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MIGRATION AND IDENTITY PROCESSES OF SLOVENIANS IN ARGENTINA: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Nadia Molek¹

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ABSTRACT

Migration and Identity Processes of Slovenians in Argentina: A Literature Review

This review analyzes and compares scholarship on Slovenian migration to Argentina, highlighting disparities between Slovenian and Argentine academic approaches. While Slovenian researchers have examined identity, politics, and transnational ties in-depth, Argentine contributions are limited. The study includes works by migrants and descendants, showing how community narratives shape collective memory. It concludes that the literature is rich but marked by national biases, calling for more interdisciplinary, integrative research.

KEYWORDS: Slovenian migrants, Argentina, identity processes, migration processes, narrative literature review

IZVLEČEK

Migracijski in identitetni procesi Slovencev v Argentini: Pregled literature

Avtorica v narativnem pregledu sintetizira in analizira raziskave o slovenski migraciji v Argentino ter primerja pristope slovenskih in argentinskih avtorjev. Ugotavlja, da je v slovenski znanstveni sferi tematika poglobljeno obravnavana, medtem ko je prispevek argentinske akademske sfere omejen. Pri tem v študijo vključuje tudi dela migrantov in njihovih potomcev ter poudarja vlogo skupnostnih voditeljev. Slovensko-argentinske skupnosti so vpete v transnacionalne identitetne procese, zaznamovane z zgodovino, politiko in kulturnim spominom. Študija izpostavi potrebo po bolj integrativnem in interdisciplinarnem pristopu.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: slovenski izseljenci, Argentina, procesi identitete, migracijski procesi, narativni pregled literature

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INTRODUCTION

The migration of Slovenes has been a historically significant phenomenon, shaped by collective strategies and institutionalized practices dating back to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. These emigration patterns followed diverse local, regional, and transoceanic directions (Kalc et al., 2024) leading to the establishment of Slovenian communities abroad. Over time, the study of Slovenian emigrants and the diaspora became a crucial research topic in Slovenia, prompting extensive efforts to document and analyze their migration experiences and integration abroad (Kalc, 2017).

One of the key destinations for Slovenian migrants since the 19th century has been Argentina. As part of its modernization and economic development, the country welcomed various contingents of Slovenian immigrants. The first migration occurred between 1878 and 1888, followed by a second migration from the early 20th century until World War I. The third significant migration occurred during the interwar period (1918–1939), while the final major migration, consisting primarily of political exiles, happened between 1947 and the early 1950s.

The migration and identity processes of Slovenes in Argentina have become an important topic in Slovenian migration studies, particularly from a historical perspective. However, while Slovenian scholars have extensively examined this migration trend, it has received relatively little attention in Argentine migration studies. This imbalance highlights the limited impact of Slovenian immigration within the broader landscape of mass migration to Argentina.

This article aims to assess and compare the amount and scope of research conducted on Slovenian migration to Argentina in both Slovenian and Argentine academic contexts. It seeks to provide a comprehensive synthesis of the existing literature, outlining key contributions and analyzing the status of research in both countries. Doing so highlights the significant academic efforts dedicated to this subject while identifying gaps in the literature.

The theoretical framework of this study is grounded in the social sciences, specifically in anthropology, to analyze the migration and identity processes of Slovenian descendants in Argentina within a continuously evolving sociohistorical structure. Migration processes are deeply intertwined with identity formation (Molek, 2022), as they involve not only physical displacement but also the renegotiation of social, cultural, and political affiliations in new contexts (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). In this sense, migrants and their descendants navigate complex identification processes.

Identity is approached as a social, historical, and relational construction rather than a fixed or immutable entity. From an anthropological and social sciences standpoint, identity emerges dynamically through interactions with others and within specific sociocultural contexts (Barth, 1976; Hall, 2003). It is examined as an analytical category rather than a natural phenomenon, structured through self-ascription and external ascription mechanisms, where individuals negotiate, redefine, and

update their affiliations based on historical and discursive frameworks (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000).

Ethnic and national identity, in particular, has been examined through diverse theoretical traditions. Some scholars adopt primordialist approaches, emphasizing natural and emotional ties to a group (Geertz, 1991), while others highlight constructivist perspectives that stress the contingent and performative nature of identity, demonstrating how it is shaped by discourses, practices, and power structures (Restrepo, 2007). In migration contexts, identity becomes even more complex, intersecting with transnationalism, collective memory, and symbolic markers that enable its continuity or intergenerational transformation (Hall, 2019).

This study employs a narrative literature review approach to synthesize the extensive research on Slovenian migration to Argentina. Multiple Slovenian sources—including academic databases such as COBISS and dLib, particularly the journal *Dve domovini / Two Homelands*—were consulted alongside Argentine bibliographic indices and migration studies journals. Additionally, biographical material, publications, documents, and reports from Slovenian associations in Argentina were analyzed (Consejo Directivo, 1981; Kacin, 1937; Rant, 1998). This approach allows for a holistic and contextualized examination of scholarly perspectives, integrating insights from various disciplines (Flick, 2015).

Aiming to examine and compare the research produced in both Slovenian and Argentine academic contexts, the article aims to highlight key contributions to the study of Slovenian migration to Argentina. It also incorporates community-produced materials, emphasizing the role of descendants and community leaders in shaping historical narratives. To achieve this, the article is structured in three sections. The first section provides a historical overview of Slovenian migration to Argentina, analyzing different migration processes and their sociopolitical contexts. It also situates Slovenian migration within broader international migration trends. The second section examines scholarly contributions on the topic, contrasting Slovenian and Argentine academic production. It highlights key research themes, including studies on interwar migration, Slovenian anti-communist refugees, and anthropological and sociocultural perspectives. Finally, the conclusion offers a critical synthesis of historiographical trends, identifying gaps in the existing literature and suggesting directions for future research on Slovenian migration and identity formation in Argentina.

MIGRATION PROCESSES TO ARGENTINA IN THE CONTEXT OF TRANS-OCEANIC MASS MIGRATIONS

The first formal migration from Slovenian territory to Argentina (1878–1888) took place as part of an agreement between the Argentine state and Austria-Hungary (Mislej, 1994; Repič, 2016) in the international context of transoceanic mass migrations.

This relocation included around 50 families from the Slovenian littoral region of Primorska (Kalc, 1995). These families opted for transoceanic mobility to improve their social conditions against a backdrop of crisis and stagnation. Originally, they were intended to colonize the northern province of Formosa. However, the inhospitable living conditions in northern Argentina forced them to look for more accessible areas, such as the province of Entre Ríos. There is no evidence of ethnic organization among these Slovenes in the past (Molek, 2012), and they assimilated within a few generations, effectively making their origins “invisible.”

In the period between the two world wars, around 25,000 Slovenes came to Argentina (Mislej, 1994) to escape the geopolitical reorganization of Slovenia after World War I and the resulting social pressure. For example, in the regions annexed to Italy after this war, a harsh process of denationalization of Slovenes—*de-Slovenization*—combined with impoverishment, forced the Slovenian population to leave their homeland in search of better living conditions (Kacin-Wohinz, 1995; Mislej, 1995). This migration was characterized by its individual character, clear regional demarcation (Molek, 2012), and antifascist ideological orientation (Kalc, 1995; Mislej, 1995). Settlement in Argentina was primarily centered on La Paternal, Villa Devoto, and Saavedra (Buenos Aires), Berisso, Bernal, and Avellaneda (Greater Buenos Aires), and the cities of Rosario, Santa Fe, and Paraná (Entre Ríos province). It was based on personal, family, or social relationships created through migration chains and networks (Molek, 2022).

The migration process of this group did not mean a definitive break with their home country; in some cases, it was not even permanent (Molek, 2018). After World War II, temporary return mobilities began, such as visits to relatives. The connections between Slovenian migrants in Argentina and Slovenia were formalized by the state institution Slovenska izseljenska matica (Slovenian Emigrant Association), whose aim until the end of the 20th century was to maintain relations with the emigrants, strengthen cultural and national ties, award study scholarships in Slovenia and organize a cultural exchange. By the end of the 1990s, 32 Argentine students of Slovenian descent had received scholarships to study in Slovenia, some of whom remained there. There were also significant cultural exchanges between the two countries, such as exhibitions, music tours, and dance and theatre groups (Molek, 2022).

Finally, between 1947 and the late 1950s came the last migration (Velikonja, 1985, pp. 49–50), which consisted of around 6,500 political emigrants who had left Slovenia at the end of World War II for fear of reprisals by the victors (Repič, 2016). Among them were those who had collaborated with the Germans in the fight against the communists and partisans and others who feared being labeled as collaborators because they had belonged to the nationalist *domobranci* (Home Guard). In fact, this fear was not imaginary, as thousands of political opponents or anti-communist Slovenes were executed by the victors and thrown into mass graves.

Before their final exile, they temporarily moved to Red Cross refugee camps in neighboring countries such as Austria and Italy (Repič, 2016; Žigon, 2001a), where

they began the complex process of diasporic organization aimed at political resistance and the preservation of cultural and identity heritage. They built a collective nationalist, Catholic, anti-communist, and anti-Yugoslav memory to process both their traumatic experiences and their exile (Molek, 2012; Žigon, 2001a). The refugees saw themselves as temporary migrants who wanted to stay until the political conditions in their homeland changed (Velikonja, 1985, p. 49). With the help of the Catholic Church, the Red Cross, the International Organization for Refugees, and emigrant organizations in various countries, they got help emigrating to Argentina, Canada, the United States, or Australia.

They organized a translocal, closed, endogamous, and hyper-networked community in Argentina through a central institution: Zedinjenja Slovenija (United Slovenia). For generations, they preserved a hegemonic social memory consolidated through fairs, schools, social and cultural practices, publications, symbols, and commemorative rituals. The obligatory preservation of Slovenian identity, roots, and orientation toward the Catholic faith and the homeland was seen as a moral duty that had to be adhered to so that one could go back once communism had finally left Slovenia. The symbolic impact of social memory was so strong that the inability to return during the four decades of the Yugoslav period did not weaken the longing to “return” to “where they should have been born.” When independence was achieved in 1991, many saw the opportunity to begin the “return process” to “free Slovenia” (Molek 2012). However, in the 1990s, only a few families and individuals actually returned. These returnees founded a new non-profit organization called Slovenija v svetu (Slovenia in the World), initially aimed to “facilitate” the return mobility of Slovenians to their homeland.

SOME OF THE REASONS FOR STUDYING SLOVENIAN MIGRATION TO ARGENTINA

Historically, the Slovenian ethnic territory has experienced significant periods of emigration. Given this context, it is unsurprising that a considerable portion of research in Slovenian migration studies has focused on analyzing migratory dynamics. However, a closer examination of these studies reveals distinct trends shaped by the strategic national interests of the states of which Slovenes were historically a part.

Kalc (2017) highlights, for instance, that while Austria largely overlooked emigration issues, the newly established Yugoslav state after World War I—formed during an era of state-controlled migration policies—significantly emphasized migration management and Yugoslav emigrant communities worldwide. From the outset, Slovenian institutions played a pivotal role in fostering connections, providing mutual support to emigrant communities, and stimulating research on migration history. Notably, Slovenian diaspora communities, particularly in the United States,

advanced in organizational, economic, and cultural development, further fueling academic interest in their migration experiences.

Kalc (2017) also traces the institutionalization of migration research to the creation of the Minority and Emigration Section at the Institute of International Public Law within the Faculty of Law at the University of Ljubljana. This development marked a meaningful step toward establishing migration studies as a multidisciplinary field.

Despite early efforts, the aspiration to systematically study emigration and preserve the historical heritage of Slovenians living abroad remained largely unrealized until the 1950s within the new Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia (Kalc, 2017). The revival of systematic and institutionalized migration research began with the establishment of the Slovenian Emigrant Association in 1951, followed by the creation of the Study Center for the History of Slovenian Emigration at the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts in the 1960s. This center aimed to study emigration and the presence of Slovenians in immigrant countries, collecting archival and documentary material on emigration from Slovenia.

Within the specific context of the second Yugoslavia, where the new nation needed to frame a historical narrative about their migrants, legitimizing certain emigrations (such as anti-fascist immigrants) while “silencing” others considered “enemies” (e.g., the anti-communist exiles), the “scientific” studies about Slovenians abroad emerged. Later, significant progress was made in the 1980s with the establishment of the Institute for Emigration Studies in 1986, which later became part of the newly formed Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Kalc, 2017).

This institutionalization of the topic intensified research about Slovenians in Argentina, especially after Slovenia’s independence in 1991. At that time, the Slovenian intellectual and political space began to need a more fruitful debate and understanding of its own national identity. At the same time, Slovenians in neighboring countries, as well as around the world, were pushed to rethink their identities and objectives and negotiate their place in the construction of memory and history in light of the new panorama.

From the 1990s to the early 2010s, scholarship on Slovenian migration to Argentina became particularly diverse and prolific. Two key factors contributed to this development. Firstly, Argentina had been a major destination for political exiles fleeing Yugoslavia after World War II, a significant migratory phenomenon that had previously been understudied or silenced. Secondly, the Argentine economic and political crisis of 2001 led to increased return migration, as many descendants of Slovenian migrants relocated back to Slovenia, further fueling academic interest in migration dynamics, identity transformations, and transnational connections.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

A significant portion of the research on Slovenians in Argentina within the Slovenian academic context is historically oriented among the most influential contributions to the work of Slovenian–Argentine art historian I. Mislej (1994) stands out. Within this historical framework, scholars have sought to define broad categorizations of Slovenian migration patterns, often resulting in generalized and homogenized classifications. Mislej (1994) played a key role in establishing a widely adopted periodization of Slovenian migration to Argentina, identifying four major processes: the first occurring between 1878 and 1888, the second from the early 20th century until World War I (1908–1914), the third during the interwar period (1918–1939), and the final after World War II (post-1945). This categorization has remained influential in shaping subsequent research on Slovenian migration.

An analysis of the literature and identification discourses of the actors reveals that Slovenian migrants to Argentina are generally classified into three broad identity-based categories: the “Lost Migration,” an actor’s idealized conceptualization referring to the earliest migration, “old immigrants” (*stari Slovenci*), which particularly delineates the immigrants of the interwar period, but for the community of refugees also defines all those who arrived before 1945, and into “new Slovenes” (*novi Slovenci*), which includes all those who arrived after the World War II.

While this dual division between “old” and “new” Slovenes is widely used and captures key historical distinctions, it also presents certain conceptual limitations (Molek, 2022). While useful for highlighting internal differences, these categories often overlook the fluidity, exchanges, and evolving identities among different migration groups. For instance, the label “new Slovenes” does not fully encompass the experiences of Slovenes who migrated to Argentina in the 1950s for reasons unrelated to political exile, such as economic opportunities or professional aspirations (Molek, 2022). Similarly, this classification does not account for individual migration trajectories, including Slovenian families who temporarily returned to Slovenia after World War II, only to later resettle in Argentina.

Studies about early migrations

Historiographically, A. Kalc (1995) examined Slovenian and Friulian emigration to Argentina within the broader context of Austro-Hungarian policies toward ethnic minorities seeking to emigrate. His research traced emigration activities from the Slovenian coastal regions (Primorska and Goriška) to Argentina from the late 19th century until World War I. Complementing this perspective, historian B. Marušič (1995) analyzed the social and economic conditions in Primorska, Goriška, and the Italian city of Trieste during the Austro-Hungarian period, arguing that economic hardship and social instability drove many inhabitants to temporary or permanent migration.

Given that statistical estimations remain one of the primary challenges in the study of Slovenian migration (Lukšič Hacin, 1995), M. Sjekloča's (2004) work plays a key role in quantifying migration patterns using statistical data. However, his quantitative findings have been subject to scholarly debate, particularly regarding their methodological accuracy and reliability.

Studies on early 20th-century Slovenian migration to Argentina remain limited, primarily due to the fragmented and dispersed nature of available historical data. Notably, Mislej (1994; 1995) identified a significant yet understudied contingent of approximately 1,000 professionally trained Slovenian migrants—engineers, technicians, and other skilled workers—who arrived between 1908 and 1914. These migrants quickly integrated into Argentina's public works sector, particularly in the interior provinces. Additionally, Mislej's research underscores the formation of transnational political networks among Slovenian and Yugoslav migrants of Austro-Hungarian origin. This phenomenon became particularly pronounced during World War I.

Studies on interwar migration and their identity processes

Much of the literature focuses on Slovenian migration to Argentina during the interwar period (1918–1939). Scholars such as R. Genorio (1986), I. Mislej (1992a; 1992b; 1994), Z. Žigon (1998), and M. Sjekloča (2004) have provided key foundational studies that characterize the regional origins, professional backgrounds, and settlement patterns of these migrants. Their research is particularly notable for analyzing both migratory processes and integration mechanisms within the broader framework of Argentine assimilationist policies. Additionally, Banko & Mouzakis (2003) contribute by examining push and pull factors influencing migration, particularly emphasizing the role of Slovenian social networks and associations in facilitating integration into Argentine society.

D. Valentinčič (2012) further explores this migration process by examining Slovenian migration from the Venezia Giulia region, focusing on their associative structures and identity formation, which he terms "Beneški Slovenci" (Slovenians from Venezia Giulia). Similarly, historian M. Zobec (2013) provides a localized case study of post–World War I Slovenian emigration from the Primorska region, particularly through the lived experiences of migrants from the village of Pliskovica. His study innovatively applies transnational migration theory, illustrating the intense epistolary exchanges between the homeland and diaspora communities, which sustained connections between these groups. Moreover, Zobec's work sheds light on the racialized and exclusionary discourses embedded in Argentine national identity construction, demonstrating how certain immigrant groups—especially those of Slavic origin—were historically marginalized and subject to sociopolitical discrimination.

The political and identity-related dimensions of interwar Slovenian migration have also received considerable scholarly attention. A crucial area of research investigates the link between fascist denationalization policies targeting coastal Slovenes and migrations (Kacin-Wohinz, 1995). A pioneering study by Genorio (1988) investigates the role of Slovenian migrants from the coastal region in Argentina's international labor movement, highlighting their engagement in political propaganda and ideological mobilization. In this context, Kalc (1995/2016) and Zobec (2022) provide valuable insights into the surveillance and persecution of Slovenian anti-fascist exiles in Argentina. Furthermore, the works of Mislej (1992b) and Sjekloča (2004) expand upon these political dynamics by detailing activist efforts within the Slovenian migrant community. Additionally, Rahten (2016) links the political trajectories of Slovenian migrants to specific policies of the Yugoslav Embassy under Ambassador I. Cankar, providing an important diplomatic and geopolitical perspective. This work challenged earlier economic determinism by highlighting the political dimension of emigration, repositioning these migrants as both economic and political refugees.

Beyond the coastal regions, research has also addressed Slovenian migration from the Prekmurje region, where migrants were often referred to as *Prekmurci* or *Transmurans*. Kuzmič (1995) extensively analyzes this group based on archival materials from the *Mladi Prekmurec* (The Young Transmurian) gazette, published by young Slovenian intellectuals and writers. His study examines economic conditions, social structures, and seasonal migration patterns, noting that Transmurans primarily migrated to Germany, France, and the Americas during the interwar years. Žigon (2003) further contributes to this body of knowledge, adding depth to the understanding of Prekmurje migrants' social and cultural experiences. Additionally, E. Cmor (2002), as an active member of the Transmuran community in Argentina, provides both qualitative and quantitative insights into the demographics and organizational structures of these migrants.

Studies on Slovenian anti-communist refugees

A substantial body of literature examines the experiences of Slovenian anti-communist exiles who migrated to Argentina after World War II. In both academic and local literature, various designations have been applied to this group, including "anti-communist exiles," "anti-communist refugees," and "Slovenian political emigration." Additionally, within Slovenian migration studies, this group has often been called the "new Slovenes," distinguishing them from earlier Slovenian migrations to Argentina.

One of the earliest significant works on this topic—published during the Yugoslav era, despite the ideological constraints of the time—was authored by Slovenian–Argentine cultural entrepreneur K. Cukjati (1986). Before Slovenia's democratization and independence in 1991, scholarly discussions about this group were largely

shaped by pro-Yugoslav intellectual circles, which maintained a critical and ideologically biased stance toward the exiles (e.g., Čuček, 1979). However, after Slovenia's democratization, academics and the exile community actively engaged in reinterpreting and contesting previous narratives, leading to a significant revisionist shift in Slovenian historiography. Particularly noteworthy among these contributions are "enthusiastic" perspectives (e.g., Kermauner, 1992), which emphasize Slovenian political emigration (*Slovenska politična emigracija*, SPE) as a "Slovenian miracle," portraying exiles as key actors in preserving Sloveneness abroad.

Since the 1990s, an increasing number of scholarly contributions have sought to rewrite and renegotiate Slovenia's contemporary history of World War II, incorporating more diverse perspectives. A significant contribution in this direction is that of British lawyer J. Corsellis (1996; 1997; Corsellis & Ferrar, 2007). His studies, drawing on correspondence and life histories of key figures among the *domobranci*, offer a well-researched perspective on the experiences of Slovenian refugees in Argentina. Corsellis highlights occupational patterns within the exile community, noting that Slovenian migrants were primarily absorbed into construction and factory work, while women predominantly engaged in education-related roles. He also underscores the traditional social ethos of the community, particularly its emphasis on voluntary, unpaid work (*ad honorem*) as a defining principle. However, his interpretation has been critiqued for its apologetic tone, as well as for being overly influenced by a Catholic moral framework, potentially overlooking the more complex sociopolitical dimensions of exile life.

Another important research avenue concerns the experience of exiles in refugee camps, which played a pivotal role in shaping social cohesion and group identity. Horvat (1996), Žigon (1998; 2001a), and Repič (2006) have examined these camps as sites of identity crystallization, where shared experiences of displacement fostered a strong collective consciousness. Their work suggests that refugee camps not only preserved social structures but also reinforced ideological and political affiliations, shaping the long-term identity formation of Slovenian exiles.

A further body of research examines identity and cultural development within the Argentine context. A key figure in this field is sociologist Z. Žigon (1998; 2001a; 2001b), whose work significantly advances our understanding of the ideological dimensions of Slovenian exile identity, particularly its anti-communist, Catholic, and nationalist underpinnings. Žigon (1996; 2001a) provides a nuanced analysis of how Slovenian exiles maintained their ethnic identity despite prolonged separation from their homeland. He argues that collective memory played a fundamental role in constructing and preserving this identity, reinforcing a dual sense of belonging—both to Argentina and to an imagined Slovenian homeland.

One of Žigon's key contributions is his examination of the role of endogamy in cultural preservation. His research suggests that intermarriage patterns within the exile community contributed to a sense of ethnic continuity. However, over time, increasing intermarriage with non-Slovenian Argentines led to a gradual process of

de-ethnicization among descendants. This argument is supported by Horvat (1996) and Lukšič Hacin (1995), who similarly observe that while the first generation of exiles largely maintained cultural and linguistic boundaries, subsequent generations have experienced greater assimilation and identity hybridity.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

A growing body of research explores Slovenian migration to Argentina from anthropological and sociocultural perspectives, with a strong emphasis on identity formation, intergenerational transitions, and cultural institutions. Several Slovenian scholars have conducted ethnographic fieldwork within Slovenian communities in Argentina, offering valuable insights into the social, cultural, and political dimensions of migration and diaspora life.

Among the early ethnographic studies, J. Mlekuž (1999) provides a geographical and anthropological analysis of Slovenian settlements in the province of Mendoza, detailing the spatial and social structures of these migrant communities. Repič (2006), in contrast, offers an innovative perspective on transnational migration, investigating the mobility of anti-communist Slovenian exiles and their descendants between Argentina and Europe. His research examines how ethnic identity is shaped through the formation of transnational communities, highlighting the role of return migration and diaspora networks in identity maintenance. In a later study, Repič (2019) analyzes anti-Yugoslav political rituals among Slovenian exiles in Argentina, demonstrating how commemorative ceremonies reinforce collective exile memories, shape the diaspora's political ideology, and frame perceptions of Yugoslavia through narratives of war, revolution, and postwar persecution.

Similarly, Toplak (2008) explores the role of artistic creation in shaping social ties and ethnic identity among Slovenian migrants in Buenos Aires. She examines how migrants' artistic expressions engage with local, transnational, and global discourses, offering a unique perspective on the interaction between identity and artistic production across migrant generations.

While the previous corpus, particularly within Slovenian historiography, tends to adopt an essentialist and classificatory approach—framing Slovenian migration in terms of discrete historical periods and stable identity categories such as “old” and “new” Slovenes—my approach seeks to interrogate these very classifications. In this sense, Molek (2019) represents a novelty because I brought together and compared the different migration processes, including the first migration (1878–1888), as well as the most recent processes of ethnogenesis between these descendants and those of the interwar period in the province of Entre Ríos.

Some scholars have framed migration through the lens of generational transitions, examining the intergenerational transfer of identity and cultural practices (e.g., Jenšterle, 1994; Repič, 2006; 2010; 2016; Žigon, 1998). These studies suggest that

descendants of anti-communist exiles tend to actively preserve Slovenian culture and identity, developing an “ambivalent identity” or a hybrid identity “between two cultures.” In contrast, descendants of earlier Slovenian migrations appear to have weaker ethnic boundaries, assimilating more into Argentine society.

The problem of “being Slovenian” has been taken up by various authors (Jenšterle, 1992; Kermauner, 1992; Lukšič Hacin, 1995; Žigon, 1998). From a dynamic standpoint, Repič (2010) argues that identifications among Slovenian descendants should be considered ambiguous and hybrid rather than fixed. Recent migrations between Slovenia and Argentina are historically and causally linked to the post–World War II political emigration from Slovenia, which led to the establishment of a diasporic community in Argentina. This community maintained complex symbolic ties to its homeland, enabling contemporary migrants to assert and (re)activate their Slovenian heritage, cultural identity, sense of belonging, citizenship, and social affiliations. Lukšič Hacin (1995) contrasts the integration and assimilation processes between Slovenian migrants of the interwar period and post–World War II exiles, highlighting differences in social, educational, and ideological backgrounds. She finds that postwar exiles were more committed to voluntary community work, which remains the foundation of their organizational structures. In contrast, interwar migrants sought faster integration into Argentine society. Another key distinction is that postwar exiles developed a temporary consciousness of exile, viewing their migration as a political necessity rather than a permanent relocation.

The issue of Slovenian language continuity has been addressed in various studies. Early works (e.g., Jenšterle, 1989; Žigon, 1996; 1998) examine linguistic retention among exiles and their descendants, while Lukšič Hacin (1995) and Žigon (1998) analyze language use from a sociological perspective. More recently, Molek (2017) provides an integrative and updated study on language practices across the different migration/descendant groups. She concludes that while few descendants of those who migrated during the first and second migration periods actively speak Slovenian, the language remains a key symbol of ethnic belonging.

The associational life of Slovenian migrants in Argentina has been a central research focus, with studies portraying associations as spaces for solidarity, cultural preservation, and integration within the host country. Among the key contributions, Genorio (1988) analyzes the formation of the *Ljudski oder* Workers’ Association, while Mislej (1994) provides a historical overview of Slovenian associations during the interwar period. Scholars such as Žigon (1998) and Sjekloča (2004) compare the associative tendencies of interwar migrants and postwar anti-communist exiles, identifying key organizational structures and identity dynamics within each group. Meanwhile, Jevnikar (1996) and Žigon (2001a; 2001b) specifically focus on the associationism of anti-communist Slovenian exiles, outlining how their institutions played a crucial role in preserving ethnic identity and political engagement.

The Slovenian press in Argentina has played a vital role in cultural preservation, political activism, and identity negotiation. Several authors agree that

Slovenian-language publications flourished during the interwar period (Brecelj, 1992; Mislej, 1996), serving as both a source of documentation on economic and social life and a platform for political struggles between different Slovenian factions. Brecelj (1992) examines the diverse Slovenian press that emerged during the interwar period, exploring how political developments in Yugoslavia and World War II shaped internal tensions within the migrant community. He highlights the ideological divisions within Slovenian–Argentine society, particularly between pro- and anti-Yugoslav factions, as well as between left-wing and clerical nationalist groups. Building on this work, Mislej (1992b; 1996) investigates key anti-fascist publications, such as *Slovenski tednik* (1929), *Novi list* (1933), *Slovenski list* (1937), and *Njiva* (1936–1943). Her research highlights these newspapers’ political stances, ideological conflicts, and broader influence on the Slovenian migrant community. She expands upon Brecelj’s findings on pre-WWII Slovenian media, extending the analysis to the postwar period and the eventual decline of major Slovenian-language publications. A notable argument in Mislej (1992b) is that most Slovenian migrants—having endured decades of Italian fascist repression—initially supported the new Yugoslav regime and sought greater unity among their associations. However, despite this initial cohesion, the Slovenian press in Argentina never fully revived, apart from internal newsletters and occasional contributions to broader immigrant publications. In a later analysis, Mislej (1996) demonstrates how the Slovenian press in Argentina reflected the political tensions, national aspirations, and ideological divisions within the migrant community during the interwar period. She further argues that the extreme polarization of Slovenian society during WWII carried over into the Argentine context, leading to the division of Slovenian media into those who supported the partisan forces (*Osvobodilna fronta*, or OF) and those who defended the nationalist guard (*domobranci*). Later contributions, such as Rot (1992), focus on the journalistic production of anti-communist Slovenian exiles, analyzing how their narratives were shaped through print media and political discourse.

The religious dimension of Slovenian migration has received limited scholarly attention despite its pivotal role in identity formation. Drnovšek (1998) offers a key contribution, demonstrating that the Catholic Church played a fundamental role in preserving Slovenian identity abroad. His work highlights that Slovenian priests served as both religious leaders and cultural mediators, actively promoting national consciousness, the Slovenian language, and traditional customs within Slovenian–Argentine communities. Additionally, Slovenian clergy abroad published religious magazines and other cultural materials, reinforcing Slovenian heritage and moral values within migrant communities.

IDENTITY, RETURN MIGRATION, AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Since the early 2000s, the question of identity and return migration policies for emigrants and their descendants has gained increasing significance. Several studies (Lukšič Hacin, 2004; Mlekuž, 2004; Žigon, 2002) have analyzed Slovenia's official policies toward its diaspora, highlighting that Slovenian state efforts prioritize identity preservation outside its geographical borders rather than implementing concrete repatriation programs. This reflects a broader trend in migration governance, where cultural and symbolic ties are strengthened without necessarily facilitating physical return.

Most research on return migration and mobility among Slovenian descendants has focused primarily on political exiles from World War II. Lukšič Hacin (2004) and Peterlin (2018) examine the integration processes of Slovenian returnees from Argentina to Slovenia in the 1990s and 2000s, identifying significant sociocultural adjustments and gaps between policy discourse and actual support structures. Mlekuž (2004) investigates the political dimensions of return migration by analyzing Slovenian state policies for returnees. His work underscores the contradictions between official encouragement for return and the lack of substantial institutional support. Pompe (2008) explores the contrast between the idealized image of Slovenia held by Slovenian communities abroad and the complexities of actual relocation. Golob (2009) focuses on returnees and second-generation migrants socialized in Slovenian communities abroad. She finds that Slovenian migrants from Argentina experience multilayered and ambivalent identities shaped by their transnational experiences. Their sense of home and belonging remains fluid, influenced both by their historical attachment to Slovenia and their lived experiences in Argentina.

A central conclusion emerging from these studies is that many migrants maintain connections with both countries, leading to a dual cultural adaptation where Slovenian heritage is preserved while also integrating Argentine customs. This results in a hybrid identity that is neither entirely Slovenian nor fully Argentine.

On the other hand, while many Slovenian emigrants expressed a longing to return, actual post-independence return migration was relatively marginal rather than a large-scale phenomenon (Repič, 2016). This challenges the traditional "myth of return"—the idea that emigrants or their descendants will eventually return to their ancestral homeland.

Interestingly, most of the research in this area has disproportionately focused on the descendants of political exiles, neglecting the return experiences of earlier Slovenian migrant groups (see Table 1). The only study covering return migration before Slovenia's independence in 1991 is Kogej (1982), who reconstructs the return of anti-fascist Slovenians after World War II through archival research and interviews. Her study focuses on the *Partizanka*, a ship that carried returnees back to Yugoslavia. Rogelj (2011) provides a non-academic yet insightful examination of similar cases.

Research area	Key findings	Main contributions
Studies on Early Migration (19th–Early 20th Century)	Research explored socioeconomic and political conditions prompting migration. Works by Kalc and Marušič analyzed Austro-Hungarian policies and economic hardship.	Kalc (1995), Marušič (1995), Mislej (1994; 1995), Sjekloča (2004)
Slovenian Migration processes	Multiple migration processes: pre–WWI, post–WWI, WWII exiles, and post-2001 economic migration.	Mislej (1994), Molek (2019)
Interwar Migration and Identity Processes	Scholars such as Mislej and Genorio examined the assimilation patterns and identity struggles of Slovenes in Argentina, highlighting regional and political influences. Migration patterns from Primorska and Prekmurje, effects of Italian fascist policies, transnational political organizations, the role of Slovenian press and associations in Argentina.	Cmor (2002); Genorio (1986; 1988), Kalc (1995; 2016); Kuzmič (1995), Mislej (1992a; 1994), Žigon (1998), Sjekloča (2004), Banko & Mouzakis (2003), Kacin-Wohinz (1995), Valentinčič (2012), Zobec (2013; 2022)
Occupational Niches	Slovenian immigrants integrated into the construction, meat, and textile industries.	Alonso & Cabaleiro (2002)
Studies on Post–WWII Anti-Communist Refugees	A rich bibliography exists on post–WWII refugees, emphasizing Slovenian exiles’ ideological, religious, and cultural self-sufficiency and their closed, trans-local community.	Cukjati (1986), Corsellis (1996; 1997), Žigon (1996; 2001a), Repič (2006; 2010; 2019), Toplak (2008)
Commemorations & Memory	Rituals of anti-communist remembrance shaped diaspora politics.	Repič (2019)
Anthropological and Sociocultural Perspectives	Research includes identity construction, transnational networks, and generational identity shifts. Scholars like Repič and Molek analyzed evolving ethnic consciousness.	Mlekuž (1999); Molek (2019); Repič (2006); Toplak (2008),
Role of the Press	Slovenian press in Argentina was anti-fascist but later divided on the issue of Yugoslavia.	Brecelj (1992); Mislej (1992b); Rot (1992)

Current Trends and Return Migration	Return migration from Argentina to Slovenia, policy gaps in Slovenian repatriation efforts, transnational citizenship, and political activism and identity negotiations among Slovenian descendants.	Lukšič Hacin (2004), Mlekuž (2004), Žigon (2002), Peterlin (2018), Pompe (2008), Golob (2009), Kogej (1982), Rogelj (2011), Kristen (2007)
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Table 1: Summary of findings on Slovenian migration to Argentina (Slovenian academic context).

Another crucial dimension of Slovenian migration is the exercise of transnational citizenship, particularly political engagement from afar. This common theme in diaspora and transnational studies is well reflected in the analyzed literature. Jenšterle (1992) studies the effects of Slovenia’s independence on Slovenes in Argentina, showing how different migration cohorts responded to the political changes. Žigon (2002) and Kristen (2007) demonstrate that Slovenia’s independence movement was not only supported by the “new Slovenes” (post-WWII anti-communist exiles) but also by interwar migrants and their descendants. These findings challenge the perception of a politically fragmented Slovenian diaspora, showing that various generations actively shaped Slovenia’s national destiny.

SLOVENIANS AS PART OF THE MIGRATION STUDIES IN ARGENTINA

The study of Slovenian migration to Argentina falls within the broader field of Slavic migration studies. However, compared to the extensive body of research on European migrations to Argentina, studies specifically addressing the immigration of Slavic peoples—including their identity formation and integration processes—remain insufficient and underdeveloped.

The return to democracy in Argentina in the early 1980s triggered an intense re-examination of the past, particularly among marginalized communities. Within this context, Argentine anthropology increasingly focused on identity formation and collective memory as central themes, fostering a growing interest in Slavic migration. The first notable academic contributions appeared in the journal *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* (Stemplowski, 1982). Many early migration studies in Argentina analyzed Slavic migration primarily through narratives of “pioneering” and “colonization,” particularly in rural areas. However, these perspectives often overlooked the presence of indigenous populations that predated these settlements (Molek, 2022). The majority of research on Slavic migration has centered on Polish immigration. However, Croats (Radovich, 1982), Slovenes (Velikonja, 1985), Czechs (Partny, 1994), and Ukrainians (Glinka, 1997) have also been studied.

Interest in Slavic migration intensified in the late 1990s as sociopolitical events increased both academic and policy-related attention to this field. Several works (Marcogliese, 2003; Pacceca, 2000; Texidó, 2004) brought greater visibility and depth to the subject, particularly in response to geopolitical transformations in Eastern Europe (Misetich & Quinteros, 1996), including the Chernobyl nuclear accident, the Balkan war, the case of illegal arms sales from Argentina to Croatia, and the increasing relations with Russia and other “Eastern European” countries made the topic attractive for research. Interest in the need to develop concrete measures for social integration for the phenomenon of the growing numbers of immigrants caused by the disintegration of multinational states in war also increased (Marcogliese, 2003).

Among the studies relating to the populations of the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, the studies on Croatian immigration stand out. Rosan (2002) explores the identity and mnemonic processes of the Croatian diaspora in Argentina, providing historical context—also extendable to the Slovenian people—by referring to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, World War II, and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Radovich (2004; 2016) has various approaches to the Croatian migration process from the perspective of the Dalmatian region. Gadže & Rajković Iveta (2016) analyze the issue of descendants who decided to emigrate to the country of their ancestors after Croatian independence in 1991 from an inter-generational perspective. Gadže (2018) further analyzes the Croatian media and its role in preserving Croatian identity in Buenos Aires and Rosario.

A significant thematic focus in Slavic migration studies is the negotiation of Yugoslav, Slavic, and national identities within the Argentine context. Several studies have analyzed how Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, and other Yugoslav groups defined their identities in relation to both Argentina and their homeland(s). Radovich (2004) provides a quantitative contribution that illustrates the approximate proportions of migratory contingents with Yugoslav nationality, a generic term that, according to the author, includes different peoples (Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Bosnians, Herzegovinians, Muslims, Albanians, etc.). He also refers to the conflict that the term “Yugoslav” caused among those nationalities who regarded Yugoslavia as a “prison of peoples.” Also noteworthy are the studies by Misetich & Quinteros (1996) and Solian (2018), which examine the different ways of self-presentations of the Yugoslavs.

Academic research on Slovenian migration in Argentina

One of the first academic studies on Slovenian migration to Argentina was the bachelor thesis by Pedro Rant (1959), completed at the Faculty of Economic Sciences of the University of Buenos Aires. His work provides a detailed analysis of Slovenian immigration periods from 1878 to post-World War II, examining the causes of migration, economic and social adaptation, and integration strategies within the host society. Notably, P. Rant highlights the role of associations, the press, and

educational institutions in the community’s integration and explores the political and economic challenges faced by Slovenians over time.

Despite this early contribution, systematic research on Slovenian migration in Argentina remained scarce until the 1990s. Since then, several scholars have contributed to mapping Slovenian communities and their sociohistorical transformations (see Table 2). M. Maffia (2002) and the team have included the Slovenes (exiles) in their mapping work in Buenos Aires, the location of the Slovenes in the districts of the province. From a historical perspective, F. Devoto (2009, p. 372) mentions the collective to clarify the category of “ethnic environment” and to illustrate the break between the old community structures that emerged among migrants before World War II and the new groups that arrived after the end of it as a product of changing policies in the country of origin (Devoto, 2009, p. 412). Cicogna (2009) refers to Corsellis (1996) and includes the Slovenian exiles of the second postwar period as part of the contingents of refugees that made up the multicultural map of Argentina. Alonso & Cabaleiro (2002) examine the socio-professional integration of an immigrant from Prekmurje, analyzing her placement in occupational niches such as the meat and textile industries. Using life history methods, they amplify the migrant’s own voice, offering a personal perspective within the broader migration experience.

Period	Key themes	Author(s)
Pre-1980s	Early studies on Slavic migration focused primarily on Poles, with limited research on Slovenians. Early documentation of Slovenian migration, press chronicles, by the migrant Hladnik in the 1930s and 1940s, documenting early Slovenian migration. First academic efforts from economic sciences.	Hladnik (1933; 1934; 1937; 1939a; 1939b; 1939c); Rant (1959)
Late 1990s–2000s	The return to democracy in Argentina led to an increasing reinterpretation of the past, with anthropology linking identity and memory. Interest in Slavic and Yugoslav migration intensified due to international events. Studies on Croatian migration advanced, with some references to Slovenians.	Misetich & Quinteros (1996); Radovich (2004; 2016); Rosan (2002).
2010s–Present	Recent anthropological and historical studies have extensively documented Slovenian transnational identity processes in Argentina. Ethnographic research has explored transnational connections, re-ethnicization processes, and memory construction.	Molek (2012; 2020; 2022)

Table 2: Slovenian migration studies in Argentina.

More recently, Molek (2012; 2022) has been crucial in advancing anthropological and historical research on Slovenian migration and identity in Argentina. Her contributions have significantly impacted Spanish-language migration studies, particularly in tracing Slovenes' transnational organizational and identity developments from the late 19th century to the present. Building on the works of Mislej (1994), Repič (1996), and Žigon (2001a), Molek's qualitative and ethnographic research is based on extensive fieldwork, including 120 life stories of Slovenians in Argentina. Her findings challenge the concept of an "authentic" and "definitive" Slovenian identity, advocating for a contextual, cross-border, and longitudinal approach to the study of Slovenian ethnicity (Molek, 2022). Her research particularly stands out for its exploration of memory and identity transformation. She identifies re-ethnicization processes among the descendants of early migration periods, revealing new forms of belonging in socioeconomic crises. These processes manifest in innovative ways, including virtual ethnic-organizational activities through Facebook groups (Molek, 2022), The writing of self-financed (auto)biographies as a form of identity preservation and personal expression (Molek, 2020), Temporary return mobilities to the birthplaces of ancestors, contributing to symbolic reconnection with Slovenian heritage (Molek, 2018).

The native perspective in studies on Slovenian migration to Argentina

The state of the art on Slovenian migration to Argentina would be incomplete without incorporating the native perspective—the knowledge production generated by the protagonists of the identity processes under analysis (see Table 3). The construction and negotiation of a historical narrative have been processes involving different groups, each with varying access to the means of knowledge production (Trouillot, 1995). The literature produced has generally been the work of intellectuals or prominent community leaders, making these writings central reference texts and objects of deliberation within the Slovenian–Argentine diaspora.

The first chronicles of the migration process at the end of the 19th century were written in Slovenian in the 1930s by the priest Janez Hladnik. Having immigrated between the wars, Hladnik became a significant chronicler of Slovenes in Argentina, contributing extensively to the religious journal *Duhovno življenje* (Spiritual Life). Through this publication, he documented his travels across Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Chile, providing detailed accounts of the Slovenian communities or migrants he encountered. His writings included both descriptive chronicles and editorials, particularly before and during World War II, in which he articulated a firm anti-communist stance. His work on *Duhovno življenje* not only served as a historical record of Slovenian networks in Latin America but also reflected and reinforced ideological perspectives within the community.

One of the first female descendants to write about Slovenian migration was Kremžar-Rožaneč (1990), who published in the cultural journal *Meddobje* about

Slovenian families who had settled in the Villa Formosa colony at the end of the 19th century. Her contribution is particularly valuable as it highlights the translocal and transnational connections of Slovenians who settled in northern Argentina, demonstrating that they maintained contact with relatives in Paraguay. Later, one of the first descendants of the 19th-century Slovenian immigrants to publish (self-financed) research on Slovenian migration to the province of Entre Ríos was Carlos Bizai (2001; 2006). His main objective was to make this early migration stream visible and to raise awareness among their descendants about their existence. His work significantly impacted Slovenian descendants in Entre Ríos, many of whom became aware of their ethnic origins through his research.

The migration of the interwar period generated more source material about itself. Slovenian associations in Argentina produced several key documents at the time. Essential contributions on the state of the question can be found in *Slovenski izseljenski koledar za Južno Ameriko za leto 1937* (Calendar of the Slovenian Association Prosvetno društvo for the year 1937) (Kacin, 1937), in the compendium *Zbornik spominu Ivana Cankarja: ob 25. letnici smrti: 1918–1943* (Annals in Memory of Ivan Cankar on the 25th Anniversary of his Death: 1918–1943) (Drašček & Birska, 1943), published by the Ljudski oder Association in 1943, as well as in a publication honoring the 100th birthday of the poet Simon Gregorčič (Gregorčič, 1945). Other sources include commemorative publications marking anniversaries of Slovenian associations.

In addition to these organizational records, several works more broadly addressed migration processes. Kurinčič (1950; 1965) documented migration waves, while Kacin (1937) and Ličen (1958) examined the challenges of integration into Argentine society. Others focused on regional profiles of migrants, socioeconomic characteristics (Škrbec, 1956), and the careers of Slovenes across different Argentine provinces and cities, such as in the Chaco (Weiss, 1969). Other studies explored cultural life (Kren, 1955), prominent Slovenian personalities (Kurinčič, 1957), and the development of associationism (Kurinčič, 1959). The political practices of Slovenian migrants also received attention (Kurinčič, 1955). Moreover, some immigrants and their descendants who returned to Slovenia after World War II contributed articles to various Slovenian journals and yearbooks, such as *Slovenski izseljenski koledar*, *Rodna gruda*, and *Koledar Mohorjeve družbe*.

During the late 1980s, a generational shift occurred among Slovenians who had migrated in the interwar period. This transition led to an increase in publications written in Spanish. One of the most notable works from this period is the Commemorative Publication of the Yugoslav Mutual Association Triglav (Consejo Directivo, 1981), which chronicles the founding and historical development of the institution. This was followed by additional publications by immigrants and their descendants in previously mentioned journals.

More recently, Slovenia's independence in 1991 sparked increased interest in Slovenian heritage among descendants who do not speak the language or have direct ascriptive continuity with Slovenian identity in Argentina (Molek, 2012). In

this context, some descendants have decided to document their ancestors' stories in books. Bizai (2006) contributed by arguing that many Slovenian immigrants in Entre Ríos did not pass down their ethnic-national identity to their descendants, historically identifying as Austrians or Yugoslavs instead. However, more recent research based on in-depth interviews with interwar migrants and their descendants challenges this argument, showing that many families preserved at least partial Slovenian identity markers (Molek, 2022).

An important contribution comes from D. Brunskole (2017), a native of Las Breñas, Chaco, who published a chronicle of his grandfather Alojz Brunskole's migration journey. His work provides key insights into the regional dimensions of Slovenian migration, as well as the presence of the Gottscheer German minority (*Kočevarji*),¹ a group largely unknown in migration studies.

The community of anti-communist exiles developed a distinct identity-building process through writing, differentiating itself from other Slovenian migration periods. This phenomenon is reflected in extensive literary output, primarily aimed at legitimizing the group's national and ideological-religious positions. Many of these contributions emerged from the intellectual habitus of community leaders, who sought to counteract the meanings ascribed to them by Yugoslav authorities and to construct alternative historical narratives. Much of this literature was published in the Slovenian language in Argentina, with some works also appearing in Slovenia. Various thematic lines can be identified within this corpus.

The most important sources tend to be institutional, with content published in outlets such as *Zbornik – Koledar Svobodne Slovenije* (founded in 1949), the weekly newspaper *Svobodna Slovenija* (founded in 1949), the journal *Meddobje* (founded in 1954), and various commemorative publications (Belič Draksler, 2006; Groznik, 2011; Rant, 1998).

The most widely produced historical works focus on events of World War II, forced exile, and life in refugee camps (Kremžar, 2008; Rant, 2008), the subsequent migration to Argentina (Fink, 2006; Rant, 2008), and everyday life in the new country (Ahčin, 1959; Bajuk, 1952; Eiletz, 2000b; Korošec Kocmur & Kocmur, 2016, among others).

A key contemporary reference is the historical essay by Jože Rant (2008), in which the theologian addresses the moral dilemmas faced by politicians, the Church, and *domobranci* in relation to the occupiers and communism. Rant disputes what he calls "communist propaganda" that claimed the *domobranci* swore allegiance to Hitler, arguing instead—following similar theses by Debeljak—that such assertions

1 The *Kočevarji* (Gottscheers or *Kočevski Nemci*) were a German-speaking farming minority in the Kočevje region, originally settled from Tyrol and Carinthia by the Counts of Ortenburg in the 14th century (Molek, 2022). They maintained a distinct identity for 600 years, but after World War I, the creation of Yugoslavia led to policies of Slovenization, stripping them of linguistic and ethnic recognition. Measures such as forced name changes and job restrictions in public administration drove many to emigrate.

are false and that they had sworn only to the Slovenian homeland in a “spontaneous act of self-defense” (Rant, 2008, p. 157).

Another important body of work is devoted to reflections on Sloveneness, exile, and the philosophical and political dimensions of this migration experience. One of the most influential voices in this field is the exiled philosopher and pedagogue Vinko Brumen (1992; 2010), who explores the ontological dimensions of migration and exile. His contributions are particularly innovative, as they critically examine the intergenerational preservation of Slovenian identity in Argentina. Brumen warns against reproducing a closed community that isolates itself from its surroundings and historical change. He argues that constructing an ahistorical image of the homeland risks alienating younger generations, making it essential for the community to engage with contemporary realities rather than nostalgically clinging to an idealized past (Brumen, 1992, p. 73).

The Marianist theologian Gogala (1996) takes a similar perspective when he reflects on the challenges the Slovenian exile community faced. His work addresses the role of the family, the fear of integration and assimilation, and the rigid enforcement of endogamy as a defense mechanism against cultural absorption. He also discusses the perceived dangers of capitalism, the deliberate severing of ties with relatives in Slovenia, and the reception of visitors from the homeland. A key aspect of Gogala’s analysis is the Church’s central role in maintaining cultural, national, and political identity within the exile community. He describes the Slovenian Church abroad as a bastion against the “communist tyranny” that had taken hold of Slovenia while simultaneously critiquing the excessive politicization of the community, which, in his view, brought it closer to a form of ideological totalitarianism (Gogala, 1994, p. 34). In contrast, Brumen (2010) sees the solution to the identity challenges of the exile community in reforming the Slovenian education system. He suggests that education should not only focus on preserving national heritage but should also encourage critical engagement with both Slovenian and Argentine realities, fostering a more open and dynamic identity rather than one rooted in nostalgia. This theme of identity negotiation is also present in the work of M. Fink (2006), a second-generation exile who explores the identity ambiguity experienced by the descendants of Slovenian migrants. His work provides a personal perspective on the tensions between inherited national identity and the lived experience of growing up in Argentina.

Category	Key themes	Author(s)
Early Chronicles	Documented Slovenian migration across Latin America, contributing to the journal <i>Duhovno življenje</i> . Provided ideological perspectives and historical accounts.	Janez Hladnik (1933; 1934; 1937; 1939a; 1939b; 1939c)
Translocal perspective	Discusses Slovenian families in Villa Formosa and their transnational connections with Paraguay.	Kremžar-Rožaneč (1990)
Early Migration in Entre Rios	Researched Slovenian migration to Entre Ríos (1879–1888, 1926–1936). Helped descendants recognize their ethnic heritage.	C. Bizai (2001; 2006)
Interwar Migration Period—Organizational Sources	Published Slovenian association records, documenting migration and cultural activities.	Kacin (1937), Ljudski oder Association (1943)
Interwar Migration –	Covered migration processes, integration challenges, socioeconomic profiles, careers, and cultural contributions of Slovenes in Argentina. Offered historical reflections and identity narratives from returnees and their descendants	Consejo Directivo (1981), Kurinčič (1950; 1965), Kacin (1937), Ličen (1958), Škrbec (1956);
Regional Migration Insights	Documented his grandfather's migration story, highlighting Gottscheer Germans in Argentina.	D. Brunskole (2017)
Anti-Communist Exiles—Historical Memory & Identity	Produced historical narratives legitimizing the exile community's national and ideological position.	Debeljak (1965; 1967), Eiletz (2000a; 2000b), Kremžar (2002; 2008), Klepec (1973), Rant (2008)
Theological & Philosophical Reflections	Explored exile, Slovenian identity, community survival strategies, and ideological engagement.	Brumen (1992; 2010), Gogala (1996)
Identity & Education	Examined identity ambiguity and cultural transmission among Slovenian–Argentine descendants.	Fink (2006)

Table 3: Native Perspective on Slovenian Migration to Argentina

CONCLUSIONS

Slovenian migration to Argentina occurred in multiple phases, each shaped by distinct historical and socio-political factors and influenced by the strategic national interests of the states to which Slovenia belonged at the time. This narrative literature review aimed to identify the dominant research trends on Slovenian migration

to Argentina, providing a comprehensive overview of the state of academic inquiry and comparing scholarly perspectives in Slovenia and Argentina.

Initially, Slovenian academic research on this topic was primarily historical, focusing on the so-called “old Slovenes” until the 1990s. Over time, sociological, geographical, sociocultural, and anthropological perspectives gained prominence, shifting attention toward the “new Slovenes”—the post–World War II anti-communist exiles and their descendants. However, only after Slovenia’s independence in 1991 did significant academic research on Slovenian migration to Argentina expand, primarily within the humanities and social sciences. In contrast, in Argentina, scholarly interest in this topic has remained limited, with most research being carried out by descendants rather than mainstream academia.

Given contemporary global developments—particularly Argentina’s ongoing socioeconomic crises and the renewed emigration of Argentines—processes of re-ethnicization among Slovenian descendants represent an emerging and relevant research area. This review has revealed a gap in the study of individuals’ ethno-national (re)emergence without direct ascriptive continuity with Slovenian identity. This is particularly relevant in light of increasing “return” migration, with individuals of Slovenian descent relocating to Slovenia (Molek, 2022). This phenomenon unfolds in a context where Slovenia faces demographic challenges, including an aging workforce and a declining birth rate, prompting discussions on the necessity of an active labor force. Future research could explore how these descendants integrate into and contribute to Slovenia’s socioeconomic landscape, providing insights into migration policies, identity formation, and labor market dynamics.

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All data presented can be traced through the references.

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POVZETEK

MIGRACIJSKI IN IDENTITETNI PROCESI SLOVENCEV V ARGENTINI: PREGLED LITERATURE

Nadia Molek

Avtorica v narativnem pregledu literature kritično analizira in primerja obstoječe znanstvene prispevke o slovenski migraciji v Argentino, pri čemer razlikuje med slovensko in argentinsko raziskovalno produkcijo. Ugotavlja, da so se zgodnejše raziskave osredotočale na vzroke za migracije, načine naselitve ter prilagajanje slovenskih skupnosti v okviru širše argentinske migracijske politike. Posebno pozornost so raziskave namenjale medvojnemu obdobju, pri čemer so obravnavale politični aktivizem, kulturne organizacije in težave pri integraciji.

Od devetdesetih let 20. stoletja naprej je zaznati metodološki prehod k vključevanju socioloških, geografskih, kulturnih in antropoloških pristopov, s čimer so v ospredje stopile tudi povojne migracije, zlasti politični begunci. Pomembno vlogo pri klasifikaciji migracijskih procesov ima I. Mislej, medtem ko sta A. Kalc in B. Marušič ponudila dragocen vpogled v emigracijo znotraj avstro-ogrske in medvojne družbeno-ekonomske konjunktore.

Procese migracije in identitete med slovenskimi izseljenci v medvojnem obdobju podrobno obravnavajo I. Mislej, R. Genorio, Z. Žigon in M. Sjekloča. Njihove raziskave razkrivajo poklicne poti in regionalni izvor migrantov ter identitetne izzive v kontekstu argentinske asimilacijske politike. Poleg tega obravnavajo tudi politične in ideološke razsežnosti migracij ter vlogo slovenskih protifašističnih izseljencev v transnacionalnih družbenih gibanjih.

V zadnjem desetletju so študije M. Lukšič Hacin, J. Mlekuža, J. Repiča in M. Zobca, v katerih ti raziskujejo vpliv migracij na kulturno dediščino, identiteto in povratno migracijo ter kažejo, kako simbolni označevalci slovenstva v diaspori vzdržujejo vezi z domovino, razširile razumevanje transgeneracijskih in transnacionalnih vidikov migracij.

Kljub bogatemu korpusu raziskav ostaja slovenska migracija v Argentino razmeroma marginalna tema v argentinski znanosti. Med pomembnejše sodobne prispevke sodijo dela P. Ranta, M. Velikonje ter avtorice prispevka, ki je analizirala reetnizacijo potomcev izven neposredne adskriptivne kontinuitete in ki povezuje slovensko migracijsko znanost tudi s širšim poljem študij vzhodnoevropskih skupnosti v Latinski Ameriki.

Poleg akademske literature imajo pomembno vlogo tudi avtobiografski viri, memoari, zapisi skupnosti in institucionalni arhivi, ki jih soustvarjajo migranti in potomci. Ti viri osvetljujejo subjektivne izkušnje migracije, boje za ohranjanje identitete in procese skupnostne organizacije.

V zaključku avtorica poudarja, da literatura o Slovencih v Argentini osvetljuje kompleksno prepletanje zgodovinskih, političnih in kulturnih procesov, pri čemer pa še vedno ostajajo vrzeli, zlasti na področju sodobne reetnizacije, vloge digitalnih orodij, povratne migracije ter gospodarske integracije potomcev migrantov v Sloveniji.

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TEMATSKI SKLOP / THEMATIC SECTION

**MIGRACIJE IN RAZVOJ NA GORSKIH OBMEJNIH OBMOČJIH ŠVICE IN SLOVENIJE
(18.–20. STOLETJE) / MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE MOUNTAIN BORDERLANDS
OF SWITZERLAND AND SLOVENIA (18TH–20TH CENTURY)**

Luigi Lorenzetti

Migrations and Historical Development Paths—A Comparative Project Between Switzerland and Slovenia: Introduction to the Thematic Section

Fabio Rossinelli, Ricardo Borrmann

The Economic and Social Impacts of Colonial Emigration on Neuchâtel During the "Long 19th Century"

Janja Sedlaček, Marta Rendla

Long-Term Migration and Remittances in the Alpine District of Gornji Grad: Human Agency Amid Environmental and Social Constraints

Borut Žerjal

The Altruistic and Redistributive Effects of Emigration: Legacies and Benefices in Italian Switzerland (18th–19th Century)

Luigi Lorenzetti, Fabio Rossinelli

Return Migration and Real Estate Projects: Philanthropy or Speculation? The Examples of Le Locle and Locarno (Switzerland), From the Mid-19th Century to the 1910s

ČLANKI / ARTICLES

Aleš Bučar Ručman

Analiza priseljevanja v Slovenijo iz (in preko) držav nekdanje SFRJ z uporabo eklektičnega modela mednarodnih migracij

Claudia Schneider

A Conceptual Framework for Multi-Way Integration (MUWI) With a Focus on Residents' Multiple Identities and Intersectionalities

Majda Hrženjak

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