

Lukšič-Hacin, Marina and Jernej Mlekuž (eds.). 2009. *Go Girls! When Slovenian Women Left Home*. Ljubljana: ZRC Publishing House. 152 pp. Pb.: €13.00. ISBN: 9789612541705.

Go Girls! When Slovenian Women Left Home is a recent addition to migration studies in Slovenia. The volume was edited by Marina Lukšič Hacin and Jernej Mlekuž and is comprised of four contributions and a short introduction. It is an inspiring volume, bringing attention to the issue of migrations as gendered social phenomena. The main aim of the contributors is to shed light on the migration of Slovenian women as an integral part of migration phenomena, one which has been continually overlooked. Contributors argue that women have been hidden from history – both in the construction of national memory, their role in the history of Slovenian emigration and in Slovenian migration studies in general.

In the introduction by Jernej Mlekuž we read: ‘For a long time, researchers of “Slovenian emigration” ... understood migration as a single-gender occurrence. Women were most often invisible, absent’ (p. 12). He also argues that migration studies in Slovenia focused almost exclusively on studying ‘Slovenian emigration’ as a national issue, even institutionally placed at the Institute of Slovenian Migration Studies (p. 13). This stance however, is highly problematic as the editor in his generalisation bluntly neglects the relatively large body of migration research by Slovenian scholars who are not affiliated with the institute. This neglect is unfortunately quite apparent even in some of the volume’s chapters; for example, in the chapter on Slovene migration in Argentina, several older and at least two recent major studies on the topic were omitted.

Mlekuž also argues that ‘noticeable changes occurred in the new millennium’ (p. 12) and lists several projects at the institute with a strong focus on the gendered aspect of migration. Here the editor usurps the advancement of migration studies to the institute and fails to identify those studies that directly focused on women migrants, their migration experiences or their role in immigrant communities. Even though I absolutely agree that the gendered aspect of migration has received (too) little attention, the uninformed statement that ‘there were exceptions but those exceptions were for the most part blind to the gendered aspect of migration’ (p. 12) is inaccurate and misleading.

The first chapter by Marjan Drnovšek, entitled “Slovenian girls, stay at home!”, provides a rich historical overview of women emigration from Slovenian ethnic territory and in-depth analysis of the concealment of the phenomena. The author argues that Slovenian history (including the history of migration) is overwhelmingly male. Women emigration, though plentiful, was either discouraged by strong patriarchal voices in newspapers and in churches, or was overlooked by historians who reproduced patriarchal gender relations. Drnovšek’s accounts on women (labour) migrants and the socio-cultural consequences of women migration are enriched with personal stories of Slovene maids, wet nurses, servants, housekeepers, cooks, prostitutes etc. who, in periods between early modern times and the mid-20th century left for Italy, Egypt, Germany, western Europe and across the Atlantic. He focuses particularly on women migrants in the USA and on the efforts to constrain women emigration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Warnings against

the emigration of women appeared in newspapers, claiming that such endeavours clashed with women's traditional role in patriarchal society and resulted in immorality. The chapter also addresses socio-cultural changes, the women's movement and emancipation as the results of migration.

In the second contribution, entitled "Man is an idea, woman is matter; man is a head, woman is a heart", Marina Lukšič Hacin explores gender dichotomy as a result of socialisation and intercultural processes, and the role of patriarchy in women emigration from Slovenia. The author asserts that the memory and achievement of Slovene women emigrants have been concealed throughout history and overlooked in Slovene migration studies. 'One of the most important mechanisms for the production and reproduction of a patriarchal or androcentric construction of reality is a historic (national) memory that excludes women' (p. 63).

Patriarchal power relations have profoundly marked emigration from Slovenian territory as well as organisations, activities and daily life of migrants. However, patriarchal relations did not always persist among migrants. Among early 20th century migrants to the USA, traditional, patriarchal gender relations were partly deconstructed. The perception of a passive role of women in public life was substituted by perception of more independent, educated women taking up active role in the society.

In contrast, in the chapter "Housewife, wife, and mother. Three roles that the Creator ensconced in women's hearts", Jernej Mlekuž argues that among post-WWII Slovene refugees in Argentina, patriarchal gender relations persisted and even became constitutive parts of the immigrant community. He analysed representations of women that reflect a strong Roman Catholic and anti-communist ideological position. Women are represented primarily as wives and mothers, whereas their principal role is seen in maintaining language, culture, Slovene identity and Roman Catholic values and transferring them to the children.

The final chapter, by Mirjam Milharčič Hladnik, entitled "Long live America, where women are first!", explores the self-representation of Slovene women migrants in USA. The author presents excerpts from life stories that were collected among Slovene women migrants in the USA. With the use of examples, this inspiring chapter discusses the theoretical background of migrations as gender-marked processes. It also offers an excellent methodological discussion on the role of biographical techniques that left an unmistakable mark on gender and migration studies.

The volume successfully combines different disciplinary perspectives on different migrations and provides a clear focus on their gendered aspects. It also provides a methodological discussion on research strategies that enable the development of such a perspective. Most of all, it clearly demonstrates that migration studies are multifaceted and multigendered phenomena. The contributors propose that migration studies should focus on women migration, not just as 'a matter of supplementing and placing into context previously overlooked events, phenomena, and occurrences, but in fact must be a project of critically sifting through the entire body of migration studies and thereby reproducing gender-determined knowledge' (p. 14).

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