

Jure Gračner,* Asja Flamiš,** Adelisa Huskić,*** Vita Poštuvan****

Media Coverage of Suicidal Behaviour in the Context of Slovenian Independence*****

IZVLEČEK

MEDIJSKO POROČANJE O SAMOMORILNEM VEDENJU V KONTEKSTU SLOVENSKE OSAMOSVOJITVE

Slovenija je bila del Jugoslavije in se je po desetdnevni vojni leta 1991 osamosvojila. Imela je najvišjo stopnjo samomorov med vsemi jugoslovanskimi državami. Vsi mladi moški v jugoslovanskih republikah so služili vojaški rok zunaj domače republike in nekateri vojaki so se zaradi samomora vrnili v krsti. To je bil med drugim povod za razpravo o samostojnosti, v kateri so sodelovali tudi slovenski časopisi. Med vojno so stopnje samomorov običajno nižje, vendar se tudi vojaki soočajo z vrsto dejavnikov tveganja samomorilne ogroženosti. Namen študije je bil ugotoviti, katere zgodbe o samomorih so bile objavljene v slovenskih časopisih Delo in Večer. Analizirali smo obdobje pred osamosvojitvijo, med njo in po njej. Ugotovili smo, da prevladujejo tri teme: zgodbe o slovenskih vojakih, politična agenda in informativni članki. Pred osamosvojitvijo je bila v ospredju politična agenda, in sicer želja po osamosvojitvi, pozneje pa posledice osamosvojitve. Zgodbe o slovenskih vojakih so bile najpogostejše v obdobju osamosvajanja, pri čemer so se pojavljale pripovedi o dejanskih samomorih z uporabo strelnega orožja. V obdobju po osamosvojitvi smo večinoma našli članke, ki omogočajo vpogled v odnos družbe do samomora. Študija osvetljuje, kako so slovenski mediji prikazovali samomore v vojski pred osamosvojitvijo, med njo in po njej.

Ključne besede: osamosvojitvena vojna, vojska, politična agenda, samomor

* MA of Psychology, University of Maribor, Slomškov trg 15, SI-2000 Maribor; gracner.jure@gmail.com

** MA of Psychology, University of Maribor, Slomškov trg 15, SI-2000 Maribor; asja.flamis@gmail.com

*** MA of Psychology, University of Maribor, Slomškov trg 15, SI-2000 Maribor; adelisaa.huskic@gmail.com

**** PhD, Associate Professor, Slovene Centre for Suicide Research, Andrej Marušič Institute, University of Primorska, Muzejski trg 2, SI-6000 Koper, vita.postuvan@upr.si; ORCID: 0000-0002-8258-5852

***** The article was written in the context of the research project J6-3123 *Sin, Shame, Symptom: Suicide and Its Perceptions in Slovenia (1850–2000)*, financed by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS).

ABSTRACT

*Slovenia was part of Yugoslavia and became independent in 1991 after a ten-day war. Slovenia had the highest suicide rate of all Yugoslav member states. In Yugoslavia, all young men served in the military away from home in other Yugoslav republics. Some of them returned in coffins due to suicide. This was one of the factors resulting in the discussion about independence, in which Slovenian newspapers played a part. During wartime, suicide rates tend to be lower, though soldiers also face an array of suicide risk factors. The present study aimed to establish which stories about suicide were published in the Slovenian newspapers *Delo* and *Večer*. While analysing the period before, during, and after independence, we identified three predominant themes: stories about Slovenian soldiers, the political agenda, and informative articles. The political agenda – namely, the desire for independence and, later, the consequences of independence – was in the foreground before independence. Stories about Slovenian soldiers were most common during the period of Slovenian emancipation, with tales of actual suicides that involved firearms as the suicide method. In the post-independence period, though, we have mainly identified articles that provide insight into society's attitude towards suicide. This study sheds light on how suicide in the military was portrayed in the Slovenian media before, during, and after independence.*

Keywords: Independence War, the military, the political agenda, suicide

Introduction

“The Ten-Day War ... was a short and light conflict that hardly deserves such a heavy name.”¹

As this brief excerpt from the year following the Slovenian War of Independence shows, some approach the subject with awkwardness, as if a short period of war could not do much harm. Nevertheless, this short but intense period affected Slovenes in many ways. In this article, we address the issue of suicidality in the critical period of Slovenian independence.

Brief Background of Independence Period in Slovenia

Slovenia was founded as an independent state in 1991 after a period of political and economic insecurities in Yugoslavia. The death of the president of Yugoslavia led to escalating issues within the country. The Yugoslav military played an important role

1 Alenka Puhar, “Vojna v Sloveniji: strahovi, panika in nočne more otrok,” *Delo*, February 4, 1992, 28, 13.

in promoting conflict between nations. The first call for Slovenian independence was published in 1987 in the 57th *Nova revija*, which called for democratization and resistance against centralist Yugoslavia.²

Some people opposed the idea and called it a political suicide for Slovenia, but that did not stop Slovenia,³ even though it also faced a war after the independence was announced. In this short War of Independence period Territorial Defence and the police were the main protagonists defending the state. Territorial Defence was later in 1994 renamed as the Slovenian Army.⁴

History of Suicide and Suicide Statistics in Slovenia

Milčinski, a distinguished Slovenian psychiatrist who focused professionally on the subject of suicide, notes that in the 19th century, Slovenia was not known as a particularly suicide-prone part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, which are also the first known sources on suicide in Slovenia.⁵ The suicide rate is said to have been at 3.⁶ The rate increased after the First World War and reached the number of 26 in some parts of the country, yet Milčinski⁷ adds that the suicide rate reached its peak after the Second World War: more specifically, it increased after 1960. In the 1960s, there was a crisis in Slovenia with a large number of suicide deaths, especially among young people, which is said to have been a problem caused by social and political conditions.⁸ Milčinski notes that after 1970 the suicide rate was consistently above 30.7. In 1989, it was 35.2, and the following year it fell below 30 for the first time in fourteen years. In 1991 it was high again (33.5), when Slovenia became an independent country.⁹ One would expect suicide rates in Slovenia to change after independence, due to the social changes that came with the new country, but the rates remained similar. The suicide rate remained at around 30, which has continued to the early 2000s.¹⁰ A decline in suicide rates was observed during the last decades.¹¹

Slovenia was part of Yugoslavia until 1991 and at the time stood out from the other member states with the highest suicide rate.¹² But Marušič and Zorko note that suicide

2 Anton Grizold, *Obrambni sistem Republike Slovenije* (Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve, Visoka policijsko-varnostna šola, 1999).

3 Anton Bebler, *Sodobno vojaštvo in družba* (Ljubljana: Fakulteta za družbene vede, Založba FDV, 2011).

4 Grizold, *Obrambni sistem Republike Slovenije*

5 Lev Milčinski, *Samomor in Slovenci* (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1985).

6 Meta Remec, "Epidemija samomorov? Odmevi na naraščanje stopnje samomorilnosti na Slovenskem v 19. in 20. stoletju," *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 63 No. 1 (2023): 8–41. <https://doi.org/10.51663/pnz.63.1.01>.

7 Milčinski, *Samomor in Slovenci*.

8 Meta Remec, "Traitors, Cowards, Martyrs, Heroes: Youth Suicide as a Socio-Historical Phenomenon in the 1960s Slovenia," *Studia Historica Slovenica* 23, No. 1 (2023): 203–38, <https://doi.org/10.3287/SHS.2023-06>.

9 Natalija Fuchs Plemenitaš, *Samomori v slovenski vojski: diplomsko delo* (Ljubljana: Fakulteta za družbene vede, 2003), <http://dk.fdv.uni-lj.si/dela/Plemenitas-Fuchs-Natalija.PDF>.

10 Andrej Marušič and Maja Zorko, "Slovenski samomor skozi prostor in čas," in Andrej Marušič and Saška Roškar (eds.), *Slovenija s samomorom ali brez* (Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenija, 2004).

11 NIJZ, https://nijz.si/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/2023-08-29-Priloga-1_samomor.pdf, accessed on August 29, 2023.

12 Milčinski, *Samomor in Slovenci*.

rates in Slovenia became more transparent after Slovenia's independence. Overall statistics for Yugoslavia were lowered due to the southern countries, such as Montenegro, Kosovo or North Macedonia which had lower suicide rates.¹³

Risk Factors for Suicidal Behaviour

The risk factors for suicidal behaviour impact the suicide rates. These are usually divided into individual factors, interpersonal, community related and societal factors.¹⁴ Among the societal ones, Milčinski notes that the cultural meaning of suicide plays an important role. Suicide was stigmatised in the past, and the lack of suicide awareness or prevention activities may be the reason for the high suicide rates in Slovenia. At the same time the lack of acceptance might have also contributed to fewer suicides reports in the past.¹⁵

Some authors have linked Slovenian national character to the high Slovenian suicide rate,¹⁶ as more Slovenes die by suicide in Slovenia than people of other nationalities.¹⁷ National character can be defined as the enduring personality traits that are said to be characteristic of a particular nation. Musek, a contemporary Slovenian psychologist, rejects the 'national personality' and describes how Slovenes are as different and diverse as any other nation. Nevertheless, he points to certain "peculiarities" of the Slovenian nation, such as aggressiveness and introversion, which in his opinion create a personality basis for increasing suicidal tendencies.¹⁸ Slovenian philosopher and sociologist Debenjak explains that the hundred years of oppression that the Slovenian people had to endure led to the aggressive forces turning inwards.¹⁹ Trstenjak, who is known as a renowned Slovenian psychologist, philosopher and sociologist, points out that the auto-aggressiveness of Slovenes is more pronounced than the hetero-aggressiveness that is supposedly characteristic of other Yugoslav nations.²⁰

Army and Soldiers and Suicide Risk

Durkheim noted that the suicide rate decreases in countries involved in wars. The author presents the theory of social integration, which states that periods of political

13 Marušič and Zorko, "Slovenski samomor skozi prostor in čas."

14 "World Health Organization," *Preventing suicide: A global imperative*. World Health Organization, 2014. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241564779>.

15 Remec, "Traitors, Cowards, Martyrs, Heroes."

16 Janek Musek, *Psihološki portret Slovencev* (Ljubljana: Znanstveno in publicistično središče, 1994).

17 Andrej Marušič, "Suicide in Slovenia: Lessons for cross-cultural psychiatry," *International Review of Psychiatry* 11, No. 2-3 (1999): 212-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540269974393>.

18 Marušič, "Suicide in Slovenia."

19 Božidar Debenjak, "Neka pitanja o revolucionarnoj antropologiji," *Praxis-Jugoslavensko izdanje* 01-02 (1969): 187-89, quoted in Milčinski, *Samomor in Slovenci*.

20 Anton Trstenjak, "Okvirne dileme o etiologiji samomora," in Milčinski, *Samomor in Slovenci*.

instability promote social cohesion, leading to lower suicide rates.²¹ The perceived threat to the group from outside can lead to greater integration of the group and consequently to lower suicide rates.²² However, there are studies that cite the negative effects of the war on the economic situation as more important factors in explaining suicidality.²³

If social integration is understood as involvement in defending the nation, it follows that soldiers are a less risky group than civilians. Soldiers may feel a greater sense of purpose in life during wartime, which could reduce their suicidal intentions.²⁴ However, we know that they are exposed to a range of stressful life experiences that are significantly associated with suicidality.²⁵

When considering the complex problems of military service suicides, it must be considered that the largest part of the military population of the Slovenian army consisted of young people between the ages of 18 and 22. Despite a certain maturity, young men are not necessarily ready for the many responsibilities and problems that come with military service. In the army, it is extremely easy to obtain weapons, and the isolation of the guard post might be another risk factor.²⁶ As Čuček also noted in his study, the army consisted mainly of young, single men who were at a higher risk of suicide due to their characteristics (e.g. gender, single, etc.). Suicide also visibly increased when conscription was introduced and soldiers were treated badly.²⁷

Due to the different periods of independence in different countries, there are not many similar studies, but there are some studies on suicide rates before and after the First World War and in the post-war period, when people are affected by shocks and economic crises.²⁸ A study of Estonian independence found that the suicide rate was low during this period.²⁹ A study in Finland found that political crises were not associated with suicide rise.³⁰ A study in Croatia shows that suicides with firearms increased

21 Émile Durkheim, *Suicide* (New York: Free Press, 1951), quoted in Frank Van Tubergen and Wout Ultee, "Political integration, war and suicide: The dutch paradox?" *International Sociology* 21, No. 2 (2006): 221–36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0268580906061377>.

22 Pat O'Malley, "Suicide and war: a case study and theoretical appraisal," *The British Journal of Criminology*, 15(4) (1975): 348–59.

23 Ira M. Wasserman, "Political Business Cycles, Presidential Elections, and Suicide and Mortality Patterns," *American Sociological Review*, 48 (1983): 711–20. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2094929>.

24 Sandra M. Escolas, Paul T. Bartone, Marek Rewers, Joseph M. Rothberg and J. Carter, "Why do soldiers kill themselves? Understanding suicide in the military," *The 7IF Advantage* 283 (2010).

25 Matthew K. Nock, Charlene A. Deming, Carol S. Fullerton, E. Gilman Stephen, Matthew Goldenberg, Ronald C. Kessler, James E. McCarroll et. al., "Suicide Among Soldiers: A Review of Psychosocial Risk and Protective Factors," *Psychiatry: Interpersonal and Biological Processes* 76, No. 2 (2013): 97–125, <https://doi.org/10.1521/psyc.2013.76.2.97>.

26 Karmen Samec, *Samomor kot družbeno-patološki pojav in problem samomora v JLA: diplomatska naloga* (Ljubljana: Fakulteta za sociologijo, politične vede in novinarstvo, 1991).

27 Filip Čuček, "Vojaški samomori v Avstriji od srede 19. stoletja do prve svetovne vojne (z nekaj slovenskimi primeri)," *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 63, No. 3 (2023): 117–34.

28 Hannes Leidinger, "Suicide Discourses: The Austrian Example in an International Context from World War I to the 1930s," in Jochen Bohler, Ota Konrad and Rudolf Kučera (eds.), *In the Shadow of the Great War: Physical Violence in East-Central Europe, 1917–1923* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2021).

29 Airi Värnik, "Suicide in Estonia," *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica* 84, No. 3 (1991): 229–32. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-0447.1991.tb03135.x>.

30 Steven Stack, "The Effect of Modernization on Suicide in Finland: 1800–1984," *Sociological Perspectives* 36, No. 2 (1993): 137–48, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1389426>.

during the war period and that suicides decreased after independence.³¹ In the Baltic states, there was an increase in suicide rates during the period of independence, which was linked to the economic difficulties that came with it.³²

Aim of the Study

Since there is a lack of studies on suicide in times of independence, the aim of the study was to understand the narratives around suicide published in the main Slovenian newspapers. We studied the period before, during and after independence in relation to the topic of suicide and political and militant situation. We predicted that the topics would differ depending on the time period.

Method

Since the main topic of our research is suicide in the period of Slovenian independence, we have chosen three periods to analyze. One before the independence of Slovenia (1986–1988), one during (1989–1991) and one after (1992–1994). In our study, we analyzed newspaper articles from two of the largest Slovenian newspapers, *Delo* and *Večer*. The search word was *samomor*, the Slovenian word for suicide. Our exclusion criteria were: all articles that did not refer to the Slovenian War of Independence, the army and the political state in Slovenia and Yugoslavia, all articles that mentioned suicide in a metaphorical way, that were about an accident instead of suicide, that were about mass suicide or suicide of an animal. We used the PRISMA method to gather the relevant papers and later used the thematic analysis to study the content of the articles.

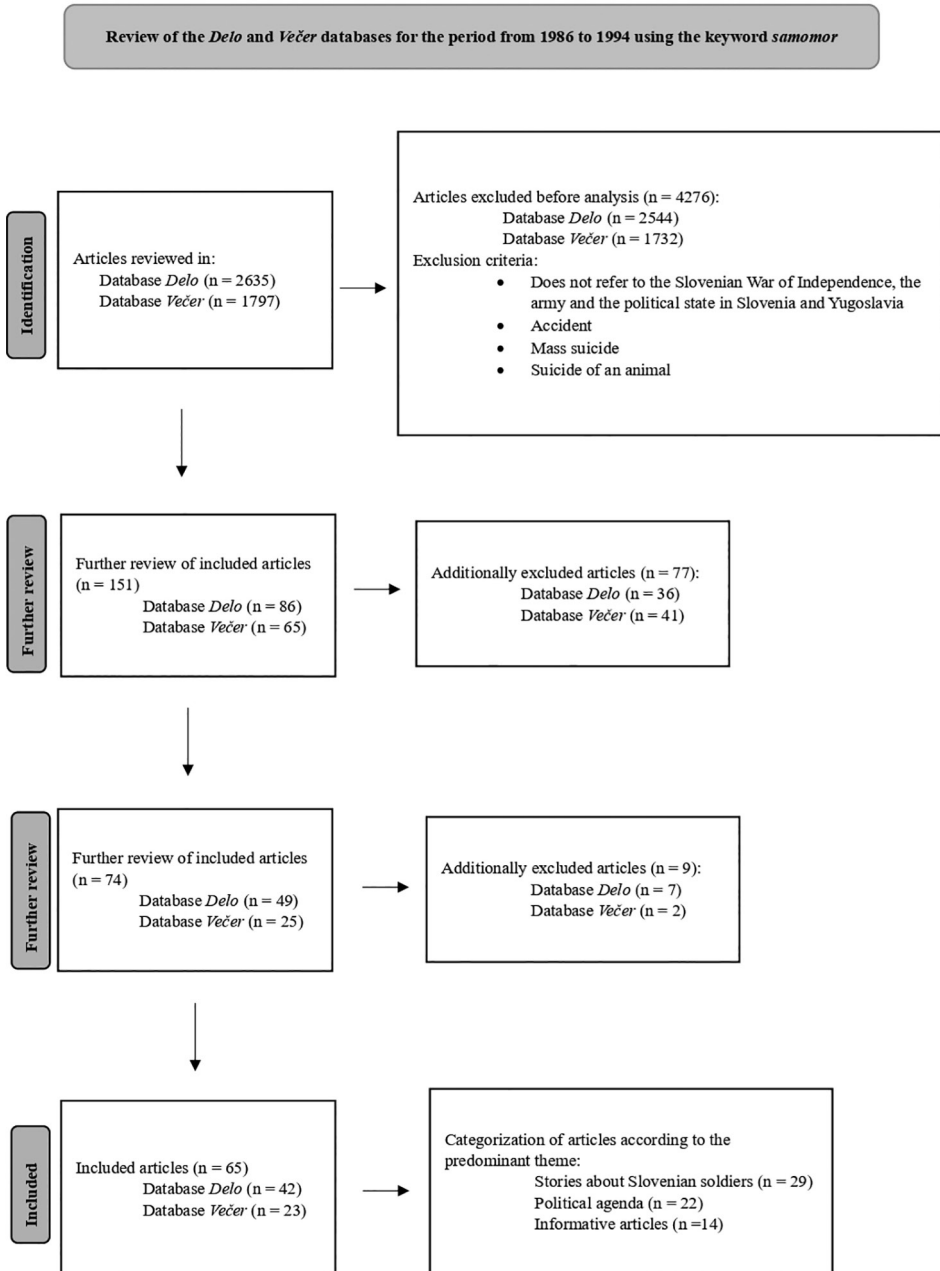
In total, we analysed 4432 articles, of which we excluded 4276 based on our exclusion criteria. We included 151 articles in our analysis, which we then re-examined and excluded a further 77 articles. In our third review, we excluded 9 articles, resulting in the inclusion of 65 articles, of which 42 were in *Delo* and 23 in *Večer*.

We then undertook a further review of the final articles and categorized them. We found three predominant themes, namely stories about Slovenian soldiers, political agenda and informative articles. Most of the articles were stories about Slovenian soldiers, the fewest were informative. We then carried out a thematic analysis, the results of which are listed below.

31 Miro Jakovljević, Biserka Sedić, Marko Martinac, Darko Marcinko, Dulijano Ljubicić and Herman Vukusić, "Update of suicide trends in Croatia 1966–2002," *Psychiatria Danubina* 16(4) (2004): 299–308.

32 Ramune Kalediene, Skirmante Starkuviene and Jadvyga Petrauskiene, "Mortality from external causes in Lithuania: looking for critical points in time and place," *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health* 32, No. 5 (2004): 374–80, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14034940410024211>.

Figure 1: PRISMA flow diagram



Results

In our analysis we included 65 articles, of which more than a half (52.31%) were from the period of independence (1989 – 1991). The second most were from the pre-independence period (32.31%), the fewest from the post-independence period (15.38%). Most of the articles were stories about Slovenian soldiers (43.08%), some were about the political agenda (33.85%) and few were informative (21.54%). Sub-themes that appeared most frequently in all three thematic categories were reasons for suicide, risk factors for suicide and the method of suicide. Method of suicide was mentioned 19 times and in all time periods we analyzed, accounting for less than a third of our articles (29.23%). The reasons for suicide were mainly mentioned in articles about Slovenian soldiers, which could also be categorized as risk factors, but they were more specific to a person who died by suicide. In the articles about the political agenda or in the informative articles, we categorized the reasons as risk factors because they were more general in nature, unless they were specific to a person who died by suicide. Reasons for suicide and risk factors together were mentioned 36 times and were the most common, accounting for more than half of all articles (55.38%).

Political Agenda

There were 22 articles that dealt with the topic of political agenda and military. In the period before independence, articles regarding political agenda were predominant: there was one in 1986, ten in 1987 and two in 1988. There were eight articles in the independence period and only one in the post-independence period.

In 1986, there was only one article on the political agenda, which contained a summary of the programme of the Liberation Front, which dealt with suicide and the Slovenian national character. Lev Milčinski said that the Slovenian character is characterized by depressive traits, which can lead to suicidal tendencies in the face of life's burdens. He explained: "... the Slovenian national character is dominated by depressive and obsessive traits as an expression of a twisted extensiveness (aggressiveness) and therein may lie a hidden readiness for a suicidal reaction ..."³³

In 1987, no. 57 *Nova revija* was published, which called for Slovenian independence for the first time. It stated that Slovenians are without perspective³⁴ and in a crisis, which was mentioned twice as a risk factor. Risk factors for suicide were also seen in the disarray of the current social and political situation in Slovenia,³⁵ the social order,³⁶ the pressure of the social system on the individual,³⁷ and the Slovenian character was mentioned twice. Additionally, also a lack of Slovenian soldiers because they were

33 Helena Grandovec, "Narod se odloča sam," *Večer*, November 7, 1986, 4.

34 J. T., "V nasprotju s programskimi usmeritvami," *Delo*, February 21, 1987, 2.

35 J. H., "Nova revija 57," *Delo*, February 26, 1987, 6.

36 Jože Horvat, "Kritično zanimanje za 'Prispevke'," *Delo*, February 27, 1987, 5.

37 Franc Šetinc, "Če elita programira," *Delo*, March 5, 1987, 4.

-serving their military service outside Slovenia:³⁸ “... they all express their concern about the crisis in which the Slovenes in Yugoslavia find themselves, which manifests itself in particular depression, mass emigration and a high suicide rate.”³⁹

This was also an attempt to politicize suicide,⁴⁰ as they referred to the negative consequences of the current social order,⁴¹ and wanted to achieve redemption through Slovenian independence. The Yugoslav newspaper reacted negatively to this: “It is almost incomprehensible ... that the existing social system ... in Slovenia is declared to be the main cause of ‘mass alcoholism, auto-aggression and suicides. /.../ It is necessary to illuminate from all sides /.../ the inhabitants of Slovenia, who have long been served these ‘promises of salvation’ in various ways.”⁴² Continuing with: “Today (suicide) is still on the increase, and it is extremely serious and tragic, but precisely because it is serious and tragic, I consider it dubious if we politicize it and to take it to extremes, because the reasons lies in the deepest essence of the Slovenian people.”⁴³

In 1988, newspapers wrote about the increase in loneliness, alcoholism and suicides due to social and political situation.⁴⁴ People began writing about the political suicide of Slovenes because they were thinking about independence, which was satirically linked to the already suicidal character of Slovenes:

“It is said that Slovenians like to go to the mountains and commit suicide... But there is another characteristic that is less known in the public consciousness: Slovenes have long shown a suicidal tendency in political life as well, and surprisingly, they persistently throw themselves into the abyss and not only into the mountains.”⁴⁵

In 1989, the satire about the high suicide rates of Slovenians continued in an article presenting Yugoslavia to tourists.⁴⁶ In addition, the army became a bigger and bigger part of political life, the attitude of Slovenians towards the Yugoslav national army called JLA (Yugoslav People’s Army) deteriorated due to the attacks of the JLA. Rumours arose that Slovenian boys in the army were returning home in coffins. This prompted the army to counter these rumours so as not to conceal any information: “The army has taken a strong step into political life / ... / the JLA should provide accurate information immediately after the death of each soldier.”⁴⁷

In 1990, there was an increasing talk of political suicide and a renewed link to Slovene suicide: “Confederation is a realistic political option for Slovenia, but secession would be - we Slovenes tend to commit suicide - a collective suicide!”⁴⁸

38 Žarko Rajković, “Več sodelovanja, manj nesoglasij,” *Delo*, March 25, 1987, 2.

39 Stack, “The Effect of Modernization on Suicide in Finland: 1800–1984.”

40 Ciril Zlobec, “Obravnava in zavrnitev nesprejemljivih stališč: Razprava o 57. številki Nove revije,” *Delo*, March 26, 1987, 4.

41 Zoran Polič, “Obravnava in zavrnitev nesprejemljivih stališč: Razprava o 57. številki Nove revije,” *Delo*, March 5, 1987, 8.

42 Jakovljević et al., “Update of suicide trends in Croatia 1966–2002.”

43 Zlobec, “Obravnava in zavrnitev nesprejemljivih stališč.”

44 France Forstnerič, “Različni pogledi na spravo,” *Delo*, January 25, 1988, 3.

45 Martin Ivanič, “Pravica Slovenca do samomora,” *Delo*, May 27, 1988, 10.

46 Tone Partljič, “Ne zamudite priložnosti, ogledjte si skrajno državo skrajnosti,” *Delo*, March 9, 1989, 9.

47 Branko Soban, “Cilj politične ocene ZIS: žigisanje Slovenije,” *Delo*, May 11, 1989, 2.

48 Milan Balazic, “Odgovor gospodoma Pučniku in Drevenšku,” *Delo*, April 6, 1990, 5.

In 1991, there was talk of a national, political and economic suicide of the Slovenes.⁴⁹ There was talk of suicide and heroic death, both of which, according to the author, had a liberating effect: "After all, we should not forget that suicide and heroic death are also categories of liberation that are attainable at any time, and therefore it would not be necessary to wait for them."⁵⁰ The Slovenian character was brought up again as a risk factor, as well as the JLA being blamed for enlisting 18-year-old boys for military service.⁵¹

In 1992, a year after independence, we did not find any articles on the topic of a political agenda, but in 1993 there were wishes for a better and stronger Slovenian army. Author expressed concern that people do not want to fight for their country, but then many of them die by suicide: "It is perceived as unthinkable that someone would consider it is wise to fight for national interests and risk their life. But 500 Slovenians can die in traffic accidents every year, and just as many commit suicide. And half of these deaths are fault of politics: poor traffic conditions and the desperation of Slovenians."⁵²

In 1994 we again did not find any articles on the topic of a political agenda.

Stories about Slovenian Soldiers

There were 28 articles dealing with stories of Slovenian soldiers. Four of them were from 1986, 19 from 1990, three from 1991 and two from 1994. 26 articles are about a person who died or attempted to die by suicide, all of them male.

A recurring theme was the method of suicide, which was mentioned 15 times. The method was always shooting with a gun, such as: "Plut committed suicide, as evidenced by the position of his hands on the automatic rifle."⁵³ This theme was also the only one that appeared in all three periods of our analysis.

In 1986, the only year before independence in which articles about Slovenian soldiers appeared, the method was mentioned four times. Another topic was location of suicide or attempted suicide, which was mentioned four times. The media and their portrayal of the Slovenian situation were mentioned twice. The escape of a soldier was mentioned three times and the theft of a vehicle and/or weapon four times. In 1986, a murder was mentioned four times: "... killed inspectors of the Slovene Republic SNZ from ambush."⁵⁴ In addition, the good cooperation between the JLA and other authorities was mentioned twice, "Cooperation with the people in the area /.../ was good, as well as with the Republican Secretariat for Internal Affairs of Croatia and the JLA."⁵⁵

49 Draga Ahačić, "Odrpoto pismo veleposlaniku ZDA gospodu Warrenu Zimmermanu in ...," *Delo*, May 15, 1991, 6.

50 Milan Maver, "Ne sprašujte me, kako bo," *Delo*, July 4, 1991, 14.

51 Marijan Pregl, "Vojna kot sindrom čelnega režnja," *Večer*, July 20, 1991, 26.

52 Marijan Poljšak, "Prejeli smo: Dve vrsti državljanov," *Delo*, December 2, 1993, 9.

53 B. A., "Poročilo še ni popolno," *Delo*, May 9, 1986, 24.

54 "Pobegli vojak Plut si je sam vzel življenje," *Delo*, May 6, 1986, 1.

55 Žarko Hojnik and Janez Kovačić, "Podrobnosti še niso znane," *Delo*, May 9, 1986, 8.

The period of independence contained the most articles, so the variety of topics was also the greatest. The method was mentioned nine times, all in 1990. Location was mentioned twice, in 1990, and there was one mention of the media, which was negative, also in 1990, "... the suicide of soldier Alojz Špendov was misused, which was done by a large number of media outlets."⁵⁶ In 1990, there were five instances where suicide was politized, two times it was mentioned as an abuse of the JLA, and three times the opposite, as a desire for the JLA to change. The most frequently mentioned topic was military service away from home, which was mentioned 11 times, once in 1991 and 10 times in 1990. Six times the wish was expressed that soldiers should serve closer to home, "... slightly less than 30 percent of Slovenian soldiers will serve in Slovenia... this percentage will increase, not decrease,"⁵⁷ and one article mentioned the same topic, yet was opposed to the request, all in 1990. The difficult conditions in the army were mentioned five times in 1990 and once in 1991: "Such education is psychologically cruel, difficult, and does not take the individual into account."⁵⁸ In 1990, the fear of parents when their children go to military service was mentioned twice. The bad attitude of the JLA towards Slovenian soldiers was mentioned twice in 1990 and once in 1991. In 1990 there was one mention of the issue of the army being a specific population so we cannot compare suicide figures: "The number of suicides in the army probably cannot be compared with the number of suicides in civilians, because it is a special population,"⁵⁹ and one statement of a stance against the JLA: "... proof of the lack of any political ear in the leadership of the army. This also shows that there is no future for Slovenia in Yugoslavia."⁶⁰

Reasons for suicide were mentioned eight times during the period of independence, seven times in 1990, four of which were the lack of a reason: "He had no reason to self-destruct,"⁶¹ and three times the statement that the reason had nothing to do with the army: "... the reasons for suicide have nothing to do with the military organization,"⁶² and once in 1991, namely an insult at a demonstration "... the protesters, who insulted /.../ shook the Slovene on guard so much that he decided to commit suicide."⁶³ In 1990, the responsibility of the JLA for the suicides was mentioned four times: "... the JLA should not and will not be able to avoid its responsibility for each individual death,"⁶⁴ and four mentions of the JLA's bad attitude towards Slovenia. In the same year, there were seven mentions of a request for an autopsy of a person who died by suicide and two mentions of parents not believing that the cause of death was suicide: "... that he committed suicide. Parents don't believe it."⁶⁵

56 Poveljstvo LK, "Odgovor na komentar Borisa Dolničarja," *Delo*, September 4, 1990, 5.

57 Veso Stojanov, "V armadi popuščajo zahtevam Slovenije," *Delo*, August 22, 1990, 1.

58 Slava Partlič, "Zakaj si vojak vzame življenje?," *Delo*, March 17, 1990, 2.

59 Jože Pučnik, "Izjava dr. Pučnika za Delo," *Delo*, April 13, 1990, 3.

60 Pučnik, "Izjava dr. Pučnika za Delo."

61 Ana Urbanija, "Pismo ob vojakovi smrti," *Večer*, September 22, 1990, 31.

62 "JLA ne verjame v zastrupitev," *Delo*, March 29, 1990, 2.

63 "Žrtve na obeh straneh," *Večer*, June 17, 1991, 16.

64 Programski kolegij Radia Slovenija, "Odgovor na odgovor poveljstva ljubljanskega korpusa," *Delo*, September 5, 1990, 7.

65 Jelka Zupanič, "Skupščina bo ocenila dogovor," *Večer*, August 22, 1990, 2.

In 1990, there were four mentions of suicidality as a general Slovenian characteristic, such as: "... the apparently suicidal Slovenian nation ...,"⁶⁶ and two criticisms of Slovenia's political steps, such as: "... cursed Slovenian humility and cowardice... can't you really do anything, Mr. Minister?."⁶⁷

In the same year, there were three mentions of the rigidity of procedures and regulations in the JLA and also a statement that there should be more coverage of suicide so that there would be fewer suicides: "... it is sometimes good to write down a few words about such cases... so that we might contribute to eliminating the causes, so that similar cases do not happen again."⁶⁸ In 1990, there were two mentions of a controversial eulogy of a JLA soldier at a suicide of a Slovenian soldier: "The soldier's eulogy was provocative and insulting."⁶⁹ In 1991, risk factors and protective factors were mentioned once. In the same year, soldiers' defence mechanisms were mentioned once and advice for soldiers' parents was mentioned once: "Instill optimism in them, tell them about the changes for the better in our political events."⁷⁰

In the period after Slovenian independence, which in this case is only 1994, because there were no articles about the stories of Slovenian soldiers in 1992 or 1993, the method of suicide was mentioned twice. There were also two mentions of the reason for suicide, which both times was an individual factor, namely personal distress, seen in the quote "... it is a suicide committed out of personal distress."⁷¹

Informative Articles

The last topic is related to 14 informative articles. Of these, two articles date from 1986, two from 1987, two from 1989, one from 1991, four from 1992, one from 1993 and two from 1994. Half of the articles are therefore from the period after independence.

Articles that raise awareness of the issue of suicide contain the following subtopics: the high suicide rate in Slovenia, the methods of suicide, the months in which the suicide rate is highest, individual and relational risk factors.⁷²

In the articles from 1986, we get an overview of the pre-war situation, with social risk factors (the economic crisis) being the dominant subtopics, "... there was a 'frightening depression' and a 'severe inner imbalance among the people,'"⁷³ as well as the Slovenian national character and the differences in suicide rates between the regions. Lev Milčinski confirmed the latter by pointing out the differences in suicide

66 "JLA ne verjame v zastrupitev."

67 Urbanija, "Pismo ob vojakovi smrti."

68 Franc Kramer, "Morda bi lahko prisluhnili," *Večer*, July 12, 1990, 24.

69 Ivanka Dernač-Špendov, "Kateri vojaki umirajo v JLA," *Delo*, September 13, 1990, 7.

70 Bogdan Žorž, "Duševne stiske vojakov," *Večer*, June 8, 1991, 30.

71 "Samomor teritorialca iz Tržiča," *Delo*, July 14, 1994, 17.

72 Marjan Skumavc, "Tudi v vzrokih samomorov je čedalje več individualnosti," *Delo*, November 15, 1989, 265, 12. Žarko Hojnik, "Samomor je za Slovence enako usoden kot vojna," *Delo*, July 27, 1991, 174, 7. Branko Žunec, "Dolga pijanost, obup, počasen samomor," *Večer*, May 7, 1994, 40.

73 Žarko Rajković, "Edinstveni smo v – napakah," *Delo*, September 23, 1986, 222, 2.

rates between the northern and southern parts of Slovenia: “Such observations make us doubt that it would be possible to speak of a uniform national character in Slovenia, and perhaps even in general, and of a high ‘suicide rate’ as a general Slovenian characteristic.”⁷⁴

In 1987, the sub-theme of negative labelling of the military was identified and individual risk factors were highlighted, within which the division of values among soldiers was particularly emphasised: “... many boys put on the uniform, torn between their sense of duty to their country and their pacifist (or other) convictions.”⁷⁵ In the same year, the differences between the Slovenes and other Yugoslav nations and possible conflicts with other Yugoslav nations were emphasised through a description of how some Serbs allegedly saw the Slovenes - as “arrogant, intruders, exclusivists, snobs, hegemonists with a messianic syndrome, separatists.”⁷⁶

In 1989, the sub-theme of differences between the Slovenes and the other Yugoslav nations was repeated: “The very different number of suicides in the Yugoslav republics also shows the diversity of character, thought and, in general, the diversity of mentality and culture.”⁷⁷ Another subtopic is high suicide rates,⁷⁸ individual risk factors⁷⁹ and differences in suicide rates between regions.⁸⁰

In the 1991 article, there is a sub-theme that negatively labels suicide while emphasising the negative consequences of suicide at the community level: “... it is a fact that any suicide can be fatal for a small nation like the Slovenes, as it can lead to the suicide of the whole nation.”⁸¹

The following themes are present this year: the decline in suicides:⁸² “After twenty years of extremely high suicide rates, Slovenians are showing a little more optimism or resilience in the face of adversity,”⁸³ and the negative labelling of suicide: “... a voluntary death is seen as even more senseless and cruel at a time when there are so many involuntary deaths.”⁸⁴ Additionally, we recognise subthemes of individual⁸⁵ and social risk factors and even war as a protective factor in times of such distress: “people gather all their defences and channel them into a ‘fight for survival.’”⁸⁶ The negative labelling of the army also reappears. An active sailor in the JVM (Yugoslavian navy) writes that he is confused by the contradictory reports and that he would “never stain his hands with the blood of his people” and that he “expects to commit suicide.”⁸⁷ In the same

74 “Misli o slovenskem značaju,” *Delo*, November 8, 1986, 261, 22.

75 “Ko se vojak ubije,” *Večer*, October 21, 1987, 4.

76 Melita Forstnerič-Hajšek, “Secirnice slovenstva,” *Večer*, August 8, 1987, 18.

77 Skumavc, “Tudi v vzrokih samomorov je čedalje več individualnosti.”

78 Janko Kostnapfel, “Odgovorni za to, kar počnemo, in za tisto, česar ne storimo,” *Delo*, August 9, 1989, 182, 5.

79 Hojnik, “Samomor je za Slovence enako usoden kot vojna.”

80 Kostnapfel, “Odgovorni za to, kar počnemo, in za tisto, česar ne storimo.”

81 Hojnik, “Samomor je za Slovence enako usoden kot vojna.”

82 A.P., “Samomorov je končno manj,” *Delo*, January 31, 1992, 25, 2. Sonja Merljak, “Niso krivi le sprememba sistema, revščina in vreme,” *Delo*, September 8, 1992, 207, 10. Puhar, “Vojna v Sloveniji: strahovi, panika in nočne more otrok.”

83 Merljak, “Niso krivi le sprememba sistema, revščina in vreme.”

84 Srečko Niederfer, “Slovenija nima kriminalne politike,” *Večer*, February 22, 1992, 31.

85 Puhar, “Vojna v Sloveniji: strahovi, panika in nočne more otrok.”

86 Niederfer, “Slovenija nima kriminalne politike.”

87 Ibidem.

year, we also recognise the undercurrent of the Slovenian national character and the differences between the Slovenes and other Yugoslav nations: “The Slovenian nation is generally not so violent /.../. This is also reflected in the suicide rate, which indicates inward aggression /.../ The opposite is true for the other nations of the former Yugoslav community.”⁸⁸

In 1993, there are mentions of high suicide rates, motives and methods of suicide.⁸⁹ Additionally, Slovenian national character is again mentioned: “The reflection /.../ raises many questions ... about our social reality and about us Slovenes ourselves.”⁹⁰

In 1994, there is the sub-theme of high suicide rate, social risk factors and alcohol abuse as individual risk factor - “another manifestation of a civilization derailed by auto-aggression.”⁹¹ The problem of increasing mental problems was explained: “... it is undoubtedly related to the social, economic and political conditions or their consequences that exacerbate psychological problems.”⁹²

Most of the sub-themes appear in all three time periods. The sub-theme of possible conflicts with other Yugoslav nations appears only before the war of independence. The sub-themes Slovenian national character and social risk factors only appear in the period before and after the war of independence. The sub-theme of high suicide rate in Slovenia appear only in the period of independence and in the post-independence period. The decrease in suicides is only reported in 1992, after independence.

Discussion

The analysis of 65 articles from the pre-independence, independence and post-independence periods of Slovenia offers a range of topics, with a particular focus on Slovenian soldiers, the political agenda and informative articles. In the following, we will explore each of the three topics in more detail.

Political Agenda

In 1986, the reason for the suicide was mainly attributed to the Slovenian character.⁹³ After the publication of the 57th *Nova revija*, responsibility for the suicides was transferred on social order and political situations. This was in line with the fact that people wanted to portray Yugoslavia as the culprit for people’s personal misery and the country’s independence as the solution. However, this led to various disagreements on the part of Yugoslavia and within Slovenia. In 1987 and 1988, articles

88 Ibid.

89 Borko De Corti, “Zakaj se je ustrelil Viktor Avbelj?,” *Večer*, April 30, 1993, 48.

90 Žunec, “Dolga pijanost, obup, počasen samomor.”

91 Ibid.

92 Slavica Crnica, “Stiske zaradi družbenih napetosti,” *Delo*, December 22, 1994, 297, 15.

93 Musek, *Psihološki portret Slovencev*.

appeared supporting or rejecting the view that the social order was responsible for the rising number of suicides. Due to the increasing talk of independence, the Yugoslav army became even more involved in the political events. The pre-independence period was an important period for political influence, as it could influence the decision for independence.⁹⁴

In 1989, accusations against the army began by parents who had lost their children while serving in the Yugoslav army. More people began to write about the political suicide of the Slovenes, especially in 1990, shortly before independence. Immediately after independence, in 1991, the reason for the high suicide rate was the economic and national crisis, and more people began to emphasize the issue of military service among young boys. This was because between 1990 and 1991 obligated military serving was abolished outside the country and the suicide rate fell during this period.⁹⁵

In 1993, the post-independence period, the desire for a strong Slovenian army was expressed, which was accomplished in 1994.⁹⁶ At the same time the negative consequences of independence and the associated reasons for suicide were also mentioned, but there was no actual increase in suicide rate.⁹⁷

Stories about Slovenian Soldiers

Most of the articles dealing with stories about Slovenian soldiers date from the period of independence, when the army and the situation of Slovenian soldiers were most prominent. Most articles mentioned a specific person who died by suicide. They were all male and young, which corresponds to the thematic category. The method of suicide was consistently mentioned throughout the articles. It was always shooting with a gun, which fits the theme, because soldiers have the access to means for suicide, which is also a risk factor on a societal level.⁹⁸

In the period before independence, there were only a few articles about Slovenian soldiers and suicide, all of which dealt with the same case. The articles were descriptive in nature and mentioned the cooperation of the JLA and other authorities, people and media.

The shift in the narrative can be seen in the independence period. There were articles about the politicisation of suicides, namely of some Slovenian soldiers, which included opinions that suicide was used as an abuse of the JLA, which came from the JLA and its media. There were also opinions that the use or politicisation of suicide was not necessarily a bad thing, as it could be seen as a desire for much needed changes in the JLA. Military service away from home was most prominent in those years, as it had become a problem for Slovenian soldiers. This gave rise to the narrative that their

94 Bebler, *Sodobno vojaštvo in družba*.

95 Ibid.

96 Grizold, *Obrambni sistem Republike Slovenije*.

97 Marušič and Zorko, "Slovenski samomor skozi prostor in čas."

98 World Health Organization, *Preventing suicide: A global imperative*.

service far from home was one of the reasons for suicides in the army. The mention of this topic decreased after 1990, when the percentage of soldiers serving far from home decreased.⁹⁹ With the suicides of Slovenian soldiers also came the mention of the difficult conditions in the army and the bad attitude of the JLA towards Slovenian soldiers and Slovenia. The reasons given by the JLA were that the suicide had nothing to do with the army. In response, the families of the deceased came forward and stated that the deceased had no reason to commit suicide and were happy before serving in the army. The articles also mentioned that some parents refused to believe that suicide was the cause of death and demanded an autopsy. As a result, the JLA was asked to take responsibility for the deaths of the soldiers who died by suicide. The articles thus mainly expressed people's dissatisfaction with the JLA and the desire for change, respect for Slovenia and Slovenian soldiers, and the emerging question of Slovenia's place in Yugoslavia through stories about Slovenian soldiers.

In the post-independence period, there were only two articles about Slovenian soldiers in which the same case of suicide of a soldier was mentioned, which was attributed to personal reasons that could have been exacerbated by the stress factors of the army.¹⁰⁰ We can therefore conclude that stories about Slovenian soldiers were most prevalent during the period of independence, when they also expressed the desire for better conditions in the army and dissatisfaction with the JLA in general.

Informative Articles

Informative articles are found in all three periods, but most frequently in the post-independence period.

Tito's death was followed by a major political and economic crisis, which took place in the pre-independence period.¹⁰¹ The articles link these social factors to the deterioration of people's mental health. At this time, the desire for independence began to take shape, and with it came statements about the Slovenian national character. Moreover, the differences between the Slovenian nation and the other Yugoslav nations were emphasized, which can be seen as an expression of the political crisis,¹⁰² but also as a justification for the idea of Slovenian independence.

At the time of independence, the talk about the differences between the Slovenes and the other Yugoslav nations continued. However, when the high suicide rate is mentioned, it is no longer so much social factors that are emphasised, but individual ones. In articles referring to suicides in the period of independence, suicide is characterised negatively at the level of the Slovenian community as a whole. This is justified by the statements that for such a small nation, any loss is too great. It seems that it was precisely through expressions of this kind that the desire to be united was indicated.

⁹⁹ Grizold, *Obrambni sistem Republike Slovenije*.

¹⁰⁰ Nock et. al. "Suicide Among Soldiers: A Review of Psychosocial Risk and Protective Factors."

¹⁰¹ Bebler, *Sodobno vojaštvo in družba*.

¹⁰² Durkheim, *Suicide*, quoted in Van Tubergen and Ultee, "Political integration, war and suicide: The dutch paradox?"

Only in the first year after independence is there a decline in suicides. This decline may have been due to the war, but also to the optimism of entering a new era of independence – both of which may have served as protective factors.¹⁰³ However, high suicide rate recurred in the following years. The content of the articles is more at the awareness level, as they often describe risk factors, especially social factors. The Slovenian national character and the differences between Slovenes and other ex-Yugoslav nations are discussed again. The presence of these two sub-themes could indicate a desire for reflection on a new identity of Slovenes in their independent country.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study contributes to our understanding of suicidality in the critical period of Slovenian independence by highlighting three important topics that were frequently reported in the Slovenian newspapers *Delo* and *Večer*. Moreover, it provides a better understanding of how suicide in the military was reported and discussed in the Slovenian media during an important period with many political and economic changes. As we anticipated, there were differences in recognized topics depending on the time period. It is important to emphasize that the issue of suicide was instrumentalized and distorted for political reasons in order to reinforce the sense of crisis and promote an unfavorable attitude towards the Yugoslav People's Army. The lack of studies in times of independence and its suicide rates limits us from creating a more comprehensive picture.

Sources and Literature

Literature

- A., B. "Poročilo še ni popolno." *Delo*, May 9, 1986, 24.
- Ahačič, Draga. "Odrpoto pismo veleposlaniku ZDA gospodu Warrenu Zimmermanu in ..." *Delo*, May 15, 1991, 6.
- Antić Gaber, Milica, Deja Crnović and Irena Selišnik. "Politične moškosti v Sloveniji: kameradi, heroji in pravi dedci." *Časopis za Kritiko Znanosti*, No. 267 (2017): 35–61.
- Balažič, Milan. "Odgovor gospodoma Pučniku in Drevenšku." *Delo*, April 6, 1990, 5.
- Bebler, Anton. *Sodobno vojaštvo in družba*. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za družbene vede, Založba FDV, 2011.
- Crnica, Slavica. "Stiske zaradi družbenih napetosti." *Delo*, December 22, 1994, 297, 15.
- Čuček, Filip. "Vojaški samomori v Avstriji od srede 19. stoletja do prve svetovne vojne (z nekaj slovenskimi primeri)." *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 63, No. 3 (2023): 117–34.
- De Corti, Borko. "Zakaj se je ustrelil Viktor Avbelj?" *Večer*, April 30, 1993, 48.
- Debenjak, Božidar. "Neka pitanja o revolucionarnoj antropologiji." *Praxis-Jugoslavenko izdanje*, 01-02 (1969): 187–89.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

- Dernač-Špendov, Ivanka. "Kateri vojaki umirajo v JLA." *Delo*, September 13, 1990, 7.
- Durkheim, Émile. *Suicide*. New York: Free Press. 1951. Quoted in Frank Van Tubergen and Wout Ultee. "Political integration, war and suicide: The dutch paradox?." *International Sociology* 21, No. 2 (2006): 221–36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0268580906061377>.
- Escolas, Sandra M., Paul T. Bartone, Marek Rewers, Joseph M. Rothberg and J. Carter. »Why do soldiers kill themselves? Understanding suicide in the military.« *The 71F Advantage* 283 (2010).
- Forstnerič, France. "Različni pogledi na spravo." *Delo*, January 25, 1988, 3.
- Forstnerič-Hajnshek, Melita. "Secirnice slovenstva." *Večer*, August 8, 1987, 18.
- Grandovec, Helena. "Narod se odloča sam." *Večer*, November 7, 1986, 4.
- Grizold, Anton. *Obrambni sistem Republike Slovenije*. Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve, Visoka policijsko-varnostna šola, 1999.
- Hojnik, Žarko and Janez Kovačič. "Podrobnosti še niso znane." *Delo*, May 9, 1986, 8.
- Hojnik, Žarko. "Samomor je za Slovence enako usoden kot vojna." *Delo*, July 27, 1991, 174, 7.
- Horvat, Jože. "Kritično zanimanje za 'Prispevke.'" *Delo*, February 27, 1987, 5.
- Ivanič, Martin. "Pravica Slovenca do samomora." *Delo*, May 27, 1988, 10.
- J., H. "Nova revija 57." *Delo*, February 26, 1987, 6.
- Jakovljevič, Miro, Biserka Sedič, Marko Martinac, Darko Marcinko, Dulijano Ljubicić and Herman Vukusić. "Update of suicide trends in croatia 1966-2002." *Psychiatria Danubina* 16, No. 4 (2004): 299–308.
- Kalediene, Ramune, Skirmante Starkuviene and Jadvyga Petrauskiene. "Mortality from external causes in Lithuania: looking for critical points in time and place." *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health* 32, No. 5 (2004): 374–80. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14034940410024211>.
- Kostnapfel, Janko. "Odgovorni za to, kar počnemo, in za tisto, česar ne storimo." *Delo*, August 9, 1989, 182, 5.
- Kramer, Franc. "Morda bi lahko prisluhnili." *Večer*, July 12, 1990, 24.
- Leidinger, Hannes. "Suicide Discourses: The Austrian Example in an International Context from World War I to the 1930s." In Jochen Bohler, Ota Konrad and Rudolf Kučera (eds.). *In the Shadow of the Great War: Physical Violence in East-Central Europe, 1917–1923*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2021.
- Marušič, Andrej and Maja Zorko. "Slovenski samomor skozi prostor in čas." In Andrej Marušič and Saška Roškar (eds.). *Slovenija s samomorom ali brez*, 10–21. Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije, 2004.
- Marušič, Andrej. "Suicide in Slovenia: Lessons for cross-cultural psychiatry." *International Review of Psychiatry* 11, No. 2-3 (1999): 212–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540269974393>.
- Maver, Milan. "Ne sprašujte me, kako bo." *Delo*, July 4, 1991, 14.
- Merljak, Sonja. "Niso krivi le sprememba sistema, revščina in vreme." *Delo*, September 8, 1992, 207, 10.
- Milčinski, Lev (ed). *Samomor in Slovenci*. Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1985.
- Musek, Janek. *Psihološki portret Slovencev*. Ljubljana: Znanstveno in publicistično središče, 1994.
- Niedorfer, Srečko. "Slovenija nima kriminalne politike." *Večer*, February 22, 1992, 31.
- NIJZ. https://nijz.si/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/2023-08-29-Priloga-1_samomor.pdf.
- Nock, Matthew K., Charlene A. Deming, Carol S. Fullerton, E. Gilman Stephen, Matthew Goldenberg, Ronald C. Kessler, James E. McCarroll et. al. "Suicide Among Soldiers: A Review of Psychosocial Risk and Protective Factors." *Psychiatry: Interpersonal and Biological Processes* 76, No. 2 (2013): 97–125. <https://doi.org/10.1521/psyc.2013.76.2.97>.
- O'Malley, Pat. "Suicide and war: a case study and theoretical appraisal." *The British Journal of Criminology*, 15, No. (1975): 348–59.
- P., A. "Samomorov je končno manj." *Delo*, January 31, 1992, 25, 2.
- Partlič, Slava. "Zakaj si vojak vzame življenje?." *Delo*, March 17, 1990, 2.
- Partljič, Tone. "Ne zamudite priložnosti, oglejte si skrajno državo skrajnosti." *Delo*, March 9, 1989, 9.

- Plemenitaš Fuchs, Natalija. *Samomori v slovenski vojski: diplomsko delo*. Ljubljana: Univerza v Ljubljani, Fakulteta za družbene vede, 2003. <http://dk.fdv.uni-lj.si/dela/Plemenitas-Fuchs-Natalija.PDF>.
- Polič, Zoran. "Obravnava in zavrnitev nesprijemljivih stališč: Razprava o 57. številki Nove revije." *Delo*, March 5, 1987, 8.
- Poljšak, Marijan. "Prejeli smo: Dve vrsti državljanov." *Delo*, December 2, 1993, 9.
- Poveljstvo LK. "Odgovor na komentar Borisa Dolničarja." *Delo*, September 4, 1990, 5.
- Pregl, Marijan. "Vojna kot sindrom čelnega režnja." *Večer*, July 20, 1991, 26.
- Programski kolegij Radia Slovenija. "Odgovor na odgovor poveljstva ljubljanskega korpusa." *Delo*, September 5, 1990, 7.
- Pučnik, Jože. "Izjava dr. Pučnika za Delo." *Delo*, April 13, 1990, 3.
- Puhar, Alenka. "Vojna v Sloveniji: strahovi, panika in nočne more otrok." *Delo*, February 4, 1992, 28, 13.
- Rajkovič, Žarko. "Edinstveni smo v – napakah." *Delo*, September 23, 1986, 222, 2.
- Rajkovič, Žarko. "Več sodelovanja, manj nesoglasij." *Delo*, March 25, 1987, 2.
- Remec, Meta. "Epidemija samomorov? Odmevi na naraščanje stopnje samomorilnosti na Slovenskem v 19. in 20. stoletju." *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 63, No. 1 (2023): 8–41. <https://doi.org/10.51663/pnz.63.1.01>.
- Remec, Meta. "Traitors, Cowards, Martyrs, Heroes: Youth Suicide as a Socio-Historical Phenomenon in the 1960s Slovenia." *Studia Historica Slovenica* 23, No. 1 (2023): 203–38. <https://doi.org/10.32875/SHS.2023-06>.
- Samec, Karmen. *Samomor kot družbeno-patološki pojav in problem samomora v JLA: diplomska naloga*. Ljubljana: FSPN, 1991.
- Šetinc, Franc. "Če elita programira." *Delo*, March 5, 1987, 4.
- Skumavc, Marjan. "Tudi v vzrokih samomorov je čedalje več individualnosti." *Delo*, November 15, 1989, 265, 12.
- Soban, Branko. "Cilj politične ocene ZIS: žigovanje Slovenije." *Delo*, May 11, 1989, 2.
- Stack, Steven. "The Effect of Modernization on Suicide in Finland: 1800–1984." *Sociological Perspectives* 36, No. 2 (1993): 137–48. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1389426>.
- Stojanov, Veso. "V armadi popuščajo zahtevam Slovenije." *Delo*, August 22, 1990, 1.
- T., J. "V nasprotju s programskimi usmeritvami." *Delo*, February 21, 1987, 2.
- Trstenjak, Anton. "Okvirne dileme o etiologiji samomora." In Lev Milčinski, ed., *Samomor in Slovenci*. Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1985.
- Urbanija, Ana. "Pismo ob vojakovi smrti." *Večer*, September 22, 1990, 31.
- Värnik, Airi. "Suicide in Estonia." *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica* 84, No. 3 (1991): 229–32. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-0447.1991.tb03135.x>.
- Wasserman, Ira M. "Political Business Cycles, Presidential Elections, and Suicide and Mortality Patterns." *American Sociological Review* 48 (1983): 711–20. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2094929>.
- World Health Organization. *Preventing suicide: A global imperative*. World Health Organization, 2014. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241564779>.
- Zlobec, Ciril. "Obravnava in zavrnitev nesprijemljivih stališč: Razprava o 57. številki Nove revije." *Delo*, March 26, 1987, 4.
- Žorž, Bogdan. "Duševne stiske vojakov." *Večer*, June 8, 1991, 30.
- Žunec, Branko. "Dolga pijanost, obup, počasen samomor." *Večer*, May 7, 1994, 40.
- Zupanič, Jelka. "Skupščina bo ocenila dogovor." *Večer*, August 22, 1990, 2.

Periodicals

- *Delo*, 1986–1992, 1994.
- *Večer*, 1986, 1987, 1990–1994.

Jure Gračner, Asja Flamiš, Adelisa Huskić, Vita Poštuvan

MEDIJSKO POROČANJE O SAMOMORILNEM VEDENJU V KONTEKSTU SLOVENSKE OSAMOSVOJITVE

POVZETEK

Pred letom 1991 je bila Slovenija del Jugoslavije, ki je po smrti voditelja počasi začela razpadati. Slovenija je začela o samostojnosti razpravljati leta 1987, ko je skupina intelektualcev objavila program, ki je pozival k demokratizaciji in decentralizaciji. Vsi Slovenci te zamisli niso podpirali, vendar republike to ni ustavilo, da se ne bi osamosvojila v kratki, a intenzivni osamosvojitveni vojni.

V Jugoslaviji so bili vsi mladi moški, tudi Slovenci, poslani v druge republike na obvezno služenje vojaškega roka v Jugoslovanski ljudski armadi (JLA). Nekateri od teh vojakov so se zaradi samomora vrnili v krsti.

Slovenija je med jugoslovanskimi republikami izstopala z najvišjo stopnjo samomorov. Število samomorov se je med svetovnimi vojnama povečalo in je bilo vedno zelo visoko. Zmanjšalo se je leta 1989 in naslednje leto je bilo precej nižje, leta 1991, ko se je Slovenija osamosvojila, pa se je začelo rahlo povečevati.

Pomembno vlogo pri osamosvojitvi so imeli tudi časopisi, saj so imeli moč spodbujanja narativa. Za oblikovanje mnenja je bilo pomembno zlasti njihovo poročanje o stopnjah samomorov v povezavi z vojno.

Med vojno je število samomorov običajno nižje, kar je mogoče razložiti s teorijo družbene integracije, v skladu s katero politična nestabilnost spodbuja družbeno kohezijo, vojaki pa so manj tvegana skupina kot civilisti. Vseeno pa tudi vemo, da so izpostavljeni številnim stresnim izkušnjam, ki so pomembno povezane s samomorilnostjo. Poleg tega je v vojski zelo enostavno priti do orožja, dodaten dejavnik tveganja pa je lahko tudi izoliranost stražnega mesta.

Namen študije je bil ugotoviti, katere zgodbe o samomorih so bile objavljene v osrednjih slovenskih časopisih *Delo* in *Večer*. Ker je glavna tema raziskave samomor v obdobju slovenske osamosvojitve, smo za analizo izbrali tri obdobja: obdobje pred osamosvojitvijo Slovenije (1986–1988), obdobje med njo (1989–1991) in obdobje po njej (1992–1994). V raziskavi smo analizirali časopisne članke iz dveh osrednjih slovenskih časopisov, *Dela* in *Večera*. Ugotovili smo, da prevladujejo tri teme – zgodbe o slovenskih vojaki, politična agenda in informativni članki.

Rezultati so pokazali, da je politična agenda pogosta tema v obdobju pred osamosvojitvijo. Članki, opredeljeni v okviru te teme, se osredotočajo predvsem na razpravo o želji po osamosvojitvi Slovenije, pozneje pa vse bolj na posledice teh političnih sprememb, pri čemer kot glavni razlog za samomore poudarjajo politične dejavnike. Članki, ki so bili pogosto objavljeni med osamosvajanjem, prikazujejo zgodbe slovenskih vojakov. Gre za tragične zgodbe o samomorih, v katerih med umrlimi

izstopajo moški. V člankih se prepletajo opisi služenja vojaškega roka in stiske vojakov zaradi različnih dejavnosti JLA. V obdobju po osamosvojitvi pa smo večinoma našli članke, ki omogočajo vpogled v odnos družbe do samomora. Včasih je njihov cilj ozaveščanje o problemu samomorilnosti, v drugih primerih pa je pereče vprašanje samomorilnosti negativno poudarjeno.

Članek omogoča boljši vpogled v to, kako so v pomembnem obdobju številnih političnih in gospodarskih sprememb slovenski mediji poročali in razpravljali o samomorih v vojski.