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## NEW DIVISIONS – NEW EXCLUSIONS? SLOVENIAN AND CROATIAN NEWS DISCOURSES ABOUT THE SCHENGEN BORDER

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### ABSTRACT

*After Slovenia joined the Schengen area in December 2007, the Slovenian-Croatian border, which had been quite permeable to local populations for centuries, became the external border of the EU, where controls were reinforced. The main goal of this paper is to research journalistic representations of the new border regime in two national daily newspapers and two daily newspapers from the Primorska region on both sides of the border. A critical discourse analysis revealed discourses of a borderless Europe, border as the Iron Curtain, border as the Schengen fort, border as a life problem, and non-problematic border as proof of the efficiency of the Croatian state. Only the regional media critically represented the new regime. The study demonstrates the usefulness of the representation approach to border research on one hand and a bottom-up and comparative approach to media and journalism studies in the coverage of EU topics on the other hand.*

**Key words:** border, Croatia, discourse analysis, European Union, news reporting, Schengen regime, Slovenia

## NUOVE DIVISIONI – NUOVE ESCLUSIONI? L'INTERPRETAZIONE DEL CONFINE DI SCHENGEN NEI MEDIA SLOVENI E CROATI

### SINTESI

*Il confine sloveno-croato che per la popolazione locale ha rappresentato nei secoli una linea di demarcazione permeabile, con l'ingresso della Slovenia nell'area di Schengen nel dicembre del 2007 si è trasformato nel confine esterno dell'Unione europea con un regime di controllo più severo. Obiettivo principale dell'articolo è l'analisi della rappresentazione che del nuovo regime danno due quotidiani nazionali e due quotidiani locali di ambedue i versanti del confine. L'analisi discorsiva ha svelato la dimensione del concetto di Europa senza confini, del confine-cortina di ferro, del confine-roccaforte di Schengen, del confine- questione di vitale importanza e del confine-privo di criticità grazie all'efficienza dello stato croato. Soltanto i quotidiani regionali hanno rappresentato in modo critico il nuovo regime. Lo studio indica l'utilità dell'approccio prescelto tanto per la ricerca sul confine quanto per l'indagine comparativa e approfondita delle analisi dei mass media nell'affrontare e presentare i temi legati all'Unione europea.*

**Parole chiave:** confine, Croazia, analisi discorsiva, Unione europea, comunicazione giornalistica, regime di Schengen, Slovenia

## INTRODUCTION

Slovenia accessed to the Schengen regime on 21 December 2007. From this day forward, all border controls between Slovenia and the European Union (EU) member states (Hungary, Austria, and Italy) were abolished. However, the southern border with Croatia became the external border of the EU, where controls were reinforced. In the past, people from both sides of the Slovenian-Croatian border were accustomed to a relatively free border crossing (see Pipan, 2007; Slovenian Parliament, 2001), one that was quite permeable and "soft", a so-called "green border", which locals could cross at any point on the existing roads, trails and paths outside the official checkpoints. Introduction of the Schengen regime brought change. For example, points at which the local population and farmers who own cultivated land on the other side of the border used for crossing the border had to be shut, mainly by means of gates, and persons who cross the border with local border traffic passes and agricultural certificates need special keys (Slovenian Police, 2007). Representations of this new regime on the borders will be of our interest in this paper. Has nothing essentially changed for the local population crossing the border? What are the prevailing representations of the Schengen border among people in both states?

The main goal is to research representations of the border as presented by the media in the two states which have now become separated by the Schengen border regime, i.e., Slovenia and Croatia. Media representation research is significant because of the influential role which the mass media plays in present-day societies. As the great majority of citizens experience politics through the media, any study of democracy is also a study of how the media reports and interprets political events and issues (McNair, 2000, 1). Much of the essential and useful information comes from the media and our lives, as well as our economy, government, and society would have great difficulty functioning without the continuing flow of news brought by the media (Hachten, 2001, xvi). The mass media has also been the key agent of dominant representation of borders (e.g., Anderson, 1991; Schlesinger, 1991; Strüver, 2004).

The prevailing research in the field of media studies about EU issues (e.g., de Vreese, 2002; Machill et al., 2006) has been an attempt to answer the question whether news media within the EU lives up to the ideals of the EU-public sphere. So far, the answers have been more or less uniform: the elite national news media contribute negatively to the "democratic deficit" in the EU, because a natural consensus on what the EU is and how it represents citizens' interests, European nations and their borders does not exist (Machill et al., 2006; Slaatta, 2006). The media is structured according to political and economic structures of society and is partici-

pating in the constant negotiation and contestation of what kind of EU we might be asked to imagine. Further, the national media often ignores EU politics, which they believe to be complicated and of little interest to a wider audience and therefore undesirable to cover. According to Kurpas et al. (2004), the EU suffers from a "communication deficit".

A more bottom-up approach to media studies is concerned with how media representations and meanings are linked to the reproduction of the EU social structures, in our case the new regime of the Slovenian borders. Media scholars must also go beyond prevailing studies of news content in major privileged, elite news media, and study more local and field-specific media. There is a constant possibility that what is seen as important news in general elite newspapers is a type of discourse that is already structured and already systematically excludes an important aspect of social life (Slaatta, 2006).

The first chapter offers a theoretical framework to the media representation of the borders, while the second chapter includes a critical discourse analysis, which was used in the research of two Slovenian and two Croatian daily newspapers' representations of the border after Slovenia joining the Schengen regime. In the last section, the results are discussed in a wider historical and social context.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social theorists have generally favoured one of two broad approaches to theorizing about borders (Rumfold, 2006, 155). On the one hand, borders have been contextualized by the idea of the network, which has shaped much current thinking on society, particularly under the influence of globalization theories (e.g., Castells, 2000; Sassen, 2002; Urry, 1999; Wellman, 2001). The network, along with associated ideas of mobilities, flows, fluids, and scapes, has become a key metaphor for understanding modern life in a "world in motion". The work of Manuel Castells (2000) is, according to Rumfold (2006), the most celebrated in this field. A network society is one where a space of places is being replaced by a space of flows, and the EU is seen as the paradigm of the network state. In the network vision of society, territorial borders are easily transcended by flows and mobilities, which take place within globalized circuits of information and exchange. Rumfold (2006) claims that, in this reading, borders remain important both because they have been rescaled by global networks and projected at a distance from the "old" borders of national territory, and because access to networks can act as a bordering mechanism: those not in the network and still existing mainly in a space of places are excluded from important circuits of information and economic exchange.

On the other hand, there are, according to Rumfold (2006, 156), social theorists who have also been concerned with the meaning and role of borders in the context of societal transformations and the new spatiality of politics. He emphasizes Bauman (2002), who sees the terrorist attacks of 9/11 as representing a symbolic end to the era of space and the primacy of territorial power. In global space, borders are translated into extraterritorial frontier lands. Beck (2004) identifies the pluralisation of borders as a key development. Borders are no longer only national, but may take many different forms. These themes are echoed in the work of Balibar (2004) for whom borders have become so diffuse that whole countries can now be borderlands, for example, those at the margins of the EU's project of integration: once countries had borders, now they *are* borders (Rumfold, 2006). Bufon (2008) points out that the political or economic "macro" approach in studying cross-border regions is limited. True nature and qualities of the regions may only be established when local cultural and social elements of cross-border relations are also taken into account (Bufon, 2008, 26). Research investigations in the Central-European border areas have shown that the intensity of cross-border relations depends above all on the presence of urbanized areas and national minorities on both sides of the border, together with traditional cultural and social ties on the basis of consolidated former territorial units (Bufon, 2005).

At the end of 2007, Slovenia and other "new" EU members became part of the Schengen zone (with the exception of Cyprus, Ireland, the UK, Bulgaria, and Romania). They accepted the abolition of control over the internal borders within the EU (openness), which, according to the "compensatory" logic of the Schengen regime, requires the parallel development of a strong external border (control). Becoming a part of the Schengen zone has been conditioned by changes in Slovenian police law, which resulted in considerably more extensive police powers which encroach upon the constitutional rights to privacy and freedom of movement. According to Article 29 of the new National Border Control Act (Slovenian Parliament, 2007), police officers may examine or search a person in the event of suspected possession of illegal items and objects or to establish identity. This has so far been limited to suspects of criminal or minor offences. The police are authorized to do this not only along the border but also practically within the whole territory of Slovenia (Article 35) which thus became a borderland. Slovenia has also integrated the Schengen Information System (SIS), established to enable the authorities designated by each member state to have access via an automated search procedure to alerts about persons and property for the purpose of border checks and other police and customs checks (Anderson, 2004). The key problem of this system is gathering data about persons with the purpose of creating

secret records or intentional control of people who are suspected of intending to perpetrate a criminal act. To put it in another way: if a person is registered with the SIS as a suspected criminal, the police are authorized to secretly gather information about this person in every procedure referring to this person. This had previously only been possible with permission from an investigating judge, and now it is possible with permission from an attorney general (Jerše, Mrak, 2007).

A key shift not directly addressed by any of these approaches concerns our changing consciousness of borders. The process of debordering nation-states and rebordering the Schengen zone cannot simply reconfigure borders. Perceptions of borders refer to the existence of borders in people's minds, to the affective, cognitive, and imagined meanings that borders are assumed to be highly influential in people's individual and social lives. Spatial borders in general – and the ones between the EU member states in particular – no longer enjoy a compelling logic on the "ground", and they are increasingly viewed as being socially constructed and carriers of various meanings. Instead of conceptualizing European borders as self-evident lines, and in addition to an understanding of borders as markers of differences in, for example, language, policy, and administration, borders are understood as undergoing a constant reconfiguration through social relations and as being constituted by imaginations and representations. The idea of socially constructed meanings of territories and borders is based on socio-cultural contingent practices and discourses. The role of discourse for constructing the meanings of borders has been taken into consideration since boundaries are not located merely within the empirical contexts of borderlines and landscapes but also in discursive landscapes, which have shaped and continually shape mindscapes and the perceptual images of the observer (e.g., Paasi, 2001; Strüver, 2004). Or to put it another way, identity is an individual, social, and special category, since the ideas of territory, self, and "us" all require symbolic, socio-cultural, and/or physical dividing lines with other, i.e., a border (Paasi, 2001). In local contexts, solidarity may be based on personal contacts and interaction, but larger-scale territories are inevitably "imagined communities" – the category that Anderson (1991) has reserved to depict a nation above all by the media. Thus, the key process for the construction of national or supranational identity is setting the symbolic border which in contemporary societies takes place mainly through media representations (Hall, 1989; Schlesinger, 1991). Thus, one way of assessing the meaning of a border is to study media representations.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The critical discourse analysis of the media will be performed as textual analysis on four "levels", including

macro and micro analysis: thematic and form structure, representation of social actors, and choice of keywords.

The analysis of the thematic organization of the news is based on the so-called semantic macrostructure (Van Dijk, 1980; 1987; 1988). This hierarchical structure consists of macropropositions that define the most relevant pieces of information in the text. Macroproposition is derived from local meanings of words by macrorules, such as deletion, generalization, and construction. Such rules combine similar meanings with higher-level abstract meanings or construct different meaning constituents in higher-level event or social concepts, which enable us to identify "the main idea unit" in the form of several sentences, a paragraph, entire news stories, etc. Close study of the macropropositions made in news items may enable us to look at the news discourse as a whole and thus have a comprehensive view of the new regime of the Slovenian borders as covered by the selected media.

Thematic organization is directly connected with the discourse schemata or the so-called superstructures (Van Dijk, 1980). Such schemata consist of a series of hierarchically ordered categories, which may be specific to different discourse types, and conventionalized and hence different in various societies or cultures. Each superstructure category is associated with a macroproposition from the semantic macrostructure. Van Dijk (1988) divided the news into a summary category (headline and the lead) and a story category. The story consists of the situation category, which consists of the episode (main events and consequences) and a background category. Longer news items often contain a background category sub-divided into the context (previous events and circumstances), a history category, and a commentary category, containing the opinions of the journalists themselves, for instance, an evaluation of the main events, or expectations and predictions of what is likely to happen next. According to Van Dijk (1991, 121), the schemata may manipulate the thematic organization in news stories about ethnic affairs. This paper aims to present the ways in which journalists use the schemata to construct the thematic organization that ideologically supports the dominant interpretation of the new regime of the Slovenian borders.

To identify news discourse about the new Slovenian border regime, we also analyzed how the media represent the main social actors, i.e., who is included within the "us" realm and who is positioned as "them". As Hodge and Kress (1993) argue, one of the central discursive strategies in ideological struggles relies on the construction of in-and-out group identities using discursive means. Any kind of identity, as Hall (1989) further suggests, is primarily defined as a difference from the other. It becomes clear through linguistic analysis that the meanings of "we" and "they" (implying identification with and differentiation from) are not ontologically given but are indeed ideologically constructed.

Further, we analyzed the choice of key words by the media. It is widely accepted that the choice of words used by journalists is by no means arbitrary. The choice is not only the journalists' own creation but is connected to their own society (Richardson, 2007). Analysis of the naming options of the border will be carried out, as journalists have to provide names for social categories; this naming always involves choice, and by choosing one social category over another, the journalists include them within a category and exclude them from other categories (Richardson, 2007).

The sample for our analysis includes 92 news items published between the beginning of December 2007 and the end of January 2008 by two Slovenian and two Croatian daily newspapers which dealt with the notion of the new Slovenian border regime, i.e., *Delo* (21 items), *Primorske Novice* (54 items), *Vjesnik* (3 items), and *Novi List* (14 items). The newspapers were selected with regard to their coverage area, i.e., national and regional. The broadsheet *Delo* is a national daily covering the entire Slovenian territory and is the leading Slovenian quality daily newspaper. *Primorske Novice* (PN) is a regional daily newspaper covering mainly the Primorska region in Slovenia. *Vjesnik* is the only nationwide quality daily paper in Croatia, while *Novi List* (NL) is a Croatian regional daily which is read mainly in Istria and the coastal region.

## RESULTS

In sum, the Slovenian dailies paid more attention to Slovenia's accession to the Schengen regime (75 news items altogether) than the Croatian dailies, which published 17 news items altogether. Differences were found among the media, both in quantity of news items and in the discourses used to represent the new border regime. Main differences were noticed when comparing national and regional dailies, regardless of the state. Both regional dailies published 64 news items altogether, while both national dailies published 24 news items altogether. Such discrepancy in the quantity of published news items already clearly points to diverse interest for the topic in the national and in the regional media. Further, representations in the regional dailies, in both states, were more critical toward the new regulation of the border. Critical discourse analysis of the news items revealed five discourses on the border:

### Borderless Europe

The comparison of all news items about the new Slovenian border regime shows great similarities in thematic and form structures of the news items analyzed. The analysis enables us to discover that the macroproposition "on the western and on the northern border, Slovenia celebrates entering into the borderless" is adopted by the

summary category of headlines and/or leads, which summarize the most important pieces of information in the news and orient the audience to process the news in a pre-determined direction (Bell, 1991). This is demonstrated by the typical headlines already: "Solemnity at Škofije: Festivities accompanying the fall of the border between the two European pioneers" (Delo, 24. 12. 2007j), or "Slovenia's historical step into the Schengen Europe without borders" (Delo, 21. 12. 2007g). The rest of the news items were structured as commentary, which used the verbal reaction category and extensively cited representatives of the EU and of the Slovenian political elite; these sources evaluated the abolition of control on the northern and western borders extremely positively, and confirmed the meaning from the summary. With this minimal thematic and form structure, journalists constructed "fragmented" discourse (Bennett, 1996, 40), which neglected the background information, the history, and the political context. Despite the abolition of border control, Slovenia is not borderless and is not an equal member of the EU, since most EU member states still have not allowed the free flow of workers from Slovenia, as it is in force in the opposite direction; however, this information was not included in this discourse. This fragmented discourse was used to represent an interpretation of the new regime of the Schengen border as a Slovenian and EU success, and it prevailed in the Slovenian national daily, but was used also by journalists in other three dailies.

All the analyzed media used the word combination "the European borders" to name the EU borders, for example, "Europe without borders" (Delo, 21. 12. 2007g), or even "borders have fallen" (Novi list, 23. 12. 2007g). This naming connotes the meaning that it was the Slovenian and the EU/European borders that fell – not only the control over these borders. Further, this naming offers the meaning that "the EU borders is the same as the European borders", since the journalists used the term "Europe" instead of "the EU" in the majority of the articles, as demonstrated by the title "Slovenians became chiefs of the southern European border" (Novi list, 23. 12. 2007g). It connotes the meaning that Slovenia was not a part of Europe before, or in other words, that those European countries that are not members of the EU yet are not part of Europe, which has already been pointed out by many researchers (e.g., Amin, 2004; Balibar, 2004; Strath, 2000).

In this discourse, the expression "border" appears in word combinations that offer exclusively very positive connotations and several "empty signifiers" (see Laclau and Mouffe, 1987), in order to emphasize the positive sides of the new regime. Thus, the new regime "is the best Christmas present" (Vjesnik, 21. 12. 2007b), it brings "generations of people's dreams fulfilled" (Delo, 21. 12. 2007g; Primorske novice, 21. 12. 2007h), "optimism" (Delo, 24. 12. 2007k), "power" (Primorske novice, 24. 12. 2007l), "normality" (Primorske novice, 20. 12.

2007g), "freedom and security" (Delo, 22. 12. 2007i), "brighter future" (Delo, 21. 12. 2007g), and "a great opportunity" (Delo, 21. 12. 2007g). Further, these words connote the meaning that before the new regime of borders, Slovenia was not normal, free, dream-fulfilling, secure, optimistic, etc. Only now, with the new regime of the Slovenian borders, has Slovenia supposedly become normal, etc. Thus, Slovenia's equal position with other EU members when it was not a part of the Schengen zone is implicitly denied.

Analysis of the representation of key social actors of this discourse revealed that journalists divide social actors into "us" (Europe/Europeans) and "them" (non-Europe/non-Europeans/Balkan). Slovenia/Slovenians are equated with Europe/Europeans, which is most frequently explicitly represented in sentences such as "we are a part of the new Europe" (Delo, 14. 1. 2008a), "today we celebrate the best of Europe" (Delo, 22. 12. 2007i), or "with Schengen we feel that we are really part of Europe" (Delo, 6. 12. 2007a). Slovenia is represented as an equal EU member, as a part of free, united, peaceful, and safe Europe, for example: "Together we have overcome border controls, artificially set obstacles to peace, freedom and unity in Europe, and we made conditions for greater safety" (Delo, 21. 12. 2007g). By entering into the Schengen zone, Slovenia finally became Europeanized and normal, for example: "Now the process of Europeanization of Slovenia, which normalized it, is over." (Delo, 22. 12. 2007h) Non-Europeans are constructed as a hidden contrast to Europeans, as those who live on the other side of the southern Schengen border, and have attributes that contradict those that are ascribed to Europe and Slovenia by journalists. Except in the following case, the attributes are not explicitly mentioned by journalists: "The border defined where one belongs. We became true Europeans, while our southern neighbours remained inhabitants of the Balkans." (Primorske novice, 21. 12. 2007i)

### Border as the Iron Curtain

The discourse of the Iron Curtain was used in three analyzed newspapers, however to describe different borders. Both Slovenian newspapers published at least one news item about memories of life along the northern and western borders. The summary category of all analyzed media included the macroproposition that "in the times of the communist Yugoslavia, life of Slovenians along the western and the northern borders was like living behind the Iron Curtain". For example: "The western border: life behind the Iron Curtain" (Primorske novice, 3. 12. 2007a). The rest of the news items were structured as a combination of the commentary and history categories, which used verbal reactions to construct specific memories of life on the western and northern borders, and to confirm the macroproposition

from the summary. This discourse is personalized, because it was constructed of the stories of ordinary people, "full of private, emotional meanings in it" (Bennett, 1996, 39). This discourse is also fragmented, because it presents the post-war history as history until today, and it constructs only a negative interpretation of post-war life along the border.

In this discourse, the border is most frequently represented by using the metaphor of "the Iron Curtain" (Delo, 20. 12. 2007e, f), and the words "closed", "uncrossable", and "military" border (Primorske novice, 20. 12. 2007e). In all stories of "the ordinary people", words such as "fear of control", "barbed wire", "frontier guardhouse", "search", "examination", "military control", "emigration", "smuggling" (Delo, 20. 12. 2007e; Primorske novice, 3. 12. 2007a) in connection with the word "border" prevail; they connote the meaning that there was a strict military border regime between Slovenia and Italy/Austria.

In these stories, the key social actors are Slovenians as individual and collective traversers of the border, going to the West and being impeded by representatives of the post-war communist regime and non-Slovenians/Southerners, especially southern customs officials and soldiers. These are represented as "foreigners", "Yugoslavs", "Southerners" having attributes designating them as "unkind", "malicious", "dangerous", "fearful", and "violent" (Primorske novice, 28. 12. 2007m). This bipolar representation constructs a division: on one hand, there are Slovenians who are good, do not adhere to the communist regime, and simply want connections with the West, while on the other side, there are southerners represented as a homogenous group of adherents to the communist regime that impedes them.

The discourse on the Iron Curtain was also used to represent Slovenia's present Schengen border with Croatia by both regional dailies, naming this border "the Iron Curtain" (Primorske novice, 20. 12. 2007f; Novi list, 20. 12. 2007b; Novi list, 5. 1. 2008). In this way, the bipolar representation known from the past was repeated and critically evaluated, pointing to a "new wall" – a new (unjust) division brought by the history: on one hand, there are Slovenians who are part of Europe now, while on the other hand, there are Non-Europeans, i.e., the southerners who will yet have to become Europeans by eventually entering into "Europe", i.e., by their state becoming the EU Member some day. The naming "the Iron Curtain" was in this sense used by both regional dailies to describe what will further be termed and analyzed as the discourse of the border as a life problem.

### Border as the Schengen Fort

When reporting about the southern Slovenia's border with Croatia, the summary category of news items in all analyzed dailies (particularly in the Slovenian dailies, but also in the Croatian ones) includes the macropropo-

sition that "the Slovenian policemen successfully protect the Schengen border". For example: "New Schengen borders are well protected" (Delo, 23. 1. 2008c), "The Slovenian police control the Schengen border" (Delo, 6. 12. 2007c), and "Guardians of the border" (Delo, 6. 12. 2007b). The rest of the news items were structured as the evaluation category, which confirms the macroproposition from the summary by numerous more or less identical positive evaluations of the new regime of the Schengen border. The aim was to confirm that the new regime of the Schengen border was successful. For example, journalists quote very detailed information and statistical data about the efficiency of the Schengen border control without any comparison and explanation: "Slovenian policemen have refused entrance to 1770 persons who were registered in the Schengen Information System; they have confiscated 140 stolen vehicles ..." (Delo, 23. 1. 2008c). The evaluation category is constructed by numerous and very detailed facts. Presenting too much and too detailed data that does not say much to those who are unfamiliar with the Schengen regime is a strategic journalistic ritual, named "factism" by Johnson-Cartee (2005); it can be more generally defined as an excessive quoting of facts that do not offer a reader a sensible meaning due to a lack of interpretation. This discourse is factually fragmented because it includes only a one-sided detailed positive assessment of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and avoids background information and an interpretation of the facts.

In this discourse, the border is most frequently represented by the use of the constant combination of words "the Schengen border" (Delo, 15. 12. 2007d) and the so-called vocabulary of Schengen security, such as "protection", "control over the secret paths of those trading with weapons, people, drugs, and also the organized criminal" (Delo, 6. 12. 2007b), "using the Schengen Information System" (Delo, 6. 12. 2007a), "efficient prevention of illegal immigrations and organized criminal", "the security system works" (Delo, 22. 1. 2008b), or "the border will be severely controlled" (Vjesnik, 10. 12. 2007a).

The key social actor in this discourse is "Schengen", transformed from an agreement and a regime into an actor in itself, which *enables, realizes, demands, protects*, etc. For example, "Schengen came to Croatian borders" (Novi list, 31. 12. 2007h), or "Schengen is on the Croatian border" (Novi list, 22. 12. 2007e). In this way, journalists transferred responsibility for measures, especially the unpopular ones, to the imaginary actor called Schengen, while the actual Slovenian protagonists' responsibility was taken away from them and they were presented as those who had successfully realized the demands of Schengen. These Slovenian protagonists mainly appeared in the role of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and especially as the policemen at the border, who are represented as heroes who successfully protect Europe: they are "the guardians of the border"

(Delo, 6. 12. 2007b), who "improve security in the EU and Slovenia" (Primorske novice, 21. 12. 2007j); they are "well qualified" (Delo, 6. 12. 2007b), they "exercise control over suspicious passengers" (Delo, 21. 12. 2007g), and "strive to reduce a crush at border crossings which might occur due to the use of the Schengen Information System" (Delo, 6. 12. 2007a). People from the other side of the border are in a generalized way represented as "the others", i.e., as the potential enemies of Europe. They are not spoken about in any particular way; they are merely mentioned as potential "actors of the illegal migrations, criminal, trading with people, weapons, and drugs" (Primorske novice, 21. 12. 2007j). Thus, everyone who crosses the Schengen border from the south is constructed as a potential enemy.

### Border as a Life Problem

Only both regional daily newspapers exposed the life problems of people by including the macroproposition that "the Schengen border caused the every-day life problems to the people living along the border". This macroproposition is adopted by the headlines already, for example: "Injustice is moving south" (Primorske novice, 3. 12. 2007b), "People, hostages of state politics" (Primorske novice, 21. 12. 2007k), "Schengen is bringing new problems to people from Žumberak" (Novi list, 18. 12. 2007a), "From tomorrow Croatia in front of the 'Iron Curtain'" (Novi list, 20. 12. 2007b), or "Schengen – another Croatian failure" (Novi list, 23. 12. 2007f). Then it is further developed by leads, such as the one from the Croatian regional daily stating that "the Schengen border is causing horror and fear among the Croatian citizens because of the more rigorous controls when entering Slovenia and Hungary, controls which have not been so rigorous at these borders since the beginning of the 1990s ..." (Novi list, 20. 12. 2007b).

The rest of the news items were structured as a combination of the verbal reactions and circumstances category, which includes personal stories about the problems of the people who live along the border, and confirms the macroproposition from the summary. This personalized fragmented discourse of ordinary people is the only one among the identified discourses that includes a negative view of the new border regime; however, this discourse neglects background information, above all the political, economic, and social context, especially the system and structural relations of power that have brought about the problems that people talk about.

In this discourse, the border between Slovenia and Croatia is represented negatively as "the problematic border", naming the border as "a life problem", "a problematic border", "a border of problems", "the Schengen plague", "the Iron Curtain" (Primorske novice, 20. 12. 2007f; Novi list, 20. 12. 2007b; Novi list, 5. 1. 2008), "a militant wall" (Primorske novice, 20. 12. 2007g), "the

Schengen wall" (Novi list, 21. 12. 2007c), "a border that is too hard" (Primorske novice, 21. 12. 2007i), and "unjust border" (Primorske novice, 3. 12. 2007b). This negative representation is connected to measures brought about by the Schengen regime, such as "ramps on the bridges toward Slovenia, setting plastic nets and other barriers on suspension bridges and much harder controls on the border" (Novi list, 5. 1. 2008).

According to the regional press, the introduction of the Schengen regime at the border caused many problems, such as the "indescribable torture for thousands of workers from the Western states returning home to their countries" (Novi list, 21. 12. 2007c), "avoiding travelling to Slovenia" and "people being nervous" because of a special identity card needed to cross the border without passport – "if they lose it, the fine is 400 euros" (Novi list, 22. 12. 2007d), the "deepened precipice between people on both sides of the border" (Primorske novice, 3. 12. 2007b), the "loss of community of people who shared destiny and dialect, distinguished from the Croatian and the Slovenian literary languages", "coming to work every day and shopping are made much more difficult" (Primorske novice, 28. 12. 2007n), the "life of people who have real property on the other side or travel frequently is made more difficult" (Primorske novice, 21. 12. 2007k), the "cleaving of the Istrian region" (Primorske novice, 20. 12. 2007f), the "infernal isolation of the border region" (Primorske novice, 20. 12. 2007f), and, generally, the "much worse everyday life of people along the border" (Primorske novice, 4. 12. 2007c).

The key actors in stories about the everyday lives of individuals are people on both sides of the border, who are ignored by the EU, and Slovenian, and Croatian politicians. These ordinary people were represented as a special community and called "hostages" and "collateral victims of the EU and the politicians who do not understand the civilization and historical connection of people living along the border" (Primorske novice, 21. 12. 2007k). The EU and the politicians are represented as those who "do not care about problems of the people living at the border" (Primorske novice, 21. 12. 2007i).

### Non-problematic Border as Proof of the Efficiency of the Croatian State

The fifth discourse of the new Schengen regime was used only in the Croatian national daily *Vjesnik*. In a way it is the most unique of them all, as it used the discourse of the border as the Schengen fort merely as a starting-point to develop a new discourse, which includes the macroproposition that "even though the border regime is more severe than before, nothing really changed for Croatian citizens, due to the efficiency of the Croatian state". This macroproposition was included throughout the text of the news items, i.e., both in the summary category as well as the story category.

The argumentation consists of three parts. First, the problem is presented, i.e., introduction of the Schengen regime performing "more severe border control" (Vjesnik, 10. 12. 2007a), which is followed by establishing that the problem does not concern the Croatian citizens in any meaningful way: "No changes for Croatians" (Vjesnik, 21. 12. 2007b), as "Croatian citizens will be allowed, same as before, to enter Slovenia /.../ with identity cards only" (Vjesnik, 10. 12. 2007a, 22./23. 12. 2007c). Then, the Croatian state is given credit for it, as it successfully normalized the situation by solving a potential problem and thus took good care of its citizens, which connotes the state's efficiency. Namely, that Croatians may cross the border not much differently than before the Schengen regime because "an agreement was reached at the meeting of the ministers of Internal Affairs", "Croatia has bilateral agreements with Slovenia, Hungary, and Italy", or "a political agreement was made for Croatian citizens" (Vjesnik, 10. 12. 2007a, 21. 12. 2007b, 22./23. 12. 2007c).

In this way, the Schengen border is represented as non-problematic, which is further demonstrated by statements in the verbal reaction category, such as the "Schengen regime did not cause longer waits at the border" (Vjesnik, 22./23. 12. 2007c). These were official statements made by the Croatian police, followed by statements of the co-called "ordinary citizens", i.e., Croatians who have crossed the Schengen border: "it is no problem for me", or "I think there will be no longer waits than usual" (Vjesnik, 22./23. 12. 2007c). By including the statements of ordinary citizens, the image of a balanced news account is established. However, all statements are carrying the same message: nothing really changed at the border. This discourse is entirely in contradiction with the discourse used by the Croatian regional daily (as well as the Slovenian regional daily), which represented the border as "a life problem".

Discourse regarding the non-problematic border as proof of the Croatian state's efficiency includes what Bennett (1996, 64) would call "normalizations of news", following the outbreak of crisis or change. And the introduction of Schengen regime was perceived as a kind of (potential) crisis for people in Croatia, especially those living along the border (see Zajc, 2007). Normalization of news is a journalistic bias for which it is typical that the reassuring, authoritative voices of officials offer normalized interpretations of the events; they respond to problems by telling us that things return to "normal" again if only we trust them to act in our interests. As crisis symptoms subside, popular tolerance for an "acceptable" level of social distress masks the underlying causes of problems. The news returns the problems to their "normal" state – chronic but unreported. The normalizing cycle in the news invites people to draw the conclusion that "the system worked". In the case of the Schengen border regime, readers of *Vjesnik* were invited to

come to conclusion that their state authority is to be trusted, as it successfully solved a (potential) crisis, meaning that the state acts in the interest of its citizens. However, by neglecting problems brought by the Schengen regime the newspaper virtually acted opposite to the public interest and misused news about the new regime on the border to offer its readers proof of the state's efficiency, a one-sided view, which was in favour of the existent political authority in Croatia.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates the usefulness of the representation approach to border research on the one hand and a bottom-up and comparative approach to media and journalism studies in coverage of EU topics (in our case, introduction of the Schengen regime) on the other hand. The study shows that there is no single homogeneous representation about the border included in all the media. Only the discourse of everyday life problems, which appeared only in the regional media, critically represented the new regime of the Schengen border. Thus, the elite national media excluded an important aspect of social life: the everyday life problems of people living along the border. This marginalized discourse of the problems of people's lives along the border should be fed back into the dominant news media discourses.

The second key finding of this study is that the Slovenian daily newspapers have changed the dominant representation of the Slovenian borders. Although in the Cold War period the Slovenian-Italian border was represented as the opposite option to the Iron Curtain model and was known as "the most open European border" (Sambri, 1970, quoted in Bufon, 2003, 183), the Slovenian national press represented it as "the Iron Curtain" to emphasize the meaning of introduction of the Schengen regime and "borderlessness". The border that had been perceived as "borderless" for centuries (Zajc, 2007) was now reconfigured into "a fort" and "a problematic border", which is confirmed also by the results of a survey of Slovenian-Croatian border dwellers (Bufon, 2008). The border which had not represented a major obstacle in everyday life of people in the Istrian region (for more about cross-border links, see Bufon, 2002; 2008; 2009) now became an obstacle also in the perception of people who live there. Namely, future expectations in consideration of the enlargement of the Schengen space to Slovenia reveal that the majority of border dwellers at the border with Croatia expect that cross-border relations will get worse (Bufon, 2008, 24). Further, the analysis revealed that the media representation of the eastern border between Slovenia and Hungary is negligible, which indicates the insignificance of this border for the construction of Slovenian identity, which is above all founded on Alpine, Mediterranean, and Bal-



kan elements, and less on the Pannonian elements (Šaver, 2005). The prevalence of the discourse of borderlessness, which links borderlessness mainly to northern and western Slovenian neighbours, indicates the media's intention to represent Slovenia as being open to the more developed west and north, and not to the less developed east or south.

The third essential finding is that different discourses found in Croatian dailies reveal different strategies in covering the new border regime, while every journalistic strategy is directly or indirectly linked to the dominant politics and ideology. Namely, it is widely accepted that the strategies used by journalists are by no means arbitrary. These particular choices are not only journalists' own creations, but have something to do with their own society. As Trew (1979) and Teo (2000) concluded in their studies of journalists' discourse, all perceptions which are embodied in lexicalization involve ideologies. The Croatian daily *Vjesnik*, which is known for its support for government politics (Malović, 2004), strives to present the new border regime as non-problematic and the Slovenian-Croatian border as a border for which more or less the same rules of crossing have applied and will always apply, and the credit is given to the government. Why is this newspaper, in contrast to the regional daily, using the strategy of normalization? Reasons can be searched in Croatia's negotiation process to become a member of the EU. According to public opinion polls, the public support among Croats for their state to access the EU is relatively low and has been dropping. As established in the Eurobarometer survey (European Commission, 2008), only 23 % of Croats assess the membership of their country in the EU as good. Therefore, it is not in the interest of the Croatian political elite to represent the Schengen regime and the EU as relentless and problematic, as it might dissuade a small number of EU adherents from their support. While the national daily follows the official politics towards EU accession, the regional daily can not afford such a strategy or it might lose readers who experience problems when crossing the border on a daily basis.

Analysis of the media representations of the border also revealed that the national Slovenian daily newspaper changed the practice of differentiation. It reproduced a clear discursive division with Europe/Europeans and Slovenia/Slovenians on one side and the region and people behind the southern Schengen border (non-Europe/non-Europeans, South/Southerners/potential enemy) on the other. Croats are never explicitly separated from the group of the non-Europeans, which means that they are represented as belonging among the Balkan nations. The national newspaper's element that had been used to constitute the category "we" ("us"), i.e., "the southern brothers" (Baskar, 2003, 199), became "they", i.e., "non-European/Southerners", while their place was taken by other Slovenian neighbours, i.e.,

"Europeans". We could even argue that the Slovenian national daily newspaper constituted "we" and Europeanizedness through "the significant other", i.e. "non-Europeans", and thus reproduced the centuries-lasting construction of identity of Europe *per negationem*, which is defined mostly through the determination of border and thus through identification of something which Europe is not. This border representation caused exclusion and the construction of a new "Non-Europe" and new "Europe-thirsty". This representation repeatedly confirms that Europe has "always been obsessed with its borders, internal and external" (Boyd, 2001, in Velikonja, 2005, 102). Even more, we could claim that the newspaper represented a mythical image of the EU as Europe, which is universal, free, harmonic and united. Therefore, entering into this Europe was represented as a privileged national project, the biggest one after the Second World War and Slovenia's attainment of independence. "The myth about Europe is a bright narrative of values like freedom, democracy, welfare, solidarity, modern technology and, above all, of high culture" (Puntscher, Riekman, 1997 in Velikonja, 2005, 102), while its positivity is constructed through antagonistic negation of all else (Velikonja, 2005, 102).

But the Croatian national newspaper also represents Croats as Europeans, as part of the developed and the Western "us", when it exposes the special regime on the border which is in force for Croats only, and will remain in force until Croatia enters the EU and Croats become "true" Europeans. This is a well known strategy of the Croatian political elite in constructing an image of their own European identity on the basis of differentiating it from the Serbs who are portrayed as unable to understand Western Catholic civilization, since they belong to the Orthodox collective spirit (Buden, 2002; Žižek, 1997).

Both national dailies' construction of the bipolar pair "Europeans – Non-Europeans", their defining of the "Other" as "South of them", and the unconditional Slovenian and Croatian elite obedience at fulfilling "the European demands" with the purpose of proving the sufficient and ultimate Europeanization of Slovenians and Croats are based on the colonial discourse of the non-Europeans' Europeanization (Velikonja, 2005). This discourse, according to Said (1996), includes not only the arrogance of the colonists but above all the servility of those who are colonized. In our case, this is revealed in the subservience of the Slovenian and Croatian political and media elite in relation to EU demands, in neglecting to solve citizens' problems, and in the belittling relationship toward everything and everyone from the past and on the other side, so that it is easier to emphasize their own successfulness and Europeanizedness.

Regional press on both sides of the Slovenian-Croatian border represents the Schengen border differently from the national press. It represents people of Istria as

"Us", i.e., as victims of the "Others", i.e., Slovenian and Croatian politicians who do not understand historical and personal connections of the people living along the border and do not care about problems of those people. Pelc (2005, 293) also establishes that the new border is an obstacle in everyday's life of local population. Particularities of the regional representations of the border

is confirmed also by Bufon's (2002; 2003; 2005; 2008; 2009) research upon which he concludes that in studying borders, the regional or local aspects of cross-border co-operation should always be analyzed; in our case of media representations of borders it was thus essential to include representations from the regional media also.

## NOVE DELITVE – NOVE IZKLJUČITVE? SLOVENSKI IN HRVAŠKI NOVINARSKI DISKURZI O SCHENGENSKI MEJI

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### POVZETEK

*Slovensko-hrvaška meja, ki je bila stoletja za lokalno prebivalstvo precej prepustna, je po vključitvi Slovenije v schengensko območje decembra 2007 postala zunanja meja Evropske unije s poostrenim nadzorom. Glavni cilj tega članka je raziskati novinarske reprezentacije novega režima na tej meji v medijih z obeh strani meje. Avtorici sta izvedli kritično diskurzivno analizo novinarskih prispevkov o schengenski meji v dvomesečnem obdobju, in sicer v dveh nacionalnih dnevnikih, tj. slovenskem Delu in hrvaškem Vjesniku, in v dveh regionalnih dnevnikih iz primorske regije, tj. slovenskih Primorskih novicah in hrvaškem Novem listu. Primerjalna analiza je pokazala razlike med mediji, tako v količini objavljenih prispevkov kot tudi v diskurzih, uporabljenih za reprezentiranje novega mejnega režima. Mediji so uporabili pet diskurzov: brezmejna Evropa, meja kot železna zavesa, meja kot schengenska utrdba, meja kot življenjski problem in neproblematična meja kot dokaz učinkovitosti hrvaške države. Glavne razlike so se pokazale pri primerjavi nacionalnih in regionalnih dnevnikov, ne glede na državo. Le diskurz o meji kot življenjskem problemu, ki se je pojavil zgolj v regionalnih medijih, je kritično reprezentiral novi mejni režim. Nacionalna elitna medija sta izključila ta pomemben vidik družbenega življenja. Slovenska dnevnikarja sta preoblikovala "železno zaveso" v "brezmejno Evropo"; mejo, ki je stoletja veljala za brezmejno, pa sta preoblikovala v schengensko utrdbo in življenjski problem. Medijska reprezentacija meje med Slovenijo in Madžarsko je bila zanemarljiva, kar govori o nepomembnosti te meje za konstrukcijo slovenske identitete. Prevlada diskurza o brezmejni Evropi, ki brezmejnost povezuje predvsem s severnimi in zahodnimi sosedi Slovenije, nakazuje namen medijev, da bi Slovenijo reprezentirali kot odprto proti bolj razvitemu zahodu in severu, in ne proti manj razvitemu vzhodu ali jugu. Hrvaški dnevnikarji so uporabili različne strategije; regionalni dnevnik je mejo obravnaval kot problem, medtem ko je nacionalni dnevnik sledil uradni hrvaški politiki glede Evropske unije. Nacionalna časopisna medija obeh držav sta vključila prakso diferenciacije, in sicer s konstrukcijo bipolarne dvojice "Evropejci – Neevropejci" in definiranjem "Drugega" kot "Južno od nas". Študija ponazarja uporabnost reprezentacijskega pristopa k raziskovanju meja na eni strani ter poglobljenega in primerjalnega pristopa k medijskim in novinarskim študijam pri pokrivanju tematik Evropske unije na drugi strani. Marginalizirani diskurz problemov ljudi ob meji bi bilo treba vključiti v dominantne novinarske medijske diskurze.*

**Ključne besede:** meja, Hrvaška, diskurzivna analiza, Evropska unija, novinarsko sporočanje, schengenski režim, Slovenija

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