



YOUTH STUDY SLOVENIA

2018/2019



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YOUTH STUDIES SOUTHEAST EUROPE 2018/2019:

“FES Youth Studies Southeast Europe 2018/2019” is an international youth research project carried out simultaneously in ten countries in Southeast Europe: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia. The main objective of the surveys has been to identify, describe and analyse attitudes of young people and patterns of behaviour in contemporary society.

The data was collected in early 2018 from more than 10,000 respondents aged 14–29 in the above-mentioned countries who participated in the survey. A broad range of issues were addressed, including young peoples’ experiences and aspirations in different realms of life, such as education, employment, political participation, family relationships, leisure and use of information and communications technology, but also their values, attitudes and beliefs.

Findings are presented in ten national and one regional study and its accompanying policy papers, which have been published in both English and the respective national languages.

YOUTH STUDY SLOVENIA 2018/2019

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1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a research report on young Slovenians aged 14 to 29. A combination of quantitative (questionnaire with 1,014 respondents) and qualitative (10 in-depth interviews) methods was adopted. Quantitative data was collected between January and March, and interviews were performed between June and August 2018.

TOP 10 SURVEY FINDINGS:

1. Following a decline from 1990 to 2020, the latest projections show stabilisation of the young population. However, aging of Slovenian society will continue and by 2050 the ratio between young and old will reach 1:2.
2. Young Slovenians rated their health as quite good, with significantly better self-rated health among young people with higher financial status and a higher level of parental education.
3. The trend towards individualisation at the level of values from the early 1990s continues and major anxieties among young people in Slovenia are in line with the general post-materialist profile. Young Slovenians are increasingly stressed and, as compared to young people in other SEE countries, disproportionately dissatisfied with their life and with their physical appearance.
4. Family and friends are very important for young people, although families in Slovenia are relatively authoritative with a clear trend towards less permissive and slightly more authoritarian parenting.
5. In the period from 2010 to 2016, the number of young people leaving Slovenia has almost quadrupled – young people with higher socio-economic status are substantially more likely to emigrate, indicating that factors of necessity (push factors) are relatively less important than factors of opportunity (pull factors).
6. Since 2010, the share of tertiary educated young people (25–34) has increased from 31% to almost 45% and was substantially above the EU-28 average in 2017. At the same time, from 2012 on, there has been a small, gradual decline in tertiary education enrolment rates but young Slovenians remain generally satisfied with the quality of education.
7. Traditional forms of permanent employment are increasingly being replaced by less secure and more flexible forms of employment. All these changes tend to be even more pronounced among the young. Fear of unemployment has been steadily increasing: it has almost doubled since 2000. Although official data indicates a decline in youth unemployment in Slovenia, the self-reported rate of unemployment has remained virtually unchanged from 2013 and is more than two hundred per cent higher than the rate reported by the Labour Force Survey (LFS).
8. The lack of interest in domestic politics among young Slovenians has increased along with political disorientation (in terms of left-right positioning), and political knowledge. However, they express a relatively greater readiness to participate in elections. In addition, almost a third would be prepared to take on a political appointment.
9. The general satisfaction with the state of democracy among young people in Slovenia today is low, yet notably higher than five years earlier. Most young people today are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the functioning of the democratic system. Most young people want to live in a country that guarantees them economic, social and legal security in a clean environment.

10. Young people strongly support social reform in the direction of democratic socialism – social and economic security for all and greater equality are almost universally accepted. Although authoritarian tendencies are relatively weak among young Slovenians, they might increase if the economic situation (including unemployment, economic welfare and inequality) were to worsen in the future.

TOP 5 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Policymakers should seek models of sustainable development in socio-psychological terms (measures leading to a less competitive and precarious situation for individuals in the labour market, less competitive approaches to formal education, less public promotion of values of personal success, and more public emphasis on values of solidarity and trust);
2. Since young people expressed a readiness to return, migration youth policies should focus on positive evaluation of newly gained knowledge and experiences gained abroad and acknowledge these within the process of integration of young people within the national context (i.e. additional points when applying for job or school enrolment).
3. Policy should focus on implementation of educational policies that would enable more links between education and work;
4. There is a need to re-evaluate the economic models that continue to exert pressure towards greater flexibility and to consider putting in place a new system of social security (for example Universal Basic Income);
5. In order to improve youth participation in politics, their perceived inclusion should be raised by allowing them to have a greater voice and by bringing politics closer to them.

2

INTRODUCTION

This document is the final report on youth research in Slovenia, which is part of a broader international youth research from ten countries of South-Eastern Europe (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Albania). A substantial part of the analysis is therefore based on the comparison of Slovenian youth with youth from the other nine countries that were included in the

survey. In addition, authors also refer to the data from other youth research, such as Youth 2010, Youth 2013, Youth Study Southeast Europe 2018/2019 or European Values Survey. The report was drafted in accordance with the guidelines of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) and the project proposal, which was written by a group of researchers at the Center for the Research of Post-Socialist Companies (CePSS) at the University of Maribor.

3

METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE

TARGET POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The target population of the Slovenian Youth Study consists of all citizens of the Republic of Slovenia aged 14 to 29. According to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SURS, 2017), there were altogether 333, 542 Slovenian citizens in that age group in 2017. As a means to research this target population, a sample size of 1,000 respondents was chosen as sufficiently reliable in order to draw inferences to the whole population. The standard sampling error in this case, assuming a 95 per cent level of reliability, accounts for ± 3.09 percentage points. This means that population parameters differentiate from sample statistics by a maximum of ± 3.09 percent-age points, which is below the standard sampling error threshold value of ± 5.0 percentage points. Hence, samples of this size are generally considered sufficiently representative for studying large populations in Slovenia.

Of course, the representativeness of a sample depends not only upon sample size; in order to achieve the best substitute for a random sample, a stratified quota sample was used. The target population was first stratified according to 12 statistical regions and 5 community types (communities with a maximum of 2,000 residents; communities with 2,000 to 10,000 residents; and communities with more than 10,000 residents, Maribor and Ljubljana), which resulted in 32 independent strata. Next, a two-stage sampling method was implemented within each stratum. First, target settlements (primary sampling units) were randomly selected from the complete list of communities corresponding to particular statistical regions and community types (stratum). Second, respondents were then chosen from the selected primary sampling units according to the pre-set quota requirements.

To be more specific, the shares of the target population within each stratum were first computed. Based on these shares, it was then assessed how many respondents would be selected from each stratum to achieve the net sample size of 1,000 respondents, so that the structure of the sample would proportionally fit the structure of the target population according to statistical regions and community types. The number of primary sampling units selected in the first sampling stage within each stratum depended on the number of respondents required within each stratum in the second sampling stage. As a rule of thumb, generally no more than 10 respondents were selected per each primary sampling unit (Ljubljana, Maribor, Celje and Kranj are exceptions, as all cities are categorised as one community and it was necessary to select more than 10 respondents from each city in the sample). Altogether, 100 primary sampling units were selected.

The interviewers were instructed to search for potential respondents only within the selected primary sampling units allocated to them. During the selection process, each interviewer had to fulfil pre-set quota requirements with respect to gender, age, and completed level of education. For each primary sampling unit, interviewers were given detailed instructions on (a) how many males and females to select, (b) how many respondents from each of the four age groups (aged 14–15, 16–19, 20–24 and 25–29) to recruit, and (c) how many respondents to interview with different levels of completed education (primary education, secondary education, higher education). Quotas were non-interlocking, which means the structure of respondents with respect to gender, age, and education was only controlled at the level of the overall sample (not in each stratum, nor in each primary sampling unit).

DATA COLLECTION

Data collection took place between 23 January and 2 March 2018. The data was collected by means of personal, face-to-face interviews in the field, mostly in households. Before conducting the field-work, all of the interviewers attended one of four introductory seminars (in Ljubljana, Maribor, Novo mesto and Koper), where they received detailed instructions about interviewing and the selection of respondents. Besides quota requirements, interviewers were also instructed to interview only one person per household, which is a common practice in sample selection due to the likely greater similarity of respondents from the same household.

Face-to-face interviews were carried out using the CAPI method (computer assisted personal interviewing), where interviewers used computers/tablets with questionnaires programmed in interviewing software. The questionnaire consisted of an oral and a written (personal) part. The oral part was administered by the interviewer, who read aloud the questions and filled in (on tablets) the respondent's answers (for certain questions, interviewers were instructed to use show-cards to make it easier for respondents to choose among the answers provided). After completing the oral part of the questionnaire, the interviewer handed over the computer/tablet to the respondent and asked him/her to fill in the answers personally for the second part. The written part included more personal and intimate questions. It was assumed that the respondents would likely give more sincere answers to questions on their own.

After the interviewer finished with the fieldwork, the validity of his/her questionnaires was checked online in real time as well as with control phone calls to the respondents who were interviewed, in order to prevent fraud. Interviewers asked respondents to provide their personal and contact information only to check the quality of the fieldwork. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality of collected information, a number of precautions were implemented to prevent the potential abuse of personal data. Personal data was treated separately from respondents' answers to survey questions, so there was no possibility to link the given answers to particular respondents.

RESPONSE RATE AND REASONS FOR NON-RESPONSE

1,201 potential respondents were invited to participate in the survey. 1,014 valid interviews were completed and incorporated into the data, while others refused to participate. Thus, the overall response rate was 84.4 per cent. The response rate is higher than would probably have been achieved had this study utilized a random sample of respondents drawn from the Central Registry of the Slovenian Population. Because this study used stratified quota sampling, interviewers were not given a list of respondents to interview; instead, they could select potential respondents from among their friends, peers, acquaintances, and family members, which probably resulted in a higher response rate. The second reason for the high response rate was the compensation for respondents. Each respondent who participated in the survey and validly finished the questionnaire was afterward given a symbolic prize (a USB stick). The compensation was given to valid respondents immediately after the survey was completed.

Although the sample was carefully constructed to meet the criteria with respect to the relevant demographic variables, some minor discrepancies from the "optimal structure" nevertheless occurred (i.e., interviewers were not able to meet the pre-set quota requirements). To achieve a better representativeness of the sample, the data were weighted prior to the data analysis in order to adjust the demographic structure of the sample to the actual demographic structure of the target population. Weights assign greater impact to some subsets in the sample and a lower impact to other subsets. Data-weighting was based on variables of gender, age and level of completed education.

First, a post-stratification based on a combination of gender and the four age groups was administered. Afterwards, a ranking method was implemented to adjust the weights according to the level of completed education.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Qualitative data was gathered in June and July of 2018. In-depth semi-standardised interviews were used in order to gather qualitative data mainly for the purpose of explanation and illustration of previously gathered quantitative findings. The design of the interviews followed the main thematic fields of the research. A list of potential profiles was developed and a non-random sample of 10 interviewees was selected:

TABLE 1: **List of interview participants**

Name of the interviewee	Profile
Vesna	student
Karolina	young mother
Suzana	young unemployed
Katja	student
Anja	young entrepreneur
Klemen	young volunteer
Taša	precariously employed
Gregor	secondary school pupil
Maj	secondary school pupil
Eva	primary school pupil

Interviews lasted from 90 to 160 minutes. Before the beginning, the respondents were informed about the conditions of the interview approach, the interview process, and they were also asked to consent to the interview and to allow the interviewers and authors of the report to collect and use the data for research purposes. Interviews were not completely anonymous; personal data that were collected which the respondents allowed to be used included personal name, age, photo and region or place of residence. In cases where respondents required absolute anonymity as a condition for cooperation, one of these three elements was omitted.

4

LEISURE AND LIFESTYLE

Living environments and living standards of children and adolescents have been changing rapidly during the last few decades. There is no doubt that in Europe this change has affected the lifestyle of young people in many ways. One of these is the way they spend their free time (leisure); that is, the time in which an individual can indulge in his own free will and is not intended for professional, family and social duties (Dumazedier, 1960). Moreover, leisure can have positive or negative effects on the quality of young people's lives and has important social, economic and political implications (Roberts, 2006).

LEISURE ACTIVITIES

Today, leisure time exists as a social phenomenon and is a part of every person's life. This means that it provides an opportunity for young people to form personality, implement plans and socialise. It enables them to get closer to the real world, especially the world that surrounds them. How young people spend their leisure time is one of the most important factors that determine their way of living. For young people, leisure time is one of the most important parts of their lives.

If leisure time is a time for certain activities, then the question arises: What are the major activities that affect the formation of the culture of leisure time?

The most frequent single leisure activity among young people is *listening to music* – almost all young people do it “often” (at least once a week) or “very often” (every day or almost every day), followed by *entertainment, socialising, relaxation* and *being active in sports* (Figure 1). Slightly fewer respondents engage “often/very often” in activities such as: *spending time in bars, cafes and clubs, shopping, doing something creative* and *playing video games*.

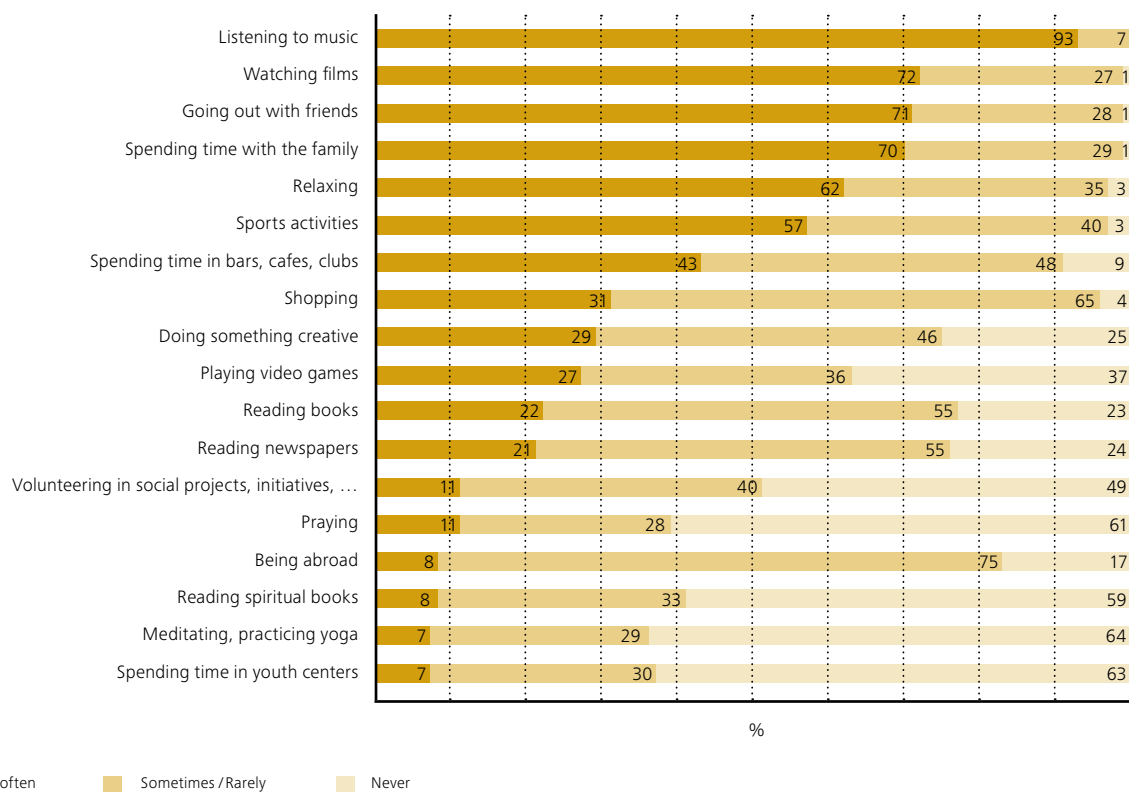
Only about one-fifth “often/very often” *read books and newspapers*, while almost a quarter never read. The fewest respondents “often/very often” engage in activities such as *spending time in youth centres, meditating, practicing yoga, reading spiritual books, praying, being abroad* and *volunteering in social projects*. Globally, youthful participation in civic engagement is relatively low (World Youth Report, 2016), so it is not surprising that almost half of our respondents never *spend time in youth centres*, and more than two-thirds never *volunteer in social projects*.

Statistical analysis reveals that determinants like gender, age, parents' education, financial status (household material status) and living environments correlate with some leisure patterns and thus indicate heterogeneity in leisure activities among young Slovenians.

Surprisingly, men, compared to women, read books more often ($C = 0.119$, $p < 0.01$). Older youth more frequently read books ($\rho = 0.071$, $p < 0.01$) and newspapers ($\rho = 0.198$, $p < 0.001$), while listening to music ($\rho = -0.085$, $p < 0.01$), going out with friends ($\rho = -0.188$, $p < 0.001$), being active in sports ($\rho = -0.064$, $p < 0.05$), doing something creative, ($\rho = -0.120$, $p < 0.001$), playing video games ($\rho = -0.145$, $p < 0.001$), relaxing ($\rho = -0.117$, $p < 0.001$) and spending time at youth centres ($\rho = -0.083$, $p < 0.01$) are more frequent among younger respondents. Young people from families in which the parents have better education are significantly more active in sports ($\rho = 0.135$, $p < 0.001$) and reading books ($\rho = 0.174$, $p < 0.001$).

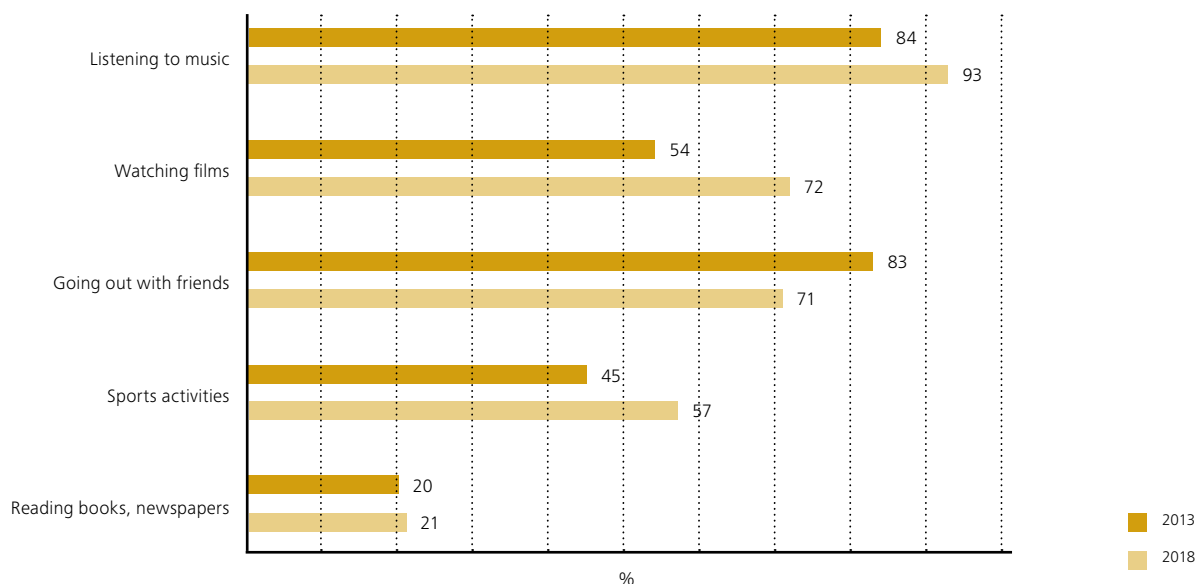
Slovenian youth research at the turn of the 21st century showed that the most frequent leisure time activity was spending a large part of their leisure time with friends and partners, followed by watching TV, listening to music and being active in sports (Ule, 1996; Ule, 2000; Ule and Kuhar, 2002). Similar leisure time patterns, with additional increased use of computer or the Internet, were

FIGURE 1: **Leisure time activities.** How often do you engage in the following activities?



Source: Data files (FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19).

FIGURE 2: **Leisure activities young people engage in “often” and “very often” in Slovenia, 2013–2018.**



Source: Data files FES Youth Study Slovenia 2013, data files (FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19).

Note: In order to enable valid comparison across different datasets, the age of respondents was limited to 16–27.

also found in the last two comprehensive Slovenian youth studies (Kirbiš, 2011a; Kirbiš, 2011b; Kirbiš and Tavčar Krajnc, 2014; Kirbiš and Zagorc, 2014).

Data from our study portrays a similar picture (most frequent activities: listening to music, watching films, socialising, using Internet and being active in sports) with some important differences. First, in 2013, 83 % of young people were *going out with friends* often or very often; this share declined to 71 % in 2018 (Figure 2). Additionally, the frequency of *listening to music and watching TV* has increased in 2018. Today, young people spend less time interacting with their friends face-to-face than the previous generation, while they spend more time listening to music, watching films (via computer, TV or any other device) and being active in sports.

The trends in young people's leisure time show a decline in face-to-face interaction with their friends, while listening to music, watching films and being active in sports are on the rise.

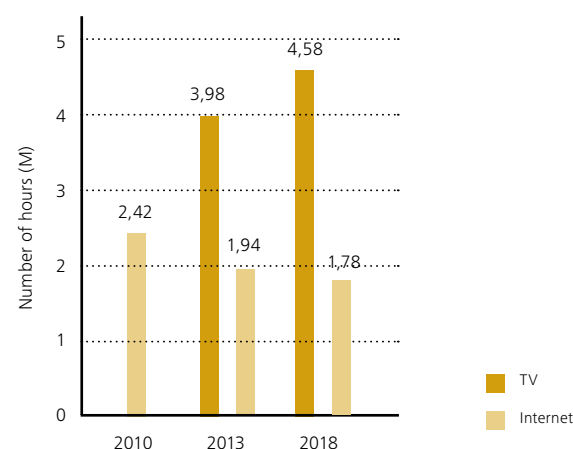
NEW MEDIA USE

An essential change in the leisure time of young people is undoubtedly an increase in the use of "new media,"¹ since nearly all of their leisure time is now spent on cell/smartphones – not talking, but texting, on social media, online and gaming (Twengle, 2017). New media affect people's everyday lives in many ways, whether in education, the workplace, at home or on the move. Mobile phones, tablets, laptops and computers are just some of the devices that are frequently used – often on a daily basis – by a large proportion of the population of the European Union (EU), particularly by young people (Eurostat, 2017).

Similarly, our study found that almost all young people (99 %) today have permanent Internet access; 78.3 % practically all the time and 18.3 % every day or almost every day. It should be noted that respondents may have Internet access in their household, at work or by mobile phone. Furthermore, an analysis of the use of mobile devices to connect to the Internet when away from home or work in 2016 shows that these were used by more than 8 out of 10 young Slovenians aged 16–29 years (Eurostat, 2017).

Past studies of young Slovenians found a substantial increase in hours spent using the Internet per day between 2010 and 2014 (Kirbiš, 2011b; Kirbiš and Zagorc, 2014). Current data show that young people in Slovenia not only spend more time online, but the frequency of their Internet use is also above the average of EU-28 countries and even above the average of the EU-15 socio-economically advanced countries (Eurostat, 2018).

FIGURE 3: **Average hours per day spent using the Internet and watching TV in Slovenia, 2010–2018**
How many hours per day do you spend using Internet and watching TV?



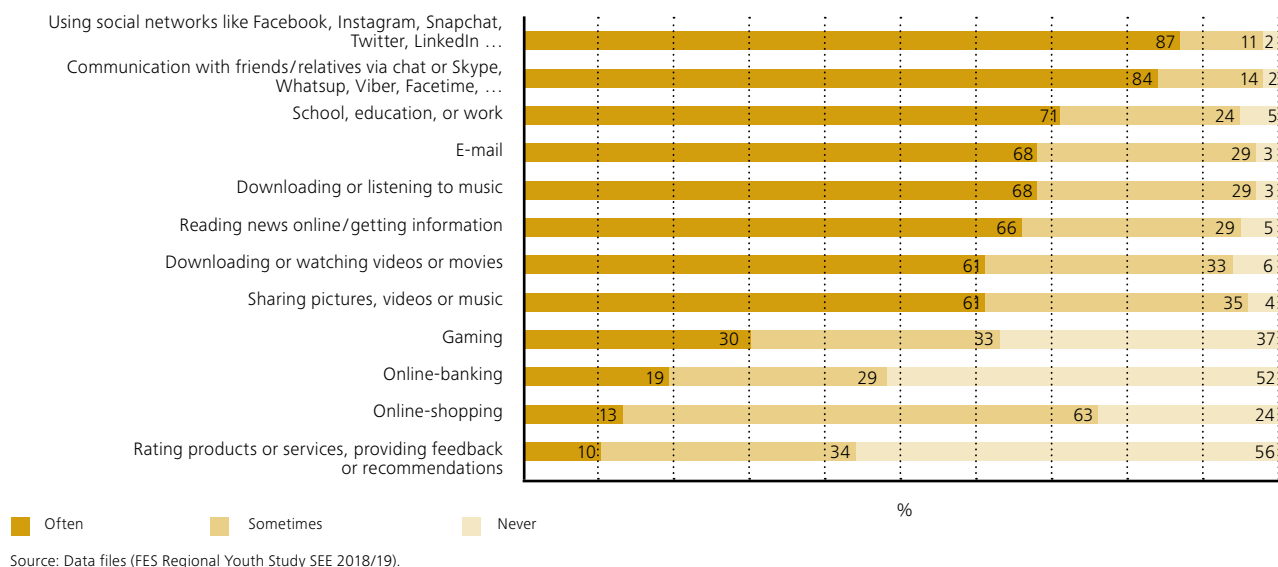
Source: Data files Youth 2010, data files FES Youth Study Slovenia 2013, data files (FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19).

Note: In order to enable valid comparison across different datasets, the age of respondents was limited to 16–27. In Youth 2010 (Lavrič et al. 2010), a different scale for measuring frequency of watching TV was used, so it was not possible to make comparisons.

Figure 3 shows a substantial increase in using the Internet. In 2010, young Slovenians spent 2.42 hours per day using the Internet, while in 2018 they spent 4.58 hours per day – 2.16 hours more. Furthermore, the 2018 survey data indicate that 39.1 % of young people use the Internet for 5 or more hours daily. The data also indicate the largest mean difference in 2018 between spending time on the Internet and watching TV. More precisely, young people spend almost 3 more hours daily using the Internet than they spend watching TV.

Additionally, household material status and the level of parental education show positive correlations with using the Internet ($\rho = 0.139$, $p < 0.001$; $\rho = 0.147$, $p < 0.001$) and negative correlations with watching TV ($\rho = -0.119$, $p < 0.01$; $\rho = -0.186$, $p < 0.01$).

FIGURE 4: How often do you use Internet for different purposes?



Almost all young people in Slovenia have permanent access to the Internet.

Most young people use the Internet for socialising with their friends and others. In fact, accessing social networks (87%) and communication with friends (84%) are the most frequent Internet activities. Somewhat less frequent are using the Internet for school, education and work, sending e-mails, downloading or listening to music and searching for information. Two-thirds often use the Internet for downloading or watching videos or films and sharing pictures or videos, while one-third use it for gaming. Less than one-fifth often use the Internet for online-banking, online-shopping and rating products or services.

Vesna:

‘What’s really cool is that I finally opened e-banking, which I’ve been doing for a hundred years, but that’s a kind of thing (participation in Erasmus mobility during study) that pushed me forward. Goodness gracious Vesna, where are you going; you’ll need a card to pay online, you need online banking, etc., no? I was basically preparing for this.’

Statistical analysis indicates that socio-demographic determinants like age, highest level of parental education and financial status correlate with some Internet activities. Younger people more frequently use Internet for social networking ($\rho = -0.088$, $p < 0.01$), communication with friends ($\rho = -0.089$, $p < 0.01$), downloading or listening to music ($\rho = -0.165$, $p < 0.001$) and downloading or watching videos or films ($\rho = -0.110$, $p < 0.001$), while older youth more often use it for sending e-mails ($\rho = 0.307$, $p < 0.001$), searching for information ($\rho = 0.359$,

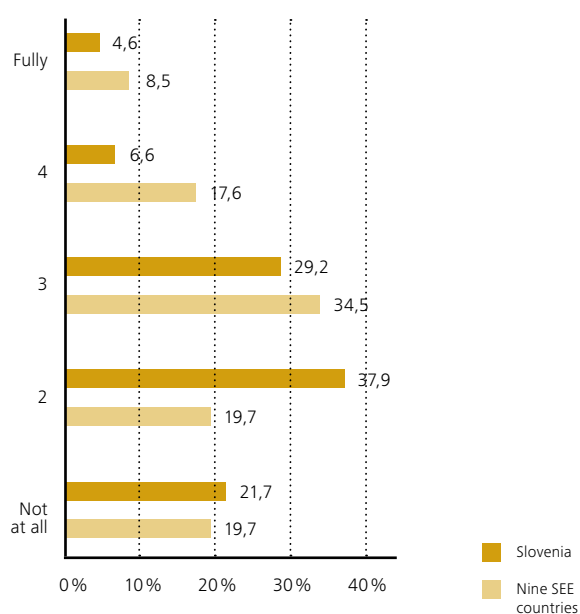
$p < 0.001$), online-banking ($\rho = 0.403$, $p < 0.001$) and online-shopping ($\rho = 0.122$, $p < 0.001$). Young people with better financial status ($\rho = 0.151$, $p < 0.001$) and higher levels of parental education ($\rho = 0.193$, $p < 0.001$) more often use Internet for school, education and work, while those with lower financial status ($\rho = -0.069$, $p < 0.05$) and lower parental education ($\rho = -0.107$, $p < 0.01$) use it more often for gaming.

Surprisingly, gender was not significantly associated with any of the Internet purposes. This finding is not comparable with past studies (Dowel et al., 2009; Kirbiš, 2011a; Kirbiš, 2011b; Kirbiš and Tavčar Krajnc, 2014; Kirbiš and Zagorc, 2014) that suggest gender differences in Internet activities.

In general, online social networks have gained great popularity, and their usage is now one of the most frequent activities on the Internet in all ten SEE countries. Obviously, online social networking takes place in a context of trust. It would thus be expected that young people also have relative trust in social networks.

FIGURE 5: **Trust in social networks in Slovenia in comparison to other countries.**

How much do you trust the social networks to make responsible use of your personal data?



Source: Data files (FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19).

Although trust in new media is increasing with the frequency of the use of activities in all SEE countries, young Slovenians surprisingly have the lowest trust in the responsibility of social networks in using personal data ($M = 2.35$) compared to other SEE countries ($M = 2.78$). Specifically, only one-tenth of young Slovenians trust social networks, while in other SEE countries, more than one-fourth do. Although the majority of young Slovenians do not trust the media and are consequently aware of the risks and threats associated with their online activities, their concern is not reflected in their actual behaviour. For example, analysis of profiles (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, MySpace, etc.) has found that, although users state that they are worried about their privacy, at the same time they put detailed personal information on their profiles (Lewis, et al., 2007; Thelwall, 2008; Utz & Krämer, 2009). This phenomenon is also known as the “privacy paradox” (Barnes, 2006) or “privacy dilemma” (Brandtzaeg et al., 2010, 1008).

REAL FRIENDS VS. VIRTUAL FRIENDS

The majority of young people are satisfied (82.4%) with their friends and treat friendship seriously – 95% of young people believe that being faithful to friends is important or very important. At the same time, there is a noticeable decline in socialising with face-to-face friends. Moreover, young people have a lot of (virtual) friends on social networks: more than two-thirds (67.2%) have more than 200 friends, and more than one-third have over 500.

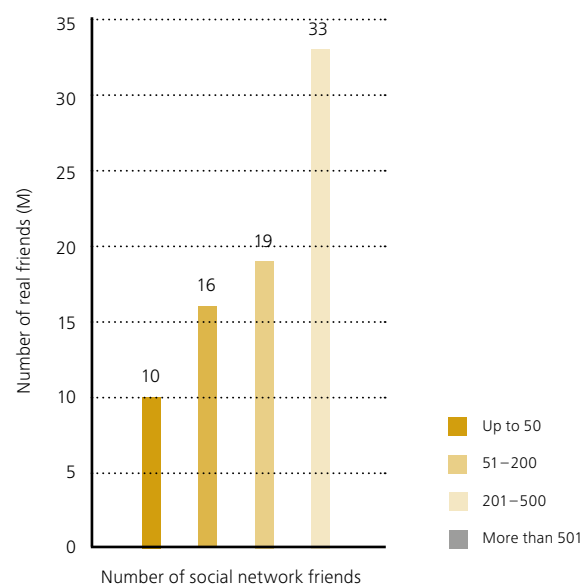
Karolina:

‘/.../people no longer take the time to go to coffee because they have the opportunity to do this (virtual interaction). And because we have the option, we simply give up ‘face-to-face’ communication.’

Anja:

‘Maybe somebody really finds it harder to make personal contact live and is much more relaxed on these Internet networks or in a virtual world and it seems easier to contact him in such a way.’

FIGURE 6: **Number of real friends vs. social network friends.** Approximately how many of your social network friends/contacts would you count in your closer circle of friends in real everyday life?



Source: Data files (FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19).

Note: Data was derived and is limited to the sample from Slovenia

As Figure 6 indicates, there is a large discrepancy in the number of real friends vs. the number of (virtual) social friends.

HEALTH AND LIFESTYLE

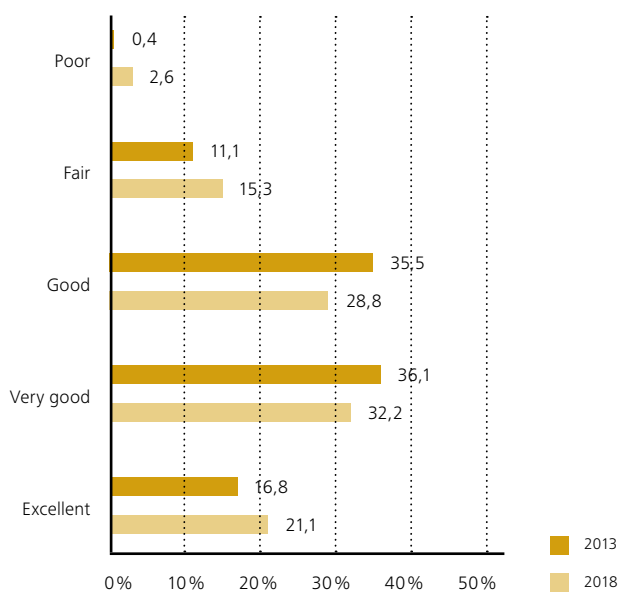
In general, young people in Slovenia rated their health as quite good ($M = 3.54$), with significantly better self-rated health among young people with higher financial status and higher parental educational level. However, self-rated health has slightly declined in the last 5 years (see Figure 7). This is particularly evident in the increased share of those who rated their health as “poor/fair” (11.5% in 2013, to 17.9% in 2018). Compared to other SEE countries, young Slovenians reported lower self-rated health.

Furthermore, our study indicates substantial differences in health risk behaviour in the last eight years. The proportion of

young people that rarely or never consume alcohol and of “non-smokers” has increased, while “everyday” smokers and those who consume alcohol every day have declined. In addition, since 2013 the share of those who never use soft drugs has risen from 49.6%, to 70.6% in 2018.

In addition, young people’s attitudes towards alcohol have also changed. If in 2013 three-quarters of young people believed alcohol was “acceptable”, this share has dropped to one-third in 2018.

FIGURE 7: **Level of self-rated health in Slovenia, 2013–2018.** How would you rate your health?



Source: Data files FES Youth Study Slovenia 2013, data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

Note: In order to enable valid comparison across different datasets, the age of respondents was limited to 16–27.

Young Slovenians have in 2018 reported lower self-rated health compared to other SEE countries.

CONCLUSION

Main Findings:

1. The trends in young people’s leisure time show a decline in face-to-face interaction with friends, while listening to music, watching films and being active in sports activities are on the rise.
2. Trust in new media is increasing with the frequency of use of social networks in all SEE countries. Although young Slovenians use social networks most frequently, they have the lowest trust in the responsibility of social networks in using personal data.
3. The majority of young people are satisfied (82.4%) with their friends and treat friendship seriously – 95% of young people believe that being faithful to friends is important or very important.
4. Young Slovenians rated their health as quite good, with significantly better self-rated health among young people with higher financial status and higher parental educational level.
5. Compared to other SEE countries, young Slovenians reported lower self-rated health.
6. Not only did young people have more negative attitudes toward alcohol than in 2013, the proportion of those who rarely or never consume alcohol actually increased. Moreover, in the same period, the proportion of “non-smokers” and those who never use drugs has also increased.

The chapter’s main findings in one or two sentences:

Young Slovenians report spending a relatively large amount of time online, while face-to-face interaction is in decline. Although they are highly adept at using technology and are very active social media users, they focus on health and well-being in areas such as sports activities.

Policy recommendation:

The rapid development of the Internet has changed the conventional way of young people’s lives, so there is a need for policy-makers to develop even greater awareness of the negative consequences (e.g. Internet addiction, social isolation, crime).

5

VALUES, RELIGION AND TRUST

Contemporary literature suggests that worldviews of young people are an important factor determining the future of societies in at least two ways. Firstly, young people can directly become agents of social change through political and wider social action. An example of this mechanism famously happened exactly fifty years ago, in 1968, when young people across Europe and the US demanded societal change and went on the streets to get it. The second, more indirect mechanism of young people's influence on the future of a society is illustrated in Mannheim's conceptualisation of generations. Mannheim (1952) conceived of a generation as an age group formed by specific historic circumstances and developing its own unique worldview, set of values and patterns of behaviour. Ensuing from the contemporary sociology of generations (Woodman, 2017), we have good reason to expect that the worldviews of

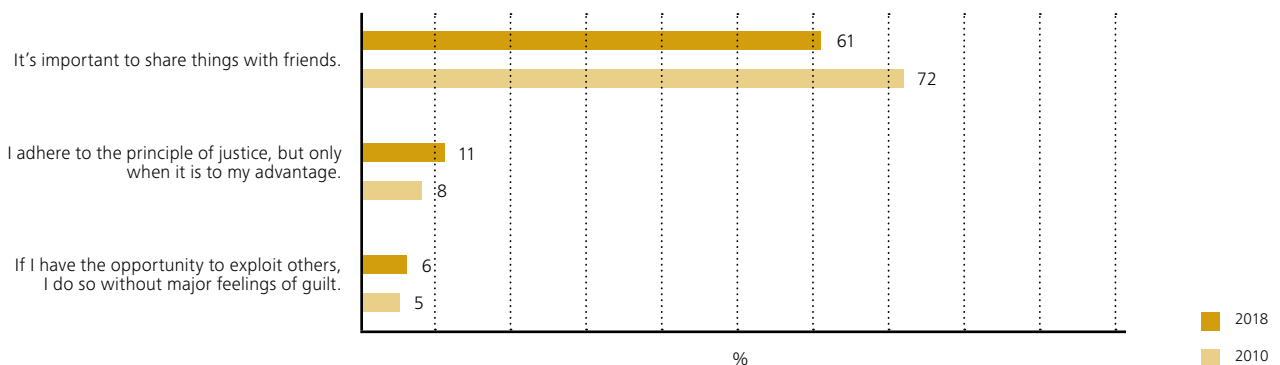
today's young people will have an important impact on Slovenian society when these young people reach adulthood and take over important roles in society.

VALUES OF YOUTH: INDIVIDUALISATION CONTINUES

Focusing specifically on the values of young people in Slovenia, the most significant general trend during the 1990s was a decline in the importance of public themes such as politics, religion or work, combined with an increase in the importance of themes relating to the private sphere, for example friends, family and the quality of everyday life (Ule 1996b: 23). Around the turn of the century, the most important values among young Slovenians were individualistic ones, such as health, true friendship and family life, but also certain globally oriented values

FIGURE 8: **Agreement with statements measuring individualism and collectivism, Slovenia, 2010 and 2018.**

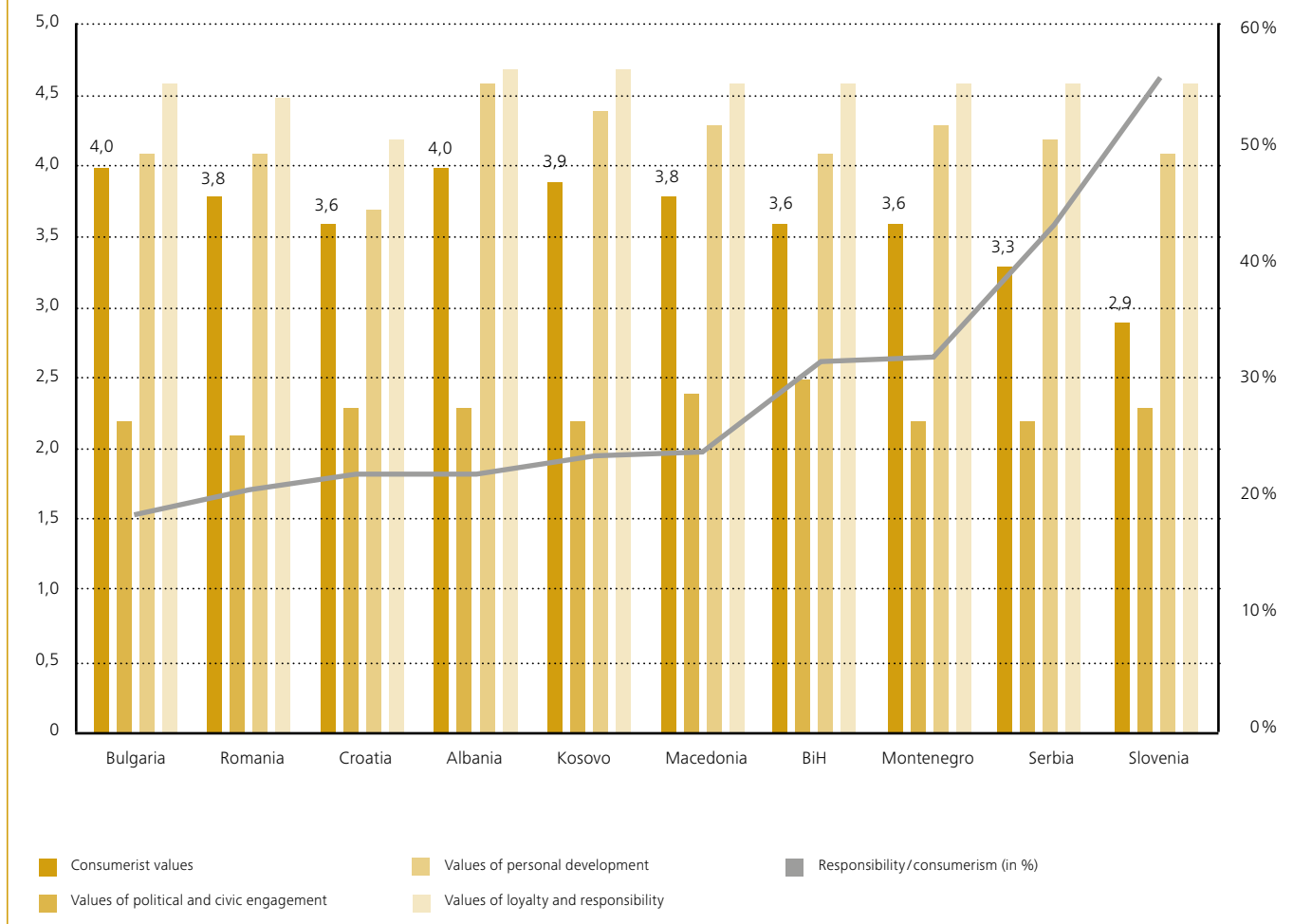
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (agree or completely agree)



Source: Data files Youth 2010, data files (FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19).

Note: Age group 15–29.

FIGURE 9: Importance of four basic value orientations, by country, (FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19).



such as peace on earth, environmental protection and liberal values (Ule and Kuhar 2002).

The decline in major ideational themes (politics, religion and work) and the growth of personal/private themes (such as family, friends or leisure time) continued at least until 2013, combined with an increasing emphasis on individualism and competition as strategies for coping with uncertainty and changing social conditions (Musil and Lavrič, 2011; Lavrič and Boroja, 2014; Kirbiš and Zagorc, 2014).

Data in Figure 8 suggest that the trend towards increasing individualism continued in the period between 2010 and 2018. Most importantly, young people in Slovenia are substantially less prepared to share things with their friends. They are also slightly more prone to display egotistical behaviour in terms of putting self-interest first and even exploiting others.

The trend towards individualisation at the level of values, which had been ongoing at least since the early 1990s, continued in the period between 2010 and 2018.

Respondents in the study were also asked to rate twenty items measuring basic social values in terms of importance in their personal life. Out of these items, factor analysis yielded four basic value orientations².

Although the differences between countries were in most cases relatively small, Slovenia does stand out in one dimension. Consumerist values, such as being rich, wearing branded clothes or looking good³, are least prevalent in Slovenia among the ten SEE countries. Though it might sound surprising that consumerist values are weakest in the socio-economically most developed country, there is a good theoretical explanation for this. It was developed by Ronald Inglehart (1977), who discovered that generations growing up in greater affluence tend to take material security for granted and therefore place greater importance on non-material issues, such as self-expression, autonomy or environmentalism. Indeed, if we focus our attention on the values that are, on average, relatively more important to young Slovenians in comparison to young people in other SEE countries, we find non-materialistic issues such as taking responsibility, being faithful to one's partner and friends or participating in civic activities.

The ratio between such values of loyalty and responsibility, on the one hand, and consumerist values, on the other, is very important, since it indicates the social responsibility and maturity of

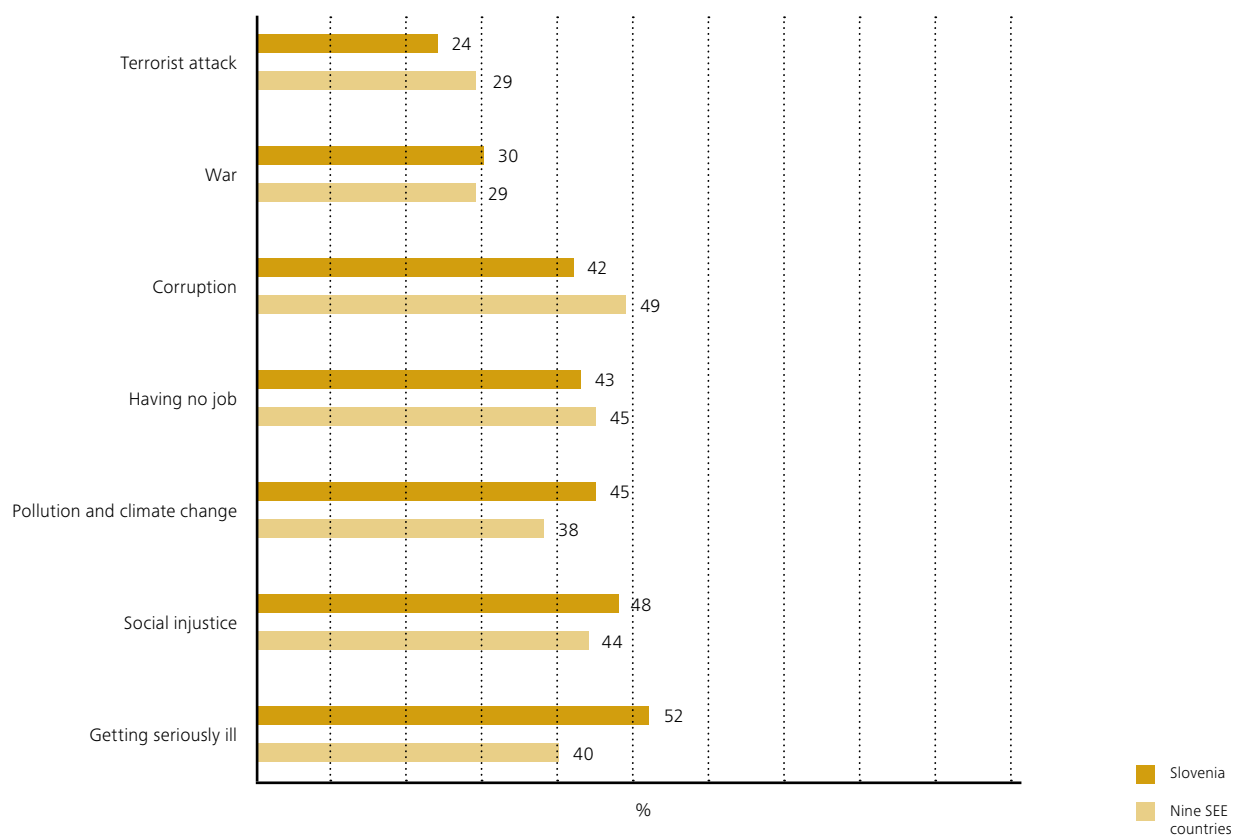
young people in the face of the temptations of consumer capitalism. As the line in Figure 9 clearly shows, young Slovenians appear to be relatively mature in this sense, at least in relation to other countries in the (FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19) sample.

ANXIETY AND LOW LEVELS OF LIFE SATISFACTION

The relative prevalence of post-materialist values is also noticeable if we focus on the major anxieties among young Slovenians:

In comparison to young people in other SEE countries, young Slovenians stand out for the low presence of consumerist values and the high salience of values of responsibility and loyalty.

FIGURE 10: **Anxieties of young Slovenians in comparison to other (FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19) countries.** To what extent are you frightened or concerned in relation to ... (% saying 'A lot')

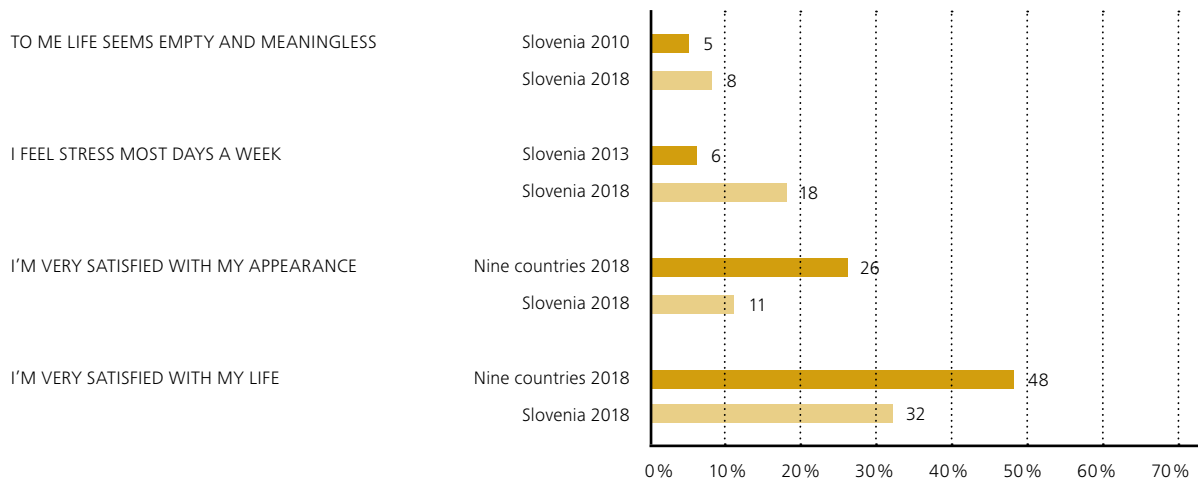


The major anxieties among young people in Slovenia are in line with the general post-materialist profile, disproportionately emphasising issues like health or environment, while putting less emphasis on issues like corruption or unemployment.

This finding fits very well with the finding about the relatively high level of individualism and post-materialism among young Slovenians. General societal issues like corruption, terrorism, war or even unemployment are, unlike in other SEE countries, generally seen as less important as compared to more individualistic and post-materialist issues, such as health, social justice and the natural environment.

The relatively great focus on personal issues might also help to explain the surprisingly low levels of life satisfaction among young Slovenians.

FIGURE 11: Indicators of life satisfaction and stress, Slovenia and nine SEE countries, 2010–2018.



Source: Data files Youth 2010, data files FES Youth Study Slovenia 2013, data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

It is discernible from Figure 11 that young people in Slovenia are not only substantially less satisfied with their lives as compared to other young people in the SEE region, but also substantially less satisfied with their physical appearance. Furthermore, in the last five to eight years, young people in Slovenia have become substantially more stressed and even slightly more prone to depressive thoughts.

To interpret these findings, we should first consider the fact that, somewhat surprisingly, young peoples' life satisfaction is negatively correlated with the level of socio-economic development of the country as measured by the HDI ($r = -0.618$, $p < 0.01$). We find the most satisfied young people in less developed Kosovo and the least satisfied young people in highly developed Slovenia.⁴

Our analysis suggests that there are two major reasons behind this apparent paradox. One is that young people from less developed countries see much brighter hopes in the EU, which fuels their social and personal optimism.⁵ The second, more important, reason has to do with the fact that young people in more developed countries tend to be more individualised. The individualisation of values and everyday life, in turn, tends to erode a sense of community and belonging and consequently life satisfaction.⁶

These findings and interpretations also accord with the finding that young Slovenians are by far the least satisfied with their physical appearance in the (FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19) sample, and that they report being increasingly under stress and even increasingly have depressive thoughts (see Figure 11).⁷ Both of these trends can be related to the increased focus on oneself⁸, which is a logical correlate of individualisation in social life.

Young Slovenians are increasingly stressed and, compared to young people in other SEE countries, disproportionately dissatisfied with their life and with their physical appearance. We can interpret this by high levels of individualisation and the related loss of the sense of community, as well as by the relative lack of optimism about the future of their country.

RELIGION: TRENDS TOWARD PRIVATISATION AND POLARISATION

Many studies have shown that religion plays a relatively unimportant role in the lives of individuals in Slovenia, compared to other countries in the region (Flere and Klanjšek, 2007; Toš, 1999; Lavrič, 2013). Furthermore, two recent studies of young Slovenians (one in 2010 and one in 2013) revealed a long-term trend of gradual decline in young people's religiousness (Flere, 2011: 471; Lavrič and Boroja, 2014).

Since the applied measures of religiosity in our survey included items that were also used in the two previous surveys and also in the World Values survey, it was possible to compare religiosity among young people in 2018 with the situation in previous years, all the way back to 2000.

Since the beginning of the century, Roman Catholicism has been losing popularity among young Slovenians. This indicates that religion has lost much of its power as an identity-marker – the share of those not identifying with any religion surged from 24% to 38% over the past eight years. We should also stress that identification with the dominant religion is extremely low in comparison to other countries in the region. While 52% of young Slovenians identify with Roman Catholicism, in neighbouring Croatia, for example, this share amounts to 90%, and the same percentage of young Serbians identify with Orthodox Christianity.

The sharp rise (from 30% to 44%) of religious non-churchgoers since 2013 confirms that we are dealing with a pronounced trend towards young people moving away from the Roman Catho-

lic Church. However, while the share of regular (at least once a month) churchgoers declined until 2013, this trend seems to have reversed after 2013. Consequently, we can notice an extremely sharp decline in the share of those 'in between', that is young people going to church just on special occasions, less than once a month. In other words, it seems that a moderate trend towards polarisation in terms of religiosity has taken place. The trend towards polarisation during the last five years is also noticeable at the level of self-reported importance of God in the respondent's life. While the share of those choosing the value '1' on a 1 to 10 scale has increased from 34% to 37%, the share of those choosing option '10' also increased, from 6% to 9%.

Further analysis also showed that religiosity as measured by the importance of God has, somewhat surprisingly, increased over the past five years. While the average score of this variable (on a 1 to 10 scale) fell from 5.42 in 2005 to 3.57 in 2013, it has increased to 3.94 in 2018. This finding might seem incompatible with the previously identified obvious decline in religious identification and religious attendance. However, these findings are entirely compatible with the privatisation thesis (see Luckmann, 1967, Beyer, 1994, Davie, 2000; Pollack and Müller, 2006; Lavrič, 2013), according to which in late modernity individualized forms of religiosity (e.g. importance of God in one's personal life) tend to increasingly prevail over the institutional ones (e.g. identification with churches or church attendance). The general trend towards privatisation of religiosity has already been established in all countries of the former Yugoslavia for the period between 1995 and 2008 (Lavrič, 2013).

FIGURE 12: **Self-declared religious affiliation, young people (16–27) in Slovenia, 2000–2018.**
Which religious denomination, if any, do you belong to?

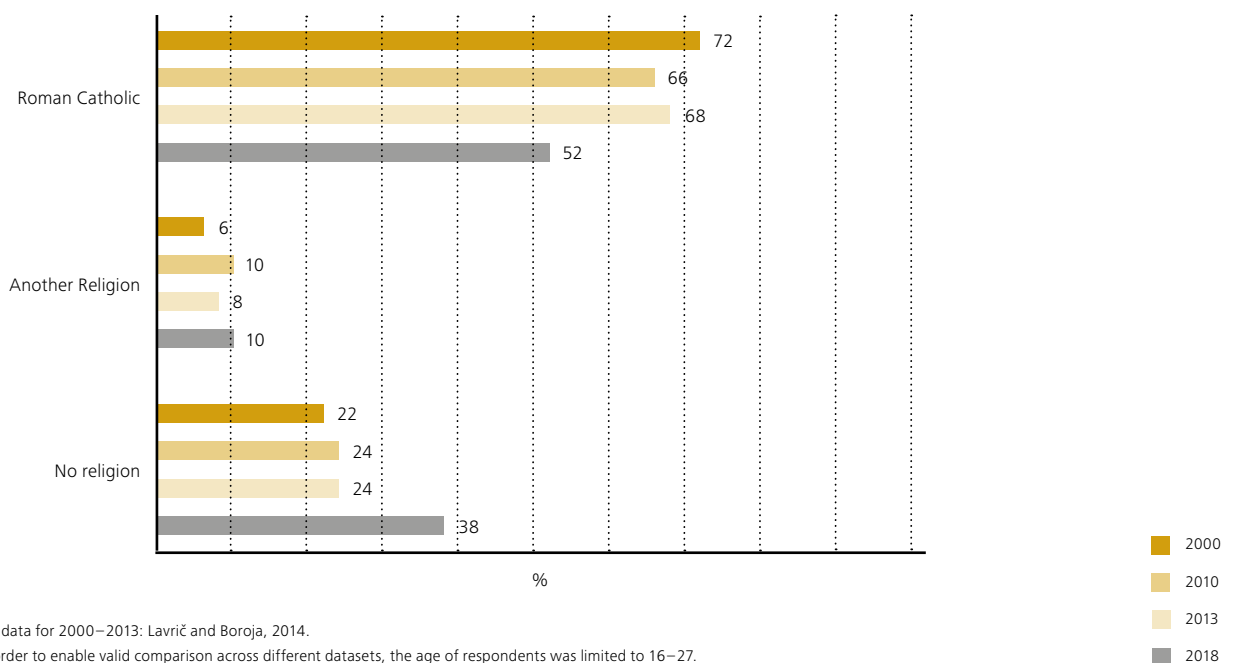
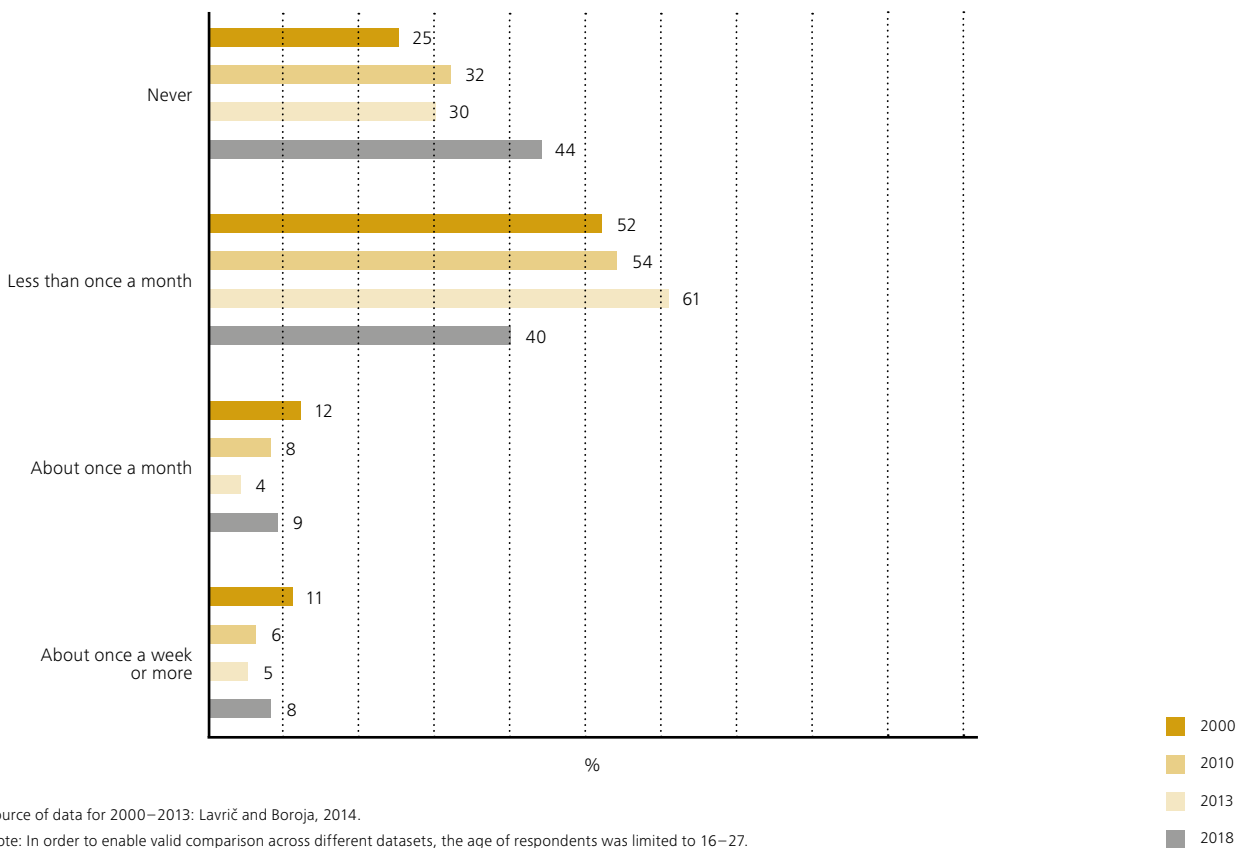


FIGURE 13: Frequency of church attendance, young people (16–27) in Slovenia, 2000–2018.

Apart from weddings and funerals, about how often do you attend religious services these days?



Karolina:

'I'm a religious person. Very religious, but not a churchgoer. /.../ I know God exists and I don't have to go to church for that.'

Anja:

'I lived in a fairly religious family, we went to church on holidays. I have almost all the sacraments, but for the last 10 years or since I've been thinking with my head about life, I no longer go to church and I do not even think about what I believe in, because it is simply a church as an institution that I disagree with.'

Combining the above findings, we can conclude the following:

Since the beginning of the century, young people in Slovenia have been rapidly abandoning their attachment to Roman Catholicism, and in 2018 only about half of young people identified themselves as Catholics. At the same time, the share of strong believers and the reported importance of God in one's life have slightly increased since 2013, indicating trends towards polarisation and privatisation in terms of religiosity.

When comparing young Slovenians to young people from the other nine countries in the region, it becomes obvious that we are dealing with by far the most secularised young people. This undoubtedly has a lot to do with the fact that Slovenia is the most developed country, at least in terms of the Human Development Index (HDI). The fact that Slovenia is at the same time the most socio-economically developed and the least religious country in the region is very much in line with what is probably the currently most influential version of the secularisation theory developed by

Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart (Norris and Inglehart, 2004). According to this theory, higher levels of HDI indicate higher levels of existential security, which is the most important factor eroding religion along the lines of modernisation.

When it comes to social factors of religiosity⁹ among young Slovenians, our data confirm many of the already well-established relationships. Religiosity is more present among young people with less-educated parents, in smaller settlements and among women.

Turning to the social effects, higher religiosity is related to higher levels of nationalism ($r = 0.245$, $p < 0.01$), psychological authoritarianism ($r = 0.161$, $p < 0.01$), political authoritarianism ($r = 0.160$, $p < 0.01$),¹⁰ and especially with a right-wing political orientation ($r = 0.304$, $p < 0.01$). It is important to add that the correlations between religiosity and right-wing political orientation, as well as correlations between religiosity and nationalism, are substantially stronger in Slovenia than in other countries (the next closest is Croatia).

Among young Slovenians, religiosity is a strong predictor of right-wing authoritarianism and nationalism.

Religiosity also correlates with higher levels of trust in social institutions and organisations, especially trust in the army ($r = 0.178$, $p < 0.01$) and in big companies ($r = 0.148$, $p < 0.01$). These findings provide further support for the thesis of religiosity going hand in hand with right-wing authoritarianism and related concepts, at least among young Slovenians.

CONCLUSION

Main findings:

7. The trend towards individualisation at the level of values, which had been ongoing at least since the early 1990s, has continued in the period between 2010 and 2018.
8. In comparison to young people in other SEE countries, young Slovenians stand out for the low presence of consumerist values and the high presence of values of responsibility and loyalty.
9. Major anxieties among young people in Slovenia are in line with the general post-materialist profile, disproportionately emphasising issues like health or the environment, while putting less emphasis on issues like corruption or unemployment.
10. Young Slovenians are increasingly stressed and, as compared to young people in other SEE countries, disproportionately dissatisfied with their life and with their physical appearance. We can interpret this by high levels of individualisation and the related loss of the sense of community, as well as by the relative lack of optimism about the future of their country.
11. Since the beginning of the century, young people in Slovenia have been rapidly abandoning their attachment to Roman Catholicism, and in 2018 only about half of young people identified themselves as Catholics. At the same time, the share of strong believers and the reported importance of God in one's life have slightly increased since 2013, indicating trends towards polarisation and privatisation in terms of religiosity.
12. Among young Slovenians, religiosity is a strong predictor of right-wing authoritarianism and nationalism.

The chapter's main findings in one or two sentences:

In terms of values, young Slovenians appear to be the most post-materialist group in the SEE region, which is consistent with theoretical expectations given the fact that the country has the highest level of socio-economic development, at least in terms of HDI. On the other hand, more than two decades of individualisation and secularisation seem to have contributed to increasing levels of stress, depression and life dissatisfaction among young Slovenians.

Policy recommendation:

Policy makers should be aware that rapid socio-economic change is likely to bring about greater psychological pressures on young people. Taking this into account, policymakers should seek models of sustainable development in socio-psychological terms. This might include measures leading to a less competitive and precarious situation for individuals in the labour market, less competitive approaches to formal education, less public promotion of values of personal success, and more public emphasis on values of solidarity and trust.

6

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

The relationship of young people towards society in the western world in the last few decades has been characterised by growing individualism: Old notions about collective duties and loyalties are diminishing, and an “individualised ethics of everyday life” is becoming a stable pattern (Ule et al., 2008, p. 76). The emphasis on quality of life in the private sphere is expressed through attribution of significance to values such as family and friends. These two values were among the top three, besides health, ranked in the recent national youth studies in Slovenia, and these values have been increasing since the beginning of the nineties (Miheljčak, ed., 2002; Lavrič, ed., 2011; Flere and Klanjšek, ed., 2014).

In 2018, respondents evaluated the importance for a happy life in various life domains, such as having a spouse, having children, having friends and living in a good country (Table 2). The importance of partnership and parenthood both show a statistically significant increase with the respondent’s age, while the importance of having a lot of friends decreases. Women attribute slightly more importance to having children than men do (3.9 vs. 3.8); the same is true for respondents with parents without tertiary education in comparison to those with at least one parent who has that level of education (4.0 vs. 3.7).

TABLE 2: **Happiness and life domains**

How important for a happy life, in your opinion...	is having a spouse/ partner in life?	is having children?	is having a lot of friends?	living in a good country?
SLO				
N	997	996	1002	988
Mean	4.34	3.85	3.61	3.47
Std. Deviation	0.974	1.262	1.096	1.190
Other nine participating countries from South East Europe (SEE9)				
N	9678	9686	9776	9760
Mean	4.52	4.63	4.14	4.55
Std. Deviation	0.850	0.832	1.029	0.797

Note: Values range from 1 (Not at all important) to 5 (Very important)

The highest level of satisfaction on average, as seen in Table 3, was with the circle of friends (4.3), followed by satisfaction with family life, indicating the importance of these two areas of life for young people. In 2018, life satisfaction in general is slightly higher than in 2013 (4.0 vs. 3.9), taking into account the sub-

sample of young people aged 16–27. Comparing responses cross-nationally, Slovenian youngsters are less satisfied across all domains except employment than the from other nine participating countries from South East Europe (SEE9) sample of respondents.

TABLE 3: **Satisfaction with life domains**

To what extent are you satisfied:	SLO			SEE9		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
With your family life?	1006	4.15	0.979	9741	4.47	0.806
With your circle of friends?	1011	4.26	0.840	9794	4.34	0.840
With your education?	989	3.87	1.008	9671	4.09	1.011
With your job, if relevant?	524	3.72	1.117	5773	3.74	1.232
With your life in general?	1004	4.03	0.887	9736	4.25	0.847

Note: Values range from 1 (Very dissatisfied) to 5 (Very satisfied)

Among the life domains, satisfaction with family life was the one showing the highest correlation with satisfaction with life in general (Pearson correlation coefficient = 0.509), followed by circle of friends and job satisfaction (0.435; 0.436).

We also examined differences in the values of getting married and having children, on the Slovenian sample. The importance of having children showed statistically significant differences across genders (female: 4.0; male: 3.8); parental education (higher: 3.7; lower: 4.1); and age (14–17: 3.7; 18–24: 3.9; 24–29: 4.1); and the importance of getting married showed statistically significant differences depending on parental education (higher: 3.4; lower: 3.2).

Immediate family is very important for young people, given that they are highly satisfied with family life. The next circle, friends, is of almost equal importance. Traditional values like getting married are slightly less important, but having children is very important, especially for young women. Both marriage and having children are slightly more valued by young people having parents with lower levels of education.

LIVING IN THE FAMILY OF ORIGIN AND LEAVING IT

The family of origin plays an important role in terms of transferable and non-transferable resources. The trend towards increasing pluralisation and individualisation of life courses and family forms, of planning and delaying parenthood (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2006; Giddens, 2000) have been well established in the recent past (Ule and Kuhar, 2003). Slovenian society has repeatedly been described as “child-centred,” with “responsible parenting” and a “protective childhood” because of the very high family input to the child’s welfare (Rener, 2006) – despite the tradition of full employment for both genders. The national youth studies from 2000 on consistently show

that the majority of young Slovenians are generally satisfied with their relationships with parents (especially mothers), and also in the international comparison (Health Behaviour in School-aged Children data 2006 & 2014; Tavčar Krajnc, Flere and Lavrič, 2014). The perception of high-quality relationships between parents and young people is statistically significantly higher in families with authoritative (but not permissive or authoritarian) parenting, and those whose upbringing exhibits sufficient closeness, support and control over young people (ibid.). Generally, contemporary family life in Slovenia is not based on traditional, rigid, generational and gender-specific roles, but rather on democratic ideals and intensive “work on relationships”, which also includes intimate conversation and negotiation on many levels (Kuhar and Reiter, 2013). The family in Slovenia fosters an individualised organisation of life, which ensures young people a relatively high level of autonomy and personal freedom in their original families (Tavčar Krajnc, Flere and Lavrič, 2014).

It seems that in 2018 respondents evaluate the relationship with their parents somewhat less favourably than they did in 2013, as shown in Table 4. With increasing respondent age, the relationship with parents is evaluated more favourably, and these differences are statistically significant. There are no statistically significant differences involving gender or parental education. Compared to the SEE9 sample, Slovenian youngsters express less enthusiasm about the relationship with their parents.

TABLE 4: **Quality of relationship between young people and their parents (self-assessment)**

Your relationship with your parents	SLO 2013	SLO 2018	SEE9 2018
	%	%	%
We get along very well	33.5	38.0	45.9
We get along, although sometimes we have differences in opinion	58.9	46.8	47.8
In general, we do not get along: we often argue	5.2	12.3	5.1
Very conflictual relationship	1.5	2.9	1.2
N	907	783	7464

The majority of young people (approx. 85 %) report that they get along well with their parents, in the SEE9, almost one-tenth more than in Slovenia. Still, the percentage of those reporting a conflictual relationship doubled in the period, from 7.7 % in 2013 to 15.2 % in 2018.

Karolina:

‘To have a good relationship with the parents means that you are able to talk to each other, to hang out together, to be able to sit together at the table, to help each other, financially, emotionally, in any way. It means that you, even if you do not live together, have a relationship with your parents.’

67.4 % would exercise the same parenting styles as their parents (72.1 % in the SEE9 sample). The percentage of young people, who appreciate their parents’ parenting style, increases statistically significantly with the parent’s level of education. Differences across genders and age group among the respondents are not statistically significant. 42.6 % of the sample reports that they and their parents take decisions jointly (57.3 % SEE9), with only 1.8 % saying (6.6 % SEE9) that their parents decide about everything, while the rest decide independently (SLO 55.6 %; SEE9 36.1 %). With age, the tendency towards independent decision-making increases. Females reported more joint than independent decision-making, on average, and highly educated parents clearly have more decision-making (co-)power. Mothers (57.2 %; 50.5 % SEE9) exert a stronger influence on respondents’ decisions than fathers do (46.6 %; 42.2 % SEE9). The percentages increase with the level of parental education and decrease with respondents’ age (25–29: 26.2 % of fathers and 25.4 % of mothers). The influence of a partner/spouse increases with respondents’ age and is statistically significantly higher for male respondents than for female respondents (23.1 % vs. 17.3 %).

Families in Slovenia are relatively authoritative, exercising co-decision-making between young people and their parents until the young people become independent. Parents are obviously taking responsibility for monitoring and directing their children until they leave the parental home, which is a more salient characteristic among parents with higher education. In 2018, there is clear evidence of less permissive and slightly more authoritarian parenting, while the value of authoritativeness

has stayed the same. Considerably more youngsters in Slovenia decide independently in comparison to their peers in the SEE9 (56 % vs. 36 %).

Within the EU, Slovenia has consistently shown one of the highest average ages for young people’s leaving home. According to the Eurostat data in 2016, the estimated average age of young people leaving the parental household was 28.2 years (ranking 9th among the 28 Member States), while the EU average is 26.1 years, with Slovenia coming second after the Slovak Republic in 2009. The proportion of young people between 25 and 29 years living in the same household with their mother increased from 44.4 % in 2000 to 66.8 % in 2010 (Lavrič and Klanjšek, 2011). The Youth 2010 sample has shown a strong link between leaving home and family formation, which in the case of Slovenia cannot be characterised as unprogressive (Kuhar and Reiter, 2014).

In 2018, 71.2 % of young people aged 14–29 were living with at least one parent (77.9 % SEE9). The percentage obviously decreases with age (14–18: 90.9 %; 19–24: 79.6 %; 25–29: 46.1 %; SEE9: 95.8 %; 84.6 %; 57.6 %) and differs statistically significantly across genders (female: 76.6 %; male: 66.1 %; SEE9: 72.8 %; 84.5 %). Among those who have already left home, the majority (66.1 %; SEE9 69.1 %) live with a partner, and about a quarter with their own children (26.6 %; SEE9 37.4 %). Among those who still live with their parents, 12.5 % also live with their partner and 2.8 % with their children (SEE9: 8.6 % and 5.6 %). 9.2 % (4.9 % in SEE9) in the group of those who have left the parental home live with friends and/or relatives; 2.3 % with friends/relatives and partner, 5.5 % with grandparents (SEE9: 12.8 %) and 16.1 % alone (SEE9 15.6 %).

The share of 25-29-year-olds living in a common household with at least one parent fell again in 2018 in comparison to 2010 (2018: 46 %, 2010: 67 %) – so it is once again similar to the percentage in 2000 (which was 44 % for this age group). The percentage is significantly lower than that for the SEE9 sample (58 %).

41.1 % (SEE9 34.1 %) of those who do not live with their parents rent a flat; 8.4 % (SEE9 8.8 %) live in an apartment bought for them by their parents; and 9.3 % (SEE9 16.5 %) in an inherited apartment. 16.4 % (SEE9 20.3 %) bought a flat/house on their own or together with their partner.

Owning an apartment does increase the probability of having the first child. The greater share of residentially emancipated respondents in Slovenia, active in the labour market and who already have a child (vs. those who do not yet have a child) have bought

a flat/house (27.9% vs. 17.9%) or inherited one/had one bought for them by their parents (21.3% vs. 15.8%).

However, there are no statistically significant differences between those living with parents and those who do not regarding satisfaction with their own family life ($M = 4.2$ for the entire analysed subsample); nor are there any differences regarding trust in immediate family members ($M = 4.7$), or in life satisfaction ($M = 4.0$). For the SEE9 sample (FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19), these correlations are the same, while for individual countries, there are differences.

On the subsample (respondents active in the labour market), we further examined why those among them who still lived with parents did so. The explanations were statistically invariable across respondents' gender, age and parental education. In the SEE9 sample (FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19), the percentage of young people expressing comfort as a reason for continuing to live with their parents is 17.4% higher than in Slovenia. Respondents who reported greater satisfaction with the relationship with their parents are much more likely to stay with their parents because it is the simplest and most comfortable solution ($p < 0.001$).

A small proportion (about 16%) of those who are residentially emancipated and active in the labour force were able to buy an apartment on their own or with their partner; one quarter get housing from their parents, while more than 40% are renting. Owning an apartment does, however, increase the probability of having the first child. Among the respondents, those who are active in the labour market and residentially emancipated express the same level of satisfaction with family and life in general as those who still live with their parents. However, more than half of the latter state a preference for leaving the parental home, while in the SEE9, this preference is lower (35%).

YOUTH PARTNERSHIPS AND PARENTHOOD

Starting a family along with procreation, including childbearing, is still an aspiration for the majority of young people in Slovenia, but it has become a less and less self-evident stage in young people's life trajectories. Besides the material preconditions (which are set high), an individualised society creates a desire in both genders to have their "own lives", and a wish to attain self-realisation, autonomy and freedom. An important hindrance when making the decision to have a child involves the greater demands connected with the rearing of children, socialisation, time distribution and finances (Ule and Kuhar, 2008).

In the 14-24-year-old age group, 62.2% (SEE9 63.0%) of young people classified themselves as single, while among those 25-29, 30.6% are single. Moreover, 9.5% of 25-29-year-olds are married (SEE9 31.7%), while 39.3% live in cohabitation (SEE9 10.7%) and a further 19.7% (SEE9 17%) are in a relationship but "living apart together." In this age group, 22.6% have children, while among 20-24-year-olds this figure is only 2.8% and among

14-19-year-olds, 1.8% (SEE9: 29.8%, 6.2%, 0.4%). There are no statistically significant differences according to gender or parental education. It seems that young Slovenians are less traditionally oriented in the formation of their own families, especially in terms of cohabitation and marriage.

The vast majority (approx. 90%) of young people in Slovenia express a desire to have a family with children (married or unmarried with partner) in the future. While there are statistically significant differences across genders, there are no statistically significant differences across age groups or parental education. These figures are much higher for the SEE9, where being married with one's own children is the desire of 90.4% of the sample. In Slovenia, 10% perceive that they will not have children, while in the SEE9, this percentage is 4.5.

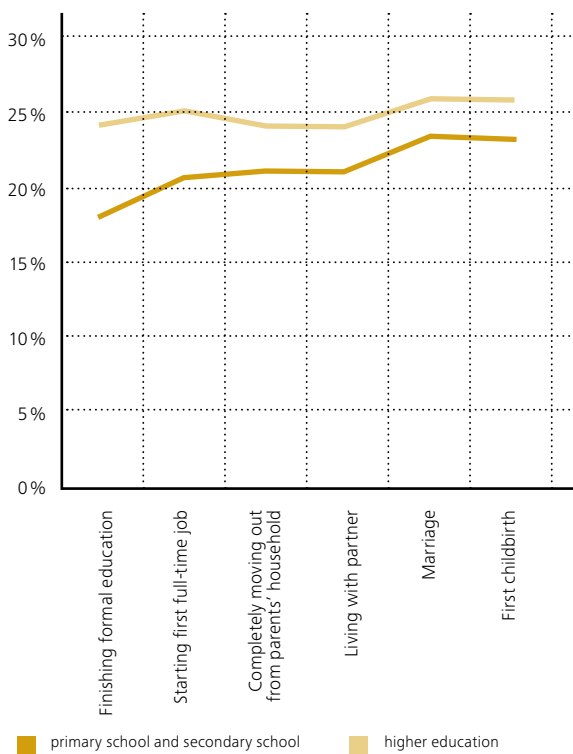
The estimated best age for marriage among women and men differs on average by 2 years (female: 27.1; male: 28.7; SEE9 25.4; 28.1), with both genders making similar evaluations. The evaluation of the appropriate age for marriage shows a statistically significant difference across age groups (with each successive age group, the optimal age is set higher), but not so for parents' education. On average, respondents plan to have 2.1 (SEE9 2.3) children (females 2.2; males 2.0), with the average planned age for having the first child being 27.4 (SEE9 27.0). The older the respondents, the higher the planned age; analysis showed no differences according to gender.

In choosing a partner, personal characteristics prevail, such as personality, common interests and good looks. Nevertheless, female respondents scored higher than male respondents on traditional 'safety' characteristics: economic standing, family approval and education level; while those with highly educated parents find more personal but also some social factors to be more important: personality, appearance, education level, common interests and national origin. The older the respondents, the more importance accrues to personality and common interests, while almost all other factors decrease in importance (only the importance of religious beliefs does not change on any statistically significant scale with age). The SEE9 shows a more traditional orientation, with family approval, education level and economic standing, religion, nationality and virginity being, on average, far more important than in Slovenia. Nevertheless, personal reasons are rated more favourably than traditional values in the SEE9, as well.

Among 25-29-year-olds, 70% are in a relationship, very few of these are married and a number cohabitating. In the SEE9, the percentage of those who are (or perceive they will be) married (instead of cohabitating) is considerably higher. Nevertheless, 90% want to have a partner and children (2.1 on average), and the first child (to be) born when they are 27.4 years old, on average. In Slovenia, 10% perceive that they will not have children, while in the SEE9, this percentage is 4.5. In choosing a partner, personal characteristics prevail over traditional and normative values.

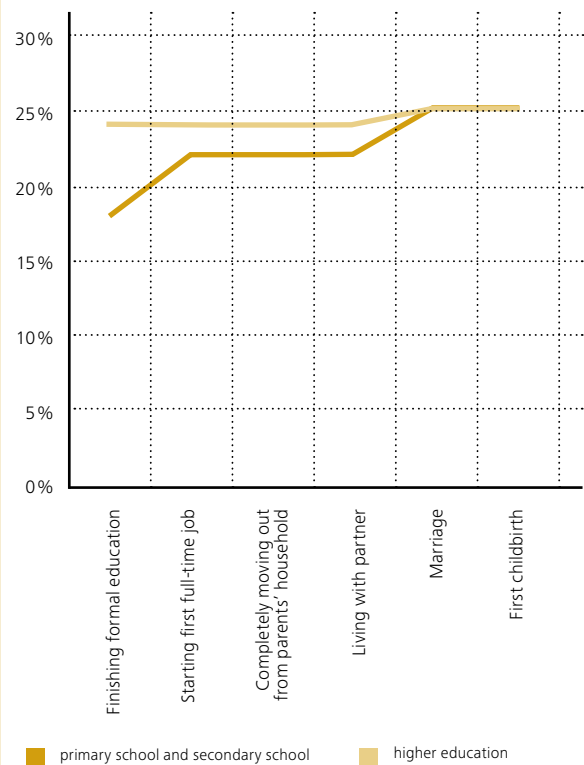
The further analysis (Graphs 14 and 15) examines the order of transition events, broken down by gender and education level. Gender-specific differences are not evident for the most part, as

FIGURE 14: **Women’s transition trajectories by education.**



Source: Data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

FIGURE 15: **Men’s transition trajectories by education.**



Source: Data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

young women reach milestones at nearly the same age as male respondents (only marriage and birth of the first child begin earlier for women with primary and secondary education). Education seems to play a role in shaping trajectories. As shown in the graphs, all transitions with the exception of marriage and parenthood in men happen earlier for young people with elementary and secondary education.

Higher education is connected to the postponement of further transitions. While there are some gradual phases in the trajectories of young people with lower and higher levels of education, getting a job and moving out of the parental household and in with a partner still take place at nearly the same time, followed by marriage and the first child.

One notable finding is that marriage takes place at the same time as (or even slightly later than) the birth of the first child, so conceiving the first child is a push factor for marriage and not the other way around.

YOUTH FRIENDSHIP

On average, respondents were quite satisfied with their circle of friends (M= 4.4; SD = 0.8; SEE9 4.3; 0.84). There are no statistically significant differences regarding sex, age or parental education, nor does it make any difference whether the respondent has a partner or offspring. In 2018, the level of satisfaction (in the sub-sample of 16-27-year-olds) is even slightly higher than in 2013 (4.3 vs. 4.1). However, trust in friends declined from 4.5 in 2013 to 4.2 in 2018 (also calculated for the sub-sample of 16-27-year-olds).

A great share of respondents have friends with a different social status. With age, these percentages are even higher, while broken down according to gender or parental education there are no statistically significant differences. All percentages for Slovenia are higher than in the SEE9 sample.

TABLE 5: Do you have friends with a background different than yours?

	SLO		SEE9	
	N	Yes (%)	N	Yes (%)
Friends with different ethnicity	976	68.3	9394	62.0
Friends with different religion	971	71.0	9454	69.2
Friends with different language	984	67.0	9562	53.8
Friends with different social status	945	73.3	9398	78.8

The study demonstrates the great importance of friends in the lives of young people between 14 and 29, with a high degree of satisfaction in this category, which has risen slightly since 2013, while trust in friends has slightly declined.

CONCLUSION

Main findings

1. Immediate family is very important to young people, given that they are highly satisfied with family life and that the family is trusted and treated loyally. The next circle, friends, is of nearly equal importance. Traditional values, like getting married, are slightly less important, but having children is very important, especially for young women. Both marriage and having children are slightly more valued by young people whose parents have lower levels of education.
2. The majority of young people (approx. 85 %) report that they get along well with their parents in the SEE9, almost one-tenth more than in Slovenia. Still, the percentage of those reporting a conflictual relationship doubled in the period, from 7.7 % in 2013 to 15.2 % in 2018.
3. Families in Slovenia are relatively authoritative, with co-decision-making characterising the relationship between young people and their parents until the children gain independence. Parents obviously take responsibility for monitoring and directing their children until they leave the parental home – a more salient trait among parents with higher education. In 2018, there is a clear trend towards less permissive and slightly more authoritarian parenting, while the value of authoritarianism has stayed the same. Considerably more youngsters in Slovenia make decisions independently in comparison to their peers in the SEE9 (56 % vs. 36 %).
4. The share of 25-29-year-olds living in a common household with at least one parent fell in 2018 in comparison to 2010 (2018: 46 %, 2010: 67 %) – thus, it is once again similar to the percentage in 2000 (which was 44 % for this age group). The percentage is significantly lower than that for the SEE9 sample (58 %).
5. A small proportion (about 16 %) of young people who are residentially emancipated and active in the labour force were able to buy an apartment on their own or with their partner; one-quarter receive housing from their parents, and more than 40 % rent. Owning an apartment does increase the probability of having the first child, however. Among the respondents who are active in the labour market, the residentially emancipated group expresses the same level of satisfaction with family and life in general as those who still live with their parents. However, more than half of the latter report a preference for leaving the parental home, while in the SEE9, this preference is lower (35 %).
6. Among 25-29-year-olds, 70 % are in a relationship, very few of them are married and several cohabit. In the SEE9, the percentage of those who are (or expect they will get) married (instead of cohabitating) is considerably higher. Nevertheless, 90 % want to have a partner and children (2.1 on average), and the first child (to be) born when they are 27.4 years old on average. In Slovenia, 10 % believe that they will not have any children, while in the SEE9 this percentage is 4.5. In choosing a partner, personal traits prevail over traditional and normative values.
7. Higher education is connected with the postponement of further transitions. While there are some gradual phases in the trajectories of young people with lower and higher levels of education, getting a job and moving out of the parental household and in with a partner still take place at nearly the same time, followed by marriage and the first child.
8. The study demonstrates the great importance of friends in the lives of young people between 14 and 29, with a high degree of satisfaction in this category, which has risen slightly from 2013, while trust in friends has declined slightly.

Main findings of the chapter in one or two sentences:

The data from 2018 indicates a consolidation of the family orientation trend that youth research in Slovenia has been registering since the 1990s. Young people and parents have close relationships, while the majority of youngsters receive a lot of parental support and assess this relationship as good. The process of residential emancipation is still largely linked to the formation of one's own family, and receives considerable support from parents. The family of procreation remains an important value for most young people. Friends also play a very important role in the lives of young Slovenes.

Policy recommendation:

More than a half of residentially non-emancipated respondents who are active in the labour market would prefer residential emancipation, and 90% would like to have children (on average 2.1 offspring) before age 28. Residential emancipation is significantly related to parental support and job stability. The recommendation is to enable youngsters to fulfil their aspirations with policies supporting emancipation.

7

MOBILITY

Mobility, in particular cross-border mobility, is inseparably tied to the trends towards globalisation (e.g. Held et al. 1999), it is “/.../ its expression, result and fuel /.../” (Lavrič et al. 2011: 401) and has numerous positive effects on young people: it enhances the ability to adapt to and integrate into the labour market (Bertoncini et al. 2008), enhances acquisition of new knowledge and skills, increases open-mindedness, tolerance and international cooperation and has a generally positive influence on individual and societal well-being (Cairns, 2010; Stanley, et a. 2011).

Previous studies of young people in Slovenia generally confirm these assumptions, yet show mobility in extent and duration as relatively low. Young people in Slovenia were largely unmotivated for mobility (e.g. Lavrič et al. 2011; Flere et al. 2014). For example, results from the study in 2010 (Lavrič et al. 2011) show young Slovenians to not be motivated to engage in long-term international mobility. At the same time, short-term international mobility among young Slovenians appears to be a mass phenomenon, and the percentage of young people going abroad for longer periods (more than 12 months) was growing. The main motivations for mobility are largely tied to education (e.g. the Erasmus programme) and employment. The study also shows the main obstacles to youth mobility to be a combination of objective and subjective factors, of which insufficient funds and limited perception of benefits prevail.

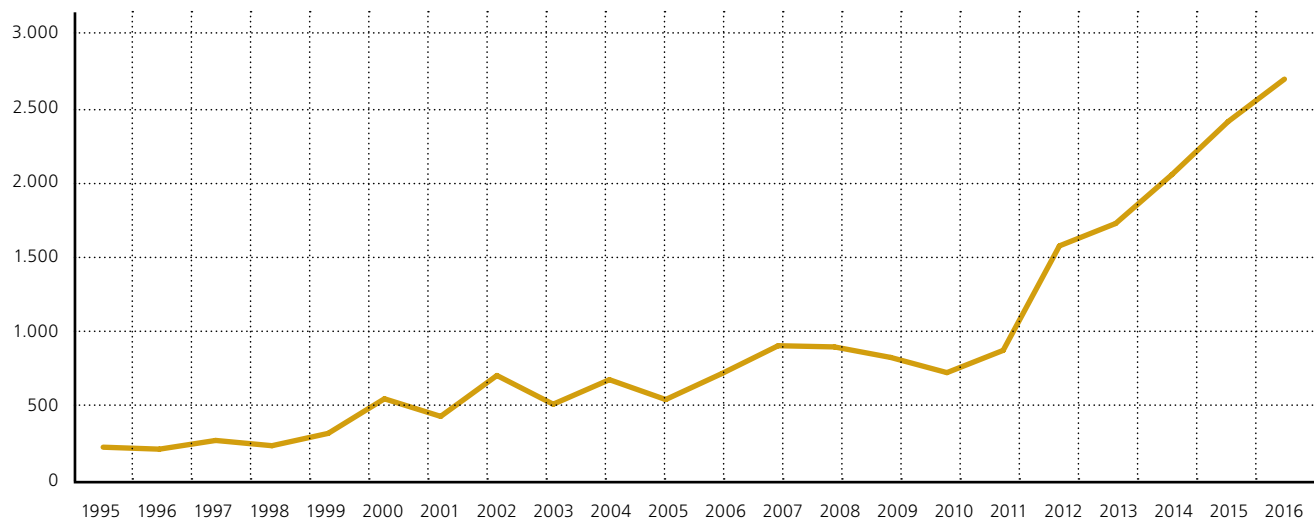
A study of young people in Slovenia conducted in 2013 (Flere, 2014) confirmed many of these assumptions. Additional findings show economic factors to be of increasing importance in motivating young people to be mobile (Flere, 2014: 79–80): economic pressure for intra-national migration of young people in Slovenia appears to be relatively low, and young Slovenians are willing to migrate somewhere else in Slovenia. Nevertheless, about one-third of young Slovenians, mostly males, older age groups and young urbanites state a willingness to emigrate, with the most preferred destinations being Austria, the United States and Germany.

In the current survey, one of the most important questions regarding international migration, at least in countries with a marked inclination to emigrate, probably relates to the expressed desire of young people to move abroad. Young people in Slovenia were addressed this question both in the 2013 FES survey and in the current survey. Given the slightly different scales of possible answers, we can only perform a valid comparison of percentages of young people (16–27) who express no desire to move abroad. This share has dropped from 42 % in 2013 to 35 % in 2018. Thus, we can conclude as follows:

The share of young people with at least some desire to leave the country has increased substantially since 2013.

The trend towards an increased desire to migrate is also reflected in official data (SORS, 2018) on the number of young people emigrating from Slovenia:

FIGURE 16: Number of young people emigrating, citizens of Slovenia, 15–29, 1995–2016.



Source: SORS, 2018.

In the period from 2010 to 2016, the number of young people leaving Slovenia almost quadrupled.

EMIGRATION POTENTIAL

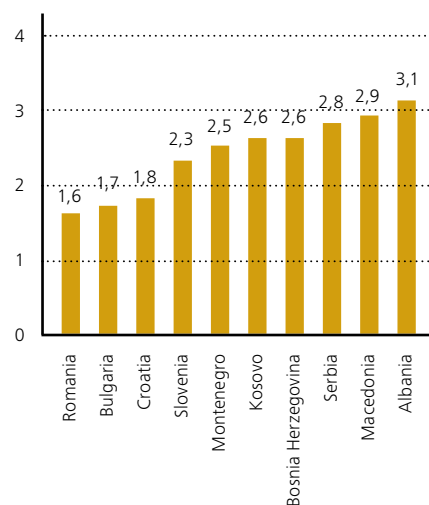
Emigration potential as conceptualised in our study may be considered as a combination of PUSH factors (factors present within a national context, perceived as negative and forcing young people to migrate) and PULL factors (factors present abroad and perceived positively, as an opportunity for further personal economic or socio-cultural development). Development of a national context has widely been understood as one of the major push factors in the peace-time period (e.g. Sik 1992; Eldis, 2018), and strong links between development and migration have been revealed by several studies (e.g. Bell and Muhidin, 2009; Bell et al., 2015). Regarding development, results show countries with moderate development to be the main sources of emigrants (Sotelo and Gimeno, 2003).

Emigration potential is generally also reflected in a desire among potential migrants to emigrate. If we compare Slovenia to the other nine countries in terms of the average strength of the desire to emigrate, it is evident that this desire is surprisingly high in Slovenia given its overall level of socio-economic development¹¹.

With the highest level of socio-economic development, Slovenia's young people exhibit surprisingly high levels when it comes to potential emigration (6th among 10 SEE countries, leaving behind four much less developed countries). This does not change much when we observe shares of those with a very high (15+) potential for emigration: Slovenia ranks 7th, with 11% of young

FIGURE 17: Strength of the desire to emigrate.

How strong is your desire to move to another country for more than six months (emigrate)?



Note: 1= no desire, 5= very strong desire

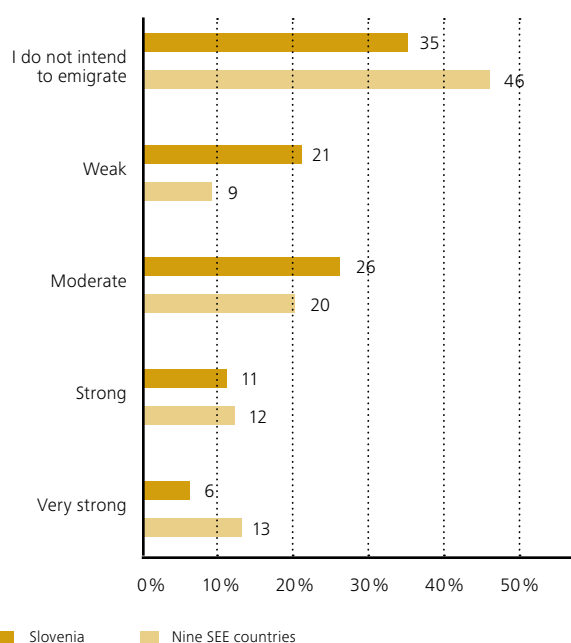
Source: Data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

people being very likely to move abroad, which is substantially more than in Romania (7%), Bulgaria (7%) or Croatia (8%).

These findings can be better understood by examining the strength of the desire of young people to emigrate.

From Figure 18, we can clearly observe an interesting characteristic of young Slovenians looking at the share of young people with weak or moderate motivation to emigrate. Within the national context of Slovenia, *push* factors like unemployment or material deprivation remain relatively weak. For example, analysis of data on unemployment and migration shows that unemployment, as the most obvious push factor for migration,

FIGURE 18: **Strength of the desire to emigrate.**
How strong is your desire to move to another country for more than six months (emigrate)?

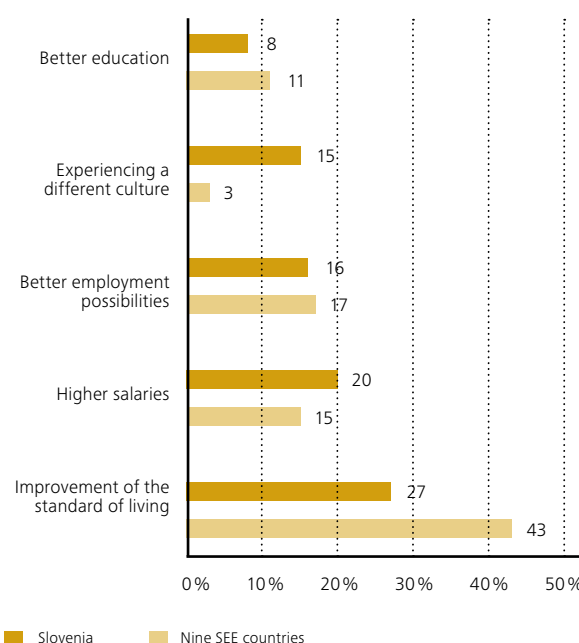


Source: Data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

increases the desire for migration in the observed nine countries in SEE ($r = 0.59$, $p < 0.01$), while in Slovenia the correlation is not statistically significant and is even negative ($r = 0.020$, $p > 0.05$). However, pull factors appear to be relatively strong for young Slovenians. These factors can be found at the macro (e.g. open national borders within the Schengen area) and micro levels (e.g. high level of participation by young Slovenians in education and Erasmus mobility, language skills developed and existing international social networks). Additional analysis confirmed both: the highest aspired level of education as a pull factor was relatively predominant in Slovenia ($r = 0.226$, $p < 0.01$), as compared to the other nine countries in the region ($r = 0.115$, $p < 0.01$), and the level of language proficiency¹² is higher in Slovenia ($r = 0.111$, $p < 0.01$) compared to the other nine countries in the region ($r = 0.081$, $p < 0.01$).

The fact that more educated and linguistically skilled young people desire to migrate is also reflected in their expectations regarding their contribution to the host country. There are important similarities between young Slovenians and young people in other SEE countries with regard to the preferred country of destination: all young people regard Germany, the USA, Switzerland and Great Britain as the most preferred destinations and Finland, Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands as the least preferred destinations. However, in comparison with other countries, Slovenians exhibit a different set of motivations for migration:

FIGURE 19: **The main reason for emigration.**
What is the main reason for which you would move to another country?



Source: Data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

Young Slovenians (27%) tend to be motivated to emigrate for the purpose of improving their living standard, but not as much as in other countries (43%), while other existential motivations like higher salaries (Slovenia 20% vs. other countries 15%) and better employment (Slovenia 16% vs. other countries 17%) do not exhibit major differences, either. However, young Slovenians exhibit strong non-materialistic motivations to migrate, which could be understood as based on post-materialist values (see the chapter on values). For example, in contrast to other countries, young Slovenians expressed a distinctively greater desire to experience a foreign culture, setting young Slovenians apart from other countries (Slovenia 15% vs. other countries 3%). Also in contrast to other countries, young Slovenians to a greater extent assume that they will contribute to the host country by providing their own specific skills (Slovenia 83% vs. other countries 60%) or exhibiting good job performance (Slovenia 90% vs. other countries 76%). At the same time, young Slovenians (50%) are less likely to assume that they will contribute to the destination country by accepting a job that is less desired by the local population than in other countries (66%). Thus, we can conclude that in Slovenia, in comparison to the other nine countries in the region, the desire for emigration is substantially more motivated by pull factors (e.g. education or language skills) than by push factors (e.g. unemployment or material deprivation)¹³.

In Slovenia, young people with higher socio-economic status are substantially more likely to emigrate, indicating that factors of necessity (push factors) are relatively less important than factors of opportunity (pull factors).

Apart from being distinctive in terms of motivation for migration and expected contribution, young Slovenians also exhibit differences with respect to the estimated time of emigration: 20% of young Slovenians intend to emigrate within the next 2 years, while this share of young people in the other nine countries is around 50%. This delayed intention to emigrate could be understood within the context of previous findings, in particular the high levels of education, skill levels and linguistic competences of young Slovenians indicate that young Slovenians tend to be better organised and cautious in terms of preparation for emigration.

Furthermore, young Slovenians tend not to migrate for longer periods of time (35% of young Slovenians expressed the desire to emigrate for 10 years or more, while 50% of young people in other countries expressed the same intention). In addition, official data (SORS, 2018) show an increased trend towards young emigrants returning since 2013. By 2016, the number of returnees in the age group 15–29 rose by 55%, and a similar (56%) increase took place for the age group 30–44.

Results show that, in comparison to other countries, young Slovenians strongly invest in preparation for migration, with the most competent individuals being the most likely to emigrate. Their emigration is well thought-out (e.g. language acquisition, departure at a later age, longer period of preparation) and their emigration often includes plans for returning home.

These findings point to the general conclusion that young Slovenians exhibit two main distinctions compared to other countries: (1) a specific understanding of emigration as an opportunity for self-development and (2) an above-average tendency towards return migration. Based on these two assumptions, we can state the following:

Policy recommendations should not be based on the logic of emigration prevention, but rather on quality support for emigration returnees to re-integrate within the national context.

We can conclude by stating that Slovenia has highly educated and socially and culturally skilled young people. Their youth is what adds to the impact of *brain drain* within the national context.

We can also state that the trend in youth emigration for Slovenia is clearly increasing, with the main reasons appearing to be tied to push and pull factors. According to popular discourse, there are two main push factors influencing young people to emigrate: lack of job opportunities (e.g. Cerar, 2006; Kaker, 2016; Jugovar and Rojc, 2018) and lack of suitable accommodation (Kutin Ledinek, 2017; Jurenkovič, 2017; RTV4, 2017). Thus, according to this interpretation, young people are unable to gain full independence and are to some extent forced to live with their parents in a common household (e.g. Jugovar and Rojc, 2018). However, our research findings show this line of thought to be somewhat misleading. We have shown that push factors play an important role in stimulating the motivation for migration in all countries; however, while these are a prevailing set of factors in the other 9 SEE countries, they play a secondary role in Slovenia. Among young Slovenians, pull factors play a dominant role in emigration. Young Slovenians are not forced to migrate, but are eager to experience foreign cultures. Since 2000, these factors have been gaining increasing relevance, mostly through processes involving the Europeanisation of Slovenia (e.g. 2004 – EU membership, 2007 – adoption of the Euro, 2007 – entering the Schengen zone) which made target countries even more culturally inviting and accessible. This accessibility was supported by other relevant factors (e.g. the high HDI of Slovenia, fuelling high participation in tertiary education, participation in Erasmus+, and a high level of engagement with ICT), and a combination of these could well explain the increasing trend toward emigration based on pull factors. Additional support for these pull factors is also visible in an increase in interest among foreign companies and employers from abroad in the Slovenian labour market, in particular among educated young people (e.g. Mastnak, 2017; GZS, 2018).

CONCLUSION

Main findings:

1. The share of young people with at least some desire to leave the country has increased substantially since 2013.
2. In the period from 2010 to 2016, the number of young people leaving Slovenia has almost quadrupled.
3. In Slovenia, young people with a higher socio-economic status are substantially more likely to emigrate, indicating that factors of necessity (push factors) are relatively less important than factors of opportunity (pull factors).
4. Results show that, in comparison to young people from other countries, young Slovenians strongly invest in preparation for migration, the most competent individuals are the most likely to emigrate, their emigration is well thought out (e.g. language acquisition, postponed departure, longer preparation period), and their emigration often includes plans to return home.

The chapter's main findings in one or two sentences:

In Slovenia, the emigration potential among young people is increasing, and factors of opportunity abroad (pull factors) are more important than factors of necessity at home (push factors). Young Slovenians are more cautious and make more extensive preparation for emigration in comparison to other SEE countries, and more often intend to return home.

Policy recommendation:

Since young people express a readiness to return, youth migration policies should focus on positive evaluation of knowledge and experience newly gained abroad and acknowledge these within the process of integration of young people within the national context (i.e. additional points when applying for job or school enrolment).

8

EDUCATION

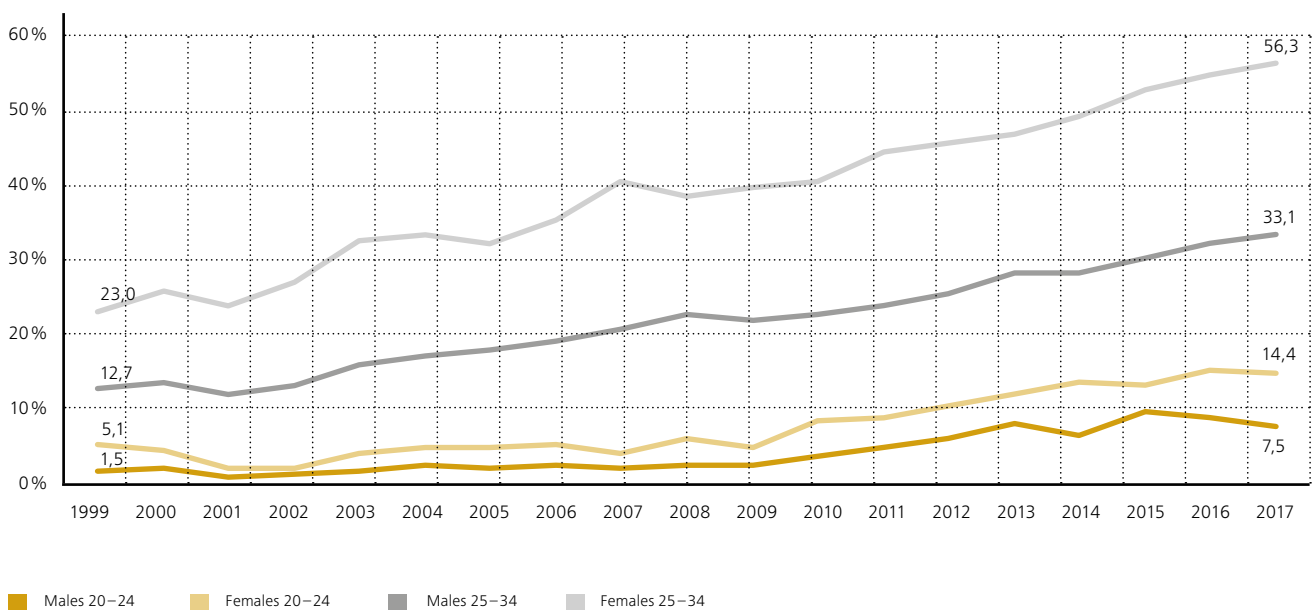
Over the past few decades, the growing importance of education has been widely recognised and emphasised in various policies of organisations such as the United Nations, the OECD and the European Union. Encouraged by their objectives, such as ensuring equitable access to education, raising the share of those with post-primary education in the EU and emphasising lifelong learning (see, for example, the Europe 2020, 2010; the Lisbon Strategy, 2000; UNESCO, 2005), education has undergone several changes. These have been reflected mostly through the extension and expansion of formal education, especially secondary and tertiary, as well as greater recognition of non-formal and informal education.

The latest OECD data (2018) show that Slovenia's enrolment rates in formal education remain among the highest compared to other EU member states: in 2015, Slovenia was 3rd place in the

15–19 age group, with 94.1% enrolled, and 5th in the 20–29 age group, with 31.8% enrolled. Although tertiary education enrolment rates have been slowly declining since 2012 (SURS, 2018), the share of young people with a tertiary education has still been on the rise (Eurostat database, 2018a). Thus, since 2010 the share of 25–34-year-olds with tertiary education increased from 31.3% to 44.5% in 2017 and was substantially above the EU-28 average (39%). While in general such a rise can be partially attributed to the Europe 2020 target of having at least 40% of 30–34-year-olds who have completed tertiary education by 2020 (Europe 2020, 2010), the growth in Slovenia was considerably faster than in EU-28, especially after 2015. Thus, even by 2017, 46.4% of 30–34-year-old Slovenians had tertiary degrees, compared to only 39.9% in EU-28 (ibid).

There are substantial differences in the share of male and female graduates, with Slovenia having the second highest gender

FIGURE 20: Tertiary education attainment by gender and age group in Slovenia, 1999–2017 (%)



Source: Eurostat.

gap among all EU-28 member states (Eurostat, 2018; Eurostat database, 2018a). As is discernible from Figure 20, the increasing gap in the last two decades is especially evident in the age group 25–34, where in 2017 women (56.3%) outnumbered men (33.1%) by more than 23 percentage points (Eurostat database, 2018a).

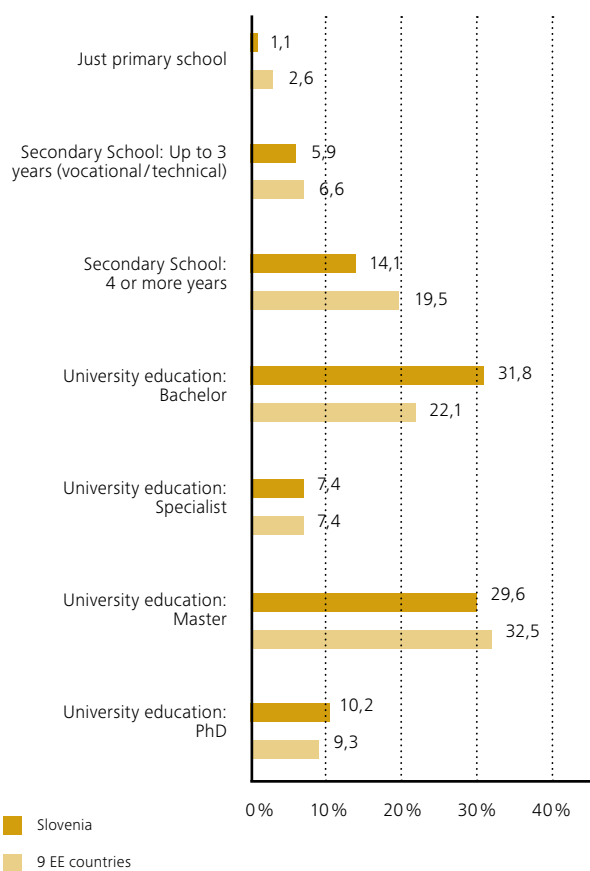
In light of various political agendas that attach great importance to tertiary education as a means to ensure greater economic competitiveness and growth (see, for example, *The Lisbon Strategy*, 2000), such a high percentage of young people with tertiary education would certainly seem to be beneficial. However, considering the recent economic situation in Slovenia and the fact that young people with tertiary education are facing more difficulty finding employment than they used to (Lavrič, 2014; OECD, 2017), the returns on such an expansion of this group would appear to be less favourable than expected. In this respect, the present situation in Slovenia adds credence to Wolf's (2002) argument to the effect that the linkage between educational and economic growth is a myth. One of the more convincing explanations for such expansion in Slovenia can be found in arguments by Bowles and Gintis (1975), who saw it as a way of diminishing pressure on the labour market. With tertiary education in Slovenia being mostly tuition-free, with many advantages in the form of student welfare and a relatively low challenge level, as shown by the *Youth 2013* study (Tavčar Krajnc, Flere, & Lavrič, 2014), participation in tertiary education could thus act as a form of safety valve, allowing young people a softer and more prolonged transition into adulthood. Moreover, although nowadays competitiveness for jobs among graduates is increasing and the traditional predictability of the school-to-work transition is disappearing, a recent OECD study (2017: 90) implies that attainment of higher levels of education still improves employment prospects. In this respect, obtaining a degree in (higher) education still plays an important role in ensuring better prospects for the future and, as noted by Furlong (2017: 96), young people are very much aware of its importance.

It is thus not surprising that in our study many young people consider attaining a high level of education to be an important life goal. They place "graduating from university" high on their priority list of important things in life (6th place among 16 items). Moreover, their educational aspirations are generally high, since more than two-thirds (78.9%) want to acquire some sort of university degree. In Slovenia, a bachelor's degree (31.8%) and PhD (10.2%) is particularly coveted compared to other SEE countries (Figure 21).

Karolina:

'In my opinion the quality of the education itself is good because it offers us a huge variety of directions, as we have a huge number of different subjects available /.../'

FIGURE 21: **Educational aspirations among young Slovenians (%).** What is the highest educational level to which you aspire? (%)



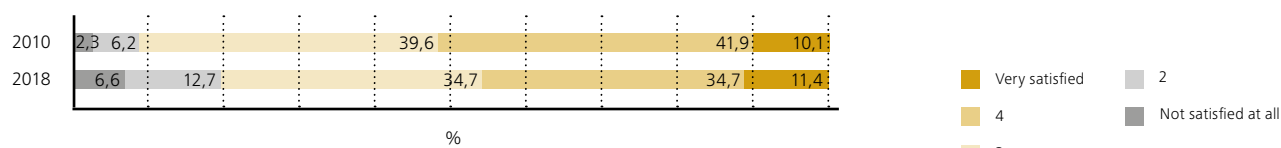
Source: Data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

In their educational aspirations, various sociodemographic factors play an important role: higher aspirations are related to higher levels of the respondent's education ($\rho = 0.443$, $p < 0.01$), higher parental educational level ($\rho = 0.373$, $p < 0.01$), a better household financial situation ($\rho = 0.230$, $p < 0.01$), living in more urban areas ($C = 0.178$, $p < 0.05$), and more authoritative parenting ($\rho = 0.071$, $p < 0.05$). Although in general most young people are quite sure they will attain the desired level, those with higher education ($\rho = 0.198$, $p < 0.01$), a better household financial situation ($\rho = 0.091$, $p < 0.01$) and authoritative parenting ($\rho = 0.096$, $p < 0.05$) tend to be more confident about it.

Most young people in Slovenia have high educational aspirations. Higher aspirations and greater certainty of attaining them are related to better socioeconomic backgrounds.

FIGURE 22: **Level of satisfaction with the quality of education in Slovenia, 2010 and 2018.**

How satisfied are you generally with the quality of education in Slovenia?



Source: Data files Youth 2010, data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

Our research shows that Slovenia has a considerably higher share of dropouts from education (23.1 %) than the other 9 SEE countries (8.1 %). However, it must be noted that it has the lowest share (17.9 %) of these dropouts at lower levels of schooling (age 19 and less) as opposed to other countries (58.4 %). Furthermore, according to national statistics, Slovenia is also quite successful in tackling students' leaving education early or their complete inactivity with regards to education or employment. In 2017, the share of early leavers in education was 4.3 %, and with this, Slovenia had reached The Europe 2020 national target for this indicator (5 %) (Eurostat 2018; Eurostat database, 2018b). The share of young people neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET) is also low (9.3 % in 2017) and has been constantly below the EU-28 average in the last 10 years. As in previous years, it was slightly higher among females (10.7 %) than males (8 %) in 2017 (Eurostat database, 2018c). It is thus not surprising that Slovenia also has a low share of low-skilled students (OECD, 2017: 311).

Young people's educational prospects are also strongly related to various sociodemographic factors, especially their family background. Thus, both dropping out of education as well as NEET are related to the parents' educational level and the household financial situation, with young people from more underprivileged backgrounds having a greater likelihood of dropping out or being NEET. A similar impact is to be witnessed in relation to educational mobility. Moreover, the role of family background is especially evident in young people's general educational attainment¹⁴: higher educational attainment is related to higher mother's ($\rho = 0.344$, $p < 0.01$) and father's ($\rho = 0.219$, $p < 0.01$) educational level, a better household financial situation ($\rho = 0.174$, $p < 0.01$), living in more urban areas ($C = 0.197$, $p < 0.05$), and authoritative parenting ($\rho = 0.179$, $p < 0.01$). All findings presented so far suggest the following conclusion:

Although education in Slovenia is generally widely accessible, some educational inequalities persist: young people from more underprivileged backgrounds have lower educational aspirations and are less likely to attain higher levels of education, but are more likely to drop out of education or be NEET.

Unfortunately, high participation in education has not been accompanied by comparably high funding for educational activities. In the last decade, expenditure on education has been declining, and with 4.6 % of GDP spent on education in 2014, Slovenia was below the average of EU-22 (4.8 %) and the OECD (5.2 %) (OECD, 2017). The decline has been most evident in tertiary education, both at the national level as well as compared to the OECD and EU-22 average (ibid). Such lack of investment can certainly affect the quality and efficiency of educational activities.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

We focused on a range of indicators to measure quality of education, from young people's general opinions regarding the quality of, and their confidence in, the educational system, to specific ones pertaining to their perception of corruption in education and of the educational system's ability to prepare young people to enter the world of work.

In general, young people in Slovenia are mostly satisfied with the quality of education ($M = 3.32$ on a 5-point scale), with slightly higher satisfaction among tertiary level students and those with higher education. Although the share of dissatisfied young people (8.5 % in 2010) has more than doubled in the last eight years (19.3 % in 2018; see Figure 22), young Slovenians are generally still among the most satisfied among all SEE countries (only Bulgaria has slightly higher levels of satisfaction).

One of the strongest factors contributing to the perception of quality in education is related to the educational system's ability to connect education and work and offer young people a good transition from school to work. Thus, satisfaction is significantly higher among those who believe that school is well adapted to the current field of work ($C = 0.349$, $p < 0.01$) and that it will be easy to find a job after finishing formal education ($\rho = 0.217$, $p < 0.01$).

In general, the majority of young people in Slovenia believe there is still much room for improvement in this respect. First, almost two-thirds of them (65.8 %) believe that training, school and university education are not well adapted to the current world of work. Such perceptions are more prevalent among men (71.8 %) than women (59.5 %). Second, 40 % believe it will be difficult or very difficult to find employment after school. Their

scepticism has even increased slightly since 2013 (35.3%), and is more prevalent among those who believe school is already not well adapted to the field of work ($C = 0.234$, $p < 0.01$).

Karolina (answering the question: Do you think that the main purpose of education is basically just the labour market?):
'No, in my opinion there is a general perception, I think, a certain willingness to find people in different life situations.'

Suzana (commenting on the quality of education in Slovenia):
'It does not seem to me that the quality of education in Slovenia is so poor, what I would change is more emphasis, to practical education and not just theory.'

While obviously more school-work relatedness is desired, some changes have occurred in this direction. Since 2013, performance of a practical position or internship within an educational programme has risen considerably, from 34.5% to 56.8% in 2018, and is the highest among all SEE countries. Findings show that those who have had such an experience within education are also more likely to already have employment ($C = 0.351$, $p < 0.01$) or are more convinced that they will have less difficulty finding employment after school ($C = 0.162$, $p < 0.01$). This implies that such experience is important, especially for young people's confidence in their own employability, and can help improve their transition from school to work. It also stresses the importance of offering opportunities for gaining practical experience within education.

Although there is still a quite widespread opinion that Slovenian school systems are not well adapted to the current world of work, there has been some progress in this respect. Performance of a practical position or internship within an educational programme is on the rise and is the highest among all SEE countries. Including more practical experience within education can improve young people's satisfaction with the quality of education and offer a better transition from school to work.

Recently, other widely recognised and promoted means to increase young people's competitiveness in the labour market, while providing an important complement to formal education, have included various forms of non-formal education and training (for example, see the EU's *Agenda 2020*). A special emphasis on greater recognition of informal forms of knowledge and integration of formal and informal education has also been stressed in the *Slovenian National Programme for Youth 2013–2022* (2013). Interestingly, despite their growing importance in various policies and relatively positive prospects as

shown in the *Slovenian Youth 2010* study (Flere & Tavčar Krajnc, 2011), participation in such forms of education has substantially declined over the last eight years.

Data from the World Values Survey (2014) show that young people in Slovenia have relatively high levels of confidence in the educational system and are among the most satisfied in the SEE region (3rd place among SEE countries). At the same time, our findings suggest that the perception of corruption is relatively high (55.9% believe that there are cases when grades and exams are "bought" in institutes/universities); however, it is still among the lowest among all SEE countries (3rd place). As expected, a higher perception of corruption is related to lower satisfaction with the quality of education ($\rho = -0.161$, $p < 0.01$).

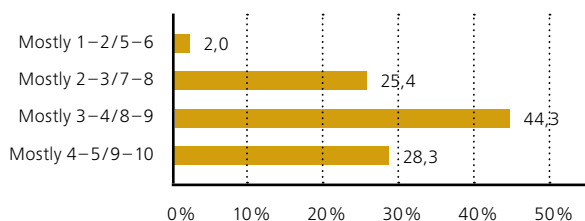
Young Slovenians are generally satisfied with the quality of education and have relatively high levels of confidence in the educational system.

EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT, SUBJECTIVE SCHOOL PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Previous studies on young Slovenians have indicated that the educational system in Slovenia is relatively friendly and has been perceived as predominantly undemanding and not particularly stressful (Flere and Tavčar Krajnc, 2011, Tavčar Krajnc, Flere & Lavrič, 2014). Our findings corroborate some of these trends in 2018, although cross-national comparisons do offer some new perspectives.

The majority of young Slovenians (72.6%) have relatively high educational achievements, with average grades ranging from good to excellent (Figure 23). In general, their achievements ($M = 2.99$) are comparable to those in other SEE countries ($M = 2.97$). Higher educational achievements are related mainly to a range of school factors, such as higher educational aspirations ($\rho = 0.178$, $p < 0.01$), more time studying ($\rho = 0.098$, $p < 0.05$) and lower level of schooling ($\rho = -0.100$; $p < 0.01$), as well as to certain types of socialisation. Lower average grades are related to more permissive ($\rho = 0.112$, $p < 0.01$) and authoritarian ($\rho = 0.116$, $p < 0.01$) parenting styles. As opposed to the findings of *Slovenian Youth 2010* (Flere & Tavčar Krajnc, 2011: 103), gender and socioeconomic factors with the exception of father's educational level ($\rho = 0.085$, $p < 0.05$) showed no significant correlations in 2018. These findings indicate that an individual's determination and effort as well as his upbringing may play a particularly important role in young people's school achievement.

FIGURE 23: Average grade during the last academic year among young Slovenians, 2018. What was your average grade during the last academic year?



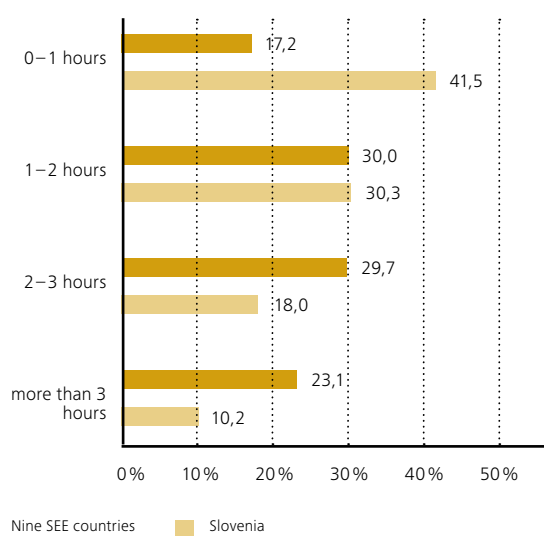
Source: Data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

Educational achievements among young Slovenians are relatively high and comparable to those in other SEE countries. Higher achievement is mainly related to their personal determination, effort and socialisation styles rather than to socioeconomic factors.

In general, the majority (80.6%) of young people in Slovenia perceive school as stressful at least to some extent. While the perception of stressfulness remained similar to that found in 2013, it is higher than in most other SEE countries (Figure 24). Greater stress at school is related to more studying after school ($\rho = 0.188, p < 0.01$), while there is no significant correlation with young people’s school achievement.

Young Slovenians spend the least time studying among all SEE countries. More than two-thirds (71.8%) study up to two hours daily, and compared to the other 9 SEE countries, a substantially lower share study for more than three hours (10.2%) (Figure 25). These results are in line with the trend from 2013 (Flere et al., 2014). More time spent studying is more prevalent at higher levels of schooling ($\rho = 0.118, p < 0.01$) and among those with higher average grades ($\rho = 0.098, p < 0.05$).

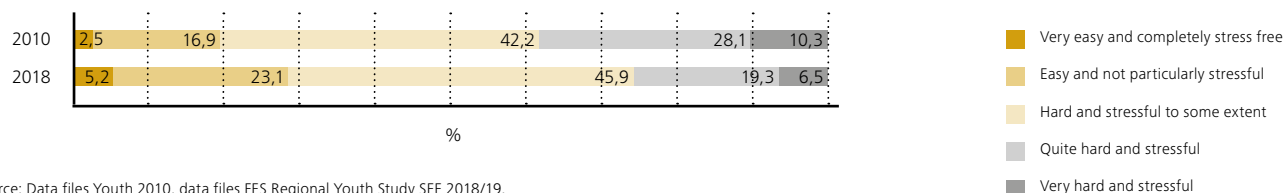
FIGURE 25: Daily number of hours of study; Slovenia and 9 SEE countries. How many hours on average do you spend studying (after classes/at home) per day?



Source: Data files Youth 2010, data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

FIGURE 24: Perception of stress at school; Slovenia and 9 SEE countries.

In your opinion, what is everyday life in your school/university like?



Source: Data files Youth 2010, data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

CONCLUSION

Main findings:

1. Since 2010, the share of young people with a tertiary education (25–34) has increased from 31 % to almost 45 % and was substantially above the EU-28 average in 2017. At the same time, from 2012 on, there has been a small, gradual decline in tertiary education enrolment rates.
2. The trend continues towards a considerably higher share of female graduates compared to males. In 2017, Slovenia had the second highest gender gap among all EU Member States.
3. Slovenia has the highest share of dropouts among all SEE countries; however, unlike in other countries, dropping out is especially prevalent at the higher levels of schooling (post-secondary). On the other hand, it has a very low share of low-skilled students, early leavers of education and young people not in employment, education or training.
4. Most young people in Slovenia have high educational aspirations, as 79 % want to obtain some sort of university degree. Higher aspirations and greater certainty about attaining them are correlated with better socioeconomic backgrounds.
5. Although education in Slovenia is generally widely accessible, some educational inequalities persist: Young people from more underprivileged backgrounds have lower educational aspirations and are less likely to attain higher levels of education, but are more likely to drop out of education or be NEET.
6. Financing of educational activities has been declining and is below the EU-22 and OECD average. The decline is most evident in higher education.
7. Young Slovenians are generally satisfied with the quality of education and have relatively high levels of confidence in the educational system. However, satisfaction could be improved through better school-work relatedness. Some steps in this direction have been made by raising the prevalence of performance of practical positions or internships within education, with Slovenia having the highest share of young people possessing such experience among all SEE countries.
8. The educational achievements of young Slovenians are relatively high and comparable to those in other SEE countries. Higher achievements are mainly related to their personal determination, effort and socialisation styles, rather than to socioeconomic factors.
9. Compared to other countries, young Slovenians tend to experience school as relatively stressful, while they spend a low amount of time studying.

The chapter's main findings in one or two sentences:

High enrolment rates, a rising share of tertiary graduates and predominantly high educational aspirations show that formal education plays an important role in the lives of young Slovenians. Although they have considerable trust in the educational system and are generally satisfied with its quality, they want more practically oriented contents that are related to their future field of work.

Policy recommendations:

Implementation of educational policies that would enable more links between education and work (practical component) – this can have positive effects on young people's satisfaction with the quality of education, while improving chances of a more successful transition from school to work.

9

EMPLOYMENT

The transition of young people from education to employment has generally been one of the most active areas of Youth Studies (Furlong, 2013: 73). During recent decades, this area of studies has become more and more difficult and interesting, as the transition takes longer and is much less certain. Some authors (e.g. Furlong and Kelly, 2005) even question the justification for the term “transition,” since for an increasing portion of the population, stable employment is simply unattainable even in the long term.

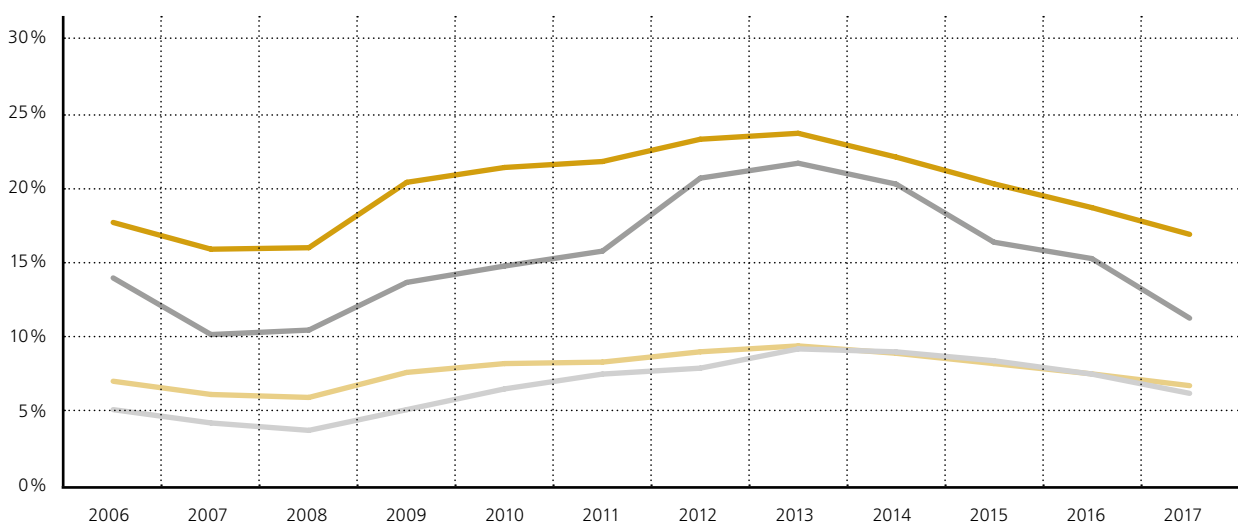
Like most European countries, Slovenia has been facing radical changes in the labour market, especially during the last decade. On the one hand, unemployment rates are still relatively high (although recent trends indicate a significant decline); on the other, traditional forms of permanent employment are increasingly being replaced by less secure and more flexible forms of employ-

ment. All these changes tend to be more pronounced among the young. Consequently, some authors refer to an “age-related segregation of the labour market” (e.g. Ignjatović and Trbanc, 2009), which is characterised by disproportionately high levels of unemployment and temporary employment among young people.

CURRENT TRENDS IN YOUTH (UN) EMPLOYMENT

As indicated, recent trends in youth unemployment in Slovenia display a significant decline (see Figure 26), staying below the EU-27 average. However, much of this improvement is related to the increase in non-standard/atypical forms of employment (e.g.,

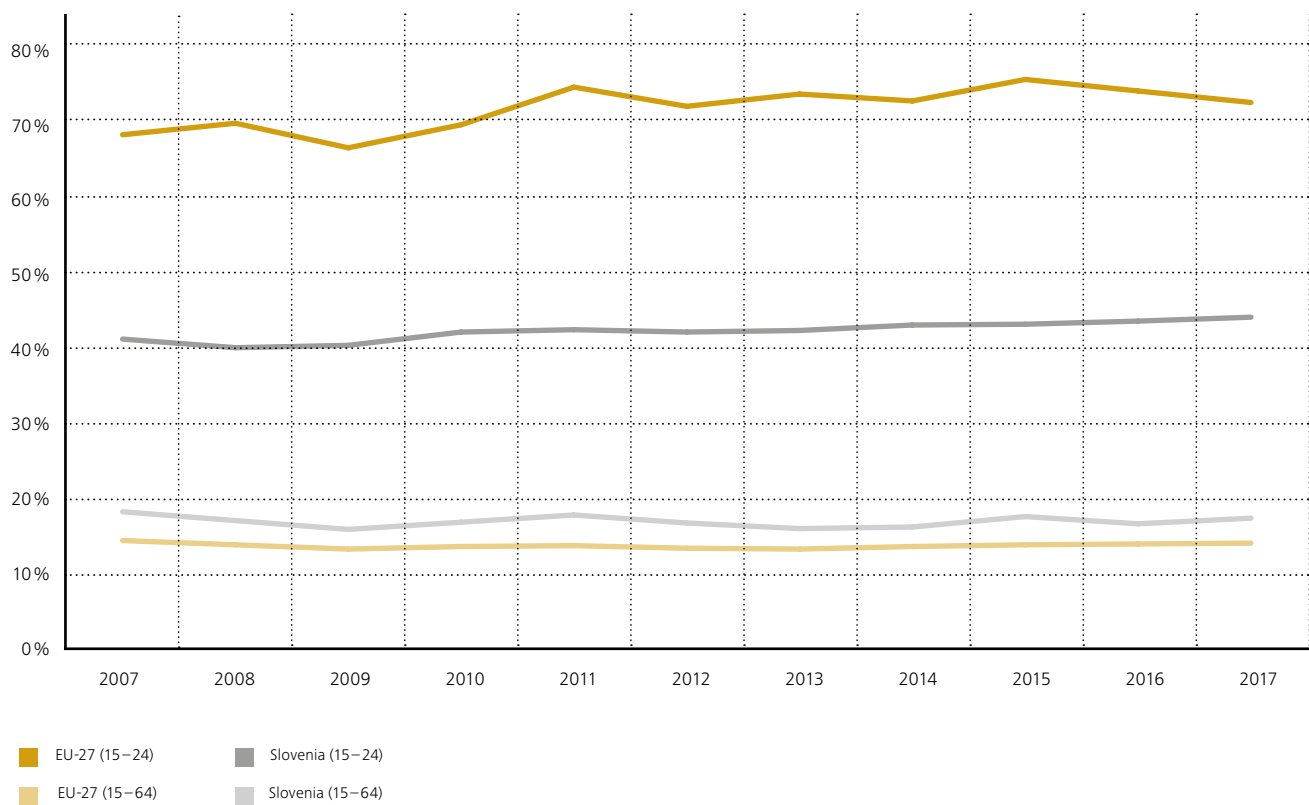
FIGURE 26: **Unemployment rate of the age groups 15–25 and 25–74, EU-27 and Slovenia, 2006–2016.**



■ EU-27 (15–25) ■ Slovenia (15–25)
■ EU-27 (25–74) ■ Slovenia (25–74)

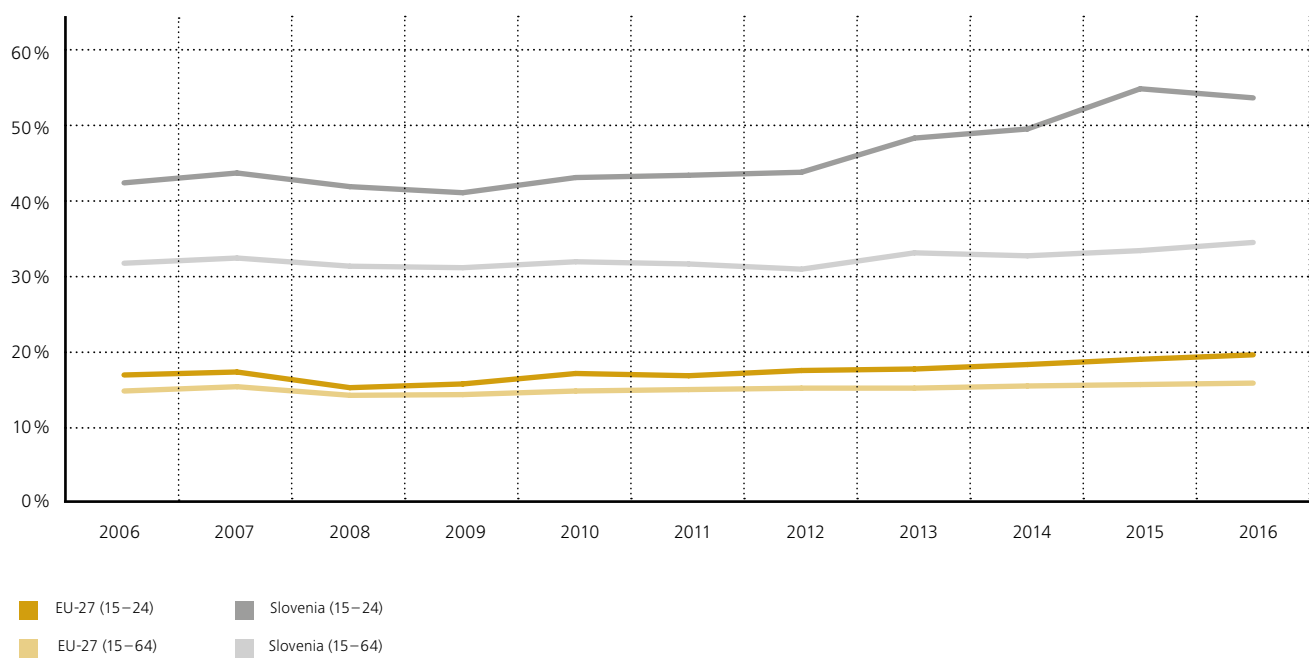
Source: Eurostat – Population and social conditions / Employment and unemployment (Labour Force Survey).

FIGURE 27: Temporary employment among the age groups 15–24 and 15–64, EU-27 and Slovenia.



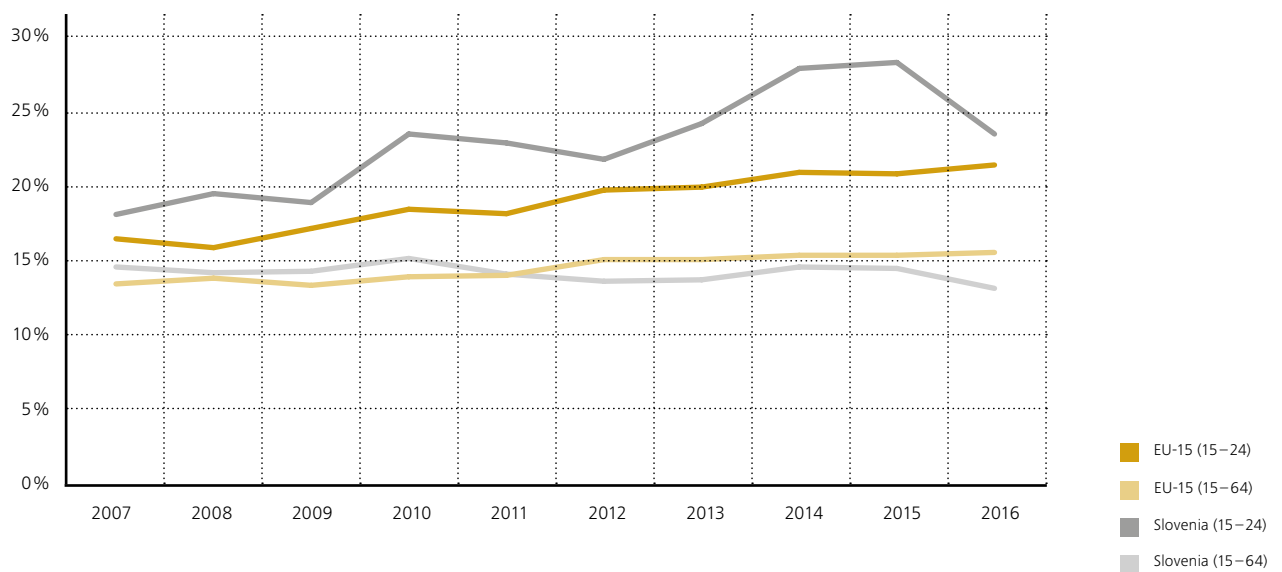
Source: Eurostat – Population and social conditions / Employment and unemployment (Labour Force Survey).

FIGURE 28: Employees working in shifts as a percentage of total employees by age, EU-15 and Slovenia, 2006–2016.



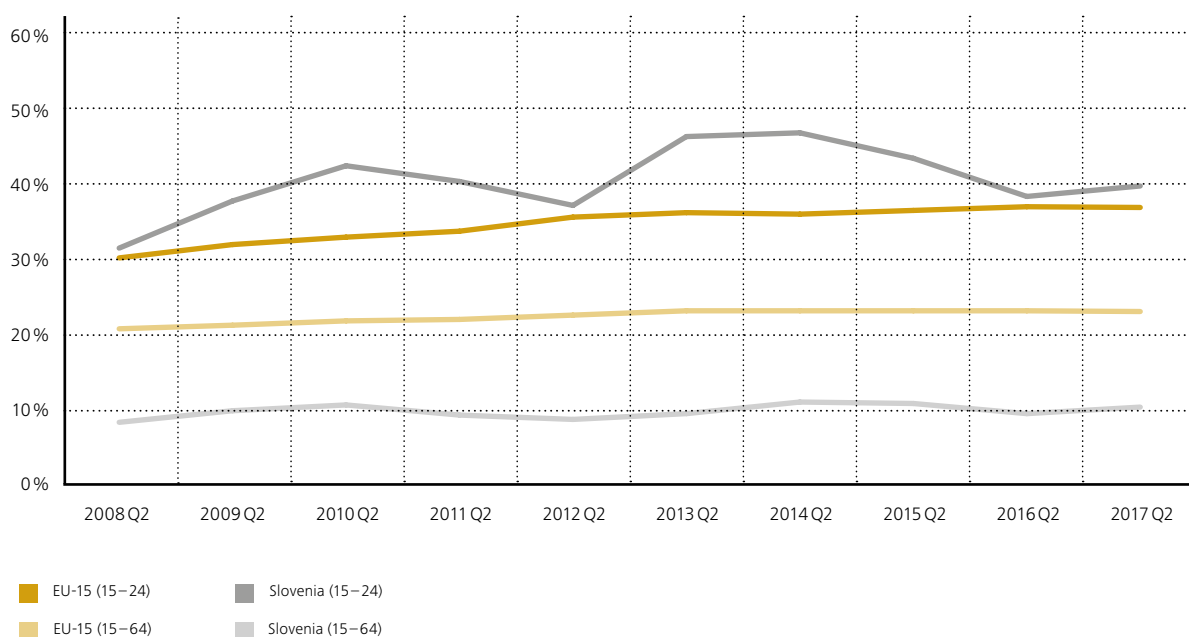
Source: Eurostat – Population and social conditions / Employment and unemployment (Labour Force Survey).

FIGURE 29: **Employees working on Sundays as a percentage of total employees by age EU-15 and Slovenia, 2007–2016.**



Source: Eurostat – Population and social conditions / Employment and unemployment (Labour Force Survey).

FIGURE 30: **Part-time employment, EU and Slovenia, 2008–2017 by age group.**



Source: Eurostat – Population and social conditions / Employment and unemployment (Labour Force Survey).

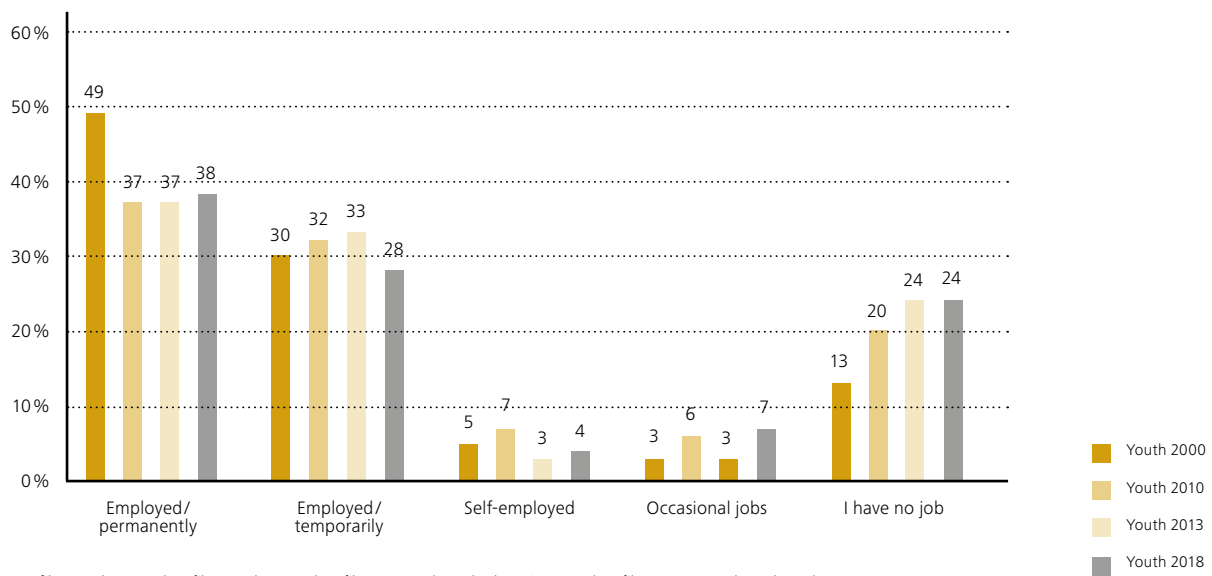
part-time, temporary employment, shift work, Sunday work), which have become or are becoming more prevalent (Figure 27, 28, 29 & 30).

Next, Eurostat data indicates that the previously detected age gap/age segmentation of the labour market (Youth 2010; Youth 2013) still exists and is even increasing (shift-work, Sunday work or part-time employment). In addition, the observed

improvement in terms of decreasing youth unemployment is much less pronounced when survey data is used. Specifically, if those enrolled in some sort of education and training are excluded, results indicate that the percentage of young people who state "I have no job" (25% females, 22% males) did not change from its peak in 2013 and remains markedly higher than in 2000.

FIGURE 31: **Employment status of economically active young people, 15–29, 2000–2018.**

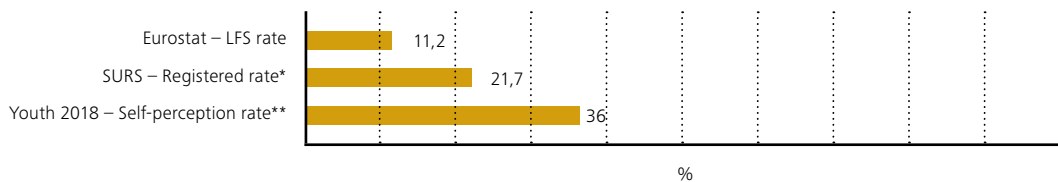
What is your current employment status?



Source: Data files Youth 2000, data files Youth 2010, data files FES Youth Study Slovenia 2013, data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

In addition, the unemployment rate, measured by the Youth 2018 survey, is considerably higher than the rate reported by Eurostat (LFS). Specifically, when the same age groups (15 – 25)

are compared, the difference between reported rates is more than 200 per cent (Figure 32).

FIGURE 32: **Youth unemployment rates (%), 15–25, 2017, by methodology.**

Notes: * The rate is calculated by dividing up all those who are registered as unemployed with the sum total of unemployed and employed.

** The rate is calculated by dividing up all those who indicated that they did not have a job with all those who were not in education or training.

Sources: SURS – Statistical Office, Slovenia (<http://www.stat.si/statweb>); Eurostat – Population and social conditions/ Employment and unemployment (Labour Force Survey).

Although official data indicates a decline in youth unemployment in Slovenia, the self-reported rate of unemployment has remained virtually unchanged from 2013 and is more than two-hundred per cent higher than the rate reported by the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

Although these differences are to be expected, as three different methodologies are used, it could be argued that the LFS method, which defines an unemployed person as someone who “in the last week (from Monday to Sunday) prior to the survey did not work even one hour for payment (in money or in kind), profit or family prosperity, but who in the past four weeks was actively seeking work and is willing to take work within two weeks. Un-

employed persons also include those that have already found work and will begin that work after the survey” runs counter to the common notion of unemployment. Registered unemployment is somewhat more revealing, although it still underrepresents the problem, since not all individuals without work register. Thus, it could be argued that the survey rate, which is based on the self-perception of the individual, i.e., the unemployed are those who perceive themselves as being unemployed, is the closest to “reality.” This also acknowledges the fact that probably only few would consider occasional jobs to be employment. Consequently, if those who only have occasional jobs are also treated as unemployed, the share of such unemployed young people increases to 42 (!) per cent. In other words, only 18 per cent of young people aged between 15–25 who are not in education or training have permanent employment. Everybody else is either unemployed or employed in insecure/precarious employment. It is not without importance that those who are either unemployed

or precariously employed on average feel less healthy and less satisfied with life and democracy, are more willing to emigrate and plan to have children later.

PROBLEM OF SKILLS/EDUCATION LEVEL MISMATCH

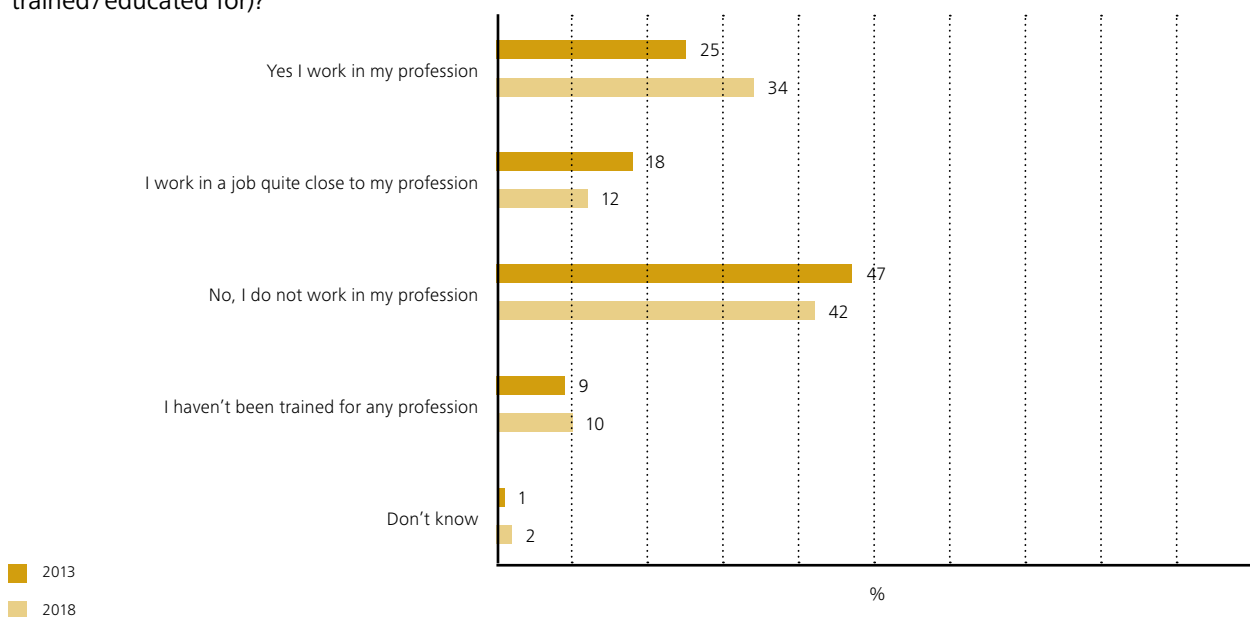
For those who do work, it is still relatively common for them to work outside their profession; however, the situation in this regard has improved somewhat since 2013 (Figure 33).

Next, it is important to note that the skills mismatch weakens once young people exit education. Specifically, the share of those reporting that they do not work in their profession decreases from 51 to 39 per cent when only those who are not in education or training are observed. In addition, and contrary to popular opinion, the most serious skills mismatch can be found, as could be expected, among those who completed primary school (57% work outside their profession) and, rather unexpectedly, among those who finished vocational/technical secondary school (49% work outside their profession). In turn, the highest share of those who do work in their profession can be found among those with education higher than a bachelor degree (56 per cent; all percentages for those who are not in education or training).

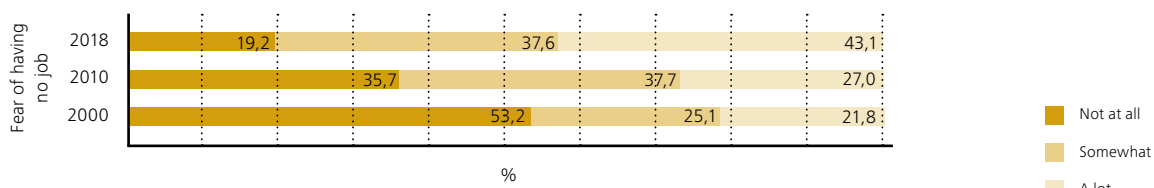
The skill-job mismatch has weakened since 2013. In addition, it is less pronounced when one analyses the group not enrolled in education or training. In this group, the biggest skills mismatch can predictably be found among those who completed primary school and, rather unexpectedly, among those who finished vocational/technical secondary school.

Next, although results indicated that the job performed often requires a lower level of formal education – 33 per cent stated that the job required a lower level of formal education, while only 8 per cent stated that the job required higher formal education – this can be attributed to the fact that many students work at casual jobs (student work), i.e., jobs that often do not require high levels of formal education. Thus, the highest “job-required-education” mismatch can be found among those who had finished secondary school (grammar school) and were still in education (i.e., students; among these, 53% have jobs that require lower education). This is further confirmed by the fact that the share of those who are not in education or training, and who state that their job is in line with the level of formal education, is quite similar, regardless of their formal education (70 per cent for vocational/technical secondary school, 67 per cent for secondary (grammar) school, 68 per cent for those who completed university at BA level). This share is somewhat lower only for those who finished primary school and for those who have completed university at the MA level (in both subgroups “only” 40 per cent state that their job is in line with their level of education). In other

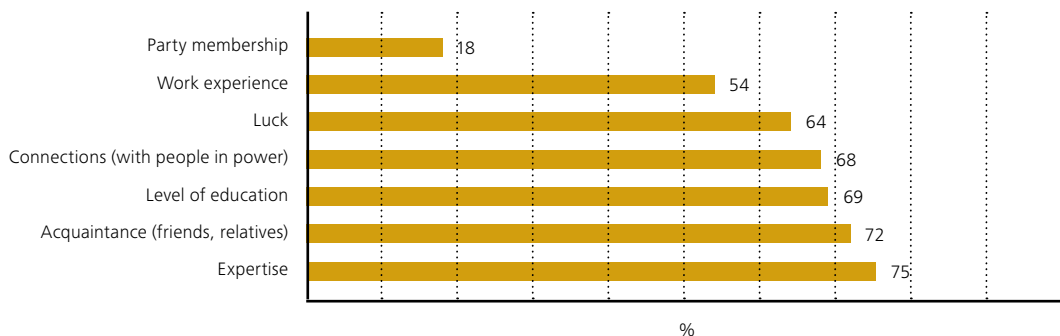
FIGURE 33: **Skills-job mismatch.** Do you currently work at a job within your profession (one that you have been trained/educated for)?



Source: Data files FES Youth Study Slovenia 2013, data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

FIGURE 34: **Fear of unemployment.**

Source: Data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19, Youth 2010.

FIGURE 35: **Factors in finding a job.** Very Important/Important when finding a job (%)

Source: Data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

words, once people finish their education or training, the “job-required-education” mismatch weakens.

Once people finish their education or training, the “job-required-education” mismatch weakens. The share of those who are not in education or training and who state that their job is in line with the level of formal education remains quite similar, regardless of their formal education.

FACTORS IN FINDING AND CHOOSING A JOB

Comparing past youth surveys (Youth 2000, Youth 2010) the percentage of young people (aged 15–29) who fear that they will not be able to find employment has increased from 22 per cent to 43 per cent (Figure 34).

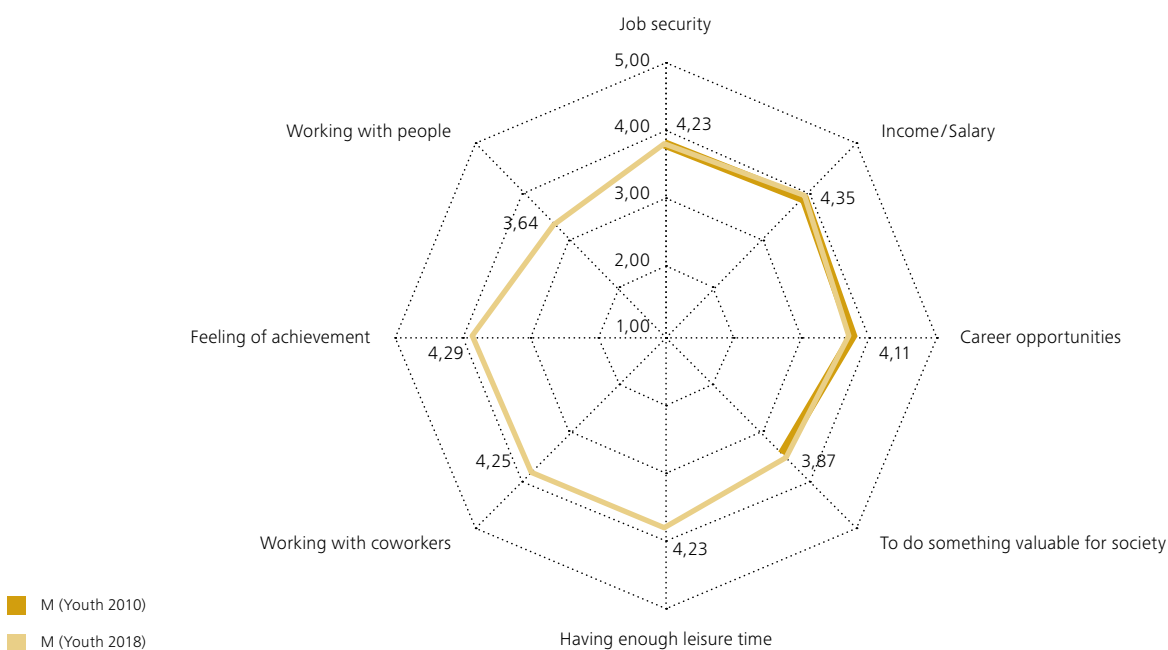
Given labour market trends, especially in terms of securing permanent, stable employment and the macroeconomic volatility of the recent decade, this trend should not come as a surprise.

Fear of unemployment has been steadily increasing: it has almost doubled since 2000.

This fear could be connected to the fact that young people consider connections and acquaintances (people in power and friends) and even luck as important factors when finding a job (Figure 35).

Besides education and expertise, connections, acquaintances and luck are identified as key factors in finding a job.

FIGURE 36: Factors relating to what is important in a job (5=very important).



Source: Data files Youth 2010, data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

One of the key questions as far as work is concerned is what the most important thing for young people in work and employment is – whether it be earning money, independence or something else. The figure below presents seven elements of work and employment and corresponding means.

For young Slovenians, the most important work-related factor is income, closely followed by a feeling of achievement and working with co-workers. There is no significant shift in comparable dimensions in relation to 2010.

Karolina:

‘Employment means a lot to me because it brings about some financial stability, it offers some sort of order, as far as life is concerned, because you see that you have an obligation every day, you know that you are full-time employed. Because if you are unemployed, you are in a way free, waiting, if you get a job, you have more stress. So for me it means a certain emotional stability, financial stability, security, satisfaction that I can do something and know why I work.’

For young Slovenians, the most important work factor is income.

CONCLUSION

Main findings

1. Traditional forms of permanent employment are increasingly being replaced by less secure and more flexible forms of employment. All these changes tend to be even more pronounced among young people.
2. Although official data indicates a decline in youth unemployment in Slovenia, the self-reported rate of unemployment has remained virtually unchanged from 2013 and is more than two-hundred per cent higher than the rate reported by the Labour Force Survey (LFS).
3. The skill-job mismatch has weakened from 2013. In addition, it is less pronounced when analysing the group which is not enrolled in education or training. As expected, the biggest skills mismatch can be found in this group among those who finished primary school and, rather unexpectedly, among those who finished vocational/technical secondary school.
4. Once people finish their education or training, the “job-required education” mismatch weakens. The share of those who are not in education or training and who state that their job is in line with their level of formal education remains quite similar regardless of their formal education.
5. Fear of unemployment has been steadily increasing: it has almost doubled since 2000.
6. Besides education and expertise, connections, acquaintances and luck are identified as key factors in finding a job.
7. For young Slovenians, the most important work-related factor is income.

The chapter's main findings in one or two sentences:

Traditional forms of permanent employment are increasingly being replaced by less secure and more flexible forms of employment. All these changes tend to be even more pronounced among the young. In this regard, the main policy recommendation would be to re-evaluate the economic models that continue to exert pressure towards greater flexibility; to consider putting in place a new system of social security (such as a Universal Basic Income), that could be financed via:

- the introduction of a “Tobin tax”,
- the additional fiscal revenues coming from establishing a minimum tax rate for capital (as is the case for VAT),
- policies that would re-establish “pre-neoliberal era” tax progression.

10

POLITICS

Politics, simply defined as “decision-making” (outside the private ambit), as an activity “through which people make, preserve and amend the general rules under which they live” (Heywood, 2011: 2), represents an immensely important part of social life. It shapes not only the present but also the future. In this sense, politics has a particular relevance for young people, as they are the group that will live in that future. However, past research indicates relatively low levels of interest on the part of youth in, and engagement with, conventional politics (Flash Eurobarometer, 2013/375).

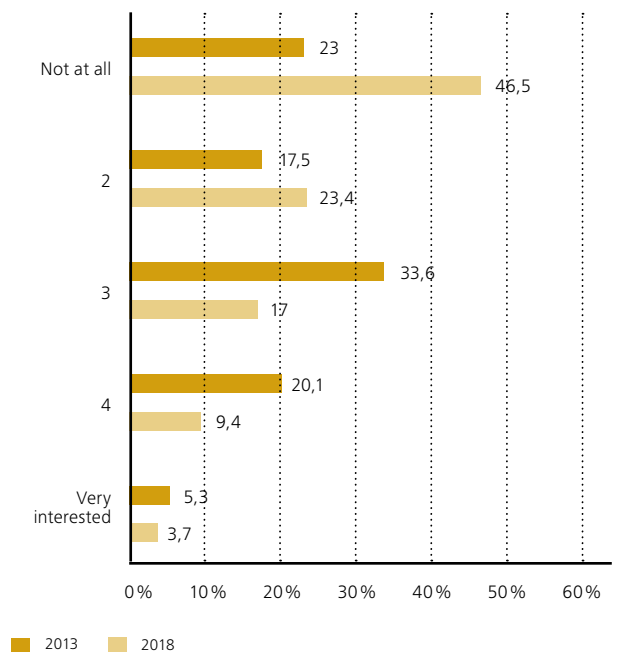
The fact that young people in general are not interested and not participating in conventional politics has also been confirmed by past Slovenian youth studies (e.g., Youth, 2010; Youth, 2013). To be precise, the last comprehensive Slovenian youth study (Youth, 2013) indicated that only 10 per cent liked engaging in politics (Youth, 2013: 234), with young people’s disinterest in politics ranging from 74 per cent (interest in politics relating to the Balkan region) to 41 per cent (interest in national politics) (Youth, 2013: 26). In addition, only 15 per cent stated that they had voted in all the elections since obtaining the right to vote, while almost 42 per cent said that they would not take part in elections if they were to be held tomorrow (Youth, 2013: 222).

These findings could be explained by the fact that in 2013 half of young Slovenians thought that they were not represented by young people who were active in politics (Youth, 2013: 223), that only 15 per cent felt that they had any influence on national political institutions (225), that they expressed high levels of dissatisfaction with democracy at present, as 60 per cent said that they were either very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with democracy at present (up from 21 per cent in 2000; Youth, 2013: 223). Furthermore, only a small minority of young people expressed trust in government, political parties and parliament (226).

Data from the 2018 wave (FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19) paints a relatively similar picture (e.g., low interest, low participation, relatively high level of dissatisfaction with democracy, and low trust in political institutions), with some important differences. First, whereas in 2013 23 per cent said that they were not at all interested

in politics, this share increased to almost 47 per cent in 2018 (Figure 37). The degree of disinterest is even greater when it comes to EU & world politics (48% for EU politics, 63% for Russian politics).

FIGURE 37: **Interest in national politics, 2013 and 2018.** How interested are you in Slovenian politics?



Sources: Data files FES Youth Study Slovenia 2013, data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

The lack of interest in Slovenian politics among young people has increased. Whereas in 2013 every fourth young person expressed a total lack of interest in politics, in 2018 roughly every second young person reported such.

Taša:

‘I do not think that politics in Slovenia is of interest to young people because it’s an unknown area for them, and at the same time they already have a negative attitude towards politics. Why would a young person be interested in politics, when he listened to his grandmother as a child complaining about how politicians were destroying everything and how the government was to blame for the drought that summer. /.../ Slovenian society blames the political arena for everything. These are the patterns that young people acquire from their environment.’

In this context of prevailing disinterest, it is not surprising that only 4 per cent of young people discuss politics very often and that only 4 per cent claim that they know a lot about politics. Both are closely associated with general interest in politics (rho-discussing, interest = 0.63; p <0.001; rho-knowing, interest = 0.52; p <0.001). A significant association can also be found in relation to parental education: young people who have parents

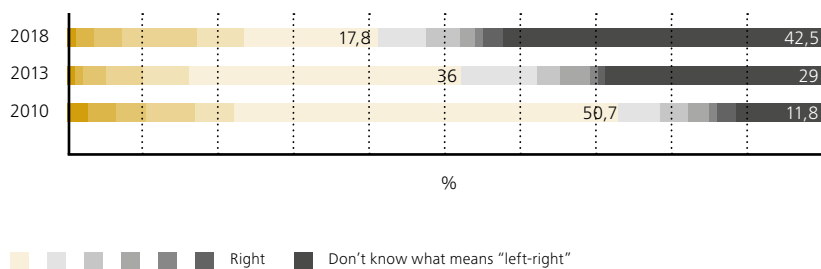
with tertiary education are significantly more interested in politics than those whose parents have only primary education (t(483) = -2.06, p = 0.04). Interestingly, no significant association was found between parental education and self-declared knowledge of politics. Parental education however, was significantly associated with the frequency of political discussion among young people (rho = 0.12, p < 0.001). In sum, it would appear that politics in general is something that is quite removed from the everyday life of young Slovenians.

Related to this, more young people today have problems positioning themselves politically on a left-right scale: whereas in 2010 only 12 per cent indicated that they were not familiar with such issues, this share increased to almost 43 per cent in 2018. As a consequence, affiliation with “the political centre” shrank from 51 to just 18 per cent. This shift (i.e. disorientation) is significantly related to political disinterest. Specifically, those who do not know where/how to position themselves (in terms of the left-right spectrum) are significantly less interested in politics in general (CC = 0.36, p < 0.001).

However, if elections were held tomorrow, almost 60 per cent would go out and vote (18% do not know, 22% would abstain), which represents a significant decrease in absenteeism since 2013, when such willingness was reported by only 32 per cent of young people (Youth, 2013: 221). Related to this, 29 per cent expressed a willingness to assume a political function (0.4 per cent said that they hold one already). In other words,

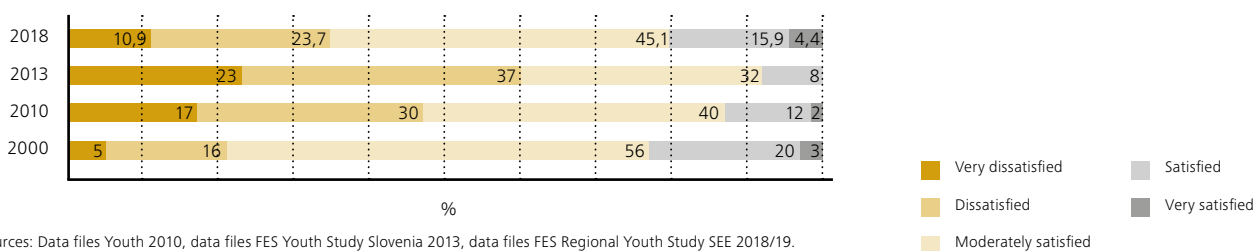
FIGURE 38: Self-alignment on the left-right spectrum, 2010, 2013, and 2018.

When people talk about their political beliefs, they mostly speak about left-wing and right-wing. How would you place your views on this scale, generally speaking?



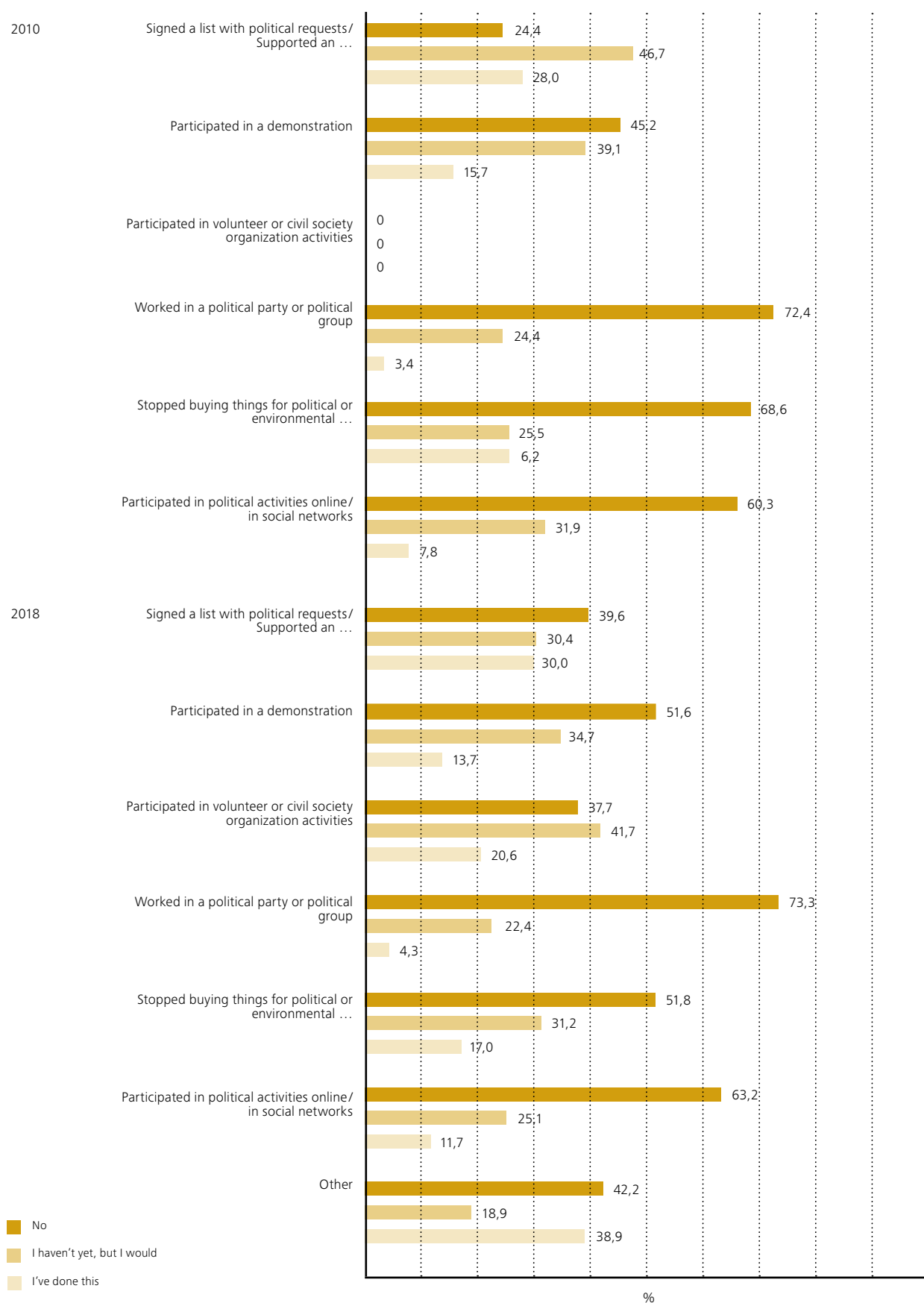
Sources: Data files Youth 2010, data files FES Youth Study Slovenia 2013, data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

FIGURE 39: Satisfaction with democracy, 2000–2018.



Sources: Data files Youth 2010, data files FES Youth Study Slovenia 2013, data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

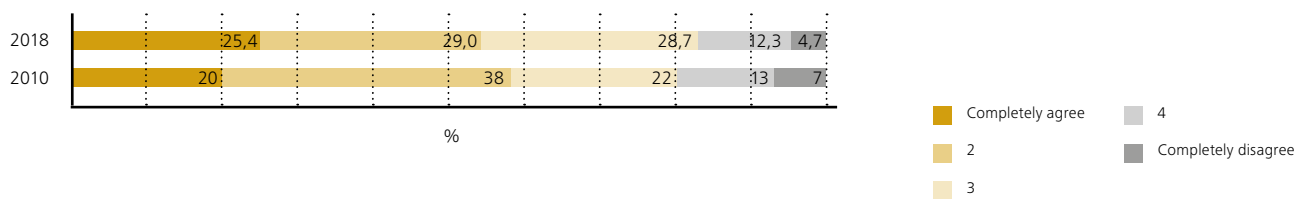
FIGURE 40: **Other forms of youth political engagement, 2000–2018.** Have you tried or would you try one of the following forms of political engagement?



Sources: Data files Youth 2010, data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

FIGURE 41: Young people's perception of whether politicians care about young people's opinions, 2010, 2018.

I don't think politicians care about young people's opinions



Sources: Data files Youth 2010, data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

Although young people today are less interested in politics (in relation to 2013), more disoriented (in terms of left-right positioning), and know relatively little about politics – the main sources of information about political events are the Internet (2013: 82.1 %, 2018: 81.7 %) and TV (2013: 70.8 %, 2018: 68.6 %) – they express a relatively greater degree of preparedness to participate in elections.

In addition, almost a third would be prepared to take on a political position.

One possible explanation for this reversal of participation could be related to the fact that young people today are relatively more satisfied with the state of democracy (although roughly a third of young people are still either very dissatisfied or dissatisfied; see Figure 39), which is undoubtedly related to the economic recovery that started in 2014 (as indicated by Klingemann (2013). Evaluations of democratic performance often take into account the current economic climate).

The current study indicates a significant correlation between past and future participation in elections and satisfaction with the state of democracy ($\rho_{\text{past}} = 0.10$, $p < 0.05$; $\rho_{\text{future}} = 0.12$, $p < 0.05$). It is worthwhile mentioning that the unemployed are on average significantly less satisfied with the state of democracy than the group that includes all others ($t(887) = -2.28$, $p = 0.023$). Concurrently, the financial situation of respondents' households was also significantly related to satisfaction with the state of democracy ($\rho = 0.10$, $p < 0.01$).

The general level of satisfaction with the state of democracy among young people in Slovenia today is low, yet notably higher than five years earlier. Most young people today are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the functioning of the democratic system.

This increase in satisfaction has also decreased for some forms of "protest through political participation." Specifically, while in 2010 and 2018 around a third stated that they had signed a petition in the past, in 2018 the share of those who would not do this increased to almost 40 per cent (from 24.4% in 2010). A slight decrease can also be observed in terms of willingness to participate in political protests. However, in 2018 more young people stated that they would be prepared to stop buying things for political or environmental reasons (Figure 40).

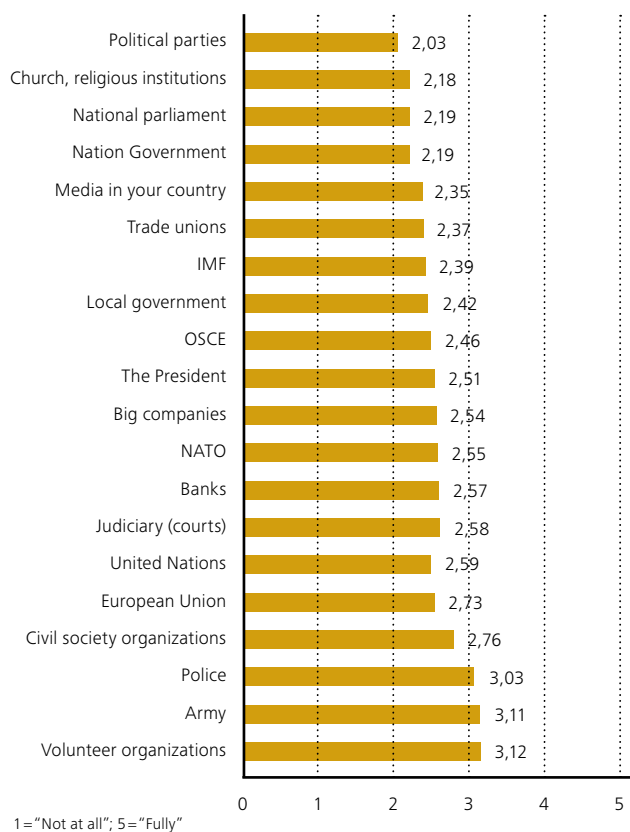
Nevertheless, even if satisfaction with the state of democracy in Slovenia has increased as the economic situation has improved (see also the chapter on employment), the majority of young people still feel that young people's interests are not represented in national politics: on a five-point scale, 63 per cent selected either "1" or "2" (1 = young people's interests not represented at all, 5 = young people's interests are very well represented). In addition, the majority of young people feel that politicians do not care about young people's opinions (Figure 41).

In other words, results still point to a feeling of significant alienation among a rather large share of young people from the world of conventional politics, which constitutes a serious problem for the legitimacy of the current form of political system. Predictably, those who feel unrepresented/left behind are significantly more dissatisfied with the state of democracy ($\rho = 0.15$, $p < 0.001$) and are significantly more willing to support claims like "We should have a strong leader who rules with a strong hand for the public good" ($\rho = 0.20$, $p < 0.001$) or "A strong party representing the common folk in general is what we need right now" ($\rho = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$).

The majority of young people feel that young people's interests are not represented in national politics, and that politicians do not care about young people's opinions.

Another indication of such alienation is manifested in the relatively low trust of young people in political institutions (e.g., political parties, national parliament and national government) (Figure 42).

FIGURE 42: **Trust in political institutions.**
How far do you trust?

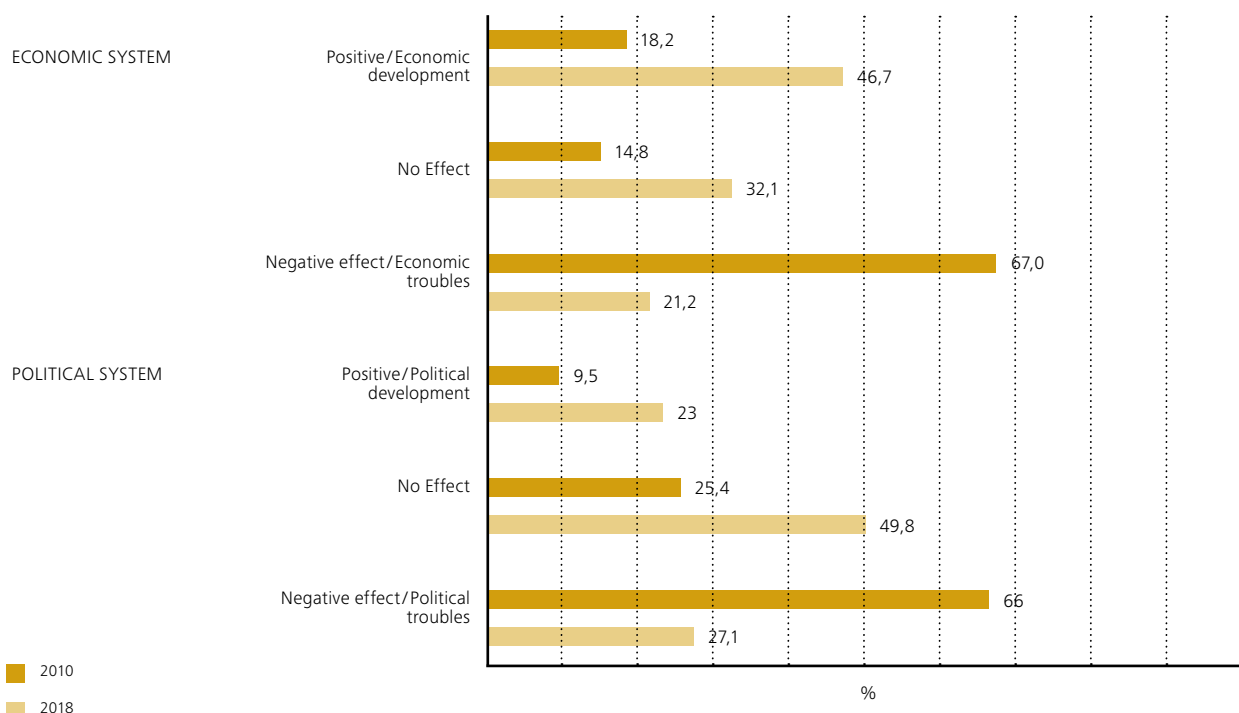


Source: Data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

Although the situation regarding trust in national political institutions has improved over the past five years¹⁵ – the share of those who expressed absolute distrust (i.e., those who opted for 1 = “Not at all”) decreased from 60% to 35% for political parties, from 56% to 30% for the national parliament, and from 58% to 30% for government – it could be argued that distrust and thus political alienation are still relatively high, since roughly a third of young people absolutely distrust national political institutions. Predictably, (dis)trust in political institutions (the president, national government and parliament, political parties) was significantly correlated with (dis)satisfaction with the state of democracy (rho: trust in president, satisfaction = 0.34, $p < 0.01$; rho: trust in national government, satisfaction = 0.35, $p < 0.01$; rho: trust in national parliament, satisfaction = 0.38, $p < 0.01$; rho: trust in political parties, satisfaction = 0.31, $p < 0.01$).

Although the situation regarding trust in political institutions has improved over the past five years, it could be argued that distrust and thus political alienation among young people are still relatively high, since roughly a third of young people absolutely distrust national political institutions.

FIGURE 43: **Attitude towards EU membership.** How do you see the effects of Slovenia’s integration into the European Union in terms of the economic and political system?



Source: Data files Youth 2010, data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

The situation is somewhat better when it comes to trust in the EU – “only” 18 per cent absolutely distrust the EU, while the share of those who view the effects of EU membership positively increased on a significant scale (Figure 43).

Young Slovenians are thus much more pro-European in 2018 than they were in 2013. Whereas in 2013 46 per cent wanted to leave the EU, in 2018 this share dropped to 17 per cent (the percentage of those who could not decide remained roughly the same – around 20%). In addition, a significant portion of young people identify themselves as Europeans (only 5% reject the idea) and as world citizens (6% reject the idea).

Still, the reported levels of political alienation, dissatisfaction and lack of trust (on a national level) all represent a problem for the legitimacy of the current political system in Slovenia. In addition, the issue cannot be ignored in relation to the rise of various populist movements/populism, usefully defined as “a set of ideas characterised by the Manichean and moral distinction between ‘the people’ versus ‘the elite’” (Hawkins et al., 2017: 533; see also Mudde, 2004; Bornschieer, 2017: 2); as a “complaint that democratic representatives have violated a sacred trust – they have wilfully ignored the rights of their constituents as citizens to equality before the law” (Hawkins et al., 2017: 536; Bornschieer, 2017); as an “expression of disappointment over frustrated economic expectations ... and fear of threats to physical and cultural security” (Galston, 2017: 11). Thus, if the levels of political mistrust are higher and people are dissatisfied with democracy, populist rhetoric will be more effective at garnering support (Akkerman et al.: 2017: 394).

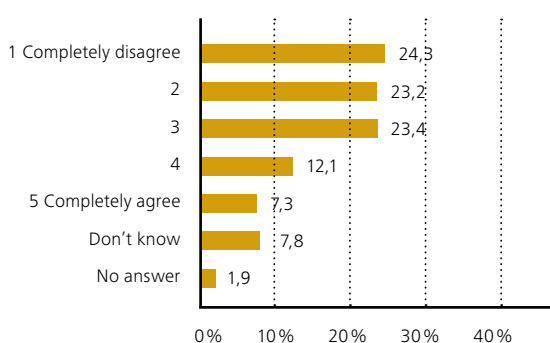
However, it should be noted that this in itself is not necessarily a cause for concern. Contrary to popular belief, populism does not necessarily threaten democracy (see Hawkins et al., 2017; Goodhart, 2017; Galston, 2018). It can often be viewed as an “illiberal democratic response to undemocratic liberalism” (cited in Galston, 2018: 11), so it is not a threat to democracy *per se*, but to its liberal version. Nevertheless, it can and sometimes actually does spill over in an undemocratic phenomenon. An example of such a spill-over effect might be the inclination towards dictatorship as a preferred form of government (Figure 44).

Almost 20 per cent completely agree or somewhat agree that dictatorship can be, under certain circumstances, a better form of government, although it should be noted that more than half agree or completely agree (52.3%) that democracy is a good form of government in general. This paints a more optimistic picture that is in line with other studies in Western Europe and North America, where it was found that “median support for representative democracy across these countries stands at 80 per cent. In contrast, only 13 per cent support a system in which a strong leader can make decisions without interference from the legislature or the courts” (Galston, 2017: 14).

In this context, the pertinent question is why such disenchantment or, speaking more broadly, alienation, from conventional politics exists. Part of the answer can be found by looking at what young people expect from the government; by analysing certain socio-political values and attitudes of young people (Figure 45).

The most important areas that government should focus on, according to respondents, are reduction of employment, human rights, ecology, social justice and social security. This clearly points to the desire to secure the basic conditions for a decent life. In other words, most young people expect the government to provide them with economic, social, and legal security in a clean environment. The main issue in this regard is that some of the goals are often mutually exclusive. For example, policies that are aimed at lowering employment and boosting economic growth are often associated with steps that erode social justice and security (e.g. deregulation of labour markets, lowering of the tax burden, etc.), are not possible without an erosion of social security) and that destroy the natural environment (e.g., infinite growth in a finite space is not possible without some sort of environmental degradation). For this reason, it is to be expected that a significant share of young people will be disenchanted or alienated from politics, as it is virtually impossible to achieve all of the identified goals at the same time.

FIGURE 44: **Attitudes towards dictatorship.** Under certain circumstances, dictatorship is a better form of government than democracy

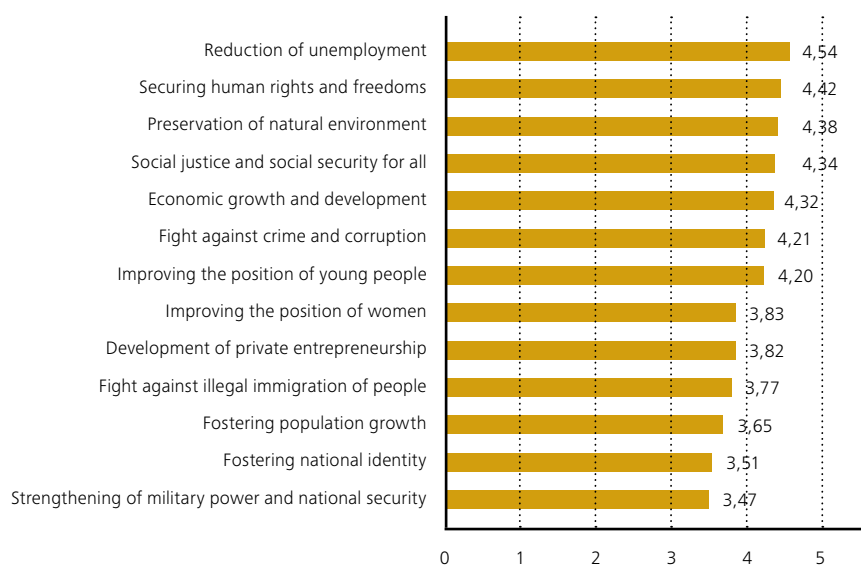


Source: Data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

Most young people want to live in a country which above all guarantees them economic, social, legal security in a clean environment. The main issue in this regard is that some of the goals are often mutually exclusive.

FIGURE 45: **Relative importance of tasks that governments should focus on.**

To which extent should the national government focus on the realization of each of the following objectives?

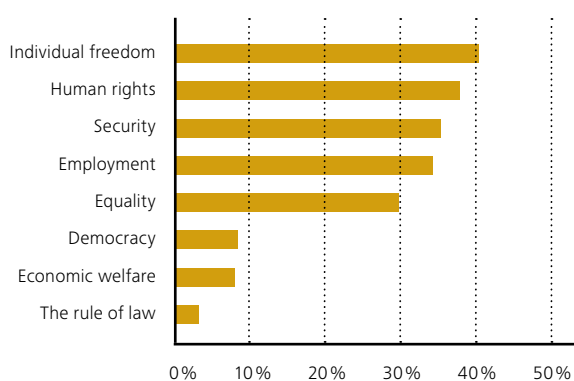


1 = Not at all, 5 = Very much

Source: Data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

This issue is also mirrored when a hierarchy of values that are most important to young people is analysed (Figure 46).

FIGURE 46: **Relative importance of eight major socio-political values.** Which are the three most important values (listed above) for you personally?



Source: Data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

Note: Respondents were asked to rate the three most important socio-political values. The scores in the graph were computed as a weighted arithmetic mean, whereby the percentage ranking of a given value first was assigned a weight of 3, the percentage ranking of a given value 2nd was weighted with 2, and the percentage ranking of a given value 3rd was weighted with 1.

For example, values of security and equality are, at least in the current setting of the global economy, often more or less directly in opposition to safeguarding employment. For example, increasing security and equality requires greater intervention by the government (e.g., tax progression), intervention that is often portrayed as detrimental to providing an institutional framework for high employment. In other words, it could be argued that young

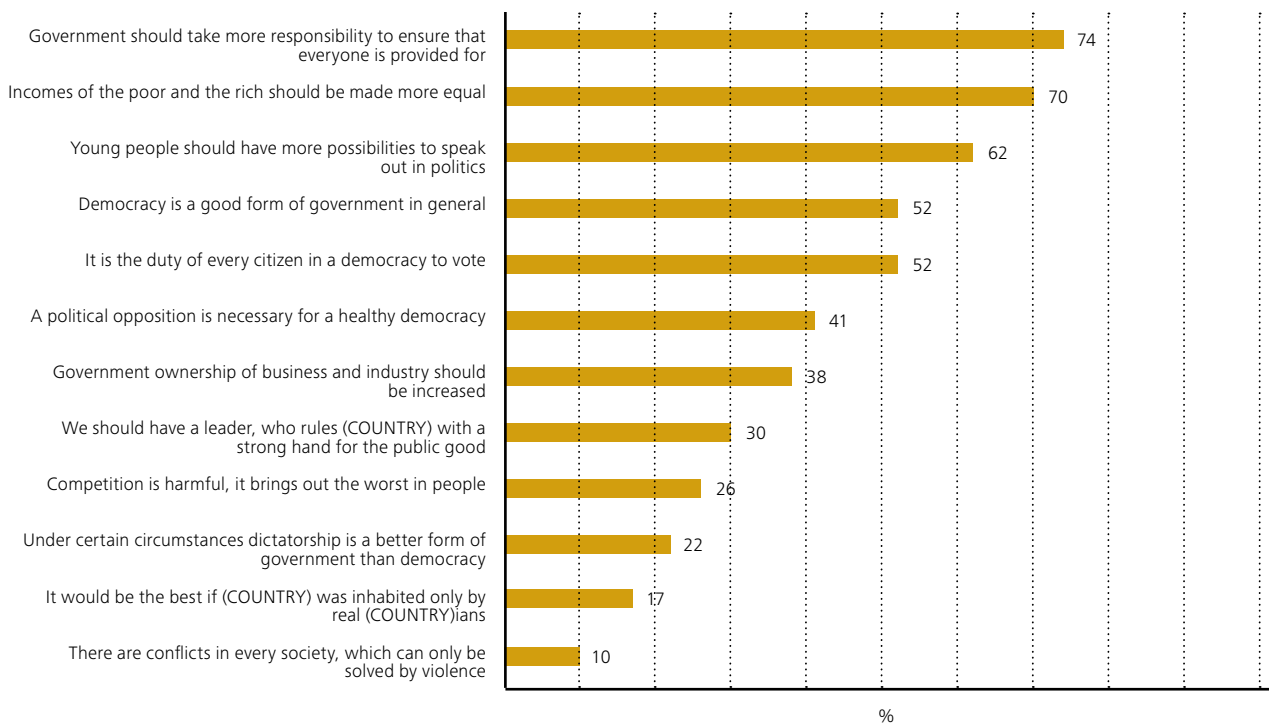
people desire and value goals that are not easy (if not impossible) to achieve simultaneously.

Next, among many statements measuring support for different changes in terms of socio-political values and attitudes, three basic orientations emerged from a series of factor analyses: democratic orientation,¹⁶ authoritarian orientation,¹⁷ and socialist orientation.¹⁸ Figure 47 presents percentages of young people agreeing and completely agreeing with each of the statements included in the three scales.

If one were to summarise the seven most popular statements in one orientation, it would probably be support for social reform in the direction of democratic socialism – social and economic security for all and greater equality are almost universally accepted. Furthermore, a large number of young people (38%) openly support the idea of increasing social ownership of the means of production, whereas every fourth respondent sees competition as something harmful. To put it differently, the idea of a strong (democratic) state ensuring a decent living for all citizens, with elements that are in certain aspects quite contrary to “pure capitalism”, is strongly accepted among young Slovenians.

Young people strongly support social reform in the direction of democratic socialism – social and economic security for all and greater equality are almost universally accepted.

FIGURE 47: **Agreement with selected statements in relation to democracy, socialism, authoritarianism, and nationalism.** To what extent do you agree with the following statements: (% agree or completely agree)?



Source: Data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

In addition, a socialist and democratic orientation is overwhelmingly more popular than an authoritarian orientation, whereas a socialist orientation enjoys greater support than a democratic one. Authoritarian tendencies thus appear relatively weak, but one should bear in mind that: a) the scale of authoritarian orientation includes two rather extreme items pointing to dictatorship and use of force by the government; b) that authoritarian/non-democratic tendencies are significantly associated with nationalism ($\rho = 0.32$, $p < 0.001$) and stances that express a negative view of the current condition regarding employment ($\rho = 0.13$, $p < 0.001$), economic welfare ($\rho = 0.16$, $p < 0.001$) and equality ($\rho = 0.10$, $p < 0.01$). In other words, the authoritarian complex might become stronger if the economic situation (including inequality) worsens in the future.

Although authoritarian tendencies are relatively weak among young Slovenians, they might become stronger if the economic situation (including unemployment, economic welfare and inequality) were to worsen in the future.

CONCLUSION

Main findings

1. The lack of interest in domestic politics among young Slovenians has increased. While in 2013 every fourth young person expressed a total lack of interest in politics, in 2018 roughly every second young person reported this.
2. Although young people today are less interested in politics (compared to 2013), they are also more disoriented (in terms of left-right positioning), and know relatively little about politics; the main sources of information about political events are the Internet (2013: 82.1%, 2018: 81.7%) and TV (2013: 70.8%, 2018: 68.6%). However, respondents express a relatively greater degree of readiness to participate in elections. In addition, almost a third would be prepared to accept a political appointment.
3. General satisfaction with the state of democracy among young people in Slovenia today is low, yet notably higher than five years earlier. Most young people today are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the functioning of the democratic system.
4. Most young people feel that their interests are not represented in national politics, and that politicians do not care about their opinions.
5. Although the situation regarding trust in political institutions has improved over the past five years, it could be argued that distrust and thus political alienation among young people is still relatively high, as roughly a third of young people absolutely distrust national political institutions.
6. Most young people want to live in a country that most of all guarantees them economic, social and legal security in a clean environment. The main issue in this regard is that they perceive some of these goals to be mutually exclusive.
7. Young people strongly support social reform in the direction of democratic socialism – social and economic security for all and greater equality are almost universally accepted.
8. Although authoritarian tendencies are relatively weak among young Slovenians, they might increase if the economic situation (including unemployment, economic welfare and inequality) were to worsen in the future.

Chapter main findings in one or two sentences:

General satisfaction with democracy among young people in Slovenia is not high (a third disapprove of it), but has significantly improved compared to 5 years ago. Young people in Slovenia almost universally favour policies aimed at increasing social and economic security, and reducing inequality.

Policy recommendation:

In order to improve young people's participation in politics, their perceived inclusion should be improved by allowing them to have a greater voice and by bringing politics closer to their everyday experience. The former could be achieved by politicians promoting policies tied explicitly and specifically to young people's interests; the latter could be attained by introducing institutions of deliberative democracy which place young people of various political persuasions in a common, face-to-face space so that their views can be expressed, challenged and discussed, furthering their personal stake in politics and demonstrating to them that they are heard.

11

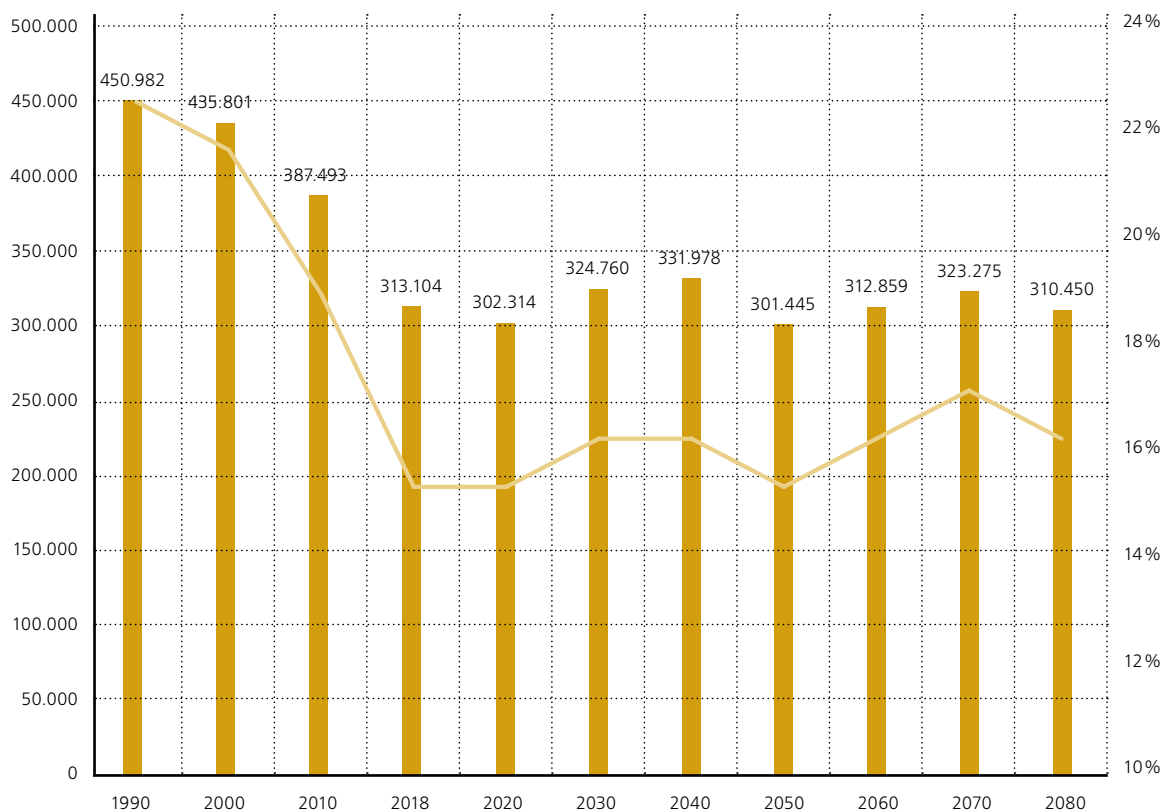
DEMOGRAPHY

One of the basic demographic trends in Slovenia is a decline in the number of young people. Some of the more pessimistic projections of previous studies, for example, one stating that “In the period from 2010 to 2020, the number of young people (aged 15–29) in Slovenia will fall by over 20 per cent.” (Lavrič and Flerš in Lavrič et al, 2011: 51), have proven to be accurate – in 2018 there were almost 21 % fewer young people in Slovenia in comparison to 2000. However, after the great decline between 1990 and 2020, when the trend bottoms out, recent projections show

a stabilisation (see Figure 48). The main reason for this can be attributed to a positive trend in fertility from 2003, when the birth rate in Slovenia gradually increased from 1.2 (2003) to 1.62 (2017) children per fertile woman. Contrary to some estimates (Lavrič et al., 2011), recent projections show that we will have reached a relatively stable level roughly in 2018.

We can draw a similar conclusion by looking at the percentage of young people in the total population (the red line). In the period between 1990 and 2018, the share of young people dropped

FIGURE 48: **Number and percentage of young people (15–29 years of age) in Slovenia, selected years.**



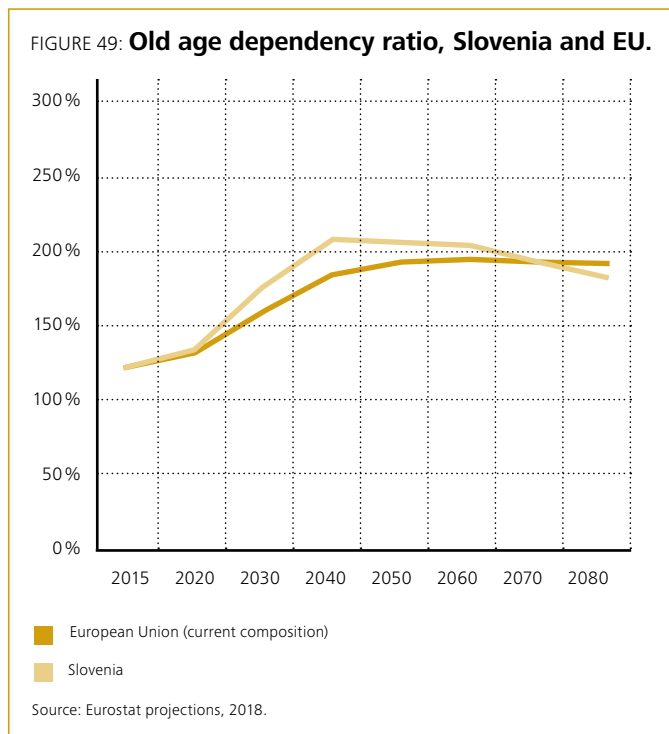
Source: SORS, 2018.

from 22 % to 15 %, but is not expected to change significantly over the next decades. This, however, does not mean that there are no demographic problems relating to age structure.

Following a decline between 1990–2020, the latest projections show a stabilisation of the youth population – both in terms of number and share.

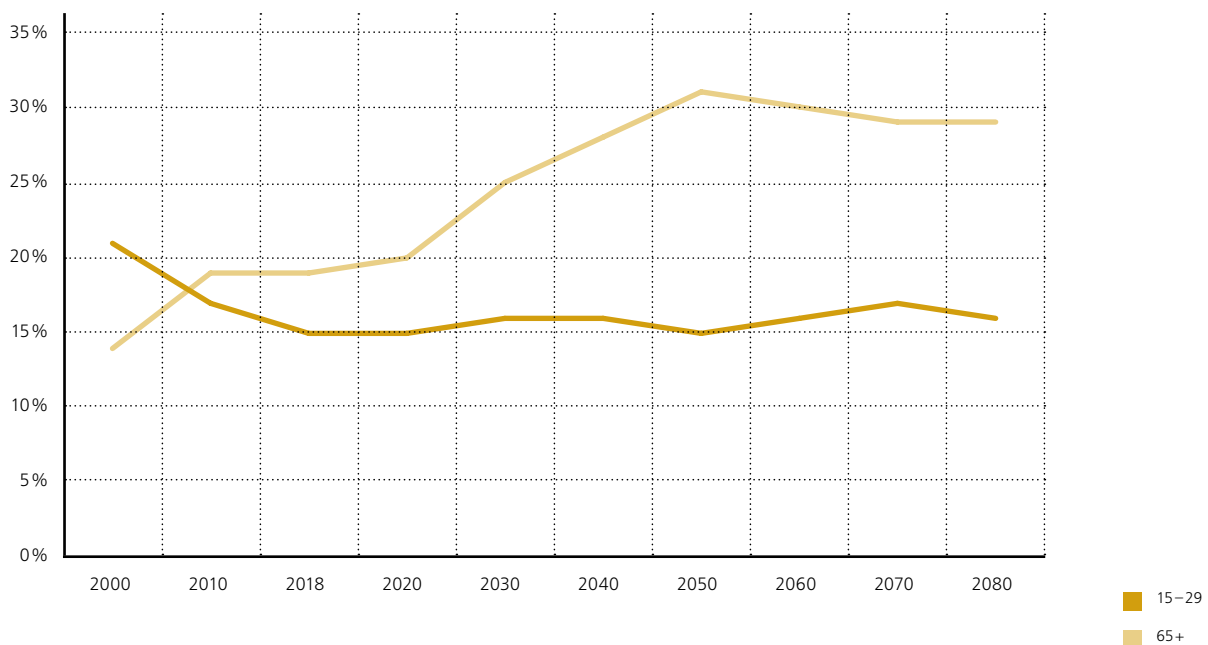
Building on data from 2008, Lavrič and Flere (Lavrič et al, 2011: 79) projected that by 2050 the number of older inhabitants (65+) in relation to the younger population (15–29) would almost triple. Recent data on the proportion of younger to older population show Slovenia to be at approximately the same level as the rest of the EU countries (see Figure 49):

The recent situation in Slovenia, in comparison to the rest of the EU, appears to be indistinct, but it is evident that there will be an accelerating trend towards an old-age-dependency ratio in the future. This trend will affect the entire European Union, but will be particularly problematic for Slovenia. The period of crisis is to be expected from 2020 until 2060, with the situation peaking out in around 2040.



A recent study explores the aftermath of the turnaround in the proportion of young and old population previously examined by Lavrič and Flere (2011: 79). In 2000 the proportion of young people (22 %) was considerably higher in comparison with the number of the old (14%), but the ratio reversed in 2010 and by 2050 the ratio will reach 1:2 (see Figure 50).

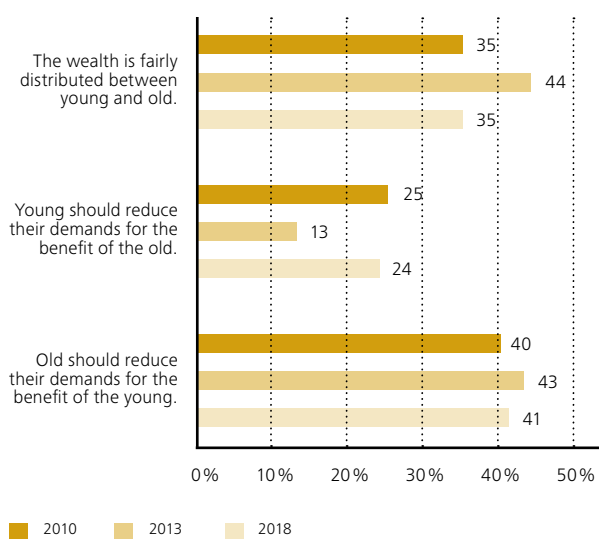
FIGURE 50: Proportions of young (15–29 years) and older (65+) inhabitants in Slovenia and EU-27, selected years.



In 2050 the ratio between young and old is expected to reach 1:2.

Previous studies of young people in Slovenia show that most young people regard the ageing of the population in Slovenia to be a serious problem, and this trend is expected to have a major influence on tensions between generations (Lavrič and Flere in Lavrič et al., 2011:78–86).

FIGURE 51: Views of the distribution of wealth among the generations.



Source: Data files Youth 2010, data files FES Youth Study Slovenia 2013, data files FES Regional Youth Study SEE 2018/19.

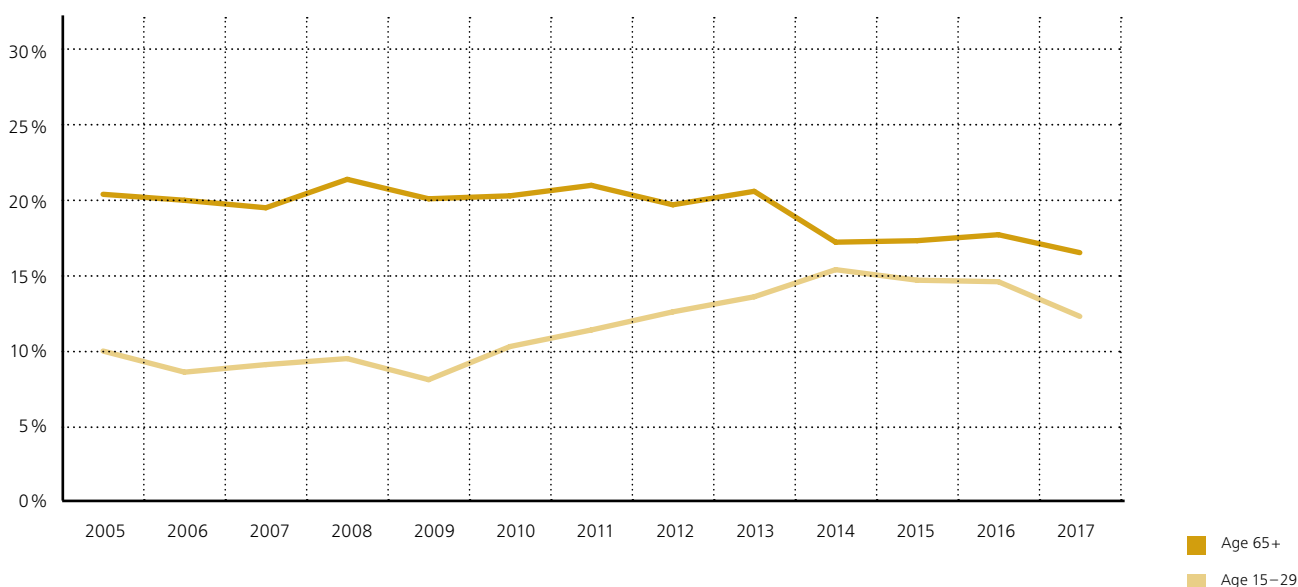
Figure 51 shows a comparison of views regarding the distribution of wealth among generations from 2010, 2013 and 2018. There is a surprising change after the year 2013 in the share of young people having the perception that the young should reduce their demands to the benefit of the old. On the other hand, the situation in 2013 appears to be exceptional, as there is a relative flattening out of the trend in 2018 in comparison with 2010. One possible explanation for this exception can be attributed to the popular perception of the dire situation of young Slovenians (i.e. Kozel, 2013; Vičič, 2013; VČP, 2013), which has been exacerbated by the recent economic crisis. Therefore, the shift in the trend from 2013 to 2018 should be regarded as a reflection of something of a decline in economic pressure, especially in relation to the older segment of the population.

As we can see from Figure 52, the poverty rate for young people increased sharply in the period 2009–2014, while during the same period the poverty rate for the elderly was actually declining. These trends undoubtedly affected relatively negative attitudes of young people regarding the distribution of wealth between generations in 2013. However, after that period, the youth poverty rate substantially declined, indicating a relative improvement in the socio-economic situation of young people in Slovenia.

Eva:

‘Often I hear from our teacher that we are the worst-off of all generations, the worst-off ever... But there is also a great deal of solidarity. /.../ We (young people) need them (older generations), they know things we don’t, they have the experience and we need to listen to them. But they also need us for help and support. And I don’t think it was any different in the past.’

FIGURE 52: At-risk-of-poverty rates among young people (15–29) and the elderly (65+) in Slovenia, 2005–2017.



Source: SORS, 2018.

In terms of cross-national comparison within the SEE region, the socio-economic situation of young people in Slovenia appears to be rather favourable. According to Eurostat data, the rate of young people at risk of poverty or social exclusion was 18% in Slovenia (age group 15–24), while this share ranged from 30% in Croatia to 48% in Romania.¹⁹ A very similar picture emerges if we look at the material and social deprivation rate. In 2016, according to Eurostat methodology, 12% of young people in Slovenia were considered materially and socially deprived, while in other SEE countries this share ranged from 19% in Croatia to 58% in Montenegro.²⁰

The relatively favourable material position of young people in Slovenia in terms of material deprivation is closely related to the educational structure of Slovenian society.

As can be seen in Figure 53, young Slovenians have been raised by relatively highly educated parents, at least in terms of the SEE region. Almost half of young people in Slovenia have at least one parent with tertiary education, while this share is much lower in all other SEE countries, reaching only 16% in Romania. With regard to the residential status of the Slovenian youth, we can observe some interesting trends in terms of rural-urban migration. In 2011, the authors of the study Youth 2010 noted

FIGURE 53: Highest achieved levels of parents' education among young people in Slovenia and other SEE countries.

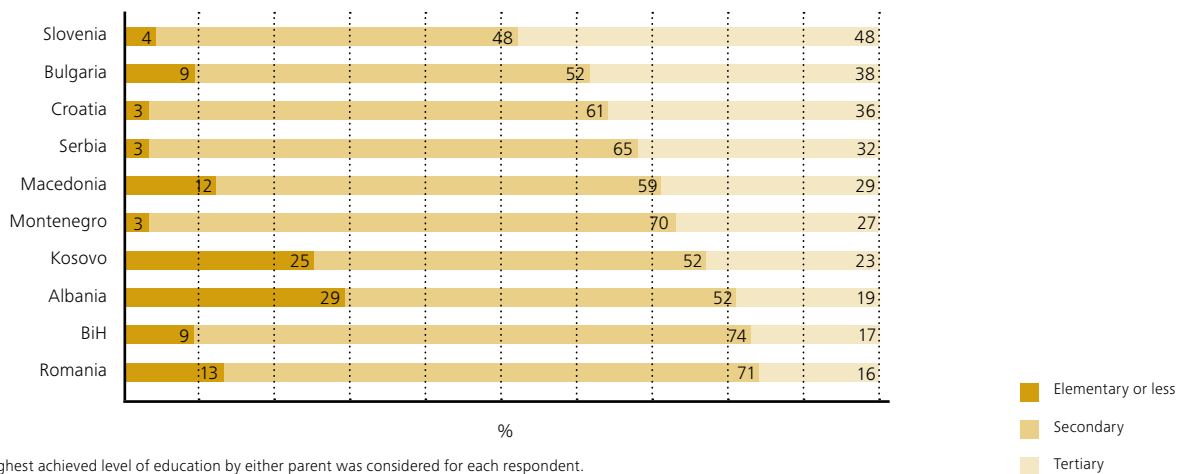
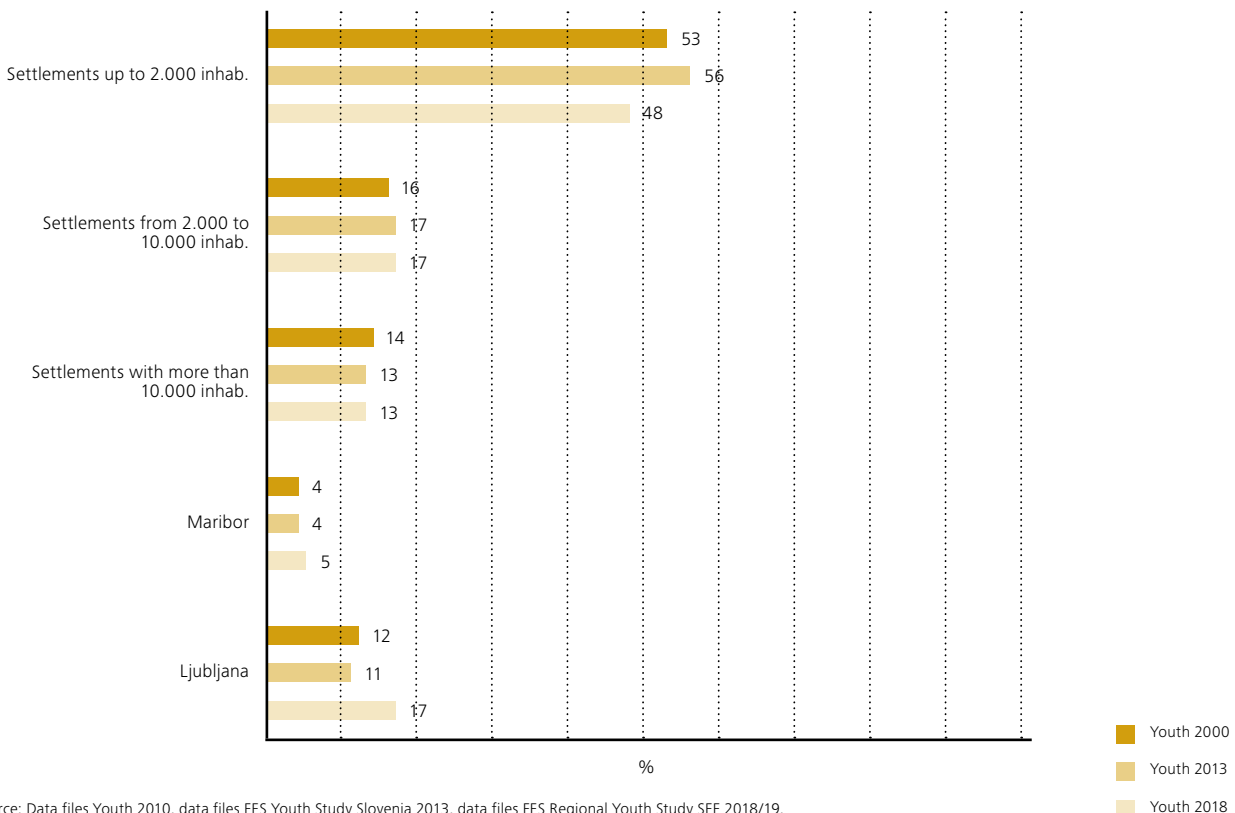


FIGURE 54: Shares of young people by type of settlement, Youth 2000, Youth 2013 and Youth 2018.



that “/.../in the last two decades there has been a marked increase in the proportion of young people living in villages and small communities and a reduction in the proportion of young people from urban environments” (Lavrič and Flere in Lavrič et al., 2011: 88). This trend of “de-urbanisation” has proven to be a temporary phenomenon, while recent data shows quite the opposite – young Slovenians are migrating to urban areas, mostly to Ljubljana and Maribor (Figure 54).

The trend towards de-urbanisation among young people from 2013 to 2018 has reversed, with the number of young people living in Ljubljana and Maribor significantly increasing.

When studying young Slovenians, it is important to note that a substantial majority (65 %) of them live in small towns and villages (up to 10,000 inhabitants). Ljubljana is the only urban area that exceeds 100,000 inhabitants and can be considered an urban centre. Other communities with more than 10,000 inhabitants can be considered small towns, with Maribor (around 100,000 inhabitants) being closest to exhibiting the nature of an urban centre. Ljubljana and Maribor are also the only categories in Figure 54, where all of our respondents described their community as urban. In the third category (communities with more than 10,000 inhabitants), 76 % of respondents described their community as urban, while others described it as “more urban than rural.” Communities with 2,000 to 10,000 inhabitants can be considered small rural centres, while communities with up to 2,000 inhabitants consist of two broad groups. The larger one consists of villages in rural areas, while the other is made up of small settlements near larger towns or urban centres. In our survey, 69 % of the respondents from this category described their community as rural, while the other 31 % described it as “more rural than urban.”

CONCLUSION

Main findings

1. Following a decline between 1990–2020, the latest projections show a stabilisation of the population of young people.
2. In 2050 the ratio between young and old is expected to reach 1:2.
3. The trend towards de-urbanisation of young people from 2013 to 2018 has reversed, with the proportion of young people living in Ljubljana and Maribor significantly increasing.

The chapter’s main findings in one or two sentences:

The decline in the number of young people in Slovenia will normalise after 2020. However, the trend towards ageing of society will continue.

Policy recommendation:

Policy should focus on intergenerational cooperation and solidarity and prepare for the problems of an ageing society.

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CONCLUSION

In 2018 there were 313,104 young people (14–29) living in Slovenia. Between 1990 and 2018, after the number of young people dropped from 22 % to 15 %, the population appears to be stable, and recent projections do not show any significant changes over the next few decades. The recent situation regarding the old-age-dependency ratio in Slovenia, in comparison to the rest of the EU, appears to be inconclusive, but there will evidently be an accelerating trend in the old-age-dependency ratio in the future. This trend will affect the entire European Union, but will be particularly problematic for Slovenia, where the ratio between young and old is expected to reach 1:2 by 2050.

According to the results of self-reporting, young people consider their health to be good, but it should be emphasised that this applies more to young people from families with better financial and educational statuses. Young people in Slovenia are spending increasing amounts of time listening to music, being active online, reading books and engaging in sports, while face-to-face interaction seems to be declining. Nevertheless, young people in Slovenia dedicate a lot of time to their friends and their families, both of which are particularly important to them. Most young people live in their parental household and report getting along with their parents well. Although families in Slovenia appear to be relatively authoritarian, there is a marked share of co-decision-making between young people and their parents. Most young Slovenians also expressed a desire to have a family of their own, which probably stems from good experience within their families.

While considering their health to be good, young people in Slovenia are increasingly more stressed and, compared to young people in other SEE countries, disproportionately dissatisfied with their lives and their physical appearance. These conclusions could be interpreted as resulting from high levels of individualisation and loss of sense of community, as well as a relative lack of optimism about the future of their country. Their fears are mostly tied to corruption, unemployment, pollution, climate change and social injustice, but above all to serious illness. Perception of stress is mostly tied to the context of school, but additional stress comes

from young people's experience with the labour market, where traditional forms of permanent employment are increasingly being replaced by less secure and more flexible forms. Since some of these findings appear to be related to the stress induced by individualisation, future trends might produce results that are not beneficial to the functioning of democracy in Slovenia. For instance, in 2018 authoritarian tendencies are relatively weak among Slovenian youth, but they might increase if the economic situation (e.g. unemployment, economic welfare and inequality) were to worsen in the future, even more so since young Slovenians show a relatively low interest in politics, and political disorientation and political alienation of young people has increased along with indifference regarding the proper functioning of domestic democracy.

However, young people express a relatively great willingness to participate in elections, and are ready to assume political functions. This finding should be interpreted first and foremost in connection with the strong desire of young people to live in a country that will provide them with economic, social and legal security and a clean environment. In this context, it is also necessary to note that young people strongly support social reform in the direction of democratic socialism, especially in the direction of social and economic security and greater equality for all.

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FOOTNOTES

[1] Manovich (2003, 16–17) describes new media as cultural objects which use digital computer technology for distribution and exhibition: websites, human-computer interface, virtual worlds, virtual reality, multimedia, computer games, computer animation, digital video, special effects in cinema and interactive computer installations. Other cultural objects which use computing for production and storage but not for final distribution-- television programs, feature films, magazines, books and other paper-based publications, etc. – are not new media.

New media refers to “those digital media that are interactive, incorporate two-way communication and involve some form of computing (Logan, 2010, 4).

[2] *Values of loyalty and responsibility* include expressed importance of taking responsibility, being independent, being faithful to friends and being faithful to an employer.

Family values include expressed importance of having children, getting/being married, having children as a means to a happy life and having a spouse/partner as a means to a happy life.

Values of personal development include the importance of doing sports, healthy eating, graduating from university and having a successful career.

Consumerist values refer to the importance of getting/being rich, wearing branded clothes and looking good.

Values of political and civic engagement include the importance of being active in politics, participating in civic actions/initiatives, and the expressed general interest in politics.

[3] Slovenia had a substantially lower average in comparison to other countries in relation to all three of these items.

[4] This finding runs against much of the existing literature, which shows a quite robust and strong positive relationship between life satisfaction and the Human Development Index (e.g. Leigh and Wolfers, 2006).

[5] Similarly, young peoples’ optimism about the future of their countries declines with the HDI ($r = -0.389$, $p < 0.01$).

[6] Our analyses have shown that the level of life satisfaction is strongly correlated to higher levels of religiosity, and the latter is much higher in less developed countries. Thus, another part of the puzzle is most likely related to the fact that less developed countries are more religious and that the positive psychological effects of religiosity on subjective well-being, which are well documented (e.g. Okulicz-Kozaryn, 2010), tend to prevail over the negative effects of lower socio-economic development. Furthermore, studies show that the main mechanism of this effect is the social capital that grows out of religion. As Okulicz-Kozaryn puts it, people have “a need to belong”, which religion helps to satisfy. This leads us to our next finding, namely that the level of life satisfaction also rises steeply with higher levels of family values. Clearly, family is the crucial social unit for satisfying the “need to belong.” Since family values tend to be much more present in less developed societies, the weaker family ties in more developed societies appear to be one reason behind the observed paradox.

[7] This finding is also supported by the first results of a study by the Slovenian Centre for the Study of Suicide, which showed a significant rise in suicidal tendencies among young Slovenians in the period between 2010 and 2018 (Zgonik, 2018).

[8] Psychological research suggests that that having self-image goals is related to higher levels of psychological distress, while genuinely taking others’ needs into account correlates with enhanced psychological well-being (e.g. Duarte and Pinto-Gouveia, 2015).

[9] For this purpose, a composite measure of religiosity consisting of frequency of prayer, frequency of attendance of religious services and self-declared importance of God in one’s life was devised (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.767$).

[10] Nationalism was measured by agreement with the statement “*It would be the best if (COUNTRY) was inhabited only by real (COUNTRY)ians.*” Psychological authoritarianism was measured by agreement with the statement “*What young people need most of all is strict discipline by their parents.*” Political authoritarianism was measured by agreement with the statement “*We should have a leader who rules (COUNTRY) with a strong hand for the public good.*”

[11] There is a negative correlation ($r = -0.179$, $p < 0.01$) between the desire and HDI at the level of all 10 countries, but Slovenia appears as the most obvious outlier within this tendency.

[12] In comparison to other countries, young Slovenians report the highest levels of proficiency in the official language of the desired host country.

[13] This assumption is also supported by the fact that 51% of young people from the materially best situated households in Slovenia (category We can afford to buy whatever we need for a good living standard) expressed at least a moderate desire to emigrate, while this share was only 35% of young people

from the poorest households (categories We don’t have enough money for basic bills (electricity, heating etc.) and food and We have enough money for basic bills and food, but not for clothes and shoes) expressed the same. The picture in other SEE countries is the direct inverse: 39.2% of young people from the richest households and 52.5% of young people from the poorest households expressed the same intentions.

[14] Measured by the highest educational level completed in the age group of 25–29-year-olds.

[15] Measured by the highest educational level completed in the age group of 25–29-year-olds.

[16] The scale included the following items:

- It is the duty of every citizen in a democracy to vote
- A political opposition is necessary for a healthy democracy
- Young people should have more possibilities to speak out in politics
- Democracy is a good form of government in general

[17] The scale included the following items:

- Under certain circumstances dictatorship is a better form of government than democracy
- There are conflicts in every society, which can only be solved by violence
- We should have a leader who rules the country with a strong hand for the public good

[18] The scale included the following items:

- Incomes of the poor and the rich should be made more equal
- Government ownership of business and industry should be increased
- Government should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for
- Competition is harmful; it brings out the worst in people.

[19] Since relevant data were not available for Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro or BiH, these countries could not be included in the analysis.

[20] Since relevant data were not available for Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro or BiH, these countries could not be included in the analysis.

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