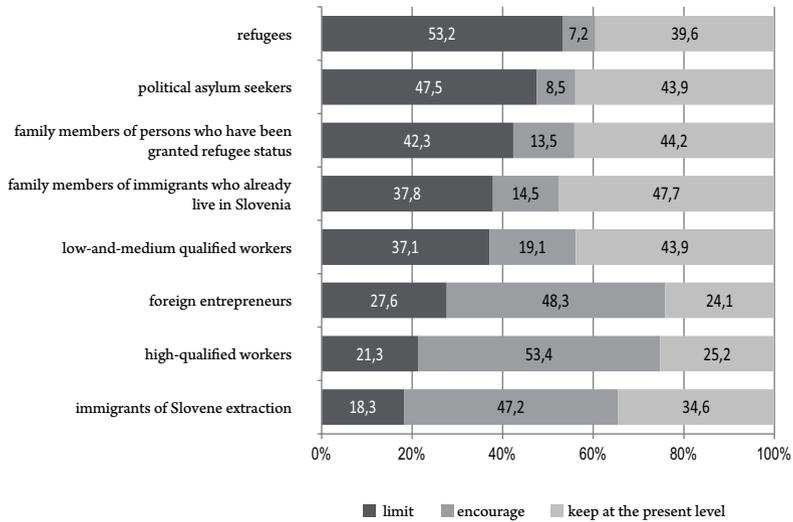
Source: Integration policies, 2007

The general opinion of the respondents is that the scope of migration from different parts of the world should be limited, the only exception being migrants from the old member states of the EU, for whom the highest share of respondents (52 %) felt that their immigration should be kept at the present level. The respondents were most in favour of limiting migration from Asia, the area of the former Soviet Union, Africa, and the new member states of the EU (2007 enlargement, meaning Romania and Bulgaria); they were least in favour (37%) of limiting immigration from the old member states of the EU. Hardly any encouragement for immigration was recorded. The shares of those who think that the scope of immigration should be stimulated are very low: from a few percentage points to at most 12 % for the most desirable immigrants from the old member states of the EU. The option that immigration should be kept at the present level is the one that, in view of similar survey researches, is valid under the assumption that the scope and structure of immigration does not change essentially. Such attitudes are often indicative of people's tolerance of existing immigrants, but the reasons are very different: from economic necessity, which the respondents recognize and accept, to cultural similarity, etc. The results show that this option is most frequent for the most desirable immigrants, while the percentages are lowest for those who are highest on the scale of undesirable immigrants.

Besides the geographical aspect, the respondents also considered the different social statuses marking groups of migrants as important (whether they be political status, ethnic features, or status variables like education, occupation etc.).

Graph 3: Regulating migration based on the immigrants' social status

Please state for the following groups of people whether you think that Slovenia should encourage their immigration, limit it, or keep it at the present level?



Source: Integration policies, 2007

The results show a fundamental dichotomy: on the one hand there is a negative perception of all classical groups of political migrants (refugees, asylum seekers) based on the principle of rejecting unwanted migrants, on the other hand, when a concrete social status is involved – meaning well-educated migrants, entrepreneurs and ethnic Slovenes – the perceptions are largely positive. It seems that the term immigration carries a largely negative connotation for the respondents, and this changes only when it refers

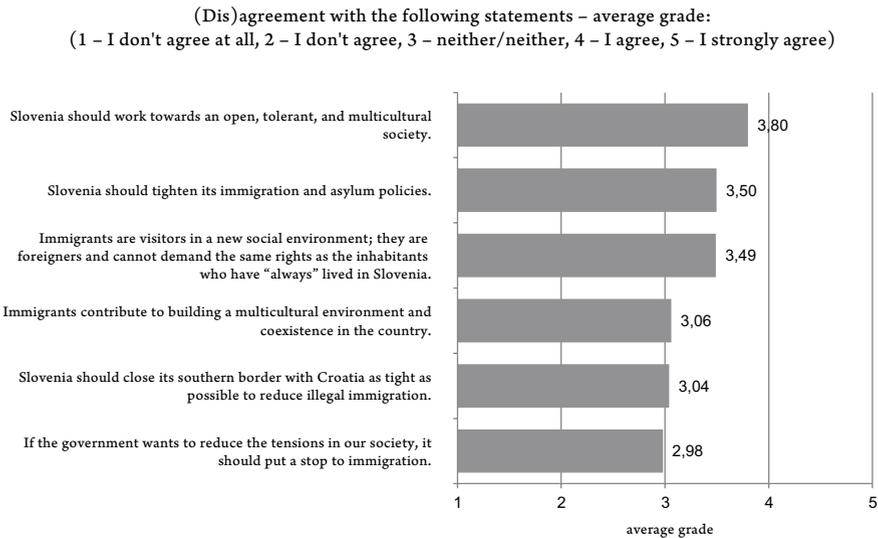
to immigration of elites and ethnically/culturally “equals”⁸. The indicated dichotomy confirms the desirability of elites (the country needs them to ensure progress and social welfare), whereas unqualified workers are perceived as a “necessary evil”. The combined answers in the graph illustrate the utilitarian logic of the public's opinions, deriving from a purposive-rational principle: the public unequivocally states that we do need certain target groups of immigrants. Besides elites, the respondents supported the need for workers with a low education level (43% supported immigration at the present level). Those who are in favour of stimulating immigration (a total of 19%) are mainly young people between the ages of 18 and 28.

The picture is quite different if we look at the groups which “do not work for us”, as shown in the top part of the graph. Slightly over half the respondents feel that immigration of refugees should be restricted and nearly half is in favour of restricting immigration of asylum seekers. It appears that the choices of the respondents naturally follow government policies: these indeed reflect in the first place the national economic interest, while the promotion of human rights and liberties, based on international conventions, is given much less attention.

The public's attitudes to positioning Slovenia in the globalised migration trends were complemented in the survey research with the public's perceptions of the characteristics of Slovenia's immigration policies. Regulating migration is indeed significantly defined by both external and internal borders, where external selective mechanisms usually amount to restricting entry across the national or Schengen borders, while the internal borders are defined by membership or inclusion/exclusion in the sense of *us vs. them* or *locals vs. foreigners*. It is typical of both geographical and social borders that they correspond in the public's perceptions where immigrants are concerned: people do not like borders being crossed, and the question of how open the borders should be must be addressed selectively and conditionally. The graph below shows high support for these two types of statements, which are actually in conflict, but it seems that the respondents do not perceive them as contradictory.

⁸ This attitude was present in three categories – highly qualified immigrants, entrepreneurs, and ethnic Slovenes. The survey data shows that over half the respondents (54%) support encouraging immigration of highly qualified labour, while 25% consider that immigration should be kept at the present level. Similarly as with the previous question, most respondents (48%) think that Slovenia should stimulate immigration of foreign entrepreneurs who would invest in the Slovene economy. Compared to the other groups, the youngest respondents, from the age group 18-28, are more in favour of stimulating immigration of foreign entrepreneurs, who would invest in the Slovene economy, and less in favour of limiting their immigration (17%). Most respondents (47.5%) support immigration of ethnic Slovenes, while 35% think that their immigration should be kept at the present level.

Graph 4: Attitudes to immigration and integration policies



Source: Integration policies, 2007

The first feature is the majority support (64%) of respondents for the statement that Slovenia should work towards an open, tolerant and multicultural society (less than 10% does not agree with it). Another feature is the high support (52%) of respondents for the statement that Slovenia should apply more restrictive immigration and asylum policies.

The basic discrepancy between self-proclaimed tolerance and restrictive regulation of migration is confirmed by other attitudes voiced by the respondents. There is a majority support for the statements that migrants are visitors (foreigners, newcomers) in a society, and that for this reason they cannot enjoy the same rights as the "indigenous" population. Migrants as "temporary newcomers" do not meet the criterion of indigeneity in any way; this is specifically important as the concept is linked to granting (special) political rights. Even though the survey research did not directly use the term "indigeneity", it seems to be impossible to avoid its popular interpretations.

Furthermore, the support for the statement that immigrants contribute to the formation of a multicultural environment and coexistence in the country is highly distributed across the groups, and one cannot expect public consensus in this matter. Support for (or opposition to) regulating migration at the external Schengen borders in order to prevent illegal immigration, is expressed in a dichotomous way: the shares of supporters and opponents are nearly equal (38% of respondents do not agree that Slovenia should close its southern border with Croatia as tightly as possible, but 39% agree). An important signal

sent out by the public opinion is that there is no matter-of-fact approach to closing the European space to non-European people. The Schengen border is presented as the border between “Europe and the Balkans”, and as such it is an important mental marker of both inclusion of the common area of the EU, which has no internal borders, and of exclusion, defining the outside population that requires permission to enter (visa, work permits).

The support for the above-mentioned, mutually contradictory statements seems to indicate that Slovenia has “properly” adopted the schizophrenic European attitude to migration, marked on the one hand by proclaimed support for a democratic, inclusive, tolerant, and multicultural society and, on the other hand, by the implementation of repressive and selective immigration policies, which may even be in contradiction with basic human rights. This is illustrated by the majority support for the statement that in their new social environment immigrants cannot claim the same rights as the inhabitants (Slovenes) who have “always” lived here. Such counter-positioning of “newcomers” versus “traditional inhabitants” clashes at least with the right to non-discriminatory treatment.

Integration policies: shifting social borders

When immigrants are on their way to the target country and manage to take the hurdle of external selective mechanisms, they face another type of social border, which conditions their membership in the majority society. The inclusion of immigrants in society at the level of everyday life highly depends on the attitude of the majority population toward the immigrants.

Table 1: Importance of the factors for successful inclusion of immigrants in Slovene society

	Share of the answers “I think it is (very) important”
knowledge of the Slovene language	87.2 %
good education	75.3 %
employment	75.2 %
acquisition of Slovene citizenship	63.2 %
origin from a similar cultural environment	59.6 %
friends of Slovene nationality	46.2 %
options for political participation	36.9 %
marriage to a Slovene citizen	36.5 %
Catholic religion	26.0 %
Race (white)	7.6 %

Source: Integration policies, 2007

The respondents in our research identified knowledge of the language, an adequately high education, and employment as the most important factors for successful inclusion in the Slovene society, while the least important factors are skin colour and religion. It thus seems that the public opinion rejects racism and religious factors. The first factor should be relativized in a dominantly “white” environment, where xenophobia and nationalism, aimed at foreigners from nearby environments (former common state of Yugoslavia), have much deeper roots.

The question on the conditions for accepting immigrants was also asked in the comparative European sociological research ESS 2002/2003. Hafner-Fink (2004: 69) established that three criteria were rated among most important in all 13 countries: a) accepting the way of living of the country; b) acquired knowledge and skills which the country needs; c) knowledge of the official language of the country. At the other end of the scale are three less important criteria an immigrant should meet: a) the fact that he/she comes from a Christian environment; b) the fact that he/she is white-skinned; c) the fact that he/she is well-off financially. The answers of the Slovene respondents were fully in line with this pattern.

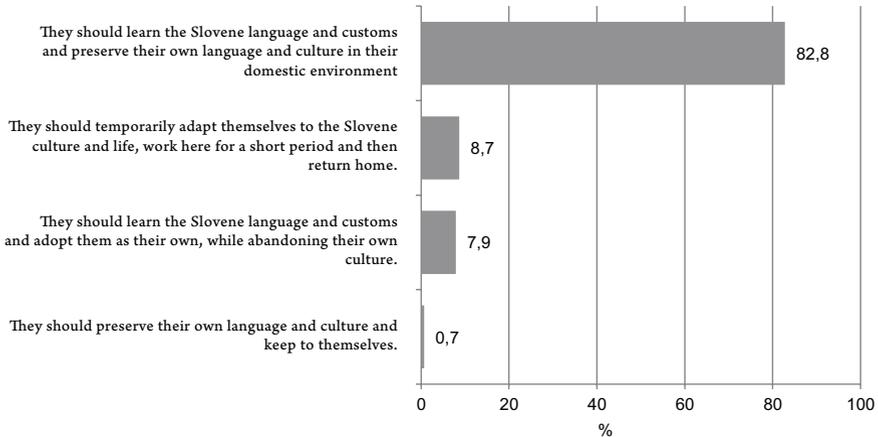
The results show some typical differences between the “Eastern” and “Western” countries in the perceptions. The Eastern countries, for instance, identify networks of relatives as an important factor for successful inclusion of immigrants. Another difference concerns the criteria referring to racial and religious discrimination. Again, there is a discrepancy between the eastern and western groups of countries: in the post-socialist countries the answers on acceptance of immigrants show that more importance is attributed to the religious and racial factors than in the West-European countries (see more in Hafner-Fink 2004: 69–70).

The two empirical researches - European Survey and Integration policies - show that the inclusion of immigrants in their new environment is conditioned upon clearly stated cultural and economic criteria; the “Eastern model” seems to hold on to a combination of a basic cultural marker (language) and economic independence. This is also indicated in the results in the first section, where the respondents voiced high support for the statement that immigrants are a burden on the welfare state.

In addition to the attitudes towards the inclusion of immigrants, the respondents also evaluated expected behaviour of the immigrants in new society.

Graph 5: Desirable behaviour of immigrants in Slovenia

How should immigrants, who have lived in Slovenia for a long time, conduct themselves? Please state which of the four statements below is closest to your opinion or which you support most?



Source: Integration policies, 2007

Most respondents are in favour of cultural adaptation, which is the conceptual background of the statement that immigrants should adopt the Slovene language and customs, but preserve their own language and culture. A significant indicator is that the respondents completely rejected a segregation strategy, by which immigrants should preserve their language and culture and live in separate, parallel social worlds. Little support was also given to an assimilation strategy and the notion of temporary “guest workers”, which equally entails “temporary assimilation”.

Conclusions

The issues of contemporary globalized migration could hardly be more complex: in almost every European society migration management is a conflictual issue, regardless of whether local, national or EU actors are involved. The sensitiveness of the issue and policies is connected with an ideological charge and new politicisation that emerged around the turn of the century, when migration turned from a classical economic issue into a paramount political issue. The disputes in both spheres – those of government policies and public opinion – are fought out at three levels: citizenship, on which different opinions exist, as well as disputes about granting citizen rights to immigrants; culture, with (dis)agreement on policies of

multiculturalism, inclusion/exclusion of foreigners; and the welfare state's functioning and distribution of social transfers across the population.

In the article we have discussed the images of immigration and immigrants through public opinion. In most cases this partial case of Slovenia confirms more general trends in Eastern Europe – as seen in European sociological research - and in some aspects worldwide. Conclusions from the empirical survey research are similar across the region, especially in Central and Eastern Europe; the general opinions about migration and the “attitudes” of the public toward immigrants are undoubtedly closely linked with the economic and social conditions in the country, and as such are also linked with greater or lesser acceptance, desirability and tolerance of immigrants.

This leads to questions on the expected trends in public opinion: will the public opinion be static and preserve mythicized notions on migration, will the processes of urbanisation and globalisation have a decisive influence, will diversified opinions prevail, as they have a more important point of reference in political affiliation or social class? Empirical results in our research pointed to three possible trends (see Zavrtnik, Kralj, Simčič 2008; Kralj, 2008; Zavrtnik 2011): the first would be the European-indigenous scenario, according to which the public's opinions will be expectedly rational and in line with current European migration and asylum policies. Such opinions are strongly present in the survey; they represent typical “European values” about newcomers and their limited role in host society. The second trend may be called the multicultural scenario, according to which changes in opinions will occur, as well as greater openness to migration and cultural differences. The empirical data suggest that such opinions are weakly expressed or only by a minority. The third trend would be the latent conflict scenario, which refers to a passive attitude or disregard of the public toward migration – both deriving from non-acceptance of immigrants. These described trends do not attempt to “cover” the whole spectrum of the public's opinion responses, but they do reflect the dominant images of immigrants and migration processes produced by the public opinion in today's society. Let us conclude with the statement that public opinion research contributes highly relevant data for sociological explanations of contemporary mobility processes and also gives a valuable tool for explaining changes in societies.

Literature

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Imigrantų įvaizdžiai Slovėnijoje: visuomenės nuostatų tyrimo išvalgos

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SANTRAUKA: Straipsnyje analizuojamos Slovėnijos visuomenės nuostatos dėl migracijos, imigrantų integracijos ir daugiakultūriškumo. Analizuojami 2007 m. mokslinio tyrimo „Migracija, integracija ir daugiakultūriškumas – empirinių duomenų rinkimas“ duomenys. Viena iš straipsnyje plėtojamų temų yra visuomenės nuostatos dėl migracijos ir imigrantų. Antroji straipsnyje plėtojama tema siekia kontekstualizuoti Slovėniją šiuolaikinės migracijos srautuose. Teigiama, kad visuomenės nuostatos atskleidžia tam tikrą skirtingą požiūrį į imigrantus, kurį formuoja geografinė imigrantų kilmė ir socioekonominis kontekstas. Duomenų analizė taip pat atskleidžia Slovėnijos visuomenės paramą tam tikriems prieštarīgiems teiginiams: iš vienos pusės pritariama nuosaikesnei prieglobsčio ir migracijos politikai, o iš kitos pusės manoma, kad Slovėnija turėtų tapti tolerantiška daugiakultūre visuomene. Trečioji straipsnyje plėtojama tema skirta integracijos politikai ir socialinių ribų tarp imigrantų ir dominuojančios visuomenės konstravimui. Respondentai vardijo šiuos veiksnius kaip svarbiausius sėkmingai imigrantų integracijai į Slovėnijos visuomenę: kalbos žinios, adekvatus išsilavinimas ir įdarbinimas.

PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: MIGRACIJA, INTEGRACIJA, VISUOMENĖS NUOSTATOS.