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YOUTH PERCEPTION AND ATTITUDE TOWARD MIGRATION PROCESSES – THE CASE OF THE USA AND SLOVENIA

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Abstract

The paper deals with the perception and attitude of young adults toward migration processes in two countries – the United States, which has been considered an immigration country for centuries, and Slovenia, which has been part of various migration processes in different historical periods (as an emigration country, immigration country, or transit migration country). The first part of the paper focuses on the migration processes in both countries and presents an overview of the average of youths' perception and attitude toward immigration, while the latter part discusses the perception and attitude toward migration processes of the 44 young Americans and Slovenians included in our survey.

Keywords: emigration, immigration, perception, attitude, youth, Slovenia, USA

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1 INTRODUCTION

We can define migration as a process of moving people either within a state or across international borders. It is not a recent demogeographic phenomenon but has been a part of human history since its beginning (Bellwood, 2013). People have been migrating internally, from one country to another or from one continent to another. According to IOM, there are more than one billion migrants around the world, including the 272 million international migrants globally (World migration report 2020, 2019). Despite being a small percentage of a world's population (3.5%), the estimated number and proportion of international migrants has already surpassed some of the projections made for the year 2050, which were 230 million (World migration report 2020, 2019).

Migration has a longstanding impact on all aspects of society. In the political sphere, for example, every country is included in migration processes in some form, as an immigration country, emigration country, or transit migration country, and therefore has its own migration policies through which it regulates migration processes within its borders. Likewise, migration has affected economies across the globe; within the past few years, immigrants have represented “47% of the increase of the workforce in the United States and 70% in Europe over the past ten years” (Migration policy debates, 2014). In terms of demography, international migration affects a country's population directly by changing its size and age structure, and indirectly by influencing the overall number of births in the future (Fihel et al., 2018). Educationally, as well, the implementation of migration-related topics into school curricula has become increasingly necessary in providing children with a well-rounded education and accurate depiction of the world (Ilc Klun, 2017a). In fact, migration can play an important role in cultural diversity of immigration countries, which is reflected in food, religion, and ethnic neighborhoods.

Despite migration's centrality in global discussions and positive contributions to many aspects of life, the media often present the topic in a negative light, thereby influencing contemporary attitudes toward migration-related topics across generations (How the world views migration, 2015). Due to news about migration in the media, there are sometimes misinterpretations that people have a negative perception of migration. Between 2012 and 2014, Gallup World Poll surveyed over 183,000 adults in more than 140 countries worldwide, asking them about their perception on migration. In seven of the top ten immigration countries (the United States, Canada, Australia, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Germany and France) citizens say immigration should be increased or stay the same, while Europeans presented more negative attitudes toward immigration (How the World Views Migration, 2015). The results of this report were the basis for the design of our own research. In order to find out the perception and attitude of young people toward migration in two very different countries, the United States and Slovenia, we designed a study to compare American and Slovenian students' thoughts on the topic.

As the leading host country for immigrants across the globe, the U.S. Department of State describes the United States as “the world’s most generous country for immigration.” In fact, the nation’s immigration statistics may support this claim; every year, approximately one million immigrants arrive in the United States, while hundreds of thousands of foreign-born residents become naturalized citizens (International migration, 2020). In 2018, immigration to the United States reached a numeric high, with more than 44.7 million immigrants living within the nation’s borders (Batalova et al., 2020). Between 2015 and 2019, as well, the foreign-born population increased by 5%, and approximately 51 million immigrants are living in the United States today (World migration report 2020, 2019). In this way, Pew Research Center notes that the American immigrant population is rather diverse, with immigrants coming to the U.S. from nearly every country in the world (Radford, 2019).

In contrast to the United States, Slovenia, as one of the smaller countries in Europe, is involved in various migration flows, not only immigration, but especially emigration. Because of its transit position, political and socio – economic reasons, Slovenia has always been involved in migration processes. In the context of migration, Slovenia can be categorized as an emigration country [before the start of the 20th century, 300,000 people had emigrated from Slovenia, which was at that time one third of whole population of the country (Ilc Klun, 2017a); and another 100,000 people emigrated from Slovenia during and after the Second World War (Ilc Klun, 2017a)], immigration country [in the 1960s and 1970s Slovenia faced immigration flow of more than 80,000 people from other Yugoslavian republics (Ilc Klun, 2019)], and as a transit migration country [when people especially from ex-Yugoslavian countries cross Slovenia to reach other Central and Western European countries (Ilc Klun, 2017b)]. About 250,000 immigrants currently live in Slovenia, which represents about 12.1% of the total population of Slovenia. With such a share of immigrants, Slovenia ranks 16th among EU member states (SURS, 2019). Among 250,000 people of immigrant background, 216,000 (86%) had their first residence in one of the countries that emerged after the break-up of Yugoslavia. Among these, the most numerous are those whose first residence (after their birth) was in Bosnia and Herzegovina (108,000), followed by those whose first residence was in Croatia (45,000), and then those with their first residence in Serbia (25,000) (SURS, 2018). Of the immigrants from other European countries, the most numerous are those whose first residence was in Germany (7,300), followed by those with their first residence in Italy (4,100) and in the Russian Federation (3,000). Among people whose first residence was in one of the non-European countries, most of them had their first residence in China (1,000), followed by those with their first residence in the United States (800) and in Argentina and Canada (400 each) (SURS, 2018). According to this research, a typical immigrant in Slovenia, who immigrated to Slovenia between 2008 and 2017, is a man aged 30-39 and lives alone. He is a foreign citizen with permanent residence in Slovenia and immigrated to

Slovenia from Bosnia and Herzegovina. He resides in one of the city municipalities. He is employed and has a vocational education (SURS, 2019).

Our research centers around youths' attitudes and perceptions toward migration, and therefore focused primarily on statistics related to youth and migration in the United States and Slovenia.

In the United States, for example, studies have shown that Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996) harbor more favorable views of immigrants than the generations before them, perhaps due to the increasing diversification and globalization of American society (Rouse, Ross, 2018). Millennials have grown up in increasingly diverse environments with greater numbers of immigrants than ever before, and these demographic changes have influenced their contemporary attitudes toward immigration (Rouse Ross, 2018). Despite the seemingly widespread adoption of tolerance toward immigrants, Millennial viewpoints still vary based on a wide range of identifiers (Rouse, Ross, 2018). Looking toward race and ethnicity, immigration has shaped the lives of various groups of the American population in different ways; Asian-Americans and Latin-Americans, for example, are significantly more likely to be an immigrant, have family or friends that are immigrants, and speak another language other than English in their homes when compared to whites and African-Americans (Cohen et al., 2018). Despite these differences, Millennials of all racial and ethnic backgrounds have expressed support for various issues, such as creating pathways to citizenship for DACA-eligible individuals and expanding the U.S. guest worker program (Cohen et al., 2018).

In Slovenia, as well, tolerance toward immigrants seems to be increasing. Compared to 2002, a 2014 study found that more Slovenians believed that immigration was making the country a better place to live (Heath, Richards, 2016). In general, Europeans have echoed this sentiment, yet have tended to favor immigrants from their ethnic or racial group and express more negative opinions about immigrants from poor countries outside of Europe (Heath, Richards, 2016). In Slovenia, too, research confirms that several groups (such as Bosniaks and the Roma) are continuously treated as outsiders, despite living in Slovenia, speaking Slovenian, and holding Slovenian citizenship (Bajt, 2016). Regardless of their place of birth, many immigrants in Slovenia have voiced their experiences with discrimination and exploitation, ultimately believing that their "foreignness" prevents them from fully being accepted in society (Bajt, 2016).

2 METHODOLOGY

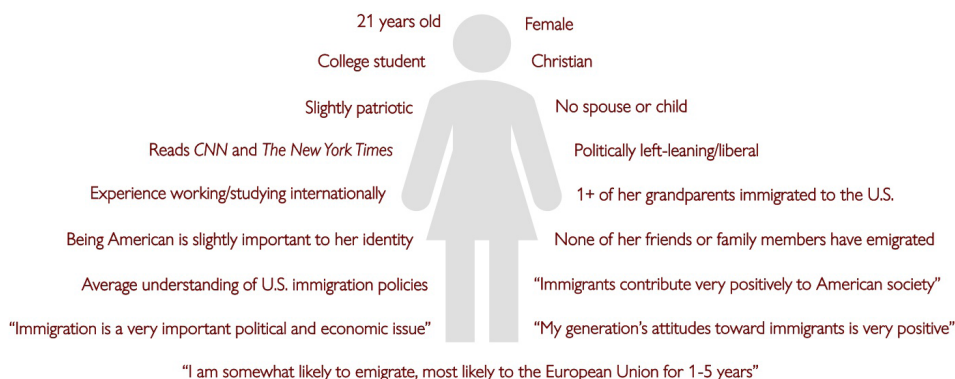
This study used an online questionnaire to examine the similarities and differences between American and Slovenian youths' perceptions and attitudes toward migration. The questionnaire was divided into three parts; the first part collected demographic data about respondents, the second part focused on attitudes toward immigration in their home countries, and the final part addressed emigration. The online questionnaire with

the support of the e-tool Ika.si was launched on July 7, 2020, and students had the opportunity to participate in the survey until July 24, 2020. In total, 44 students participated in the study, of which 19 were from the United States and 25 from Slovenia.

In the case of the American students, all 19 respondents were between the ages of 20 and 21 and the majority of them (68%) were female. More than half (58%) of the students identified as Christian (26% were not religious, 11% were Jewish and 5% were Russian Orthodox). All respondents have completed high school and the majority have at least some college experience. In terms of international experience, 71% of respondents have worked or studied abroad. It should be noted, as well, that this sample is not reflective of the American undergraduate student population; in contrast to the 10% of American students that study abroad, many of the students in the sample study international affairs, politics, and language, and may be more likely to spend time abroad (US study abroad, 2018). Politically, 88% of respondents said they were liberal (6% identified as conservative, and another 6% as moderate), consistent with the fact that many respondents said that they primarily utilize left-leaning news sources, such as *CNN* and *The New York Times*. At the same time, 76% of students use at least two sources to collect their news, with 18% of respondents utilizing social media platforms.

At the same time, it seems as though American students view their nationality rather neutrally; although the results varied, 41% of the respondents indicated that being American was slightly important to their identity, while 35% stated that it was fairly important, 12% claimed it was very important, and 12% claimed it was not at all important. Despite the 88% of respondents that claimed being American was at least slightly important to their identity, 29% of our sample described themselves as not at all patriotic. 41% of respondents did, however, identify as slightly patriotic, 18% as very patriotic, and the remaining 12% as fairly patriotic.

Figure 1: An average American student who participated in the study.



In the case of Slovenian students, the majority of them, 65%, were 20 years old, 13% 25 years old, 9% 22 and 24 years old and 4% 23 years old. Majority of them, 60%, were female. Almost half of students identified as Christian (48%), while others stated they are atheist, or claimed that this information is personal, did not answer the question, or emphasized regional identity over religion in their answers. All respondents completed high school, and all have some college experience - 76% completed high school and are currently students of first bachelor level, while others have already a bachelor's degree and are currently students of a master's program. In terms of international experience, the majority, 92%, have not studied or worked abroad, which starkly contrasts the high percentage American students with international experience who participated in the study. 60% of Slovenian students considered their political views as moderate, while 36% liberal and 4% as conservative. In terms of utilizing news platforms, the majority of them (44%) use different, at least two or more news sources, and 20% of Slovenian students have exposed social media platforms (eg. Facebook) when obtaining the news. Majority of Slovenian students, 58%, indicated that being Slovenian is very important to their identity, while 21% stated it is fairly important, 17% slightly important and only 4% indicated that being Slovenian is not at all important for his/her identity. Nevertheless, they indicated their national identity as very important, Slovenian students do not consider themselves as being very patriotic. Majority of them, 44%, find themselves as fairly patriotic, 28% as slightly patriotic, 20% as very patriotic and 8% as not at all patriotic.

Figure 2: An average Slovenian student who participated in the study.

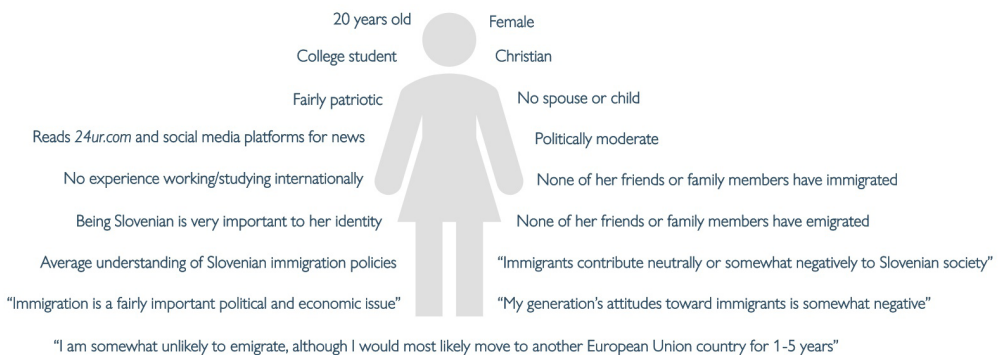


Table 1: Demographic information of respondents.

		American students (%)	Slovenian students (%)
International experience	Yes	71	8
	No	29	92
Political orientation	Liberal	88	36
	Conservative	6	4
	Moderate	6	60
National identity	Very important	12	58
	Fairly important	35	21
	Slightly important	41	17
	Not at all important	12	4
Patriotic	Very patriotic	18	20
	Fairly patriotic	12	44
	Slightly patriotic	41	28
	Not at all patriotic	29	8

Table 1 highlights some key differences between American and Slovenian students, most notably the major gap in international experience. In our survey, we asked students if they had ever worked or studied abroad and, while most American students already have at least one experience outside of their home country, the vast majority of Slovenian students do not; as previously stated, this share is higher among American students due to their involvement in the study of international relations. Among Slovenian students, however, this percentage is very low because most of the students who participated in the research are first-year students and have not yet made the decision to study abroad. Another significant difference between American and Slovenian students is their political orientation. The majority of American students defined themselves politically as left-leaning/liberal, while the majority of Slovenian students defined themselves as moderate, and these differences are reflected in their definitions of national identity and patriotism. Most American students, for example, perceive their national identity as slightly important and define themselves as slightly patriotic. Slovenian students, on the other hand, consider their national identity very important and express more patriotism than their American colleagues.

3 RESULTS

Survey results are divided into two parts; the first section discusses our American and Slovenian respondents' perceptions and attitudes toward immigration, while the second part assesses their feelings toward future emigration.

3.1 Attitude and perception of American students about immigration

Both countries, the United States and Slovenia, have been part of immigration processes. The United States, for example, has a long history of immigration, and immigrants from all over the world continue to diversify the nation. Slovenia, on the other hand, has been part of two major immigration waves in the 20th century (through the 1960s and 1970s and again after 1991), when immigrants from (former) Yugoslavia immigrated to Slovenia, mostly for economic reasons. In our research, we were interested in whether the state's involvement in immigration processes can be linked to the attitude and perception of young people toward immigration; in fact, the results of the International Organization for Migration's 2012–2014 survey showed that the largest immigration countries (the United States, Australia, Canada, etc.) have a positive attitude towards immigration, while European countries are generally averse to immigration (How the world views migration, 2015).

In our research, we asked the participants whether they themselves had any experience with the immigration process, and most American students expressed at least one familial or friendship-based connection to American immigration. In fact, nearly half (47%) of the respondents noted that at least one of their grandparents immigrated to the United States, and 41% said they have at least one close friend who is an immigrant. At the same time, 24% stated that at least one of their parents is an immigrant, and other 24% of students have no connections to the immigration process.

In terms of identity, all American students agreed that there is no difference between an American-born American and a foreign-born American. Many students noted that an immigrant should hold certain values associated with the United States, such as a belief in liberty and justice for all, while others stated that obtaining citizenship, participating in governmental processes, and contributing to the economy are essential to being "American." At the same time, many students emphasized the centrality of immigration and diversity in American history and culture, stating that differences among Americans should be celebrated. Despite the consensus that all Americans should be treated equally, one respondent noted that foreign-born Americans are likely to face discrimination based on the color of their skin and the accent of their voice.

American students have made it clear that immigration is a high-priority political issue, as 83% of respondents described it as very important, with the remaining 18% describing it as fairly important. In assessing issues more important than immigration, healthcare, climate change, police/prison reform, and gun control proved to be

significant among American student population. Economically, almost half (47%) of respondents viewed immigration as very important, 29% said it was fairly important, and the remaining 24% stated that it was slightly important. Although no students described immigration as completely unimportant economically, most students believed that addressing the wealth gap, minimum wage, unemployment, poverty, and access to health-care and social welfare are currently more economically significant than immigration.

In terms of migration-related knowledge and education, most American students (47%) stated they have an average understanding of U.S. immigration policies (41% claimed their understanding was good, while the remaining 12% described it as poor). To improve this understanding, many students voiced their desire to learn more about the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy, as well as the work of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, known widely as ICE. Others also hoped to better understand the process of becoming an American citizen and the governmental treatment of immigrants during this process.

Overall, American youth seem to possess favorable views of immigrants in their society. According to 88% of our American respondents, immigrants contribute very positively to American society; the other 12% of students described the immigrant contribution as somewhat positive. On a larger scale, 59% of respondents describe their generation's attitude toward immigrants as very positive, 29% describe it as somewhat positive, 6% describe it as neutral, and another 6% describe it as somewhat negative.

Despite the generally positive youth perception of immigrants in the United States, many of our respondents expressed concerns about racism, xenophobia, and other forms of discrimination against the American immigrant community. While 16% of students say that all immigrants in the United States share a similar experience, based on the feeling of being an outsider and creating a new life in an unfamiliar territory, the remaining 84% of respondents claim that immigrant experiences in the U.S. can differ widely, based on factors such as country of origin, educational and economic background, skin color, religion, fluency in English language, legal status, and level of familial support. One student noted that the U.S. has “favorite” countries, meaning that Americans value immigrants from these countries more than others, likely because of religious and racial factors. Similarly, another student mentioned the role of stereotypes in an immigrant's experience in the United States; for example, a Latinx or Middle Eastern immigrant may face more discrimination and assimilation-related challenges than a European immigrant, based largely on their appearance as an “outsider.” Two students also claimed that a support system (of family or friends) can influence an immigrant's experience in the United States, as the area in which immigrants live and the people with whom they interact can ultimately impact their experience in the United States.

Similarly, all American students agreed that immigrants to the United States do not feel like a full and equal citizen with all the rights and protections that other people have, further highlighting the presence of xenophobia within the American general

public. Yet again, students believed that immigrants are likely to face discrimination; however, many students also noted that undocumented immigrants and DACA recipients are more likely to be disadvantaged, as any minor indiscretion can strip them of their legal protection. Likewise, 24% of respondents stated that policies created under the Trump administration have further barred immigrants from integrating (and feeling accepted) in the United States.

Regardless of the perceived threat of discrimination against immigrants in the United States, 71% of American students surveyed strongly disagreed with the idea that more Americans would accept immigrants' cultural differences if they tried harder to fit in (24% disagreed, and 6% agreed). The majority of students expressed their belief that immigrants should not have to abandon their culture and background to conform to American standards; rather, students noted that cultural diversity contributes significantly and positively to American society (both historically and contemporarily), as immigrants consistently bring new ideas to the forefront and propel the nation into the future with more acceptance. Addressing the hypocrisies of assimilation, one student noted that an immigrant that "tries too hard to fit in" will be categorized as "white-washed" by the American public, yet an immigrant that "doesn't try hard enough to fit in" will be described by others as "not a real American."

In fact, the majority of American students believed that the media negatively influenced their perceptions of immigrants in the United States by feeding into pre-established stereotypes of immigrants and criminalizing immigration. Many students felt that the media fails to discuss the "overwhelming good" that immigrants bring to American society, causing a student to feel concerned for the safety of immigrants in the United States. A few students also noted that different sources will present different viewpoints of immigration in the United States, perhaps polarizing the issue. Addressing the importance of immigration coverage, another student mentioned that the media is where they receive information about immigrants and immigration, which in turn impacts their perception of the topic; in this way, it seems as though the media play a key role in the formation of American youths' opinions on immigration.

3.2 Attitude and perception of Slovenian students about immigration

In contrast to American respondents, most Slovenian students (72%) have no connections to immigration processes. In terms of friends and family, only 20% of Slovenian students stated that they have a close friend who immigrated to Slovenia, and only 16% of students have one or more grandparents who immigrated to Slovenia. Unlike the 24% of American students with at least one immigrant parent, none of Slovenian students have parental immigration history.

In the demographic section of our survey, 58% of Slovenian students described their national identity as very important to their personal identity. In addressing Slovenian national identity, the majority of Slovenian students (52%) stated that there

is no difference between a Slovenian-born Slovenian and a foreign-born Slovenian, 8% stated that there is a difference, and the remaining 40% were not clear in their answers. When we asked them about the factors that define an individual's national identity, 32% of students answered that the most important identifiers of Slovenian identity are language and culture. Thus, in the context of defining national identity, Slovenian students emphasized one component, the linguistic-cultural component, which is often the fastest to notice, while generally disregarding the historical, spatial, economic-social and political components of national identity (Zupančič, 1998).

In addressing the significance of immigration in the political and economic realms, Slovenian survey respondents described the issue as generally important. Politically, for example, almost half (48%) of students described immigration as fairly important, 32% as very important, and the remaining 20% as slightly important. In fact, none of Slovenian respondents perceive immigration has an unimportant part of Slovenian politics. In the economic sphere, too, most Slovenian students consider immigration to be fairly important (48%), while 24% of Slovenian students describe it as very important or slightly important. Only one Slovenian student emphasized that immigration is not all important in terms of economic issues. In assessing issues more important than immigration, healthcare, climate change, unemployment, homelessness, gender equality, elderly care, and corruption proved to be significant among the Slovenian student population.

Like American survey respondents, most Slovenian students (48%) described their understanding of Slovenian immigration policies as average, 28% as good, 12% as poor, and another 12% as very poor. To improve understanding of immigration policies, Slovenian students voiced their desire to learn more about the procedures for acquiring citizenship, asylum, the procedures for integrating immigrants into society, challenges that immigrants face in Slovenian society, employment opportunities for immigrants, healthcare, etc.

In comparison with American students' overwhelmingly positive perception of immigrant contributions to society, Slovenian students presented a largely negative view of immigrants' societal impacts. More specifically, most Slovenian students suggested that immigrants neutrally (33%) or somewhat negatively (33%) contribute to Slovenian society. Although another 4% described immigrants' contributions as very negative, others expressed more favorable views; 25% of Slovenian students described immigrant contributions as somewhat positive and another 4% as very positive. On a generational level, as well, Slovenian students tend to perceive immigrants rather negatively. For example, 44% of Slovenian students described their generation's attitudes toward immigrants as somewhat negative, 28% as neutral, 16% as somewhat positive, 8% as very negative, and 4% as very positive. Overall, these statistics confirm the results of the International Organization for Migration's 2012-2014 study (*How the World Views Migration*, 2015) which showed that adults in Europe have a negative perception of immigration. More specifically, our research showed that young

people in Slovenia, who were at the center of our research, have a slightly more negative attitude toward immigrants and immigration.

In addressing societal acceptance of immigrants in Slovenia, the majority of Slovenian students (72%) believed that immigrants in Slovenia do not share similar experiences and may be treated differently based on factors such as ethnicity, cultural background, and education. In their responses, many students described the centrality of immigrants' ethnic affiliations in societal acceptance; in their opinion, immigrants who immigrated to Slovenia from the countries of former Yugoslavia are much less likely to be accepted in Slovenia than those who immigrate to Slovenia from other countries. In addition, many students noted that immigrants with different cultural backgrounds and lower levels of education may be perceived more negatively by Slovenians, and therefore less likely to feel accepted in society.

When asked if immigrants in Slovenia feel like full and equal citizens with all the rights and protections that other people have, Slovenian students' opinions were divided. The majority (44%) of students agreed with the statement, believing that immigrants in Slovenia feel completely equal. In their answers, some Slovenian respondents emphasized the idea that many immigrants from former Yugoslav republics can speak in their native languages and be generally understood by the Slovenian population. Another 40% of students, however, stated that immigrants in Slovenia are not equal and may face discrimination by others. Similarly, 71% of Slovenian students believe that Slovenians would be more likely to accept the cultural diversity of immigrants if they tried harder to fit in (46% agreed with the statement and 25% strongly agreed). Above all, they emphasized that Slovenians would be more accepting of immigrants if they learned the Slovenian language and accepted Slovenian culture. On the other hand, 29% of Slovenian students did not agree with the statement, ultimately believing that immigrants have the right to keep their language and culture.

In addressing the media's impact on Slovenians' perceptions of migration, the majority of Slovenian students (44%) believed that the media influence the way Slovenians view migration, but did not mention whether this influence is positive or negative. However, 28% of students stated that the Slovenian media depict a very negative image of migration, which in turn affects society's perceptions of migration. Interestingly, none of the Slovenian students believed that the Slovenian media would present migration as a positive demographic process.

3.3 Attitude and perception of American and Slovenian students about emigration

Looking toward prospects for emigration, it seems that American students are rather interested in living abroad. In fact, 59% of American respondents stated that they're likely to emigrate in the future (24% said they were very likely and 35% described themselves as somewhat likely). On the other hand, 6% of students remained neutral

on the issue, 12% said they were somewhat unlikely, and the remaining 24% said they were very unlikely to emigrate. At the same time, 63% of students said that having a spouse or child may influence their likelihood of emigrating; many described a desire to raise children outside of the United States, and others said that they would be willing to move abroad to be with a foreign partner. One student described living internationally as “a great opportunity to learn about other cultures, gain new skills, and see the world from a perspective that isn’t focused on the U.S.”

When asked their top three reasons for moving abroad, the most common answer was career-focused, yet closely followed by a desire to gain new experiences within a foreign cultural context; to further describe this sentiment, one student wrote “life is short and I think it’s a disservice to yourself to stay put and never try learning in other places.” In fact, previous research suggests that young self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) are motivated significantly by adventure and life changes, in addition to financial and professional desires (Ceric, Crawford, 2016). A study conducted by the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) on global mobility and employment preferences echoed these ideas, stating that individuals want to become a global citizen through diverse professional and personal experiences abroad (Strack et al., 2014).

In addressing the yearning for occupational experience abroad, research suggests that Americans between the ages of 21 and 30 are 59% more likely than Americans in general to consider international employment opportunities; although this high percentage may be correlated with the financial crisis, many educated young Americans have also been seeking non-traditional starts to their careers through temporary overseas assignments, perhaps with nonprofit organizations (Strack et al., 2014).

In addition to personal and professional growth, many American respondents stated that political factors will significantly impact their likelihood of moving abroad in the future. While 25% of students explicitly described the re-election of Donald Trump as a push factor, other students also stressed the importance of healthcare and education accessibility issues, as well as problems with the two-party system, gun control, and racial inequalities. However, these findings are rather unsurprising. Following the election of President Trump in 2016, a Gallup poll found that 30% of Americans between the ages of 15 and 30 said they would like to move to another country, representing a record high in the desire to emigrate (Ray, Esipova, 2019).

In terms of desired destination, Europe appears to be popular among American youth, as 69% of our respondents stated that they would most likely emigrate to countries within the European Union, 13% stated North America, 6% stated Asia, 6% stated Eastern Europe, and the remaining 6% stated Oceania. However, none of the students surveyed want to live abroad forever; in fact, 44% of students want to live internationally for 1–5 years, 38% for 5–20 years, 13% for less than a year, and 6% for 20–50 years.

Despite this strong desire to live abroad, American students expressed doubts about their ability to integrate into a foreign society. When asked if they would feel like a full and equal citizen with all the rights and protections that others have when

abroad, 77% of respondents said no, believing that immigrants are often treated as outsiders. While some stated that citizenship may be necessary to feel like a full and equal citizen in a foreign country, others noted that identifiers such as race and socio-economic status may be even more important (perhaps because they are more visible) in gaining acceptance. Speaking from personal experience, one student also stated that some countries are quite nationalistic, have an ingrained perception of what a citizen should look like, and may be less likely to accept immigrants into their society.

In Slovenia, as well, emigration has become an increasingly popular phenomenon. Between 2010 and 2016, the number of young people emigrating from Slovenia nearly quadrupled, as many individuals exhibit a desire to experience a foreign culture (Naterer et al., 2019). Studies have shown that young Slovenians often prepare for future migration (through language classes, etc.), although they typically plan to return home (Naterer et al., 2019). Perhaps through the Europeanization of Slovenia (gaining EU membership, adopting the Euro, etc), pull factors have been more significant than push factors when young people consider emigration, as other European countries have become increasingly accessible (Naterer et al., 2019). Likewise, many international companies have contributed to this population's high likelihood of emigrating by targeting young educated individuals (Naterer et al., 2019).

In regard to emigration, most Slovenian students have no desire to emigrate from Slovenia; in fact, 39% of Slovenian students answered that they would be somewhat unlikely to emigrate from Slovenia, and 13% very unlikely. This result is slightly different from previous research (Naterer et al., 2019); Ilc Klun, 2017). In this survey, which included more than 1100 pupils from Slovenian primary and secondary schools, 63.5% of pupils expressed a desire to emigrate from Slovenia (Ilc Klun, 2017b). Although this research did not include college students, this research showed a positive correlation between age and desire to emigrate, meaning that older students looked more favorably upon emigration than younger students (Ilc Klun, 2017b). However, our research showed that 26% of Slovenian college students want to emigrate from Slovenia (22% somewhat likely and 4% very likely). In assessing reasons for emigration, familial connections proved to be a major motivator. More specifically, the survey showed that 50% of Slovenian students would emigrate due to family ties (they would be more likely to emigrate from Slovenia if they had a spouse from a foreign country), but 35% of Slovenian students would not consider family ties an important factor for emigration from Slovenia.

When stating the reasons for emigrating from Slovenia, 80% of Slovenian students emphasized that if they emigrated, they would emigrate for work experience. 35% of them stated in their answers that the reason for emigration would also be family or love.

In regard to the destination of emigration, most Slovenian students (57%) would emigrate to one of the countries of the European Union, followed by North America (17%), Eastern Europe (13%), Oceania (9%) and South America (4%). In terms of time spent abroad, most students (48%) pointed out that they would emigrate abroad

for a period of 1-5 years, 22% would emigrate for 5-20 years, 17% for less than a year and only 4% for more than 50 years.

Given that the majority of Slovenian students have expressed a desire to emigrate to one of the countries of the European Union, the belief that they would feel equal in the country of immigration as immigrants is understandable. 40% of Slovene students answered that they would feel equal to other citizens in the country of immigration, and 20% of Slovene students expressed doubts toward this statement.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The United States and Slovenia are geographically very different countries, and despite their size, history, economic and political characteristics, both countries have been involved in different migration flows. Therefore, in both countries, migration-related topics are part of daily media coverage and political decisions. Given that there is a general belief that most people have negative perception and attitude toward migration, as most negative news about migration and migrants is mainly provided by the media, we were interested in the perceptions and attitudes of young people in the US and Slovenia towards migration and migrants. In July 2020, we conducted an online survey among 44 students from the USA and Slovenia, in which we were interested in their perception and attitude towards immigration and immigrants on the one hand, and their opinion on emigration on the other. In terms of perception and attitude toward migration, our research showed that American and Slovenian students are similar in some ways (ex. average understanding of migration policy, immigrants have different experiences), but quite different in many aspects.

The first part of our research was related to the thematic area of immigration and immigrants. The results of the survey showed that most American students have at least one closer experience with the immigration process, meaning that one of their family members or friends immigrated to the United States. On the other hand, most Slovenian students (72%) do not have this experience. When asked if they thought there was a difference between immigrant citizens and those born in the country, all American students answered that in their opinion there was no difference, while Slovenian students were quite divided in their answers, as slightly more than half (52%) stated that there is no difference. Subsequently, 83% of American students emphasized that immigration is a very important political issue, while only 48% of Slovenian students think that immigration is a fairly important political issue. Differences between the groups were also reflected in their opinions on the economic importance of immigration. For example, 47% of American students think that immigration is very important from an economic point of view, while 48% of Slovenian students think that immigration is only fairly important economically. The students' opinions differed greatly from each other on the contribution of immigrants to the country's society. 88% of American students believe that immigrants have a positive contribution to American society, while only

29% of Slovenian students have such an opinion. Most of them believe that immigrants have a somewhat negative (33%) or neutral (33%) contribution to Slovenian society. In their answers, the American students pointed out that, in their opinion, most young Americans have a positive attitude towards immigrants and immigration. A much higher percentage of Slovenian students, however, believed that their generation has a somewhat negative attitude toward immigration. This result goes hand in hand with a survey conducted by the IOM between 2012 and 2014, which showed, among other things, that adult Americans have more positive attitudes toward immigration and immigrants than adult Europeans (How the World Views Migration, 2015). Since the media have a significant influence on people's opinions, we were interested in youths' opinions on the media's impact on migration. The results of the survey showed that all American students believe that the media have a negative impact on people's opinions on migration, while only 28% of Slovenian students have such an opinion.

The second half of our research was related to the field of emigration. We were interested in whether young people in the United States and Slovenia are interested in emigrating, where and for how many years they would emigrate, their top reasons for emigrating from the country, etc. The results of the survey showed that the majority of American students (59%) want to emigrate from the country, but usually only temporarily, for a maximum of 1–5 years. On the other hand, the majority of Slovenian students are not in favor of emigration (52%), and in the case of emigration, the majority also opted for temporary emigration for a maximum period of 1–5 years. In both groups of students, the reasons for emigration were primarily related to professional careers and gaining new work experience abroad, and the decision for emigration in both groups would also be influenced by family reasons. Both groups of students pointed out that if emigrating, they would most likely choose one of the European Union countries, and in their answers, American students pointed out that, in their opinion, they would not feel equal to other citizens in another country, while a large proportion of Slovenian students expressed the opinion that they would feel equal to other citizens in another country and that they would have the same rights.

Finally, it should be noted that the survey was conducted on a relatively small sample of students (44), so the results of the survey cannot be fully generalized to the entire youth population. To this end, it would be necessary to conduct research on a significantly larger sample, which could confirm or refute some of the results we presented with our research.

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