

IZZIVI PRIHODNOSTI

Challenges of the Future

Maj / May 2019
Letnik / Volume 4
Številka / Issue 2
ISSN 2463-9281



ISSN 2463-9281.

Izdajatelj / Publisher: Fakulteta za organizacijske študije v Novem mestu / *Faculty of organization studies.*

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Foodsaving for Sustainable Development: Local Implications of Global Problems

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Abstract

Abstract Purpose and Originality: Food security is becoming an increasingly important issue to governments, world organizations, as well as businesses, non-profit organizations and ordinary citizens. Until recently, it was thought that highly developed countries had not been affected by this problem. However, in the light of the recent economic and financial crisis, this perception has started to change. Food deficiency concerns virtually the whole world. What makes matters worse is the intriguing dichotomy between the fact that millions of people suffer from insufficient access to good quality food and that, on the other hand, every day tons of food is thrown away. Can this problem be solved? How can a local initiative help to solve it? In this article I am going to present some examples of best European practices in the recovery of surplus food, which could bring more sustainable development in the world.

Method: The author of the article has been a member of The Foodsaving Project, which researched the best practices concerning salvaging of food surpluses in four different European countries. The project involved both some theoretical assumptions, as well as research results developed in the course of running the project, such as the analysis of various documents, texts, interviews and observations.

Results: The result of the research is the presentation of the best European practices concerning salvaging food surpluses, especially in Poland.

Society: The presentation of the best practices directly influence the social responsibility, the perception of the problem as well as the domestic and international legal regulations connected to it. It also shows that social responsibility can affect everyday life.

Limitations/further research: The research had a local scope, and the range of the best practices presented is, therefore, limited. There remains a number of unexplored solutions, which can possibly further influence the social responsibility and the environment in this respect.

Keywords: food, food recovery, non-profit organization, global problems, local implications, sustainable development, environment, society.

1 Introduction

Despite the seemingly universal availability of food, the phenomenon of hunger still exist in the world. The food is still being frittered and wasted in each of the production stages - starting from agro production up to final consumers. In developed countries huge mass of food is being wasted at the consumption stage. That means that it is being thrown out, even if it is still fresh and edible for people. In developing countries the situation appears differently - food is being frittered mostly at the end of delivery stage - from farmers to the producers.

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Prejeto: 2. maj 2019; revidirano: 15. maj 2019; sprejeto: 18. maj 2019. /
Received: May 2, 2019; revised: May 15, 2019; accepted: May 18, 2019.

Much less of the products are being wasted in the consumption stage. The wastage in both situations is so significant that during the last several years it became a center of international political and academic debate¹ in the field of food security and resulting from it the food saving. Until now highly developed countries thought, that they do not have to be aware of the food threat (at least, when referring to the majority of the population). However, the economic and financial crisis, which started in 2007 and had its peak in the years 2008-2009 after the fall of the largest US banks. changed this perception, making food poverty a problem not only for underdeveloped and mid-developed countries (Taghreed, de Savigny, 2012), but also for those highly developed. (IFRC, 2013)

Meanwhile in rich countries, the public and the rights creators attention has been aroused by a kind of antithesis: the number of people suffering from hunger is constantly growing, while huge amount of food is being wasted everyday.² It is estimated that in the European Union itself about 88 million tons of food is being frittered yearly, so the average amount per person is 173 kilograms. (European Parliament, 2016)

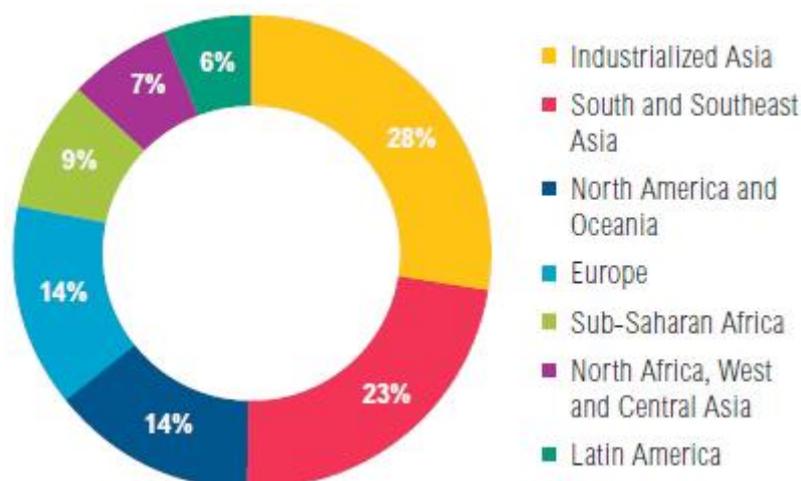


Figure 1. Share of global food loss and waste, (100 % = 1.5 quadrillion kcal)
Data source: Reducing food loss and waste, World Resources Institute, 2013.

About 4 billion metric tons of food is being produced in the world every year, but unfortunately because of using inappropriate ways of harvesting, storage, transportation, distribution and finally the consumption - about 30-50% (i.e. 1,2-2 billion tons) of the resources is being wasted (Fox, 2013). At the same time there are nearly 1 billion of malnourished people in the world. According to many experts, access to healthy and sufficient food in the future will be even harder for poor people. The main reason for that is food prices volatility, restricted food availability, interdependence between commodity markets and the impact of climate change on food production systems. In their opinion, in

¹ e.g. Bittes, Ferrari Filho, Camargo Conceição (2009), Duffy (2002). Engler-Stringer, Harder,(2007). Peers, (2009), Lang, Barling (2012), Riches, (2002).

² e.g. BCFN (2012), EC (2014) FAO (2011), Garrone, Melacini, Perego, (2014), Parfitt, Barthel, Macnaughton, (2010), Schneider, (2012).

2050 it will be a great challenge for the mankind to feed 9,6 billions of people and it will require a thoughtful, multi-faceted global strategy (FAO, 2013). Intensifying the food production is one of many solutions to meet this challenge, but in many cases it is not the best one. It causes an increasing greenhouse gas emissions, which is being regulated by European Union (it is forcing Member States to decrease it in 2020 by 20%, compared to the level from 90') (EEA, 2013).

One of the solutions that would be able to improve this situation is reclaiming the food excesses and its redistribution. It is a solution that responds to the growing need for affordable food in affluent societies. For this purpose many countries have adopted legislation to encourage behavioral changes at the level of the citizens and the business world in order to reduce food waste and improve the overall consumption habits, but also in order to reclaim the products that are still suitable for consumption, but can no longer be sold (Parfitt, Barthel, Macnaughton, 2010). This kind of law regulations are most often implemented by third sector organizations.

This article will present the best examples of this type of organization and solutions from several European countries, including Poland.

2 Theoretical framework

Before we move on to discuss local solutions that can bring a response to the global problem, which is insufficient amount of food and its wastage, we should define few terms. The most important are food security and food wastes.

Neither in the scientific communities, nor in public politics, the one coherent definition for food wastage does not exist. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) distinguishes this term between two main categories: the food loss and food waste (FAO, 2011). The food losses refer to the wastage before the food supply stage - mostly during the sowing, cultivation, harvesting, processing, conservation and at the first few stages of agricultural transformations. The food wastes are the losses resulting from the negligence of retailers and consumers, but also from conscious decisions about getting rid of edible food items. FAO scientific figures are based on products weight. In terms of weight, one ton of grains is equal to a ton of fruits or meat, but these kinds of foods differ significantly in terms of water content and calorific value per kilogram (kcal/kg, see Figure 1). For example, one kilogram of wheat flour contains approximately 3 643 kcal (12% of water), while one kilogram of apples contains about 578 kcal (84% of water). Therefore, the weight measures does not properly reflect the energy in foods that may be consumed by humans.



Figure 2. Contribution of individual food products in the worldwide food loss and waste, 2009.
From: Reducing food loss and waste, World Resources Institute, 2013.

The second key term for this thesis is food security. According to researchers, it is accurate only when people have continuous physical, social and economical access to sufficient, safe and nourishing food to meet their needs and food preferences necessary for healthy and active lifestyle (FAO, 2009). This term has been so far considered mostly for underdeveloped countries, and the global literature is also focused mainly on them (Bittes, Ferrari Filho, Camargo Conceição, 2009, Stewart et al, 2013). But in recent years the number of people who do not have access to safe and nourishing food is growing also in highly developed countries. According to *World Disaster Report* in different European countries, many organizations and public institutions noticed the general growth of needs - not only among already existing, but also in new, exposed to poverty groups of people (IFRC, 2013, Publications Office of the European Union, 2015). The Eurostat data from 2013 shows that 24.5% of the European Union population has been exposed to poverty or social exclusion. In practice it means that people in their everyday's life have to face at least one of the following social situations: they are exposed to poverty because of social transfers (i.e. income poverty), they are deprived of the livelihood or live in household with very low work intensity (Publications Office of the European Union, 2015).

The European Union situation is deteriorating also by the aging population, growing poverty and unemployment. As the increasing demand for food aid for charities in many European countries shows, the lack of food security is often related to the above-mentioned social problems of European Union (IFRC, 2013, Lambie-Mumford, Dowler, 2015).

Food saving and reclaiming its excesses cannot be the only solution to accomplish the sufficient level of food security. Nevertheless for the EU policy makers it is one of the most important fields of intervention. It is often indicated as one of the priorities that are able to reduce the food loss and waste in the same time (Parfitt, Barthel, Macnaughton, 2010, FAO, 2011, BCFN, 2012, Deloitte, 2014). Among other things, for this purpose the European Union in 1987 has started the *Food Distribution Programme for the Most Deprived Persons of the Community* (MDP) (EC, n.d.). Their goal was to make the public acquisition more effective – by reclaiming the excesses of agricultural stock and handing it over as a food aid for the

groups of highest needs in the community³. Unfortunately this program was not able to fare with the declining level of agricultural stock; so in the middle of 1990 it has been modified. In its newer form it included the possibility of purchasing goods on the market and in the subsequent years the program became more of a market system. In following years, especially 2011 and 2012, after the reform of Common Agricultural Policy (PAC) and the German dispute against the European Commission, the excesses had been rapidly utilized. In order to not replace the interventional stocks by purchasing goods on the market, in 2013 the European Council and the European Parliament finally decided to close the MDP. In its place they established the *Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived* (FEAD⁴). Its purpose was to support the actions of EU countries in order to provide material assistance to the most deprived people⁵. Nevertheless this foundation activity is fully based on purchasing the food and other goods from public funds. It does not de facto impact the policy related to the food donations and reusing the food excesses, so it can not be included in policies to promote such actions.

3 Method

The author of this text has participated in the project *Foodsaving: social innovation for the food surplus recovery* (Foodsavingproject, n.d.), which researched the best ways of reclaiming the food excesses in four European countries. The project has been carried out in 2014-2015 by a consortium of three key universities of Milano: Università Luigi Bocconi, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore and Politecnico di Milano. The research was conducted in four key European regions, chosen due to the idea of World Regions Forums⁶ about their comparability and competitiveness. Those regions were: Lombardia (Italy), Catalonia and Madrid (Spain), Baden-Württemberg (Germany) and Rhône-Alpes (France). The goal of the project was to examine numerous initiatives realized by profit and non-profit organizations in order to reuse the food excesses for social purposes.

In this article the theoretical assumptions of the project and the state of research worked out during the project conduction we used, along with following testing methods: analysis of the documents and international literature of the subject, interview and observation.

³ Which in 2010 passed the number of 18 millions.

⁴ *Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived*. Retrieved from <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1089>

⁵ It includes donations of food, clothing and other necessary items for personal use (EC, 2014).

⁶ The first global network of excellence in regional management of global problems such as innovation, competitiveness, health, environmental research.

4 Results

4.1 European legal regulations

Development of general legal regulations concerning the food donations poses many problems. Here are the two most important ones.

The potential donors often get rid of food excesses instead from redistributing it to the food banks or charitable organizations, because because they fear liability risks for the donated food. Currently, by virtue of General Food Law UE (Regulation (EC) No 178/2002) entities engaged in the food sector must ensure that their food products or feed meet the requirements of the food law, depending on the type of activity they perform. In case of food poisoning the producers and distributors would be responsible for this situation and thereby jeopardise their reputation. To prevent such situations in recent years several European countries (France, Greece and Italy) has adopted regulations transferring this responsibility from donors to recipients.

France is the first country in the world that implemented the law prohibiting the supermarkets to utilize the unsold food and forcing them to donate it to charity (Senat, 2015). Creators of this law anticipate that all unsold, but still edible food should be donated to charity or for immediate distributions for the deprived people. When it comes to food that does not meet the food safety requirements, it is to be passed on to agriculture for use for agricultural purposes. According to this legislation, supermarkets in size of 400 thousand meters or more by July 2016 were required to sign an agreement with one or more charity institutions dealing with food redistribution. In case of absence of such contract, they may be imposed with a fine up to 75,000 EUR or two years in prison.

The source of this regulations was a campaign carried out in France by buyers, poverty fighters and those who oppose food waste. The campaign itself and the petition following it were initiated by a young center-right politician, councilor in Paris Courbevoie - Arash Derambarsh, who started his activities from collecting unsold food and passing it on to the needy. The next step was to create an online petition that helped create the basis for the new law. This law de facto establishes a fairly rigid hierarchy of food use for French retailers, as it obliges them to retain the priority of its re-use for human consumption.

The second problem is general misunderstanding concerning two dates visible on the products: „best before” and „use by”. Many people do not see any difference between them and they consider „best before” as an expiration date and not the date of its highest quality, while considering the final expiration date as „use by”. At the same time there is no way for donating products that are past the „best before” date, while still being edible. In European Union there is no regulations concerning the donation of food after „best before” date. Such legislation was introduced in 2012 in Greece, but after the wave of media criticism concerning the provision of the needy products of inferior quality, ultimately withdrawn this

right⁷. On the other hand, Belgium established guidelines for the assessment of the additional lifetime of food after reaching or exceeding the „best before” (Van Boxstael et al., 2014).

Only two EU countries offer tax incentives for donation of food. And here again France and additionally Spain are leading the way. In these countries, companies that are donating food can take advantage of the lower income taxes from legal entities in the amount of 60% (France) (Senat, 2015) and 35% (Spain) of the donated goods. Portugal also has good practices in this area as they have possibilities of even higher taxes allowance. This means that donors can deduct 140% of the food value at the time of donation, on condition that it will be used for social purposes (such as supplying food banks) (Deloitte, 2014).

Additionally, another important legal regulation was implemented in 2008 by Waste Framework Directive (Directive 2008/98/EC) hierarchy of wastes management through prevention, preparation for reusing, recycling, recovery and disposal. However, there are no specific EU guidelines concerning the hierarchy of food use. Priority is given to the redistribution the food to feed people and then to animal feeding and the recovery of energy or nutrients from food components. Unfortunately, for some entrepreneurs it may pose many problems - in some EU countries, such as the United Kingdom, it is more expensive to transfer food excesses than to use it for energy recovery.

4.2 Impact of local initiatives on countries food policy - Poland casus

Poland is one of the countries that legally remained behind the other EU countries for quite a long time. It was only in October 2013, after a few years of struggle between entrepreneurs and food banks, the unfavorable law has been changed. In its previous form it caused the waste of about 500,000 tons of food excesses from stores, instead of supporting those in need. This right is an amendment to the VAT Act, according to which food distributors will be exempt from the responsibility to pay this tax if they donate the food to the needy for free (Pieńczykowska, 2013). Earlier, throwing food into the trash was more profitable for traders, because from every product donated to a charity, tax offices demanded to pay VAT, which was 5.8 or even 23 percent of the product value - depending on the type of food.

Nowadays, both producers, stores, commerce networks and restaurants can donate free-of-wholesome food for free, when the product is approaching its expiry date in a few days. The recipients of the gifts can be only public benefit organizations, and the transfer of each kilogram must be properly documented. Another condition is that food can not be sold again - it must be passed on to the needy free of charge. The effect of this amendment was that many commerce networks signed agreements with charitable organizations. Among them there are

⁷ *It's Official: "Expired Food" Will be Sold in Greek Supermarkets.* Keep Talking Greece, Greek News in English, Blog, Wit & Drama. Retrieved from <http://www.keeptalkinggreece.com/2012/10/12/its-official-expired-food-will-be-sold-in-greek-supermarkets/>

i.a. Tesco and Auchan, which even earlier cooperated with Food Banks at Christmas food collections (Nowiny.pl, 2016).

A very interesting program is STOP Waste, initiated by Carrefour Poland⁸. Their goal is to fight everyday food wastage at many levels of the company's operation and promoting the prevention of wastage among employees, suppliers and customers of the shops network. The program conducts seven fields of action: employee education and the implementation of ecological habits to everyday practice in Carrefour offices and shops, optimization of goods circulation, engaging the suppliers' to avoid the food waste, customer education in the area of wastage prevention, reduction of wastage related to packaging management, optimization of transport and logistics and rationalization of energy consumption. As a result, Carrefour implemented LED lighting in nearly 147 stores in Poland, and in 23 of them - a refrigeration system based on the CO2 factor. Additionally, in 5 stores, the FCH system was introduced. It used the temperature of groundwater, which reduces the consumption of electricity and heat by 50% compared to conventional systems. In 2016, thanks to the management of composting the bio-waste, Carrefour reduced the mass of waste sent to the landfill by nearly 3000 tons, and 100% of super- and hypermarkets in Poland signed agreements concerning the food excessed donations with Food Banks. In addition, the Carrefour Foundation funded the purchase of 16 refrigerated trucks for the Banks⁹.

Another extremely fascinating initiative is Foodsharing, founded in 2012 in Germany by Raphael Fellmer¹⁰. Foodsharing rule is to simply share food with others - in case we have prepared too much of it (e.g. cake or dumplings) or if we made too big surpluses and we will not be able to eat it, because the expiration date will be over - this may apply to for example, pasta, bread or fruits. In 2016, the idea reached the Vistula and quickly spread among the largest Polish cities¹¹.

One more interesting project was launched by Warsaw students from the Warsaw School of Economics - Feed Them Up¹². The idea of this endeavour is to redistribute the food excesses, which many restaurants are getting rid of every day, and hand them over to charitable foundations. The process of transferring surplus food is simple. Restaurants must sign only a donation contract under which they will provide their surplus to Feed Them Up. In the next stage, they will go to a public benefit organization in Warsaw. This is the first initiative of this kind in Poland.

⁸ See *Carrefour*.

⁹ See *Retail Action Plan*.

¹⁰ See *Foodsharing*.

¹¹ See *Alteia*.

¹² See *Feed-them-up*.

Established in 2015, nationwide Polish campaign „Let’s share” is strictly time-limited¹³. It is a social project where everyone who has excess food at home can share it with the homeless. The campaign is being conducted around Easter, because it is the time when Poles waste the biggest number of food. The project has been conducted in 17 Polish cities and its range is continuously increasing.

5 Conclusion

Giving the examples of such initiatives could be never-ending. This article recalls only a few selected and most recent Polish endeavours. Interest in recovering food excesses, both at the national and EU levels, has been so great in recent years that initiatives associated with it appear incessantly. At the same time, they are often very innovative and they arise from bottom-up movements of the citizens themselves. One of them is, for example, Last Minute Market¹⁴ - an Italian project enabled in over 40 Italian cities, aiming at recovering food products and collecting surplus from companies and food productions, vegetables that have been collected and stored in the field. Another bottom-up initiative is the French National Association for the Development of Solidarity Groceries (ANDES Association Nationale de Développement des Épiceries Solidaires)¹⁵, which was established as a protest against food waste and growing number of people that could use it¹⁶, or GESRA¹⁷ - Association of Food and Social Solidarity Stores Rhône-Alpes (Groupement des Épiceries Sociales et Solidaires Rhône-Alpes). It is an innovative network of social and solidarity stores, based on the French law from 1901. Its business goal is to promote, create networks, support, accompany or conduct any activity that serves the management and development of social grocery stores in the Rhône-Alpes region.

Another important social initiative is „Food Not Bombs”¹⁸ - an informal campaign for global peace and social justice. It was initiated in the 80's in the USA during anti-nuclear and anti-military protests. Currently, FNB groups operate in most large cities of the world, and they do not have a hierarchical structure, but are based on voluntary activities. The message behind the campaign is to oppose the current system in which we can witness a huge waste of food in rich countries, destroying its surplus to maintain high prices, commercialization and subordination of the consumption logic in each zone of life, or finally further wars for constantly dwindling resources.

The shortage of food in some way affects the whole world, and this peculiar dichotomy, consisting in the fact that millions of people suffer from malnutrition while every day tons of

¹³ See *Głos Wielkopolski*.

¹⁴ See *Lastminute Market*.

¹⁵ See *Andes*.

¹⁶ Solidarity stores offer low-income consumers 10-20% cheaper food than their normal retail price.

¹⁷ See *Gesra*.

¹⁸ See *JZB*.

food are thrown out became the center of attention of the modern world. The answer to the question of whether this problem can be solved is very difficult. Not surprisingly, the number of undertaken initiatives, at various levels - international, national and local - is so large that it indicates that this problem has become a key issue. Good local practices in a very tangible way affect the social perception of the problem and legislative changes that are slowly occurring in individual countries. Poland is one of the examples of this process. The next years will show whether these initiatives will actually help solve the global problem of food shortages. The key is education - both at the level of the final consumer as well as on entire food production stage and in distribution process. My research is a voice in the discussion about possible solutions to this problem, but there is still much to be done at both local and global levels. And many more areas remain for further research, in terms of good European and global practices as well as legal regulations.

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Povzetek:

Prehransko varčevanje za trajnostni razvoj: Lokalne predpostavke globalnih problemov

Namen in originalnost: Prehranska varnost postaja vedno pomembnejša tema vlad, mednarodnih organizacij kot tudi ekonomskih ter nevladnih subjektov terposameznikov. Do nedavna je veljalo prepričanje, da to vprašanje ne zadeva razvitih držav, vendar se je v luči ekonomske in finančne krize pokazalo drugače. Neizpoljenost prehranskih virov zadeva celoten svet. To stanje poslabšuje tudi dejstvo, da na eni strani milijoni ljudi trpijo za pomankanjem dostopa do kvalitetne hrane, med tem ko na drugi strani dnevno zavržemo tone dobre hrane. To stanje zahteva odgovore na vprašanja, kako lahko to rešimo, kakšna je vloga lokalnega okolja v tem okviru. V članku obravnavamo nekatere primere evropskih dobrih praks na področju uporabe presežne hrane, ki pripomorejo k zagotavljanju trajnosti v svetu.

Metoda: Avtorica raziskave je članica projekta s področja prehranskega varčevanja, ki se je ukvarjal z dobrimi praksami na področju upravljanja s prehranskimi presežki v štirih evropskih državah. Projekt je vključeval tako teoretske predpostavke kot tudi empirične rezultate.

Rezultati: Ključni rezultat je predstavitev najboljših evropskih praks na področju izrabe prehranskih presežkov, s poudarkom na Poljski.

Družba: Predstavitev dobrih praks vpliva na družbeno odgovornost zaznavo problemov in domačo ter mednarodno regulativo v zvezi z obravnavano problematiko. Kaže tudi na to, da lahko družbena odgovornost vpliva na vsakdanje življenje.

Omejitve/nadaljnje raziskovanje: Raziskava ima lokalni fokus na področju dobrih praks, še vedno pa obstaja več drugih rešitev, ki niso bile obravnavane in bi lahko v nadaljevanju vplivale na družbeno odgovornost ter okolje v tem kontekstu.

Ključne besede: hrana, odgovorno ravnanje s hrano, neprofitne organizacije, globalni izzivi, lokalne posledice, trajnostni razvoj, okolje, družba.

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Attitudes Towards National Identity Among Slovak Youth

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Abstract:

Purpose and Originality: This article is dealing with attitudes of young people in North-Western Slovakia towards various intolerant or xenophobic ideas to other nationalities, ethnic groups and races. It also notices the possible differences between the answers of students in gymnasias and in professional high schools. It offers insight into attitudes of future voters in respect to currently very relevant questions of nationalism, tolerance and authoritarianism.

Method: Our research used questionnaire with 15 closed-ended questions as a technique of data gathering. It enabled us the initial insight into the researched attitudes of young people and the possible influencing factors. In this phase of the research we did not set hypotheses although we did have interest in the influence of education and the relation to the authoritarian attitudes.

Results: We found strong attitudes against Roma and immigrants, relatively high but not prevailing attitudes in favor of authoritarianism and Slovak State and relatively weak attitudes against Jews and international integration of Slovakia. These attitudes are all weaker among students of gymnasias.

Society: The attitudes towards tolerance among young Slovaks are of great importance to the future of the society. Today, as xenophobia and intolerance are on the rise, it is crucial to study how is the future generation of voters influenced by these events during their political socialization and how do these processes work.

Limitations / further research: The research is the first phase of wider ongoing research, the methodology of which we keep refined.

Keywords: youth, tolerance, attitudes, minority, immigrants, authoritarian, Slovakia, holocaust.

1 Introduction

This article is dealing with attitudes of young people in North-Western Slovakia towards various intolerant or xenophobic ideas to other nationalities, ethnic groups and races. It also notices the possible differences between the answers of students in gymnasias – offering general education and preparation for university – and in professional high schools – which usually offer less of civic education and history. The support for authoritarian views is also measured. The research is the first phase of wider ongoing research, the methodology of which is being continuously refined.

The research was conducted in Trenčín and Žilina Self-governing Regions in North-Western Slovakia. These are relatively accessible parts of Slovakia from the Trenčín University, but most relevantly these two regions have traditionally the highest proportion of inhabitants with Slovak nationality in Slovakia - over 97% (Statistical Office of the SR, 2019). So the measured data are almost entirely talking about views of Slovaks. Also, these are Slovaks with very little to no direct contact with national minorities or immigrants. This is noteworthy because

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Prejeto: 12. maj 2019; revidirano: 14. maj 2019; sprejeto: 17. maj 2019. /
Received: May 12, 2019; revised: May 14, 2019; accepted: May 17, 2019.

many of the questions we asked in our questionnaire concern attitudes towards these groups of people.

These two regions also are historically the stronghold of Slovak nationalism and authoritarianism (Krivý et al., 2011). Support for the Hlinka Slovak Peoples Party (HSLS) in the 1930s and 1940s and for Movement for Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) and Slovak National Party (SNS) since the 1990s has been significant in these two regions. This is one of the reasons why we chose to conduct research of related values of youth in these regions. To see if we could find the signs of continuity or change among the young generation.

The main goal of this paper is to measure the attitudes of young people in North-Western Slovakia towards various intolerant or xenophobic ideas to other nationalities, ethnic groups and races. It also has some secondary goals, namely to measure the support for authoritarian views, which can be connected to the xenophobic attitudes and to compare the views of students in gymnasia and in professional high schools to see how significant is the impact of education on these issues.

2 Method

Our research used questionnaire as a technique of data gathering. The questionnaire had 45 closed-ended questions in total, but only 15 of them concerned this particular research. The questions had mostly the form of “yes / no / do not know”, in order to make them easy to work with for respondents. However that makes the questions harder and less informing to evaluate compared to, say, the Likert scale.

The population of our research were third year students of high schools in Žilina and Trenčín Regions in North-Western Slovakia. In order to get our data we constructed a stratified sample of the students (Disman, 2018). The sample was designed to represent every district in the Trenčín Region with nine districts and Žilina Region with 11 districts in total. We did however encountered negative response in schools in two districts in each of the regions and the sample does not cover them. The upside is that there is small chance that these missing students would create significant nonresponse bias, since it was the school that did not respond, not individual students. Among the rest of the respondents we had 100% response rate at individual level, since we asked entire classes of students while in school. In this respect we can be confident in reliability of our data.

In order to be able to compare the gymnasia students and the professional high schools students, we overrepresented the gymnasia students in the sample. We gave the questionnaire to classes at twenty gymnasia and twenty technical high schools, both regions represented by ten of each. The sample contained 601 high school third graders in total, 320 of which were male and 280 female. In Žilina Region there were 360 respondents – 4,91% of all third graders. And in Trenčín Region there were 241 respondents – 4,84% of all third graders.

There were 250 students of professional high schools – out of 4977 in total – and 351 students of gymnasia – out of 2179 in total.

The fifteen questions in the questionnaire can be divided into several issue areas, concerning some aspect of our research. The first are attitudes towards international integration as opposed to independence of Slovakia. The second looks at the attitudes towards the place of minorities and foreigners in the Slovak society. The third measures authoritarian or liberal democratic attitudes. The fourth looks at attitudes toward Jews and their perceived place in Slovak society. And the last one concerns the war-time Slovak State and views of Slovak youth towards it as it is an important symbol of attitudes towards national minorities and authoritarianism.

At this point, our research does not have more precisely formulated methodological aim. It does not formulate hypotheses to be tested on the data. It could be done, since we do measure enough variables, but our goal at this point is just to gain initial data on a cluster of issues so that we can see which ones show promise in terms of being well measureable, getting clear answers and which answers show unexpected results. For this, our research at this stage could be criticized for theoretical malnutrition, because the research does not work with any particular theory and its outcomes are merely numerical values for basic questions on the issues of integration, attitudes towards minorities and migrants, authoritarianism and war-time Slovak State. However, because these data were missing so far, obtaining them is significant result. To test hypothesis at this point would tidy up the findings but would also limit the scope of questions and therefore information which we gain out of it. We are however planning to do this in later phases.

3 Results

We visualize the percentage share of different answers of students to each of the fifteen questions by graph, in most cases by a pie chart. In these questions answers are mutually exclusive. In two cases the questions were not mutually exclusive and the visualization uses a bar chart instead. These two questions were also not fully closed-ended and included the possibility of individual answer.

3.1 Attitudes towards international integration as opposed to independence of Slovakia

The results show that young Slovaks are generally in favor of European integration of Slovakia and are not opposed to NATO membership. It is a generation that does not remember Slovakia before joining these organizations fifteen years ago. It is a normal situation, which they accept, are used to, maybe even actively support it and advantages it brings. It does not seem to be in conflict with the national independence and identity for most young people. The share of students that spoke against membership in these organizations was between 15 and 24%.

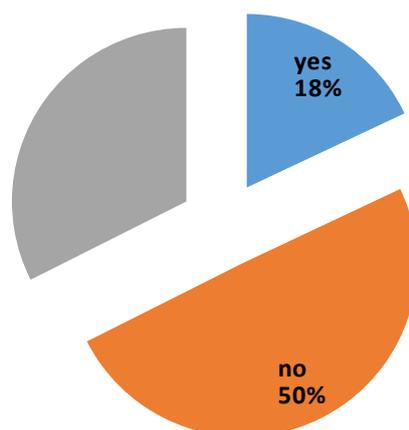


Figure 1. The response to “I would like the Slovak Republic to leave the EU” (source: research)

A somewhat less supportive were young people towards membership in Schengen area. This should be understood in the context of the refugee crisis which was still quite recent in the time of data gathering, which was at the end of the year 2017. In reaction to the crisis there were many radical public appeals, one of which was the proposal by some politicians to leave the Schengen area. This can explain the fact that out of the three integration projects we asked about, Schengen area had the most opponents, which seems counterintuitive among young people.

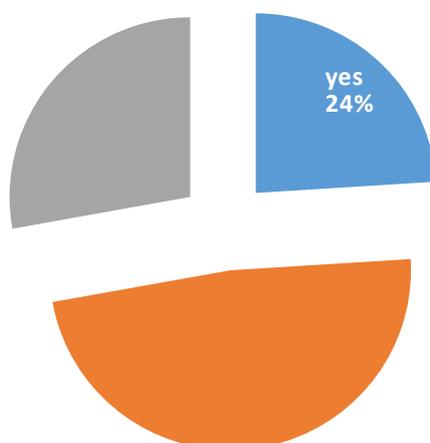


Figure 2. The response to “I would like the Slovak Republic to leave the Schengen area (close the borders and introduce border controls)” (source: research)

The least decisive response was in case of NATO. As this is a military organization, it would not have been unexpected if we found a significantly different reaction compared to that to the EU. But even membership in this organization did not have many open objectors among students, even though NATO has been strongly criticized by far right in Slovakia for many years now (Štefančík et al., 2013, Mesežnikov & Gyárfášová, 2016). But neither do the results show much enthusiasm for the North Atlantic Alliance. It is less popular than the

Schengen Zone or the European Union as a whole, but membership in it is accepted as a fact of life among the students.

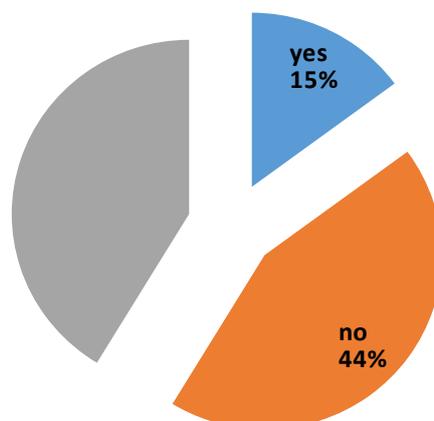


Figure 3. The response to “I would like the Slovak Republic to leave NATO” (source: research)

We also asked a question about an opinion on a proposed view that Slovaks are the only nation that has the right to live in Slovakia. This was offered as a radical exclusionist view of Slovak society to see what would be the reaction of the students to it. Great majority refused it. Only to 14% this was acceptable view, which is not negligible, but still small part of respondents in this part of Slovakia as for example Gyárfášová & Krivý (2013) or Rybář et al. (2017) can testify. Both regions had similar composition of answers to this question.

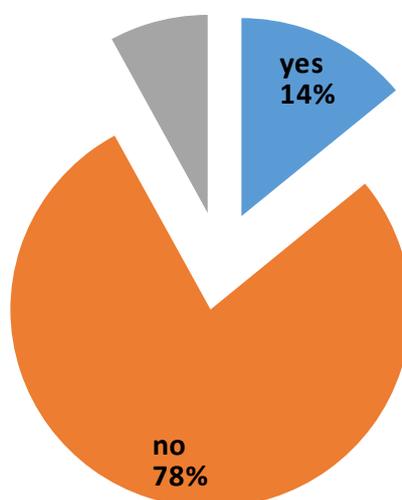


Figure 4. The response to “In my opinion, Slovaks are the only nation that has the right to live in Slovakia” (source: research)

3.2 Attitudes towards the place of minorities and foreigners in the Slovak society

Having said that most young Slovaks do not share the view that only Slovaks should be living in Slovakia does not mean that there is not a significant social distance, even hostility, towards members of national minorities, especially Roma, and refugees or other immigrants (

Štefančík et al., 2013). This is interesting because these are the two regions with hardly any minorities or immigrants present. So, personal experience with minorities is not very common here. These attitudes are mostly influenced by media image of these “other” groups, or by traditional local attitudes towards non-Slovaks (Gyárfášová & Krivý, 2013, Štefančík et al., 2013, Vašečka, 2009).

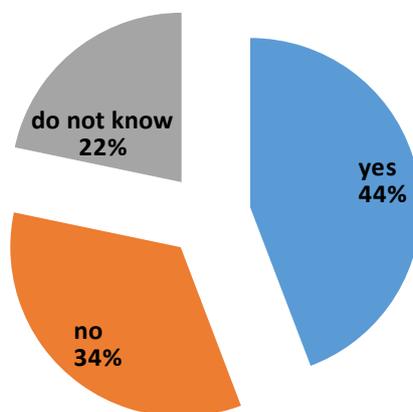


Figure 5. The response to “I think that minorities (homosexuals, Roma people, Hungarians) have too much rights and attention nowadays” (source: research)

This question has a form of provocative statement, in order to counter the socially desirable answer “no”. The outcome shows some tendency towards agreeing with the statement, although it represents less than majority of responses. The weak point of the question is the fact that it asks about minorities in general and offers three different examples, to which respondents can have different attitudes. Therefore we will divide the question up in the future phases of research to gain more reliable data. But generally we can see significant tendency to view the place of minorities in Slovak societies as disproportionately high.

In the responses, there are some differences between regions and between types of schools. Žilina Region has lower level of “yes” answers compared to Trenčín. Type of school also generally shows some difference – answer “yes” was given by 52,8% of students in professional schools while only by 37,89% of students in gymnasia for “yes“. This is quite a significant difference in attitudes depending on type of education and the extent of civic education in it and shows that it does have significant effect on answers.

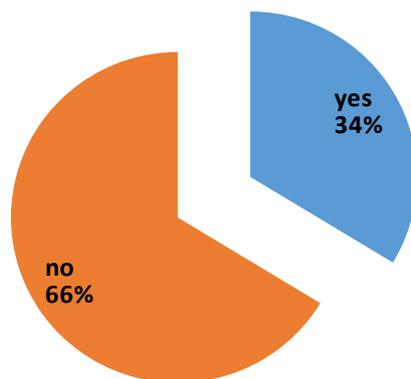


Figure 6. The response to “I have friends among the Roma people” (source: research)

The next question is specifically asking about Roma and friendly ties to them. Roma people are traditionally the only “visible” minority in Slovakia and are also strongly socially excluded. They became some of the first losers of economic transformation, mainly due to the stark reduction low skilled jobs, in which they were overrepresented. They then became scapegoats for many political representatives who blamed them for laziness, criminality and taking advantage of the social system. This became the general simplified image of Roma in Slovak society (Vašečka et al., 2002, Matlovičová et al., 2012). Their inclusion into society is one of the main tasks for the future.

This is why we were interested in how big part of young people has a personal friendly connection to a member of this community. It is however methodologically problematic. The difference between self-identified Roma and people identified as Roma by others is significant as is well documented by Vašečka et al. (2002) and more recently studied by Matlovičová et al. (2012). We already mentioned that more than 97% of people in researched area self-identifies as Slovaks. But some 2 % of them would be identified as Roma by others, compared to roughly 0,5% self-reported Roma. This would be methodologically irrelevant, because only self-identification matters in matter of ethnicity. But it can be relevant for understanding the responses to our question. Otherwise it could be justifiably argued that 34% of students having a Roma friend is as big a share of them as can be expected given the size of Roma population in their regions. But when we take into account that these students would “see” 2 – 3% of Roma in their regions, the 34% actually shows some social distance towards them, although not vast.

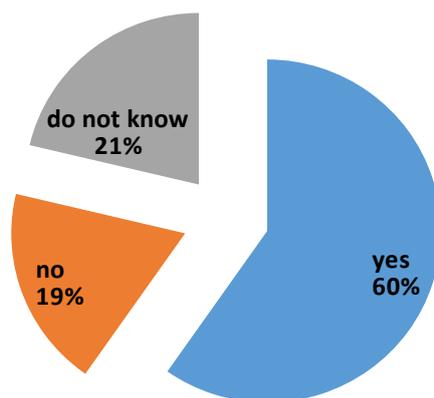


Figure 7. The response to “The Roma are nomadic from nature and thus have a problem to adapt to the way of life of the majority (most of the population)” (source: research)

In the next question we offer the students a provocative statement picturing Roma through a generalizing stereotype with some racial reasoning in it. This image of Roma people is very common in Slovakia and we wanted to measure how big part of young generation would agree with it and how many would refuse it. It says that Roma are nomadic from nature and thus have a problem to adapt to the way of life of the majority. The logical consequence would be that there is no point in helping the Roma since they are maladaptive by nature. It also vindicates the general population from any blame for ongoing social exclusion of large part of the Roma. Indeed, 60% of the respondents agreed to this statement. It was only unacceptable to a small part of youth – 19%, while another 21% did not know how to react to it. These two numbers roughly correspond to the share of students with friends among Roma and hints that the 66% of respondents without any Roma friends are not in this situation for the lack of opportunity.

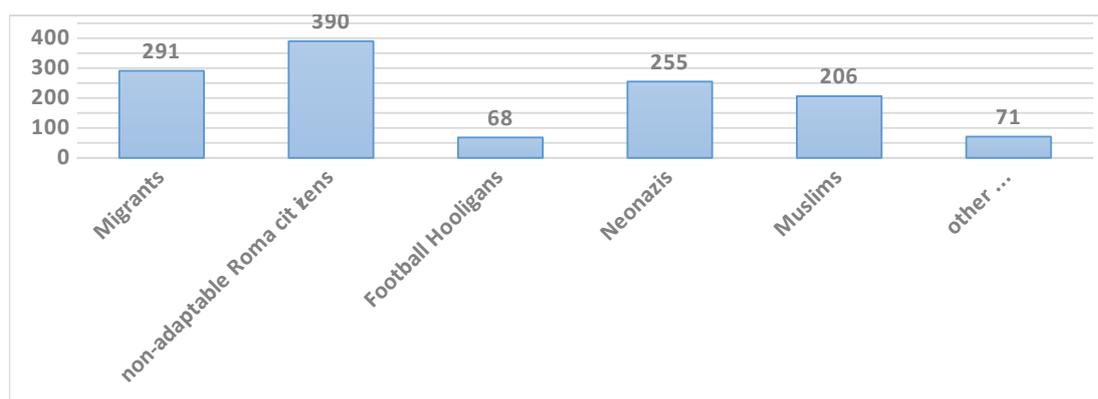


Figure 8. The response to “The security of Slovak citizens is threatened mainly by” (source: research)

We then tried to change the category from Roma in general to “non-adaptable Roma citizens”. It was a media phrase used mainly in the 1990s, which since then became colloquially used. It represents the part of Roma connected to the problematic phenomena. This group was identified by 390 students, or 65,9%, as the main threat to the security of Slovak citizens. In this multiple answer questions it was the only answer agreed on by majority of the students.

The second one were immigrants, chosen by nearly half of the respondents. We remind that the data represent quite secluded regions in a state with very little immigrants. In the context of these views the strong support for far right parties in the two regions is not surprising. However, the neo-Nazis were identified as the third most common threat by 42,4 respondents. The combination of seeing immigrants, non-adaptable Roma and Muslims as the main threat was chosen by 67 respondents or 11,1%.

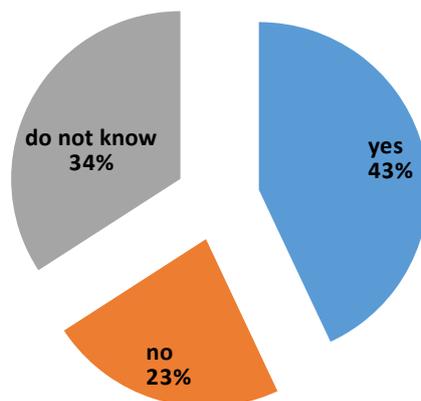


Figure 9. The response to “I distinguish between economic, political and life-saving immigrants” (source: research)

The fear of immigrants hints at likelihood that there are some misconceptions in their perceiving by the students. We wanted to know how many are willing and able to understand the difference between different kinds of migrants. We found that distinguishing among economic, political or life-saving immigrants was only limited. Those who did were the biggest group, but only represented 43% of total. The second most significant group did not know how to react to the question. This mainly shows lack of personal experience with immigrants and of serious information on the matter. All immigrants are often presented as economic in the media and by political elites. The 23% of people that did not distinguish between immigrants were the smallest group.

3.3 Attitudes toward authoritarianism

We were also interested to find out the share of authoritarian respectively democratic attitudes among the students. It is not the main issue of interest in this research but the connection to the attitudes towards minority groups in Slovakia seemed promising.

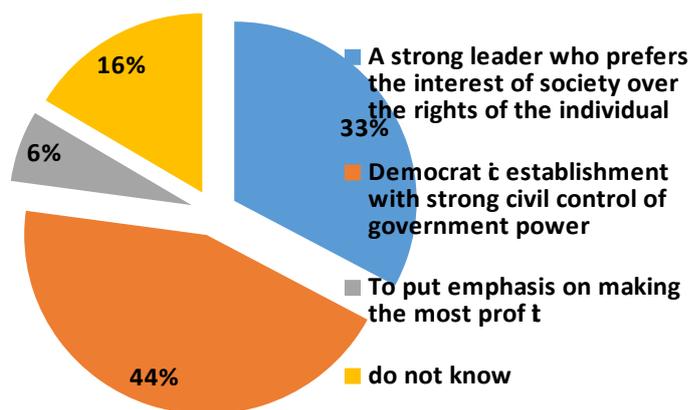


Figure 10. The response to “In order to move forward, society must have” (source: research)

This question was among those with significant difference between the gymnasias and other types of schools. In gymnasias 51% of students had democratic views, compared to 28,5 % of students with authoritarian. In the professional schools 32,8 % of students supported democratic views while 37,6 % supported authoritarian views. In general, the most common answer preferred democratic views, but alarming 33% opted for authoritarian views.

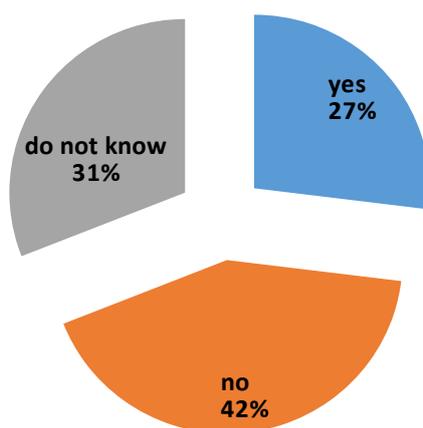


Figure 11. The response to “I think that a long-term government of one party or individual is more favorable to the country than a rotation of governments of different political parties” (source: research)

Similar support of for political plurality was shown in the next question. Rotation of governments of different political parties was favored by 42% of students, compared to 27% in favor of long-term government of one party or individual. This is also not very optimistic result, but the prevalence of attitudes preferring plurality is clearer. In neither of the questions did the attitudes in favor of liberal democratic political system gain majority. In both the authoritarian views were almost as common. These results are unsettling especially in context of high support of intolerant attitudes towards minority groups.

3.4 Attitudes toward Jews and their perceived place in Slovak society

The view of the Jews is measured separately from other minorities, because it demands different set of questions. The Jews are, again, barely present in Slovakia today. That is mainly a consequence of the Holocaust, which wartime Slovak State took active participation in. The same Slovak State is often celebrated by far right politicians as the first Slovak state entity and a positive historic era. Part of this praise often is denial of Holocaust or some of its aspects. The insistence on Holocaust is then interpreted as a “Jewish complot” to cast blame on Slovak State and Slovaks as a people and to use this as a political weapon to dominate the world, Slovak Republic included. We tried to measure these views among the students.

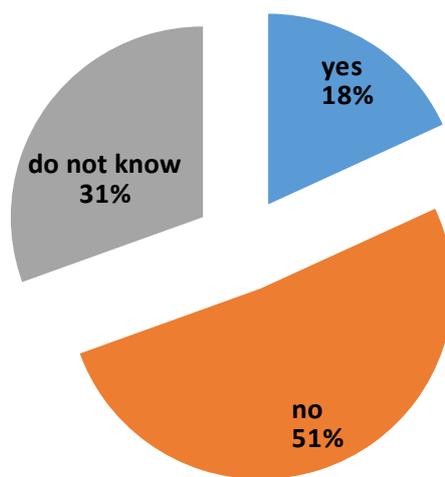


Figure 12. The response to “I agree that the Holocaust did not happen as described in the textbooks and as it is presented by commercial and public media” (source: research)

This was also one of the questions with significant difference depending on being educated at gymnasia or at professional high schools. Among students at gymnasia 14.5% did not agree with the official version of the Holocaust, compared to 58,1% agreeing with it. Among professional high schools 22,8 % did not agree with the official version of the Holocaust, while as few as 40,6% did. In general these numbers are not the most disturbing ones, although 18% of students were prepared to question educational institutions, media, historical research and survivors of the Holocaust. These are likely future voters of far right.

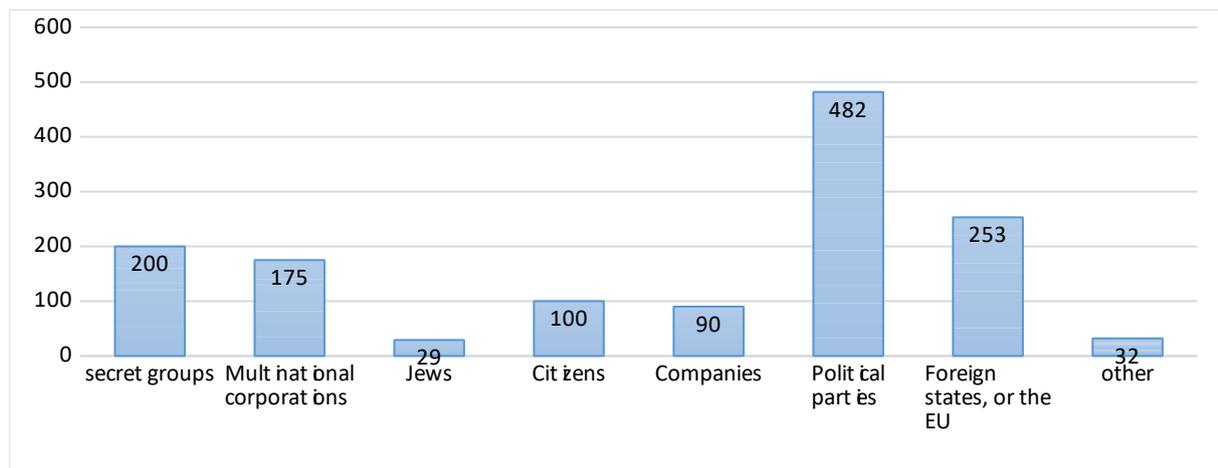


Figure 13. The response to “I think that the decisions about politics and economy in Slovakia are made by” (source: research)

The last question also offers conspiratorial answers. When asked who makes decisions about politics and economy in Slovakia, students could choose multiple answers. Among offered answers there were also “secret groups”, “Jews” or “multinational corporations”, but only very few students - 4,8% - took the bait and responded Jews to it. Multinationals and secret groups were more successful, being chosen by almost a third of respondents. 253 students responded “foreign states or the EU”, which is interesting when we remember that much fewer students want to leave the EU or NATO. The most common answer, chosen by 80,2% of students, was political parties.

3.5 The war-time Slovak State and views of Slovak youth towards it

The last issue area is about attitudes towards the war-time Slovak State and towards its main political representative, Jozef Tiso, who was its only president and was executed after the end of the war.

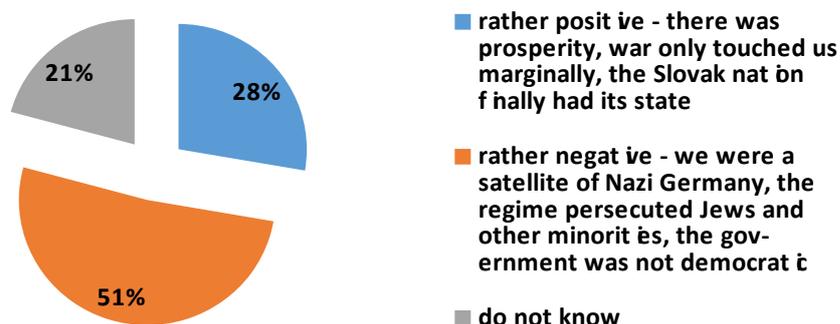


Figure 14. The response to “My view of the war-time Slovak State is” (source: research)

While the share of positive views of the Slovak State is almost the same in both gymnasias (27,6%) and professional high schools (28,8 %), negative views show some difference. In gymnasias, 55,3% of students expressed negative view while in professional high schools it

was only 46,8 %. In general, 51% of students expressed negative attitudes to the Slovak State, which is rather high share when we consider the support this historical era sometimes gets from political leaders, representatives of the church and oral history within Slovak families. Positive view of the State was expressed by 28% of students, which is not surprising, given some of the earlier answers. There was no difference between answers of students in the two regions, which is consistent with virtually all other questions in the research.

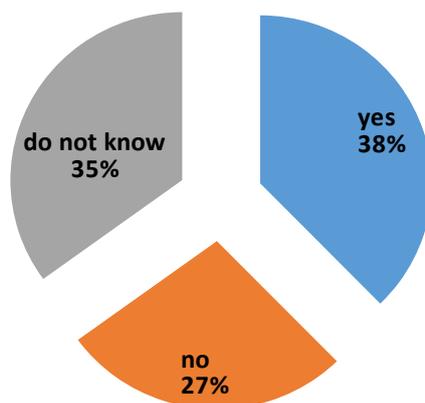


Figure 15. The response to “ThDr. Jozef Tiso is one of the most important personalities in the history of Slovakia” (source: research)

The last question concerns the leading representative of the Slovak State, priest Jozef Tiso. This figure is viewed significantly more favorably than the state itself. It however could have been the consequence of wording of our question, which enables alternative explanations. 38% of students sees him as one of the most significant historical figures of Slovakia, while 27% of students does not.

4 Discussion

The attitudes towards international integration as opposed to independence of Slovakia turned out to be fairly in favor of integration. Better yet, there does not seem to be any such dichotomy. Young people are not much opposed to membership in the EU or NATO, even if their views in other issues seem convincingly nationalistic. There is a minority that would prefer leaving the organizations, but it is limited to 15 – 24%. The most significant inclination towards leaving was in case of Schengen Area. Slovakia is viewed as part of the world and other people than Slovaks belong there as well.

Attitudes towards the place of minorities and foreigners in the Slovak society were less encouraging. Especially in case of Roma population of Slovakia. Approximately two thirds of the students did not have friends among Roma, considered them maladaptive from the nature, and viewed those among Roma who would not adapt as the main threat to the safety of Slovak society. Second to Roma in posing a threat were considered immigrants, even though opportunities to gain personal experience with actual immigrants are scarce in these regions.

The third group of questions measured authoritarian against liberal democratic attitudes. The findings were less alarming than attitudes to Roma and immigrants, but still far from satisfying. Only 42 to 44% of students were expressing attitudes supporting liberal democratic political system. Even though this was the most frequent answer, it was not too greater than the group of students expressing authoritarian attitudes, which ranged between 27 and 33%. This is significant part of population being in favor of changing the basic principles according to which political system works. Together with previous cluster of questions they show huge electoral potential for the extreme right among youth in the studied regions.

The fourth battery of questions looked at attitudes towards Jews and their perceived place in Slovak society. We found out that 18% of students do not believe that they are being told the truth about the Holocaust. Some 11% considers Jews to be making decisions in Slovak politics and economy. These numbers correspond to the regional support for the extreme right, so they are not a surprise.

The last small group of questions concerned the war-time Slovak State and views of Slovak youth towards it. Some 51 percent of students stated a negative view of this part of Slovak history, while 28% did the opposite. The picture was different when it came to evaluation of president Tiso as one of the most significant personalities in Slovak history – 38% agreed, while 27 disagreed. The first question, however, is more reliable. It shows that majority of students can be critical even to problematic and controversial parts of national history.

We found general tendency towards greater tolerance, democratic values, critical view of the Slovak State and its role in the Holocaust of Jews among the students in gymnasia when compared to other kinds of high schools. This suggests that emphasis on education of history and civic education, which is greater in gymnasia does have significant and measureable influence on attitudes of young people in these areas.

The regional differences turned out to be very weak and inconsistent across different issues. These small differences are easy to explain by structural similarity of Trenčín and Žilina regions.

5 Conclusion

In this article we studied attitudes of students of the third year of high school in North-Western Slovakia towards different groups of national minorities, our own national history, and integration to international organizations. National identity and its many aspects are formed during political socialization. This is also the time of high risk of radicalization for young people. That is why research of these attitudes is important, especially in turbulent political times such as these.

We found that attitudes of young people can vary a great deal even across issues which seem close and interconnected. Some of these attitudes are so widespread, they are not far from being a social norm among young people – such as attitudes towards Roma people.

Approximately two thirds of the students did not have friends among Roma, considered them naturally maladaptive, and viewed those among Roma who would not adapt as the main threat to the safety of the Slovak society.

But few attitudes are so widespread. In case of authoritarian vs. democratic views, or in case of attitude to the war-time Slovak State, the two opposing views are being comparably strong. Students are more in favor of democratic values compared to authoritarian ones, but even the democratic ones are only held by 42 – 44% of them. In case of Slovak State, 51% has a negative view of it, while 28% is viewing it positively. These attitudes show that while greater part of students supports the liberal democratic order of Slovakia, another part – and not much smaller - would gladly change it for stricter regime and looks favorably on historical instances when such a thing happened. All of these data demand further study and research, since they are signaling a serious problems in how great part of young people perceps their society and the values it stands on.

The third cluster of issues are the ones in which attitudes do not cause alarm. These are issues such as membership in international organizations or the attitudes towards Jews in the society. In the first, there is a group of students, that would prefer leaving the organizations, but it is limited to 15 – 24%. In the second, 18% of students do not believe that they are being told the truth about the Holocaust by the schools and the media and some 11% considers Jews to be making decisions in Slovak politics and economy. These numbers are not ideal but look far less alarming when compared to attitudes towards Roma or immigrants.

There was only so much that we hoped to found out at this stage of our research. We formulated our research design respectively. We did not formulate hypotheses, although we did have some defined areas of interest. Other than the attitudes we measured in each of the fifteen questions, we were also able to evaluate the influence of education and region. In case of regional differences we found no conclusive influence, since the results in both regions were close and did not vary in any systematic way. In case of different types of high schools we could however recognize a clear pattern. Among the students in gymnasia we found general tendency towards greater tolerance, democratic values, critical view of the Slovak State and its role in the Jewish Holocaust, when compared to other kinds of high schools. Emphasis on education of history and civic education, which is greater in gymnasia seems to have significant and measureable influence on attitudes of young people in these areas.

We did identify several ways in which to improve our research in its later phases. Most of all - there is still much room for improvement in formulation of questions in the questionnaire. We are also adding other techniques of data gathering into our research, to make our findings more robust and informative. And finally, we do aim to create a stricter research design built around testable hypotheses and more firmly set in a theoretical framework.

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Povzetek:

Odnost do nacionalne identitete med Slovaško mladino

Namenin izvirnost: Članek obravnava odnos mladih na severo-zahodu Slovaške do različnih ksenofobnih in netolerantnih idej v razmerju do drugih nacionalnosti, etničnih skupin in ras. Zaznava tudi možne razlike med dijaki gimnazij in drugih srednjih šol ter ponuja uvid v razmišljanje bodočih volilcev v odnosu do trenutno aktualnih vprašanj vezanih na nacionalizem, strpnost in avtoritarnost.

Metoda: Raziskava temelji na vprašalniku s 15 zaprtimi vprašanji. To nam je mogočilo osnovni uvid v odnos mladih in razumevanje potencialnih faktorjev, ki na to vplivajo. V tej fazi raziskovanja hipoteze niso bile zastavljene, čeprav smo se osredotočali na vpliv izobrazbe in odnos do avtoritarnosti.

Rezultati: Rezultati kažejo na močan negativen odnos do Romov in imigrantov, relativno visok, vendar ne prevladujoč odnos v korist avtoritativnosti in in Slovaške države ter relativno šibek negativen odnos do Židov in mednarodne ingracije Slovaške. Vsi ti odnosi so šibkejši med dijaki gimanzij.

Družba: Odnos do tolerantnosti med slovaško mladino je izjemnega pomena za prihodnost družbe. V času, ko sta ksenofobija in netolerantnost v porastu je ključno proučevanje vpliva preteklosti na bodočo generacijo volilcev, ter na njihovo politično socializacijo.

Omejitve/nadaljnje raziskovanje: Raziskava je v začetni fazi ter del širšega raziskovalnega projekta, katerega metodologija je še v fazi prilagajanja.

Ključne besede: mladi, tolerantnost, odnos, manjšina, imigrantje, avtoritarnost, Slovaška, holokavst.

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Novo mesto after the article has been accepted for publication.

Youth Unemployment in Slovakia and in Slovenia

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Abstract

Purpose and originality: The purpose of this paper is to advert the state of youth unemployment, with comparison in two countries, Slovenia and Slovakia.

Method: We analysed unemployment of young population. In our paper we used quantitative analysis and comparative method which we deal with comparison of two countries and percentage of youth unemployment. Data were collected through document collection from available literature and mostly from available internet portals such as statistic office of Slovak republic and statistic office of Slovenia. We collected as much data as it was possible in general point of view.

Results: We analysed and compared those data to get wider point of view on the youth unemployment. In our paper we deal with hypothesis which says that youth unemployment within countries is higher than general unemployment and the second hypothesis says that Slovakia has higher percentage of unemployed young people. We confirmed our hypothesis in the paper.

Society: We strongly believe that this analysis will help to understand the state of youth unemployment, with which obstacles has to deal with and also if there are differences between countries.

Limitations/ further research: We suggest further research on possibilities for young population, if they use possible and available supports and grants. For further research we suggest to analyse “Guarantees for youth” which are supposed to support young people aged 25-30 to activate their career on labour market.

Keywords: youth, unemployment, Slovakia, Slovenia, Novo mesto, Dolny Kubin, European Union.

1 Introduction

The problem which we see is that youth unemployment is one of the most challenging issue nowadays within European Union. The main issue is how will be looks like the European future. The question had been asked because when young people will have lack of experience, or worse, no experiences and no jobs that can seriously influence the economics of European union countries. The negative impact will not only be on economic level, but also on the social and political level. When young people feel unnecessary that can cause social problems such as criminality, violence, suicides, or no improvement of themselves. When we are

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Prejeto: 4. maj 2019; revidirano: 10. maj 2019; sprejeto: 17. maj 2019. /
Received: May 4, 2019; revised: May 10, 2019; accepted: May 17, 2019.

dealing with negative political impact it can cause demonstrations, coups in governments but also lack of democracy. On the economic level we are dealing with stagnation of economic growth because young generation is supposed to be enhancing economic growth.

With our paper we wanted to advert on necessity of employable young population. Young population is supposed to be the engine which drives the economy. That is why we consider this issue as very current and it is necessary to be solved.

The aim of the thesis is to point out the current youth unemployment on the example of two European Union countries, with closer look at the unemployment in Slovenia and Slovakia. The main goal of this paper is to bring the state and view of the current state of youth unemployment and thereby contribute to science for the professional, but also for the lay public. We analysed this issue because of the great need to solve this problem. In our paper, we built two hypotheses. The first states that unemployment as an overall indicator in Slovakia and Slovenia is lower than the unemployment of young people in these countries. Secondary hypothesis says that the unemployment is lower in Slovenia than in Slovakia.

We have decided to make the hypotheses based on the decision of the European Commission, which says about support and guarantees for young people. These “Guarantees for Youth” were created to increase dynamics of youth employment. For dynamics of youth employment is also important how young people are qualified. The qualification of young people is important, but some fields of study, which every year qualified thousands of graduates, cannot respectfully respect the demands of labour market. We meet situations where there are a large number of graduates who are not able to apply in their field because there are not enough vacancies for them. On the other hand, we meet the demand of companies for specific fields of study for which there are not enough qualified candidates for the vacancies. Another problem we encounter is short-term or long-term job placement, finding work abroad etc.

These reasons led to the examination of this issue. In the paper we will not deal with economic indicators, because this paper should not point on the economic aspect of the problem, but we devoted to data that confirm or not our hypotheses.

2 Method

In our paper, we used methods we considered as the most relevant for the research. Among them were quantitative method, comparative and descriptive methods. Last but not least, we used theoretical research in which we used document collection and its following analysis. We chose to use this method mainly because of the use of results and analysis as a contribution to the science. The aim of the paper is also to compare the situation in Slovenia and Slovakia, so we very actively using comparative method. Due to the analysis of unemployment, we used a quantitative approach, using the description and analysis of phenomena we found out. (Lincényi, 2017, pp.27).

The data we used was obtained by collecting data from internet portals of the statistical offices of the Republic of Slovenia and also by the statistical offices of the Slovak Republic. We have supplemented these data with available literature and available information on the European Union's website or the European Commission website and documents. During the collecting data, it was important to first clarify the theoretical indicators, respectively to clarify key and research terms. These terms are defined on the basis of internationally recognized definitions. Defining terms as unemployed, employed, working, young, or economically inactive has been very important for our research, especially when searching for and collecting data and then comparing them. It was important to realize and define what we are researching and in what time frame to get data which were comparable. We analysed the data to get a wider picture of the unemployment situation in the countries concerned and, in particular, to get a picture of youth unemployment in Slovakia and Slovakia. In the article, we decided to investigate unemployment over the past two years, so we could bring the most recent possible outcome. Of course, we have also had to deal with data older than two years for correct presentation and research, but we had used the comparative method and analysis over the past two years, and so 2017 and 2018.

In the first part of the paper, we have defined the terms, for closer and more thorough clarification of the examined one. For research purposes, we used also descriptive method. We explained why we decided to devote these two countries to comparing youth unemployment. In the next section, we brought the results of the research, which we processed through the available data, especially from the Internet portals and the annual reports. We had to search for and process these data after monthly reports to get the most relevant result. In the last part, we discussed the research, where we brought possible reasons for the research results.

3 Results

According to the definitions given in the Slovak Statistical Office with European validity, working persons are over 15 years old and are those who have worked for at least one hour during previous reference week, and any work for any remuneration and thus for wages, remuneration, salary whether they worked for profit. Thus, in this definition of the term “working”, this is both full time and half-time work, but also occasional or seasonal work. According to this definition, a worker is also a person who works abroad within one year, but also a person who works on the basis of activation works and agreements. A worker is considered to be a person who has a job but could not do it because of health reasons, vacation or maternity leave, participation in training, strikes, or lockout. Conversely, a worker is not a person on long-term unpaid leave and a person who is on parental leave (www.slovak.statistics.sk, 15.4.2019).

According to the definitions given in the documents of the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, which is in compliance with Commission Regulation (EC) No 1782/2003. 1897/2000 is an unemployed person or persons who are between 15 and 74 years of age and

meet three conditions simultaneously. The first condition is that during the reference week, did not perform, respectively. they do not have any paid work; simultaneously they have to fulfill conditions, that during last four weeks they were actively seeking for a job, or they have already found the job and will start within 3 months. At the same time, they must meet the third condition such as the unemployed person is able to start working within two weeks (www.slovak.statistics.sk, 13.4.2019).

When we look at the definition of an economically inactive population, in layman's terms, it is the opposite of an unemployed person. Indeed, economically inactive people are persons or person from 15 years of age and in the reference week within he or she was able to work, he or she did not seek actively for work or was unable to start working within two weeks. As a rule, these persons are old-age people or disability pensioners, persons preparing for work, taking care of the household, participating in a retraining course, being on parental leave as well as persons wanting to work, but not looking for a job because they do not believe they will find work that rewards them appropriately is so-called discouraged. If the paper talks about the level of economic activity in general or the level of economic activity by age, it is the percentage of the economically active population and the population aged 15 and over expressed as a percentage, or in a certain age group of the population in the same age group. The employment rate is also expressed as a percentage but expresses the share of persons aged 15 and over who work. The rate of unemployment that we are examining in our paper was also shared by the proportion of unemployed in the economically active population, which is expressed as a percentage.“ (www.slovak.statistics.sk, 15.4.2019).

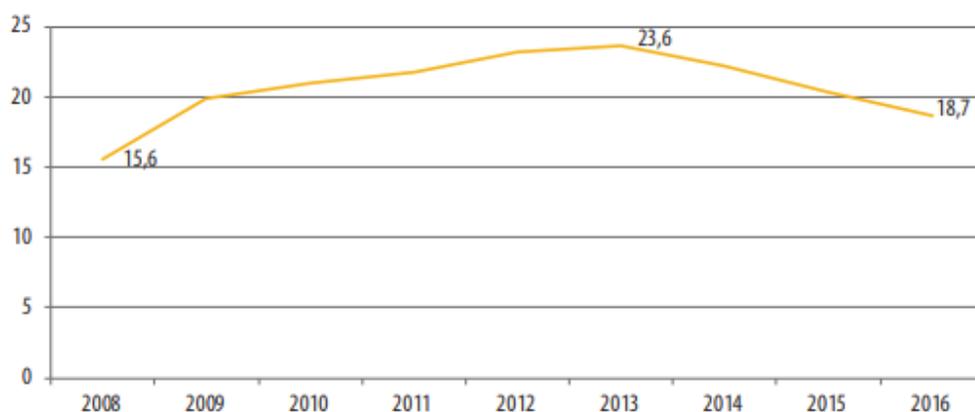


Figure 1: Youth unemployment in the European Union (15 – 24 years old) (source: Audit reports)

This graph represents the percentage of youth unemployment in the European Union from 2008 till 2016. When we talk about young people, in our research we worked with data where the young represented a group from 15 to 24 years. According to the above graph, the youth unemployment rate was 18,7% in 2016 and thus 4,9 percentage points (p.p.) below the maximum level reached in 2013 when it reached 23,6%.

The following graph shows the research results of a thesis that says that unemployment as an overall indicator in Slovakia and Slovenia is lower than the unemployment of young people in these countries.

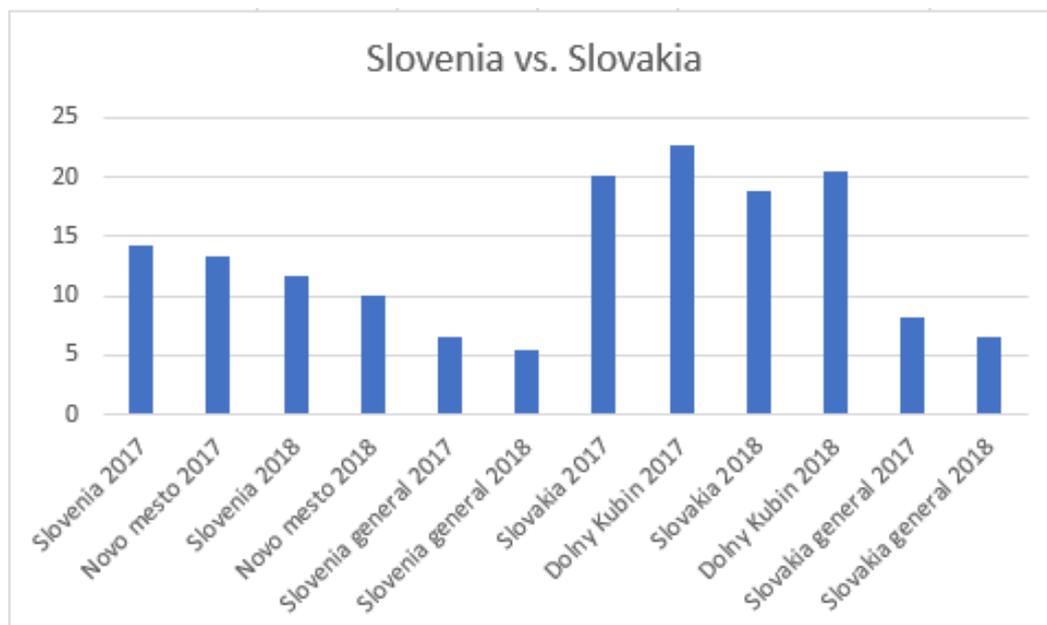


Figure 2: General unemployment, youth unemployment and comparison of two Slovakia and Slovenia, and the comparison of Novo Mesto (SL) and Dolny Kubin (SK) (source: research)

This graph shows the results of our research on unemployment, youth unemployment and comparison of two places for a more detailed illustration of youth unemployment as such. In our research, the figures say that Slovenia had in 2017 14,17% youth unemployment, while in the city of Novo mesto was 13,4 %. Slovenia in 2018 11,7% youth unemployment, and in Novo mesto in 2018 it was 9,94%. Slovenia in general in 2017 has 6,6% unemployment and in 2018 it was 5,4%. In Slovakia in 2017 the youth unemployment was 20,2% and city of Dolny Kubin in 2017 it was 22,62%. In Slovakia in 2018 the youth unemployment was 18,76% and in Dolny Kubin 20,44%. Slovakia in general in 2017 has 8,1% unemployment and in 2018 it was 6,6%.

The second hypothesis states that the unemployment is lower in Slovenia than in Slovakia. To bring correct result we used for this Ttest and express a greater difference between two states.

In numbers, the results are as follows:

Table 1: General unemployment, youth unemployment and comparison of two Slovakia and Slovenia, and the comparison of Novo mesto (SL) and Dolny Kubin (SK) in 2017 and in 2018 (source: research)

	Slovenia	Slovakia
Year 2017	Youth unemployment 14,17%	youth unemployment 20,2%
	General unemployment 6,6%	General unemployment 8,1%
Year 2018	youth unemployment 11,7 %	youth unemployment 18,7 %
	General unemployment 5,4%	General unemployment 6,6%
	Novo Mesto	Dolny Kubin
Year 2017:	youth unemployment 13,4 %	youth unemployment 22,62 %
Year 2018:	youth unemployment 9,94 %	youth unemployment 20,44 %

4 Discussion

The results of the research we have done shows us that youth unemployment is a major problem for society as a whole. That is why we have decided to examine this issue from the point of view of two states, namely Slovenia and Slovakia. We have decided to explore these two countries because they have been often mistaken as the equal for their similar names, and we want to point out that, despite the name, these two countries cannot be perceived equally. As well as the results of quantitative research, in Slovenia, youth unemployment is about 6 percentage points lower than in Slovakia.

The aim of our paper was to contribute to the debate on youth unemployment in Europe and whether this topic is important. Some authors, such as Artner (2013) they say that youth unemployment is not so much a problem than the elderly unemployment. The aim of our contribution to the science was not to confirm whether to deny this theory, but to support the debate and the issue of youth unemployment, and thus to point out the need to address this problem, which has been proven to be up to date on the basis of research. Based on the results of our research, we dare say that, although two similar countries may seem to have similar results, this is not the case. We wanted to point out that unemployment is not a topic that should be taken on a light topic, as it affects several other aspects and factors of people's lives. Obviously, this was one of the reasons why the leaders of the European Union decided to devote the whole EU summit to just youth unemployment. This summit in July 2013 should not only solve the fact that unemployed young people are expensive for society, but also that it has a major impact on their future and on the future of the EU as such. In 2016, nearly 4.2 million young people were unemployed in Europe. The worst of the EU are Spain (14.7%), Greece (11.7%) and Croatia (11.6%). (Audit reports, 2018, p. 21- 23) Since 2013, when there

were the highest number of unemployment, the situation is getting better, but this does not mean that the problem is solved as the youth unemployment rate is still more than 2 times higher than the total unemployment rate of 2016 in the EU28, it is 7,5% (Audit reports, 2018).

The hypotheses we have set and that unemployment as an overall indicator in Slovakia and Slovenia is lower than youth unemployment in these countries; and the secondary hypothesis which says that unemployment is lower in Slovenia than in Slovakia; we consider them as confirmed based on our researched results. We can see that youth unemployment in Slovenia and Slovakia in the last two years is higher than the total unemployment in these countries and also the overall unemployment rate in Slovenia is lower than in Slovakia.

We perceive the problem of not respecting the educational departments on the market demand and therefore the low applicability on the labor market of secondary or university graduates. Education is an important factor in getting a job. Employers are constantly looking for new employees, but they are lacking in quality candidates, for example from the automotive sector, automation and IT sectors. In Slovakia it is quite difficult to obtain and find doctors or health care professionals. The question of the salary assessment of the given positions remains. We leave this debate open, as several new issues arise in this matter, and further research is needed to answer them.

The problem that we perceive and which we have examined, and thus the unemployment of young people, we consider to be the current problem and it is necessary to solve. This is also confirmed by the decision of European institutions on the so-called "Guarantees for Youth". This support program should encourage young people to find a work and thus start their careers. The aim of our article and research was to contribute to the debate on youth unemployment and to contribute by looking at the comparison of the two EU countries, Slovenia and Slovakia. For further research, we recommend just exploring how and if the support system "Guarantees for Youth" is doing well" (www.consilium.europa.eu 17.4.2019), if this program encouraging young people to apply them to the labour market. For this initiative, the EU has agreed to allocate 6 million Euros, in particular youth unemployment. (www.consilium.europa.eu 16.4.2019)

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Povzetek:

Nezaposlenost med mladimi na Slovaškem in v Sloveniji

Namen in izvirnost: Namen članka je bilo razumeti stanje nezaposlenosti med mladimi v Sloveniji in na Slovaškem.

Metoda: analizirali smo nezaposlenost med mladimi na podlagi kvantitativne metode ter primerjalne metode, osnovane na primerjavi dveh držav. Podatki so bili zbrani na podlagi dostopnih statističnih informacij za Slovaško in Slovenijo.

Rezultati: Analizirali in primerjali smo podatke na podlagah katerih smo dobili vpogled v nezaposlenost mladih. V članku zagovarjamo hipotezo da je nezaposlenost med mladimi v državah višja od splošne stopnje nezaposlenosti. Ter v konkretnem primeru, da je nezaposlenost med mladimi na Slovaškem višja kot v Sloveniji. Obe hipotezi sta bili na podlagi študij primerov potrjeni.

Družba: Predpostavljamo, da ta analiza pomaga razumeti stanje nezaposlenosti med mladimi, ovire s katerimi se srečujejo in s tem povezane razlike med posameznimi državami.

Omejitve/nadaljnje raziskovanje: Nadaljnje raziskovanje bi bilo smotno v smeri razumevanja možnosti, katere imajo mladi na področju zaposlovanja, kot so nadomestila in spodbude. Med drugim tudi »garancije za mlade«, ki naj bi podpirale mlade med 25 in 30 letom starosti pri njihovi aktivaciji na trgu dela.

Ključne besede: mladi, nezaposlenost, Slovaška, Slovenija, Novo mesto, Dolny Kubin, Evropska unija.

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