

## Introduction: The (In)visibility of Multi-locality in Theory and Practice

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*Tatiana Bajuk Senčar*

ZRC SAZU, Institute of Slovenian Ethnology, Slovenia

tatiana.bajuk@zrc-sazu.si

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1804-9844>

This article maps out multi-locality as an interdisciplinary field of study and presents the state of current research on multi-locality in Slovenia, including a brief discussion of the author's own research. In this context, the author also addresses the issue of the visibility of multi-locality, both in the realm of theory as well as in the sphere of practice.

• **Keywords:** multi-locality, second homes, transnationalism, Slovenia, mobility

Avtorica v članku oriše multilokalnost kot interdisciplinarno raziskovalno področje in predstavi stanje trenutnih raziskav o multilokalnosti v Sloveniji, vključno s kratko razpravo o lastnih raziskavah. V tem kontekstu obravnava tudi vprašanja o vidnosti multilokalnosti – tako na področju teorije kakor tudi v raziskovalni praksi.

• **Ključne besede:** multilokalnost, sekundarna bivališča, transnacionalizem, Slovenija, mobilnost

### Introduction

Although mobility and migration have long been topics of research, the emergence of the “new mobilities paradigm” (Sheller, Urry, 2006) and the “mobility turn” in the social sciences and humanities (Faist, 2013; Sheller, 2017) have strongly contributed to current understandings about the extent to which mobility shapes today's world. In addition, increasing attention to diverse mobilities, mobile actors, and practices on numerous, interlocking scales has done much to call attention to how sedentarism has often been at the center of theories of culture and everyday life. This does not imply that researchers previously ignored mobile practices and actors, given the flourishing lines of inquiry dedicated to diverse forms of mobility (migration and tourism) both past and present.

Mimi Sheller and John Urry engage with this very issue when they posit that “all the world seems to be on the move” (Sheller, Urry, 2006: 207), arguing that mobility and movement are central to the world we live in and not the domain only of some. This sort of statement begs the question of whether this image of the “world on the move” is the result of a recalibrated analytical focus or of a qualitative shift in current everyday practices. In other words: are researchers finally “seeing” the significance of mobility and taking it into account in their research, or are people actually more mobile? A realistic answer – and one informed by current knowledge about paradigm shifts in communities of knowledge (Kuhn, 1970) – is that the emergence of a new paradigm

is the result of a complex interplay of evolving research sensibilities with changes in the field of practice and the everyday: the field site of ethnologists and anthropologists.

One of the results of the interplay between a broadened research awareness and shifting trends shaping everyday life is an expanding body of research dedicated to varied – and previously unexplored – mobile practices. This article and the other contributions to this thematic block aim to contribute to this body of research by examining multi-local actors whose rhythms and trajectories of mobility and residence have made them increasingly more visible to researchers. Their specific mobile practices result from the fact that they live in – and move between – more than one residence. Multi-local actors form a heterogeneous group; among them are second home owners, persons whose family members live across multiple households, and others that live in multiple homes due to their employment or own lands (often agricultural) across national borders. Their motivations, rhythms of residence, and living arrangements can vary widely. However, one unifying feature is that their everyday lives, which are distributed across – and link together – multiple residences, hinge on trajectories and rhythms of mobility. These trajectories of movement serve as evidence of their practices, which are otherwise less visible, primarily due to their intermittent physical presence at their residences.

This analytical discussion, focused on multi-local living and multi-local actors, is framed in terms of visibility and invisibility. It begins by mapping out in broad strokes the development of multi-locality as a field of study and the state of existing research on multi-locality in Slovenia, in which I also include my own experiences in studying multi-locality. The discussion also touches on the impact that the visibility and invisibility of multi-local actors – both in the realm of theory as well as the sphere of practice – has on research, an issue that all the authors of this thematic block address in diverse ways. Finally, it posits possible ways that studies of multi-locality can contribute to broader discussions within anthropology and ethnology.

### **The emergence of multi-locality as an object of research**

As an analytical term, multi-locality has evolved within the context of numerous disciplines and varied lines of inquiry, resulting in it acquiring numerous connotations and lacking a single overarching theory (Weiske et al., 2015). In effect, the concept of multi-locality has roots in anthropology. According to Peter Weichhart (2015) and others, multi-locality first appeared in research literature in the early 1970s. The anthropologists Melvin and Carol Ember used the term in their analyses of settlement patterns in traditional societies, which were primarily defined by kinship ties (matrilocal, patrilocal, etc.). They coined the term multi-local to refer to a pattern that did not accord with established options but identified an emergent pattern of “co-occurrence of any two or more fairly frequent patterns of consanguineal residence” (Ember, Ember, 1972: 382).

They argued that the use of two or more residences developed as a livelihood strategy in some societies in the face of certain challenges such as depopulation. Thus, Melvin and Carol Ember coined the term to refer to a practice that fell outside the norm: a practice that they considered an adaptation to changing circumstances.

Whereas the focus of Ember and Ember's analysis was on the number and location of residences, numerous studies that followed employed the concept of multi-locality in relation to trajectories of mobility that did not fall under conventional categories in migration studies, which traditionally centered on the (often cross-border) movement of people resulting in a definitive, often permanent, change of residence. In particular, geographers used the concept of bi-locality or multi-locality to build on the concept of circular migration within migration studies. Their aim was to capture distinctive forms of migration that did not conclude with a definitive shift in residence to a different place but involved a pattern of continual, circular movement between or among numerous places (see, e.g., Chapman, 1979; Watts, Prothero, 1981). In this fashion, the term multi-locality was employed by select migration specialists to identify and examine a set of practices that could not be accounted for by conceptual categories.

Initial research on multi-locality was piecemeal and distributed across varied lines of inquiry, each with its own analytical questions and priorities. The development of research on multi-locality was also informed by the culturally and historically specific manifestations of multi-local living that researchers encountered worldwide, resulting in numerous, albeit overlapping, approaches and insights. What researchers did have in common was the issue of trying to identify and examine social actors whose practices transcend established analytical oppositions between mobility and sedentariness, between being here or there – in order to understand how people live both here *and* there, beyond the strictly local (Duchêne-Lacroix et al., 2016). To this end, multi-locality in certain studies took on additional connotations, linked to either multi-sitedness (Kingsolver, 1996) or multi-vocality (Rodman, 1992).

Interest in and research on multi-locality significantly expanded in the face of increased attention to broad-based changes linked to diverse, overlapping processes of globalization that encourage new forms of transnational mobility and connection (Glick Schiller et al., 1995; Vertovec, 2009; Salazar, 2011; Gregorič Bon, Repič, 2016). This resulted in multi-locality's transformation from a concept meant to identify exceptions or deviations from the norm to one referring to an increasing prevalent set of practices. More recent research on multi-locality has aimed at mapping out multi-locality conceptually (Nadler, 2009; Weichhart, 2015; Schmidt-Kallert, 2016) and developing a typology of multi-local practices (Duchêne-Lacroix, 2014). The range of multi-local practices is quite broad, including job-related multi-locality (Jordan, 2008; Schneider, Meil, 2008; Thieme, 2008; Reuschke, 2012; Garde, 2021), non-cohabitating or "Living Apart Together" couples and post-separation families (Schier et al., 2015; Schier, 2016; Merla, Nobels, 2019), and second homes (Bonnin, Villanova, 1999;

Bendix, Löfgren, 2007; Rolshoven, 2007). Studies focused on developing typologies of multi-local practices also analyzed overlapping lines of inquiry into diverse forms of multi-locality, be they established practices of the past (Duchêne-Lacroix, Mäder, 2013) or practices that are analyzed within other conceptual frameworks (e.g., for second homes, see Bendix, Löfgren, 2007).

The distinctive characteristics of anthropological and ethnological research are both methodological and conceptual. Anthropological and ethnological studies that examine multi-locality are based on qualitative methods and ethnographic research, an approach that is to some degree shared with researchers of other disciplines that employ qualitative methods – primarily sociologists and geographers, as is apparent in the contributions to this thematic block. Furthermore, the lines of inquiry pursued by anthropologists and ethnologists center on their approach to multi-locality as *vita activa* (Rolshoven, 2006)<sup>1</sup> or everyday life in numerous places, examining how social actors develop strategies allowing them to “organize their everyday lives between living, working and having time off, as well as shift between moving and staying put” (Rolshoven, 2007: 19). The study of everyday lives across multiple homes serves as a lens for examining broader issues. In the case of research on second homes, for example, ethnological explorations of multi-locality strive to engage broader questions, such as understandings of home and belonging (Bendix, Löfgren, 2007).

### **Research on multi-local practices in Slovenia**

Studies in Slovenia that center on multi-local practices *as* multi-local are exceedingly rare, due in large part to a range of factors, most of which are theoretical or analytical in nature; others stem from Slovenia’s specific historical and cultural circumstances. The most relevant issues, however, are linked to the ways that research on mobility/migration and settlement patterns has developed within Slovenia, which in turn influenced the conceptual frameworks in terms of which multi-local patterns of living were identified and examined.

In the case of migration and mobility studies, a flourishing interdisciplinary field of research with roots that extend to the early twentieth century, researchers focused primarily on tracking existing patterns of migration of Slovenes. This was historically heavily informed by emigration, but it also involved, albeit in a much smaller proportion, daily migration, cross-border migration, and return migration, as well as more contemporary transnational migration patterns (Repič, 2006; Gregorič Bon, Repič, 2016; Lukšič Hacin, 2018). These patterns also included seasonal migration, which

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<sup>1</sup> Johanna Rolshoven’s use of the term *vita activa* is based on Hannah Arendt’s definition of the term as composed of three fundamental human activities: labor, work, and action (Arendt, 1958).

involved seasonal rhythms of mobility and residence (Drnovšek, 2005) that were multi-local in nature.

An example of a study of seasonal mobility patterns is that of Katalin Munda Hirnök (2004), which centers on the border communities along the Slovenian-Hungarian border. This is a region that has been particularly susceptible to outmigration due to its historically sparse population and the relatively poor quality of the land, which has resulted in a decrease in agriculture as a viable source of livelihood for its residents. Munda Hirnök conducted research among Porabje (Rába Valley) Slovenes on the practice of seasonal migration as a livelihood strategy, a practice that allows them to remain in their home villages instead of emigrating to industrialized centers or towns. With the aid of biographical narratives, Munda Hirnök analyzed the life stories of villagers and compiled a social history of seasonal migration for the area, shedding light on how seasonal migration became an established livelihood strategy that involved cross-border mobility and intermittent absences from home. The study involved mapping out which social actors decide to engage in seasonal migration, their experiences as seasonal migrants (where they go and for how long), how seasonal migration operates as a system (from the point of view of the migrants), and how seasonal migration affects daily life (see also Munda Hirnök, Medvešek, 2016).

In addition to studies focused on cross-border seasonal migration, some research has analyzed traditional subsistence strategies typical for the Alps that have been based on a form of seasonal multi-locality: alpine transhumance and traditional cheese production. Numerous Slovenian villages have maintained the traditional system of access to particular mountain pastures in the Alps, where villagers take their herds to pasture in the summer months and also manufacture milk products, particularly cheese. Ethnologists have focused on these practices primarily as a form of heritage – one that has, due to various reasons, been increasingly abandoned (Ledinek Lozej, 2002, 2013), which in turn has spurred changes in the alpine cultural landscape (see also, e.g., Minnich, 1998). Certain researchers, such as the anthropologist Jaka Repič (2014), have also focused on these traditional livelihood strategies as mobile and multi-local practices, shedding light on the routes and seasonal dwelling practices in the highland pastures.

In addition to a limited number of studies on migratory patterns that can be described as multi-local, research on second homes in Slovenia has received comparatively more attention – albeit through the lens of diverse conceptual approaches and frameworks. The earliest research on second homes extends back to the socialist era, the period during which owning second, vacation, or weekend homes became more prevalent. Before then, vacation homes were the domain of the wealthy or upper class, who would have had a home or villa at a popular tourist destination. The first vacation homes were built in the late nineteenth century in alpine tourist destinations such as Bled or Bohinj (Jeršič, 1968).

The first researchers that focused on the increasingly prevalent practice of second home ownership were geographers, who documented shifts in settlement practices in various regions across Slovenia – not only in the Slovenian Alps, but also at popular seaside tourist destinations. Matjaž Jeršič's study on second homes (1968) was the first systematic analysis of second or vacation homes in Slovenia, a line of inquiry further developed by numerous geographers that contributed to expanding knowledge of the evolving practice of second home ownership during socialism (e.g., Gosar, 1987b; Koderman, 2014) as well as within a broader Yugoslav context over time (Opačić, Koderman, 2018). Work in this vein has helped map out the evolving second home landscape in Slovenia, tracking the effects of increasing numbers of second homes on the spatial development of settlements, villages, and towns through different historical periods. In particular, I highlight the research conducted in protected areas in the Slovenian Alps, in Triglav National Park (Gosar, 1987a, 1989; Koderman, Salmič, 2013; Koderman, 2017), in which researchers examined the effects of second home developments on cultural landscapes and on tourism development.

In addition, comparative geographic research has also focused on the effects of second homes within the context of interlocking migration processes, including out-migration and amenity migration. Researchers examining alpine settlements in the border region between Slovenia and Austria (Steinicke et al., 2012) analyzed the effects that amenity migration processes have had on alpine settlements that have otherwise suffered significant demographic changes, due particularly to outmigration. Barbara Lampič and Irena Mrak (2012) carried out a study on persons that purchased second homes in the Pomurje (Mura Valley) region, near Slovenia's borders with Hungary and Slovenia. Their work focused on the period after Slovenia's accession to the European Union, which heralded a new era for second home ownership. The Mura Valley is a peripheral rural region marked by a strong history of both seasonal migration as well as outmigration. Lampič and Mrak studied those that split their time between their primary and secondary countries of residence. Their work focuses on foreign owners, be they amenity migrants that made a definitive move to Slovenia or those that split their time between their primary and secondary countries of residence. In their study, Lampič and Mrak employed qualitative methods (such as interviews) as well as statistical data analysis to provide a more complete picture of the experiences of foreign home owners and their impact on the local communities they moved into (from their own point of view). This dimension of their study renders their work more in line with that of ethnologists and anthropologists, whose fieldwork also seeks to convey both emic and etic perspectives.

Despite these overlaps, there is a crucial difference between the work of geographers and that of ethnologists and anthropologists. While geographers have conducted considerable research on second homes over the last decades, ethnologists and anthropologists have mostly examined second home owners if and when they became relevant to the

questions they examine in the field. My own first experiences with multi-local actors followed this very pattern, when I was conducting research on tourism development (as well as the politics of heritage management and preservation) in Bohinj (Bajuk Senčar, 2005, 2014b), a municipality that has one of the highest percentages of second homes in Slovenia. In trying to include the broadest possible range of social actors and stakeholders among my interlocutors, I came across a group of persons that comprise an ambivalent category from the perspective of tourism: they are neither tourists nor residents. Although their inconstant presence renders them less “visible” in local daily life, their presence and role in the social landscape of the Alps has strengthened markedly over the years, which manifests itself in local tourism development in diverse ways.

The distinctiveness of ethnological and anthropological research on owners of second homes in Slovenia thus far is that they are addressed within the context of micro-studies in the field that are primarily place-based. In this manner, these studies explore the potential role that the increasing, yet intermittent, presence of owners of second homes has on everyday life in the communities where they have their second homes.

The work of the ethnologist Matej Vranješ (2005, 2017), for example, has focused on what he termed the ambivalent relationship between local actors and owners of second homes in Tolmin and how it manifests itself through their differing understandings and uses of the local landscape. Tolmin is located in the western region of Slovenia’s Alps, an area that has suffered a long-term trend of outmigration. In his fine-grained ethnographic research with members of the community, Vranješ found that owners of second homes are welcomed by locals, who may sell them part of their land to make ends meet or to prevent their land from falling into disrepair, especially if there is no one in the family to maintain it. This not only extends to existing buildings (family homes, etc.) but also to land that is normally maintained and cultivated for farming or husbandry. If land is not properly maintained, the forest encroaches on it, transforming a cultivated cultural landscape into a “wild” one. Locals would bemoan such changes as forms of degradation, as the spread of what they term a “green desert” – a sign of the area’s (and the community’s) decline. The sale of property or land to people as second homes did not necessarily imply that those properties would be maintained in accordance with local standards because owners of second homes, who do not necessarily share a history with or have ties to the local community, do not necessarily experience the local landscape in the same way as locals. In addition, their motivations for purchasing a second home and maintaining a lifestyle that allows them a hiatus from their (often urban) daily life could often be understood in terms of an escape to nature that they understand and experience in their own ways. They do not necessarily share locals’ concern with the “green desert.” On their contrary, the current state of the natural landscape could tie in quite nicely with their desire for a natural escape and for privacy. The often divergent experiences and expectations of the local landscape frequently operate as a source of tension, if not misunderstandings, between locals and owners of second homes.

Research on manifestations of multi-locality in Slovenia is thus comprised of varied lines of inquiry that examine social actors or social practices that can be considered multi-local but are normally not studied through the lens of multi-locality. For example, multi-locality in terms of seasonal migration is viewed as an established livelihood or subsistence strategy that is viewed as an alternative to emigration. Second home ownership is viewed as a practice that became prevalent in the postwar period, and the bulk of research that has been conducted by geographers has involved examining second home ownership primarily from the perspective of the settlements and communities in which second homes are located – albeit in spatial terms. Ethnological and anthropological research on second home owners and second home ownership, which is less common, has primarily resulted from encounters with second home ownership in the field and its significance for the communities that researchers study. However, few ethnological and anthropological studies in Slovenia center on second home owners themselves and their multi-local ways of life (Vranješ, 2017), which may be an indirect result not only of the issues that ethnologists and anthropologists examine in the field but the theoretical and analytical concepts that they employ.

However, given the increasing prevalence of diverse forms of multi-locality, examining them *as* multi-local can offer crucial insights. To illustrate this point, I briefly discuss my own experiences with studying multi-local actors when conducting field research among the first generation of Slovene EU officials, or Eurocrats. They include persons that, once Slovenia became a member state of the European Union, decided on a career working in – or in conjunction with – the EU institutions located in Brussels (Bajuk Senčar, 2014a; see also Bajuk Senčar, Turk, 2011). The main issues that I explored during my fieldwork among EU officials were integration and mobility. My aim was to understand my interlocutors' experiences of integration into the culture and operation of the EU institutions in their own terms, as well as how they experienced and negotiated the various dimensions of their identity (national, professional, and European). One of the main challenges that I faced was unpacking the concept of integration itself, which is structured in terms of a normative binary opposition between alterity and identity (Sayad, 2004). Although the concept of integration infuses virtually all levels of EU discourse and practice, the case of Slovene EU officials is a specific case. This is in large part because their move to a city in a different country also implied a move into the network of EU institutions, which is a world unto itself – referred to as the “Brussels Bubble” or “field of Eurocacy” (Georgakakis, Powell, 2013) – that transcends the physical boundaries of the EU district in Brussels. Thus, my fieldwork, which centered on examining my interlocutors' experiences in Brussels in the context of their move to Brussels, involved mapping out and understanding both their physical and professional mobilities.

During my research, I soon realized that the stories of my interlocutors did not fit into integration's binary logic of alterity and identity. Their narratives were full of stories about experiences of “living long distance”: about living in Brussels and



working in the institutions but maintaining links with “home” in numerous ways. While I worked with concepts such as transnationality (Glick Schiller et al., 1995; Vertovec, 2009; Salazar, 2011) and simultaneity (e.g., Levitt, Glick Schiller, 2004), I realized that numerous persons that I encountered habitually moved back and forth between in Brussels and Slovenia. For some, being multi-local served as a transitional phase between living in Slovenia and making a definite shift to Brussels because settling in, making friends, and feeling at home took time. For others, it helped them maintain professional contacts and develop their expertise in case they wished to leave the EU institutions and to move back to Slovenia. Another group of interlocutors continually moved back and forth between Brussels and Slovenia because their partner or family maintained a home base in Slovenia. These diverse patterns of multi-local living as well as professional practice informed their notions of identity and belonging in varied ways. The following excerpt from one of my interviews with a mid-level Eurocrat depicts one of the possible configurations between mobility, home, and identity:

*Living in Brussels is just fine. I do not have any problems with it. I settled in quite quickly and, if someone asks me where home is, yes, home is literally where my suitcases are. It is a very relative concept for me. When I go home tonight, after work I go home to Ixelles, where I live. Of course, when I go to Ljubljana I go home to our apartment there. On the weekends, we live at our home at Bled. That is where home is for me. I do not subscribe to the concept of home that poets and writers celebrate in their work. For me it is everywhere where my suitcases are.*

Making my interlocutors’ multi-local practices part of my ethnographic research was crucial to understanding their sense of self as Slovene EU officials because their daily lives and experiences simply were not geographically or socially – or even professionally – limited to their lives in Brussels. They did not live either in Brussels or Slovenia, but in both places. Multi-local ways of living create habitual rhythms of mobility and residences across numerous locations that create what Cédric Duchêne-Lacroix (2010) describes as an archipelago. Mapping out and examining these archipelagos should also delimit our lines of inquiry, both conceptually and in terms of defining our ethnographic field.

### **Visibility and invisibility of multi-local actors and practices**

Despite the increasing prevalence of multi-local practices, there are numerous challenges that researchers face when conducting research on multi-locality, many of which are discussed by the authors of the articles in this thematic block. As in the case of

migration and mobility studies, research on multi-locality is inherently interdisciplinary, as is apparent from the brief overview of existing studies discussed in this article. On the one hand, studies conducted at diverse scales or with the aid of varied approaches provide a broader picture because findings and insights can complement each other. Yet, on the other hand, varied approaches and methods do not necessarily contribute to building up a shared and coherent conceptual framework. In addition, numerous studies of multi-local practices are examined through other, broader lines of inquiry, which may result in multi-local practices not being analyzed on their own terms or in their entirety. This in turn also affects the visibility of multi-locality beyond the research sphere.

Many of the contributors to this thematic block address the challenges to researching multi-locality, one of them being the invisibility of multi-local actors and practices, which results from the fact that mono-local residency is still the norm. This manner of thinking manifests itself, for example, in the ways that residency is regulated and recorded on the part of the state, which in turn represents a problem for researchers that work with state statistics in their studies. As Lena Greinke and Barbara Jaczewska show in their analyses, many countries do not allow for the possibility that people may be registered at more than one residence, and declarations of residency do not accurately reflect residential multi-locality in the field, thus rendering multi-local actors less visible.

Another issue centers around the fact that certain forms of multi-locality may be more visible than others: the relative locations of the homes between which people move may be a significant factor, with homes separated by national borders being more marked than those are not. The lack of visibility of multi-local actors became apparent in Slovenia during the lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. In Slovenia, as elsewhere, the state implemented quarantine measures limiting people's mobility to within municipal borders with rare exceptions (Odlok, 2020). Many Slovenian citizens contested such measures on principle, questioning the authority of the state in limiting trajectories of mobility that had never been regulated to such a degree before. For others, these measures were problematic because their everyday lives and livelihoods depended on their motility (e.g., Flamm, Kaufman, 2006), on their being able to move between certain locations. Debates unfolding in the public sphere centered on the meanings accorded to different forms of mobility – defined in terms of degrees of necessity – and the criteria that justified cross-border mobility (across municipal or state borders) under pandemic conditions. The state itself defined certain cases of so-called necessary mobility in the lockdown ordinances and their subsequent annexes. They included travel to and from a place of employment or source of livelihood, travel to care for vulnerable family members, and travel to carry out basic/necessary errands that are not available locally (including, e.g., access to medical services/pharmacies). In this manner, the regulation of exceptions highlighted trajectories of mobility linked to the fulfillment of habitual yet necessary tasks. During the lockdown, it become

apparent that, for a surprising number of persons, elementary dimensions of everyday life – being at home, maintaining one’s livelihood, caring for family, or pursuing university studies – involved moving between and staying at more than one residence. This was an unquestioned dimension of their lives that came to the fore if these activities involved crossing otherwise permeable borders.

The articles in this thematic block contribute to expanding the understanding of multi-local practices in Europe through a range of topics, social actors, approaches, and sites of research. In this manner, they reflect the breadth of the interdisciplinary field of study that has been discussed in this article, as they are based on studies carried out in diverse disciplines and employing quantitative and qualitative research. In addition, the authors present analyses conducted in countries of central and eastern Europe, which have been underrepresented in the current body of research on multi-locality.

Tanya Matanova’s article provides an analysis of multi-local actors that are based in Bulgaria’s capital city of Sofia but have second homes, predominantly in the nearby countryside. Matanova provides an overview of second home ownership in Bulgaria that has roots in the communist period but has become a more widespread phenomenon in recent years, also as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to providing insights into her interlocutors’ specific patterns of multi-local living, Matanova’s ethnological study of multi-local residents of Sofia focuses on central issues linked to everyday life across numerous households: notions of home, belonging, and territorial identification.

The article by Yelis Erolova and Vanya Ivanova, while also focusing on Bulgaria, provides an interesting counterpoint because it examines a different set of multi-local actors and their roles in maintaining two religious sites in rural northeast Bulgaria: the muslim sanctuary of Ak Yazılı Baba Tekke and the Church of St. Dimitar. Their historical and ethnological analysis provides an in-depth perspective on the history and heritage of each site and is structured as an analysis of the religious sites as polysemic landscapes. They examine the relationship between multi-local actors and the religious site, depicting the different roles that multi-local actors play at each site, contributing to their preservation, commercialization, or revitalization.

Lena Greinke’s work centers on a distinctive group of multi-local actors that, although quite numerous, has not been at the forefront of research on multi-locality: university students. Her quantitative analysis is based on an online survey conducted in 2020 with students from the Faculty of Architecture and Landscape Sciences at Leibniz University Hanover. Greinke’s analysis focuses on patterns of multi-locality among her respondents and the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on their multi-local living practices. In addition, she assesses the current and potential impacts of student multi-locality on urban spatial policy and planning.

The thematic block concludes with Barbara Jaczewska’s study of multi-local actors based in Poland’s Mazovia Province, where there have been few studies of multi-locality.

Her research, which portrays multi-locality as a spatial practice developed in relation to an evolving set of circumstances, combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches. With the aid of semi-structured interviews and an online survey, she analyzes her survey respondents' multi-local living arrangements, her interlocutors' motives for becoming multi-local, and their experiences with multi-local living.

These articles offer insights on a number of issues linked to multi-local living. One issue is the significance of the distinctive histories of second home ownership with roots in socialism among central and eastern European countries. Another issue concerns the role of recent events on multi-local practices – specifically, the role and legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic on various groups of multi-local actors. Finally, the authors also address issues that transcend studies of multi-locality: understandings of home and belonging, territoriality, landscape, mobility, and spatial planning. In this manner, these studies also portray how research on multi-locality can contribute to broader, interdisciplinary discussions on a range of issues central to the changes shaping our world today.

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### Uvod: (ne)vidnost multilokalnosti v teoriji in praksi

Avtorica v kontekstu vse večjega zavedanja raziskovalcev o pomenu mobilnosti kot značilnosti sodobnega vsakdanjega življenja oriše multilokalnost kot interdisciplinarno raziskovalno področje. Zaradi rastoče ozaveščenosti in številnih širših procesov, kot sta fleksibilizacija dela in globalizacija, vse več ljudi postaja multilokalnih, kar pomeni, da živijo v več kot enem kraju in se gibljejo med njimi. Struktura analitične razprave je dvojna, teoretična in metodološka: na eni strani oriše razvijajoče se področje raziskovanja multilokalnosti, na drugi pa obravnava izzive raziskav multilokalnosti in multilokalnih akterjev na terenu.

Multilokalnost predstavlja kot interdisciplinarno raziskovalno področje, ki se je razvilo v številnih disciplinah in različnih raziskovalnih usmeritvah, zaradi česar ima koncept številne konotacije in nima enotne krovne teorije. Avtorica koreninam multilokalnosti sledi od prvih rab izraza v antropologiji, nato pa so ga prevzeli geografi in drugi strokovnjaki s področja migracij, da bi z njim označili značilne oblike mobilnosti in gibanja, ki ne sodijo v konvencionalne migracijske vzorce in analitične kategorije. Slednje vključujejo dokončne (in pogosto enosmerne) spremembe prebivališča. Poznejše raziskave temeljijo na konceptih, kakršna sta transnacionalizem in sočasnost/simultanost.

V nadaljevanju je predstavljeno stanje raziskav multilokalnih praks v Sloveniji, kjer se multilokalnost kot koncept redko uporablja, vendar so multilokalne prakse in akterji predmet preučevanja v sorodnih raziskovalnih smereh, zlasti na področju migracij in v raziskavah mobilnosti ter v raziskavah, ki se dotikajo sekundarnih bivališč oz. vikendov. Predstavitev trenutnih raziskav o multilokalnih praksah v Sloveniji vključuje raziskave iz številnih ved, vendar podrobneje obravnava tiste, ki so bile opravljene v etnologiji in antropologiji. Avtorica članek sklene z razpravo o izzivih raziskovanja multilokalnosti, ki jih povezuje z vidnostjo in nevidnostjo multilokalnih akterjev in praks, tako na področju teorije kot raziskovalne prakse.