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Irena Lesar and Mojca Peček (Eds.), *Immigrants in Slovenia through the research prism of students of the Faculty of Education* (in Slovene: *Priseljenci v Sloveniji skozi raziskovalno prizmo študentov Pedagoške fakultete*), University in Ljubljana, Faculty of Education, 2021, 276 pp.: ISBN 978-961-253-276-5

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In 2021, *Immigrants in Slovenia through the research prism of students of the Faculty of Education* was published by the Faculty of Education in Ljubljana, edited by Irena Lesar and Mojca Peček.

The idea for it derives from the fact that a whole range of high-quality graduate, master and doctoral theses) have been created at the Faculty of Education, which deal with the topic of migration, most often at its intersection with education.

The editors contacted the mentors of these theses with a call to highlight some of the quality final works on the field of migration, finished in recent years. In the second step, editors contacted the authors who prepared these articles for this publication.

The result is a collection of articles dealing with migration from very diverse perspectives and using very different methodological approaches, all of which have a common degree of depth and innovation in the choice of research perspective. The aforementioned diversity regarding approaches and content is discussed in the editorial entitled *Being an immigrant in Slovenia*, using large-sample research and first-person reflections. The authors attempt to represent the most holistic picture of what it means to be an immigrant in Slovenia, drawing on Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1994). The editors assess the efforts made thus far in migration research in Slovenia, pointing out some of the deficit areas: migrants without status, research from the perspectives of migrants



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themselves, especially children, and participatory research.

Some of the works that follow may fill some of those gaps.

The collection of articles includes two made on the basis of the doctoral thesis, one by Sabina Krajnc Dular and the second by Karmen Mlinar.

Krajnc Dular reveals how the learning outcomes of immigrant students are related to the integration processes and how both are embedded in the system, consisting of the school, teacher, teaching material, student, parents. The part that the teacher covers is crucial. The result of this research also includes the didactic dimensions of quality teaching for immigrant students, which can serve as an example of effective approaches to follow.

In her article (last chapter in the book), Mlinar is also interested in primary school concerning the development of an intercultural and anti-bias school ethos. She presents a *Declaration about respecting differences* as a model, developed at one of the primary schools and based on the paradigm shift from tolerance towards mutual respect. It supports an intercultural and anti-bias ethos of education from the bottom up. Generally, she reveals how the inclusion of pupils with non-dominant ethnic backgrounds is expressed on the systemic and practical-everyday levels.

Patricia Urlep and Anthony Paul Smaga titled their article *Analysis of Discrimination against Immigrants in Slovenia*. It is based on the first-person perspective of immigrants to Slovenia and analyses their own experiences of discrimination on various levels (employment, health care system, legal system, etc.). In addition to different levels, they also identify different layers of discrimination, from subtle forms to more direct ones.

Following is an article by Doris Špurej, whose research problem is distinctly innovative and deals with the contribution of volunteering to the integration of refugees, specifically persons with the status of international protection. Conceptually, it brings the relationship to the forefront as a means of integration. She addresses volunteering to work with refugees from the perspective of Putnam's concept of social capital and social networking, Allport's contact hypothesis, and the hypothesis of inter-group cooperation. The findings confirm the recognition of the importance of volunteers in the process of refugee integration into society and in refugees themselves.

The article by Melita Zukić is distinctly action-oriented and follows the unmet needs of a specific community in Slovenia, the Muslim Community specifically, the aspect of the realisation of their religious needs, which she examines through the lens of Slovenian kindergartens. She presents the legal basis of confessional activity in Slovenia, as well as some cases from abroad. The parents' perspective is very fore-fronted, mostly regarding social, educational, and

nutrition aspects that are the main areas, which are not recognised in Slovenian kindergartens thus far from the perspective of the researched minority.

Anja Franko Dobnikar presents the learning outcomes of immigrant students through the prism of language. She starts from the unfortunate but well-known research fact that the language achievements of immigrant pupils differ significantly across countries, with immigrant pupils' achievements mostly being lower than the achievements of their counterparts. She follows the thesis that language is often a primary barrier to equal achievements, so she wants to draw attention to the teaching and learning of the language of the host country.

Three chapters (by Andrejka Štimpfel, by Barbara Sotenšek, and by Katja Vodopivec and Irena Lesar) are dedicated to the question of how to improve the learning outcomes and general school performance of migrant students in three different subjects (Slovenian language, mathematics, and English language).

The final chapter is by Maša Bricelj, which opens up the research question (no less important but, compared to learning outcomes, mostly overlooked) of the relation between teachers and migrant students and how it is related to their well-being in school.

As a whole, the book discusses many specific topics, which can be interesting by themselves (many focused on schools, but also some going broader) but fascinating it is to attempt to see different interplays and overlaps of other chapters: being discriminated and having a religious needs unmet in the host society, with one's general well-being being lower and learning outcomes worst – all of this is part of having a non-dominant ethnic background in Slovenia.

The book is fresh and innovative in its format (a set of articles based on the final works on a common topic) and seems entirely appropriate for an institution such as the Faculty of Education of the University of Ljubljana, so we can hope that more will follow that example.

It also provides recognition and further encouragement to students whose work is published in this selection.

It can also serve as a valuable resource for future students who are about to search for relevant research topics, as the chapters can demonstrate to them a whole range of approaches to a particular topic, bring a degree of interdisciplinarity and present new findings, didactic and other approaches for working with migrant pupils, and also opens up a reflection on gaps in the research of topics, which still need to be addressed.