

**BRATISLAVA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS**

**SECURITIZATION OF MIGRANTS;  
WHY DO MIGRANTS NOT WANT TO STAY IN SLOVAKIA?**

**Bratislava, 2023**

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Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

## **Declaration of Originality**

I hereby declare that this bachelor's thesis is my own work and has not been published in part or in whole elsewhere. All used literature and other sources are attributed and cited in References.

Bratislava, February 15, 2023

Kristína Bujdošová

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate why the Slovak people still have problems with racial differences and do not accept different cultures and religions that are not similar to their own and why racism and xenophobia are still, to some extent, present in Slovakia. The author of this thesis will examine why migrants from third countries do not want to live in Slovakia but rather immigrate to more developed Western countries. Slovakia is mostly just a transit country for them. Several research studies have already been made on how migration policies and institutions dealing with migration work in Slovakia. However, there is still a lack of studies investigating in depth why migrants are not satisfied and do not want to stay and live in Slovakia. The author of this thesis will examine two main aspects of why migrants do not want to stay in Slovakia, which are political causes and social-psychological causes. The main focus of this thesis will be the analysis of the social-psychological reasons where topics like culture, xenophobia, racism, discrimination, and attitudes will be examined. The author will analyze the obstacles and difficulties of migrants who often face discrimination in their everyday life, whether because of their looks or skin color. Religion plays a huge role in a cultural aspect, and it affects primarily the Muslim migrants who are also, to some extent, restricted with the expression of their religion. The author of this thesis will support these statements with research studies and interviews. The interviews will be done with migrants of various spectrums, but mostly with migrants from third countries.

*Keywords:* migration, culture, legislature, institutions, religion, integration, Slovakia

Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

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## Abstrakt

Cieľom tejto bakalárskej práce je zistiť, prečo majú ľudia na Slovensku stále problémy s rasovými rozdielmi a neakceptujú odlišné kultúry a náboženstvá, ktoré nie sú podobné ich vlastným a prečo je na Slovensku stále do určitej miery prítomný rasizmus a xenofóbia. Autor tejto bakalárskej práce bude skúmať, prečo migranti z tretích krajín nechcú žiť na Slovensku, ale radšej odchádzajú do vyspelejších západných krajín. Slovensko je pre nich väčšinou len tranzitnou krajinou. O tom, ako na Slovensku fungujú migračné politiky a inštitúcie zaoberajúce sa migráciou, už bolo urobených niekoľko výskumných štúdií, no stále chýbajú štúdie, ktoré by do hĺbky skúmali dôvody, prečo migranti nie sú spokojní a nechcú na Slovensku zostať žiť.

Autor tejto bakalárskej práce bude skúmať dva hlavné aspekty, prečo migranti nechcú zostať žiť na Slovensku, ktorými sú politické a sociálno-psychologické príčiny. Hlavným zameraním tejto práce bude analýza sociálno-psychologických príčin, kde budú skúmané témy ako kultúra, xenofóbia, rasizmus, diskriminácia a postoje k cudzincom. Autor rozoberie prekážky a ťažkosti migrantov, ktorí sa v ich každodennom živote veľmi často stretávajú s diskrimináciou, či už kvôli ich vzhľadu alebo inej farbe pleti. Náboženstvo zohráva obrovskú úlohu v kultúrnom aspekte a týka sa najmä moslimských migrantov, ktorí sú tiež do istej miery obmedzovaní vo vyjadrovaní vlastného náboženstva. Autor tejto práce podporí tieto tvrdenia výskumnými štúdiami a rozhovormi. Rozhovory sa budú robiť s migrantmi rôzneho spektra, väčšinou však s migrantmi z tretích krajín.

*Kľúčové slová:* migrácia, legislatíva, inštitúcie, náboženstvo, integrácia, Slovensko

## **Table of Content**

Declaration of Originality	III
Acknowledgments	IV
Abstract	V
Abstrakt	VI
Introduction:	1
Chapter 1: Political reasons	4
1.1 Legislation and migration policies	6
1.2 Historical development of the migration policies	7
1.3 Illegal migration	11
1.4 Legal migration	15
1.5 Ombudsman	16
Chapter 2: Social-Psychological Reasons	20
2.1 Xenophobia	23
2.2 We and them	25
2.3 Implementation of Muslim religious practices	27
2.4 Nationalized citizenship	28
2.5 Islamophobia	29
Chapter 3: Methodology	30
Chapter 4: Perception of migrants in Slovakia	32
Results and Discussion	42
Conclusion	44
Resumé	46
Reference List	51

## Introduction:

Since 2004, when Slovakia joined the European Union, the number of migrants seeking asylum in Slovakia has increased significantly. However, even with rising numbers and asylum applications, migration has not been one of the government's priorities for a long time, perhaps because even when the numbers were higher, they were still not so high compared to other European countries. Perhaps because Slovakia is still not the most attractive country where migrants would like to go and live if we compare it to some Western European countries (Androvičová, 2015). Even the International Organization for Migration claims that:

Slovakia is not one of the traditional final destinations for migrants. It is a culturally homogeneous country, which was not affected by the dramatic increase in migration during the twentieth century. Until recently, Slovakia was almost exclusively the country of origin of the migrants, in other words, a country whose residents used to migrate abroad for various reasons. (2022)

The International Organization for Migration defines the term migration as:

Migration is a process in which individuals and groups leave their homes for various reasons. The current mobility of people is higher than ever before in modern history and continues to increase sharply, becoming one of the determining global issues of the 21st century. Almost all the approximately 200 world states are countries of origin, transitor destination for the migrants. (International Organization for Migration, 2022)

The author of this bachelor's thesis will focus on why migrants who come to Slovakia do not want to continue living in Slovakia but prefer to immigrate to more western and developed European countries. It mainly focuses on migrants from third countries, for whom Slovakia is usually only a transit country and not a final destination. Slovakia has never been among the famous countries where migrants would like to come and live. On the contrary, it ranks among the countries with the strictest migration policies. Slovak society also has a problem with accepting and integrating migrants who profess other religions and have a different nationality,

## Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

which later results in racism and xenophobia, which are still present. Several research studies have already been made on how migration policies and institutions dealing with migration work in Slovakia. However, there is still a lack of studies that would investigate in depth the reasons why migrants are not satisfied and do not want to stay in Slovakia.

This bachelor's thesis is divided into three chapters examining why this is so. The first two chapters are theoretical; the third chapter is practical. The first chapter focuses on political causes, where the author focuses on legislation and various institutions dealing with migration as well as on migration and asylum policies and the characterization of the terms legal and illegal migration. Many migrants who came to Slovakia are initially from third countries such as Africa or Afghanistan. According to their statements, they decided to leave Slovakia because they had a problem Slovakia, especially with the institutions dealing with migration and helping migrants, specifically with the Migration Office and the Foreign Police (Popper et al., 2006). Migrant Integration Policy Index is one of the most accurate studies that show levels of integration in various European and non-European countries, which the author also includes in this thesis.

In the second chapter, the author of this bachelor's thesis examines the reasons from a socio-psychological point of view since racism and xenophobia still prevail to a certain extent in Slovakia today, and people have difficulty accepting different cultures and nationalities. The first part deals precisely with xenophobia, from which the mentioned racism, discrimination, and negative attitudes toward migrants follow. Xenophobia is fear of the unknown, of otherness. In Slovakia, this is especially true for Muslim migrants; since most of them profess Islam and are of different skin color, these migrants have a big problem integrating into Slovak society because most Slovaks are afraid to accept them, mainly because it is something unknown to them. To a large extent, the media also play a role in this case, when newspapers or television associate Muslim people with negative news about various terrorist attacks, when the generalization of the assumption that all Muslims are like that arises.

Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

The third chapter is focused on the practical part, where the author uses interviews with migrants from different countries to investigate how they perceive the situation in Slovakia and what their experiences are with Slovak citizens or with various institutions. The last chapter is practical, conducted using interviews with migrants from different countries to confirm the findings. The author of this bachelor thesis conducted six semi-structured interviews with migrants from countries such as Ukraine, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, the Philippines, and Belarus. All respondents were asked to answer the same questions to find out whether the reasons for these different cultures leaving the country were different or the same.

## Chapter 1: Political reasons

The International Organization for Migration defines migration as a process of a person who moves away from their home country for some time or permanently. This process must be in alignment with the legal procedures, which are also connected to various reasons why people migrate to different countries, such as "migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movements are legally-defined, such as smuggled migrants; as well as those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students" (International Organization for Migration, 2022, para. 1). "An asylum seeker is a foreign national who declares at a police department that he is applying for asylum on the territory of the Slovak Republic, and refugee is a foreigner who has been granted asylum" (Divinský, 2007, p. 33).

Regarding the definition of the term migration policy, Čeri (2016) explains that it is a complex of tools and measures that deal with legal and illegal migration and its regulation, which are also established by law. "The migration policy determines, e.g., conditions for accepting immigrants, their integration into society, and the possibility of obtaining residence permits, work permits, or even citizenship" (Čeri, 2016, p. 28). Čeri (2016) also claims that many people may confuse migration policy with integration policy, which aims to integrate migrants into society. According to the author, citizens may also mistake it for minority policies. However, in reality, these policies are in charge of other tasks, and "minority policies may not have anything to do with the issue of immigration, but only with the autochthonous population - autochthonous minorities" (p. 28).

According to Galtun (2006, as cited in Antalová, 2016), there are four main reasons why people want to leave their home country permanently. "They are either afraid of their own life, their human rights are endangered, they want to provide a better life for themselves or their family, or they just want to find some purpose in their life" (p. 8). Pechočiak and Hrdá (2017) states that the term migration refers to the movement of people who leave their permanent residence, and go to live elsewhere.

## Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

There are many reasons for migration, and they can be different, but there are two fundamental divisions. If a person migrates within his home country, where he also has citizenship and moves to another city, this is called internal migration. However, if a person migrates to another country and crosses borders, this is foreign migration.

Most of the migrants who came to Slovakia come from third countries such as Africa or Afghanistan, or other Muslim countries where there is a war going on. Popper et al. (2006) state that they want to come to a country that provides safety and adequate living conditions for its citizens, so they do not choose a particular country where they want to go. Many of the migrants that came here from third countries after some time left the more developed western countries where also the citizens might be more open to their religion and beliefs. According to their statements, Popper et al. (2006) also argue that in Slovakia, migrants had a problem, especially with the institutions that dealt with migration, such as the Migration office or the Office of the Border and Foreign Police. Another reason they stated was that they had difficulty finding a full-filling and well-paid job because, in most cases, they represented only cheap labor. Many of them came to Slovakia for higher education since there are no such opportunities in their home countries, or "education in their home countries, for example in Africa, is so corrupt that people without connections or money will be not accepted to universities" (Popper et al., 2006, p. 27).

According to (Divinský, 2009), a particular category consists of migrants from China, South Korea, and Vietnam. They came to Slovakia mainly for work and were engaged in their small business. Divinský (2009) states that a few years ago, we would not even have noticed them here; in most cases, they lived close to their small communities and did not come into contact with Slovak citizens very much, but the number of those migrants over the years increased. Today the number of legal migrants from Vietnam currently living in Slovakia represents 7235, and from China, the number is 2697 (Office of the Border and Foreign Police, 2021). According to their statements, some people also migrate to Slovakia for various personal reasons; they want to start a new life in a different country or family or to find a new purpose

Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

in their life. Those people, on the contrary, come to Slovakia from developed Western countries. However, those migrants can also quickly move back to their home countries if they want to and live a full-filling life there, as in Slovakia. This is not the case for most migrants from third countries, where there is a war or where the living conditions are often inadequate (Popper et al., 2006).

Pechočiak and Hrdá (2017) divide the reasons for migration into two categories: the push and pull categories. According to the author:

Push factors are negative economic and social environments, lack of work, political instability, racial, ethnical, religious repressions, civil riots, armed conflict, and wars. Among the pull factors, there are better living conditions, especially regarding the social system, health care, education, safety, human rights, higher salary and higher standard of living, work and business opportunities. (p.34)

### Legislation and migration policies

Antalová (2016) argues that the primary purpose of migration policy is to consider the interests of migrants and their security. The author also claims that several research studies have been conducted in Slovakia to determine whether the migration policy is effective. There were also statements from workers who were in regular contact with migrants. Among their most frequent answers was that migrants in Slovakia do not have perfect conditions for developing their own culture, their titles from their home countries do not have the same value in Slovakia, so they do not usually get well-paid jobs, and there is also a problem with obtaining citizenship or asylum due to the established migration laws Slovakia has.

Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) examines the extent to which migrants from third countries integrate. They operate in various European countries but also outside Europe. MIPEX includes different preconditions that they believe are essential for migrants, such as employment, finding suitable accommodation, participation in social events, and anti-discrimination policies. According to these statistics, Slovakia is in last place among the countries of the European Union, which does not represent perfect conditions for the integration of migrants in Slovakia (Vašečka, 2009).

## Historical development of the migration policies

From the historical point of view of the development of migration, Barša and Baršová (2005) claim that it started with the Treaty of Rome in 1957, which was based on the free movement of persons within the European Union. It was mainly a movement for better work. This is how migration gradually began to take shape in Europe, and such migration for work was advantageous for both parties. It was better for people who wanted to migrate from their home countries because they could leave for better and more paid work, and for the European Union and its states, it was better from an economic point of view. Later, the European Union member states began cooperating on standard migration policies that dealt with issuing visas or applying for asylum. Barša and Baršová (2005) claim that in the past, migration policy was only concerned with security, and it is only a phenomenon of the last few years when migration policy began to be combined with aspects such as human rights and their protection, integration, discrimination and the fight against it or also economic factors connected with migration. From a legislative point of view, the development of migration policies in Europe could, according to the authors, be divided into three primary phases:

- 1, "The beginnings of intergovernmental cooperation of the EU countries - from the second half of the 1970s until the entry into force of the Treaty on the European Union (Maastricht Treaty) on November 1, 1993,

- 2, the period institutionalized by intergovernmental cooperation between EU states - from Maastricht to Amsterdam (1993 - 1999),

- 3, the period of communitarianization of migration and asylum policy - from the entry into force of the Treaty of Amsterdam (May 1, 1999) to the present."(Barša&Baršová, 2005, p. 134)

Migration policies in Slovakia go back to 1993 when the Migration Office was first established under the Ministry of the Interior. With the development of the Migration office government also issued provisions that were supposed to regulate migration and especially take control of illegal migration. Divinský (2007) argues that

## Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

these provisions could have been more useful but they were vague and not precisely defined. Divinský (2007) also claims that migration has never been a very serious topic in the Slovak parliament. Several sources have long criticized Slovakia's migration and management policies. For years, the country needed to catch up compared to other European countries regarding effective migration management and regulations.

Migration policies in Slovakia deal with the control and guidance of migration as well as create tools to prevent illegal migration and to ensure that there are only legal migrants in the country who have permission to their stay. This might be either for work or education. Migration policy also deals with and creates tools for the integration of migrants into society and the improvement of their daily life. This policy includes asylum and visa policies (Čeri, 2016). A permit to stay in the country is issued to a foreigner by the police, specifically at the foreign police department. This then gives the migrants legal permission to move legally in the country, looking for work and suitable accommodation. However, all this is for a certain period of time, and after this period the migrant must go to the police again to ask for a permit (Pechočiak & Hrdá, 2017).

Since the resolutions that the Migration office established were not that effective, new laws had to be adopted to control migration in the country. The government also had to take some more serious steps because, after the year 2000, the number of migrants that were seeking asylum in Slovakia increased significantly. On the other hand, the number of illegal immigrants also went drastically higher. The government adopted laws on the provision of asylum as well as measures regarding the acceptance of migrants into the country and regulations about the migrant's safety (Divinský, 2007). These migration policies were mainly started by the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997 (valid since 1999). The Treaty strengthened the common migration and asylum policies of the member states of the European Union. It was enriched with new legal regulations regarding granting visas, asylum, and the free movement of persons. These regulations were intended to more closely and precisely characterize the conditions of entry, granting of a residence permit, and

Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

granting of visas if a migrant wants to stay in the country for a more extended period and are intended to help fight against illegal migration (Barša&Baršová, 2005).

In Slovakia, these migration policies fall under the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic. The Ministry of the Interior issued a document on migration policies with a view to 2025, where they claim that:

The goal of migration policy is to create conditions in the field of legal migration, taking into account the priorities, needs, and abilities to receive foreigners, including their integration into society. The migration policy emphasizes preserving the security of the Slovak Republic and the rights of citizens of the Slovak Republic, as well as the rights of foreigners staying in the territory of the Slovak Republic (2021).

The humanitarian transfer of refugees through the territory of the Slovak Republic is based on agreements between the government of the Slovak Republic, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The Government of the Slovak Republic is responsible for granting national visas before refugees enter the territory of the Slovak Republic and providing them with accommodation, meals, and basic hygiene needs during their stay in the asylum facility (Čeri, 2016, p. 28).

The International Organization for Migration is tasked with helping migrants in need. This organization is an intergovernmental organization with several headquarters. In Slovakia, it is in the capital, Bratislava and Košice. It was initially founded in 1951 in Switzerland. The reason for establishing this organization was to help people in need after the Second World War (Pechočiak & Hrdá, 2017). According to Pechočiak and Hrdá (2017), since migration is a phenomenon that does not end, on the contrary, it rises and only increases in recent years, as was the case in Slovakia after 1989, for example, or after Slovakia joined the European Union, the International Organization for Migration is growing together with new trends in the world, and tries to provide services in the field of migration as efficiently as possible, worldwide.

## Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

Divinský (2011) criticizes migration policies and how getting asylum works. The author argues that even with the increasing number of requests from people seeking asylum, the state provides only a few asylums for the people, and for that few, the manners of the workers and the quality of the process could have been better. According to him, this is happening mainly because society is divided. People in the government also had very different approaches and opinions on migrants, what to do with them, and how to handle this situation. Still, many migrants decide to leave Slovakia even before the asylum process is finished. They claimed that this happens mostly with migrants that police found were staying in Slovakia illegally. Moreover, some criticized and argued that this process of getting asylum is very long and rigid.

Regarding migration management, after 2004, there were several changes occurred, primarily qualitative ones. The government in Slovakia gradually changed its migration laws. Until then, Slovakia had approaches from the 1990s that were old and did not align with the constantly changing society. They had only ten very vague regulations. The changes occurred in several factors, mainly legal and illegal migration. Still, regarding the asylum migration, in 2004 and 2008, the laws about asylum were changed and amended to strengthen and facilitate the asylum process. Because of these changes, the court dealing with asylum applications sped up, and asylum seekers did not have to wait months to see their results regarding whether they got asylum (Divinský, 2009).

As far as legislative standards and laws are concerned, Vašečka (2009) argues that gradually the regulations regarding migrants were becoming more and more restrictive. Vašečka (2009, as cited in Gallová-Kriglerová et al., 2009) also argues that:

This happened especially after the year 2007 when Slovakia adopted a new law about Slovak citizenship, which tightened the conditions for acquiring citizenship by naturalization. Similarly, the adoption of the law on religious freedom, beliefs, the status of churches and religious societies have affected, even if indirectly, the possibilities for the integration of many groups of migrants (p. 23).

Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

One positive aspect was that Slovakia in 2006 presented a subsidiary protection institute, which means that migrants that did not get asylum and cannot go back to their home countries because of war or some other violations happening in their home country, the migrants could still get citizenship in Slovakia. However, they still experienced exclusion from society and felt like they could not integrate. For this were partly responsible the non-governmental institutions, authorities, and also self-governmental institutions because, according to those people that did get the subsidiary protection, when they wanted to integrate here and live their everyday life, they had only limited access to health care, could not find a well-paid job, they got only a very little financial help in terms of social benefits and the institutions that were responsible for providing them support and health care did not cared for them (Divinský, 2011).

### Illegal migration

Illegal migration describes the passage of migrants across state borders or their stay in which they are not legally authorized. This means that migrants remain on the territory of the country without permission and visas. This issue is dealt with by the Slovak police, specifically the border office and foreign police, which also grant residence permits to foreigners from other countries. The police also control and regulate illegal migration in the country; every year or six months, they publish yearbooks with exact statistics on how many illegal migrants they caught in a given year (Divinský, 2007). Migration policies, especially those related to the safety of citizens, tend to be more robust and more strictly enforced. These are specific policies that the border and foreign police also deal with, i.e., issuing visas and residence permits, granting asylum, and the like. Since citizens' safety is at stake in such cases, these policies are more robust than integration policies or cultural aspects (Barša&Baršová, 2005).

The Office of the Border and Foreign Police of the Presidium of the Police Force was established on April 1, 2000, as a body with nationwide scope for the area

## Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

of border control of the Slovak Republic. The Office of the Border and Foreign Police is a department of the Presidium of the Police Force, which directly manages, directs, and controls the activities of its organizational components in the performance of tasks in the area of border control, the fight against illegal migration and smuggling, the asylum of travel documents, the residence regime of foreigners, the return and deportation of foreigners (The Office of the Border and Foreign Police, Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic, 2022).

The development of asylum policies in Europe began to take shape in 1986 when the group "ad hoc for migration" began to take an interest in asylum issues. It started with the Dublin Treaty, which was introduced mainly to properly distribute the number of migrants the country would accept in the European states. The Treaty entered into force in 1997 and served to prevent a situation where one country would get more migrants and become overloaded. Nevertheless, on the other hand, what concerns migrants, is that they find safety in the country and that the member states do not send them from country to country until they find the "suitable" one for the migrant (Barša&Baršová, 2005).

As for illegal migration in Slovakia from a historical point of view, in the past Slovakia was among the countries that had the largest number of illegal migrants in the country. It happened mainly in the 90s and around 2000, when Slovakia began to be an attractive country for migrants, but only serving as a transit to western countries. Migrants first decided to go here because of the low strictness of controls, but after more and more of them came here, the government introduced measures and a large number of migrants were detained at the border. However, even that did not help Slovakia get higher and not be among the countries with the largest number of illegal migrants at that time (Divinský, 2007).

From the findings, it is already clear why migrants from third countries leave their native countries for the more western and developed ones. The reasons are primarily leaving for a better job and providing for the family, fleeing due to a terrible situation in the country of origin, especially war or a terrible situation

## Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

regarding state management, such as various totalitarian regimes or corruption. Of course, there are many more reasons, but these are already some of the worst reasons why leaving one's native country for many people from third countries is essential for their safety and a better life. Furthermore, precisely because of this, illegal migration also arises. As for Slovakia, many migrants because our country is not one of the famous countries where migrants would like to come; for them, Slovakia means only transit, often they want to cross the Slovak border so that they can later settle in more western countries Čeri (2016).

According to Čeri (2016), many illegal migrants plan in advance their transit through Slovakia or how to get to the asylum procedure, they are looking for ways to bypass certain things or cross illegally borders without being caught by the police. According to the author, to improve the situation in Slovakia in the fight against illegal migration, it is necessary for the state to supervise such illegal migration. Being an illegal migrant is a crime in Slovakia, which means that greater punishments should also be introduced for these people, as well as more monitoring of the numbers, how many and when migrants applied for asylum, and how many of them we have at the border. This is stated by the author as recommendations in the state's fight against illegal migration, as well as the fact that "improving the situation in this area primarily requires improving the protection of the state border by the requirements arising from the Schengen Convention, eliminating the risk factors of migration such as criminal activity, terrorism, smuggling, trafficking" (Čeri, 2016, p. 30). The author also states that:

One of the important forms of combating illegal migration and criminal activities of foreigners is the visa policy; it is necessary to consistently and more flexibly apply the procedures resulting from the uniform visa policy of the European Union in practice, to facilitate legitimate travel and solve illegal immigration through further national legislation and procedures for processing documents at consular offices, while efforts to integrate biometric identifiers into travel documents, visas, residence permits, and information systems need to be continued (Čeri, 2016, p. 30).

## Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

Divinský (2007) claims that most migrants from eastern countries want to cross the borders of the Czech Republic or Austria, where they either stay or migrate further to, for example, Germany. Before the Asylum Act came into being in 2002 and the government introduced stricter controls regarding the passage of migrants, there were frequent illegal crossings to these two countries, i.e., Austria or the Czech Republic. Migrants who came here from third eastern countries had to be checked and detained upon entering Slovakia; later, the police sent them to refugee camps, and it was from these camps that migrants often illegally fled across the border to the west without permission. Therefore, the government had no other choice but to introduce stricter laws and measures so that migrants do not use situations for crossing and to reduce illegal migration.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the European Union adopted legal decisions concerning tightening entry conditions for migrants from third countries. Specifically, it was the resolutions of the European Council from 1994 for economic migrants who wanted to migrate mainly for work. Residence permits for economic migrants were stringent at the time and were issued only in exceptional cases. It was mostly only in the case of seasonal employees or workers in higher jobs or multinational positions. These strict policies in Europe were only changed and softened by the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997 (Barša&Baršová, 2005). After 1999, Slovakia began to detain illegal migrants from third countries who fled the war and migrants from countries such as China or Vietnam. They were also detained in large numbers. They came to Slovakia mainly because they wanted to ensure a better life for themselves and their family from a financial point of view and to gain more freedom in another country. Such migrants belong to the economical category (Divinský, 2007).

However, since 2001, the conditions for the entry of economic migrants have been relaxed again. The European Union issued a proposal to make it easier for migrants from third countries to enter the country for work purposes. According to the Barša and Baršová (2005), this proposal represented a positive turn in thinking. Therefore it was also an incentive to change these legal provisions because migration began to grow and will be present for a very long time. Some specific changes for migrants

## Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

from third countries were that new legislative requirements allowed migrants to come for work, but only if the given job was not filled, or a domestic citizen or a person from a member state of the European Union was not interested in it. The change here occurred because previously, residence permits were only approved for seasonal migrants or those who worked in multinational organizations. After 2001, opportunities also opened up for migrants from third countries who wanted to start a European business. According to the authors, the government saw it as an added value; previously, the conditions for business activities were rigorous, and starting a business was almost impossible. Gradually, changes began to take shape so that migrants from third countries no longer have to come only for a certain period, for example, a few months or weeks, as was the case with seasonal workers, but new perspectives on migration were opened. Migrants could stay here for longer or apply for citizenship after a certain period (Barša&Baršová, 2005).

### Legal migration

For a migrant to live legally in Slovakia, he first needs a residence permit issued and approved by the border and immigration police office. From a historical point of view, the number of legal migrants in Slovakia was deficient from the beginning, for example, even if we compare it with other Western European countries. One of the reasons may also be the fact, as already mentioned, that Slovakia had strict immigration policies and was not even among the attractive countries where migrants would like to live. Divinský (2007) states that since 1999, the number of legal foreigners in the country was mostly the same. The change occurred only after Slovakia joined the European Union in 2004 when the number of migrants living in Slovakia rapidly increased by 10,000. In 2006, since 2000, when the number of migrants in the country increased, the number of legal migrants living in Slovakia amounted to 32,153. The highest increase was in the years between 2004 -2006. Although this may seem like a high number, it was still low compared to other European countries.

Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

As part of legal stays in Slovakia, there has also been a so-called "tolerated" stay in the country since 2002. This tolerated stay is mainly intended for persons who have committed a criminal offense and face a prison sentence; it can also be the case if such a person has participated in human trafficking or, if it is a terrible situation in his country and the person in question was provided with temporary accommodation in Slovakia until his problem is resolved (Divinský, 2007).

## Ombudsman

Another vital institution that deals with the human rights of refugees and their protection in Slovakia is the Ombudsman institution. This name came from Sweden and was established in 1713 and translates as "representative." The institution is based on democracy and the rule of law. According to Söderman (2004) the goal of the Ombudsman was to more clearly supervise workers in order to avoid corruption and bribery, but on the contrary, to ensure that everyone does their job fairly as they should. Later, in 1908, this idea was expanded to include that it was supposed to regulate the executive and legislative powers. After the Second World War, the Ombudsman idea grew even more, and it no longer served only from a political point of view to regulate and control power but was supposed to serve more to help citizens of states or to serve as a representative for its citizens (Söderman, 2004). Söderman (2004) also argues that ". . . ombudsman institutions were set up in the Commonwealth countries, the ombudsman's mission has turned more towards settling individual disputes caused by unfair, abusive or false decisions, away from the original focus on supervising the legality of administrative activities" (p. 1). The Ombudsman expanded mainly because it no longer only related to political matters but was supposed to bring the idea that institutions are there for people, and citizens can complain if they do not like something. The Ombudsman further processes these suggestions from the state's citizens and issues various regulations and recommendations to improve the system's functioning (Söderman, 2004).

## Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

The ombudsman idea spread very quickly, and in later years it was also adopted by other European countries, especially after the fall of dictatorship regimes. This took place primarily in Western Europe. This idea came to Eastern Europe after the fall of the communist regime, where it was supposed to help states that took longer to recover from previous rigid administrations and did not know how they would function now. Currently, the Ombudsman is extended to around 120 institutions worldwide (Peters, 2005). The main idea of the Ombudsman is its transparency towards the citizens with a strong emphasis on ensuring that no human rights and freedoms are violated and that citizens can live in peace in their communities and society as a whole, as well as no one getting an advantage from them. They have the right to fair treatment as far as the administration is concerned. For example, other institutions do not take advantage of them but act according to legislation and legal standards. Such institutions are, for example, banks if a person wants to take out a loan (Kucsko-Stadlmayer, 2009).

There is also ombudsman for specific subject areas such as consumer protection, children's rights, data protection, small business issues, or the military forces. Moreover, ombudsman institutions have been applied during the international administration of territories, e.g., in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the Dayton General Framework Peace Agreement of 1995 (Peters, 2005, p. 698).

The European Ombudsman was established in 1992 with the Maastricht Treaty. Its primary purpose was to improve the leadership and government of the European Union as well as the citizenship-obtaining policy (Peters, 2005). The Ombudsman works on the principle that citizens of the state can send their complaints to this institution, and this institution tries to resolve them later. Complaints can be filed before they are filed in court, and they are less formal than in the courts. One of the main points that can represent a great advantage for some states' citizens is that they do not have to pay any fees if they want to send a complaint (Söderman, 2004). Söderman (2004) also argues that:

The mandate of many ombudsmen, including the European Ombudsman, is to deal with maladministration. Since this term is not defined by any Community or

Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

Union text, the European Ombudsman proposed the following definition after consultation with the national ombudsmen of the member states: Maladministration occurs when a public body fails to act by a rule or principle which is binding upon it (pp. 2-3).

This principle is applied mainly to ensure that citizens are treated with proper and efficient administration and that no rights and freedoms are violated. Kucsko-Stadlmayer (2009) claims that:

The Ombudsman does not only have the power to deal with the complaints before constitutional courts but is also assigned with preventive powers, which give him the ability to influence the political process and public awareness by advising state organs on the implementation of human rights, reporting on the general situation in the field of human rights, tasks of education, information and research in the field of human rights, cooperation with NGOs and international organizations. The activities of these ombudsmen are focused on the protection of human rights (p. 12).

Another organization that serves to help migrants in need is the Center for Legal Aid. This organization falls under the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic and provides legal aid to persons in material need. The primary mission of the Legal Aid Center is to help citizens in need, especially if they need material assistance. The center also helps educate refugees about their options and rights in the country. It provides them with the necessary information to solve their problems if migrants cannot help themselves. The center assists Slovak citizens but also foreigners and asylum seekers. It provides assistance to migrants while they wait for their decision, whether they will be granted asylum or not, gives them advice and assistance with legal matters for foreigners who are new to the country and find it difficult to find their way in Slovakia, or do not even know the language yet. The institution helps them with various requirements and papers necessary for granting asylum, court decisions (Legal aid center, 2022).

Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

Among the other services that this center provides to foreigners is also if, for example, foreigners have been sent to asylum centers for a certain period by the border and immigration policy, the Legal Assistance Center provides migrants with legal assistance aspect where migrants can appeal to the court if they do not agree with any decisions and are not satisfied. When a migrant wants to send a complaint he or she must first go directly to the center or to the police department (Legal aid center, 2022).

## Chapter 2: Social-Psychological Reasons

The migration issues and migrants seeking asylum in Slovakia are topics that the Slovakian government has faced for many years. It started when Slovakia became part of the European Union in 2004, and the number of asylum applications increased by 11,000 (Divinský, 2009). The main problem regarding cultural aspects is the integration of the migrants. The Slovak government and other institutions dealing with migration have tried for many years to develop some effective integration policies. However, even today, migrants still have to face prejudices, discrimination, and obstacles in their everyday life. According to Vašečka (2013):

Prejudices are a rigid and irrational generalization about a certain category of people. This attitude tends to be highly stereotypical and emotionally charged, and they do not change easily just because someone will tell us different information. Discrimination is then a practical result of prejudice and refers to behavior, especially the unequal treatment of people of a certain group. About ethnic groups, it is mainly a denial of equal access to resources and opportunities, which is based on illogical and irrational reasons (p.14).

Antalová (2016) further discusses various aspects of migration, such as demographic, social, economic, and cultural aspects. Regarding cultural elements, the author claims that if a migrant starts living in another country, cultural changes in the migrant's life naturally also occur. However, two different scenarios can occur. One is that the migrant adapts to the culture of the country they came to, or there is a conflict between two different cultures, and the migrants do not want to give up their customs and rituals, which they were used to from their home country. Cenker (2010), wrote a study on the life of migrants in Slovakia, to be precise in Bratislava, and claims the same thing as Antalová (2016) that to integrate, there can easily be a conflict between two different cultures. Cenker (2010) researches Muslim migrants and how their religion and culture affect the daily lives of these people. The author further argues that even some migration policies and laws in Slovakia are established on the fact that the refugees must give up on their religion and custom, so it is only "one-sided" integration. According to him, this might be mainly because of the

Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

Muslim people. There is a prejudice in our society regarding this religion, and Slovakian people reject it mainly because they have little knowledge about it.

Vašečka (2013) argues that this is a "racist paradox, which considers minorities to be unconquerable and the majority would never accept them. Nevertheless, they are encouraged or directly forced to assimilate or integrate" (p. 14). Vašečka (2013) further claims that as an example from today's world in Slovakia, we could say this about the Roma people, many of whom would also like to integrate and find higher-ranking jobs, get an education and not just be somewhere on the outskirts of cities in settlements. We, in some way, force them and tell them that they should go out of those outskirts and integrate, but even if some of them do, we still do not want them to get closer to us and have dismissive attitudes towards them as well. To solve the problem of the racist paradox and the division of Slovak society into them and us, Vašečka (2013) claims that "without the deconstruction and changes of the collective identities of the dominant group in the future, the full integration of "others" will not be possible and legislative standards in this area, no matter how high quality, will not solve the situation" (p.26).

Another reason our society is rejecting the Muslim religion is, for example, the 9/11 attack and other terrorist attacks that happened in Europe over the past years.

A stereotyping view of international politics, simplistic handling of concepts such as culture and civilization were overlaid with simple truths for the public. Both public and political discourse changed a lot after September 11, 2001, and later attacks in London and Madrid. Islam has become a threat. Moreover, a threat is present on the persons who follow this religion every day through migration in Europe (Cenker, 2010, p.3).

People who do not understand the Islamic religion can fear Muslim people to a certain extent. What we often see in the media can contribute to stereotypes that this religion does not bring anything good and is dangerous. That is news in the press, mainly about terrorism and various attacks (Al-Sbenaty, 2013). Nevertheless, Islam religion does not teach their religious people to act violently. To a great extent, Muslim people respect Koran and what is written in it. Koran does not support wars,

## Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

terrorism, and violence in any way. That is nothing that would contradict people's fundamental human rights and freedoms. On the contrary, it teaches Muslim people how to be better in every way. It wants to teach people to do well, just as it is for Christians written in the Bible. However, nowadays, people often condemn the Islamic religion and consider it dangerous. It is mainly about the fact that for many people in Slovakia, it is something unknown and misunderstood, even though, as already mentioned above, Islam and what is stated in the Koran are very similar to the Christian religion.

People with a healthy personality and nature will always prefer to live peacefully, without violence and cruelty. The Koran guides Muslims to this as well. In it, we find many verses of a general nature, establishing universal and basic rules that not only teach Muslims good behavior and manners but impose it on them. (Al-Sbenaty, 2013, p.159)

As one form of integration, Antalová (2016) recommends the multicultural model, which she explains in her study, where it's stated that migrants do not have to give up on their traditions, custom, and whole religion but rather this aspect accepts the legitimacy of different cultures and stands for equality of people. Cenker (2010) suggested almost the same approach that governments and institutions dealing with migration should try to make more compromises or dialogues so that migrants from third countries who have a different religion than Christianity will not feel so excluded from the society. Divinský (2011) also argues that the main problem why the migrants want to leave Slovakia was the fact that they were negatively affected by our society and by the process of integration by Slovakian citizens. They felt excluded from our community and had difficulty finding well-paying jobs and reasonable accommodation.

Slovakia is not characterized as a famous country where migrants would like to come and live, and precisely for those reasons, in most cases, these migrants came here mostly only to study. They plan to leave Slovakia after finishing their university degrees. On the other hand, we can still find a few Muslims who have been living in Slovakia for over twenty or thirty years who came here during communism also

Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

because they wanted to study at a university here. At that time, many of them were coming here to study, but many left the country and moved to more developed western countries. The few that remained here now have well-paid jobs at high positions, mainly in the medical sector (Cenker, 2010).

## Xenophobia

Al-Sbenaty (2013) argues that the biggest problem in Slovakia with the Islamic religion is that Slovak people do not understand this religion properly. For Slovak people, it might be something completely different, something they do not know, and that is why Muslim migrants who either work or study in Slovakia often face discrimination and racism. Al-Sbenaty (2013) also connects it with xenophobia, the fear of the unknown, and claims that if people in Slovakia understood to a greater extent what Islam is really about, they would have fewer prejudices against this religion. According to Vašečka (2013), "The term xenophobia is used in a non-evaluative discourse when analyzing the relations between different groups and when defining the relations between "We" and "Them" in professional literature as well as materials of international organizations" (p. 8). Vašečka (2013) further claims that in communities where patriotism is higher, even greater xenophobic behavior can be induced because it is simply fear of something unknown, fear of otherness, so we naturally fear, for example regarding the Islam religion, that it will somehow prevail in our country and that it will become maybe more dominant than the Christianity. Then people can act xenophobic. Cenker (2010) also claims that Slovakia has a problem accepting any difference and something that is not similar to them. Suppose the topic of migrants, specifically Muslim migrants, is brought up. In that case, Slovaks do not want to talk about it or refuse to be further educated about this religion because they feel it is foreign to them. They will accept only the things that are close to them, so the topic of racism is also present in our culture.

To understand closely what it is racism Vašečka (2013) claims that "racism is generally based on the belief in the exceptionality, superiority, and superiority of an

Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

ethnic group, in the European tradition of "white" ethnicity" (p.9). Race can be characterized as a group of people sharing a standard feature. Those features can be either visual, but also they can share common values. People who live together in nation-states and have established their traditions and custom through the development of history share certain religions. However, regarding the visual side, they have similar visual elements. As an example, that might be European people, Vietnamese, or people from the Middle East. In today's world, it is most simply represented by the terms white, black, and yellow (Vašečka, 2013).

Races are not equal according to physical or psychological characteristics. The white race is characterized by great energy and intelligence, a sense of honor, courage and military art, and a sense of beauty. This means qualities that set it above the yellow race, which is intelligent and persistent in its efforts but has a great tendency to idealistic and unhealthy fantasy. According to him, the black race is the worse, and those people are lazy, lack a sense of beauty and art, and do not have organizational skills. (Vašečka, 2013, p.10)

These dismissive attitudes have also been, to some extent, held by the government in Slovakia for a long time. For many years in the Slovak government, the topic of migration and their integration was not significant. They were also not very interested in creating quality policies that would improve the integration of migrants from third countries. It is clear that in such a case, migrants feel unwelcome in Slovakia if, on the one hand, they have a problem with the fact that the government does not want or is unable to help them with their integration processes. Slovakia has also often been criticized for its strict asylum policies. On the other hand, many citizens in Slovakia do not have a very positive attitude to Muslim migrants as well. Many of them also believe that if some Muslim people want to come to Slovakia and start a new life here, they have to get rid of their Islam religion and other customs. They have to follow our rules and live a life in a way that we are used to (Cenker, 2010).

Vašečka (2013) defines one of the reasons why such a degree of discrimination and manifestations of xenophobia still exist in today's society is that people have

gradually developed a confident attitude towards Slovaks and "foreigners," i.e., people of a different race, for example, who are and look different from us, Slovak people. "Attitude is a relatively fixed tendency of an individual to behave in a certain situation in a certain way or to react positively or negatively to stimuli associated with such a situation" (p.12).

Regarding the problems of otherness and the fact that Slovakia has a problem accepting any otherness, Vašečka (2008) claims that these problems began to take shape, mainly in Central Europe, already in the 19th century, when the development of the states was oriented more towards cultural aspects than, for example, political. It is precisely such strong building of cultural elements or various customs and traditions that result in the fact that even in Slovakia, people have a problem with otherness. Vašečka (2008) also states this in the example of obtaining citizenship in the states. "The confusion is visible mostly in a radically different manner in which citizenship in particular countries of Central Europe is shaped. *Ius soli* (birthright citizenship) and *iussanguini* principles (right of blood) are used chaotically to determine the state citizenship in most of the Central European countries" (p. 7). Vašečka (2008) suggests that maybe "The post-modern CEE nations should re-define their ethicized identities to identities shaped by constitutional patriotism, democratic values, human rights, and the rule of law" (p. 8).

## We and them

Vašečka (2013) also characterizes the terms "we" and "they" as the words "out-group," which in this case means some external group that would like to integrate into the majority group called the "core group." In our cases, they can be Muslim migrants or the already mentioned Roma. Most people in Slovakia have a problem accepting people from other ethnic groups. "For Slovaks, the core group is closed not only to those who are different but also to those who have gone through the process of assimilation and become Slovaks. The primordial, blood-based "community of the imagination" resists the "strangers of the elements" (Vašečka, 2013, p.26). Among

Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

other stereotypes that are often talked about in our society are women's rights and the fact that women have a much lower status than men. Although there may be differences in some Muslim countries, in Koran, it is written that women and men should be equal. No chapter noted that a man has more power than a woman (Al-Sbenaty, 2013). The author also argues that, in today's world, it may not be the case in all Muslim countries. In some societies, it is customary that men are the dominant ones and might have more rights; nothing will ever change if we only continue to condemn them and show signs of xenophobia (Al-Sbenaty, 2013).

Vašečka (2013) further claims that attitudes, especially towards people from other ethnic groups, for example, the already mentioned migrants from third countries, people who have different skin color or profess a different religion than Christianity, we tend to have negative attitudes toward these people, and those attitudes are often connected with prejudices and stereotyping. Such attitudes are primarily influenced from an early age, and it depends on what we hear at home, how our parents and grandparents talk about such things, whether they teach us to be more open-minded about those kinds of things or they also have more closed and conservative views. School also plays an essential factor, as well as the people we go out with, our friends, or what the media presents to us. Together, these things can significantly influence our attitude towards people from countries other than European.

Al-Sbenaty (2013) also argues that people who, for example, have visited some of the Muslim countries or even non-Muslim ones that have other religions than Christianity or Islam understand more that it is something different to a certain extent, but not completely foreign. Such people have a more open view of other cultures, customs, and ways of life. However, to understand it, a person does not have to travel and visit all the countries in the world. It would only help to be more open to getting to know and educate oneself about the religion, to be more willing to accept otherness, and not immediately alienate the migrants just on the basis that they have a different religion or skin color.

Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

Cenker (2010) states that most Muslim people who come to Slovakia are either very well-educated people who come here for better job opportunities as opposed to those in their home countries, or a large part of Muslims are students. The number of migrants that came to Slovakia because of their studies has been increasing in recent years. That might also be why many of them live in the typical student towns, for example, Košice or the capital Bratislava. As we can see, Muslim migrants in Slovakia are "educated and solvent people," contrary to the ideas of most Slovak people who think that migrants from poorer countries are only uneducated and often dangerous individuals who only when they come to Slovakia are, dependent on the social system. Muslim migrants in Slovakia have a relatively high social status and have the ability to take care of themselves and their families" (Cenker, 2010, p.4).

### Implementation of Muslim religious practices

Regarding implementing Muslim religious practices and their prayers, in Slovakia, we still do not have officially established mosques where Muslim migrants can pray. The government is also not interested in building mosques or introducing Islam as a registered religion. On the contrary, in 2017, certain members of parliament submitted a proposal to introduce a law prohibiting the building of mosques and the promotion of this religion in Slovakia. Until now, Slovakia, as a European country, still has one of the strictest policies regarding registering new faiths. However, there are five prayer rooms where Muslims can go to pray, but none is officially reported as a mosque. These prayer rooms are currently located in Košice, Martin, and Nitra, and two are located in the capital Bratislava. These prayer rooms are open at different times during the week, but Muslims use them most for Friday prayers, one of the most important for them (Cenker, 2010).

In addition to performing their spiritual activities, according to Cenker (2010), they often talk about ordinary things and try to help each other as a group. They also discuss political topics and events in the world or give practical advice on where to find or buy something; if someone is looking for a job, they can ask about it right

Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

there and find out if someone can help them. In addition to the prayers they perform there, these prayer rooms for Muslims mean mainly a place of rest, where they can meet, in a certain sense, with "their people," where no one discriminates against them, but on the contrary, they find understanding there.

Another problem arises outside the prayer rooms when Muslims would like to pray at other times of the day outside the prayer rooms, as is prescribed by their religion. Still, those who work or study cannot do so because the employees would not allow them. The same applies at schools and universities; teachers would not give Muslim students passes to go and pray. If they have time, they can only go to prayer rooms or pray only at home (Cenker, 2010).

### Nationalized citizenship

Vašečka (2008) characterizes citizenship as "A membership status, which contains rights, duties, and obligations, and which implies equality, justice, and autonomy. Citizenship itself could be thin and thick – a rich sense of citizenship can only be achieved when the contextual barriers to its performance are recognized and removed" (p. 200). The division of citizenships into "ius soli" and "ius sanguinis" in Central Europe and Slovakia, citizenship policies are based in such a way that these two divisions overlap. When a migrant receives citizenship in Central Europe does not immediately mean that he will fit into our society and that the citizens will accept him as one of their own. Still, it is expected that he will respect the traditions and political culture of the state. According to Bauböck (2010):

Being a state citizen entails the collection of all subjects must be regarded as the ultimate sovereign in a political system. Subjects are entitled to elect their political representatives, counting every vote as one and one only. They can appeal to an independent judiciary against the unlawful exercise of political power and enjoy a right of resistance against illegitimate rule. Conditions like these mark the transformation of subjects into citizens. (p. 276)

## Islamophobia

Walter (2019) also claims Slovakia has a big problem accepting Muslim migrants. Specifically, he talks about "Islamophobia" and the extent to which Slovak media influence how Slovak citizens perceive Muslim migrants. Since the media mainly presents negative things, such as the terrorist attacks that happened in the past, for example, the 9/11 attack or the terrorist attack in Paris in 2016, it is no wonder that Slovaks do not want to accept Muslims into society. As mentioned above, the Slovak government also does not show much interest in the integration of migrants or even in granting them asylum. Some political representatives even publicly declare that Islam does not belong in Slovakia. "Former Prime Minister Robert Fico and like-minded politicians and media activists were arguing that "Islam is not compatible with our culture" (Walter, 2019, para. 5). Another example of when Slovak politicians themselves presented to the citizens that we must not accept migrants here in Slovakia is from the 2016 election, when Slovak politician Marián Kotleba presented that he will protect Christianity in Slovakia, with the slogan that we do not want and cannot accept migrants here. "Kotleba was also referring to Slovak members of the European Parliament as traitors who had voted in favor of the EU migrant quotas; Kotleba played on Slovak citizens' sensitivity on this issue with the simple slogan, "Stop Immigrants!" (Walter, 2019, para. 19).

### Chapter 3: Methodology

This bachelor's thesis deals with why migrants from third countries are not satisfied with the living conditions in Slovakia and a large part of them migrate further to more developed countries. In the theoretical part of this work, I collected information from various books and studies to find the causes and reasons for this. In the next part of this thesis, I will deal with the practical component to confirm my findings so far. This part's methodology will focus on qualitative research using interviews. Specifically, I will conduct semi-structured interviews with six migrants who live in Slovakia, of which one female respondent decided to leave Slovakia.

These semi-structured interviews aimed to find out and support my previous findings on this issue, as well as how migrants perceive the situation in Slovakia regarding their own experiences with various institutions and Slovak people in general. The six migrants with whom I conducted these interviews are of a different spectrum and come from other countries, so another goal of these interviews was to find out whether their reasons for possibly leaving Slovakia are the same or different, and if they differ, what precisely.

Interviews were conducted with migrants from Ukraine, the Philippines, Uzbekistan, Belarus, and Afghanistan. I first contacted these respondents by email or phone, and all of these respondents were asked the same questions to find out if I could find differences and, if so, what differences in opinion prevail between these different cultures and nationalities from which these migrants come. Five of the six interviews were conducted in Slovak and translated into English by me. I ran the sixth interview in English, specifically with a man from the Philippines.

The questions I asked the respondents were first about what their life looked like, what life was like in their native country, whether Slovakia was their final destination, what brought them to Slovakia, and whether they had problems finding work or accommodation. To confirm the previous findings in the second chapter of this bachelor's thesis, which was about social and psychological causes, I asked the respondents questions such as whether they ever had a situation where they hesitated for a few seconds to come to Slovakia, whether they could determine the

Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

reasons why other migrants should or should not come to Slovakia according to them, or why they should rather avoid Slovakia, in which situations Slovaks treated them kindly and when, on the contrary, not kindly, when they were surprised by the Slovak environment, either positively or negatively. The last question asked to the respondents was whether they could list what they gained or lost after arriving in Slovakia, positive or negative losses and what dominates them more.

All interviews were planned with the respondents in advance and lasted approximately twenty to thirty minutes due to the respondents' workload. The interviews were conducted by telephone or video call, mainly because the respondents do not live in Bratislava and because of their busy workloads. However, all respondents agreed to record the interview but wished to remain anonymous due to fear that some things and their experiences they said are sensitive topics for them to talk about. Five of the six interviews were conducted in Slovak, one in English, and one was conducted by a couple of husbands when his Slovak wife answered for the husband, who is a migrant living in Slovakia, due to the language barrier.

## Chapter 4: Perception of migrants in Slovakia

Vašečka (2009) claims that migration has been a part of our lives for many years and people migrated from place to place, but attention began to be paid to it only when modern states were created and state borders were grounded. States formed their national policies, which were also related to the creation of migration policies. In Slovakia, migration became a breakthrough, especially after 1989 and after the country joined the European Union.

Divinský (2011) criticizes the management of migration policies and processes as not at a very high-quality level compared to other European countries. Slovakia is at the bottom of the ranking, especially with the countries of Western Europe. Therefore migrants prefer to leave for those countries where they are also accepted, and because of the state policies, they can integrate into those countries much better. According to the author, the main problem is mainly how the asylum policy is set up and the workers of the foreign police who deal with the arrival and granting of asylum to migrants. The problem is mainly that there are very few asylum grants, and the process takes a long time with a lot of paperwork, where migrants wait for approval for several months. Another problem is that foreign police officers do not know how to communicate in a language other than their native Slovak. Then there is a language barrier between migrants who want to extend their stay or apply for asylum and between the officers who do not know how to help and explain to these migrants the situation.

One respondent I interviewed also had to face such a problem, when asked what her experiences were with the management of migration policies and institutions, she answered that complications occurred mainly with the foreign police. As a Ukrainian studying in Slovakia, she had to renew her student visa and card every year or two (depending on how long the foreign police extended her stay). According to her, there were a lot of technical problems with the foreign police when they had to wait several hours with other applicants for their stay to be extended.

I had to renew my student card every year or two and make sure I had all the paperwork and money for living in Slovakia. Otherwise, they wouldn't extend my

Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

stay. We had to wait a very long time for this process because there were few windows with workers in the building and therefore they could receive a small number of people waiting; I came in the evening and had to wait the whole night. (Female, personal communication, December 6, 2022)

When asked how the workers of the foreign police behaved towards migrants, she answered that her experiences were different. Still, she must admit that the workers were often arrogant and not helpful to the waiting people who had questions.

I understand that it is a stressful job for them too and that they also have to work there for long hours and wait there with us, but the policemen behaved arrogantly to our questions, gave vague answers, or even ignored us. I know they also have a lot to do and can experience stress, but they could arrange it better. (Female, personal communication, December 6, 2021)

She further added that these days were always the most stressful for her because she never knew how the extension of her stay and the long waiting process would turn out. When she finally got the confirmation and could go home after waiting all night, it was the happiest feeling in the world for her. She has currently moved to Spain for further studies at university. She has to repeat the same process there as well. According to her, if she were to compare it with Spain, the entire approach of the police and management would be much better there than in Slovakia. There it is not such a stressful event for her.

When asked if she could name a few reasons why other migrants should or should not come to Slovakia, she answered that Slovakia is a good country, especially from an economic point of view, for people who do not want to spend a lot of money for their studies, because studying in Slovakia is for free. According to her, she had friends from Italy in Slovakia who decided to come here to university for this very reason. She also stated that, in her opinion, it mainly depends on where the migrants come from. Suppose they come from neighboring countries such as Ukraine. In that case, they might have an easier time here because “the Ukrainian language is similar to the Slovak language; they can learn it quickly and thus also find a job and integrate” (Female, personal communication, December 6, 2022). For her, the

Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

reason other migrants should consider coming to Slovakia was that even though she had a job, the cost of living was too expensive for her.

Weak management and low-quality practices of institutions in Slovakia were one of the main factors and reasons why migrants would not want to stay in Slovakia because, as already mentioned, Slovakia fell behind significantly in this area among Western European countries, and migrants decided to emigrate there. Another factor is the integration of migrants and the attitudes of Slovaks towards migrants. Xenophobia, which is still present to a large extent in the Slovak environment, also plays a vital role in this factor and the general education of the Slovak people. Since they have more conservative views and are not educated in different cultures and religions, they later have a problem accepting someone from a foreign country into their collective.

Divinský (2007) also claims that the perception of migrants in Slovakia is at a worse level and that there are signs of xenophobia and social exclusion towards foreigners, which prevails not only among Slovak citizens but also in various institutions as well as media. Also, according to him, it doesn't matter what nationality the given migrant is because most Slovaks don't care and don't recognize it in that much detail. They acknowledge only whether someone is Slovak or not and behave accordingly. When asked if she had any negative experiences in Slovakia, she answered that she had one unpleasant experience at her university when she moved here.

After my first lecture at the university, a teacher told me I didn't need this knowledge from this subject anyway because I came to Slovakia to find only a man. I don't know if Slovaks have the idea that women from eastern countries migrate to more western ones to find a man here. It emerged from this experience that he does not treat us Ukrainian women as equals; we also want to be educated in the same way as Slovak students" (Female, personal communication, December 6, 2022).

This experience shows again the xenophobic behavior and prejudices Slovaks have towards migrants. The respondent further replied that she was shocked by this comment about her nationality, as well as the fact that at that time, she did not even

Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

know how to speak Slovak properly because she had just moved here so she did not answer anything, which, according to her, she regrets, because now she would definitely change it and not just stay silent.

Vašečka (2013) in his study about xenophobic behavior refers to American psychologist Gordon Willard Allport who presented a theory of five stages of prejudice and racism. This theory later proved to be a very effective tool for educating children and young people to monitor the development of biases and, subsequently, xenophobic behavior. If we recognize xenophobic behavior at the right stage and catch it in time, we can further prevent violence against foreigners. Whether verbal or physical, violence, thus educating children about what is right and wrong. The five stages are:

1. Defamation – verbal defamation of members of minorities, racist propaganda, and the like,
2. Avoidance – keeping the minority separate from the dominant group; a typical example is the founding of a ghetto,
3. Discrimination – minorities are excluded from participation in civil rights, employment, certain forms of housing, etc.
4. Physical attack – violence against people and property,
5. Extermination – violence against the entire group” (Vašečka, 2013, p. 17).

Another Ukrainian respondent also went through this experience in her work. She came to Slovakia because of the war in her native country, as thousands of other Ukrainian refugees came. She worked as a waitress at the time. She heard several times from Slovak citizens that they feared Ukrainians and that no one could hire them.

I heard from Slovaks that they are afraid of Ukrainians, especially that they are afraid to hire them because they don't know the language and will take all our vacancies. I also heard them saying that prices in Slovakia are increasing because of

Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

us, Ukrainians and that Slovaks will now have to pay more for everything because of us” (Female, personal communication, December 3, 2022).

In this particular case, we can see that prejudice and discrimination are not always related only to whether a person has a different skin color or professes another religion. Ukrainians are similar to Slovaks in many aspects, but because they are simply of a foreign nationality than the Slovak one, prejudices and fear of otherness arise. Vašečka (2013) claims that such attitudes are typical for the majority of Slovak society, which rejects foreign nationalities out of fear of being different, does not want them to integrate into society, and does not show any interest in integrating them, or accepting them into Slovak culture, which also means that then there are cases when migrants have difficulty finding well-paid jobs, or any work at all. Vašečka (2013) further states that:

. . . Attitudes later turn into discrimination and discrimination is the result of prejudices and refers to behavior, especially the unequal treatment of people based on their belonging to a certain group. In connection with ethnic groups, it is mainly the denial of equal access to resources and opportunities, which is based on illogical and irrational reasons. (p. 14)

Slovakia has been one of the most heterogeneous countries in Europe for many years. Vašečka (2009) also claims that, in addition to the Slovak government, which showed no interest in promoting effective integration policies for migrants, the media, which provides very little information on this issue, is also, to some extent, responsible for this. They also appear to be disinterested in this issue due to strong national identity and reluctance to accept foreign nationalities or multiculturalism. Among the other reasons why this is so and why the Slovaks have a problem carrying migrants, the education of the Slovaks is also related. This was mentioned in the previous chapter of this thesis about the social-psychological causes, which is the lack of education of the Slovak people. In schools, young Slovaks are not educated about this topic enough. Teachers do not teach students about other nationalities and religions to a large extent, from which it follows that it is something they do not

Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

know. Out of fear, they form false and stereotypical opinions when they alienate the whole nation, as in the interview with a Ukrainian Woman.

Attitudes and beliefs are passed on in the family from generation to generation. Vašečka (2013) claims that these views are inherited because the families also influence the attitudes of its younger family members. Vašečka (2013) also argues that:

When spreading prejudice, their xenophobic representatives try to reach the largest possible percentage of potential recipients, and therefore use patterns of behavior that a significant part of the recipients can understand and identify with. Xenophobic messages that appear daily in public space often combine several sign systems – both visual and verbal. (p. 19)

However, some migrants who came to Slovakia had to if they wanted to survive. Such a case happened specifically to a Belarusian and an Afghan man I interviewed. Because of the war and the flawed political system, as well as corruption in their native country, they decided to come to Slovakia, where, according to their own words, they had a much better life and many more excellent opportunities than they would have in their native country. One of them is an Afghan man I interviewed who has been living in Slovakia for decades. According to his words, he never regretted his decision to come to Slovakia because he gained a lot of positive experiences here for which he can be grateful and which he might never have had in his native country.

My family and I moved from city to city because of the war in Afghanistan, we ended up in Kabul, but after a while, it was no longer possible to live there. Slovakia was my destination country, I never regretted coming here, and it was my decision. I was lucky to meet helpful people. Maybe I wouldn't be alive now if I had stayed in Afghanistan, so I'm happy in Slovakia. (Male, personal communication, January 5, 2023)

Another example is a man who was born in Belarus. He left his native country with his family when he was still a child; he has currently been living in Slovakia for 19

Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

years, but as he confirmed in an interview, even though there are much better countries, for example, those in Western Europe, where he could imagine to live, in Slovakia it is still better than it would be if he stayed in Belarus. The reason is mainly the bad political situation in his native country, where, according to him, he would not have as good a life as in Slovakia. In the interview, he mainly claimed that we Slovaks do not realize how precious ordinary things are, which we do not attach any importance to.

Slovaks criticize that there is corruption in Slovakia, but I have experienced much worse things when I can't see a doctor without a bribe. In Belarus, you can't experience the state having a dispute with a private person and losing it; the state is all-powerful there. The things that are common in Slovakia are for example, food quality control, standards, consumer protection, and a two-year warranty on clothes; these are not such common things because, in Belarus, not everything has a warranty. Also, entrepreneurs are undesirable; there is a post-communist view of business. (Male, personal communication, December 6, 2022)

When asked if he had experienced situations where he regretted coming to Slovakia, he answered that he had undergone various problems here, both positive and negative. Because he is a foreigner, references to the fact that he is Belarusian and of a different nationality did not escape him either.

When I didn't know the Slovak language as a child, they made fun of me at school and invented nicknames; in the village, they also called me some insults in the form of saying that I am an immigrant and I should better go back to where I came from. (Male, personal communication, December 6, 2022)

Such an example only further confirms what Vašečka (2013) claims, that due to the fear of otherness as well as cultural difference, situations arise when people resist xenophobia out of fear, that is, in essence, xenophobia in such a way that they create attitudes that lead to violent behavior and insults. "Cultural fundamentalism can lead to xenophobia and subsequently to exclusion and violence, and similarly patriotism can awaken xenophobia and subsequently to ethnic discrimination" (Vašečka, 2013, p. 9).

## Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

Regarding the authorities or obtaining various paperwork, he claimed he had the worst experience with the foreign police. “The policeman acted like he is the master here, and we are just some vermin who need something from him” (Male, personal communication, December 6, 2022). The respondent further claimed that, according to him, the way the foreign policy system is set up is very bad. People from his neighborhood, who are also migrants, had to come and wait for long hours to get in line and get a ticket, and he also confirmed that the police officers’ approach was insulting and arrogant.

According to him, similar situations occurred not only with the foreign police but also with other authorities, where he had to prepare various papers and confirmations. Even when he was a small boy, he grew up in a small town in Slovakia, specifically in Považská Bystrica. He claimed that even the officials who work there are not at all used to the fact that migrants come there because it is a different city from, for example, Bratislava, so even the employees who worked at the office at that time did not know what to do, what papers to give them and so they just threw them between the departments and sent them on and on. He claimed that it was another terrible experience for him and his parents and that to arrange anything at all so the respondent’s family had to study the law themselves and insist on what they wanted to get it. “My parents still have traumatic memories of it; they kept sending them everywhere possible, and sending them to complete new and new papers, it was bad” (Male, personal communication, December 6, 2022).

One thing that officials in Slovakia have in common is that they are not willing to help people; I encounter this many times. They do the minimum they have to, but they don’t do anything more; they don’t go out of their way to help. They do the things they deal with on daily basis, but as soon as something a little different happens, a migrant comes to them the officials should know what to do with us but on the contrary, they don’t know and are not interested in helping; that’s my experience. (Male, personal communication, December 6, 2022)

The last two interviews I did were with two men who decided to come to Slovakia mainly because of family reunification. One man is from the Philippines, and the

## Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

other is from Uzbekistan. Both cases found their wives when they were working abroad, specifically in England. Since their wives came from Slovakia, they decided to return and live in Slovakia with them. Since their wives are Slovak and know the Slovak language and how it works with the authorities and the like, according to them, these migrants in Slovakia did not have a significant problem with the management or the processing of various confirmations that were necessary for their stay. As for cultural acceptance and integration, their families and distant family are multicultural; they have different nationalities, so no significant problem was noted.

However, despite this, according to previous findings and statements from interviews, the claims that xenophobia still prevails to a certain extent in Slovakia and that Slovaks have a problem accepting culturally different nationalities and integrating them into the Slovak environment have been confirmed. As already mentioned in the first chapter of this bachelor thesis, the claim that the management of the Slovak authorities is still lagging and the employees are unwilling and unmotivated to help migrants further was also confirmed.

The results of these interviews showed that the migrants who came to live in Slovakia have and have had problems to a large extent, especially with the institutions and authorities that deal with migration and that serve to help these migrants. As already stated in one interview, some even have traumatic experiences. Problems arose mainly with the management and foreign police officers, who often needed to be more willing to help and explain the situation. According to the respondents' statements, the police officers behaved arrogantly. As for the management, the shortcomings were mainly in that very few workers could take migrants in and help them with their requests, i.e., extend their stays, issue the certificates they needed, and the like. As a result, migrants had to wait for several hours, often even whole nights, to get their turn at the clerk's window. Organizational problems and, thus, management are insufficient not only in terms of the foreign police department but also in offices where migrants also need to obtain confirmations for permission or extension of their stay many times. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, problems arise, especially in smaller towns, where officials are

Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

not at all used to the arrival of foreigners. Thus, even if they should know and be familiar with what the migrants asked of them, they did not know, and disagreements arose.

Regarding work or finding accommodation, in these areas, the respondents said they had no enormous problems and always managed to find something. However, where problems arose were at work, at school, or just in their everyday life, where colleagues or classmates verbally hinted at the fact that they were not from Slovakia but came from another country. Several respondents agreed on this point.

## Results and Discussion

After contacting the respondents and asking if they would be willing to interview about their life in Slovakia, the respondents were a little surprised. Still, they all willingly agreed and gave the impression of joy and satisfaction that someone wanted to hear their story. However, during the interview with these respondents, memory optimism often prevailed since some respondents have been living in Slovakia for several years; it often happened that they forgot about the negative experiences or pushed them out of their memory, and only after some time did they talk about the unpleasantness experiences that happened to them as migrants in Slovakia. On the other hand, also because, as they said, it was also due to fear and the fact that these are sensitive and too personal experiences for them.

According to the evaluation of the results of the interviews, the respondents had the most negative experiences with organizations and institutions that deal with migration. As for looking for a job, they did not say that they had greater problems in those areas. The problem only increased in employment where their colleagues were Slovaks, and the same applies to the school. "At school, my classmates often made fun of me and invented various nicknames because I didn't speak Slovak well. When we played football in the village, people commented about my other nationality" (Male, personal communication, December 6, 2022). Other respondents also encountered similar verbal insults several times in their daily lives. Such statements confirmed that Slovaks have increasingly closed and conservative views and have difficulty accepting otherness and different cultures.

Manifestations of xenophobia and the fact that Slovaks have negative attitudes toward foreigners have been proven, and this also applies in areas such as institutions, offices, and the media not just in migrant's daily lives. To a significant extent, politicians are also to blame for this, who express to migrants that they do not want them here and are trying to provide laws that would make it difficult for migrants to even come to Slovakia. The concept of xenophobia was explained in more depth in the previous chapters of this bachelor's thesis; in simple terms, it means fear of the unknown so negative behavior towards migrants and verbal

Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

insults, in an attempt to protect oneself, can easily follow this. Vašečka (2013) claims those attitudes are passed from generation to generation. The attitudes someone develops as a child remain, and to a lesser extent, friends, school, and the environment in which the individual grows up later influence it. However, it is essential to learn about this issue in schools, to talk about it more, and to educate children and young people about different cultures and religions, that there are no bad or dangerous cultures, and that if someone has a different nationality or a different skin color is not immediately dangerous. That is, to teach people to have more open views and to throw away stereotypes and generalizations.

## Conclusion

This bachelor's thesis aimed to discover why people in Slovakia still have problems with racial differences and do not accept different cultures and religions that are not similar to their own and why racism and xenophobia are still present to a certain extent in Slovakia. The political cause's chapter first describes the legislation and migration policies, the history and emergence of migration policies in Slovakia, the division of legal and illegal migration concepts, and the description and characteristics of the leading institutions dealing with migration in Slovakia.

The second chapter of this bachelor's thesis gives the reader an overview of how Slovak society perceives migrants and the attitudes of Slovak citizens towards migrants. This chapter focuses on topics such as racism, discrimination, xenophobia, and how Slovaks perceive otherness and different cultures and religions. Such opinions and attitudes also result from Slovaks needing to be better educated about these different cultures and religions. It is something unknown to them, and therefore they start to fear it to a certain extent and have xenophobic attitudes. The fact that they are not enough educated on this topic results mainly from school, but such attitudes are already formed at home by the family and can be transferred from generation to generation.

The third chapter is focused on the practical part, where the author uses interviews with migrants from different countries to investigate how they perceive the situation in Slovakia and what their experiences are with Slovak citizens or with various institutions. The interviews showed that these respondents generally have a positive attitude towards Slovakia and Slovaks. Still, according to the statements, they also had to go through several negative, in some cases, even traumatic experiences. These respondents had such experiences, especially with organizations dealing with migrants. Specifically, it was the foreign police department and the migration authorities. According to the respondents' statements, the police behaved arrogantly and unwillingly; they answered their questions vaguely or entirely ignored them.

## Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

When asked if the respondents had trouble finding work or accommodation, they answered that they had no such trouble finding something in these areas because they were foreigners. However, problems arose in their everyday life, at school or work, when they too encountered Slovaks' prejudices and xenophobic behavior. This was mainly in the form of various comments on their nationality. The results of this thesis show that Slovakia still has a problem with otherness, and Slovaks demonstrate xenophobic behavior towards foreigners. Slovaks are not enough educated about other religions and cultures and still to some extent have conservative views inherited from the family. This further leads to them forming prejudices against migrants out of fear and ignorance.

## Resumé

Táto bakalárska práca sa zaoberá otázkou prečo migranti, ktorí prídu na Slovensko nechcú ďalej ostať žiť na Slovensku, ale radšej migrujú do viac západnejších a vyspelejších krajín v Európe. Zameriava sa najmä na migrantov z tretích krajín, pre ktorých Slovensko vo väčšine prípadov predstavuje len tranzitnú krajinu, a nie cieľovú destináciu. Slovensko nepatrilo nikdy medzi populárne krajiny, kam by migranti chceli prísť žiť. Naopak, radí sa medzi krajiny s najprísnejšími migračnými politikami. Slovenská spoločnosť má taktiež do istej miery problém s prijatím a integrovaním migrantov, ktorí vyznávajú iné náboženstvá, majú inú národnosť, z čoho neskôr vyplýva aj rasizmus a xenofóbia, ktoré sú stále prítomné.

Táto bakalárska práca je rozdelená na tri kapitoly, v ktorých skúma príčiny prečo tomu tak je. Prvé dve kapitoly sú teoretické, tretia kapitola je praktická. Prvá kapitola sa zameriava na politické príčiny, v druhej kapitole autor tejto bakalárskej práce skúma dôvody zo sociálno-psychologického hľadiska, keďže na Slovensku ešte stále, aj v dnešnej dobe, prevláda do určitej miery rasizmus a xenofóbia a ľudia majú problém prijať odlišné kultúry a národnosti. Tretia kapitola je zameraná na praktickú časť, kde autor pomocou rozhovorov s migrantmi z rôznych krajín skúma, ako vnímajú situáciu na Slovensku práve oni a aké sú ich skúsenosti či už so slovenskými občanmi alebo s rôznymi inštitúciami.

Medzinárodná organizácia pre migráciu charakterizuje pojem migrácia ako presun ľudí z miesta ich rodného bydliska do inej krajiny, či už natrvalo alebo len na určitú dobu (2022). Dôvody na migráciu sa taktiež u každého človeka líšia. Môže to byť preto, lebo v ich rodnej krajine sú nepokoje a vojna, boja sa o svoj vlastný život a preto chcú odísť preč, ich základné ľudské práva sú v ohrození, politická alebo ekonomická situácia v ich rodnej krajine nie je ideálna a do veľkej miery tam prevláda korupcia, preto si chcú zabezpečiť lepší život pre seba a svoju rodinu, ďalej môže migrácia nastať aj za účelom vzdelania (Galtun, 2006, as cited in Antalová, 2016). V prvej kapitole tejto bakalárskej práce, ktorá je zameraná na politické príčiny toho, prečo migranti nechcú ostať žiť na Slovensku sa autor zameriava na legislatívu

Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

a rôzne inštitúcie zaoberajúce sa migráciou a pomoci migrantom, ako aj na migračné a azylové politiky a charakterizovanie pojmov legálna a nelegálna migrácia.

Veľký počet migrantov, ktorí prišli na Slovensko sú pôvodne z tretích krajín ako je Afrika alebo Afganistan. Podľa ich výpovedí dôvod prečo sa rozhodli zo Slovenska odísť bol ten, že v krajine mali problém najmä s inštitúciami, ktoré sa zaoberali migráciou a pomoci migrantom, konkrétne s Migračným úradom a cudzineckou políciou (Popper, et al., 2006). Keďže téma migrácie nepatrí a ani nepatrila medzi prioritné témy v Slovenskej vláde, krajina výrazne zaostáva oproti iným Európskym krajinám v tvorení a uplatňovaní kvalitných migračných a integračných politík, Slovenské médiá o túto problematiku taktiež nejavia záujem, k tomu neochota pracovníkov na migračných úradoch, vedú k tomu, že sa nakoniec migranti rozhodnú zo Slovenska odísť do takých krajín, kde sú tieto politiky viac rozvinutejšie a migranti sa tam dokážu ľahšie integrovať.

Na Slovensku sa miera integrácie cudzincov meria najmä pomocou indexu integračnej politiky migrantov (MIPEX). Okrem Slovenska pôsobia aj v rôznych iných krajinách a zahŕňajú v sebe rôzne faktory, podľa ktorých sa ďalej skúma miera integrácie. Sú to faktory ako miera zamestnanosti, ubytovanie, zdravotníctvo, školstvo, účasť na spoločenských predstaveniach a antidiskriminačné politiky štátu. Podľa týchto štatistík je Slovensko na poslednom mieste medzi krajinami Európskej únie, čo nepredstavuje ideálne podmienky pre integráciu migrantov na Slovensku (Vašečka, 2009, p. 23). V neposlednom rade sa prvá kapitola zameriava aj na legálnu a nelegálnu migráciu. V jednoduchosti, nelegálna migrácia znamená to, že migrant ostane žiť v určitej krajine nelegálne, čiže bez platného povolenia na pobyt. Na Slovensku sa touto problematikou zaoberá oddelenie cudzineckej polície, ktoré vydáva migrantom víza a povolenia na pobyt. Vo všeobecnosti, opatrenia a zákony voči nelegálnej migrácii sú na Slovensku zadané prísnejšie a kladie sa na ne o dosť väčší dôraz ako napríklad oproti integračným politikám, keďže v tomto prípade ide aj o bezpečnosť slovenských občanov (Čeri, 2016).

Druhá kapitola tejto bakalárskej práce dáva čitateľovi náhľad toho, ako slovenská spoločnosť vníma migrantov, a aký má k nim postoj. Táto kapitola sa zameriava na

témy ako je rasizmus, diskriminácia, xenofóbia a to, ako Slováci vnímajú inakosť a odlišné kultúry a vierovyznania. Na začiatku autor definuje pojem xenofóbia, z ktorého ďalej vyplýva už spomenutý rasizmus, diskriminácia a negatívne postoje voči migrantom. Xenofóbia znamená strach z nepoznaného, z inakosti. Na Slovensku to platí najmä pri moslimských migrantoch, kvôli ich farbe pleti a vyznávaniu Islamu. Práve títo migranti majú veľký problém sa integrovať do Slovenskej spoločnosti, pretože väčšina Slovákov sa ich bojí prijať najmä preto, že je to pre nich niečo nepoznané. Do značnej miery v tomto prípade zohrávajú rolu aj médiá, kedy noviny alebo televízia spájajú moslimov s negatívnymi správami o rôznych teroristických útokoch, kedy ďalej vzniká stereotypná domnienka, že všetci moslimovia sú nebezpeční.

Takéto názory a postoje vyplývajú aj z toho, že Slováci sú málo vzdelaní o rôznych kultúrach a náboženstvách. Je to pre nich niečo nepoznané a preto sa začnú do istej miery báť a mať xenofóbne postoje. Za takéto postoje je zodpovedné nie len zlyhávajúce školstvo, ale aj domáce prostredie, ktoré sa väčšinou presúva z generácie na generáciu. Z toho ďalej vzniká aj diskriminácia, čo znamená hlavne to, že nemajú rovnocenné príležitosti na prácu, život a vzdelanie s ostatnými občanmi, sú do istej miery vylúčení zo slovenskej spoločnosti a to všetko je vo väčšine prípadov založené na vágnych a nelogických dôvodoch (Vašečka, 2013). To, že Slovensko nejaví záujem prijať migrantov a zaviesť lepšie integračné politiky dokazuje aj to že v krajine doteraz neexistujú oficiálne mešity, a taktiež sa na Slovensku nedá hlásiť k Islamskému náboženstvu. Práve naopak, vláda sa viac krát v minulosti snažila zaviesť zákony a predpisy, ktoré by to zakazovali (Cenker, 2010). V poslednej časti tejto kapitoly sa autor zameriava tým, že na Slovensku existuje do určitej miery istá forma Islamofóbie, ktorou sa netaja ani určití slovenskí politici, ktorí sa verejne vyjadrovali že Islam na Slovensku nechcú v žiadnom prípade presadiť a že do našej slovenskej spoločnosti to ani nepatrí, pretože sa to nezlučuje s našou kultúrou (Walter, 2019).

Tretia kapitola tejto bakalárskej práce tvorí praktickú časť a je zameraná na to, ako celkovú situáciu na Slovensku vnímajú samotní migranti. Keďže prvé dve kapitoly boli teoretické, posledná kapitola tvorí praktickú časť, ktorá bola vykonaná pomocou

rozhovorov s migrantmi z rôznych krajín na potvrdenie doterajších zistení. Autor tejto práce vykonal šesť polo - štruktúrovaných rozhovorov s migrantmi, ktorí pochádzajú z krajín ako je Ukrajina, Afganistan, Uzbekistan, Filipíny a Bielorusko. Všetci respondenti mali odpovedať na tie isté otázky s cieľom zistiť, či sa dôvody týchto rôznych kultúr na odchod z krajiny líšia, alebo či sú rovnaké.

Otázky, ktoré boli respondentom podané boli najskôr typu ako vyzeral život v ich rodnej krajine, či bolo Slovensko ich cieľovou destináciou, alebo čo ich vlastne priviedlo na Slovensko, či mali nejaké problémy s hľadaním si práce alebo ubytovania. Na nadviazanie druhej kapitoly teoretickej časti tejto práce, teda kapitole o sociálno-psychologických dôvodov na odchod zo Slovenska, boli respondentom podané otázky typu či u nich nastali niekedy situácie že na pár sekúnd zaváhali že vôbec prišli na Slovensko; či by si teraz vybrali možno už inú krajinu na život, ďalej či by vedeli určiť dôvody prečo by mali ostatní migranti prísť alebo naopak prečo by sa mali Slovensku skôr vyhnúť, v ktorých situáciách sa k nim Slováci správali pekne a kedy naopak nepekne, kedy boli prekvapení zo slovenského prostredia či už pozitívne alebo negatívne. Ako posledná otázka, ktorá bola respondentom položená bolo či by vedeli vymenovať čo získali alebo stratili po príchode na Slovensko, taktiež pozitívne alebo negatívne straty a čo u nich dominuje viac.

Výsledky rozhovorov ukázali, že títo respondenti majú vo všeobecnosti pozitívny prístup k Slovensku a Slovákom, avšak aj oni si museli prejsť viacerými negatívnymi, v niektorých prípadoch podľa výpovedí, až traumatickými skúsenosťami. Takéto skúsenosti mali respondenti najmä s organizáciami zaoberajúcimi sa migrantmi. Konkrétne to bolo oddelenie cudzineckej polície a migračné úrady. Na cudzineckú políciu museli prísť vždy najprv po príchode na Slovensko a neskôr, ak si chceli predĺžiť svoj pobyt. Podľa výpovedí respondentov sa polícia správa arogantne a neochotne, na ich otázky im odpovedali vágne alebo ich úplne odignorovali. Manažment by tam taktiež podľa nich mohol byť upravený na lepšej úrovni, keďže na to, aby sa dostali na rad tam museli čakať hodiny a veľa krát aj celé noci. Čo sa týka úradov, výsledky sa taktiež potvrdili a ukázali že pracovníci úradu k cudzincom boli často krát neochotní, a niekedy ani samotní pracovníci nevedeli čo majú s týmito

## Bujdošová: Why do migrants not want to stay in Slovakia?

migrantmi robiť a tak ich často krát posielali z jedného oddelenia na druhé namiesto riešenia ich problému. Toto sa stávalo hlavne v menších mestách na Slovensku, kde nie je bežné aby k nim cudzinci chodili pýtať si rôzne potvrdenia. Zamestnanci úradov vo väčšine prípadov boli ochotní spraviť len to minimum čo bolo potrebné pre ich prácu, ale nikdy nie viac. Pri otázkach či mali respondenti problém s hľadáním si práce, alebo ubytovania, tak odpovedali že v týchto oblastiach si nemali problém niečo nájsť len kvôli tomu že sú cudzinci. Avšak problémy nastávali v ich bežnom živote, v škole alebo v práci, kedy sa aj oni stretli s predsudkami a xenofóbnym správaním sa Slovákov, a to najmä v podobe rôznych narážok na ich národnosť, niekedy až vulgárnych.

V závere tejto práce autor poukazuje na to, že hypotéza sa potvrdila a Slovensko ma stále problém s inakosťou a Slováci preukazujú xenofóbne správanie voči cudzincom. Slováci sú málo vzdelaní o rôznych iných náboženstvách a kultúrach a pretrvávajú v nich konzervatívne názory, ktoré sa do veľkej miery dedia od rodiny. To ďalej vedie k tomu, že zo strachu a nevedomosti si vytvárajú predsudky voči migrantom, ktoré sú často krát založené na nelogických dôvodoch.

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