

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CREATIVE WORKERS: UNDER-ACTIVATED DEVELOPMENT POTENTIALS IN SLOVENIA?

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Creative viewpoint.

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Demographic characteristics of creative workers: under-activated development potentials in Slovenia?

ABSTRACT: The purpose of the article is to present the key demographic characteristics of the creative labour force in Slovenia and bring attention to some opportunities for a more effective activation of the creative potential. We analysed data from the Statistical Register of Employment. The results indicate that creative workers in Slovenia are not only heterogeneous from the aspect of the employment structure, but that they also differ significantly in terms of gender, age, education, and ethnicity. Even though Slovenia can be compared to the most developed countries in the scope of the creative labour force, it will have to work on stimulating additional development potentials to make it to the top of the list. We conclude that, in the future, a more prominent role should be given to the female creative labour force, young bohemians, and foreign creative people.

KEY WORDS: human geography, creativity, creative professions, innovation, economic development, regional development, demographic change, labour force, Slovenia

Demografske značilnosti ustvarjalnih delavcev – premalo aktivirani razvojni potenciali Slovenije?

POVZETEK: Namen prispevka je predstaviti poglobitve demografske značilnosti ustvarjalnih delavcev v Sloveniji in opozoriti na nekatere priložnosti za učinkovitejše sproščanje ustvarjalnega potenciala. V ta namen sem analiziral podatke Statističnega registra delovno aktivnega prebivalstva. Rezultati prikazujejo, da ustvarjalni delavci v Sloveniji niso heterogeni samo z vidika poklicne sestave, ampak se močno razlikujejo tudi po spolu, starosti, izobrazbi in narodnosti. Čeprav se Slovenija po obsegu ustvarjalne delovne sile lahko primerja z najbolj razvitimi državami, bo morala za preboj med najboljše aktivirati dodatne razvojne potenciale. V sklepu nakazujem, da bi lahko v prihodnje večjo vlogo namenili ženski ustvarjalni delovni sili, mladim kulturnim ustvarjalcem in tujim ustvarjalnim delavcem.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: humana geografija, ustvarjalnost, ustvarjalni poklici, inovativnost, gospodarski razvoj, regionalni razvoj, demografske spremembe, delovna sila, Slovenija

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1 Introduction

The geography of creative workers, especially their influence on urban and regional development, has been the subject of numerous discussions in the post-industrial period (Ravbar, Bole and Nared 2005; Clifton 2008; Hansen and Niedomysl 2009; Ravbar 2011; Uršič 2016). Even though psychologists have already developed the appropriate tools for measuring an individual's creativity (Kim 2006), urban and regional studies still find it very difficult to determine who a creative worker actually is because of a lack of this kind of psychological data on different spatial levels (Madanipour 2011). One of the more widely accepted definitions that cities and regions have focused on in their quest for economic development and regeneration strategies in the past fifteen years pertains to the theory of »the creative class« (Chapain, Clifton and Comunian 2013). Florida (2002) was the first to discuss it; he defined creative workers as an »economic«, not a »social« class. Their merging into a social group and creating a common identity is mostly founded on them performing an economic function: the occupation. Creative workers are people who have a creative occupation. They differ from other occupations in that their activities include detecting problems, looking for solutions, and taking existing findings and transforming them into new conclusions. The creative workers' main task is to think and invent and create innovation through their creativity. This is actually a manner of work that differs radically from the manufacturing of manual labour that once dominated the industrial society with its predetermined patterns.

While Florida's ideas (2002; 2005; 2008) on the theory of the creative class have permeated local and regional planning strategies, many authors have expressed doubt and hesitation about its validity (Glaeser 2005; Peck 2005; Boyle 2006; Markusen 2006; Rausch and Negray 2006; Scott 2006; Musterd and Gritsai 2012; Nathan 2015). Asheim and Hansen (2009) divide the critics into two groups. The first question the theoretical basis and the political recommendations, the other the insufficient soundness of the empirical data. With regard to the theoretical background, one of the more resounding doubts relates to the lack of conceptual clarity in the understanding of creativity, which is said to be caused by the insufficient delineation of heterogeneous occupational groups (Krätke 2010; Alfken, Broekel and Sternberg 2015). Some authors have proposed more precise definitions of creative occupations (e.g. McGranahan and Wojan 2007; Marrocu and Paci 2012); however, few have attempted to surpass the bare economic framework by studying their demographic and social characteristics (e.g. Cooke 2014; Eisler, Donnelly and Montuori 2016). Creative workers are not heterogeneous only from the aspect of the occupational structure, but they also differ according to age, gender, education, status, nationality, and others (Fritsch and Stützer 2007; Alfken, Broekel and Sternberg 2015). In addition to the occupational capabilities and experience, demographical characteristics also have an important influence on the representation of different knowledge in a certain regional or local context (Gülümser, Baycan-Levent and Nijkamp 2010). Not taking these demographic, cultural, and social characteristics differences within creative workers into account enough can lead to a diminished competitiveness of individual areas (Huggins and Clifton 2011); this creates a need for a more in-depth insight into the intricacies of the creative manners of work and the people performing them (McGranahan and Wojan 2007).

The purpose of the article is to present the main demographic characteristics of the creative workforce in Slovenia and raise attention to some of the crucial obstacles and opportunities for a more efficient release of the creative potential. The main research question is whether significant demographic differences can be detected among creative workers in Slovenia and how these differences can be translated into a developmental context. The hypothesis is that, similar to elsewhere, there are also differences in demographic characteristics and the social background of creative workers in Slovenia and taking these differences into account could have firmer and more positive developmental effects.

The article's specific goals are:

- 1) To analyse the main demographic characteristics of creative workers and their subgroups; the creative core, creative professionals, and bohemians with regards to the gender, age, education, and ethnic structure. The control groups were the general populations and the labour force.
- 2) To analyse the main demographic changes in creative workers and their subgroups compared to the control groups for the period 2000–2011.
- 3) To define some under-activated development potentials in Slovenia that can be deduced from the demographic characteristics of creative workers.

2 Methods

The definition of **creative workers** in terms of contents is adopted from the theory of the creative class (Florida 2002; 2005; 2008), which separates creative workers from others based on their occupation, while additionally differentiating between members of the creative core, creative professionals, and bohemians. In the technical sense, we used the example of the *Technology, Talent and Tolerance in European Cities: A Comparative Analysis* European research project's methodology (e.g. Andersen and Lorenzen 2005; Fritsch and Stützer 2007; Clifton 2008; Boschma and Fritsch 2009) and the Slovenian Standard Occupational Classification (SKP-V2), which is based on the International Standard Occupational Classification (ISCO-88). Here, we used data on the labour force from the Statistical Register of Employment, managed by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia.

Creative core (A) consists of workers who create new knowledge. These are mostly engineers of a technical profile, natural scientists, doctors, teachers, and researchers in the fields of economy, social sciences, and humanities. These highly creative social groups are said to run the social and economic development (SKP-V2 codes: 211–214, 221, 222, 231–235, 243, 244, 247, 344).

Creative professionals (B) are made up of experts in labour intense occupations. These are managers, high-ranking state officials, experts in various technical, educational, medical fields, lawyers, and other occupations that support the social and economic development (SKP-V2 codes: 1, 223, 241, 242, 31, 32, 341–343, 345, 346).

Bohemians (C) are creative workers in the narrowest sense of the word. These include musicians, publicists, writers, painters, sculptors, and others (SKP-V2 codes: 245, 347, 521).

3 Analysis of the demographic characteristics of creative workers

According to the latest available data, there were about 930,000 active inhabitants in Slovenia in late 2011, which is about half (45%) of the entire population. Among the active population, there were about 817,000 in the labour force and 113,000 unemployed. The level of registered unemployment was 12%. The largest share among the labour force was made up of people with occupations in the service sector (42%), a somewhat smaller share of people in creative professions (38%), while a much smaller share accounted for people in manufacturing (14%) or agricultural occupations (5%) (Kozina 2013). The scope of creative workers in Slovenia is comparable to the situations in countries in Northern and Western Europe (see Andersen and Lorenzen 2005; Fritsch and Stützer 2007; Clifton 2008; Boschma and Fritsch 2009). Florida (2002) concluded that the share of creatives in the economically most developed countries accounts for over a third. Among Slovenian creative workers in 2011, a third belonged to the creative core, a bit less than two thirds to the creative professionals, and only a scattering of bohemians, which is also comparable to the situations in other economically more developed European countries (Figure 1).

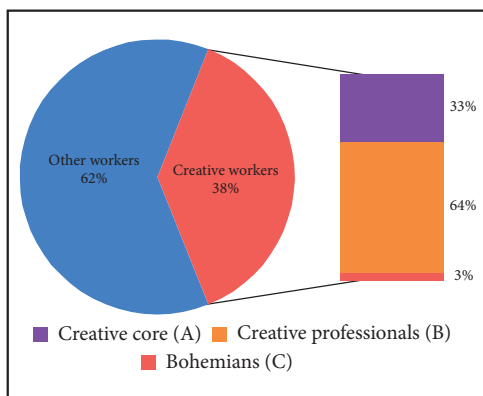


Figure 1: The structure of the labour force and the creative labour force in Slovenia in 2011 (Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia and our own calculations from the Statistical Register of Employment database).

3.1 Gender structure

There have been more women than men registered in all censuses in Slovenia. The smaller share of men is predominantly the consequence of world wars, in which the share of deaths of men was greater than women, and of their shorter life expectancies. In recent times, the differences in the gender structure have started to slightly level out (Perko 1998). This is most likely the result of the decreasing effect of both world wars, less physical demands for men's occupations, and improved hygienic and health conditions that prolong life expectancy. In 2011, there were about half women and half men, but accounting only for the labour force (not counting farmers), there were almost a tenth (9%) more men than women. It is interesting that the picture becomes almost reverse if we include only creative workers into the analysis. In this case, women exceed men in number, especially due to the creative core, where the difference amounts to 17%. The gender structure is nearly the same among creative professionals, while there were a few more men only in the group of bohemians (6%) (Table 1).

A comparison of the current state with the conditions from 2000 indicates that the gender structure of the labour force (not counting farmers) at the break of the millennium is similar to today. The differences that have appeared during this period are moving towards a slight increase of the share of women in creative occupations (2000; 50%) and a decrease in other occupations (2000; 44%). In Slovenian society, where the gender structure is generally quite balanced and men assume more employment positions, women are now reaching for the most demanding creative professions more and more.

Table 1: Gender structure of creative workers in Slovenia in 2011.

	Men (%)	Women (%)	Total (%)
Population	49.5	50.5	100.0
Labour force	54.7	45.3	100.0
Creative workers (A + B + C)	47.4	52.6	100.0
Creative core (A)	41.5	58.5	100.0
Creative professionals (B)	50.2	49.8	100.0
Bohemians (C)	53.0	47.0	100.0

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia and our own calculations from the Statistical Register of Employment database.

3.2 Age and education structure

An insight into the age structure reveals that creative workers are on average somewhat older than the rest of the labour force (table 2). The explanation for this can be found in their education structure (table 3). Creative workers on average are much more educated. This means that they enter the labour market later than others because of their prolonged education. Consequently, more than half creative workers have attained a tertiary education in 2011, while this share was almost half lower in the general labour force. Among the creative subgroups, the oldest and most educated members belong to the creative core, as would be expected.

The age structure reveals the young age of bohemians. A precise explanation for this is difficult to pinpoint. At this point, we can propose two hypotheses that should be empirically tested in the future. The first relates to the fact that bohemians are usually employed in cultural and creative industries (Kozina and Bole 2016), which have only recently been getting more attention as a form of economic activity (Bole 2008). This was strongly supported by the emergence of new forms of artistic creation and entertainment, especially in the area of computer industry, digital media, and the web (Montgomery 2007). It is likely that predominantly younger people occupy employment positions in these branches of the economy; they have spent their adolescence, education, and internship period to acquire the necessary knowledge to work in these areas, which has only begun to emerge a couple of decades ago due to the lack of (internet) technologies.

The second hypothesis that would account for the significantly lower average age of bohemians can be linked to the fact that occupants of such employment positions go through re-training periods to transfer

to other areas later in life. This can either be a sort of natural progression, when a writer becomes editor of the medium in time and performs more managerial duties instead of artistic-cultural creation for example, or people look for jobs in more interesting market-oriented or existentially more reliable branches. In this case, in terms of our predetermined groups, they transfer from bohemians into creative professionals or the creative core.

The education structure also reveals that, despite this relevant interconnection, a high education level is not the only precondition for becoming a creative worker. Only about half (55%) of creative workers have attained a tertiary education, while about four fifths (78%) of people with creative occupation have attained a tertiary education. This means someone with a lower education level can also be creative and vice versa. This confirms Florida's (2002) hypothesis that every individual can be creative. The only factor is whether or not they develop and capitalize on their potential.

Table 2: Age structure of creative workers in Slovenia in 2011.

	15–29 (%)	30–49 (%)	50–89 (%)	Total (%)
Labour force	12.7	62.4	24.9	100
Creative workers (A + B + C)	10.1	64.3	25.6	100
Creative core (A)	9.6	64.1	26.3	100
Creative professionals (B)	10.1	64.3	25.6	100
Bohemians (C)	14.3	66.9	18.8	100

Source: Own calculations from the Statistical Register of Employment database.

Table 3: Education structure of creative workers in Slovenia in 2011.

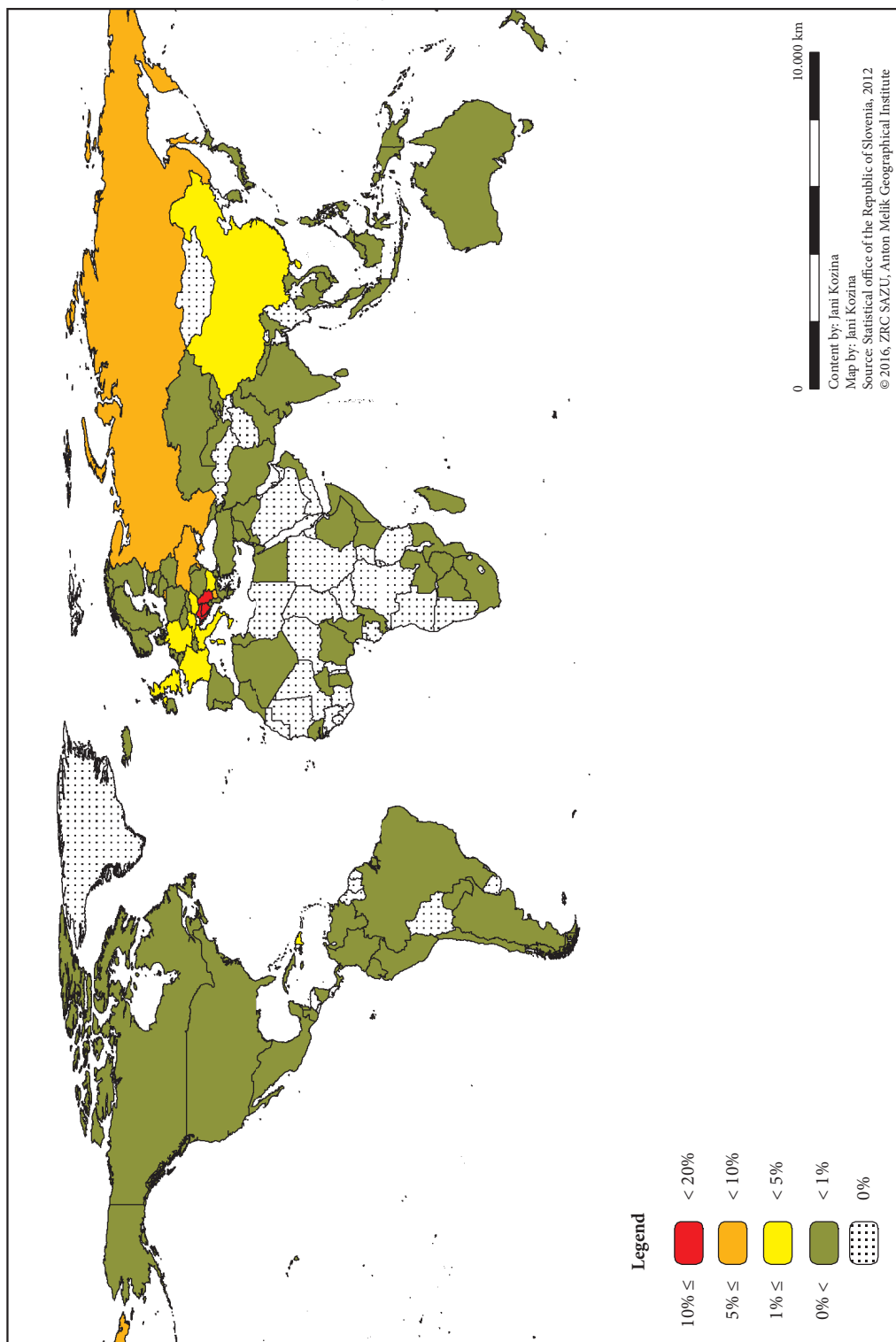
	Primary school or less (%)	Secondary school (%)	Tertiary (%)	No data (%)	Total (%)
Labour force	14.3	57.8	27.9	0.0	100
Creative workers (A + B + C)	1.2	32.1	54.9	11.8	100
Creative core (A)	0.0	7.0	80.9	12.1	100
Creative professionals (B)	1.5	44.8	42.1	11.5	100
Bohemians (C)	5.7	36.7	42.8	14.8	100

Source: Own calculations from the Statistical Register of Employment database.

3.3 Ethnic structure

In view of Florida's (2002) theoretical views on creative workers' free choice of residence and workplace, which spreads across national borders in this increasingly globalised world, it is interesting to study the countries of origin of creative workers in Slovenia. With regard to migrations, Slovenia was long the kind of country, from which people emigrated. In the 19th century and first half of the 20th century, people left for Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, Belgium, and some other developed European countries as economic emigrants. In the mid-1920s, a large amount of Slovenes fled from the region under Italian rule due to the increasing fascist pressure, mostly to Argentina. After World War II, an important wave of political refugees followed, who moved predominantly to Argentina, the US, Canada, and Australia after the establishment of Communism in the homeland. During different periods from the 60s to the 80s, a significant number of characteristic economic emigrants left for Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, France, Belgium, and some other countries (Žigon 2004).

Figure 2: The share of foreign creative workers in Slovenia according to their country of origin in 2011 (own calculations from the Statistical Register of Employment database). ►



Mass immigrations to Slovenia began only after World War II in the 1960s and lasted up to the mid-1980s. The country's relative development made Slovenia interesting to immigrants from other republics in the former Yugoslavia, who got employment mostly in manufacturing, coal-mining, and construction. There were very few immigrants from other countries. Immigrants most often settled in the former municipalities of the so-called »industrial crescent«; from the north-west towards the south-east (municipalities of Jesenice, Radovljica, Kranj, Škofja Loka) to the municipalities around Ljubljana, and reaching from there through Zasavje towards the north-east (Celje, Velenje, Maribor). Outside that crescent, a number of immigrants settled in the municipality of Nova Gorica and the coastal municipalities (Kuhar de Domizio 1998).

Soon after Slovenia's independence, the dynamics of transnational migrations settled down and was even negative between 1991 and 1992. After this period, immigration to Slovenia once again increased and surpassed emigration. Most of the immigrants were still from the countries of the former Yugoslavia, but there were also quite a few Slovenes returning home due to the new social and political situation up to 1999. The Argentinian economic crisis also triggered Argentinian Slovenes to return home. After 1999, more Slovenes were emigrating than immigrating again and that trend is still growing. Emigration was also prompted by the processes of Slovenia joining the European Union, which included Slovenia into the area of the free flow of people, capital, goods, and services. During this period, Slovenia started temporarily or permanently losing young educated people at the peak of their creative powers when they emigrate (Lapuh 2011).

After 1999, the number of immigrations to Slovenia increased, because the country was internationally connected (European Union, Schengen area, OECD, NATO), economic conjuncture, and the need for certain, especially low-skilled workers. According to data from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, around 31,000 people moved to Slovenia at the peak in 2008. Of these, almost 80% were citizens from former Yugoslav republics. Among the labour force, only 4% had attained a tertiary education, 45% a secondary school education, and 51% completed primary school or less. The world economic crisis caused less than half that amount of people to move to Slovenia in 2010.

In 2011, around 42,000 people with foreign citizenships were employed in Slovenia, which is about 5% of the entire labour force. The 2011 EUROSTAT report placed Slovenia at the bottom of European Union and EFTA members in this criterion (Migrants in Europe 2011). From the foreigners employed in Slovenia, about 7000 were occupying creative positions in 2011, which amounts to only 17% of the foreign labour force.

A regional overview of foreign creative people living in Slovenia shows that the greatest share (59%) falls to the countries of the Western Balkans (countries of the former Yugoslavia and Albania), 20% to the members of the European Union (EU-27) and the Schengen area, and 13% to the countries of Eastern Europe (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova). People from other continents constitute the minority (8%) and are limited to individual cases with regards to their countries of origin. The only non-European countries with more than one percent of the foreign creative workers in Slovenia are China and the Dominican Republic (figure 2).

4 Discussion

Based on the analysis of the Statistical Register of Employment, we may conclude that in accordance with the theory of the creative class (Florida 2002; 2005; 2008), creative workers in Slovenia express a fair amount of demographic diversity. This confirms the hypotheses of other authors that creative workers are not only heterogeneous with regards to the occupation structure, but that they also differ according to age, gender, education, status, nationality, and other (Fritsch and Stützer 2007; Alfkén, Broekel and Sternberg 2015).

Even though the gender structure of Slovenes is balanced and men occupy more jobs, more and more women are assuming the most challenging creative professions. The results indicate that women in Slovenia could also assume greater roles in the most visible and responsible positions that require decision-making and a greater level of creative thinking; however, this is not yet so in different social and economic areas (Penner et al. 2012; Ule 2012). Data from other research reveal proportionately large inequalities in gender even after decades of ideological, legislative, and institutional support for economic gender equality in Slovenia and that these inequalities have become even greater in recent times (Penner et al. 2012). According to Humer and Roksandić (2013), measures to deal with the crisis failed to predict this kind of effects. The same authors propose the following possible solutions: a mandatory overview of the statistics according

to gender in all areas of life and regular statistical oversight of the social and social changes, such as the current crisis and measuring the consequences of the anti-crisis measures; a more meticulous and precise oversight of the influence and effects of fiscal consolidation to the welfare state and revenue; passing goal-oriented measures for vulnerable groups; ensuring effective operations of public institution for gender equality. Adam (2013) adds that there is a lack of training courses in Slovenia that would educate and groom women for leadership positions (in the industry and elsewhere), which is typical for Scandinavian countries that boast the greatest gender equality (The Global ... 2014). The same author mentions that there are not enough awards, competitions, and festivals in Slovenia to support the entry and the existence of women in creative professions and industries (like the Marie Curie Foundation for women in science and the International Women Invention's Exhibition).

The age structure of creative workers indicates that they are somewhat older on average than the rest of the labour force, which is most likely the consequence of a belated entering the labour market due to the longer education period. However, this finding is accurate only for the subgroups of the creative core (A) and creative professionals (B), while bohemians (C) are, just the opposite, younger. The issue of this social group today lies in the increasing precarious self-employment and is widely discussed (Zhang and Pan 2012; Donald, Gertler and Tyler 2013; Fritsch, Kritikos and Sorgner 2015). In addition to their working in more market-volatile and existentially more sensitive branches, as young people, they are exposed to additional risks in the areas of the labour market and social security. More and more research raises attention to the fact that the current manner of state support to self-employed people in culture in Slovenia is no longer suitable. Change is necessary in recognizing more social rights, considering the specifics of the profession and the special work conditions of self-employed people in culture (Pernarčič 2012; Ograjenšek and Perviz 2015). Addressing the issues of this social group is also important because of the increasing tendencies for expanding self-employment to other disciplines (Pernarčič 2010).

The ethnic structure shows that the sparse foreign labour force still performs mentally less demanding tasks. Regardless of the manner of work, the countries of origin of immigrants are mostly in the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe. Therefore, Slovenia does not import creativity, but mostly exports it (Lapuh 2011), which can be quite a worrying fact in the long term. All these facts should also be reconsidered in light of the increasing »migrant crisis« in Europe.

5 Conclusion

The purpose of the article is to present the key demographic characteristics of the creative labour force in Slovenia and bring attention to some of the obstacles and opportunities for a more effective activation of the creative potential. The main research question is whether there are significant demographic differences among creative workers in Slovenia and how can these differences be transferred to a developmental context. The results of the analysis of the data from the Statistical Register of Employment confirmed that creative workers, in accordance with the theory of the creative class, exhibit a significant level of variety with regards to gender, age, education, and ethnicity. Additional analyses have revealed that Slovenia can be compared to other countries of the western and northern Europe in terms of its share of creative labour force, even though it does not measure up to them in terms of economic development. This economic lagging can partly be attributed to some under-activated development potentials that pertain to a high share of female creative labour force and their underrepresentation in decision-making processes (including the highest levels in politics, science, higher education, and other), to young bohemians and their increasing precariousness (especially among self-employed people), and to the creative labour force that Slovenia does not seem to know how to attract and retain.

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