

THE SLOVENIAN-CROATIAN BORDER: HISTORY,  
REPRESENTATIONS, INVENTIONS

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## ABSTRACT

*This is not an essay on the history of the Slovenian-Croatian border. It is an essay on the contemporary perception of the border's history. For Slovenia, which only has 46 km of the Adriatic coast, the question of the maritime border and the border in Istria are especially pressing. The context of the EU did not just help to solve the problem, it also complicated it. The Essay deals with the history of the border inasmuch as is needed to confront a historiography, based on comparable methodology/theory, with nationalist perceptions. A brief analysis of the nationalist historical narrative on the border reveals five characteristics of nationalist representation of the border history: anachronisms; false methodology; inconsistency; the focus on the "movements" of the individual parts of the border; the belief in the "naturalness" of national identities.*

*Key words: Slovenian-Croatian border, perception of the border, methodological nationalism, nationalism, administrative legacy*

IL CONFINE SLOVENO-CROATO: LA STORIA,  
LE RAPPRESENTAZIONI, LE INVENZIONI

## SINTESI

*L'articolo tratta la storia del confine sloveno-croato dal punto di vista delle percezioni della storia di confine nell'attuale opinione pubblica slovena. Per la Slovenia, con soli quarantasei chilometri di costa adriatica, il punto più importante è la risoluzione della questione del confine marittimo. La cornice più ampia dell'Unione Europea da una parte aiutò alla risoluzione dei problemi e dall'altra parte a crearli. Nell'articolo la storia del confine è rappresentata minimamente, soltanto per mettere a confronto la storiografia, basata sul metodo della teoria comparativa, con le rappresentazioni nazionaliste. La breve analisi dello sguardo nazionalista sulla storia rivela cinque caratteristiche delle rappresentazioni nazionaliste della storia del confine sloveno-croato: l'uso degli anacronismi, l'errata metodologia, le contraddizioni o incoerenze, la concentrazione sugli "spostamenti" delle diverse parti della linea confinaria fuori del contesto storico e la convinzione nella "naturalità" e l'antichità delle identità nazionali.*

*Parole chiave: confine sloveno-croato, percezione del confine, nazionalismo metodologico, nazionalismo, eredità amministrativa*

## INTRODUCTION

“Josip Broz Tito is from Kumrovec in Croatian Zagorje. Tito’s father was Franjo, a skinny man with a black curly hair and eagle-like nose. His mother was Marija, Slovenian woman from the other side of the Sotla-river. Franjo met her when he went across the river to chop some wood, which was not in abundance in Kumrovec. They had a difficult life. [...]. Little Joža was lucky to spend his childhood with a grandfather Martin Javoršček, his mother’s father. He lived in Podsreda, in a forest place on the slope of a hill on the other side of the Sotla-river. Joža was his favorite grandson. Since his grandfather was wealthier as the Broz family, Joža spent the happiest childhood days there. ‘Those are my gentlest childhood memories,’ says Tito.”

France Bevk, *Knjiga o Titu*. Mladinska knjiga, Ljubljana 1955.

It is common knowledge that Tito was born in the Croatian village of Kumrovec near the Slovenian-Croatian border. But is this true? If we look at maps from the period in which he was born, there is no Slovenian-Croatian Border there. First of all, there was no such thing as Slovenia and Croatia was a bit different too. Yet, undoubtedly, by the time he was born, there was such thing as a Slovenian-Croatian border. It was just not easy to find.

This is not an essay on the history of the Slovenian-Croatian border. It is an essay on the contemporary perception of the border’s history in Slovenian public sphere. It deals with the history of the border insomuch as is needed to confront a historiography, based on comparable methodology/theory, with nationalist perceptions. Historians must pose questions in order to perform their work (Baberowski, 2009, 117). One of the biggest mistakes that historians make is not giving wrong answers, far more problematic is posing the wrong questions – questions which can never be answered, because they imply wrong premises. For example, the question “where is the historically true Slovenian-Croatian border” undoubtedly belongs to this category. Historians are not amateur archaeologists who dig into the ground and search for a long lost red line made in prehistory by an unknown supernatural forces. We cannot “prove” or “find” the true border between Slovenian and Croatia, but we could better understand the border if we research the nature of past borders. These could be seen as “predecessors” of the contemporary border. It is not an easy job and it sounds a bit complicated. Secondly, if we want to understand the complexity of border “making and breaking”, we need to take a step away from current affairs. This distance to the “present” is essential for two reasons: it prevents creating new anachronisms and it gives the researcher a broader perspective. Understanding the surroundings of “the subject of research” could prove crucial.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND CONTEXTUALIZATION

The author of the text is definitely a Slovenian historian. The term Slovenian historian, as understood by the author, is not a euphemism for an inventor of Slovenian nationalist

historical narratives. Being a Slovenian historian does not necessarily mean being a historian “of” and “for” the Slovenian nation/state. It simply denotes the fact that the author lives in Slovenia and works as a professional historian in Slovenia as well. Does this fact by itself imply a lack of historiographical distance – especially due to the fact that the author has contributed elaborations for the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Relations regarding the arbitration procedure in Hague? The author does not believe so. As long as historians adhere to their principles, they do not have to be nationalists in order to provide the state with their expertise. Unresolved border disputes are the subject of politics, not the subject of historiography. Negotiators only use those historical arguments that suit them. There is nothing wrong with that, but it would be wrong if historiography resorted to the same logic.

When discussing the contemporary state/national borders we certainly discuss nationalism. When discussing nationalism, we, as historiographers, are obliged to explain how we perceive the phenomenon of nationalism. Although the author considers certain characteristics of the ethno-symbolic perspective (long duration, integration in the context of the pre-existing “collective cultural identities” and pre-modern traditions), he develops his approach in the context of the modernist paradigm. Likewise, he is skeptical of the claims emphasizing the direct connection between the pre-modern ethnicities and nationalisms or to the claims that in some cases nations manifested themselves before nationalisms (Smith, 2005, 80). On the other hand, the approach of social anthropology, which advocates the use of the general term ethnicity (instead of nationalism) could prove helpful when discussing the processes of border-making (Rožac Darovec, 2010, 218). According to Barth, ethnic boundaries channel the social life. Ethnic groups only persist as significant units if they imply a persistent cultural difference (Barth, 1969, 15-16). The “differences” (and “similarities”) are constructed through the media. Benedict Anderson stresses the significance of the media in the formation of nations as imagined communities (Anderson, 2006, 6).

As Rogers Brubaker underlines, nations and nationalisms have to be seen in the framework of practical categories, actions, cultural idioms, cognitive systems, discourse contexts, institutional forms and political contexts. Nationalism is a way of perceiving, interpreting and representing the social world. It is a perspective of the world. It involves the “nationalized” way of looking at things (and ignoring them), construction (and deconstruction), activity (and inactivity), remembering (and forgetting) (Brubaker, 2004, 17). Another global theoretician of nationalism – Umut Özkirimli – sees nationalism as a discourse, as a frame of reference that helps us make sense of and structure the reality that surrounds us. The discourse of nationalism divides the world into “us” and “them”, it hegemonizes, naturalizes itself and operates through institutions (Özkirimli, 2005, 30-32).

One of the most interesting features of the Slovenian-Croatian border dispute after 1991 is a nationalist historical discourse, which is in stark contrast to the novelty of the dispute. There are different ways of how to grasp the matter. One of the possibilities is to use the concept of “historical myth”. For example, the Slovenian nationalist conception of the historical land of Istria as “Slovenian” territory could certainly be analyzed as a historical myth, invented after 1991. The basic theoretical framework for analyzing myths as “a boundary-defining mechanism” in South Eastern Europe was constructed

by the Norwegian researcher Pål Kolstø. He identified four types of historical myths: (a) the myth of being *sui generis*, (b) the myth of being *antemurale*, (c) *martyrium*, (d) the myth of *antiquas* (Kolstø 2005, 23–27). Using the concept of “historical myth” has its advantages: since the factors that define the members of two groups as different are often “mythical” rather than “factual”, myths can function as substitutes for “actual” differences. Myths do not float in open space: they have “a bond” to a specific ethnoscape (Smith, 1999, 150). Yet the author of this article chose not to go along this conceptual path. The reasons are purely methodological. Every concept we employ uncovers certain aspects of the researched phenomenon and blurs others. The author would like to emphasize the constancies/changes of the public (and historical) discourse in Slovenia regarding the Slovenian-Croatian border. At the same time, he would like to suggest approaches in order to avoid methodological nationalism or unjustified generalizations in historiography. In the center of the contemporary border dispute is the border line “on the ground”, especially the maritime border. The author of the article believes that using the concept of historical myth could lead us away from the administrative/political border, which is (and has been) real in the geographical space (e. g. the Schengen border after 2007). Other conceptual approaches, developed by Kolstø, are more appropriate for our topic: for example, Kolstø’s research of the nation-building in South Eastern Europe and his reflections on the media discourse and the Yugoslav Conflict. In the new European states, argues Kolstø, “newness” is not regarded as a positive quality – the contemporary nation-state is projected deep into the past (Kolstø, 2005, 12). Individuals may be strongly influenced by the existing discourses of “border-making”, but they may also manipulate these discourses for their own purposes (Kolstø, 2009, 243).

## THE DISPUTE

Slovenian-Croatian relations started degrading when the two former Yugoslav republics became independent states. Minor discrepancies at the border have become very important, politically and ideologically. For Slovenia, which only has 46 km of the Adriatic coast, the question of the maritime border and the border in Istria are especially pressing (Dukovski, 2011, 58–66; Kladnik/Pipan, 2008, 57–91; Pipan 2008, 331–356). In Yugoslavia, the maritime borders between federal units were not specified. The Border also became a political problem. Politicians in both countries were abusing the problem in order to legitimize their authority. Political elites solved the issue by signing the Arbitration Agreement regarding the border in November 2009. Both governments have submitted their territorial and maritime disputes to arbitration. The Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague was chosen as the arbitral institution (PCA, 2014). In April 2010, the Slovenian parliament ratified the Agreement, and in June 2010 a referendum was held in Slovenia at the request of the parliamentary right wing. The outcome of the referendum was a big defeat for nationalists: the majority of voters were in favor of the agreement (Vlada Republike Slovenije, 2014). Since then, the issue enters the Slovenian public sphere only sporadically, as if the conflict needs to remind us it still exists. Meanwhile, the status of the border has changed. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2013, the Republic of Croatia entered the European Union. Although the Slovenian-

Croatian border ceased to exist as a custom-border, border crossings for people remained. Croatia remained outside of the Schengen area (Policija, 2014).

How could we define the role of the EU regarding the Slovenian-Croatian border dispute? The context of the EU was did not just help to solve the problem, it also complicated it. Slovenian politicians understood the EU as a “weapon” (we are “in”, they are “out”), which could be used to “force” the neighbor to agree to our terms. On the other hand, Croatian politicians could blame Slovenia for their late “coming to the European home” (Poslovni dnevnik, 2010). In December 2008, Slovenia blocked further EU accession talks with Croatia. The Slovenian government had reservations regarding the documents (maps) which Croatia had provided during its accession process. According to the Slovenian side, these could prejudice the common border in favor of Croatia (BBC, 2008). When the agreement was reached and the arbitration procedures began, the European Commission tried to present the solution as a role-model for other border disputes in the Balkans. In its press release on the 11<sup>th</sup> of January 2012, the European Commission stated: “A common agreement would be a positive political signal for the further development of the good neighborly relations between the two countries as well as for the Western Balkans regions showing how difficult issues could be solved” (European Commission, 2012). Nevertheless, the EU was not completely innocent when it came to complicating the Slovenian-Croatian border issues. In 2007, according to EU directives, Slovenian authorities had to close all “unofficial” bridges over the border-rivers between Slovenia and Croatia in order to satisfy Schengen standards. What had been a passable border between two former Yugoslav republics became the Schengen border. The EU, based on coexistence, was enlarged by demolishing bridges. “My sister lives on the other side,” complained a resident of a Slovenian border village to a *Delo* journalist in 2007: “We don’t have neighborly relations anymore, because we are not allowed to use the bridge.” A resident of a Croatian border village stated that »near the border, the entry of Slovenia into the EU is quite noticeable. Life is not the same as it once was« (Delo, 2007).”

Much ink has been spilled in the Slovenian media trying to understand or describe the Slovenian-Croatian border disputes. Not all of the commentaries could be defined as openly nationalist, striving to support the claims of Slovenian nationalists (see: Delo, 2013). However, there were no discussions about the reasons for the popularity of the issue in the Slovenian public sphere. Why are such relatively small disputes so important, as if Slovenia and Croatia would “fight” for vast regions with immense natural wealth and large population? Why has the Slovenian-Croatian border become (at least in certain moments) the identifying point of Slovenian nationalism? Why has the issue motivated “common people”? It is obvious that we cannot answer these questions easily and that there are no straightforward answers. In order to illuminate these questions, we would need a detailed study of the (institutional, political and discursive) development of the dispute in the period 1990–2015. This analysis should include a general understanding of the contemporary political/social processes in the region (e. g. dissolution of the SFRY, consolidation of the new states, processes of EU-enlargement – “approaching Europe”, entering the EU, various crises – economic, social, and political). Although the author of this text has not (yet) carried out the above mentioned research, he would like to empha-

size the ideological and discursive perspective. Thus, I would like to point out two important moments: the Slovenian perception of Yugoslavism/Yugoslavia and the perception of the “Slovenian sea”.

After 1945, Slovenia became a federal Yugoslav unit with broad autonomy and complete territory, yet the Slovenian-Croatian border was not focused on. As far as Slovenians were concerned, it existed and did not exist at the same time. They could turn it on and off as they pleased. When they were vacationing in Dalmatia, they turned it off; and when they complained because Slovenia had to contribute to lesser developed Yugoslav regions, they turned it on again. The problem was evident from the social sciences textbooks. These contained a map of the “narrower homeland” – Slovenia, and the “wider homeland” – Yugoslavia (Košak/Weber, 1981, 3). For Slovenians, the Slovenian-Croatian border at the time was precisely that: the border between the “narrower” and the “wider”. After 1990, the border gained a significant ideological dimension for the Slovenian public. But this demarcation was not without a bitter aftertaste. Slovenia opened towards the north and the west, “towards Europe”, and, after all, “got in”. However, this openness towards Europe is not the same as the former ideologically much more charged openness towards the rest of Yugoslavia. In the ideological sense, the strict border with Croatia limited Slovenians to their own space. This fact has not changed since the Croatian accession to EU.

In short: several generations of Slovenians were used to identify themselves with a larger space than Slovenia, if needed. After independence, this became hardly possible: Europe is too big, Slovenia is too small. Slovenians were confronted with a relatively small “real” and imaginary space. It is not surprising that the problem of the undetermined sea border became a common point of frustrations, caused by the post-independence complex of “Slovenian smallness”. Weekend-cottages on the Croatian coast, owned by Slovenians, did not “move” anywhere, yet they “traveled” to a foreign country. With some imagination and irony, we could describe Slovenian-Croatian border dispute as a “hangover” or “collateral damage” of independence. The question of the border has mutated into an ideological axis around which a completely new conflict started forming. The “Slovenian sea” is in the center of these debates (see Mihelič, 2007, 145); the sea component gives the issue of the Slovenian-Croatian border the character of national importance. The Arbitration Agreement between Slovenia and Croatia states that the Arbitral Tribunal shall determine three points, which are all connected with the issue of the sea: “(a) the course of the maritime and land boundary between the Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Croatia; (b) Slovenia’s junction to the High Sea; (c) the regime for the use of the relevant maritime areas” (PCA, 2013). Although there are several disputed areas on the land border (especially near rivers), which cause huge problems for the local population, most of the discussion in Slovenian public sphere concentrates on the maritime border (Josipovič, 2011, 227–248).

## SLOVENIAN NATIONALIST HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

We are obviously dealing with a relatively new conflict, which was constructed (or invented, if you like) after 1990. Very soon, a pseudo-historical narrative of the conflict



appeared in Slovenia: about Croats who “were always” taking land from Slovenians, etc. (per example: Kunej, 2006). This narrative, which slowly penetrated into the mainstream media, is even more surprising due to the fact that the Slovenian-Croatian border never was “the problem” for Slovenian nationalism. The past was cast in a role of a kind of a “shopping center”, where only those contents that provide further momentum to the conflict are “bought”. Because these contents are few and far between, such pseudo-historical hate speech must resort to a lot of originality. Through the activities of amateur historians, the sensationalist media and “civilian initiatives”, the dispute started living its own life. Therefore, it is not unimportant to analyze how nationalist activists interpret the border’s history. In my opinion, a brief analysis of the nationalist historical narrative on the border reveals five characteristics of nationalist representation of the border’s history:

- Anachronisms. Putting elements of the present or later past “into” a certain period.
- False methodology. Instead of researching the phenomenon of the border in the past, nationalist historians are interested in one question only: where is the true border? They search for an answer that “fits”.
- Inconsistency, mixing of various levels. Legal and administrative elements are mixed with linguistic and ethnographical arguments. If the arguments don’t fit, they are simply ignored.
- A focus on the “movements” of the individual parts of the border, which is related to the (sometimes intentional) disregard for the wider historical context and qualitative changes.
- The belief in the “naturalness” of national identities. Presupposing that the differences between Croats and Slovenians are very old and „natural“.

The best known organization advocating nationalist claims regarding the “southern border” is “The Institute of the 25th of June”, which operates under the patronage of the Slovenian People’s Party. This organization is not without influence in the Slovenian political scene. Among their members, we can find influential members of Slovenian society: ex-politicians, lawyers, teachers, archivists, ethnologists and even a Constitutional Court judge. “The Institute of the 25th of June” tries to present their claims as “moderate” and “European”, yet they barely manage to hide their Slovenian nationalist agenda. The discourse of their publications is more confused than offensive. They do not openly claim where the true border should be, they rather insinuate a “just border” between the lines by citing carefully chosen sources and literature. For instance, they do not claim the river Mirna represents “the true Slovenian-Croatian border” in Istria, but they assert “the river Mirna represented the last internationally recognized border of the Zone B of the Free Territory of Trieste from 1947 until 1954” (Krnj – Umek, 2005, 15). By doing so, they imply that the southern border of a formally independent territory, which came into existence because of Cold War tensions, could somehow be interpreted as a “just” Slovenian-Croatian border. Reliable historical proof for such claims is not presented.

Those historical facts that are not mentioned are also interesting. The fact that “Slovenians in the 19<sup>th</sup> century populated the Istrian peninsula up to the river Mirna and in some places even further to the south” is seen as crucial (Krnj – Umek, 2005, 16). Another fact that completely changes the picture is not mentioned: the multi-ethnic character of the

above mentioned area with fluid boundaries between ethnic/national identities (Darovec, 2011). Furthermore, an impression is given that the Italians are not really important; they are mentioned mostly in negative terms, as an intruding foreign element. Habsburg population censuses of the 19<sup>th</sup> century are seen as reliable when it comes to Savudrija, but when it comes to Slovenian-Italian relations, they “don’t show an objective picture. It is therefore possible to conclude that there was more Slovenian population by ethnicity than shown by the censuses.” The authors of “The Institute of the 25<sup>th</sup> of June” publications do not forget to mention that “Istria was until 1945 never within the framework of an administrative unit uniting Croats. On the contrary, it was within the framework of units uniting Slovenians as the majority nation” (Krnj – Umek, 2005, 19). It would be unjust to define the claim as completely false, but they did not explain that Croatia existed as a political unit in the context of Habsburg Hungary. Istria was simply not a part of it. Why was the existence of Croatia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century not mentioned? Maybe because, in this case, they would need to admit that Istria could not be a part of Slovenia, because Slovenia did not exist as a political/administrative unit before 1945.

## METHODOLOGY

Slovenian contemporary nationalist discourse on the Slovenian-Croatian border deserves a detailed investigation. However, this is a task for a separate historical-discursive analysis. At this point, I would like to refer to Slovenian academic historiography. How can we grasp the problem of the Slovenian-Croatian border without falling into a trap of methodological nationalism? There are several ways to avoid this danger. I believe we should approach the subject on two levels: on the legal and administrative level and on the political and ideological level.

The administrative borders are the indicators of the actual power that the state exerts over its societies – inwards (the borders between the administrative units) as well as outwards (the state borders or the borders of the larger political units). They are the expression of the aspiration of the modern state to become the dominant force in “its” territory, disciplining and subjugating any localisms. In this context, the drawing of the borderlines on the maps has an important role. Defining and drawing the borders has a purpose of establishing a system of clearly separated territorial jurisdictions (Behrisch, 2006, 16). Administrative units are essential for the functioning of modern states. Borders between administrative units shape the lives of the population: they specify where and how people come into contact with the authorities (place of residence, right to nationality, court competences, etc.). Borders between wider political units may also be borders between different legal systems. Legal dimensions are not only “felt” by the population by the border, but also in other parts of political units (the right to trade, customs duties, validity of diplomas, etc.). The administrative and political borders have frequently moved in the geographical space. The reasons for that were different: movement without human intervention (for example: a river changes its flow); movement due to changes in “global” factors (territorial changes due to conflicts between states, large scale state reorganizations); movement due to “local” factors (ownership disputes, the local administrative reorganization).



Equally important is the political and ideological level. With the development of the modern state, politics moves towards democratization. Nationalisms become the way of perceiving, interpreting and representing the social world. Ideological borders are drawn; certain administrative-political borders acquire new nationalized boundaries, while others are ignored by the nationalist point of view. National cultures (also within multinational states) strengthen ideological us-them distinctions. Alliances can transform into opposition. Slovenian nationalism of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century emphasized the borders with Germans and Italians, while Croats were deemed as Slavic allies. Especially before 1918, the Slovenian-Croatian border was not a precisely defined concept, involving a strict division at the “us” – “them” level. It was important – not as a border, but as the “passage” to the South Slavic world. The Slovene elite saw its prospects only in the reliance on the South Slavs. Since they did not define a fixed ideological boundary, they regarded the entire southern Slavic area as “ours” (Zajc, 2006, 14). In the beginning of the 1990s, the status of this border changed. After the attainment of independence, the border became a problem. All of the reluctance to specify the border with Croatia and the lack of interest that had been present since the beginnings of Slovenian nationalism turned into a newly discovered “national interest”.

The best way to conceptualize the history of the Slovenian-Croatian border is to apply a comparative and transnational perspective. The German project Phantom Borders in Eastern Central Europe ([www.phantomgrenzen.eu](http://www.phantomgrenzen.eu)) represents a good reference point. Phantom borders are the former political borders that still structure the modern world. The historical spaces (e.g. the Habsburg Monarchy, the Ottoman Empire) persist or “keep returning” in the form of voting behavior, infrastructure networks or social/political practices etc. (Phantomgrenzen, 2014). Although the phantom border research orients itself mostly towards former political borders, the notion of Phantom Borders is also suitable for the research of still-existing political borders. In this regard, the concept of administrative legacy could prove helpful. Borders could be defined as “virtual spaces” with a horizontal dimension (the social influence) as well as a vertical dimension (historical layers). Administrative legacy represents historical layers, which are “made” in a certain political context by the state administration (cadastral measurements, unresolved border disputes, special border commissions, etc.). When the political context changes, those layers persist as part of a “working administration”. Such administrative legacy has a “phantom” potential, which can activate itself in the right political situation. For example, the Slovenian-Croatian border at the river Mura near Hotiza was not disputed in the time of the SFRY. However, with the dissolution of Yugoslavia, its phantom potential “awakened”

SLOVENSKO-HRVAŠKA MEJA: ZGODOVINA, REPREZENTACIJE,  
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## POVZETEK

Članek se ne ukvarja z zgodovino slovensko-hrvaške meje, ampak z sodobnim dojemanjem zgodovine meje v slovenski javnosti. Za Slovenijo, ki ima zgolj 46 km jadranske obale je še zlasti pomembna meja na morju. Širši okvir Evropske unije ni samo pomagal reševati težave, ampak jih je istočasno tudi ustvarjal. V članku je zgodovina predstavljena toliko, kolikor je potrebno za soočenje historiografije, ki temelji na primerjalni metodologiji oziroma teoriji, z nacionalističnimi predstavami. Kratka analiza nacionalističnega pogleda na zgodovino je odkrila pet značilnosti nacionalističnih reprezentacij zgodovine slovensko-hrvaške meje: uporaba anahronizmov, napačna metodologija, protislovja oziroma nedoslednosti, osredotočenost na "premike" odsekov meje brez historigenega konteksta in prepričanje v "naravnost" in starodavnost nacionalnih identitet. Avtor predlaga metodološke in konceptualne pristope, ki omogočajo preseganje neupravičenega posploševanja kot metodološkega nacionalizma. Po njegovem mnenju bi se morali lotiti preučevanja slovensko-hrvaške meje na dveh ravneh: pravni in upravni ter ideološki in politični. Najboljši način za konceptualizacijo meje pa je upoštevanje primerjalne in transnacionalne perspektive. Kot referenčni primer takšnega pristopa avtor navaja nemški projekt Fantomske meje v Vzhodni Srednji Evropi. V zaključku pa predlaga uporabo koncepta administrativne dediščine, ki ga je razvil skupaj s sodelavci na projektu o Administrativnih mejah in slovensko-hrvaški meji.

*Ključne besede:* slovensko-hrvaška meja, percepcija meje, metodološki nacionalizem, nacionalizem, administrativna dediščina

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