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UTJECAJ POLITIČKE DIMENZIJE GLOBALIZACIJE NA ODLJEV MOZGOVA: PRIMJER SLOVENIJE

Sažetak:

Ovaj rad analizira utjecaj političke dimenzije globalizacije na fenomen odljeva mozgova u Sloveniji. Istraživanje se temelji na anketnom upitniku provedenom među studentima društvenih znanosti. Rezultati pokazuju da ekonomsko-socijalna dimenzija globalizacije ima najveći utjecaj na odljev mozgova, dok politička stabilnost i nedostatak priznanja u struci doprinose odlasku stručnjaka. Rad također ističe nedostatak učinkovitih vladinih politika za zadržavanje kadrova te pesimizam glede pozitivnih političkih promjena. Zaključno, predlaže se uvođenje politika koje će poticati povratak mladih stručnjaka i smanjiti negativne učinke političke globalizacije.

Ključne riječi: globalizacija, ljudski kapital, migracije, odljev mozgova, politička dimenzija, Slovenija.

THE IMPACT OF THE POLITICAL DIMENSION OF GLOBALISATION ON BRAIN DRAIN: THE CASE OF SLOVENIA

Abstract:

This article examines the impact of the political dimension of globalisation on the brain drain phenomenon in Slovenia. The research is based on a survey conducted among social sciences students. The results show that the economic-social dimension of globalisation has the greatest impact on brain drain, while political stability and lack of professional recognition contribute to the emigration of experts. It also highlights the lack of effective government policies to retain talent and a pessimistic outlook on positive political changes. In conclusion, the study suggests implementing policies to encourage the return of young professionals and mitigate the negative effects of political globalisation.

Keywords: brain drain, globalisation, human capital, migration, political dimension, Slovenia.

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INTRODUCTION

Brain drain is the transfer of knowledge from one country to another. When highly skilled individuals move from their home country to another, they transfer skills and knowledge that they can use to address difficult situations and develop economically. Moreover, when these individuals move to other countries, they continue to acquire new skills in their host countries that they can use later when they return to their home countries (Naumovski, 2021). These acquired skills and knowledge can benefit their home countries, especially developing countries, as they can foster innovation, economic development and growth, and increase the competitiveness of the home country. Brain drain also generates resource transfers, which flow back to the home country as income. When skilled individuals move to work in other countries, they receive a salary and benefits and remit part of these funds back home. Remittances play an important role in poverty reduction and economic development. Finally, brain drain promotes better economic and diplomatic ties between host countries and the home countries of those involved in the migration process (Adovor et al., 2021). The presence of skilled individuals in developed countries can help developing countries to establish diplomatic and economic ties, which can help to promote technology transfer, foreign investment and trade relations, benefiting both countries. Despite concerns about brain drain, it has a number of positive effects that can benefit both home and host countries. Despite the many positive effects associated with brain drain, several negative effects mainly affect the home countries of skilled individuals moving to other countries. One of the biggest negative effects of brain drain is the loss of human capital in the home country (Adovor et al., 2021). Economic growth and development depend heavily on human capital, as people provide the services needed for economic prosperity. When the majority of skilled human resources move from one country to another, the home country is deprived of human capital, and economic growth and development stall. Human capital is crucial for the development of economic sectors such as health, research and education, and the loss of human capital has a significant impact on the growth and development of these sectors. Brain drain also leads to dependence on remittances from home countries, which can lead to economic vulnerability of the home country (Naumovski, 2021). Although remittances sent by skilled individuals working abroad can stimulate economic development and reduce poverty levels, they can create a situation of over-reliance on

remittances, which can lead to economic vulnerability in the long term. It is not advisable for home countries to rely too heavily on remittances from abroad, as remittances may not be sustainable or permanent in the long term and may affect economic development (Naumovski, 2021). Brain drain can also increase economic and social inequality in a country. Brain drain allows those who can afford to move to developed countries and have ample opportunities, while those who cannot afford to do so are left behind and struggle with poverty and limited opportunities. For it is clear that the political reasons for brain drain are usually coercive, whereas the economic ones are not so obvious. Nevertheless, the large number of foreign professionals also has undesirable consequences for these countries. There is less interest in training and promoting domestic experts. Another unfavourable consequence is the dependence of certain disciplines on foreign intellectuals (for example: health care in the USA and the UK).

1. THE POLITICAL DIMENSION OF GLOBALISATION AND THE BRAIN DRAIN

Theories such as social capital theory and neoliberalism can be used to understand why some people experience more brain drain than others. According to neoliberal theories, the brain drain is caused by market-driven decisions and individual freedom. Most neoliberal policies promote globalisation and free markets, which affect the migration patterns of skilled personnel, as these individuals may choose other countries with better wages and opportunities than their home countries (Vega-Muñoz, 2021). On the other hand, social capital theory emphasises the influence of foreign countries. Social capital theory argues that skilled migrants are influential because they can use their connections and social networks to promote economic development at home (Vega-Muñoz, 2021). Migrants can do this by sharing knowledge, promoting investment and fostering trade relations between host and home countries. According to Baldwin (2016), the positive effects of globalisation, such as access to wider markets and technologies, are often more visible in urban and developed centres, which can influence positive perceptions, while the negative effects, such as social inequalities or environmental problems, are felt more by vulnerable groups and in less developed regions.

Political causes and motives, the political situation worldwide and in individual countries is constantly changing. There are military conflicts, revolutions,

discrimination phenomena, political persecutions, pressure from criminal groups, etc., all of which accompany political migrants seeking new political systems and, of course, more political rights, freedom and a society that tolerates their political values. A very famous definition of political globalisation is given by William R. Thompson, who defines it as: "The expansion of the global political system and its institutions in which international transactions (including, but not limited to, trade) are managed". It is primarily the blurring of boundaries between nation states in order to reduce friction between nations. This can be achieved in all areas of political and social life, including (Drew, 2023): reducing barriers to migration, reducing barriers to the movement of goods and services, agreeing common standards for labour, intellectual property and environmental protection.

Political globalisation brings to the fore challenges to the principle of state sovereignty, opportunities for regional and global governance, demographic change and global migration flows (Steger, 2023). Less direct, but nevertheless political reasons are also (Bevc, 2004): Political-legislative causes, most notably changes in labour legislation, education legislation and its strategic policies), market closedness, various forms of discrimination (e.g. political mischaracterisation), changing political options, intolerant societies, homophobia, racism), disrespect for human rights. The world's superpowers, such as the US, the EU and China, are gradually moving away from full political globalisation and into a phase of partial deglobalisation. This turn is the result of complex factors, including rising tensions between the superpowers, such as the US-China rivalry, and the reconfiguration of the global political landscape. In this new phase of deglobalisation, we see a greater focus on national sovereignty, the use of bilateral relations and a reduced trust in multilateral institutions. At the same time, however, all this does not mark the end of globalisation, but its transition to a new era where digital globalisation is becoming a central feature (Ilyin & Leonova, 2022).

2. BRAIN DRAIN IN SLOVENIA

For a small Slovenia with a declining birth rate and an ageing population, a good understanding of the issues and trends in brain drain is particularly important, as it is losing young professionals who are urgently needed at home, both for technological and economic development (Bevc, 2004). Brain drain refers to highly skilled individuals moving from their home countries to more developed countries in search of better living

conditions and job opportunities (Jurić, 2021). Globalisation allows highly skilled workers to move from one country to another. Over the last few decades, brain drain has been a matter of great concern, as most countries, especially developing countries, are facing a large brain drain. Countries such as Slovenia and other countries in the Balkans have also experienced a large brain drain in the last few years (Naumovski, 2021). Brain drain has both negative and positive consequences, as explained later in this section. Brain drain is interesting in several respects. The phenomenon is fundamentally linked to changes in the economy and has an impact on the development of society. The term is usually used to describe people who add value or have a competitive advantage in their field and are therefore in demand in various professional positions, as they contribute significantly to the progress of an organisation. In 2018, 43% of Slovenians were willing to work abroad, while in 2020, the figure is 10% lower, i.e. 33% (Optius, 2023). It can be observed that the majority of immigrants to Slovenia are lower-skilled workers, while higher-skilled workers with various master's degrees or even PhDs are leaving Slovenia. As educated Slovenians acquire new skills abroad, it should be in our country's interest to turn the brain drain into a brain circulation. This means attracting young people back to their home country with the new skills and experience they have acquired (Optius, 2019).

More educated immigrants are better able to integrate into society and find jobs more quickly, which means they do not become a 'burden on the state'. In fact, the biggest burden is borne by the country of origin, which financed their education and was left without their contribution. The report ranks Slovenia alongside Finland, Norway and Germany in terms of the rate of emigration of educated people. For all, between 15 and 20 per cent of the population aged 24-65 is considered to be highly educated, while around 10 per cent have emigrated (24.ur, 2019). This is clearly an effect of EU membership. The necessary changes in the taxation of salaries, especially of engineers, professors and other professionals, should make it easier for employers in Slovenia to recruit highly educated staff - they are the creators of more added value. In addition, the education system - especially higher education - should be radically transformed in line with the needs of the labour market, as currently many study programmes do not keep pace with the market's demand for practical skills. Our housing policy is also a major problem, and it is not much better elsewhere in Europe (for example in Portugal's capital, where the minimum wage is almost double the average rent in Lisbon).

This seemingly new phenomenon is already well known in the history of migration dynamics in our region and beyond. Particularly in the period from the 1960s to the 1980s, the position of the Slovenian (Yugoslav) economy in global political-economic power relations led to a significant outflow or brain drain to Western European countries and the USA over several years (Lukšič-Hacin 2020). The main reasons for the phenomenon of brain drain were professional opportunities for career advancement, excessive bureaucratisation and a rigid hierarchical structure of work organisation, the devalued social position of science in society and in a country where science is not valued (Lukšič-Hacin, 2020). Living conditions were also important, from the possibility of solving subsistence problems to political rights - many people disagreed with the communist regime in the former Yugoslavia (Lukšič-Hacin, 2020). After our country joined the EU negotiations, Slovenia experienced a major brain drain, with most of its skilled individuals and professionals looking for opportunities in Western Europe. Many did not see the young country as a prospect, and the political-economic situation and international standing were questionable. This led to a large brain drain from Slovenia (Adovor et al., 2021). However, Slovenia has eventually managed to tackle the brain drain by implementing policies and measures to ensure that it attracts and retains the majority of its human capital. Slovenia has prevented the loss of human capital by fostering and creating an enabling environment for innovation and entrepreneurship. It has therefore fared much better in this respect compared to the other countries of the former Yugoslavia. The hardly expected development breakthrough in

terms of value added has not yet materialised, and the social cap, education and science wages are exacerbating the problem. I believe that Slovenia should further separate economic and political influence and make more patriotic decisions for the sake of Slovenia and its people, for a bright future, and not just for its own interests. There will also be less brain drain when our experts are correctly rewarded for their mission and have the opportunity to influence the development of the economy.

3. THE IMPACT OF THE POLITICAL DIMENSION OF GLOBALISATION ON THE BRAIN DRAIN IN SLOVENIA

The findings of the study were obtained through a survey conducted to obtain information on the views and opinions of respondents on the brain drain in Slovenia and the impact of the political aspect of globalisation on this phenomenon. 78 respondents took part in the survey (on the Ika.si platform). The survey was carried out on a sample of a specific social science private faculty in Slovenia, between 19-23 May.

Question 1: Have you ever thought about leaving your home country and looking for better career opportunities abroad?

The majority of respondents (76%) answered that they had thought about leaving their country to find better career opportunities abroad.

Question 2: Which dimension of globalisation do you think has the biggest impact on the brain drain in your country?

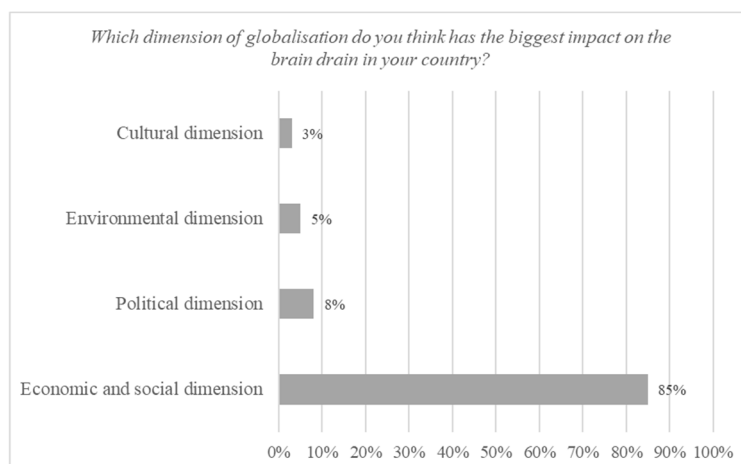


Figure 1. Which dimension of globalization do you think has the biggest impact on the brain drain in your country

The largest share of respondents (85%) believes that the economic and social dimension of globalisation has the biggest impact on the brain drain in Slovenia. A smaller proportion of respondents also highlighted the political, environmental and cultural dimensions as important factors. The political dimension, which is less relevant in developed democracies such as Slovenia, was rated as less important.

Question 3a: Are you or do you know a person from Slovenia who is part of the so-called brain drain?

The majority of respondents (87%) answered that they are or know a person from Slovenia who is part of the brain drain.

Question 3b: If so, what do you think is the main reason for their departure?

Among respondents who are or know a person from Slovenia who is part of the brain drain, the largest proportion (45%) cited lack of support and recognition in the profession as the main reason for their departure. 27% said the reasons were non-political. Other perceived reasons were corruption

and excessive bureaucratisation, and greater political stability and security.

Question 4: In your opinion, are there any government policies or initiatives in Slovenia aimed at tackling the brain drain? If yes, please list them.

Among the respondents, 24% answered "no" to the question on the existence of government policies or initiatives to tackle the brain drain. Some gave as examples of specific measures: subsidies for youth employment, higher financial valuation of individual skills and improved housing policies. A smaller proportion of respondents were not aware of specific government policies or initiatives, and some highlighted a lack of information and knowledge in this area. This needs to be addressed as Slovenia is facing full employment, while businesses report difficulties in securing an adequate workforce (OECD, 2024, p. 69).

Question 5: How optimistic are you about positive policy changes and developments in Slovenia in the next three years?

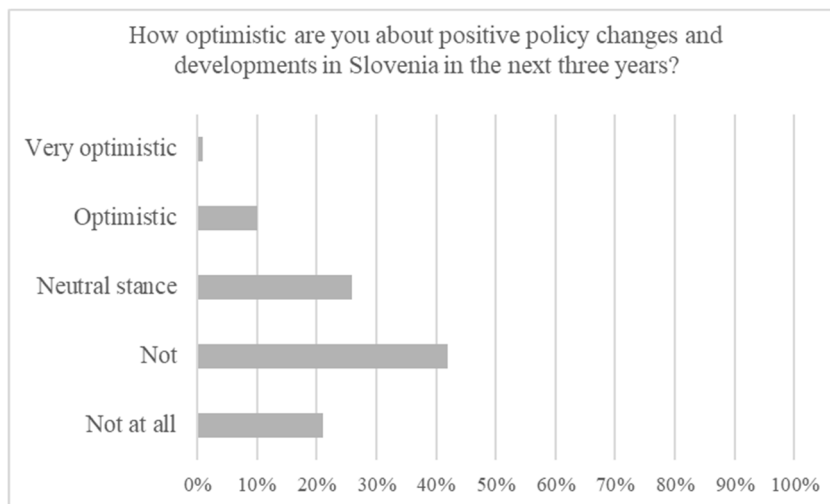


Figure 2. How optimistic are you about positive policy changes and developments in Slovenia in the next three years?

The majority of respondents (63%) express a very negative or negative view on the prospects for positive political change and development in Slovenia in the next three years. Only 11% of respondents expressed optimism about these changes. The situation could improve as inflation and interest rates fall and as global geopolitical crises subside.

Question 6: Is globalisation a positive or negative

phenomenon for you?

The majority of respondents (78%) consider globalisation to be both a positive and a negative phenomenon. The rest are divided as follows: 15% perceive it as a positive phenomenon, while only five respondents tend to have a negative view of globalisation. This is probably a reflection of the complexity of this process, which brings both benefits and challenges, often manifested in different social contexts.

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CONCLUSION

In summary, the survey reveals that the brain drain is a significant phenomenon in Slovenia, with the economic and social dimension of globalisation being highlighted as the main cause. Lack of support and recognition in the profession was cited as the main reason for leaving. Respondents were not unanimous about the existence of effective government policies or initiatives to tackle the brain drain. There is also considerable pessimism about positive policy changes and developments in Slovenia in the next three years, while most respondents perceive globalisation as a phenomenon with both positive and negative aspects.

The data from this survey can serve as an insight into the opinions and views of the respondents regarding the brain drain and the political situation in Slovenia, but it is important to bear in mind that

this is a limited sample of the population and that the results may not reflect the opinions of the entire population, as the pool of respondents was limited to young educated people, namely students of a particular faculty.

Globalisation has important implications for economies and political systems around the world. The political dimensions lead to global interdependencies and transnational networks that play an important role in shaping the economic and political landscapes of countries. Brain drain is one example of the consequences of the political dimension of globalisation. Brain drain provides an understanding of the complexity of the political dimension of globalisation. It can lead to knowledge spillovers, diaspora influence and, in turn, to an impoverishment of the intellectual pool and a decline in innovation. Therefore, countries need to address the brain drain and implement meaningful policies to reduce it.

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