



# Legitimate (multilevel) crisis management from the perspective of human rights, rights and position of minorities, and non-discrimination: Conceptual and methodological issues, and literature review

## WP4: Legitimate Crisis Governance in the Context of Human, Rights, Minority Rights and the Principle of Non-Discrimination



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## Executive summary

The Covid-19 pandemic and crisis management dominate media and scholarly literature since 2020. This paper focuses on a specific segment of the Covid-19 related crisis management, specifically on various impacts and consequences of Covid-19 related crisis management in diverse environments on human rights, status, situation, rights and protection of minorities, and the principle of non-discrimination. In this context, it addresses two research questions: Which conditions, circumstances, policies, measures, actions can contribute to more democratic and legitimate crisis management and governance? How can the inclusion and participation of diverse social actors, including (social) minorities and persons belonging to them in crisis management processes and decision-making be improved, thereby contributing to their better legitimacy? Answering these questions, four hypotheses are tested exploring the impacts and consequences of crisis management measures considering the perspective of individuals and distinct communities, the importance of inclusion and participation for legitimacy of crisis management paying special attention to the inclusion of minorities as well as how different measures impact and hurt different minorities and persons belonging to those minorities.

The literature review shows that human rights, their limitation(s) and suspension as well as impact(s) of crisis management on democracy, legitimacy, diverse (social) minorities, marginalized groups and border communities are often mentioned, but seldom focussed on. In this context, WP4 focuses on human rights, (cases of direct and indirect) discrimination, rights, position and protection of diverse (social) minorities and persons belonging to them, their inclusion, integration and participation in crisis management process, impact(s) and consequences of particularly restrictive and/or repressive crisis management measures on those communities and persons belonging to them as well as on their perceptions regarding those issues. The literature review confirms that human rights, including rights of minorities are among the first victims of crises situations and crisis management, particularly restrictive, repressive and often disproportional (crisis) measures employed by authorities at all levels in such situations. Encouraged by experiences of the “war on terror(ism)”, the authorities believe that people are willing to trade their human rights for (the feeling of) security. The literature and data on Covid-19 crisis show that economically and socially de-privileged individuals, members of diverse minorities, migrants, refugees, marginalized individuals and groups frequently experience(ed) additional vulnerability, worsening of pre-existing health conditions and illnesses, worse access to (public) healthcare and other services as well as excess mortality compared with the rest of the population. In addition to those deprived individuals and marginalized communities, we should mention women, children and young people, older people, people with disabilities, people in precarious working conditions, homeless, and among national/ethnic minorities particularly the Roma. All those would need the recovery and resilience plans and measures that should improve equal access to public services, reduce digital divide and enable digital access (particularly to distant learning, but also to other services), promote gender equality and inclusion as well as prevent all types of violence that particularly and disproportionately impact children, girls and women.

Aggressive nationalism, exclusion, racism and xenophobia frequently directed against minorities, migrants, foreigners, refugees, marginalized groups and individuals, usually defined as “the others” that had existed and escalated with the growing populism and ideology of illiberal



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democracy in many societies already before the Covid-19 pandemic often escalated during the crisis and effected those target populations disproportionately. On the other hand, inclusion, integration, multi and intercultural policies as the basis for democratic participation combined with the inclusive open public dialogue could be considered useful approaches to deescalate and prevent populism, exclusivism, aggressive nationalism, exclusion, racism and xenophobia.

LEGITIMULT project on legitimate democratic crisis governance in multilevel systems combines multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary approaches, qualitative and quantitative research methods in studying those complex and dynamic phenomena. The conceptual, terminological and methodological discussions presented in this paper indicate that in exploring the impact(s) of crisis management, policies and measures (particularly restrictive and repressive ones), on human rights, minority rights and protection of minorities as well as on the principle of non-discrimination qualitative approaches and methods prove the most suitable. This is particularly relevant in studying the perceptions of persons belonging to diverse minorities on democracy and legitimacy of crisis management and governance in respective environments. As the presented discussions and preliminary research show, we could expect that the research of WP4 would be able to test the hypotheses and answer the research questions.

## Abstract:

The Covid-19 pandemic and crisis management dominate media and scholarly literature since 2020. The literature review shows that human rights, their limitation(s) and suspension as well as impact(s) of crisis management on democracy, legitimacy, diverse (social) minorities, marginalized groups and border communities are often mentioned, but seldom focussed on. LEGITIMULT project on legitimate democratic crisis governance in multilevel systems combines multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary approaches, qualitative and quantitative research methods in studying those complex and dynamic phenomena. As a deliverable of this project, the paper focuses on the impact(s) of crisis management, policies and measures (particularly restrictive and repressive ones), on human rights, minority rights and protection of minorities as well as on the principle of non-discrimination. Qualitative approaches and methods prove the most suitable for studying the perceptions of persons belonging to diverse minorities on democracy and legitimacy of crisis management and governance in respective environments.

**Keywords:** crisis management, inclusion, participation, multilevel governance, (social) minorities and persons belonging to them, human and minority rights, protection of (persons belonging to) minorities, border communities, (principle of) non-discrimination.



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## 1. Introduction

In the recent years, the SARS-CoV-2 Virus, Covid-19 Pandemic and pandemic related crisis management have been omnipresent topics in media and public discourses. They dominate also scholarly literature and publications in almost all disciplines and fields, including social sciences and humanities. (e.g., Žagar 2020 and 2023) A deliverable of LEGITIMULT project<sup>2</sup> that focuses on the legitimacy of Covid-19 related crisis management and measures in diverse environments in Europe, this paper is no exemption. However, it discusses some specific issues, concepts, dimensions and contexts that are often overlooked.

If observed from the perspective of multilevel governance (MLG) and considering the very nature and complexity of the process(es), (almost) every crisis management is a complex multilevel process that requires cooperation and/or (at least) coordination of different levels of government and authorities effected by and involved in it. Even more so in global crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic that shook the very foundations of contemporary societies and our traditional way(s) of life. Crisis management processes resulted in specific crisis strategies, policies, decisions and measures as well as in their implementation that impacted populations, individuals, distinct groups and (particularly minority and border) communities in different societies and environments. Restrictive and/or repressive crisis policies and measures and their implementation impacted them the most profoundly. Considering responsibilities, competences, tasks, relations and cooperation of governments and authorities at all levels, LEGITIMULT project studies and compares Covid-19 crisis management process(es), decision taking and measures, their effects and consequences in European countries, more precisely in 31 European democracies (EU-27, plus Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, and the UK) from the perspective of inclusion of different actors, democracy and legitimacy of crisis management and governance.

LEGITIMULT project's Work Package 4 (WP4)<sup>3</sup> focuses on various impacts and consequences of Covid-19 related crisis management in diverse environments on human rights, status, situation, rights and protection of minorities, and the principle of non-discrimination. Studying the impact of Covid-19 measures on different societal groups and the affects of those measures, multilevel governance institutions and their intergovernmental relations (MLG IGR) on human and minority rights, WP4 and this paper, based upon the literature review, answer two research questions: Which conditions, circumstances, policies, measures, actions can contribute to more democratic and legitimate crisis management and governance? How can the inclusion and participation of diverse social actors, including (social) minorities and persons belonging to them in crisis management processes and decision-making be improved, thereby contributing to their better legitimacy?

Taking into account these questions, this paper tests four (working) hypotheses dealing with the legitimacy of democratic crisis management, crisis management strategies, policies and measures considering their impact on human rights, rights and protection of diverse minorities and persons

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<sup>2</sup> See, LEGITIMULT project on legitimate crisis governance in multilevel systems: <http://legitimult.eu/> as well as: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089222897068>, <https://www.linkedin.com/company/legitimultproject> and <https://twitter.com/legitimult>.

<sup>3</sup> For a brief presentation of LEGITIMULT Project and its WP4 on legitimate crisis governance in the context of human rights, minority rights and the principle of non-discrimination, see: <http://www.inv.si/Dokumenti/dokumenti.aspx?iddoc=1055&idmenu1=19&lang=slo>.

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belonging to them as well as their consequences for (the implementation of) the principle of non-discrimination.

Two general hypotheses are: (H1) In different ways and to a different degree, crisis management processes related to the Covid-19 Pandemic, adopted and executed strategies, policies and measures, particularly restrictive and/or repressive ones that limit and/or suspend certain human rights impact all individuals, communities, groups, associations, organizations and institutions in a respective environment. (H2) The inclusion and participation of relevant and interested actors (individuals and diverse forms of their association and organization), including diverse (social) minorities and persons belonging to them in the formulation and adoption as well as in the implementation of (crisis) processes, policies and measures improve their legitimacy.

Two specific hypotheses deriving from the general hypotheses are: (H3) Different crisis management processes, policies and measures in diverse environments impact and hurt different (social) minorities and persons belonging to those minorities more than the rest of the population. (H4) Considering the perceptions of the persons belonging to different minorities, formal and informal inclusion and participation of diverse minorities, persons belonging to them and particularly their representatives in the formulation, adoption and implementation of crisis management processes, strategies, policies and measures can improve their legitimacy, acceptance and effectivity within those communities and respective societies.

The following section of the paper briefly presents a literature review as the basis and framework for the section on conceptual and methodological discussion as well as for the conclusion. These sections address some key concepts as well as terminological, conceptual and methodological questions relevant for the research of legitimacy of crisis management processes, strategies, policies and measures in general and particularly from the perspective of diverse minorities, persons belonging to them, and (the implementation of) the principle of non-discrimination. They present some preliminary research results and conclusions of LEGITIMULT project and particularly its WP4.

## 2. Literature review<sup>4</sup>

As mentioned, the SARS-CoV-2 Virus and Covid-19 Pandemic related contents have dominated the local, national and global printed and electronic media as well as the academic press in the past years, more precisely since the end of 2019. The volume of broadcasted radio and TV programs and contents, published news, commentaries and reports, (see, e.g. 24ur.com, BBC, CNBC, DW, MMC) popular and scholarly articles, papers and studies published in scientific journals (e.g., *Nature* with more than 18 thousands search results, *Science* with more than 650 search results, *The Lancet* with more than 9,690 search results, etc.) and scholarly books in all sciences and almost all disciplines and fields is enormous, while it is almost impossible to imagine the number and volume

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of real/true and fake, individual and collective, relevant and irrelevant contributions, news, blogs, shared contents, b/vlogs and comments on the web.<sup>5</sup>

Consequently, working on a comprehensive literature review of the SARS-CoV-2 Virus, Pandemic and Covid-19 crisis management related contents is a complex task, even when focused on specific topics and contexts. Searching in general search engines (e.g., Google, Yahoo), databases of selected national and international media mentioned above, and different digital databases (national, regional and global ones, such as, e.g., *COBISS*, *Scopus*, *Web of Science*, on-line library catalogues, such as e.g., *Wiley Online Library*, as well as specialized data bases, such as e.g., *International Political Science Abstracts*, and on-line data bases of scholarly journals – in addition to those mentioned above, e.g., *East European Politics*, *Public Organization Review*, *Treatises and Documents*, *West European Politics*, etc.) for the relevant literature and sources published between the end of 2019 and February 2023 (in addition to English ones, also those in Croatian, English, German, Italian and Slovene), we used search terms related to the topics of WP4. As expected, the number and share of relevant titles, publications and sources addressing broader and more general topics are bigger than the number and share of those addressing more specific and narrower ones. Studying legitimacy of Covid-19 Pandemic related crisis management in diverse environments and at different levels of government in European countries LEGITIMULT project's literature review focuses on:

- legitimacy (e.g., Beetham 2012, Buchanan 2002, Caby & Frehen 2021, De Fine Licht et al. 2014, Esaiasson et al. 2012, Jackson et al. 2012),
- the approaches to and concepts, strategies, policies and measures of crisis management in general and specifically considering the Covid-19 pandemic (e.g. Ansel et al. 2010, Christensen et al. 2016, Christensen & Ma 2021, Rodríguez et al. 2018),
- the roles of all branches of government, and particularly of legislation in crisis management processes (e.g., Bolleyer & Salát 2021, Chaplin 2020, Petrov 2020),
- democracy, inclusion, integration and participation of citizens, citizens' perspectives on pandemic related crisis management and particularly on crisis management policies, measures and their impacts and consequences (e.g., Alsan et al. 2020 – 2023, Bohle et al. 2022, Cronert 2022, Edgell et al. 2021, Engler et al. 2021, Gidengil et al. 2022, Guasti & Bustikova 2022, Heinzl & Liese 2021, Lowande. & Rogowski 2021, Lozano et al. 2021, Maerz et al. 2020, Mouter et al. 2021, Rump & Zwiener-Collins 2021, Stasavage 2020).

In this context, WP4 focuses its literature review on more specific contents and pays special attention to the inclusion, integration and participation of diverse minorities and persons belonging to them in crisis management processes, and particularly in the development, formulation, adoption and execution of crisis management strategies, policies and measures at all levels, the impact(s) of those policies and measures on human rights, rights and protection of minorities and the principle of non-discrimination. It pays special attention to the consequences of those policies and measures as well as to the perceptions of persons belonging to diverse minorities of those crisis strategies, policies and measures, their impact(s) and consequences.

Considering their social relevance, logically, the issues of legitimacy, human rights, equality and minorities appeared in media reports and contents rather early in the Covid-19 Pandemic,

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<sup>5</sup> For example, the *COVID-DEM Global Democracy & Pandemic Tracker* that ran from April 2020-April 2022 contains over 3000 items



particularly in the context of the introduction of limitations, lockdowns and different restrictive measures, but also regarding the access of people in different environments to adequate health and other public services. (e.g., BBC, DW) More precisely, the issues of interference with human rights, constrains, restriction(s), limitation(s) and temporary suspension/derogation of human rights, the extent and reciprocity of introduced measures as well as the fact that diverse, particularly marginalized groups, minorities and persons belonging to them were over-proportionally affected by Covid-19 crisis policies, measures and restrictions were addressed rather frequently. However, in most cases, media reports, discussions, expressed concerns and warnings as well as different expressions of public concerns and dissatisfaction did not seem to influence significantly crisis management processes and the authorities, particularly the executive in formulating, adopting and executing their strategies, policies and measures in respective environments. Explaining and justifying their position, crisis policies and management, decisions, measures and actions that they had taken, the authorities claimed that the urgent crisis situation demanded urgent and immediate decisions, measures and actions, including radical ones such as lock-downs and other restrictive and repressive measures. They concluded that, consequently, there was no time for time consuming, uncertain and possibly ineffective (extensive) public consultations, inclusive democratic processes and decision making. Faced with the life-death dilemma in the public health crisis situation, in their view, sacrificing some human rights and democracy by neglecting and limiting democratic inclusion and participation in decision-making was necessary and the price worth paying. After all, the experiences of “the war against terror(ism)” showed that people can accept certain limitations of human rights and might be willing to trade some rights for a promise, even a false one, of safety and security. (Žagar 2020 and 2023)

Not surprisingly, the Covid-19 pandemic and related crisis management, developments and processes that shook the very foundations of contemporary societies that determine themselves as democratic ones immediately attracted attention of researchers and stimulated intense research of those issues and phenomena in social sciences and humanities. The first studies, research reports and scholarly publications appeared already in 2020 and their number and volume increased substantially in the subsequent years. For example, at the Institute for Ethnic Studies we immediately started to study the impact and consequences of Covid-19 related crisis management strategies, policies and measures on ethnic minorities and persons belonging to them, particularly in Slovenia and neighboring countries. Our first research results, more precisely 11 (scholarly) papers were published in the thematic issue (No. 85) of the *Treatises and Documents, Journal of Ethnic Studies* in December 2020, and the publication of the extensive scholarly monograph in Slovene language followed in 2021 (Munda Hirnök & Novak Lukanovič 2021). The edited volume on comparative federalism and Covid-19 (Steytler 2021)<sup>6</sup> and the study on the impact and consequences of the Covid-19 Pandemic on linguistic minorities and border communities of the South Tyrolean Political Science Association (Alber et al. 2021) also appeared in 2021.

Reviewing the existing scholarly publications and literature (particularly in social sciences and humanities) in the beginning of 2023, we find that they frequently mention different issues relevant for the legitimacy of crisis management, particularly legitimacy of crisis decision making, strategies, policies, measures and actions in diverse environments. Among those issues we could list human rights, their limitation, suspension and/or derogation, cases of possible discrimination,

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inclusion and participation of citizens (and the population in general) in decision making or – more precisely – the lack thereof (resulting in exclusion) that leads to the strengthening of the executive and could result in democratic deficit and in rising of illiberal policies. However, only a relatively small share of publications and literature focus on those issues and address them (or – at least – some of their specific segments and dimensions) in depth and/or holistically. From the perspective of the WP4 that (within those issues) focuses on human rights, (cases of direct and indirect) discrimination, rights, position and protection of diverse (social) minorities and persons belonging to them, their inclusion, integration and participation in crisis management process, impact(s) and consequences of particularly restrictive and/or repressive crisis management measures on those communities and persons belonging to them as well as on their perceptions regarding those issues, the number of the relevant titles is even smaller, but still substantial. A selected bibliography of those publications is available at the webpage of the LEGITIMULT project as an appendix to the Deliverable 1 of WP 4.

In addition to the themes and publications already mentioned and commented, for the purpose of presenting the key findings of our literature review at this point in the following paragraphs a few publications are singled out and presented briefly.

Historic experiences, the literature review and our research focusing on the Covid-19 pandemic, crisis and crisis management show that human rights, including rights of minorities are among the first victims of crises situations and crisis management employed in such situations. The report of the Croatian Ombudswoman on the situation of human rights and equality in the country in 2021 (Pučka pravobraniteljica 2022), and her recommendations for a better resilience to future crises based on her assessments of the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on human rights and equality (Pučka pravobraniteljica 2022a) confirm such a conclusion. As all too often in crisis situations, during the Covid-19 pandemic authorities at all levels world-wide adopted and implemented restrictive and/or repressive crisis management policies and measures that frequently disproportionately limited and/or suspended human rights arguing that such a practice was necessary to prevent the spread of the virus and curb the pandemic. Encouraged by the ideology and experiences of the “war on terror(ism)”, they tend to believe that people are willing to trade their human rights for (the feeling of) security and learn to accept the limitation or suspension of certain rights. Surely, such practices of authorities and possible human rights violations that can provoke revolt and resistance of the people in some cases could not be considered legitimate democratic crisis management. (Huffstetler et al. 2021, Žagar 2021)

The Covid-19 pandemic with its impacts and consequences that resulted in public health, economic and social crisis as well as related crisis management with its diverse, particularly restrictive and repressive measures effected all spheres and pores of life, exposed existing (often long-term) inequalities, including social, ethnic and racial ones in contemporary societies and created new ones. (Katikireddi et al. 2021, Platt & Warwick 2020) As consequences of those inequalities, often economically and socially de-privileged individuals, members of diverse minorities, including ethnic and racial ones, migrants, refugees, marginalized individuals and groups frequently experience(ed) additional vulnerability and exposure to the virus, worsening of pre-existing health conditions and illnesses (e.g., diabetes, obesity, hypertension, cardiovascular problems), and worse access to (public) healthcare and other services. The data show that they often suffered excess mortality compared with the rest of the population. (Kumar et al. 2021, OECD 2022)



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Looking at the negative impacts of the pandemic and crisis on social rights, inclusion, integration and participation as well as on principles of justice, equality and non-discrimination, there is the need to develop and implement recovery and resilience plans and measures at all levels, from local to national and the EU level that shall address inequalities, (social) vulnerabilities, rights and specific needs of individuals of all generations, diverse population groups and communities, particularly diverse minority communities and persons belonging to them, marginalized individuals and groups. In Europe and globally, in this context we should mention women, children and young people, older people, people with disabilities, people in precarious working conditions, homeless, diverse social minorities, including national and ethnic minorities, LGBTQIA+ community, marginalized groups and individuals, particularly the Roma. Among others, the recovery and resilience plans and measures should improve equal access to public services, reduce digital divide and enable digital access (particularly to distant learning, but also to other services), promote gender equality and inclusion as well as prevent all types of violence that particularly and disproportionately impact children, girls and women. (FRA 2022, UN 2020)

Although the largest ethnic minority in the European context, the Roma could be considered the most marginalized minority that frequently experiences direct and indirect discrimination. The Covid-19 pandemic and related crisis management in many environments have widened long-standing exclusion, poverty of and discrimination against the Roma that often do not have the access to potable tap water, adequate housing and sanitary facilities needed to follow preventive public health measures, while their access to health-system could be limited. There were reports on disproportionate or militarized Covid-19 crisis measures targeting Romani neighborhoods or towns, racist and discriminatory approaches to public health, racist narrative and discourses as well as media reporting that cast the Roma as a collective health and safety threat in Bulgaria, Slovakia and Romania, but also in other countries. In addition to already poor inclusion and performance of the Roma pupils in education in Slovenia and Europe-wide, the suspension of regular school activities, remote learning during the lockdowns and problems in establishing the contact and collaboration between the teachers and Roma pupils as well as their parents with schools due to technical conditions and lack of digital access are likely to have broader negative consequences for these pupils. (Bešter & Pirc 2020 and 2021, FRA 2020, Girard 2021, Matache & Bhabha 2020)

Aggressive nationalism, exclusion, racism and xenophobia frequently directed against minorities, migrants, foreigners, refugees, marginalized groups and individuals, usually defined as “the others” that had existed and escalated with the growing populism and ideology of illiberal democracy in many societies already before the Covid-19 pandemic often escalated during the crisis and effected those target populations disproportionately. In the initial stages of the pandemic, guessing about the possible origins of the virus the growth of anti-Asian racism was detected. However, it could be concluded that in societies lacking democratic and full social, economic and political inclusion, integration and participation as well as tolerance and equal inclusive cooperation, particularly the systemic discrimination and socio-economic injustice fuel the escalation of populism, exclusivism, aggressive nationalism, exclusion, racism and xenophobia. On the other hand, inclusion, integration, multi and intercultural policies as the basis for democratic participation combined with the inclusive open public dialogue could be considered useful approaches to deescalate and prevent populism, exclusivism, aggressive nationalism, exclusion, racism and xenophobia. (Elias et al. 2021, Žagar 2023)



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The toolkit of the Council of Europe based upon anti-discrimination, diversity and inclusion (dimensions) as well as democratic participation provides some general guiding principles to member states on ensuring that measures taken during states of emergency that shall be proportionate to the evaluated risk and shall have clear time-limits uphold democracy, the rule of law and human rights. It stimulates information, communication, inclusion of and multi-level cooperation with all relevant actors, including civil society and specific communities as well as cross-border communication, mobility and cooperation, that is particularly important for border regions, populations there, national and other minorities. (Cramer Marsal et al. 2020, 11-25, Alber et al. 2021, Jurić Pahor 2020)

As the case of the Slovene national minority and its members in Austria shows, social interaction within the minority and broader, flexible (internal and external) communication, organisational capacity and ability to adapt to the changed situation and Covid-19 crisis management measures as well as cooperation with its kin-state proved crucial for the vitality and development of minorities and persons belonging to them. Consequently, they were able respond to restrictive crisis measures, the cancellation of traditional events and closure of bilingual schools by organizing online and hybrid activities. However, restrictive crisis measures are likely to have a long-lasting impact on minority's ethnic vitality. These developments confirmed also the importance of the use of minority and regional languages in such situations and in crisis management in general in diverse societies. The online survey aimed to analyze to what extent communication in mother tongue was assured by different stakeholders in the Member States of the EU, as well as among the members of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) conducted between March and June 2020 showed the importance of minority and regional languages in general and particularly in crisis situations. The availability of relevant information in mother-tongue, public use of mother tongue, mother tongue education and other public services contribute to better social inclusion of minorities and persons belonging to them as well as to more successful, inclusive, legitimate and democratic crisis management. (FUEN 2020, Grafenauer & Jesih 2020 and 2021)

South Tyrol is an interesting case study that shows how this autonomous province experienced the Covid-19 pandemic and related crisis that impacted its life and politics as well as how it reacted to the crisis within the framework of Italy's pandemic management. (Alber et al. 2021) It opted for a special path legitimized through a law that the provincial parliament adopted with a large majority in May 2020. Although it flexibly adapted to new local circumstances, resulting in more or less strict measures compared to the national emergency decrees, the special path has ultimately not turned out to be successful from the epidemiological point of view. Nor was the province's governance style radically different from the national one. The pre-existing socio-political cleavages continued and resulted in criticism of the special path. However, this path shared by other Italian regions represented a reaction against the centralized pandemic management of the Conte II government. (Alber & Zgaga 2021)

### 3. Methodological and conceptual discussion

The literature review confirms the relevance of our research questions and shows that authors recognize the importance of democratic and legitimate crisis management and governance. From



their specific perspectives, they indicate different and diverse (f)actors, conditions, circumstances, approaches, strategies policies, measures and actions that can contribute to more democratic and legitimate crisis management. There seems to be a general agreement that exclusive decision-making (usually) dominated by the executive, restrictive and repressive crisis management policies and measures had a negative impact on democracy, while in many environments (not only in countries considered illiberal democracies) they might have contributed to strengthening of populism and the ideology and practice of illiberal democracy.

Our literature review and previous research confirm also the relevance of LEGITIMULT research design, planned research approaches and methods as well as conceptual and theoretical discussions and framework. Studying such complex, dynamic and constantly evolving (social) phenomena and concepts as democracy, legitimacy, inclusion, integration and (democratic) participation of individuals and (distinct) communities, including diverse (social) minorities and persons belonging to them in the context of crisis management, particularly studying the legitimacy of the Covid-19 related crisis management considering its consequences and impacts in a respective environment upon individuals and distinct communities, including different (social) minorities and persons belonging to them requires constant, intense, open and inclusive conceptual and methodological discussions and development. Consequently, LEGITIMULT project is designed in such a way that it recognizes, uses, coordinates, combines, interprets, evaluates and develops (taking into account its research process and results) diverse (disciplinary, multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary) research approaches and methods as well as terminologies, concepts, definitions and theories. This is reflected in the design, planned work, coordination and cooperation of its interrelated and interdependent WPs that simultaneously enjoy the necessary autonomy that allows them to best perform their specific tasks. In addition to cooperation among WPs within the project and with other related research projects, WPs (will) cooperate with relevant stockholders and in interactive events discuss with them the concept of legitimate democratic crisis governance, best practices, recommendations and toolbox highlighting the core elements of legitimate crisis governance. The approaches and practices of methodological pluralism (see e.g., della Porta & Keating 2008) that we often use in studying socially relevant diversities, equality, inclusion, integration and participation of diverse (social) minorities, distinct communities and persons belonging to them prove useful also in the research of democracy and legitimacy of crisis management and governance.

WPs that cooperate within the LEGITIMULT project and their specific tasks are the following ones: **WP1 Dataset and Qualitative Analysis** in cooperation with all WPs oversees the development of an extended and integrated database on the MLG dimension of national Covid-19 crisis policies and measures. **WP2 From Crisis Management to Legitimate Crisis Governance in MLG Systems** explores the concepts of crisis management and crisis governance in the context of Covid-19 crisis and aims to develop a more functional concept of legitimate crisis governance based upon the principles of human rights and democratic governance that can provide legitimate responses within democratic MLG systems to crises situations in times of uncertainty. **WP3 The Making and Breaking of Rules in Crisis Situations: The Rule of Law and Democratic Participation**, **WP4 Legitimate Crisis Governance in the Context of Human Rights, Minority Rights and the Principle of Non-Discrimination**, **WP5 Legitimate Crisis Governance and Trust**, and **WP6 Legitimate Crisis Governance and Economic Sustainability** study and assess specific areas and topics relevant for assessing democratic governance and crisis response(s) in



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crisis situations and for dealing with the MLG dimension of democratic crisis governance. **WP7 Shaping the Future – from Project to Practice** that in cooperation with other WPs and based upon their work, findings, results and inputs focuses on results and future outcomes of the project aims to organize interactive events with relevant stakeholders in different environments that will discuss the concept of legitimate crisis governance and test its implementation. These activities should contribute to the development of a **toolbox highlighting the core elements of legitimate crisis governance**. In this context, based upon the LEGITIMULT Impact Strategy, **WP8 Dissemination and Communication** is designed to bring together, disseminate and communicate the results, findings and best practices of all WPs. In addition to coordinating the dissemination and communication of the project's research findings and results, and in cooperation with all other WPs, it will engage with the practitioners and stakeholders throughout and beyond the duration of the project in order to promote the concept and tools of legitimate democratic crisis governance, particularly the toolbox that can be used in different crisis situations in the future. Finally, in order to ensure the best possible functioning and execution of LEGITIMULT project, **WP9** focuses on the **Management** of the consortium.

In accordance with their specific research themes and tasks, the research oriented WPs in their research use different and specific research approaches and methods, share with other WPs the data that they collect, create and analyze as well as the literature and sources, and feed in other WPs with their research results and findings. While the other research oriented WPs mostly use quantitative approaches and methods, including statistical analysis adjusted to their specific themes and tasks, and feed in WP 4 with their data, analyses and findings (as the necessary foundation for its specific research), WP 4 in its research and creation of specific research data uses predominantly qualitative approaches and methods. Consequently, although some similarities can be detected in studying different minorities in various environments, particularly in the comparative context the data collected and created by WP 4, its research results and findings should not be generalized as they are specific to specific cases that are studied – distinct communities and minorities chosen as case studies, particularly to individuals belonging to those collective entities who participate in the research. However, the results, findings and comparisons are important for the verification, evaluation and interpretation of the data, results and findings of other WPs and the project as the whole.

Based upon studying and analyzing the literature, existing data and sources, including the data and findings produced by other WPs, WP 4 aims to research perceptions of persons belonging to different social minorities (including marginalized groups and border communities) regarding legitimacy and democratic nature of crisis management and governance in respective environments, the impact(s) of crisis management policies and measures, particularly restrictive and repressive ones on human rights, rights and position of minorities, the principle and policies of non-discrimination, the consequences of those policies and measures as well as their attitudes regarding those processes, policies and measures. Based upon qualitative research approaches and methods in researching specific case studies, in addition to direct and indirect observation, informal conversations and possible formal events, such as meetings, panels, workshops and/or focus groups, particularly open-ended in-depth interviews will be used. The initial interviewees will be selected based upon our already existing contacts, communication and cooperation with persons (particularly activists and representatives) belonging to different minorities, distinct and/or marginalized groups and communities, such as national, ethnic, religious and language minorities,



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(im)migrants (in addition to documented ones also undocumented ones, if possible), refugees, homeless, gender and LGBTQIA+ communities and associations, etc. in Austria, Croatia, Italy, Slovenia and possibly additional countries (e.g. Spain). Starting with five to ten interviewees, mostly coming from national/ethnic/language minorities in Austria, Croatia, Italy and Slovenia we will use the snow-ball method to expand the number of interviewees and include additional social minorities as case studies, possibly adding additional countries. Depending on access to diverse minorities, readiness of possible interviewees to participate and our capacity to carry out interviews one to five interviews with persons belonging to the same minority community are planned.

We developed the concept and core questions for the planned open-ended in-depth interviews taking into account our previous research and the literature review. Based upon our already existing contacts and cooperation, some informal conversations<sup>7</sup> were held with a few members and representatives of different social minorities and institutions (e.g., national, ethnic and linguistic minorities, migrants, offices for migrant workers, gender and LGBTQIA+ activists in Slovenia, Croatia and Italy)<sup>8</sup> as well as selected researchers to test the concept and core questions of the open-ended in-depth interviews. Those conversations proved very useful as they detected some difficulties and possible problems, particularly terminological and conceptual ones that will need to be considered in carrying out the interviews. Considering very different social, economic and educational background, status and position of individual interviewees, there is a need to present, explain and clarify the used terminology and concepts in detail and particularly in a way that the interviewee understands them fully. Namely, our informal conversations showed that the understanding and interpretation(s) of concepts such as democracy, legitimacy, inclusion, integration and participation as well as crisis management and governance could be rather different, effecting the results and interpretation of the interviews. However, all confirmed the importance of informal and formal inclusion and democratic participation of minorities and their representatives in decision-making processes for legitimacy of crisis management, adopted decisions and measures in a certain environment.

Considering our research experiences, the specifics of WP 4, its research and planned case studies as well as views expressed in our informal conversations, we are planning to offer all interviewees the option to decide whether they want their interviews to be anonymized or not. Often, the persons belonging to different minorities express that they want to have their names, work, positions within their minority community, and presented views visible in the research documents as well as in the presentations of research findings and results in media and publications. Such a practice that takes into account expressed wishes and interests of interviewees is consistent with the research ethics and rules.

Based upon past and present research experiences, we know that successful execution and completion of multi, inter and transdisciplinary research projects that study dynamic and complex (social) concepts and phenomena, such as LEGITIMULT project require constant, systematic

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<sup>7</sup> Such informal conversations as informal settings were chosen to test the core interview questions based upon our previous experiences that interviewees perceive interviews as formal settings to which they react accordingly. Namely, in formal settings people tend to adjust their behaviour, attitude, reactions, language and answers to their specific perception of the formal event.

<sup>8</sup> Some of them might be included in the further research as interviewees in the planned field research of WP4.

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interactive and open methodological, terminological and conceptual discussion(s) and coordination that take into account the (evolution and development of) research process, work and activities, including collection, creation, analysis, comparison and interpretation of data, cases and findings, development of data bases, research findings, results and theory as well as their interpretation, communication and dissemination. Our informal conversations with members and representatives of various minority communities in the process of developing and testing the core questions of the open-ended in-depth interviews confirm the importance of continuous and open terminological and conceptual discussions. Namely, these conversations showed that individual respondents understood, defined and interpreted certain questions, the used terminology and complex concepts, such as democracy, inclusion, integration, participation, legitimacy, human rights, including rights and protection of diverse social minorities, (the principle of) non-discrimination, direct and indirect discrimination differently due to their different personal, social, educational and professional background, engagement and experiences.

We could conclude that in addition to the involvement of all participating researchers, the inclusion and participation of respondents, stakeholders, practitioners and other target populations into such systematic interactive and open terminological, conceptual and methodological discussions might be instrumental for the successful execution and completion of the project as well as for its desired results and social impact. It is important that the researchers explain the terminology, concepts and definitions that they are using, discuss differences, often disciplinary based in their terminologies and definitions and accept the existing plurality in this context. For this reason, different uses and specific contents of terms, concepts and definitions need to be presented and explained by researchers not only to other researchers within the project and in their scholarly publications, but also to other relevant populations in all forms of communication and dissemination. Considering that the same terms and concepts can be used in different contexts and ways and with different meanings, in communication and publishing we suggest that the desired best practices would be to always present and explain clearly and in detail the contents, context and interpretations of used terms, concepts and definitions to avoid possible misunderstandings or misinterpretations.

All social phenomena are ongoing, complex, interwoven, interdependent, dynamic and constantly evolving processes with their specific spatial, temporal and relational dimensions. On the other hand, their descriptions and definitions as well as concepts used in public discourses tend to be static and (over)simplified. Often, the same criticism applies for the descriptions, definitions, concepts and theories developed by researchers and scholars, particularly if we compare them with the complex and dynamic social realities shaped by the interactions, interdependence, evolution and transformations of social phenomena. Obviously, it is difficult to detect, fully comprehend and conceptualize the dynamics, complexities and interdependence of social phenomena and social realities. For this reason, we might be tempted to confuse our simplified descriptions, definitions and concepts with the actual social phenomena and reality.

The complexities and dynamics of social phenomena and realities, their interactions and interdependence seem to be among the causes that in most cases rather than having a single universally accepted definition of a certain phenomenon, a number of different, possibly conflicting definitions and concepts (co)exist. LEGITIMULT project recognizes that researchers in different WPs in addition to specific research approaches and methods use also their specific terminologies and definitions that, however, need to be presented, explained and coordinated. With



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regard to the planned research within WP 4, these issues were discussed in our informal conversations. Testing the core interview questions, the key terms and concepts used in the research were discussed. All participating in the informal conversations explained their understanding(s) and interpretations of key terms, concepts and definitions and assessed their importance from their specific perspectives, considering the position, status, perceptions, worries, needs and interests of respective minority communities. Discussing the process of the planned interviews, members and representatives of various minority communities suggested that first the respondents should be asked to present their understanding and interpretations of terms, definitions and concepts before the interviewer asks the core questions. Particularly important in this context would be their understanding, interpretation(s) and assessment(s) of the concepts and their definitions of legitimacy, legitimate democratic multilevel crisis management and governance in general and related to the Covid-19 pandemic, diverse social minorities, human and minority rights, inclusion, integration and participation. The recommendation was that before interviewees start answering the core interview questions they should be explained in detail how the researchers understand these terms, definitions and concepts as well as which are the main goals, expected results and impacts of LEGITIMULT project and its WP 4. The interviewers need to pay particular attention to the exact and comprehensive explanation of the concepts and definitions of legitimacy and multilevel democratic crisis governance, which are less known and clear even to those with a social science and humanities background.

Recognizing several definitions and concepts of social and political legitimacy that can be found in scholarly literature, including the ones by Locke and Weber,<sup>9</sup> for the purpose of our research we can define legitimacy in the context of crisis management and governance simply as the popular acceptance of and agreement with the approaches, decision-making and practices of authorities at all levels as well as specific strategies, policies, decisions, measures and activities of crisis management and particularly their execution, impacts and consequences in respective social environments. Considering the attitudes of the people in a certain social environment, it could be concluded that the higher the acceptance and agreement the more legitimate is the crisis management.

As already mentioned, in complex, plural and diverse contemporary societies successful crisis management and governance require coordination and cooperation of all levels of authorities that ensure their efficiency. Consequently, crisis management and governance in general and related to the Covid-19 pandemic in European countries could be considered multilevel crisis management and governance even in the most centralized societies. However, the level of centralization and distribution of powers and competences within a system determine the role and power of a specific level of authorities.

Legitimate democratic (multilevel) crisis management and governance presumes democratic inclusion, integration and participation of the people in accordance with democratic principles, rules and procedures in the development and formulation of crisis strategies and policies, in decision-making on crisis policies and measures at all levels of authority as well as, ideally, in their execution. Our informal conversations pointed that the social activists, members and representatives of diverse social minorities consider the inclusion and participation of persons belonging to respective minorities as well as those minorities as collective entities key indicators

<sup>9</sup> Usually presented in basic social science textbooks in secondary and higher education and all encyclopaedias.

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of legitimacy and democracy of crisis management and governance. In this context, they stressed the importance of social and political participation of diverse minorities and persons belonging to them for legitimacy and democracy in diverse and plural contemporary societies. There was a general agreement that democracy is a cherished social practice, value, principle and goal worth striving and fighting for.

Recognizing that there is no single universally accepted definition of (social) minorities, it was stressed that as a rule they are unequal and unprivileged, usually in a less favorable situation and status in comparison with the rest of the population, even if in some specific cases (e.g., woman) they might be a numerical majority. It is important to recognize that social minorities as social majorities are internally diverse and plural. They are not homogenous and uniform. Consequently, both majorities and minorities could be observed as coalitions of coalitions and diversities.

Our informal conversations confirmed the research findings of the Institute for Ethnic Studies (IES) and particularly the basic research project *Political participation of national minorities and persons belonging to them: Comparative study of political participation of Slovene minorities in the neighboring countries of the Republic of Slovenia (J5-3117)* that as a consequence of the inclusion of diverse (social, specifically national and ethnic) minorities and persons belonging to them in all spheres of life their social and political participation should be considered one of the most important criteria of democracy and democratic governance in respective environments. In this context, the theoretical model of social and political participation and representation of (national) minorities (Žagar 2017, 16-18) developed as a tool and yardstick for the IES research proves useful. This theoretical model that evolves constantly specifies general approaches to political participation of (diverse social, particularly national) minorities and within this framework concepts, types and mechanisms of political participation of minorities. It is used in designing and carrying out research of social and political participation of minorities in different environments as well as in classifying, interpreting and evaluating research findings and results.

Among the **general approaches** to social and political participation of (national and other) minorities and persons belonging to them the theoretical model lists: (I) constitutionally and/or legally regulated **formal participation** in the legislation and executive as well as in consultative bodies, (II) **informal participation** in political processes and decision-making as well as lobbying, (III) inclusion, membership and activism in **political parties** (both, mainstream parties and minority ones), **movements, organisations and associations**, (IV) **(Neo)Corporatist approaches, arrangements, bodies, processes and mechanisms** (such as different forms of consultations and consultative bodies), (V) **consociative arrangements**, particularly elite power-sharing, (VI) inclusion and participation through **basic principles** of constitutional and international law that include human rights, rule of law, democracy and democratic participation, equal rights and equality, justice, non-discrimination, limited majority rule, special rights and protection of minorities, (VII) inclusion and participation through **inclusion and integration policies**, and (VIII) inclusion and **participation through specific systems and mechanisms of minority protection** (at all levels), based upon the special rights of minorities. (Žagar 2017)

Among the **concepts, types and mechanisms** of social and political participation of (national and other) minorities and persons belonging to them that can provide for and promote their better inclusion and participation the theoretical model includes: (I) **Elections and electoral systems**



that can provide (A) for formally guaranteed direct representation of minorities in the legislative (1) through reserved minority seats, (2) special minority thresholds for minority political parties and/or candidates, (3) over-proportional representation of minorities and/or minimal quotas of minority representatives on the lists of mainstream parties, or (B) for informal political arrangements and declarations suggesting the mainstream political parties to include a certain number or share of minority candidates on their electoral tickets/lists. (II) **Informal agreements in political processes** and principles declared by statutes, programs and other documents of **political parties** that should ensure (1) inclusion and participation of minority politicians and representatives in mainstream political parties, including quotas for diverse minorities, (2) inter-party cooperation and consensus building on minority (related) issues, (3) participation of minority political parties in political processes, including elections. (III) **Special procedures of decision making** regulated by law or political agreements, including minority veto and obligatory or consultative opinions of minority institutions, organisations and/or representatives or joint consultative bodies that can ensure the adequate participation of minorities and realization of their specific interests. (IV) Inclusion of minority representatives and elites in policy formulation and decision-making through various **(Neo)Corporatist and Consociative arrangements** and/or (formal and informal) bodies and institutions at all levels of government (from local to national) that brings in those processes specific views and interests of diverse minorities. (V) **Affirmative action and other affirmative measures** (sometimes called positive discrimination) that promote inclusion, integration and participation of minorities and persons belonging to them. (VI) At least proportional, if possible over-proportional **employment (quotas) of persons belonging to minorities** in the public and private sectors that shall ensure the adequate number and share of persons belonging to different minorities among public/civil servants in state administration and public institutions. (VII) **Monitoring of the situation, position and status of minorities and persons belonging to them** for which adequate internal and external mechanisms shall be established. (VIII) **Autonomies**, particularly minority autonomy that can be realized through diverse arrangements of self-rule and management at different levels (from local to national), such as formal (constitutional, legal, political) and informal autonomies, territorial (federalism, regionalism) and non-territorial autonomies (such as cultural, functional and personal autonomy). (Žagar 2017)

Our informal conversations covered issues of human rights, rights, position and protection of minorities, possible cases of discrimination, (the realization of) anti-discrimination policies and the principle of non-discrimination that everybody considered very important. There was a general agreement that the core interview questions address appropriately the relevant issues, that the adopted and implemented crisis policies and measures, particularly restrictive and repressive ones did impact human and minority rights and resulted in inequality and discrimination at least in some cases. Usually, they impacted diverse minorities and persons belonging to them more than the rest of the population. For example, in addition to the unpleasant consequences of the lockdowns, which were felt by everyone, due to the closed international borders, including the borders between the Schengen countries, regular contacts, intense economic and particularly cultural cooperation with their kin countries involving daily mobility of national minorities and persons belonging to them were interrupted and/or prevented. Such contacts, cooperation and mobility of those minorities are essential for their vitality and preservation of their specific cultures, ways of life and identities, considering that contacts, cooperation with and support of respective kin states represent their traditional cultural background. From the perspective of border regions, all populations of



those regions and their specific way of life, we could conclude that also they were over-proportionally effected by closures of international borders, which made cross-border cooperation and exchange, international (daily) mobility and migrations almost impossible. (Grafenauer & Jesih 2020 and 2021)

Although everybody was effected by lockdowns that limited or even prevented internal mobility and cut personal, cultural, social and economic links, contacts and cooperation, diverse (social) minorities and persons belonging to them, particularly migrants, marginalized groups and individuals felt the impacts and consequences of lockdowns even more. Consequently, their marginalization and (social) exclusion as well as the risk of being discriminated against increased, while their (social) inclusion and integration became still more difficult. Our literature review and research so far confirm that those in socially less favorable situation, marginalized individuals and groups did not have equal access to health and social care as well as to different (administrative and public) services, including medical services and education.

The reviewed literature, our previous research and informal conversations confirm that developing and using more inclusive and democratic crisis management, inclusion and participation of interested social actors, including diverse (social) minorities and persons belonging to them in decision making would contribute to a more democratic and legitimate crisis management. Inclusion and participation of diverse minorities and persons belonging to them in democratic decision-making are important indicators of democracy and legitimacy in diverse societies that apply also in crisis situations.

Our literature review, previous research and informal conversations indicate the relevance of our research questions and working hypotheses. They indicate that in diverse environments formal and informal inclusion and participation of (ideally, all) minority communities, persons belonging to those (social) minorities, particularly their leaders, activists and (s)electd representatives in crisis management processes, the formulation and adoption of strategies, policies and measures as well as in their implementation/execution could improve their legitimacy (within minority communities and societies as a whole) and democratic nature of crisis management and governance. This is true even if their inclusion and participation are only symbolic. Our literature review, our previous research and attitudes expressed in informal conversations indicate also that crisis management processes, policies and measures (particularly restrictive and repressive ones) usually impact and hurt different (social) minorities and persons belonging to those minorities more than the rest of the population.

#### 4. Conclusion

The literature review, our previous and preliminary research, methodological, terminological and conceptual discussions as well as informal conversations presented in the previous sections confirm the relevance of LEGITIMULT project, its design and planned research. They provide an adequate basis and framework for the future research of perceptions and attitudes of persons belonging to different social minorities with regard to democracy and legitimacy of crisis management at different levels of authority within WP4. Studying perceptions and attitudes of (selected) persons belonging to diverse social minorities, in its predominantly qualitative field research WP4 will focus on the inclusion and participation of minorities and persons belonging to



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them in the formulation and adoption of crisis management strategies, policies and measures as well as in their implementation, on the impacts and consequences of those strategies, policies and measures regarding human rights, position, status, rights and protection of minorities, and the principle of non-discrimination.

We expect that the planned field research in the next phases of LEGITIMULT project, particularly open-ended in-depth interviews will provide an insight into the perceptions and attitudes of persons belonging to the minorities selected as case studies with regard to the legitimacy and democracy of the Covid-19 related crisis management and measures in respective environments that will help in evaluating and interpreting the research findings and results of other research oriented WPs that use mostly quantitative approaches and methods. Consequently, the research findings and results of LEGITIMULT will enable the formulation of relevant recommendations and development of a toolkit for a better inclusion and democratic participation in decision making of relevant actors in crisis management processes that could be used by all stakeholders in respective environments at all levels and that could help in improving democracy and legitimacy of crisis management and governance in the future crisis situations in different environments.



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## 7. Appendices:

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69. Žagar, Mitja, (2021), Legitimno krizno upravljanje v demokratičnih družbah in vključevanje različnih manjšin in njihovih pripadnikov [Legitimate Crisis Management in Democratic Societies and the Inclusion of Various Minorities and their Members]. In: Munda Hirnök, Katalin, ed. & Novak-Lukanovič, Sonja, ed. (2021), *Svet je postal drugačen: vpliv covida-19 na etnične manjšine in obmejni prostor v Sloveniji in sosednjih državah*. Ljubljana, Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja, (pages 9–26).



## 2. Abstracts and/or summaries of selected publications and sources

1. **Aithal, Lara, Arnu, Hannah, Veit, Susanne, Wölfer, Ralf & Yemane, Ruta, (2021), Deutsches Zentrum für Integrations- und Migrationsforschung (DeZIM-Institut); Jonas Rees, Institut für interdisziplinäre Konflikt- und Gewaltforschung (IKG) und Forschungsinstitut Gesellschaftlicher Zusammenhalt (FGZ), Universität Bielefeld, DeZIMinutes Berlin (Deutsches Zentrum für Integrations- und Migrationsforschung (DeZIM-Institut), Solidarität mit allen? Hilfeverhalten gegenüber Angehörigen ethnischer Minderheiten in Zeiten von Corona, Juni 2021, [https://www.rassismusmonitor.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/NaDiRa/Pdfs/DeZIMinutes\\_03\\_RZ\\_210601\\_web.pdf](https://www.rassismusmonitor.de/fileadmin/user_upload/NaDiRa/Pdfs/DeZIMinutes_03_RZ_210601_web.pdf) (6. 11. 2022).**

Complementary to research demonstrating unequal treatment in the labor or housing market, this study was able to show that members of minorities benefit less from solidarity behavior than members of the majority society, despite an overall high willingness to help. It is therefore important for politics and other structure-creating institutions that special consideration should be given to vulnerable groups in times of crisis in order to compensate for this disadvantage.

2. **Alber, Elisabeth & Zgaga, Tiziano, (2021), Ein Jahr Pandemiemanagement in Italien und Südtirol. Durchregieren auf Sicht und Südtirols Sonderweg [One year of pandemic management in Italy and South Tyrol - Governing without a map and South Tyrol's special path].. Bolzano/Bozen, Raetia. In: Alber, Elisabeth, Engl, Alice & Pallaver, Günther, ed. (2021), Politika 2021. Südtiroler Jahrbuch für Politik. Politik und Gesellschaft im Umbruch: Folgen der Covid-19-Pandemie Gemeinderatswahlen in Südtirol und im Trentino. Bozen, politika – Südtiroler Gesellschaft für Politikwissenschaft (pages 43–69).**

### Abstract

This article analyzes how South Tyrol as an autonomous province reacted to Covid-19 within the framework of Italy's pandemic management. It examines the special path that South Tyrol forged in adopting anti-crisis measures in late spring/summer 2020, after the centralization that characterized the first months following the pandemic's outbreak. Legitimated through a law that the provincial parliament adopted with a large majority in May, the special path initially found a generalized consensus among South Tyrolean parties and society. However, parties and interest groups criticized specific elements of the configuration in which the special path manifested itself (e.g. relaxation or differentiation of anti-Covid

measures). Although it flexibly adapted to new local circumstances, resulting in more or less strict measures compared to the national emergency decrees, the special path has ultimately not turned out to be successful from an epidemiological point of view. Nor was the province's governance style radically different from the national one. Both were governing without a map and foresaw a preeminent role for the national/provincial government at the expense of the legislature. In South Tyrol, the special path instead resulted in a burning glass for preexisting socio-political cleavages



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and was thus met with more and more criticism. Nevertheless, it represented a reaction – shared by other Italian regions as well – against the centralized pandemic management of the Conte II government.

3. Ančić, Branko & Cepić, Dražen, (2021) “Tko su antimaskeri u Hrvatskoj? Prilog istraživanju antimaskerske reakcije tijekom pandemije bolesti COVID-19 u Hrvatskoj”. *Sociologija i prostor: časopis za istraživanje prostornoga i sociokulturnog razvoja*, Vol. 59 No. 219, pp. 187–218.

### Abstract

Since the very beginning of the COVID-19 disease pandemic there have been alternative narratives, not only in virtual spaces, but also as part of official explanations given by social actors relevant for managing the pandemic crisis. As a reaction to the disease spread, authorities everywhere introduced quarantine measures, obligatory adherence to epidemiological measures, and economic lockdown, which led to protests against the measures in a number of cities worldwide, such as Berlin, London, Brussels, Dublin, Madrid, Paris, Rotterdam, even Zagreb (so-called anti-mask protests) during the summer and throughout the autumn and winter of 2020. In this paper, the notion of anti-mask attitude is viewed as a social phenomenon implying not only a mere fact of not wearing a mask as an act of violating epidemiological measures, but also the reaction of people during the pandemic. This reaction is comprised of the perception diminishing the danger of the SARS-CoV-2 virus or even denying its existence, along with the assessment that the imposed epidemiological measures are oppressive (too stringent). The theoretical framework of the paper is based on literature on conspiracy theories as an overarching concept that helps understand the anti-mask movements. In the analysis, the data gathered by a questionnaire survey (CATI technique) during August, September and October 2020 on a nationally representative sample (N=1512) were used. In the paper, some determinants of inclination towards conspiracy theories were analysed as possible explanatory determinants of the anti-masker social reaction. The analysis pointed to two aspects appearing as key for understanding the anti-masker social reaction – existential conditions and the changes of these conditions due to the pandemic, and trust in relevant social actors’ / institutions’ management of the COVID-19 disease induced crises.

### Summary

Authors found out that in Croatia Anti-mask attitudes depend on existential and material factors as well as with the general trust. Class indicator showed that there is the highest anti-mask attitude among working class. The paper does not include or highlight minorities in any part of the research.

4. Alber, Elisabeth, Engl, Alice & Pallaver, Günther, (?), **Multilevel crisis management in European Border Areas.** (ne vem, kje najti ta vir - ali je trenutno morda samo interni?)



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## Abstract

In Europe, the interdependencies created by the European integration process have contributed to the revision of traditional concepts in border studies. Instead of exploring what happens when distinct societies rub against each other or contest land – the traditional and loosest understanding to be found in border studies in international relations – border studies viewed through the lens of the European integration process explore how areas interact through concrete cross-border activities, though under the authority of different States. The paper explores the nexus between cross-border (minority) activism and crisis management. To do so, it builds on the concepts of political autonomy (i.e. the scope of the autonomy a border constituency is vested) and of borderlands as soft spaces (i.e. flexible multi-level governance arrangements that encounter crises by institutional innovation). The paper assumes that re-centralization and re-nationalization is counteracted by the formation of trans-regional spaces, and that the importance of cross-border activism has become apparent to the inhabitants of border areas, first and foremost because of the pandemic. The paper offers conceptual reflections and a contextual analysis in relation to different European border areas.

5. **Andresen, Janus, Kunkel, Kieran, Pusch, Dominik, Kohnke, Benjamin, Søndergaard, Lasse & Steffen, Anna Chiara, (2023), Diskriminierung und Corona: Dies beschäftigt die Jugendlichen der Minderheit, Der Nordschleswiger, 22. Februar 2023, <https://www.nordschleswiger.dk/de/nordschleswig-apenrade-tingleff-nordschleswiger-macht-schule-gesellschaft/corona-jahrgaenge-des-dgn> (12. 11. 2022).**

Digital alternatives made it possible to work remotely at the Deutsches Gymnasium für Nordschleswig (DGN). A survey at the Deutsches Gymnasium für Nordschleswig (DGN) in Apenrade (Aabenraa) shows how learning during the Corona lockdown has influenced the students.

The students were put under pressure by the switch to online teaching - this was not always visible to many adults. Not only the young people, but also the teachers had to deal with this challenge, as the online lessons had to be designed in a different way. It was a new and unknown situation for everyone involved.

The survey found that 68 percent of all young people surveyed were mentally affected by the pandemic and also that it had a negative impact on some areas of life. However, the students do not only take away negative things from this time. 72 percent report that they are also optimistic about the pandemic. Academic performance was also negatively impacted in many different ways. Many problems arose with the major shift from face-to-face to homeschooling: Internet outages, problems with writing programs, delays in video calls, and a lack of motivation during the pandemic...

Family life mixed with everyday school life, and technology also became an everyday problem in the lives of the young people. The sense of time was lost because many of the students often sat in front of the PC or laptop from morning to evening, according to the tenor of the survey. There was a lack of togetherness, a gap that the digital lessons could not close, according to the students. The concentration on the lessons decreased, the young people were more easily distracted by other



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content on the computer or mobile phone that was usually supposedly more exciting for the young people.

**6. Bešter, Romana & Pirc, Janez, (2020), Impact of Remote Learning during the Covid-19 Lockdown on Roma Pupils in Slovenia. *Treatises and Documents - Journal of Ethnic Studies*, 85, (139–164).**

Abstract

The article analyses the impact of remote learning during the Covid-19 lockdown on Roma pupils in Slovenia. Roma are one of the most marginalised and vulnerable groups in Slovenia. Most of them record poor inclusion and performance in education, which is why the suspension of regular school activities is likely to have much broader negative consequences for these pupils. Based on the outcomes of the study that included surveys among Roma assistants and teachers, the article analyses the technical conditions available to Roma pupils for remote learning during lockdown, the establishment of contact between teachers and Roma pupils in such period, and the collaboration of Roma pupils and their parents with schools. The article also provides a comparative perspective of the position of Roma and other pupils and draws attention to the possible long-term consequences of remote learning for Roma pupils.

**7. Bešter, Romana & Pirc, Janez, (2021), Romski učenci in izobraževanje na daljavo v času epidemije covid-19 [Roma Pupils and Remote Learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic]. In: Munda Hirnök, Katalin, ed. & Novak-Lukanovič, Sonja, ed. (2021), *Svet je postal drugačen: vpliv covid-19 na etnične manjšine in obmejni prostor v Sloveniji in sosednjih državah*. Ljubljana, Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja, (pages 241–281).**

Abstract

The article presents the remote learning of Roma children in Slovene primary schools after the Covid-19 related school closure between March 2020 and April 2021. As one of the most marginalised and vulnerable population groups in Slovenia, Roma had been recording significantly lower educational outcomes than the rest of the population, both in terms of inclusion and performance. Therefore, the disruption of regular school activities is likely to have much broader negative consequences for Roma pupils than for most of their non-Roma peers. Based on the results of a study involving online surveys among teachers and Roma assistants, the article analyses the technical conditions available to Roma pupils for remote learning, the establishment of contact between teachers and Roma pupils, the participation of Roma pupils in remote learning, and the cooperation of their parents with the school, teachers, and Roma assistants. The article provides a comparative perspective of the position of Roma and non-Roma pupils in the school years 2019/20 and 2020/21. Furthermore, it explores the impacts of remote learning (in particular) on Roma pupils and the negative consequences which had become apparent already in the transition from the 2019/20 to the 2020/21 school year and which are likely to be much more far-reaching.



**8. Bošnjak, Milan, Hrvatska nacionalna manjina u vremenu korone (Croatian national minority in the time of Corona), Vijenac, br. 683.**

<https://www.matica.hr/vijenac/683/hrvatska-nacionalna-manjina-u-vremenu-korone-30340/> (05. 11. 2022).

The paper describes how members of Croatian national minority abroad organized their social activities during the pandemic, starting from the claim that ethnic minorities are the most sensitive part of society especially in the time of crisis. Author generally claims that Croatian minority communities primarily focused on assisting older members of their communities, while most of their social activities (important for the preservation of identity and culture) were organized online. Then he claims that older members of community are essential in the effort of preserving and continuing cultural traditions, while adaptation to virtual reality (organizing activities on-line) revealed the particular importance of two specific areas: education and media in minority language and script.

Then the author explains particular importance of minority media outlets, such as newspapers and magazines, radio and TV stations – they adjusted their programs during the pandemic, specifically to meet the needs of the young and children, as well as senior population. Further on, he explains how on-line teaching was organized for members of Croatian national minority in several cases.

Finally, this article focuses on the importance of media and education in the time of pandemic, concluding with the remarks on the support that was provided by the Croatian government offices.

**9. Božić, Saša, (2021) “Interaction Ritual Chains and Sustainability of Lockdowns, Quarantines, “Social Distancing” and Isolation during the COVID-19 Pandemic”. *Sociologija i prostor: časopis za istraživanje prostornoga i sociokulturnog razvoja*, Vol. 59 No. 219, pp. 13–34.**

Abstract

National and local governments around the world introduced lockdowns, quarantines, “social distancing” and isolation to curb the global pandemic of COVID-19. While these measures were arguably successful in preventing the potential dire consequences of an uncontrolled pandemic, they also deeply influenced societies at the micro-, meso- and macrolevels. They disturbed interaction ritual chains, the building blocks of social reality as conceived in Randal Collins’ interaction ritual theory. This article identifies and discusses the social effects of lockdowns, quarantines and isolation measures. It addresses interruptions of interaction ritual chains and consequent problems in building up emotional energy and their impact on overall solidarity; the sustainability of economic classes as circuits of monetary exchange; the consequences of closed interaction ritual markets; the disturbance of the interaction ritual structure, the loss of emotional energy, rising violence in isolated households; as well as the consequences of isolation in one-person households. The article also addresses micro and meso-level strategies for coping with lockdown and isolation, particularly the potential of computer-mediated interactions to substitute

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face-to-face interaction; ability of emotionally entrained mass audiences to sustain overall solidarity through creating new “sacred objects”; and the emergence of negative emotional energy within previously energised groups and a consequent defiance to introduced measures.

## Summary

Word minorities have been mentioned twice:

In footnote 8 page 19:

“E.g. demonstrations and storming of the statehouse in Michigan, USA (British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC], 2020), demonstrations and arrests in Berlin, Germany (Euronews, 2020). The lack of fervour and later violence can be explained by the fact that the EE of these crowds never reached the point at which the emotional power of the group could become embodied in a violent minority. Collins (2008:449) claims that “violence mainly comes from the emotional flow of an assembly whose attention has become sharply focused, whether as companions, audience, or antagonists”. The lack of general support for such demonstrations as well as of a clear focus of demonstrators probably resulted in a much lower build-up of tension.”

In footnote 18 page 27:

“E.g. demonstrations and storming of the statehouse in Michigan, USA (British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC], 2020), demonstrations and arrests in Berlin, Germany (Euronews, 2020). The lack of fervour and later violence can be explained by the fact that the EE of these crowds never reached the point at which the emotional power of the group could become embodied in a violent minority (Collins, 2008)”.

Both notions refer to group interaction rather than minorities itself.

The rest of the paper deals with individual and group trauma and solidarity in general society – not including any particular minorities

**10. Brajdić Vuković, Marija & Doolan, Karen, (2021), “Očaj i sreća u doba nesreće: raznolikost ženskih doživljaja karantene za vrijeme COVID-19 pandemije”. *Sociologija i prostor: časopis za istraživanje prostornoga i sociokulturnog razvoja*, Vol. 59, No. 219, pp. 241–265.**

## Abstract

The article draws on concepts such as pandemic social practices, economy of care and capita- lism in order to explore women’s feelings, thoughts and practices during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in Croatia in April 2020. It is based on on-line research which gathered the responses from 213 women of different age groups who, based on their educational level and profession, belong to the dominant class. The research consisted of a series of open questions which enabled the collection of personal narratives. Our study partici- pants noted key words they felt captured the world, their family and friends, and themselves during the pandemic as well as what their daily lives look like during lockdown and what thoughts they are having about their

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lives in the present and future. Our findings show that responsive pandemic practices shape everyday life during lockdown, that life during lockdown is routinised, emotionally complex, that women with small children are overburdened and exhausted and that lockdown sharpens gender inequalities. We find that being financially secure adds to our participants' resilience, as well as that some of them are in precarious positions and concerned about their financial prospects. Good relationships with others and hobbies, which include on-line yoga and on-line cultural practices, are also conducive to their resilience. According to the women participating in our study, the pandemic may result in an economic crisis, deepening inequalities, curbed personal freedoms and alienation among people, but it may also lead to more concern for nature, a political and economic shift to a more sustainable society and strengthened solidarity.

## Summary

Main findings are that lockdown sharpens gender inequalities. Ethnic minorities are not included in this gender-oriented research.

### **11. Brezigar, Sara, (2020), The Slovene Community in Italy and the Covid-19 Pandemic. *Treatises and Documents - Journal of Ethnic Studies*, 85, (83–100).**

#### Abstract

Italy was the first country of the Western world to experience the outburst of the Covid-19 pandemic, and slowing it down required a swift and sizable adaptation of all aspects of life in Italy. Based on a preliminary qualitative study and relying on existing primary and secondary data sources, the author explores the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Slovene community in Italy. Although the community shared the same fate as the rest of Italy's population in terms of restrictive measures and limitations to human rights, the author argues that some of the measures had a different, sometimes disproportionate and harmful effect on the community. Similarly, the changes in modus vivendi et operandi of the minority and its members that appeared as a side-effect of the pandemic may alter significantly the functioning of the minority in the future, and wider integration processes in the cross-border region may be slowed down or even reversed.

### **12. Chiozza, Giacomo & King, Jeffrey, (2022), The state of human rights in a (post) COVID-19 world. *Journal of Human Rights*, Volume 21, Number 3, (246–262), <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/14754835.2022.2051450?needAccess=true>**

#### Abstract

p. 248: Ramji-Nogales and Goldner Lang (2020), for example, pointed out that when borders were closed to all noncitizen travelers in the European Union in March of 2020, many migrants and asylum seekers from Africa became stuck in nonnative and unsafe states enroute. Even when refugees reached the borders of destination states, they were sometimes refused entry and were



forced to return to their unsafe ports of origins (Crawley, 2021). The cumulative effect of border closures has forced refugees and migrants into increasingly precarious positions throughout the pandemic.

p. 248: In other instances, refugees and migrants living within host states faced worsening conditions from lockdowns. Dempster et al. (2020), for instance, found that refugees were 60 percent more likely to work in industries that were most impacted by COVID-19 measures. As a result, migrants were more likely to lose their jobs, leading to increasing homelessness and food insecurity, all while being denied access to health care (Hill et al., 2021). Coupled with this, migrants have been subject to increasing amounts of vitriol and violence in many host countries, as they have been blamed for bringing COVID-19 into the states (Wang, 2020). To make matters worse, many governments have used migrants to implement policies that limit or suspend legal immigration and asylum procedures, in many cases in direct violation of the rights of migrants and refugees (Crawley, 2021; Garrett, 2020; Roksandić et al., 2021).

p. 249: Lockdowns have had significant negative consequences for the well-being of women in many countries (Aziz & Moussa, 2021). During the pandemic, reports of domestic violence increased in India by 94 percent (Nigam, 2020), in Brazil by 40 percent (Telles et al., 2021), in Hubei Province China by 90 percent, and in the United States by estimates ranging from 10 percent to 48 percent (Boserup et al., 2020; Agüero 2021). Unfortunately, findings of this sort are to be expected because of a well-known finding within the violence-against-women literature, that most acts of violence against women are perpetrated by family members. During lockdowns, women, many of whom can be described as vulnerable, are required to shelter-in-place with abusers. Coupled with this, during the pandemic victims have had less access to the justice system and police and social worker intervention. This effectively has disempowered women in favor of their potential abusers.

**13. Corona-Pandemie und Migration, (2022), <https://mediendienst-integration.de/migration/corona-pandemie.html> (5. 11. 2022).**

The corona pandemic was also affecting migrants and refugees. Because of the entry restrictions, it has become more difficult to get to Germany. Statistically, migrants who lived in Germany have a higher risk of becoming infected. Why is that? MEDIENDIENST has compiled important information on the topic of the corona pandemic and migration.

**14. Cramer Marsal, Stéphanie, Ahlund, Christian & Wilson, Robin, (2020), COVID-19: an analysis of the anti-discrimination, diversity and inclusion dimensions in Council of Europe member States. Strasbourg, Council of Europe.**

<https://rm.coe.int/prems-126920-gbr-2530-cdadi-covid-19-web-a5-final-2774-9087-5906-1/1680a124aa> (18. 10. 2022).

= the report is focused on recommendations (to authorities) how to respond to multiple crisis of covid-19 in relation to minorities in the fields of anti-discrimination, equality and inclusion (based on the experiences/practices of the first few months of pandemics). I suggest reading all the collected recommendations on pp. 49–51 of the report.



p. 9/ The situation concerning covid-19 pandemics in 2020 was at great variance among (Council of Europe - CE) member States: some have formally introduced states of emergency under their domestic legal order; others have done so by submitting their derogation under Article 15 of the ECHR, thereby explicitly signalling that the normal functioning of the State could not be maintained to tackle the Covid-19 crisis. In some other states, extraordinary measures have been adopted under existing legal rules, albeit not referring to a state of emergency as such. p. 10/ A central question has therefore arisen: how does international human rights law apply to such an unprecedented situation? And, connected to it, how does international law provide protection against possible threats to non-discrimination, diversity and inclusion?

p. 11/ In its toolkit to member states, the CE provides some general guiding principles on ensuring that measures taken during states of emergency uphold democracy, the rule of law and human rights. Measures must be taken in accordance with the law, have clear time-limits and be proportionate to the evaluated risk. Regularly reviewing the conditions of necessity, proportionality and temporariness is particularly needed in rapidly changing situations such as the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure an adequate response. p. 14/ Since responsibilities are shared among levels of government, co-operation between national and subnational levels of government is key to ensure that the right balance is struck in addressing the health, economic and social challenges raised by the pandemic. Trust within the government and between different layers of governance is therefore important in ensuring an effective response and implementation.

pp. 16-19/ The Covid-19 crisis has underlined the importance of being able to rely on genuinely representative institutions or mechanisms to have an understanding of the specific challenges faced by minority communities, and reaching out to them on measures. A variety of approaches of States to the covid-19 crisis are listed below:

- Use of existing consultation mechanisms and role of mediators
- Co-operation with civil society
- Investigation measures on the impact of Covid-19 on specific communities
- Pragmatic use of existing opportunities
- Engaging reflection on effectiveness
- Accessible information: language and dissemination.

pp. 22-23/ Territorial dimension of covid-19 crisis:

Multi-level and multi-stakeholder governance: robust co-ordination between all actors responsible at central and regional levels is not only important during the crisis but also for the recovery phase.

Cross-border co-operation and national minorities: Hasty moves by some States to shut their borders to non-citizens in order to contain the spread of the virus /.../ had a negative impact on minorities living in cross-border regions in their ability to maintain contacts and cultural and linguistic activities with their kin-states.

p. 25/ The crisis has not affected all minority groups in the same way but rather has had an asymmetric impact, with groups that were already marginalised before the crisis becoming even more disenfranchised.

## 15. Devetak, Robert, (2021), Delovanje muzejev slovenske skupnosti v videmski pokrajini v času pandemije covida-19 [Operation of Slovene Community Museums in the

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**Province of Udine during the Covid-19 Pandemic]. In: Munda Hirnök, Katalin, ed. & Novak-Lukanovič, Sonja, ed. (2021), *Svet je postal drugačen: vpliv covida-19 na etnične manjšine in obmejni prostor v Sloveniji in sosednjih državah*. Ljubljana, Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja, (pages 61–85).**

#### Abstract

In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic profoundly impacted all aspects of life worldwide. The museum sector was no exception, as museums had to close their doors to the public for an extended period of time. In addition to high financial losses, they faced programme cuts, layoffs, and even shutdowns. This period was also marked by content digitisation and museum activities moving online to keep contact with visitors. With interviews with museum staff and newspaper reports as its main reference, the article presents the museums of the Slovene community in the province of Udine and their efforts to cope with the situation in the pandemic year characterised by financial loss, a significant drop in visits, and changes in visitors' profile.

**16. Doz, Daniel, Felda, Darjo, Cotič, Mara & Štemberger, Tina, 2022. Students' Perceptions of Remote Teaching and Learning: The Slovene Minority in Italy during the Pandemic Period of Covid-19. *Treatises and Documents - Journal of Ethnic Studies*, 88, (5–26).**

#### Abstract

During the second quarantine period in Italy (Oct. '20–June '21), students once again faced a remote teaching and learning format. Much research has been conducted on students' perceptions during the first pandemic period; however, far less is known about the second period, especially in the case of students within the Slovene minority in Italy. We aimed to investigate (1) students' satisfaction with their teachers' teaching methods in remote learning and in-class teaching formats, (2) students' perceptions regarding the main differences between in-class and online mathematics lessons, and (3) whether students' grades in mathematics changed as a result of the pandemic. The findings showed that students' grades during the quarantine period increased compared to their grades before the pandemic. However, students were more satisfied with their teachers' in-class teaching methods and believed that in-class teaching was more efficient. They were also more motivated and concentrated at school than online.

**17. Elias, Amanuel, Ben, Jehonathan, Mansouri, Fethi & Paradies, Yin, (2021), Racism and nationalism during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 44, Issue 5, (783–793).**

#### Abstract

Racism and xenophobia associated with the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic disproportionately affect migrants and minority groups worldwide. They exacerbate existing patterns of discrimination and inequity, impacting especially those already facing intersecting

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social, economic and health vulnerabilities. In this article, we explore the nature and extent of racism sparked by COVID-19. We briefly introduce the relationship between historical pandemics and racist sentiments and discuss ethnic and racial disparities in relation to COVID-19. We contextualize racism under COVID-19, and argue that an environment of populism, resurgent exclusionary ethno-nationalism, and retreating internationalism has been a key contributor to the flare-up in racism during the COVID-19. We then discuss links between racism, nationalism and capitalism, and consider what intercultural relations may look like in a post-outbreak world. We conclude by highlighting the potential effects of COVID-racism on intercultural relations, and the national and global implications for social policy.

From the conclusion:

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, a surge of racism has impacted minority groups within countries across the world. Emerging research has particularly documented the link between the pandemic and heightened anti-Asian racism. This renewed form of ethno-cultural racism can be contextualized in relation to rising hate speech, cultural prejudice, and racial attacks that have occurred during historical pandemics. In this article, we have argued that an environment of rampant exclusionary nationalism and unprecedented economic inequalities created conditions for the resurgence of xenophobia and racism following the outbreak and progression of COVID-19. In a context of exclusionary nationalism and global recession, fear plays an adverse role, triggering attitudes and behaviours that foment hate and xenophobic sentiments. Such sentiments, crystallized by exclusionary ideologies, threaten the future of social reform and racial justice, both due to potential for intercultural and resource conflict as well as the reinforcement of ideological divides, and intensified polarization. We argued that COVID-racism should not be viewed from an interpersonal ethno-cultural relations perspective alone. Equally, and perhaps more consequential is the systemic discrimination and socio-economic injustice that is exacerbating the disproportionate adverse outcomes for racialized ethnic minority groups. While the rise in racism and xenophobia have affected these groups, racism at policy, institutional and societal levels have also been exposed during the progression of the pandemic.

**18. ERGO Network, (2020), The effects of Covid-19 on Roma communities in EU Member States and Enlargement and Neighbourhood Countries,** [https://ergonetwork.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/ERGO-input\\_impact-section-in-specific-MS.pdf](https://ergonetwork.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/ERGO-input_impact-section-in-specific-MS.pdf) (18. 10. 2022).

Reports indicate a huge, disproportionately negative impact of both the pandemic and the security measures associated with it on Roma communities across Member States, Enlargement and Neighbourhood Countries, aggravated by long-term systemic discrimination and antigypsyism.

Marginalized Roma are amongst the most affected and impacted by Covid-19, mainly due to their devastating living conditions and exclusion, along with widespread antigypsyism. Most Roma living in poverty find it very hard to protect themselves from getting the virus or spreading it further, if infected, by a lack of access to the water and sanitation necessary to washing their hands



frequently and sanitising their living spaces. This is even harder for homeless Roma or those living in segregated and illegal camps and settlements and improvised shelters.

With schools being closed and education being delivered either online or remotely, Roma children are particularly affected. Most Roma children and their families have no access to internet, do not have computers and other electronic devices, and in some cases even electricity is not available. Since lack of internet access and electronic devices is higher in regions where significant numbers of Roma reside, this means most Roma children cannot attend online classes, thus leading to long-term effects on their school performance and continuation.

In the area of employment, Roma with lower incomes and insecure or informal employment experience reductions in their income or unemployment due to the growing impacts of the epidemic will also be more adversely impacted. Many Roma working in the informal sector lost their sources of daily income, such as those working in the arts and culture, those working the fields of private owners as daily labourers, those collecting and selling scrap metal, small traders, market sellers, flea market sellers, cleaners (especially single mothers) and last but not least, those who beg.

Security measures of social distancing, confinement and quarantine have disproportionately impacted Roma and other marginalised groups living in poverty with limited resources or savings to sustain themselves during confinement. The inability to engage in informal work and the loss of the social benefits on which many families depend expose Roma to increased poverty and further social exclusion. In most situations where Roma were placed in quarantine the authorities failed to provide food, water and sanitary equipment, keeping families confined in potentially hazardous conditions. During the pandemic we are seeing a worrying increase in the stigmatisation and scapegoating of Roma for allegedly spreading the coronavirus.

**19. Eurac Research, (2020), Minorities and COVID-19 [A ten-part webinar series of the Institute for Minority Rights], 13 May – 14 July 2020, <http://www.eurac.edu/en/research/autonomies/minri/services/Pages/Webinars.aspx> (8. 12. 2020).**

The Eurac Research, a research centre from Bolzano/Bozen, South Tyrol, and its Institute for Minority Rights organised ten online workshops between 13 May and 14 July 2020 dealing with the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic and the many challenges it brings to national minorities. Researchers from various institutions and collaborators of selected monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of minority rights focused on the general consequences of Covid-19 on minorities, territorial and transnational management of minority issues, equality and discrimination during the pandemic, gender issues and religious minorities, borders, economy and diversity management, and on possible post-Covid-19 scenarios for the minorities. The ninth online workshop, entitled Economy, Minorities and Covid-19, was attended by Valentin Inzko.[1] Presenting the situation of Carinthian Slovenes in the first, spring wave of the epidemic and the measures taken by the countries, Inzko pointed out the discontent among Slovenes in Austrian Carinthia at the closing of borders,[2] especially since Austria left its borders with Switzerland and Germany open without restrictions. The Carinthian Slovenes protested against the closure of the border between Austria and Slovenia and in a joint effort with some mayors of border

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municipalities eventually achieved that border measures were mitigated. At the beginning of April 2020, at the initiative of the population on both sides of the border, the foreign ministers of the two countries agreed to open the Holmec border crossing as it would be crossed by many of the 2,000 Slovenes from the Koroška region commuting to work to Austrian Carinthia on a daily basis.

Inzko also pointed to Article 17 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1998), whereby the Parties undertake

[n]ot to interfere with the right of persons belonging to national minorities to establish and maintain free and peaceful contacts across frontiers with persons lawfully staying in other States, in particular those with whom they share an ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, or a common cultural heritage.

Slovenes in Austria were of the opinion that restrictive border-crossing measures prevented traditional cross-border contacts (e.g. visits to family members and other relatives, funerals). Inzko also stressed the cultural consequences for the minority (music teachers from Slovenia who teach at the Slovene Music School of Carinthia were unable to cross the border, puppet theatres could not perform outside their seats, etc.). With the exception of a few online events, cultural life came to a complete halt. This hit hard on the small minority national community, which normally records over 1,000 cultural events per year. Regarding the economic consequences, Inzko mentioned the problems in logistics and the difficulties of Slovenes commuting to work to Styria and Carinthia<sup>[3]</sup> who were subject to special border crossing regimes. Many Austrians and Slovenes from Austria also work in Slovenia, especially Ljubljana, in the service sector (bank employees, tax advisors, etc.). Slovenia plays an important role in the Austrian export economy and is the world leader in terms of imports of Austrian goods and services at EUR 1,700 per capita. Despite a population of only two million, Slovenia is Austria's 11th most important foreign market. Among the EU members, Austria is the most important buyer of Slovene products. In terms of per capita, Slovenia is more important for Austria than e.g. Japan or Scandinavia, according to Inzko. He concluded that the restrictions had a strong impact on the Slovene national community in Carinthia in many areas (culture, economy, tourism) and hoped that the borders would remain open.

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[1] Valentin Inzko has been president of the umbrella political organisation of Carinthian Slovenes, the NSKs, since 2010, and the UN and EU high Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina from 2009 to 2021.

[2] The two countries established a special border crossing regime when the first infections were recorded in March 2020. Not only on the border with Croatia, but also on the internal Schengen borders (with Italy, Austria and Hungary), Slovenia introduced certain (temporary) traffic restrictions and changed entry conditions for foreigners and exit conditions for Slovene citizens. These measures were adapted to the epidemiological situation. On 4 June, most of the restrictive measures regarding border crossings were released.

[3] According to estimates, there are 20,000 to 25,000 daily migrants. Most daily cross-border migrants come from the Štajerska region in Slovenia.



**20. European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages - Evaluation by the Committee of Experts of the Implementation of the Recommendations for Immediate Action contained in the Committee of Experts' sixth evaluation report on CROATIA**  
<https://rm.coe.int/croatia-eval-6-iria-en/1680a5e82f> (01. 12. 2022).

“Examination of the implementation by Croatia of the recommendations for immediate action

I. General issues

Use of minority languages during the Covid-19 pandemic

6. In 2020, the Committee of Experts expressed concern about the widespread absence of regional or minority languages from official information and communication about the Covid-19 pandemic in several states parties. It was underlined that, according to the Charter, regional or minority languages should be used in all fields of public life and, therefore, that authorities should also actively use such languages in their response to the pandemic. In particular, it should be borne in mind that Covid-19 patients would feel even more isolated if they were not able to communicate with healthcare staff in their language. 4 In this context, the Committee of Experts decided to address the impact of the pandemic in its future evaluations and reports.

7. The Croatian authorities have informed the Committee of Experts that, during the pandemic, video lessons were recorded for pupils attending classes in Czech and Serbian language and culture, respectively. The video lessons were published online by the Ministry of Science and Education. An association promoting Istro-Romanian produced digital educational materials for the distance learning of Istro-Romanian and distributed them to children’s parents.” (p.3)

**21. European Commission, (2020), Overview of the Impact of Coronavirus Measures on the Marginalised Roma Communities in the EU.**  
[https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/overview\\_of\\_covid19\\_and\\_roma\\_-\\_impact\\_-\\_measures\\_-\\_priorities\\_for\\_funding\\_-\\_23\\_04\\_2020.docx.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/overview_of_covid19_and_roma_-_impact_-_measures_-_priorities_for_funding_-_23_04_2020.docx.pdf) (18. 10. 2022).

Summary

The Coronavirus outbreak has widened long-standing exclusion, poverty and discrimination against some of the disadvantaged and rights deprived groups in the EU, including its largest ethnic minority, the Roma people. Member States’ (MS) emergency measures, such as hand washing with warm water, prove a challenge for 30% of Roma living in households with no tap water. Compliance with personal hygiene recommendations is also questionable, as 40% of Roma have no sanitary facilities in their dwellings. In some MS, up to 80% of Roma live in cramped, overcrowded Roma neighbourhoods, which makes physical distancing, a key element of preventive public health measures, next to impossible.

Additionally, there is also a risk that the mid-term socio-economic impacts of the pandemic will hit these communities the hardest, contributing to further inequalities. For example, remote learning through digital education is most often not accessible and/or affordable for marginalised Roma children, lacking any/adequate IT equipment, and/or internet connection, or sometimes even

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electricity. This could further deepen inequalities in education. Many Roma living in segregated settlements see themselves cut from any source of income and economic activity, leading to rising unemployment and poverty.

The reported cases of scapegoating the Roma and ethnicisation of the Coronavirus crisis across MS are even more worrisome. MS need to ensure that their most vulnerable members do not carry the burden of the pandemic and suffer from additional hate and discrimination. Hence, the protection against the spread of the Coronavirus in these communities is crucial and in need of additional emergency interventions.

This paper provides an overview / brief information on the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on marginalised Roma communities and the actions and/or measures undertaken by National Roma Contact Points or other public authorities to approach the situation. Input from civil society comes from various articles about related initiatives of NGOs and other voluntary groups.

**22. FRA - European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2022), Social rights and equality in the light of the recovery from the covid-19 pandemic.**  
[https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022-focus\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-fundamental-rights-report-2022-focus_en.pdf) (19. 10. 2022).

This report looks at the impact of the pandemic on social rights. It examines the measures in national recovery and resilience plans that address the social vulnerabilities among a variety of population groups in the EU, including women, children and young people in situations of vulnerability, people with disabilities, older people, Roma and people in precarious working conditions.

p. 4/ Echoing the European Parliament’s resolution of April 2020 on EU action to combat the pandemic and its consequences the Porto Social Commitment (of 2021) calls on all relevant actors to take on board the lessons learned from the pandemic and to join forces to “develop public policies that ... promote equal opportunities for all, particularly children at risk of poverty, the elderly, people with disabilities, people with a migration background, disadvantaged and minority groups and the homeless”.

p. 5/ The EU made € 723.8 billion available to Member States through the Recovery and Resilience Facility, also to address the social damage the pandemic caused. Each Member State had to submit a national recovery and resilience plan outlining the measures it would take through the facility. The Recovery and Resilience Facility rests on six policy pillars. One of them is social and territorial cohesion. The European Commission identified 869 measures in the recovery and resilience plans that pertained to the policy of this pillar.

pp. 8–10/ The negative impact of the pandemic affected various population groups differently:

- For example, recurring nationwide lockdowns severely limited the rights of older people to lead a life of dignity and independence and to participate in social and cultural life, which Article 25 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights enshrines. In the worst days of the pandemic, many older people were sick or died alone, isolated from their



relatives and friends in residential care settings for extended periods, owing to restrictions on interpersonal contact.

- The European Disability Forum highlights that “persons with disabilities have been more likely to be infected by Covid-19, develop serious illness or die, or find themselves isolated, impoverished, and facing increased hardship in the future”. Social distancing and school closures accentuated learning disabilities and prevented many people with disabilities from actively participating in the labour market. The requirement to wear masks created challenges, notably for people with hearing impairments who could not lip read, and health complications for people with certain other disabilities.
- The suspension of essential services, such as the provision of food or medical assistance, hit homeless people hard, and shelters were often overcrowded.
- The digital divide also became apparent in education, where the switch to distance learning coupled with an absence of social contact with peers affected children and young people in different ways, including a negative impact on their mental health. Distance learning proved to be a particular problem for children and young people from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.
- Concerning gender equality, the pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on women, including as regards the intensification of experiences of all types of violence against women and girls. Concerning the labour market, women make up a larger proportion of the workforce in sectors that the pandemic hit hardest.

**23. FUEN (Federal Union of European Nationalities), (2020), Do you speak Corona? Minorities without a Kin-State discussed COVID-19 related problems at their Working Group’s first online meeting (online event), 17. 07. 2020, <https://fuen.org/en/article/Minorities-without-a-Kin-State-discussed-COVID-19-related-problems-at-their-Working-Groups-first-online-meeting> (6. 11. 2022).**

The activities of many minority organizations were severely affected by the pandemic, with events, including congresses, conferences and festivals cancelled or postponed to autumn or even next year. Some minorities were hit hard by economic difficulties and increased unemployment, even their co-nationals working abroad lost their jobs and had to return home. During the meeting it was interesting to see how governments reacted differently to similar challenges: while in France all television programs in Breton language were cancelled during the pandemic, in North Macedonia tv programs in Arman increased to three hours per day. But this period also brought some exemplary solidarity and charity actions, and increased interest in online education, time for self-evaluation, new programs and an increased online presence.

**24. FUEN, (2020), Do You Speak Corona? Survey results on the use of minority languages under the covid-19 outbreak. [https://fuen.org/assets/upload/editor/docs/doc\\_pEfaUggu\\_CoronaENG-min.pdf](https://fuen.org/assets/upload/editor/docs/doc_pEfaUggu_CoronaENG-min.pdf) (25. 10. 2022).**



pp. 3–4/ An online survey, with the scope of analyzing to what extent communication in mother tongue is assured by different stakeholders in the Member States of the EU, as well as among the members of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), was conducted between

March and June, 2020. The online questionnaire focused on:

- 1) the availability of information related to the coronavirus outbreak, in general;
- 2) the availability of healthcare information related to the outbreak;
- 3) existence of an emergency hotline operated in minority language;
- 4) the availability of online education in mother tongue.

The survey was completed for 44 minority communities and language groups in 25 European countries.

pp. 7–8/ 1) key general information on the coronavirus outbreak is available in mother tongue of minority communities and language groups in slightly more than one third - 34.9% - of the cases. 20.9% receive partial information, meanwhile 44.2% lack all communication on mother tongue. In most of the cases, state and regional governments assure this type of communication, while in some communities minority organizations, along with minority press are the sole providers of key information.

p. 11/ 2) key health information on the coronavirus outbreak is available in mother tongue of minority communities and language groups, similar to key information, in slightly more than one third - 35%. Partial information is available in 25.5% of the cases, meanwhile 39.5% have no access in their mother tongue to the health related information of the aspects of the coronavirus outbreak.

p. 12/ 3) the availability of the emergency hotlines in minority languages are limited, as 69.8% of the cases have no access to them. We can observe that in only 20.9% of the cases have hotlines been set up and in 9.3% of the cases minority communities or linguistic groups have partial access to mother tongue emergency facilities, should a COVID-19 related emergency arise.

p. 14/ 4) In 22 occasions, representing 51.2% of all cases analyzed, online education was organized in mother tongue during the coronavirus outbreak. In another 8 cases, representing 18.6%, online education in mother tongue was at least partially available, meanwhile in 10 cases, representing 23.3%, no access to online education was assured (while they benefited of mother tongue education before the outbreak). In 3 cases, representing 6.9%, mother tongue education was not available before the coronavirus outbreak either.

**25. Girard, Nicole, (2021), Human rights and COVID-19: Repression and resistance in the midst of a pandemic. Minority and Indigenous Trends 2021,**  
<https://minorityrights.org/programmes/library/trends2021/chapter-3/>.

Abstract



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COVID-19 has exposed the stark inequalities existing in our societies. Minorities, indigenous peoples and migrant communities have been hit disproportionately by the spread of COVID-19, fuelled by poorer pre-existing health indicators, economic disenfranchisement and discrimination. But in many cases, it has been the government response to the pandemic that has exacerbated existing discrimination, leading to increased insecurity and direct threats to minority and indigenous rights.

Racist and discriminatory approaches to public health during the initial spread of COVID-19 resulted in segregation and restrictions on movement for entire neighbourhoods and settlements, as was the case for Roma in Bulgaria and Slovakia, and refugee camps in Greece, where lockdowns targeted residents while the rest of the country had returned to normal. Non-governmental organization (NGO) Médecins Sans Frontières called the extended lockdown for refugee camps ‘absolutely unjustified from a public health point of view – it is discriminatory towards people that don’t represent a risk and contributes to their stigmatization, while putting them further at risk’ by keeping them in overcrowded and unhygienic conditions.

In Bulgaria, the extreme right Bulgaria National Movement (VMRO) exploited the crisis in what some Roma rights activists described as the ‘ethnicization of the pandemic’. In the early days of the emergency, VMRO chairperson and Bulgarian Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Angel Dzhambazki called for the closure of Roma neighbourhoods, describing them as ‘real nests of infection’. Shortly afterwards, the Kvartal Karmen settlement in the town of Kazanlak was blockaded, exits to the neighbourhood were sealed and the one remaining access point was continuously guarded by law enforcement. Similar checkpoints were installed around Roma settlements across various municipalities, leading to an overwhelming presence of soldiers, police and drones – constituting a far more visible presence than medical workers and supplies. In some instances, authorities did not ensure that blockaded communities had access to food, water or medicine: in Tsarevo, for example, 500 Roma residents were left without water for 10 days. Similar blockades were not instituted in non-Roma neighbourhoods, and churches remained open.

As blockades and checkpoints continued, Roma citizens began protesting in Sofia in mid-April 2020. Working largely in informal industries, many could not provide the documents necessary to allow them to pass through checkpoints. Rumours that Roma in certain neighbourhoods were infected prompted employers to fire workers. Roma activists submitted a citizens’ petition to the two other Bulgarian MEPs, calling for them to refute the words of Dzhambazki, but were met by silence. After sustained pressure, the restrictions were lifted at the end of April. Finally, in mid-May, two UN Special Rapporteurs on racism and minority issues released a joint statement calling the actions of the Bulgarian authorities ‘discriminatory’, ‘overly-securitized’, and ‘a violation of Roma’s right to equality and freedom of movement’ through ‘a government response to COVID-19 that singles out Roma’.

**26. Grafenauer, Danijel & Jesih, Boris, (2020), Impact and Consequences of Covid-19 on the Functioning of Minority Institutions of the Slovene National Community in Austria. *Treatises and Documents - Journal of Ethnic Studies*, 85, (203–222).**

Abstract



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Crucial for the development and survival of minorities and persons belonging to them is that their situation and position are taken into account in the countries' measures and policies and are not aggravated thereby. This is particularly relevant in times of crisis, such as the Covid-19 pandemic. Social interaction within the minority and the active contact of a national community with its kin-state - currently limited as a result of the measures to contain the coronavirus - are of the utmost importance for all minority national communities. Thanks to its organisational capacity, the Slovene national community in Austria was able to properly respond and adjust to the restrictions imposed, but the cancellation of traditional events and closure of bilingual schools raise questions among the community as to how its identity will survive if it cannot be expressed. There is concern that these consequences, especially since the epidemic continues unabated in the second wave, are likely to have a long-term impact on ethnic vitality.

**27. Grafenauer, Danijel, & Jesih, Boris, (2021), Covid-19 in njegove posledice za delovanje slovenske narodne skupnosti v Avstriji [Covid-19 and its Consequences for the Activities of the Slovene National Community in Austria]. In: Munda Hirnök, Katalin, ed. & Novak-Lukanovič, Sonja, ed. (2021), *Svet je postal drugačen: vpliv covid-19 na etnične manjšine in obmejni prostor v Sloveniji in sosednjih državah*. Ljubljana, Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja, (pages 115–145).**

## Abstract

It has been two years since world society began to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic. Ever since March 2020 when Austrian and Slovene authorities started to implement measures to prevent and curb the spread of the disease, it had been clear that such would have a negative impact on social life. Measures limiting social contacts, hindering traditional economic, cultural, social and sports activities, and preventing cross-border activities between the two countries severely hit this geographical area and its people. The consequences soon became apparent, especially for minorities as social interaction within a minority community and its active contact with its kin state are of the utmost importance for any minority national community. It is in fact interactions, culture and social life – all currently limited as a result of the measures to contain the coronavirus – that make these communities vital and prosperous. Thanks to its organisational skills, the Slovene national community in Austria was able to properly respond and adjust to the restrictions imposed, but the cancellation of traditional events and the closure of bilingual schools raise questions of how its identity is to survive if it cannot be expressed. This article analyses the consequences of restrictive measures for the Slovene minority in Carinthia, Austria, in the period between March 2020 and November 2021. At the end of 2020, there was concern that the consequences, especially since the pandemic continued unabated in the second wave, were likely to have a long-term impact on ethnic vitality. Luckily, in the summer of 2021, cultural events resumed and were attended also by Carinthian Slovenes. To quote one of the respondents: “People were hungry for culture”. The general social climate and situation in the fifth wave of the pandemic at the end of 2021 show that authorities and people are “tired” of following and implementing measures to contain the spread of the pandemic – they crave social contact and, in principle, they are taking a pragmatic approach in the face of the above measures. It is crucial for the development and survival of minorities and their members that state actions and policies take into account their



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specific situation and status and do not aggravate them. This is especially important in times of crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

- 28. Gschrey, Sebastian Vincent, (2022), The role of institutionalized cross-border cooperation in European transboundary crisis-responses: The case of euroregions along DE-NL border. Master thesis, Universities of Twente and Münster. <http://essay.utwente.nl/90576/>.**

#### Abstract

The nature of crisis and crisis-management is changing. Since 2000, Europe experienced several transboundary crises (Boin 2009). The SARS outbreak from 2003, the financial crisis from 2008, the refugee crisis from 2015 and the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Despite the transnational nature of these crises the crisis-management competences within the European Union largely remain with the Member States. With different degree of centralization in national systems crisis-management competences often lie on the national, subnational, or regional level resulting in a multilevel governance structure in European transboundary crisis-responses. Since transboundary crises, like the current Covid-19 pandemic, easily cross geographical, political, and legal boundaries this means that many (inter)national actors are involved in the crisis-management process. Without supranational coordination critical information is hidden in technical concepts, clashing paradigms and different languages (Boin 2019). This paper researches the influence of institutionalized cross-border cooperation (ICBC) on the transboundary crisis response of Germany and the Netherlands. It argues that established ICBC can booster the effectiveness of a transboundary crisis response by providing crisis-managers with additional organizational capacity to enhance their sensemaking, response coordination and meaning making capacities.

- 29. Hasselmann, Donata (2021), Corona trifft Minderheiten besonders hart, <https://mediendienst-integration.de/artikel/corona-trifft-minderheiten-besonders-hart.html> (5. 11. 2022).**

A disproportionate number of members of minorities died from Covid-19 in the UK. This was shown by a study in the summer of 2020. The sociologist Aleksandra Lewicki (University of Sussex) said in an interview that it could be similar in Germany. There was no data on this in this country at that time.

- 30. Huffstetler, Hanna E., Williams, Caitlin R., Meier, Benjamin M. & the UNC Health and Human Rights Working Group, (2021), Human rights in domestic responses to the COVID-19 pandemic: preliminary findings from a media-coverage database to track human rights violations. *The Lancet Global Health*, Volume 9, Special Issue, S16, March 01,**



[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/350016131\\_Human\\_rights\\_in\\_domestic\\_responses\\_to\\_the\\_COVID-19\\_pandemic\\_preliminary\\_findings\\_from\\_a\\_media-coverage\\_database\\_to\\_track\\_human\\_rights\\_violations](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/350016131_Human_rights_in_domestic_responses_to_the_COVID-19_pandemic_preliminary_findings_from_a_media-coverage_database_to_track_human_rights_violations).

## Abstract

**Background** As COVID-19 has spread throughout the world, domestic public health responses have neglected human rights. Human rights are crucial to public health promotion, yet there are significant gaps in how human rights are being monitored during the pandemic response. Existing efforts to track potential human rights violations in domestic responses to COVID-19 are neither comparative nor comprehensive. To fill this gap, we developed a novel, comparative database to systematically track media coverage of potential human rights violations. Using these data, we examine how public health policies impacted human rights realisation across countries during the first 3 months of the pandemic. **Methods** We used a systematic qualitative coding methodology to examine the extent and range of media coverage at the intersection of COVID-19, public health, and human rights. Using a structured key-term search strategy, we searched the NexisUni news database for English-language media reports. Results were screened based on pre-determined eligibility criteria, such as whether the report discussed a public health action (or inaction) in response to COVID-19 and described the human rights implications of that action (or inaction). Reports were coded by geographic location, type of public health response, human rights implications, and populations impacted. To guide the coding process, we developed a codebook based on WHO frameworks in public health and UN frameworks in human rights. **Findings** In the first 3 months of the pandemic, media coverage of domestic public health responses to COVID-19 increased rapidly as the crisis escalated. This coverage included a wide range of public health actions that impacted human rights across six geographic regions. We identified 17 public health actions that impact 24 distinct human rights, and noted that domestic public health responses were reported to have consequences for the range of civil, political, economic, and social rights that underlie public health. For example, domestic actions to implement lockdown measures were reported to have implications for the human rights to life, liberty and security of person, health, work, and education. These effects were reported to have been experienced differently across national contexts and disproportionately impacted the human rights of particular groups, including women and minority populations. **Interpretation** Public health and human rights are inextricably linked in the COVID-19 pandemic. Ongoing data collection and comparative analysis can inform domestic best practices and future pandemic preparedness efforts. Our comparative database provides a foundation for future research that examines the public health impacts of human rights violations in the pandemic response.

- 31. Josipovič, Damir, (2021), Regionalno-geografski in demografski učinki pandemije covid-19 v Sloveniji s posebnim poudarkom na obmejnem območju ob slovensko-hrvaški meji [Regional-Geographic and Demographic Impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic in Slovenia with a Special Emphasis on the Border Area along the Slovene-Croatian Border]. In: Munda Hirnök, Katalin, ed. & Novak-Lukanovič, Sonja, ed. (2021), *Svet je postal drugačen: vpliv covida-19 na etnične manjšine in obmejni prostor v Sloveniji in sosednjih državah*. Ljubljana, Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja, (pages 310–327).**



## Abstract

The article aims to assess the impacts of the pandemic on selected demographic indicators. It explores regional deviations from national averages in excess and premature mortality and their spatial dynamics, focusing on the border area along the Slovene-Croatian border. Other demographic implications of the pandemic include reduced fertility and an increased number of fatalities (accidents and suicides). Analyses reveal that excess mortality by municipality presents a different pattern compared to Covid-19 related deaths. Demographically, the border municipalities are more at risk, especially those along the Slovene-Croatian border where excess and premature mortality increased despite a lower share of Covid-19 related deaths.

### **32. Jurić Pahor, Marija, (2020), *Border as Method: Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the Border Area between Italy and Slovenia and on the Slovene Minority in Italy. Treatises and Documents - Journal of Ethnic Studies, 85, (57–81).***

## Abstract

The first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated that the “border as method” (Mezzarda & Neilson) is paradigmatically established and proliferates in the borderland of a nation-state. Analysing the prevailing political, media and public discourse and focusing on the border area between Italy and Slovenia, the article illustrates that borders are not located only on the edges of a territory, but also extend inside and outside such. They are part of broader social processes of border internalisation in the management of population movements. During the pandemic, the tendency to strengthen control of the Schengen border and of the border between Italy and Slovenia gained new impetus. The border was invoked in relation to the risk of infection, thus implying adiphorisation and exclusion (“We are not Italy!”), and also as the locus that – particularly among the Slovene minority and the people living along the border – raised awareness about the need for empathic, cross-border and European integration in the sense of transcending national borders.

### **33. Jurić Pahor, Marija, (2021), *Meja kot metoda: vpliv pandemije covid-19 na mejno območje med Italijo in Slovenijo ter na slovensko narodno skupnost v Italiji [Border as Method: Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the Border Area between Italy and Slovenia and on the Slovene National Community in Italy]. In: Munda Hirnök, Katalin, ed. & Novak-Lukanovič, Sonja, ed. (2021), *Svet je postal drugačen: vpliv covid-19 na etnične manjšine in obmejni prostor v Sloveniji in sosednjih državah*. Ljubljana, Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja, (pages 27–61).***

## Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic – the article covers the period between the first wave starting in March 2020 and the onset of the fourth wave in September and in the first three weeks of October 2021 – has revealed that ‘border as method’ (Mezzarda & Neilson) is paradigmatically established and proliferates in the borderland of a nation-state. Analysing the prevailing political, media and public

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discourse and focusing on the border area between Italy and Slovenia, the article illustrates that borders are not located only on the edges of a territory, but also extend inside and outside such. They are part of broader social processes of border internalisation in the management of population movements, especially “illegal” migrations. During the pandemic, the tendency to strengthen control of the Schengen border and the border between Italy and Slovenia gained new impetus, with “joint” or “mixed patrols” being set up again or anew. The border was invoked in an imaginary of “general (un)security”, related to the idea of military defence of the national territory and implying adiaphorisation and exclusion (“We are not Italy!”). It was further considered the locus that – particularly among the Slovene minority, the authorities and the people living along the border – raised awareness about the need for empathic, cross-border and European integration in the sense of transcending national borders. The findings are supported by a public opinion poll conducted in July and August 2021 as part of the Slovenhood Dimensions between Local and Global at the Beginning of the Third Millennium research programme (P5-0409), more precisely, the section relating to the Italian border area. The article also addresses the efforts undertaken by the President of the Republic of Slovenia Borut Pahor and the President of the Italian Republic Sergio Mattarella to create a cross-border culture of coexistence (return of the Narodni dom of Trieste to the Slovene national community; the symbolic hand-shaking at the Basovizza monuments; the official visit to Gorizia and Nova Gorica sharing the title of European Capital of Culture in 2025 under the motto GO! Borderless).

- 34. Katikireddi, S.V., Lal, S. Carrol, E.D. et al, (2021), Unequal impact of COVID-19 crisis on minority ethnic groups: a framework for understanding and addressing inequalities. *Epidemiol Community Health*. pp. 970-974.  
<https://jech.bmj.com/content/jech/75/10/970.full.pdf> (15. 12. 2022).**

The paper addresses a framework for understanding ethnic inequalities in COVID -19 suggesting six ways through which differences in health outcomes due to the pandemic could arise: differential exposure to the virus, differential vulnerability, differential health consequences, differential social consequences, differential effectiveness of pandemic control measures and differential adverse consequences of control measures. Based on the evidence from the USA and the UK, authors initiate their research by claiming that minority ethnic groups have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. They are using the term ethnicity which includes the concept of race and consider racial inequalities as core to ethnic inequalities. However it is clearly stated that health and related experiences of minority ethnic groups are not homogenous and that multiple dimensions of ethnicity influence health through their interaction with wider processes. For example although ethnic inequalities in health are mostly related to socioeconomic differences, they are other factors involved such as discrimination. The authors provide a brief introduction of mentioned six pathways focusing on relevant studies trying to show how it might be relevant to ethnic inequalities rising from the pandemic. The research concludes “that unequal impacts of the pandemic can be mitigated through more comprehensive and evidence informed action at each of the pathways” (pp. 973). This paper presents a first step towards more elaborate thinking on ethnic inequalities in COVID -19 by highlighting mechanisms through which structural racism operates.



- 35. Koren, Ivana (2021) Distance learning for Roma students in the 2019/2020 school year during the COVID-19 pandemic [Nastava na daljinu kod učenika romske nacionalnosti u školskoj godini 2019./2020. za vrijeme pandemije COVID-19.] Master's Thesis**  
<https://repozitorij.ufzg.unizg.hr/islandora/object/ufzg%3A2458/datastream/PDF/view>  
(22. 02. 2023).

This master's thesis focuses on difficulties encountered by the members of Roma national minority in terms of access to education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Apart from the general overview of the position of the Roma national minority in Croatia and problems that Roma pupils come across in their education in ordinary circumstances, it specially focuses on the model of distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic during 2019/2020 school year and identifying vulnerable groups of pupils in practicing that model. Apart from pupils with learning difficulties and those with unfavourable socio-economic status, the author particularly focuses on pupils of minority background. In the case of Roma pupils, unfavourable socio-economic status is what made disproportionately vulnerable. The research (interviews) was conducted in three primary schools in Međimurje county as well as Roma settlement/village Piškorovec.

Summary: "... a study was conducted which examined the success of online classes for Roma national minority students in the 2019/2020 school year, the attitude of Roma students towards work, how students and parents of the Roma national minority coped in the challenges of distance learning and the difficulties they encountered. The research was conducted in the area of Međimurje County, which has the largest number of Roma population in the Republic of Croatia. The conducted research confirmed the difficult and ungrateful position of Roma students during online classes. According to teachers, students of the Roma national minority did not have the same conditions for following online classes as students of the majority population. Poor social and material conditions, lack of understanding of the Croatian language, and low educational status of parents additionally affected the monitoring of teaching content, which is difficult for this group of students to follow. Despite poor remote monitoring conditions, progress in the education of Roma populations remains visible."

- 36. Korunovska, N. & Jovanovic, Z. (2020) Roma in the COVID-19 Crisis. An Early Warning from Six EU Member States. Open Society Foundation.**  
<https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/publications/roma-in-the-covid-19-crisis> (27. 2. 2022).

The report focuses on Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovakia and Spain, all EU member states that have not responded with proportionate attention to the much higher risk of death from COVID-19 in Roma communities. Urgent measures that should be calibrated in each country are listed. Roma communities in Europe face a much higher risk of death from COVID -19, as already in the richest continent on Earth, 80 percent of Roma surveyed live below their country's threshold for being at risk of poverty; about 30 percent live in housing without tap water, and every third Roma child lives in a household where someone went to bed hungry at least once in the previous



month and the number of Roma children in segregated, substandard education increased by half. The report predicts that COVID-19 crisis will not only affect the Roma but also mainstream societies, economies and politics and heighten interethnic conflict to a level not seen in the last three decades. The recommendations aimed at EU institutions and national governments are divided in seven categories: health measures, security measures, emergency and humanitarian measures, social measures, education measures, economic measures and disinformation measures, within which urgent and long-term recommendations are listed.

**37. Kovács, Attila, Göncz, László, (2020), The Hungarian National Community in Slovenia and the Covid-19 Epidemic. *Treatises and Documents - Journal of Ethnic Studies*, 85, (181–202).**

Abstract

Based on interviews and newspaper and internet sources, the study explores the impact of Covid-19 and the related measures on the life of the Hungarian national community in Slovenia during the first wave of the epidemic, i.e. from 12 March to 31 May 2020. Members of the Hungarian national community and their respective institutions, as well as all residents of the border area, were directly affected mainly by border closure, since following the democratic processes after the 1990s, and especially after accession to the European Union, life in the border zone had changed in both qualitative and quantitative terms. In the last decade, residents of the border area on both sides of the border have been integrated in the economic, transport, educational, cultural and sports life of the neighbouring country, their homeland.

**38. Kovács, Attila, (2021), Madžarska narodna skupnost in epidemija boleznii covid-19 v letu 2020 in 2021 [The Hungarian National Community and the Covid-19 Pandemic in 2020 and 2021]. In: Munda Hirnök, Katalin, ed. & Novak-Lukanovič, Sonja, ed. (2021), *Svet je postal drugačen: vpliv covid-19 na etnične manjšine in obmejni prostor v Sloveniji in sosednjih državah*. Ljubljana, Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja, (pages 174–212).**

Abstract

Based on interviews and newspaper and internet sources, the article explores the impact of Covid-19 and related measures on the life of the Hungarian national community in Slovenia during the first and second waves of the pandemic, i.e. from 12 March 2020 to 15 June 2021. Members of the Hungarian national community and their respective institutions, as well as all residents of the border area, were mainly affected by border closure since following the democratic processes in the 1990s and especially after accession to the European Union, life in the border zone changed in both qualitative and quantitative terms. For the past ten years, residents of the border area on both sides of the border have been integrated into the economic, transport, educational, cultural and sports life of the neighbouring kin state.



- 39. Kumar, Bernadette N., Hargreaves, Sally, Agyemang, Charles, James, Rosemary A., Blanchet, Karl & Gruer, Laurence, (2021), Reducing the impact of the coronavirus on disadvantaged migrants and ethnic minorities. *European Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 31, Supplement 4, (iv9–iv13).**

Studies from several countries have shown that the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected migrants. Many have numerous risk factors making them vulnerable to infection and poor clinical outcome. Policies to mitigate this effect need to take into account public health principles of inclusion, universal health coverage and the right to health. In addition, the migrant health agenda has been compromised by the suspension of asylum processes and resettlement, border closures, increased deportations and lockdown of camps and excessively restrictive public health measures. International organizations including the World Health Organization and the World Bank have recommended measures to actively counter racism, xenophobia and discrimination by systemically including migrants in the COVID-19 pandemic response. Such recommendations include issuing additional support, targeted communication and reducing barriers to accessing health services and information. Some countries have had specific policies and outreach to migrant groups, including facilitating vaccination. Measures and policies targeting migrants should be evaluated, and good models disseminated widely.

- 40. Madrigal-Borloz, Victor (2020), Violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Report of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. United Nations General Assembly. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3883083?ln=en>.**

In the present report, the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, Victor Madrigal-Borloz, discusses the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) and gender-diverse persons, communities and/or populations. The Independent Expert analyses the impact of the pandemic on social exclusion and violence and the interaction with institutional drivers of stigma and discrimination. He also analyses measures adopted in the context of the pandemic aimed at persecuting LGBT and gender-diverse persons or with indirect or unintended discriminatory effects and identifies good practice.

- 41. Matache, Margareta, & Bhabha, Jacqueline, (2020), Anti-Roma Racism is Spiraling during COVID-19 Pandemic. *Health and Human Rights Journal*, Volume 22, Issue 1, (379–382).**

Abstract

The article writes about the discriminatory treatment of Europe's Roma minority in the times of the covid-19 pandemic. It reports about states (Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria) enacting disproportionate or militarised measures targeting Romani neighbourhoods or towns. Some of



these measures were driven by a racist narrative that casts Roma as a collective health and safety threat.

The article also presents cases of media broadcasting narratives blaming Roma, especially those recently returning from other countries, for spreading COVID-19. It points out that the Romanian media is one of the worst examples.

**42. Matković, Teo & Lucić, Marko, (2012), “All in the Same Boat? Differences in Employment Experience and Risks During the First Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Croatia”. *Sociologija i prostor: časopis za istraživanje prostornoga i sociokulturnog razvoja*, Vol. 59 No. 219, pp. 153–186.**

### Abstract

Experience of work amidst the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic was subject to disruptions for most of the employed. According to results of the initial wave of a panel survey research (SOCRES project) conducted between August 20 and October 2 2020, analysed in this paper, six out of seven employed in Croatia encountered some of the observed workplace-related events (furlough, reduced workload, receiving state wage subsidies, working from home, disrupted work-life balance, wage reduction). We grouped the employed respondents into six segments considering epidemiological restrictions and support measures directly affecting the labour market. We examined differences in the incidence of disruptive events, in particular the disrupted work-life balance and reduction in wage and household income. We also examined differences in the perception of situation, contact with the virus, and self-reported health deterioration. Sociodemographic traits (education level, household type and composition, age, gender) and the role of wage subsidies were accounted for in explaining the variation in outcomes. Few inequalities between employment segments were found beyond those obviously arising from interventions. We found adverse effects of disruptive workplace events on earnings, perception of the situation and self-reported health deterioration. A drop in earnings occurred most often among the self-employed and disrupted work-life balance among educators and healthcare workers. Broad state support via wage subsidy amounting close to minimum wage reassured workers, yet was insufficient to compensate. The necessity of robust and effective lockdown-proof public education and care services came to fore during the initial wave of the pandemic, as all the workers had to engage in providing those within the family, leading to increasing work-life balance challenges.

### Summary

This paper use data from the survey of the project “The social resilience of Croatian society in the midst and aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic” (SOCRES). “The telephone-based survey was executed by the Valicon company between August 20 and October 2 2020, and reached a total of 1,512 adult respondents. This includes 1,212 respondents sampled from the population of households with listed land-line phones, and 300-respondent booster drawn from the pool of the Valicon “JaZnam” panel. With respect to working life, this survey contained questions on employment status and occupation of respondents immediately prior to the pandemic and during the survey rollout, whether they changed job or have lost job due to the pandemic, and a set of items regarding



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work-related changes since the onset of the pandemic. This survey acted as the initial round of an ongoing panel design, and relied upon a retrospective recollection on the period from the onset of the pandemic until the time of the interview (that is, about previous 6-7 months). The data used in the analysis was weighted using RIM method, accounting for region, settlement size, gender, age group and education level.” – the survey did not include minority status or minority related questions.

**43. Munda Hirnök, Katalin, (2020), Impact of the Covid-19 Coronavirus Disease Pandemic on Slovene Organisations and Institutions in the Raba Region. Treatises and Documents - Journal of Ethnic Studies, 85, (165–179).**

Abstract

The article provides an analysis of the activities of Slovene organisations and institutions in the Raba Region during the first wave of the Covid-19 epidemic. Initially, the author points to the vulnerability of the Slovene national community, which is closely related to historical circumstances. The study of articles published in electronic media and the analysis of the results of online surveys and semi-structured interviews with Slovene minority organisations and institutions in the Raba Region suggest that the Slovene national community adapted to the new normality and coped with the challenges brought by the epidemic relatively well. The closure of border crossings between the Raba Region and Goričko cut cross-border contacts, thus affecting the Slovene minority in all areas of life and stirring discomfort and criticism among the Slovenes from the Raba Region. Due to the unpredictable course of the Covid-19 epidemic, it is not yet possible to anticipate any long-term consequences thereof for the activity of Slovene organisations in the Raba Region.

**44. Munda Hirnök Katalin, (2021), Delovanje slovenskih organizacij in institucij v Porabju v času pandemije covida-19 [Activities of Slovene Organisations and Institutions in the Raba Region during the Covid-19 Pandemic]. In: Munda Hirnök, Katalin, ed. & Novak-Lukanovič, Sonja, ed. (2021), *Svet je postal drugačen: vpliv covida-19 na etnične manjšine in obmejni prostor v Sloveniji in sosednjih državah*. Ljubljana, Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja, (pages 148–172).**

Abstract

In 2020 and 2021, the Covid-19 pandemic strongly impacted all aspects of the life of Slovenes in the Raba Region who are still struggling with the legacy of their marginalisation. Based on online surveys, interviews with the heads of central Slovene organisations, and analyses of newspaper and radio reports, the article explores how Covid-19, its consequences and the measures taken by Hungary (as well as Slovenia) affected the activities of central Slovene organisations and institutions and the Slovene community in the Raba Region. Despite the state of emergency, the activities of Slovene organisations continued – several planned programmes may have been cancelled and postponed, but with new forms of work and new content, they were able to manage the consequences in areas that are vital to the further development of the Slovene community. The

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closure of border crossings between the Raba and Goričko regions and special border crossing regimes severely affected the Slovene community and hampered the established overall cross-border cooperation with the Goričko region. The opinions about the consequences of the pandemic expressed in the interviews suggest that the respondents are well aware of the negative impact of Covid-19 on their present life and of the risk posed by the pandemic to the future activities of Slovene organisations.

**45. OECD, (2022), The unequal impact of COVID-19: A spotlight on frontline workers, migrants and racial/ethnic minorities.**

[https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=1133\\_1133188-1q9ii66g9w&title=The-unequal-impact-of-COVID-19-A-spotlight-on-frontline-workers-migrants-and-racial-ethnic-minorities](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=1133_1133188-1q9ii66g9w&title=The-unequal-impact-of-COVID-19-A-spotlight-on-frontline-workers-migrants-and-racial-ethnic-minorities) (18. 10. 2022).

= the report is about socio-economic consequences of the covid-19 for vulnerable groups (I focused only on migrants and racial/ethnic minorities) in OECD countries though it does not mention crisis management.

p. 8/ The COVID-19 crisis hit hard employment of both native and foreign-born workers, but the negative effect was generally stronger for the latter. In Q2 2020, on average across the 28 countries [European + USA and Canada] considered, employment (as a proportion of the working age population) fell relative to the same quarter of the year before by 3.3 percentage points for the foreign-born and 2.3 percentage points for the natives. There was however significant variation across countries. /.../ The initial impact of the crisis was smaller for migrants than for the native-born only in 9 of the 28 countries considered.

Part of the overexposure of migrants to the crisis is explained by their higher concentration in sectors hit harder by the crisis, such as domestic services and hospitality. In the EU, for example, immigrants account for about 12% of the population, but for more than a quarter of employment in the hospitality industry. But migrants were also disproportionately affected by job losses within the sectors that saw larger employment losses. /.../ Besides their sectoral concentration, migrants face a number of additional vulnerabilities in the labour market. They are overrepresented among employees with temporary contracts and low wages and typically have fewer networks to rely upon in times of economic downturn. There is also evidence that discrimination is more pronounced in times of slack labour markets. Most of the decline in employment at the start of the pandemic translated into an increase in inactivity for both migrants and the native-born (+1.8 percentage points and +2.3 percentage points respectively). This is largely due to the fact that workers were discouraged (or even prevented) from searching for new opportunities due to sanitary restrictions and the general fall in economic activity as measures to contain the spread of the virus were introduced in all countries.

p. 10/ Migrants continued to lag behind even as the economy and labour markets improved with easing or lifting of restrictions in many countries and vaccination campaigns gathering pace. By Q2 2021, on average across the 28 countries, their employment was still 1.3 percentage points lower than the pre-crisis level, compared against 0.6 percentage points for native-born. Due to a range of vulnerabilities such as higher incidence of poverty, overcrowded housing conditions, and



high concentration in jobs where physical distancing is difficult, immigrants are at a much higher risk of COVID-19 infection than the native-born. Studies in a number of OECD countries found an infection risk that is at least twice as high as that of the native-born. /.../ Because most OECD countries do not collect data on race or ethnicity, it is difficult to understand the true extent of persistent labour market disadvantages faced by racial/ethnic minorities in these countries, including where best to start addressing this problem.

**46. Ombudsman [Pučka pravobraniteljica] (2022) Report of the Ombudsman - analysis of the state of human rights and equality in Croatia in 2021 [Izvješće pučke pravobraniteljice – analiza stanja ljudskih prava i jednakosti u Hrvatskoj 2021] (2022).**

<https://www.ombudsman.hr/hr/download/izvjesce-pucke-pravobraniteljice-za-2021-godinu/?wpdmdl=13454&refresh=6247119d58b0c1648824733> (12. 12. 2022).

The Report of the Ombudsman points out the detected problems, but also the positive administrative actions, in the practice of the rights of national minorities and the human rights of minorities and marginalised groups in general in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. It tackles the issues of cultural autonomy, education, media and health:

“In July 2020, the amendments to the Criteria for funding and contracting programs for the cultural autonomy of national minorities enabled that the funds that have been approved for programs of cultural amateurism and manifestations, which had to be cancelled or postponed due to epidemiological reasons, can be used for the procurement of equipment and other functional needs of minority associations and institutions, which proved to be good in 2021 as well.” (p. 94)

After receiving complaints during 2020 that pointed to the absence of television-mediated minority classes in the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, but also to the lack of textbooks and teaching materials and delays in the translation of textbooks, the Serb national minority associations reported that only at the beginning of 2021, the Ministry of Education made a decision to form an expert team to prepare a plan and record video lessons, as well as that minority institutions organised the classes and provided the materials at their own expense and according to their capabilities. (p. 98)

Ombudsman also initiated a procedure in relation to media reports that in an elementary school attended by mostly Roma children, the infection of COVID-19 is spreading uncontrollably among the pupils, and this is because the parents do not take them to the doctor and do not follow the prescribed measures. However, the media did not collect all the available data when reporting, which was then reported to the Council for Electronic Media and the Croatian Journalists' Association by the Ombudsman, which collected the information from the county institute for public health and the school medicine doctor. Furthermore, although data on the number of deaths and cases of COVID-19 in Roma settlements are not available, Ombudsman recommend that the Ministry of Health continue to improve their health care through direct work in communities and by informing Roma about the usefulness of vaccination, especially since due to the higher prevalence of chronic diseases and those with poorer general health are additionally vulnerable in the context of an epidemic. (p. 105)



The conditions in the Reception Center for seekers of international protection in 2021 were not completely satisfactory. From August 25 to September 15, the shelter had no hot water, which affected the quality of life and hygiene standards. Due to epidemiological measures, most CSOs did not have access to the Reception Center and applicants could not even use their WiFi. It is positive that stateless persons and persons who didn't have a regulated status in Croatia could be vaccinated even without personal documents and personal identification number and were issued a vaccination certificate. Institutions such as Croatian Red Cross also played an important role, sharing information about the epidemic and vaccination in languages known to the seekers (p. 109).

**47. Ombudsman [Pučka pravobraniteljica] (2022) The impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on human rights and equality - recommendations for strengthening resilience to future crises [Utjecaj epidemije COVID-19 na ljudska prava i jednakost – preporuke za jačanje otpornosti na buduće krize]**

<https://www.ombudsman.hr/hr/posebno-izvjesce-pucke-pravobraniteljice-hrvatskom-saboru-s-ciljem-jacanja-otpornosti-hrvatske-na-krize-poput-epidemije/> (12. 12. 2022).

The Report analyzes issues such as unequal access to healthcare services; difficulties related to the organization and implementation of vaccination; impact of epidemiological measures on rights from labor relations; restrictions on public gatherings and freedom of movement; the impact of epidemiological measures to the elderly, young, socially vulnerable, Roma, migrants, persons deprived of liberty, women, persons with disabled and children, especially with developmental difficulties.

“When mitigating the consequences of the epidemic, the heterogeneity of young people as a group should be kept in mind as well as circumstances that affect their opportunities, such as the fact that some of them come from rural areas and subsidized areas, from families with weaker financial status, that they belong to ethnic, national or gender and sexual minorities... (p. 19)

“Although we already warned at the beginning of the epidemic about the importance of preventing the spread of the coronavirus in Roma settlements and the necessity of securing aid, given that as many as 92% of Roma households in the Republic of Croatia live below of the poverty risk threshold (46), initiatives to provide them with protective and hygienic means were scarce, and distributed funds were not sufficient to meet real needs.

With the growth of unemployment, the (few) Roma employed in the service sector and those who worked undeclared or for wages, and therefore did not meet the conditions for state aid. Additionally, the ban on leaving residence and permanent residence reduced the possibilities of earning for those who deal with the collection of secondary raw materials.

Due to the bans in public transport, administrative institutions and health services have become even more inaccessible to Roma. Since almost half of Roma live in localities without food stores, some families lacked even the most basic foodstuffs. Likewise, there is no pharmacy in half of the localities nor there is one nearby, which is why in the circumstances of greater need for medical products, lack of public transportation also had negative consequences on their health. High degree of material deprivation and poverty due to which 61.5% of Roma in regular circumstances cannot

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afford to pay for medicine or medical services, in epidemic circumstances, in which all citizens had to finance their medical protection products, contributed to greater exposure to infection and illness of Roma.

The lack of appropriate housing associated with poverty became an additional negative in the epidemic factor. (...) Due to the closure of schools, Roma families were left without various forms of support, which further reduced the possibility of their children's success in education. (...)

(...)National Vaccination Plan provided for priority vaccination of persons in collective housing or communities where physical distance cannot be maintained, however, Roma are not were listed among the priority groups.

Rare positive examples are the brochure published by Teaching institute for Public Health "Dr. Andrija Štampar" in Roma language with basic information on the coronavirus, published at the beginning of the epidemic, and vaccination organized at the end of 2021 in several Roma settlements by Public health institute of Međimurska County with partners." (p. 21-22.)

**48. Platt, Lucinda, (2021), COVID-19 and Ethnic Inequalities in England. *LSE Public Policy Review*, Vol. 1, No. 4, (1–14). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31389/lseppr.33>.**

Abstract

Ethnic minorities have been particularly hard-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, in terms of both mortality risks and economic impacts. This has been widely recognised in the UK and elsewhere, and there has been extensive analysis of mortality risks and a burgeoning number of reports reflecting on the wider inequalities associated with them. Yet, despite occupation being flagged as a key differentiator in the experience of ethnic minority groups, there has been little systematic investigation of how far the occupations of both immigrants and British-born ethnic minorities are linked to the negative consequences of the pandemic. In addition, most analysis has focused on the consequences of lockdowns and mortality risks for individuals, rather than considering the implications for the wider household and family. In this paper, I argue that, while not the only factors shaping vulnerability to COVID-19, we can shed further light on ethnic inequalities in the experience of COVID-19 if we pay greater attention to employment patterns and occupational distributions across ethnic groups and within families. It is also relevant to ascertain the extent to which these patterns do or do not dissipate across generations to identify enduring cleavages within the population and the longer, as well as the shorter, term implications of the pandemic for ethnic inequalities.

**49. Platt, Lucinda (2021) Why ethnic minorities are bearing the brunt of COVID-19. <https://www.lse.ac.uk/research/research-for-the-world/race-equity/why-ethnic-minorities-are-bearing-the-brunt-of-covid-19> (08. 11. 2022).**

The paper analyzes the disproportionate effect of COVID-19 on ethnic minorities in the UK. The effects that it looks into are those related to health and economic consequences. It points out to



some evidence that health workers who died of COVID-19 were predominantly ethnic minorities, and that death rates were higher in the areas mostly inhabited by ethnic minorities. It then goes on to discover whether higher number of deaths among black and Asian communities, detected in a study of hospital admissions, has anything to do with ethnic inequalities. It also points out to economic impact of lockdown on different social groups – and the lack of specific reference to ethnic minorities in the research that had been done up to that point. A claim that “It was important to consider in parallel ethnic differences in both the health and economic impacts of COVID-19” was main driving force behind research done by Lucinda Platt (LSE) and Ross Warwick (Institute for Fiscal Studies) – “Are some ethnic groups more vulnerable to COVID-19 than others”. They published their study already in May 2020. Their study shows that “that almost all minority ethnic groups had higher risks of dying from COVID-19 than the white British majority of a comparable age”. They point out to subsequent studies which further confirmed their initial findings. “Our study also explored some of the potential reasons for the higher risk to ethnic minorities: greater likelihood of working in health and social care key worker occupations, (...) greater chances of having a health condition that made them especially vulnerable to COVID, (...) and greater chances of living with others or in more densely occupied or overcrowded areas.”

**50. Platt, Lucinda & Warwick Ross (2020), Are some ethnic groups more vulnerable to COVID-19 than others?. The IFS Deaton Review.**

<https://ifs.org.uk/publications/are-some-ethnic-groups-more-vulnerable-covid-19-others>  
(08. 11. 2022).

“The COVID-19 pandemic has affected some sections of the population more than others, and there are growing concerns that the UK’s minority ethnic groups are being disproportionately affected. Following evidence that minority groups are over-represented in hospitalisations and deaths from the virus, Public Health England has launched an inquiry into the issue.

In the short term, ethnic inequalities are likely to manifest from the COVID-19 crisis in two main ways:

- through exposure to infection and health risks, including mortality;
- through exposure to loss of income.

Analysis of ethnic disproportionalities in health outcomes that aggregates groups together masks much of the story with regards to ethnic inequalities, and limits the scope for understanding why they have come about. Moreover, simply comparing mortalities with overall populations fails to take account of key characteristics of different groups that we would expect to lead to different outcomes in the aggregate, such as demographics and place of residence. Accounting for these factors is necessary to understand the true scale of disproportionalities as a starting point for thinking about policy responses.”

**51. Platt, Lucinda & Warwick, Ross, (2020), COVID-19 and Ethnic Inequalities in England and Wales. *Fiscal Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 2, (pp. 259–289), <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/1475-5890.12228>.**



## Abstract

The economic and public health crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed existing inequalities between ethnic groups in England and Wales, as well as creating new ones. We draw on current mortality and case data, alongside pre-crisis labour force data, to investigate the relative vulnerability of different ethnic groups to adverse health and economic impacts. After accounting for differences in population structure and regional concentration, we show that most minority groups suffered excess mortality compared with the white British majority group. Differences in underlying weather short-term shocks to their income. Documenting these immediate consequences of the crisis reveals the potential for inequalities to become entrenched in the longer term. Health conditions such as diabetes may play a role; so too may occupational exposure to the virus, given the very different labour market profiles of ethnic groups. Distinctive patterns of occupational concentration also highlight the vulnerability of some groups to the economic consequences of social distancing measures, with Bangladeshi and Pakistani men particularly likely to be employed in occupations directly affected by the UK's 'lockdown'. We show that differences in household structures and inequalities in access savings mean that a number of minority groups are also less able to weather short-term shocks to their income. Documenting these immediate consequences of the crisis reveals the potential for inequalities to become entrenched in the longer term.

**52. Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women (2020). United Nations,**  
<https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/Policy-Brief-on-COVID-Impact-on-Women.pdf>.

Across every sphere, from health to the economy, security to social protection, the impacts of COVID-19 are exacerbated for women and girls simply by virtue of their sex:

- > Compounded economic impacts are felt especially by women and girls who are generally earning less, saving less, and holding insecure jobs or living close to poverty.
- > While early reports reveal more men are dying as a result of COVID-19, the health of women generally is adversely impacted through the reallocation of resources and priorities, including sexual and reproductive health services.
- > Unpaid care work has increased, with children out-of-school, heightened care needs of older persons and overwhelmed health services. As the COVID-19 pandemic deepens economic and social stress coupled with restricted movement and social isolation measures, gender-based violence is increasing exponentially. Many women are being forced to 'lockdown' at home with their abusers at the same time that services to support survivors are being disrupted or made inaccessible.
- > All of these impacts are further amplified in contexts of fragility, conflict, and emergencies where social cohesion is already undermined and institutional capacity and services are limited.



### Project funded by



- 53. Primorac, Jaka, (2021), “Izgubljeni prihodi i pronađena solidarnost: utjecaj prvog vala pandemije bolesti COVID-19 na kulturni sektor u jugoistočnoj Europi”, *Sociologija i prostor: časopis za istraživanje prostornoga i sociokulturnog razvoja*, Vol. 59 No. 219, pp. 219–240.**

#### Abstract

The paper presents results of a research on the impact of the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic on the life and work of cultural workers in South-Eastern Europe, which was carried out from May till July 2020. The paper shows how in that period in all of the researched countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Northern Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia) cultural workers noted a significant drop of income, expected decrease in total earnings and continued trend of the necessity of additional work and self-exploiting practices. In the researched countries, the measures for minimizing the negative impact of the pandemic on the cultural sector were mainly not adopted at the local level. If they were adopted on the national level, these predominantly included one-time assistance to artists and cultural workers, and selected indirect measures, where a difference between EU Member States and those outside of the EU exists. The data shows a limited influence of international foundations and networks on the sector, however, one can note an increase of initiatives and networks of solidarity of professional associations, NGOs and independent cultural workers. The research shows that for the cultural sector in South-Eastern Europe the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about a number of negative consequences, while the early measures in most of the countries were of limited impact and scope. The positive effects are reflected in the strengthening of solidarity within the sector and greater networking among cultural workers, as well as in the strengthening of the view that a new, more sustainable approach to the cultural sector is needed, and which is not based on the market logic.

#### Summary

Although not oriented towards minorities and minority rights it is assumed that cultural rights have been diminished altogether.

- 54. Recommendations for members of Roma national minority [COVID-19] [Preporuke za pripadnike romske nacionalne manjine [COVID-19]]**  
<https://www.stampar.hr/hr/novosti/preporuke-za-pripadnike-romske-nacionalne-manjine-covid-19> (22. 2. 2023).

It is a set of recommendations prepared by the Teaching Institute for Public Health „Dr. Andrija Štampar“ and the Council of the Roma national minority of the City of Zagreb, in Croatian and Roma language. It contains general information about the disease and on important protection measures: "What do we need to know about COVID-19?", "How to avoid infection?" and instructions on "Self-isolation". The material was distributed through social media. This activity was part of the Action plan of the City of Zagreb for the Implementation of the National Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma for the period from 2013 to 2020, specifically the measure aimed at



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improving the health of members of the Roma national minority and the quality and availability of health services, as well as raising the level of awareness of Roma population about responsibility for their own health.

**55. Riman, Barbara, (2020), The Slovenian Community in Croatia during the Covid-19 Pandemic. *Treatises and Documents - Journal of Ethnic Studies*, 85, (119–137).**

Abstract

The article analyses the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the life and work of the Slovenian community in Croatia, focusing on the attitude of the Republic of Slovenia towards the members of such community and the challenges they encountered in maintaining contacts with Slovenia. The article studies Slovenian and Croatian media reports as well as documents published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia. In addition, it examines data obtained from interviewees who live in the border area and/or are active members of the Slovenian community in Croatia. The testimonies largely relate to changes of the border regime that have affected the interviewees' private and professional life. The processes resulting from the measures adopted to tackle the pandemic have indeed left a deep imprint on the lives of the members of the Slovenian community in Croatia.

**56. Riman, Barbara, (2021), Delovanje slovenskih kulturnih društev na Hrvaškem v času covid-19 [Activities of Slovene Cultural Societies in Croatia during the Covid-19 Pandemic]. In: Munda Hirnök, Katalin, ed. & Novak-Lukanovič, Sonja, ed. (2021), *Svet je postal drugačen: vpliv covid-19 na etnične manjšine in obmejni prostor v Sloveniji in sosednjih državah*. Ljubljana, Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja, (pages 214–240).**

Abstract

The article explores the activities of 16 Slovene societies in Croatia at the onset and during the Covid-19 pandemic. The study, which took place from March 2020 to August 2021, reveals that Slovene societies underwent considerable changes. Already in the first pandemic wave, once traditional cultural societies with elderly membership rapidly adapted to the new digital reality. The article presents the respondents' views about measures and ways in which Slovene societies adapted to the new situation. One can conclude that the societies continued to pursue their goals and carried on with activities related to the preservation of the Slovene language and culture. Nearly two years from the start of the pandemic, it is evident that those societies which had their own staff and premises adapted more easily. The new situation and the elderly members' lack of skills to cope with the digital world made the leaders of Slovene societies reflect on the future and the importance of attracting younger generations into active membership in Slovene societies in Croatia.



**57. Sharifah, Sekalala & Forman, Lisa & Habibi, Roojin & Meier, Benjamin Mason, (2020), Health and human rights are inextricably linked in the COVID-19 response. *BMJ Global Health*, 5:e003359. doi:10.1136/bmjgh-2020-00335, 1–7, <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/bd7a543b-3cd2-34d2-80cf-0bdbedf44a2f/Health%20and%20human%20rights%20are%20inextricably%20linked%20in%20the%20COVID-19%20response%20.pdf>.**

## Abstract

To mitigate the spread of COVID-19, governments throughout the world have introduced emergency measures that constrain individual freedoms, social and economic rights and global solidarity. These regulatory measures have closed schools, workplaces and transit systems, cancelled public gatherings, introduced mandatory home confinement and deployed large-scale electronic surveillance. In doing so, human rights obligations are rarely addressed, despite how significantly they are impacted by the pandemic response. The norms and principles of human rights should guide government responses to COVID-19, with these rights strengthening the public health response to COVID-19.

## Summary box

- There is an inextricable linkage between health and human rights, first identified in the early response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which has evolved over 30 years to provide a human rights foundation for the COVID-19 response.
- Human rights should guide government responses to COVID-19, strengthening the public health response to COVID-19 by: framing restrictions on individual liberties, managing COVID-19's impacts on medical care, public health and social and economic rights, and realising global solidarity through international collaboration and assistance.
- Many governments have introduced emergency laws in response to COVID-19 that restrict individual rights, including limitations on the freedom of movement through home confinement and limitations on the right to privacy through public health surveillance.
- While pandemics may require restrictions of individual rights to protect public health, these limitations must be necessary (following proper scientific evidence), proportionate (to the public health threat and time limited) and non-arbitrary (non-discriminatory).
- To ensure that public health measures employ a rights-based approach to health, governments must prioritise protecting the most vulnerable people in society through transparent policymaking and public participation.
- Beyond respect for individual liberties, states also bear obligations under the human right to health to ensure available, accessible, acceptable and good quality health responses to prevent and treat COVID-19.
- A wide range of economic and social rights are necessary to support underlying determinants of health through periods of physical distancing, including rights to work, social security, housing, food, water and sanitation.
- Governments have shared responsibilities to provide international assistance and collaboration to realise access to food, essential supplies, and testing and medical support in overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic through global solidarity.



## Project funded by



**58. Sorgo, Lara, Novak Lukanovič, Sonja, (2020), The Italian National Community in Slovenia during the Covid-19 Epidemic. *Treatises and Documents - Journal of Ethnic Studies*, 85, (101–117).**

Abstract

The article presents the views and opinions of the members of the Italian national community regarding the organisation of their institutions and schools and regarding state borders with Italy and Croatia during the Covid-19 epidemic in Slovenia. The main purpose of the study, which took the form of a telephone interview with members of the Italian national community, was to explore the situation of the Italian national community during this period. The analysis shows that the Italian national community is active mainly in the cultural and social field and that it strives in various ways to preserve its vitality, especially in the field of culture, language and identity. Although the whole world is struggling with a state of emergency and searching for a solution to get life back on track, members of the Italian national community are also aware that they need to find additional ways to fulfil their mission. Education was the fastest to reorganise itself during the epidemic, as it has been promoting the use of ICT for years as an effective way of teaching. However, when teaching takes place entirely remotely, problems also arise, such as difficulty of communication with those parents who do not know Italian well or do not know it well enough. For the youngest pupils, the problem is computer skills, because they are not independent. There are other problems, as well, that need to be solved if classes were to take place online again, such as appropriate support for children with special needs and other vulnerable groups. As regards the border and cross-border cooperation, the psychological consequences of border closure and the difficulties in maintaining family contacts were the most prominent in the respondents' answers. Members of the Italian national community identify themselves on the basis of their language and the environment in which they live, and for them contacts with Italy are vital. Respondents did not provide any specific answers to what to do in case of border closure. In their opinion, more appropriate solutions should probably be found at the national level through an active foreign policy, as well as at the regional level by maintaining good neighbourly relations, with due account of the fact that a similar situation could reoccur. It is important that the Italian national community maintains contacts with the country and nation of origin and that both Italy and Slovenia are willing to cooperate in the development of the minority. This is not only about cultural and linguistic exchanges, but about recognising the presence of the Italian national community as a proof of the presence of Italian identity in the border area of Slovenian Istria. The circumstances in which the Italian national community found itself at the time of the epidemic reinforced the meaning of the word community, which became a fundamental point of reference for members and a connecting element between people. It showed that an individual is important only as a member of a community. The challenges posed by the new circumstances related to Covid-19, which the Italian national community will have to face in the future, are great and unpredictable. But this diversity can also offer new opportunities in the sense of finding new and different ways of working, organising institutions, opening and connecting with the general public, connecting with different generations not only in a narrow local area but in a wider geographical area.



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- 59. Sorgo, Lara & Novak Lukanović, Sonja, (2021), Vpliv epidemije covid-19 v drugem in tretjem valu na italijansko narodno skupnost v Sloveniji [The Impact of the Second and Third Waves of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the Italian National Community in Slovenia]. In: Munda Hirnök, Katalin, ed. & Novak-Lukanović, Sonja, ed. (2021), *Svet je postal drugačen: vpliv covid-19 na etnične manjšine in obmejni prostor v Sloveniji in sosednjih državah*. Ljubljana, Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja, (pages 87–113).**

#### Abstract

The article presents the results of a study on the impact of the second and third waves of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Italian national community in Slovenia. The study was divided into two parts. The first part, conducted among persons of Italian nationality engaged in the activities of the Italian Communities, aimed to explore how they experienced the lockdowns in the second and third waves of the pandemic. The second part involved teachers employed in primary schools with Italian as the language of instruction in Slovene Istria to have a general idea of remote learning. In the first wave of the pandemic, the Italian national community quickly adapted to the new circumstances: it complied with government measures to curb the spread of infections while reorganising its activities to maintain contact with its members. Although the 2020 study did not provide tangible conclusions as to the Italian national community's preparedness should the crisis continue, it nevertheless suggested a reflection on the further monitoring of the situation. The authors note that for the Italian national community, the preservation of language, culture and identity is key. In the changed working conditions dictated by the second and third waves of the pandemic, the Italian national community sought new or different ways to maintain its vitality also in the above area.

- 60. Sun, Nina, Christie, Emily, Cabal, Luisa & Amon, Joseph J., (2022), Human rights in pandemics: criminal and punitive approaches to COVID-19. *BMJ Global Health*, 7:e008232. doi:10.1136/bmjgh-2021-008232, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8889439/>.**

#### Abstract

In the early years of the HIV epidemic, many countries passed laws criminalising HIV non-disclosure, exposure and/or transmission. These responses, intended to limit transmission and punish those viewed as 'irresponsible', have since been found to undermine effective HIV responses by driving people away from diagnosis and increasing stigma towards those living with HIV. With the emergence of COVID-19, human rights and public health advocates raised concerns that countries might again respond with criminal and punitive approaches. To assess the degree to which countries adopted such strategies, 51 English-language emergency orders from 39 countries, representing seven world regions, were selected from the COVID-19 Law Lab, a database of COVID-19 related laws from over 190 countries. Emergency orders were reviewed to assess the type of restrictions identified, enforcement mechanisms and compliance with principles outlined in the Siracusa Principles on the Limitation and Derogation Provisions in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, including legality, legitimate aim, proportionality, non-



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discrimination, limited duration and subject to review. Approximately half of all orders examined included criminal sanctions related to violations of lockdowns. Few orders fully complied with the legal requirements for the limitation of, or derogation from, human rights obligations in public health emergencies. In future pandemics, policymakers should carefully assess the need for criminal and punitive responses and ensure that emergency orders comply with countries' human rights obligations.

### Summary box

- Increasing attention to human rights and to evidence-based approaches has resulted in decreased use of criminal and punitive sanctions in public health policies and interventions, except in times of infectious disease outbreaks and pandemics.
- Countries' human rights obligations continue to apply in public health emergencies and should align with the Siracusa Principles, namely, that any limitation of, or derogation from, rights obligations must be lawful, pursue a legitimate aim, be strictly necessary and proportionate, be non-discriminatory, of limited duration and subject to review.
- An analysis of COVID-19 emergency orders found that approximately half of all orders included criminal sanctions related to violations of lockdowns while few orders applied multiple elements of the Siracusa Principles.
- In the context of public health emergencies, criminalisation and other punitive measures may heighten stigma, undermine trust and disproportionately impact marginalised populations.
- As countries revise their strategies to address public health emergencies, they should align their laws, policies and practices to facilitate more supportive, rights-compliant responses, including critical analysis of whether criminal law has any role to play in public health emergencies.

**61. Trupia, Francesco, (2021), Debunking ‘the Great Equaliser’ Discourse: Minority Perspectives from Bulgaria and Kosovo During the First Shockwave of the Covid-19 Pandemic. *Teorija in praksa*, Vol. 58, special issue, 616–631.**

### Abstract

During the first shockwave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the risk of infection was inaccurately touted as ‘the great equaliser’. However, the virus’ rapid spread and the state of emergency accelerated the magnitude of pre-existing inequalities by taking a heavy toll on already marginalised, exploited and extremely poor segments of societies. Focussing on sub-national contexts in Bulgaria and Kosovo, this article demonstrates how Bulgarian Roma and Kosovo Serbs were not only hit the hardest by the introduction of ad hoc lockdowns and curfews, respectively, but also how disciplinary mechanisms of control and surveillance were embedded in public methods and cultural policies of scapegoating and ascribing images of societal irresponsibility and backwardness upon these two minority groups.

The virus is acting as a great accelerator by deepening and exacerbating the phenomenon of the systematic marginalisation that existed already before March 2020. Namely, an attempt is made to

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further debunk ‘the great equaliser’ discourse by casting a spotlight on how the official safety measures imposed to deal with the spread of SARS-CoV-2 and minimising the risk of contagion have not only deepened the many inequalities, but also subtly reinforced images of a health threat, civil irresponsibility, a lack of deservedness, and backwardness upon already marginalised segments of societies.

**62. UN OHCHR (2020) Leave No One Behind - Racial Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities in the COVID-19 Crisis- Statement by the United Nations Network on Racial Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities (29.04.2020.)**

[https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Minorities/UN\\_Network\\_Racial\\_Discrimination\\_Minorities\\_COVID.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Minorities/UN_Network_Racial_Discrimination_Minorities_COVID.pdf) (17. 01. 2023).

The statement points out to the need of enhancing the efforts to address the protection of vulnerable groups from violence, exclusion and discrimination, emphasizing that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the risk of discrimination and exclusion of marginalized individuals, groups and communities. In this statement, governments are invited to “ make sure that #COVID19 information, guidance and care is available in minority languages, including sign languages, and is age-, disability- and gender-appropriate. Emergency measures should not be used by law enforcement officials to ethnically profile or to discriminate against minorities through arrest or detention or other measures!”

Vulnerable entities here include “minorities, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees, LGBTI, people with disabilities and others.”

Key points of the statement:

“Various reports indicate instances of violence, discrimination, arbitrary denial of services, heightened exclusion or other forms of disparate negative impact in the COVID-19 crisis against minorities including Roma, people of African Descent, people of Asian descent, refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and stateless persons, internally displaced persons and religious minorities, as well as other persons and groups exposed to stigma and/or discrimination such as LGBTI people, indigenous peoples, as well as based on caste.

Political, civic and religious leaders have a crucial role to play in speaking out firmly and promptly against intolerance, discriminatory stereotyping and instances of hate speech.

Emergency measures and their implementation undertaken in response to the COVID-19 outbreak must not involve direct or indirect discrimination (...)

Minority communities may face disparate impact in the sudden loss of livelihood seen as a result of lockdown or large-scale quarantine. In some cases, loss of work has additionally meant loss of health insurance. Minority groups with disproportionate rates of institutionalization or over-representation in criminal justice now face increased risk as a result of close confinement. COVID-19-related death rates among certain minority communities are already alarmingly high.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues has expressed concerns about the absence of information about the pandemic in minority languages, including sign languages.”

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**63. Unsere Corona-Fehler, Da habe ich mich geirrt, *Die Zeit*, 26. Januar 2023, p. 10–11.**

The newspaper brings an interesting topic – (re)thinking about their wrong decisions during Covid-19 Pandemic, which they would not repeat today. 20 important people in Germany (from the prime minister to a virologist) who played an important role during the Covid-19 pandemic, answered on different questions. Answers and thoughts vary widely. They mainly depend on the professional field and role of each individual. They range from thinking that today they would no longer close playgrounds and schools, prohibit visits, would adopt different communication strategies, take different paths regarding vaccinations, etc.

Above all, it is important that the politicians in particular noted that today they would take much more into account the violation of basic human rights, which also include minority rights. A newspaper survey found that 58 percent of Germans would agree to the creation of a parliamentary commission to review wrong decisions during the Covid 19 pandemic.

**64. Wintersteiner, Werner (2020), Die Covid-19 Krise aus einer Global Citizenship Perspektive, The Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution (ASPR), [https://www.aspr.ac.at/fileadmin/Downloads/Presse/Kommentare/Kommentar\\_Global\\_citizenship\\_23-03-2020.pdf](https://www.aspr.ac.at/fileadmin/Downloads/Presse/Kommentare/Kommentar_Global_citizenship_23-03-2020.pdf) (8. 11. 2020).**

Wintersteiner argues that in the spring 2020, countries responded to the virus from a narrow, national(istic) position, as they closed state borders rather quickly. The European Union (EU) did not provide the right answer either. The lack of solidarity within the EU was first observed when the virus spread widely in Italy. Wintersteiner reflected on the implications of such situation for refugees and marginalised communities, pointing to the proliferation of nationalist approaches, practices and discourses (the use of the phrase war against coronavirus across Europe) and the need for critical observation. He suggested political cosmopolitanism as the answer to this problem and highlighted the cooperation among health professionals as the beginning of global solidarity.

**65. Wu, Cary, Qian, Yue & Wilkes, Rima, (2021), Anti-Asian discrimination and the Asian-white mental health gap during COVID-19. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 44, 2021 - Issue 5, (819–835).**

Abstract

In this article, we consider how, due to a spike in anti-Asian hate crimes, Asians might face a disproportionate mental health impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Analyzing data from the University of Southern California's Center for Economic and Social Research Understanding Coronavirus in America survey, we report several findings. First, since the onset of the pandemic, Asians (Asian Americans in particular) have experienced higher levels of mental disorders than whites. Second, Asian Americans and Asian immigrants are about twice as likely as whites to report having encountered instances of COVID-19-related acute discrimination. Third,

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experiences of COVID-19-related discrimination increase mental disorders for all Americans. Finally, COVID-19-related discrimination partially explains the disproportionate mental health impact of the pandemic on Asians. In conclusion, we highlight the importance of tackling hate, violence, and discrimination so as to address the disproportionate mental health impacts of COVID-19 on minority populations.

**66. Zorčič, Sabina, (2021), Učenje na daljavo dopolnilnega pouka maternega jezika in kulture otrok drugih narodnosti v šolskem letu 2020/21 [Remote Remedial Classes in Mother Tongue and Culture for Children of Non-Slovene Nationality in the 2020/21 School Year]. In: Munda Hirnök, Katalin, ed. & Novak-Lukanovič, Sonja, ed. (2021), *Svet je postal drugačen: vpliv covid-19 na etnične manjšine in obmejni prostor v Sloveniji in sosednjih državah*. Ljubljana, Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja, (pages 283–308).**

#### Abstract

In line with its international commitments and the adopted language policy, Slovenia also provides for children enrolled in the Slovene educational system whose mother tongue is not (only) Slovene. The article examines the conduct of remedial classes in mother tongue and culture for children of non-Slovene nationality in the 2020/21 school year when, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, a considerable part of education moved online. The article presents the results of questionnaires and surveys used to identify the ways in which classes were delivered, the manner of communicating with parents and children, the negative and positive impacts of remote learning, and the many adjustments needed for teachers to complete the school year with a satisfactory coverage of the curriculum. The most significant negative impacts of remote learning include the lack of direct social contact and classroom interaction, the lack of most non-verbal communication, and the inability to experience different ways of learning (group work, work in pairs, playing games, etc.). Another negative experience concerns writing (for younger children, this applies to learning different handwriting styles; for older children, this applies to proper spelling) – a skill that bilingual children, who have a better command of the family language in spoken form, need to practice the most. The options currently available to teachers are not sufficient. Further urgent measures to improve remote learning include access to paid videoconferencing applications, better internet connectivity, better technical equipment, a common online platform, while teachers also wish for more e-textbooks, online content and materials. In the 2020/21 school year, the conduct of remedial classes in mother tongue and culture for pupils of non-Slovene nationality was satisfactory. In the long run, however, remote learning is likely to result in a considerable deterioration of knowledge compared to the established methods of language teaching, which is still most effectively delivered in person.

**67. Zorčič, Sabina, (2022), Dimensions of Remote Learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic in Minority Language Schools (The Case of Austrian Carinthia). *Treatises and Documents - Journal of Ethnic Studies*, 85, (223–252).**



## Abstract

Based on a survey conducted among teachers in three schools in Austrian Carinthia where the language of instruction is (also) Slovene, the article examines the impact of remote learning between March and June – i.e. during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic – on a possible deterioration of students' language skills. The results also bring new data and insight into teachers' language accommodation. The results confirm the predominance of reading and writing communication with a minimum use of audiovideo technology. The lower input of verbal communication mainly affected students with (strongly) unbalanced linguistic competence in both languages of instruction. Education is an important factor in reducing inequalities in society; thus, as long as remote learning increases inequality, this form of education should be pursued with some reservations.

**68. Zorko, Marta & Lučev, Josip, (2021), Geographical Patterns and Geo-Economic Reasoning of the Pandemic Consequences: Old Geopolitical “Games” in the Post-COVID Global Order, *Sociologija i prostor : časopis za istraživanje prostornoga i sociokulturnog razvoja*, Vol. 59 No. 219, pp. 89-118. <https://hrcak.srce.hr/255047>.**

## Abstract

The research provides a two-type analysis of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global world order after 2020. The first dimension of analysis is oriented towards geopolitical parameters, while the second is based on the geo-economic consequences of the pandemic crisis. The authors identified and classified three types of geopolitical games in the international community: the game of non-movement and labelling; the game of vaccine racing and the game of securitization. Furthermore, the goal is to identify potential consequences for the economy of certain countries, but also the postulates of international political economy due to the contemporary geographical, political and economic patterns of behavior in a global pandemic crisis. Although the paper focuses on international level; games could be interpreted on micro level as well.

The main thesis is aimed at confirming predictable and common patterns of behavior that are accompanied by tested mechanisms of attempts to exercise power in the international community (classical geopolitical power games in the new conditions). The aim of this paper is to develop scenarios of potential changes in power relations at the global level and to analyse the consequences with regard to the outcomes of the three mentioned games.

The first part regarding the game of (non)movement is the most important one for the potential analysis of the position of minorities in COVID-19 crisis. Citation: “Geographical patterns of (non) movement during the pandemic were (and still are) noticeable in selective border closing. Either in a sense of being selective towards neighboring countries (e.g. Croatia during the time of elections); being selective towards specific goods and services (e.g. export, import, transit); and being selective towards different groups of people (e.g. different protocol for different passports at those closed borders, not to mention migrant people in Europe). The paradox of closed borders and new bordering practice related to COVID-19 could be summarized in one question: how come if closed borders is a functioning mechanism and people are not travelling that the Virus still finds



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its way to travel? Or as a meme circulating on Internet has pointed out: 2020 – the year that the Virus travelled more than you did. As safe vaccine was developed, the question of travelling re-entered the global scene. “Immunity passports” or “risk-free certificates” (WHO, 2020a) are not yet approved by the World Health Organization which “paradoxically, signed an agreement with Estonia in October to collaborate on the development of a digital vaccination certificate - or a smart yellow card” (www.euronews.com, 2/3/2021).” pp.93-94. Although not stressed enough in this paper COVID passports are potential mechanism of discrimination.

- 69. Žagar, Mitja, (2021), Legitimno krizno upravljanje v demokratičnih družbah in vključevanje različnih manjšin in njihovih pripadnikov [Legitimate Crisis Management in Democratic Societies and the Inclusion of Various Minorities and their Members]. In: Munda Hirnök, Katalin, ed. & Novak-Lukanovič, Sonja, ed. (2021), *Svet je postal drugačen: vpliv covid-19 na etnične manjšine in obmejni prostor v Sloveniji in sosednjih državah*. Ljubljana, Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja, (pages 9–26).**

#### Abstract

The article presents some preliminary findings and considerations regarding the practice and research of crisis management as well as specific crisis management decisions and measures from the perspective of their legitimacy. It finds that for the legitimacy of crisis management in ethnically and otherwise plural and diverse societies, adequate inclusion and participation of various minorities, the persons belonging to them and their representatives in all stages of decision-making are crucial. The inclusion and participation of all relevant and interested actors in general and in specific environments, such as Slovenia, as well as the efficiency, success, democratic nature, legality and legitimacy of crisis management and related decisions and measures are discussed in the context of the health crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The discussion provides the basis for broader reflections and proposals presented in the final section, all aimed to improve the efficiency and legitimacy of crisis management and the decisions and measures taken in crisis situations in general.

