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## **Negotiating European identity at the periphery: 'Slovenian nation', 'Bosnian refugees' and 'illegal migration'**

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**NEGOTIATING EUROPEAN IDENTITY AT THE PERIPHERY: 'SLOVENIAN NATION',  
'BOSNIAN REFUGEES' AND 'ILLEGAL MIGRATION'\***

Sabina Mihelj

**Introduction**

Entering the last decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century, Europe found itself involved in two logically opposed, yet curiously interlinked processes. To the West of the vanishing iron curtain, nation states were engaged in establishing a supranational union. Simultaneously, the existing supranational structures positioned to the Eastern and South-Eastern margins of the rising European Community were rapidly disintegrating. Paradoxically enough, the European integration itself was used to legitimize the tearing apart of already existing supranational unions. Throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s, the political elites and the mainstream mass media in Slovenia – the only former Yugoslav republic that survived the violent break-up of the federal state without much scarring – were framing the process of gaining independent statehood in terms of exiting 'the Balkans'<sup>1</sup> and entering 'Europe' (Rupel, 1997; Bakić-Hayden and Hayden, 1992). However, the presence of a growing number of refugees after the outbreak of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Doupona, Verschueren, Zagar, 2001) was a disturbing sign of the fact that 'the Balkans' were not as far as the prevailing rhetorical frame would have it. In order to retain the consistency of this frame, most mass media would employ a number of strategies which effectively put distance between Slovenians and Bosnians, including representing Bosnian refugees as Slovenia's negative mirror image, as an intrusion of 'the Balkans' into 'Europe'.

At the turn of the millennium, having successfully distanced itself from 'the Balkans' and undertaken negotiations for EU membership, Slovenia was - according to the mass media - endangered by a new 'tide of migration'. This time, the wave did not originate in 'the Balkans', but further away in 'the East', where countless individuals, driven by poverty and oppressive political regimes, decided to search for a better life in 'the West'. From existing analysis one can infer that media representations of both 'Bosnian refugees' in 1992 and 'illegal immigrants' in 2000/2001 activated very similar interpretative frames. Indeed, the object of media representations - 'illegal migrants' - again functioned as a focus point for negotiating Slovenia's own identity, including its relationship to 'Europe'. However, the symbolic mapping underlying media reports on 'illegal migration' revealed an importantly different positioning of Slovenia. Far from being unambiguously positioned on the side of 'Europe', Slovenia was now referred to as the 'rampart' or 'threshold' of the West, caught between the 'proper West' (i.e. the European Union) and the menace of 'the East' (including 'the Balkans'). While representing 'Bosnian

refugees' and 'illegal migrants', media in Slovenia were thus also involved in renegotiations of Slovenia's relationships with its neighbouring nations as well as broader regions, including Europe.

One of the main aims of the chapter is to track these changes in Slovenia's symbolic positioning (and identity) by examining the way the issues of 'Bosnian refugees' and 'illegal migration' were framed in mass media representations, as well as to point to the ways in which these changes in framing were coinciding with developments in the political field. The question of how a European space and identity gets moulded by media inside European Union itself was already addressed by various authors (Schlesinger, 1991; Morley and Robins, 1995; Meinhof and Richardson, 1999 to name just a few), while the question of the role of a European identity for countries positioned at the outskirts of EU remained marginal. The present paper is thus also an attempt to fill this gap by providing a case study for Slovenia. In the concluding sections, special attention will be paid to the attribution of responsibility (scapegoating 'the West') connected with the changes in symbolic positioning of Slovenia at the turn of millennia.

### **Theoretical underpinnings**

The most important theoretical pillar underpinning the chapter consists of the interdisciplinary field usually called symbolic or cultural geography, which finds its main reference in Edward Said's seminal work on *Orientalism* (1978). Said's critique of orientalism was immensely influential in last two decades; research agendas in many scientific disciplines were redefined with respect to it. Yet, it was also extensively criticised, even severely condemned (Ahmad, 1992). Thus, I am applying the notion of *orientalism* only after rereading it through the lens of subsequent critiques, paying special attention to developments that went against ahistorical and essentialising tendencies and were ramifying the initial conceptual framework in order to account for specific regions, collectives and their histories of changing borders – particularly Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Central Europe and the territory of former Yugoslavia (Wolff, 1994; Todorova, 1997; Bakić-Hayden and Hayden, 1992; Gingrich, 1998).

The understanding of identity adopted in the chapter follows the *actionist perspective* which 'requires us to see collective identity not as a prior condition of collective action but rather as a continually constituted and reconstructed category,' (Schlesinger 1991: 173). Far from being just passive mirrors of this on-going process of constitution and reconstruction, mass media are actively involved in it, contributing to the reality of a given collective by invoking appropriate collective references and recreating the continuity of a the collective over time and across space. Accordingly, the understanding of *nation* adopted in the chapter is not one that sees nations as pre-existing, fixed and bounded realities, nor does it deem nation states to be a *sine qua non* of social organization. Contrary to that, nation is understood as a phenomenon of recent historical origin (Gellner 1987, 1998; Hobsbawm, 1983), and as an imaginative social construction (Anderson, 1983; Brubaker, 1996) which is undergoing constant change and appropriation and is never fully unitary (Verdery, 1996).

Finally, taking media representations of 'Bosnian refugees' and 'illegal migration' - i.e. two instances of *migration* - as a starting point to discuss the issue of Slovenia's changed positioning and identity was not a random choice. When faced with a new or unexpected phenomena, the role of collective representations, including media representations, is to anchor the phenomenon in something familiar, to integrate it into an existing mental universe (cf. Jodelet, 1991: 52). However, migration

presents a serious challenge to the existing mental (as well as, necessarily, institutional) universe characteristic of modern societies after the industrial revolution. This universe takes nations to be a *sine qua non* of every social organization, and is based on what L. Malkki (1997) calls *sedentarist metaphysics*. The latter consists of a set of taken-for-granted ways of thinking about identity and territory based on a naturalised identity between people and place and an implicit assumption that the world should be composed of sovereign, spatially discontinuous units. Yet, migrants often seem to disregard the linkages to places assumed to be 'theirs' and want to settle down in another place. Thus, when taking into account migration, the 'world of nations', conceived as a discrete spatial partitioning of populations 'rooted' in territories, becomes a highly inaccurate way of representing the world. Consequently, various institutions engaged in the process of naturalizing the national order of things, including the mass media, have to invent a range of policies and interpretative frames to preserve the integrity of such an order of things.

Media necessarily rely on established repertoires of references shared by their audiences, but also have the choice to *select* and *connect* them into interpretative frameworks with relative freedom, supporting some frames while avoiding others. Or - to apply what some authors dealing with communication inspired by writings by Erving Goffman (especially his *Frame analysis: an essay on the organization of experience*, 1974) see as a potential new paradigm - media necessarily get involved in *framing*. According to Robert M. Entman, to frame is 'to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal explanation, moral evaluation, and-or treatment recommendation for the item described' (Entman, 1993: 52). Making selected bits of information more *salient* (i.e. more noticeable, meaningful or memorable) enhances the *probability* (yet does not *guarantee*) that receivers will perceive the information, discern the meaning and store it in memory. The probability increases if the frames are provided by those media that are conceived as an authoritative source of information, as well as if the frames interlock with those provided (and possibly quoted in media) by other institutions holding authority in a given society (representatives of the state, science etc.).

Following the broad definition of *collective representation* as 'a mental act by which a subject relates itself to an object', and by which this object acquires meaning for the subject (Jodelet, 1991: 37) - but also, we should add, by which both the object and the subject get constituted -, the chapter has two main threads. One is dealing with elements of media representations primarily linked to the *object* ('Bosnian refugees' and 'illegal migrants'), the other focuses on those frames that primarily constitute the *subject/addressee* of these same media representations (mostly, yet not exclusively, Slovenians and/or Slovenia). However, this division is far from being sharp: as will become evident through the exposition of results, constituting the object necessarily involves also constituting the position of the subject (the ideal recipient or addressee).

### **Research strategy and limitations of the database**

In his questioning of xenophobia and racism on television, Jérôme Bourdon argued that '[t]he praiseworthy approach of pointing out 'incidents' and 'excesses' of all kinds - in other words, overt and avowed racism - is bound to be insufficient,' (Bourdon, 1995: 23). Following his argument, both the selection of focus periods and media to be analysed as well as the choice of the research strategy was

conducted in such a way as to avoid focussing only on most obvious examples of xenophobic or racist treatments of refugees and migrants. The two periods in focus are the year 1992 (March to December), when the peak of migration of war refugees from Bosnia occurred, and the period from September 2000 to May 2001, when 'illegal migration' was on the prime-time agenda. In both cases, key events such as political agreements, public demonstrations etc. were taken as orientation marks for defining the time-slots most suitable for analysis. Yet, in order to include also an analysis of specific trends in media coverage that might have led to the outburst (or silencing) of the 'crisis', the focus periods were extended to include periods before and after the most disputed events.

In accordance with the concept of framing as sketched above, the analysis focuses on specific elements of media texts which are involved in framing, such as naming and labelling, compartmentalizing, archiving and showing. These elements are to be scrutinised as possible indicators of Slovenia's changing positioning vis-à-vis Europe. The analysis predominantly involves a comparison along the diachronic axis, i.e. it compares representations of 'Bosnian refugees' in 1992 to representations of 'illegal migration' in 2000-2001. However, the comparison along the diachronic axis is at some points complemented by the comparison along the synchronic axis in order to provide a comparison of different media with regard to their proximity/distance to mainstream framing. Among four main television channels in Slovenia, attention was paid to just those two of them that produce daily news programmes: the first channel of *TV Slovenija (TVSI)* and *Pop TV*. Out of all television genres, only news programmes were analysed, and among those, bulletins broadcast in prime time were of highest interest. Among the news programmes of *TVSI*, almost all daily news bulletins were covered, including the prime time bulletin starting at 7:30 p.m. and the evening news appearing in the 10 p.m. slot, as well as the chronicle of local and regional news broadcast before the prime-time bulletin. For the limited period of the escalation of the crisis (November 2000 to February 2001), the weekly programme *Tednik (Weekly)* was also analysed, a news programme with high viewing share and a tabloid character. *Pop TV*, since founded in 1995, did not yet exist when the refugees from Bosnia were in focus. However, in autumn of 2000, when the 'illegal migration crisis' entered the media stage, their daily news bulletin *24ur (24 hours)* starting at 7.15 pm was already a well-established and widely watched part of the programme. *Pop TV*'s news bulletin was not covered as extensively as the news programmes broadcast by *TVSI*; it was analysed systematically only in the period from 29 January to 21 February. In the case of print media, all major daily press was covered: the nation-wide *Delo (Work)* and *Slovenske novice (Slovenian News)*, the region-centred *Večer (Evening)* and the city-centred *Dnevnik (Daily)* for both periods, the nation-wide *Republika (Republic)* and *Slovenec (A Slovenian)* just for 1992, since they both ceased to exist in 1996. A selection of periodicals was also taken into account: national ones such as *Mladina (Youth)* and *Mag* and regional ones such as *Primorske novice (News of the Littoral)*. Before looking at the results of the analysis and their interpretation, it is necessary to place all the selected media into the context of changes and continuities in the Slovenian media landscape in the 1990s.

### **Slovenian media landscape before and after the dismemberment of Yugoslavia**

Contrary to what has happened in some other countries inside the former Eastern block (cf. Giorgi et al. 1995), the largest part of the Slovenian press market is held by a small number of local owners, and is

not substantially controlled by large European and American corporations. Three out of four still existing daily newspapers in focus (the nation-wide *Delo*, the region-centred *Večer* and the city-centred *Dnevnik*) originate from the period of Yugoslavia. Except for *Slovenske novice*, which took an explicit sensationalist approach to news making and succeeded in attracting a wide enough audience, all three other nation-wide dailies formed after 1990 (*Slovenec*, *Republika* and *Jutranjik*) failed. In 2001, companies publishing *Delo*, *Večer*, *Slovenske novice* and *Dnevnik* controlled more than 90 percent of the daily newspaper market.

The situation regarding television in Slovenia at the turn of the millennium may best be described in terms of a duopoly. In 2001, 81 percent of viewers in Slovenia watched the four main national channels, two public (*TVS1* and *TVS2*) and two commercial ones (*Pop TV* and *Kanal A*). The remaining 19 percent watched mainly Austrian, Italian and Croatian programmes (Bašič Hrvatin 2002: 71). As opposed to the press, the developments in the sphere of television in Slovenia are similar to those in Central and Eastern Europe. The real progress of commercial television began in 1995, when *Pop TV* and *TV3* were introduced. Given its offer of cinema and television hits, the rating of *Pop TV* soon exceeded that of *TVS1*, and also its prime time news bulletin *24ur*, which attracted the audience by sensational news and life-stories of 'common people', proved to be a serious competitor to the prime time news bulletin broadcast by *TVS1*. The figures for *TVS1* average annual shares of viewing from 1996 to 2001 reveal that prime-time viewing fell from slightly over 40 percent in 1996 to slightly over 25 percent in 2001 (Bašič Hrvatin, 2002: 69).

From the point of view of central issues here addressed, it is important to note that the Slovenian media, although formerly functioning in a political formation that integrated many different nations, did not have to imagine their national community from scratch. During 1960s and 1970s, the political power in Yugoslavia was devolved from the central (federal) organs to the six republics (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia) and two autonomous provinces within Serbia (Kosovo and Vojvodina) and their respective branches of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. As the same time, the media were also decentralized; they were (with the exception of a few pan-Yugoslav media) controlled at the republican level and were increasingly geared for republican audiences (cf. Thompson, 1994: 5-7). What set Slovenian media apart from other Yugoslav media (with the exception of Macedonia) was also the fact that they produced contents only in Slovenian, a language incomprehensible to most of the remaining Yugoslav audiences (Bašič-Hrvatin, 1996: 16). Therefore, it should be clear that during the establishment of a fully sovereign state, the Slovenian media did not have to change their ways of reporting, modes of address and ways of imagining the addressee that drastically (cf. Vogrinc, 1996: 13).

Such an understanding of relationships between media and nations in Yugoslavia partly coincides with the arguments of various scholars dealing with nationalism in Yugoslavia that seem to agree that Yugoslavia never succeeded in becoming a melting pot, moulding previously separate nations into one, Yugoslav nation (Djilas, 1995: 85; Banac, 1995: 118). Yet, this should not lead to claims that the fall of Yugoslavia was an *inevitable* outcome of either 'ancient hatreds' suppressed during communism or the specific federal structure adopted in 1974. The disintegration was a process requiring specific economic and political interests reinvoking the hatreds as well as appropriated references shared by wider masses, previously inculcated by educational and cultural policies (cf. Wachtel, 1998, 14-18). The mass media

was a crucial player in these processes, especially with regard to selection, specific combination, interpretation and strengthening of existing collective references and frames. The analysis presented below unveils some of the references invoked in framing the issues of 'Bosnian refugees' and 'illegal migration' in Slovenian mass media - especially those appertaining to the realm of symbolic geography - , and shows how they were used to make sense of the events, ascribe responsibility and legitimate solutions.

### **Mapping the subject and the object**

The symbolic mapping implicit in media representations was unveiled primarily by means of an analysis of labels and phrases appearing in connection to various entities of the symbolic map: individual countries ('Slovenia', 'Croatia', 'Italy', 'Austria' etc.) as well as wider regions ('Europe', 'the Balkans', 'the East', 'the West'). The analysis was predominantly qualitative and consisted of grouping the labels and phrases with regard to their denoted and connoted meanings, taking in account also their position in the chapters and news items (labels and phrases appearing in titles and in topic sentences of news items were regarded as more indicative).

#### ***Mapping 'Bosnian refugees': exiting 'the Balkans', entering 'Europe'***

In 1992, the symbolic mapping present in media representations of 'Bosnian refugees' included two main, opposing, entities: 'Europe' and 'the Balkans', the first being equated with Western Europe, the second with republics of former Yugoslavia. Most media representations were sharply demarcating Slovenia from 'the Balkans' and placing it into 'Europe', and thus paralleled the developments in the political arena. After gaining international recognition, Bosnian refugees, as well as those Slovenian politicians and intellectuals arguing for a less sharp departure from 'the Balkans' (their views were most often appearing in *Mladina*) were represented as prolongations of 'foreign' ('Balkan') interests. The policy measures aimed at settling the 'refugee problem' supported this frame: refugees were preferably held in centres far from main roads, city centres and tourist attractions, their freedom of movement was restricted and they were not allowed to work. It could thus be argued that the Europeaness of Slovenia was literally negotiated through Bosnian refugees: if Slovenia was to prove its Europeaness, Bosnians had to be kept out of sight and remain complete strangers. Finally, in August 1992, the Slovenian government, claiming that 'all possibilities in the Republic of Slovenia for accommodating and caring for temporary refugees are exhausted' (quoted in Doupona, Verschueren and Žagar, 2001: 26), closed the borders to refugees.

This symbolic travel from 'the Balkans' into 'Europe', and the concomitant framing of Bosnians, was supported by developments initiated long before 1992. As already pointed out, press and broadcasting systems in Yugoslavia were, for the most part, increasingly regulated from within the republics from the late 1960s, and they already had their nationally defined imagined communities. However, reports on events happening within the respective republic were regularly complemented by substantial blocs of reports on events from other republics. As far as television news is concerned, in the moments of crisis at the end of 80s, this general pattern did not change – the only change appeared on the level of length, since the bulletins grew longer and tended to consist predominantly of Yugoslav news (Vogrinc, 1996: 14). Contrary to that, the press was already changing significantly. While

Yugoslavia was falling apart in the press, television continued to portray the symbolic universum of a homogeneous state, and it was the last medium to allow opposition speakers on the screen (Bašič Hrvatin, 1996: 158). But the really sharp changes – obviously sharper in television than in the press, which is again consistent with developments in Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic (L. Giorgi et Al., 1995) – came in 1990/91, in the period marked by the plebiscite for independence (held on 23 December 1990) and the *Declaration of Independence* (adopted by the Slovenian Assembly on 25 June 1991). In this period, the amount of space in the prime time news bulletin on *TVSI* dedicated to the rest of Yugoslavia was sharply reduced, news from the former fraternal republics categorised as ‘foreign news’ and preferably reported by *TVS* resident correspondents (Vogrinc, 1996: 14). It can be said that from that point on, the relationship between press and television with regard to placing Slovenia onto the symbolic map was reversed. Television took the leading role in drawing Slovenia out of ‘the Balkans’, while the press was more often representing voices calling for a more active Slovenian attitude towards ‘the Balkans’, arguing that Slovenia should take advantage of having a better knowledge of this space than most Western European states.

#### ***Mapping ‘illegal migration’: Slovenia as the ‘threshold of the West’***

At the turn of the millennium, the relative roles played by press and television remained roughly the same: television would foster mainstream arguments, while the press would present a wider range of perspectives. From existing analysis (Žagar, 2001; Kuhar 2001; Jalušič 2001) one can infer that mainstream media activated interpretative frames very similar to those appearing in the case of Bosnian refugees. Media, politicians and sometimes even humanitarian organizations (like the Slovenian Red Cross in 1992) alike were using metaphors from the realm of natural phenomena or catastrophes (the refugee tide, swamped over...), describing ‘Bosnian refugees’ as well as ‘illegals’ as belonging to a different civilisational and cultural level, observing different behavioural patterns, disrupting the habits of the local population, being potential criminal offenders, bringing tensions etc. In other words, the object of media representations - ‘illegal migrants’ - again functioned as a focus point for negotiating Slovenia’s own identity, including its relationship to ‘Europe’. And again, mainstream media reports and prevailing rhetoric used by representatives of the state (first and foremost the police and Ministry of Internal Affairs) supported each other in legitimating the introduction of restrictive measures such as limiting the freedom of movement. Yet, in contrast to media representations of ‘Bosnian refugees’, media reports on ‘illegal migration’ revealed an importantly different map – not least because it comprised larger portions of the world and was, in a sense, global – as well as a much more ambiguous positioning of Slovenia vis-à-vis Europe.

The main division reiterated the mapping known from the Cold War period, dating back to the Enlightenment: ‘the West’ was opposed to ‘the East’ (cf. Wolff, 1994). ‘The West’ subsumed Europe as conceived in 1992 (as Western Europe or EU) and was usually even equated with it, while ‘the Balkans’ are seen as one element in the hierarchy of entities constituting ‘the East’. Furthermore, ‘the Balkans’ were no longer conceived simply as an opposite to ‘Europe’, but were characterised by ambiguity, transition, contradictions, in-betweenness, liminality. As such, these representations fit into the discourse of *balkanism* as identified by Maria Todorova, formed gradually in the course of two centuries and crystallised with the Balkan wars and World War I (Todorova, 1997). It is hardly a surprise that the

route along which illegal migrants were coming was persistently represented as the 'Balkan route', connected also with other kinds of illegal trafficking, especially drugs. A further important point is that the recurrent symbol of 'the Balkans' in this mapping was 'Bosnia' and especially Sarajevo airport, represented as the main opening for the influx of illegal migrants. Moreover, journalists rarely forgot to mention that Bosnia, as 'traditionally open to Islam countries', does not have visa requirements for them. Thus, contrary to representations in 1992, Slovenia was no longer pictured as endangered by the influx of 'the Balkans', but by the influx of 'the East' – arriving *through* 'the Balkans'.

The mapping emerging here can partly be conceived in terms of what Milica Bakić Hayden and Robert M. Hayden called a system of *nesting orientalisms*, in which 'there exists a tendency for each region to view cultures and religions to the south and east of it as more conservative and primitive' (Hayden 1992: 4). From this point of view, the hierarchy of 'Bosnian refugees' and 'illegal migrants' can be seen as a prolongation of the political rhetoric that 'since the late 1980s has revolved around constructions that claim a privileged 'European' status for some groups in the country while condemning others as 'balkan' or 'byzantine', hence non-European and Other,' (Hayden 1992: 5).

Another suitable concept to account for the above sketched hierarchy of Oriental Others is the concept of *frontier orientalism* coined by Andre Gingrich. This 'complement to or a variant of orientalism in general' is, in his view, a distinctive feature of folk cultures in (roughly) the southern parts of Central Europe, which made up the central domains of the Habsburg Empire: eastern Austria, Hungary, north-eastern part of Italy and Slovenia. It is a 'folkloristic glorification of decisive local military victories in past times, either against Muslims or together with Muslims, but serving present nationalist purposes, and it places the home country and its population along an adjacent territorial and military borderline which is imbued with a timeless mission,' (Gingrich 1998: 119). Among key structural elements of frontier orientalism as conceptualised by Gingrich, two are of particular relevance to the analysis presented so far: the Good Muslim Oriental (the Bosnian) and the Bad Muslim Oriental (the Turk). The hierarchy established between 'Bosnian refugees' and 'illegal migrants' may be seen as a variation of this dual image of the Other. This thesis is supported also by the overrepresentation of Turks with regard to actual proportions of migrants coming from Turkey (to be discussed in more detail in following sections).

It may well be that what is arising here is a reworking of a definition of Europe to which Islam, rather than Communism, is now seen to supply the Eastern boundary (cf. Schlesinger, 1991: 189-190; Morley and Robins, 1995: 80). Yet, it is important to note that in the map underpinning media representations of 'illegal migration' in 2000/2001, Slovenia was no longer positioned unambiguously on the side of Europe. Rather, it shared many qualities otherwise recognised as 'Balkan'. First and foremost, it was consistently represented as a transit point between West and East, a neither-here-nor-there land, caught between two large bodies exerting pressure on it: the West and the East (metaphors and phrases ascribing such a position to Slovenia appeared in almost every article or news item). However, contrary to the discourse of balkanism as conceptualised by Todorova (1997: 15), Slovenia was not represented as the *crossroad* or *bridge* between East and West. Rather, it was referred to as 'the rampart of the West', 'the waiting-room of European Union', the 'sanitary cordon of Europe' and the wall which is bound to protect Europe from the tide of migrants coming from the East. This difference

can be interpreted as a consequence of the discourse of frontier orientalism intervening into the discourse of balkanism.

Before proceeding to changes in the attribution of responsibility, appearing together with above described changes in the symbolic positioning of Slovenia, I will first turn to the analysis of a selection of other elements of media representations contributing to the overall mapping as described above.

### **Positioning the subject by constituting the object**

Besides explicit symbolic positioning of Slovenia by using labels referring to geographical units such as 'East', 'West', 'Europe' or 'the Balkans', the above depicted symbolic mappings were supported also by a range of other elements of media representations that are not so obviously linked to geography. In the following sections, I examine four such elements of media representations: naming/labelling and showing the object, compartmentalising and archiving news items.

#### ***Naming and labelling the object***

Names and labels are usually so strongly identified with their referents, so deeply embedded into common sense and thus 'obvious', that their arbitrary nature largely passes by unnoticed. However, names, labels and words in general do not describe independent, pre-existing things; rather - to rephrase the title of John L. Austin's famous book (1962) - words actually *do* things. Of course, not *any* words - for an utterance to acquire a performative power, the authorisation of a legitimate institution which has access to symbolic resources is needed (Bourdieu, 1991, 109; cf. Melucci, 1989, for a similar argument on naming). Mass media with nation-wide audiences and highest viewing rates or circulation are certainly well equipped to provide such institutional conditions; the words used by them can thus easily achieve the power to *create* things, to bring them into existence (cf. Bourdieu, 1996: 19). This power is even greater if the naming they provide is left unchallenged by other, alternative media, and if it is used also by other authoritative institutions in a given society. For the purposes of the present chapter, the frequency of names and labels referring to war refugees from Bosnia and non-registered migrants in all the titles of all articles appearing in the focus periods was analysed. The sample included main titles, subtitles as well as short paragraphs summarising the main points of the article directly below the title. In the case of *TVSI*, the data base consisted of partial transcriptions with brief descriptions of news items appearing from 1990 to 2001 collected in a specialised computer-based archive. The news bulletin *24ur* could not be fully included in the analysis, but the pattern retrieved for the limited period in focus is in tune with the general pattern of changes discerned in other media.

As Igor Ž. Žagar observes, in 2000/2001 the media virtually never used the term 'refugees' when talking about immigrants, regardless of the fact that the use of the term was in accordance with the UN Convention on refugees and the definitions in the Geneva Convention. Rather than 'refugees', migrants were most often labelled as 'ilegalni migranti' (illegal migrants), 'ilegalci' (illegals), 'tujci' (foreigners) or by using the peculiar term 'prebežniki' (or, most often, 'ilegalni prebežniki') (Žagar 2001, 7). The qualitative analysis of these terms gives a good entry point for the discussion of the reasons for the shift in naming which occurred in the 1990s. The noun 'prebežniki' is derived from the verb 'bežati', the same one from which also the Slovene word for refugee is derived ('begunec'), and it means 'to run away' or 'to escape'. But an important difference is introduced by the prefix pre-, which implies that the

people referred to as 'prebežniki' did not run away with the intention to come *to* Slovenia and stay *in* the country. Contrary to that, their goal was to flee *through* or *over* Slovenia to reach a place somewhere else. Therefore, already the labelling of the object contributed to the specific mapping of Slovenia described in previous sections: the use of the label 'begunci' constituted Slovenia as the ultimate final destination of migration, while the label 'prebežniki' presented it as a transitory space, a space in-between.

Two other frequently used labels – 'ilegalci' or 'ilegalni migranti' – carry explicitly negative connotations: they classify the people as criminal offenders, place them out of the safe world regulated by laws (e.g. Slovenia), and do not imply any connection to fleeing from something and/or seeking asylum. Contrary to that, the labels 'azilanti' and 'prosilci za azil' (asylum seekers) have a rather neutral denoted meaning. Yet, since journalists were frequently stressing that the asylum was just a *cover up*, *abused* by migrants who did not want to stay in Slovenia but reach one of the Western European countries, the two labels acquired a negative connotation. In print media, this connotation was reflected in the frequent use of quotation marks; the asylum seekers were labelled as 'asylum seekers', i.e. as not real asylum seekers. The possibility of such subtle shifts in the meaning of labels, largely dependent on specific contexts, need to be taken in account when looking at changes in the quantity of different labels over time.

The quantitative analyses of titles in print media revealed a basic shift in labelling which occurred uniformly in *all* press media considered. In 1992, people fleeing from the war in BiH were, with hardly any exceptions, named 'refugees', while the migrants in 2000-2001 were most frequently referred to with labels 'foreigners' or 'prebežniki' (both terms were used in roughly one third of cases), 'illegals' or 'illegal migrants' (in about 20-25 percent of cases), and the label 'refugees' appeared in only about 15 percent of all cases. The same shift can be discerned also in news items broadcast by *TVSI*. In January 2001, the use of the labels 'illegals' and 'illegal migrants' decreased in favour of the label 'prebežniki' and 'foreigners'. This, however, was most probably not due to a conscious change of attitude or heightened level of awareness of the power of naming among journalists. Rather, it was a consequence of the fact that due to a concerted action of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), police ceased to be the central authoritative source of information on non-registered migration. Rather, the issue became a top priority on the main political agenda, and the prevailing labels shifted accordingly; the migrants were no longer seen solely in terms of criminal activity and security, but in terms of citizenship and asylum. Again, the media simply followed the labelling used by the main authoritative institution providing information: initially, they would most often turn to the police, while from January on, they would more often turn to the highest representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as well as to the NGOs. Relying on the police was characteristic especially of television; while television journalists would turn to the police in roughly one third of the cases, press journalists would do so in 20 percent of the cases.

An additional level of naming that contributes to the constitution of distance between the addressed audience (generally, Slovenians) and respective objects is the use of individual names instead of collective labels (this part of the analysis was made just for *TVSI*). Again, labelling without individual names was much more persistent and widely present in the case of 'illegal migrants' than in the case of 'Bosnian refugees', thus instituting a greater distance between the addressee and 'illegal migrants' than

between the addressee and 'Bosnian refugees'. Again, the share of individual names in reports on illegal migration increased in January 2001, parallel to the decrease in the share of labels such as 'illegals' and 'illegal migrants' and thus parallel to the move of the topic of non-registered migration from the realm controlled by the police onto the main political agenda.

### ***Compartmentalising the object***

The way each medium presents its news compartmentalised into a few 'naturally given' thematic fields, sequenced hierarchically in time with the more important usually at the beginning, is another well known strategy which contributes to the naturalisation and objectivation of media representations. The compartmentalisation into rubrics was analysed just for daily news bulletins and daily press, since others do not have comparable structures of rubrics.

Roughly, the changes in compartmentalisation followed the main shifts regarding the 'refugee problem' in the political field. From April to July of 1992, i.e. in the period of the first major condensation of media attention to 'Bosnian refugees', articles and news items about refugees would mostly appear on pages or inside segments of news bulletins dedicated to 'internal affairs'. In October and November, when refugees again became a hot issue (they would appear as one of the most important topics in campaigns for parliamentary elections), 'internal affairs' was still the prevalent rubric. However, from September 1992 on, articles and news items would very often appear also in rubrics dedicated to education. This was linked to the fact that a separate education system for refugee children was being organised in Slovenia, held in their 'mother tongue' (cf. Doupona Horvat, Verschueren, Žagar, 2000: 36). Another rubric into which articles and news items about refugees were more and more frequently put from September on was culture. The unifying trait of articles and news items appearing both under 'culture' as well as 'education' was the reduction of refugees to their culture and/or collective identity. Namely, both education and cultural activities were presented as means of *preserving* their culture/identity. A concomitant aspect of this seemingly tolerant perspective was the neglecting or even repulsion of refugees who did not want to stick to their presumed collective roots and would rather mix indistinguishably with the host society. Thus, one could say that by representing the refugees as culturally different, the media were playing a central role in hindering the integration of refugees into the host society. What is more, the difference between the two collectives was often represented in terms of religion, i.e. Christianity and Islam. Therefore, distancing the subject (as well as the addressee), i.e. Slovenians, from the object, i.e. 'Bosnian refugees', was not just a matter of instituting a difference between two nationalities, but much more a matter of drawing a distinction between different civilisations and, *inter alia*, between 'Europe' and 'the Balkans'.

Throughout 1992, articles and news items about refugees only rarely appeared in crime-related rubrics, although allusions to refugees as potential crime-offenders were appearing quite often. Contrary to that, 'illegal migrants' entered the media stage in a completely different manner, which again coincided with the main approach taken with regard to the issue in the political field. In the initial period of the escalation of 'crisis' (September - November 2000), up to 75 percent of articles and news items about migrants were published as parts of regular police chronicles, and in about 80 percent of news items journalists turned to the police for information. Such a compartmentalization had similar effects as the use of the labels 'illegals' and 'illegal migrants'; namely it identified migrants as criminal offenders

and placed them out of the safe world regulated by laws. Another important difference with regard to media representations of 'Bosnian refugees' was the fact that news about 'illegal migrants' almost never appeared in rubrics dedicated to education and culture. This is an indication that they were less intensively treated with reference to their specific collective identity, but rather simply as foreigners, indistinguishable among each other. This thesis is supported also by the results of analysis of classification used by professional archivists working in archives inside particular publishing and broadcasting institutions.

### ***Archiving the object***

The categorization of articles and news items followed in media archives is crucial for the establishment of long-term, institutional memory. As such, it can be read as another indication of the interpretative framework shared by journalists and editors of a given medium. The analysis took into account the time span from 1990 to 2001, and considered the two largest media archives in Slovenia – the archives of TV Slovenia and archives of the publishing house Delo. Contrary to news items and articles about Bosnian refugees, which were mostly classified under the larger heading of 'Bosnia and Herzegovina' or 'Bosnia', most news items about 'illegal migrants' were not classified with reference to their source country. This can partly be explained by the fact that archivists in 1992 still followed the classifying structure established in the times of Yugoslavia, where each republic had a separate and amply differentiated heading, while rubrics dedicated to other countries were not so well differentiated. A further possible explanatory factor is that 'illegal migrants', as opposed to 'Bosnian refugees', mostly appeared in mixed groups comprising people from different countries, which made a classification according to their source country too time-consuming to be applied.

A counter-argument can be found in an aspect of naming and labelling that was not mentioned in the previous section: the distortions in representation with regard to the source countries and nationalities of migrants involved. Although (in the period in focus) Iranians were by far the most represented nationality in actual statistics provided by border police, the proportion mentioning Turkey and Turks reaches almost the same level as the proportion of mentioning Iran and Iranians. Another strong distortion in representation was that the reported numbers of Chinese migrants were four times greater than the actual statistics. What is encountered here can adequately be conceptualised using the distinction of *elaborated and limited codes* (Eco, 1996: 155-157). In the absence of an elaborated code, journalists based their representations on limited codes that were melding very different people together to make them suit those few images of the Other that were long segmented in collective memory in Slovenia. The fact that 'illegal migrants' were perceived as importantly different from Bosnian refugees called for representations referring to more distant Others, and the most suitable ones appeared to be the Turks and the Chinese. However, this does not yet explain why archivists would turn to exactly such a limited code - involving Turks and Chinese - in the first place. In order to provide an answer to this explanation, it is useful to differentiate between the *internal other* (or, to use a term employed by Maria Todorova, *alter ego* – cf. Todorova, 1997: 18-19) and the *external other*. Despite perceived cultural, especially religious differences, 'Bosnian refugees' are still regarded as somehow similar - they appertain to the same, i.e. Slavic race -, and can thus fulfil the role of the internal other. Contrary to that, 'illegal migrants' are perceived as completely different and thus fulfil the role of the external other.

### *Showing the object*

Amongst all media, television – or, more specifically, television news programmes, – received additional attention in the analysis. Although both press and television used roughly the same ways of constituting the object of representation, television was most influential in terms of the wider population, since it is by far the most important source of information for most Slovenes (Toš et al., 1997). Furthermore, it could be argued that television played a specific role in developing a sense of being placed (as a member of a collective) in space. In common-sense perceptions as well as in many scientific approaches, the *differentia specifica* of television – as compared to other forms of mass media – is deemed to be the presence of visual signs, especially moving images. If we accept the general classification of signs into those crucially linked to time (roughly, audio signs) and those decisively linked to space (roughly, visual signs) (Saussure, 1997: 84; Mounin, 1999: 36), the importance of television, as well as newspaper photographs, for developing a sense of being placed in space, can hardly be a surprise. What is more, state borders proved to be a much more attractive object of representation for television than for the press: among items on ‘illegal migrants’, 13.9 percent of them were dealing with developments at the border, while in the press, only 3.4 percent of articles were taking borders as the central issue. And among the latter, most were longer reports with photos, which is a further argument in support of the thesis that visual representations play a central role in constituting a sense of being placed into a territory with clearly established borders.

Anchoring is probably the best term to define a series of strategies by means of which the relationship between the sender, the object of representation and recipient gets constituted. Many of them are not common to all media, and I will focus mainly on some of them which are specific for television news: the role of the anchor person (the absence/presence of reporters), the selection of ‘spots’ where reports are made, the use of objects as symbols of something else (e.g. war or chaos) and the role of the camera’s movement.

According to Jože Vogrinc, an important factor in enhancing the imagined distance between Bosnia and Slovenia via television was the absence of a resident correspondent. During the escalation of war in Croatia in 1991, *TVS* relied heavily on its own special reporters from the frontline, as well as resident correspondents. When in spring 1992 the war in Bosnia broke out, *TVS* reversed its previous policy and recalled reporters from Bosnia as well as Kosovo. This withdrawal strongly inflected the discourse of the central news bulletin: because *TVS* ‘is not there’, because it has no representatives at the heart of the matter, by virtue of its monopoly of representation of Slovene viewers, *Slovenes are not directly involved* (Vogrinc, 1996: 15).

Absence of resident correspondents apart, when the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina escalated, *TVSI* was still following the events regularly and in much detail, which could at least potentially contribute to a stronger solidarity with refugees. Contrary to that, when ‘illegal migrants’ became a hot issue, a much greater distance separated them from addressees. Reports on ‘illegal migrants’ only occasionally got coupled with information on the situation in their source countries, which could contribute to the representation of them as refugees and not just plainly ‘foreigners’ or ‘illegals’. Among news items in bulletins on *TVSI* in 1992 dealing (at least partly) with Bosnian refugees, over a third of them appeared as part of reports on actual developments in Bosnia. In comparison to that, only 1 percent of news items dealing with illegal migrants in 2000-2001 was explicitly addressing the situation in their source

countries. A fact linked to that is that illegal migrants were not commonly used as a *symbol* of war or deteriorating social and economic conditions in their countries. This is another difference with regard to Bosnian refugees, which were consistently represented in such a manner (Bašič Hrvatinić 1996: 18).

A further aspect of televisual representations contributing to framing on the visual level is the movement of the camera, connected also with the selection of scenes, including lights and sounds. As Steven Heath argued when writing about narrative space in cinema, what is moving is not simply the camera, but the spectator (Heath 1996: 353). Actually, the movement of camera is, on the level of visual signs, a functional equivalent of personal pronouns on the level of linguistic signs, and can thus be seen as a visual complement of verbal deixis which constitute the banal nationalism as defined by Michael Billig (1995). Furthermore, by constituting the relationship between object and addressee, the movement of camera also contributes to the organization of space, its division into 'home' and 'foreign'. When analyzing smaller samples (6 items for each 'period of crisis') of news items from this point of view, important differences were recognised between representations of 'Bosnian refugees' and 'illegal migrants'. In the case of the latter, the distance between object and subject/addressee was intensified by the use of sharp oppositions between light and darkness (the latter being associated with 'their', 'foreign' spaces on the other side of 'our' border), and, in some cases – especially in the weekly, yellow-press *Tednik* on *TVS*, by use of music evoking fear. 'Bosnian refugees' would mostly be shot at the border in daylight, from relatively close to. Contrary to that, news items about 'illegal migrants' often included shots of woods and empty, muddy roads in darkness. These were taken from police vehicles during their regular border controls in the night, and when cameras came across migrants, these would frequently be shot from afar. In this way, the movement of the camera also contributed to the constitution of a specific positioning of and relationship between the addressee (Slovenians) and the object ('Bosnian refugees'/'illegal migrants'). By showing 'illegal migrants' consistently in connection with visual signs that carry negative connotations (darkness, mud, emptiness), and in the absence of other explicit explanations, it supported the attribution of responsibility for the situation to 'illegal migrants' themselves. Such a frame of attribution of responsibility was virtually the only one provided by media in the first phase of the 'illegal migration crisis' (September-December 2000). Later, frames attributing responsibility to the Slovenian State or, most often, to 'the West' or 'Europe' complemented it. It is this aspect, connected to the already described changes in symbolic mapping, that will be the focus of the rest of the chapter.

### **Scapegoating 'the West'**

As argued before, media representations of 'illegal migration' in 2000/2001 constituted Slovenia as a land 'in-between', caught between 'the East' and 'the West'. Contrary to the prevalent mapping drawn by media representations of 'Bosnian refugees' in 1992, 'the Balkans' now no longer played the role of the absolute Other, since this position was reserved for 'the East'. Rather, 'the Balkans' now functioned as a despised Alter Ego, i.e. a part of the self which is pictured as negative and neglected. At the same time, however, Europe no longer played the role of a *positive* dominant Ego-image, i.e. a part of the self pictured as worth aspiring to, but was instead acquiring rather negative overtones - while nevertheless keeping the dominant position. Therefore, it is not enough to say that Slovenia, when it came to screening the South and the East, adopted the 'Western gaze' (itself an often essentialized category in

texts exploring orientalist and similar discourses, including Said's), since it was an object of that same gaze too. To understand the whole complexity of the mapping, one should look also for manifestations of a specific internalization of and/or repulsion from these same orientalizing and balkanizing discourses. These internalizations can be explored as elements of a discourse that could be referred to as *occidentalism* and can be further ramified similarly as orientalism (i.e. one can talk about *nesting occidentalism* and *frontier occidentalisms*).

One of the most persistent elements of this discourse as appearing in media representations of 'Bosnian refugees' as well as 'illegal migration' is homogeneity. For example, when comparing Slovenia to other countries, the media would most often talk about 'European' or 'Western' policies towards migration *en bloc*, without pointing to differences between measures employed in specific countries. While from inside of the European Union, media programmes such as *EuroNews* have problems addressing their viewers as Europeans – all deictic references still point to respective national spaces (cf. Meinhof and Richardson, 1999, 75-86), the Slovenian media seem to have no second thoughts when presenting Europe and its inhabitants as a unified entity. This is an argument supporting the thesis that it is not so much 'the West' itself who is producing an imbalanced picture of the world inside which one, homogeneous West is opposed to a range of different Orients (Near East, Middle East, and Far East). Rather, such a map might be a product of various subjects self-conceived as Oriental, who, while trying to 'enter the West', tend to picture it as homogeneous, stretching its borders to include themselves into it, while at the same time also excluding immediate neighbours towards the East and South and thus producing additional hierarchies in representations of the Orient. From this point of view, the tendency to point to 'the West' as the sole source of orientalizing discourses can function as an excuse for one's own exclusivism, shifting the responsibility onto another subject ('the West'). This is, I believe, the backbone of most of the *quid-pro-quo* rhetoric employed in East and Southeast European countries when dealing with migration. By claiming Europe is the one exerting pressure on it to become an effective filter for migration, Slovenia, along with other countries at the margins of EU, is believed to be legitimised to introduce more restrictive regulations and, if necessary, close its southern and eastern borders.

But while the homogeneity of 'the West' or 'Europe' is a feature persisting in media representations of both 'Bosnian refugees' and 'illegal migration', the overall value of this entity changed considerably. Contrary to 1992, when the prevailing connotations connected with Europe were positive, in 2000/2001 the West was presented as ambiguous. This is most clearly evident in print media, where the words 'Europe' and 'the West' regularly appear together with the adjective 'promised' or the phrase 'promised land' put into quotation marks. Since these are a marker of distancing a certain locutor in relation to the statement (they *derealize* what is said), such a use of quotation marks expresses a doubt towards 'Europe' and 'the West'; the positive character of this part of the world is challenged. The main argument appearing alongside with such attitudes is that 'the West' no longer keeps to its own standards of democracy and liberalism; when faced with the influx of migrants, they tend to close their borders. With regard to this point, no media in Slovenia is an exception; all of them picture Europe in mixed tones, claiming its liberalism and openness to be a fake.

Parallel to changes in the overall representation of Europe/the West, the character of relationship between Slovenia and Europe/the West was also substantially changed. While in the 1992, Slovenia was

predominantly represented as a 'long lost' part of Europe now returning to where it always belonged, in 2000/2001 'the West' was no longer uniformly pictured as an entity Slovenia would like to enter at any cost. 'The West', especially the EU, was now increasingly seen as the prime cause of the 'illegal migration crisis': attracting migrants with its wealth yet denying them entrance upon arrival and forcing countries at its outskirts to perform the role of a sanitary cordon. Inside such a map, Slovenia appeared as an innocent victim of both the wave of migrants, themselves deluded by images of a prosperous West, as well as the pressures of the 'fortress Europe', reluctant to accept the migrants. Only rare journalists - usually those writing for the periodical *Mladina* or individual journalists writing for *Delo* - were countering the prevailing representations and pointing to the fact that Europe is not such an impermeable fortress.

In 2001, after months of gradually increasing, media-supported xenophobia and Euro-scepticism, loosely organised groups of intellectuals, supported by a couple of non-governmental institutions as well as branches of international organizations, managed to challenge the above described mainstream framing of 'illegal migration'. To an extent, they even succeeded to force alternative frames onto both the media and the government. They were demanding a public denunciation of xenophobia and calling for implementation of policy measures that would enable Slovenia to cope with the phenomenon of non-registered migration in accordance with democratic standards, avoiding human rights violations. The public protests, taking place in the capital of Ljubljana in February 2001 coincided with the election of the new ombudsman, a gesture that was meant to represent government's willingness to fulfil the expectations voiced by the protest, and thus its acceptance of alternative frames. However, although rejecting some of the central characteristics of mainstream frames - the normalization of xenophobia and blaming the victims - these developments left the basic mapping unveiled in the paper almost intact, including the attribution of responsibility to 'Europe'. Such a frame was discernible in statements given by the co-organisers of the public manifestation and quoted in news bulletins and press articles, as well as in their publications appearing in the aftermath of the crises (for example Milohnič, 2001).

Moreover, when the 'crisis' was over, mass media soon re-established the same frames of reference. In May 2001, when police again supplied journalists with data on illegal migration, mass media activated similar frames as in early phases of 'illegal migration crisis', with the sole exception that now, the 'crisis' was a matter of the past. This shows that the alternative frames were accepted by mainstream media only when supported already by the central political power structure.

### **Conclusion: The Recurrence of Peripheral Nationalism?**

To summarise, mass media regularly used discourses of balkanism, orientalism (especially frontier orientalism) and occidentalism, and the discourse of peripheral nationalism to frame the issue of both 'illegal migrants' as well as 'Bosnian refugees'. By selectively invoking certain frames appertaining to the realm of symbolic geography, and therefore by (re)positioning Slovenia with regard to different geographical units and collectives such as 'Europe', 'the Balkans', 'East' and 'West', they also played an important role in shaping the political processes, including the legitimization of xenophobic policies and attitudes. For the most part, they uncritically echoed or supported the frames offered by different authoritative institutions, especially the police and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. This was characteristic especially of television news, while alternative frames would most often appear in the

press, especially the non-mainstream print media and those not explicitly conceived as nation-wide media.

In media representations of 'Bosnian refugees' in 1992, 'Europe' mostly figured as unambiguously positive, while Slovenia was positioned inside 'Europe' and sharply divided from 'the Balkans'. Contrary to that, the map drawn by media representations of 'illegal migration' in 2000/2001 pictured 'Europe' (equated with EU), as well as 'the West' in general, in ambiguous tones. Slovenia was now positioned on the outskirts of Europe, as a neither-here-nor-there land caught between 'the East' (including 'the Balkans') and 'the West'. As such, it frequently appeared as an innocent victim of both requirements imposed by the EU as well as the pressure of migration 'from the East'. The latter was itself explained as a phenomenon provoked by 'the West', which attracted the migrants by claiming to follow liberal standards, yet denying them access when they actually arrive. As a future member, obliged to follow the rules set by 'the West', Slovenia was presumably forced to become a 'sanitary cordon' of 'fortress Europe'.

Arguably, the specific mapping arising in media representations of 'illegal migration' is not an unprecedented novum, but resembles the positioning (and thus identification) of the Slovenian nation at various points in its history. Early Slovenian nationalism as formed in the 19th century - national 'awakening' according to nationalist accounts - is close to the ideal type of *peripheral nationalism*. This is a type of nationalism which, according to the typology of nationalism suggested by Michel Hechter (2000), occurs when a culturally distinctive territory resists incorporation into an expanding state, or attempts to secede and set up its own government. Often this type of nationalism is spurred by the very efforts of another type of nationalism, *state-building nationalism*, which is embodied in the attempts to assimilate or incorporate culturally distinctive territories into one state.<sup>2</sup> Slovenian nationalism developed primarily in opposition to - but also, to a large extent, in alliance with - one such state-building efforts, namely the Habsburg Empire (and later mainly the Austrian part of the Empire). However, although perpetuating an ambiguous relationship towards the Habsburg Empire, the central Other against which Slovenian nation was defined was the Ottoman Empire (and later the Turks). Later, the Slovenian nation was reshaped in opposition to other state-building efforts in the region. On the basis of the analysis presented above it can be argued that a similar logic of defining the national identity - against a dominant Ego-image (not necessarily always pictured as positive) on one hand, and against a despised alter-Ego, i.e. an internal Other, as well as an external Other, on the other hand - is reproduced also in recent media discourses. Among functional equivalents of the Habsburg Empire one can list 'Europe' and 'the West', while 'the Balkans' as well as all the competing nationalisms that developed South of Slovenia, occupy the position of the internal other (the despised alter-Ego), and 'the East' receives a position structurally similar to the Ottoman Empire. Such a mapping of nation can easily be used to support policies that foster multiculturalism, as well as to form a position critical of any of the geographical entities and thus political formations involved, including those playing the role of the dominant Ego-image. However, the mapping can also be selectively activated - as in the case of 'illegal migration' - in order to voice criticism, that is in turn used as an instrument for shifting responsibility and as an excuse for one's own xenophobic attitudes and policies.

As the example of media coverage of 'illegal migration' shows, discourses supporting a negative attitude towards 'the West', especially as a part of the discourse of peripheral nationalism, can easily be

reactivated. Therefore, one could expect that when tackling with domestic problems, scapegoating the EU might serve as a ready-made framework for attribution of responsibility in the future as well, especially if the transfer of a part of sovereignty onto the EU will be perceived as a loss rather than gain. Whether and how political actors in Slovenia will recur to the discourse of peripheral nationalism upon Slovenia's accession to the EU, defending 'their people' from 'the foreign state', and whether and to what extent mass media will support the same discourse, remains to be seen.

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<sup>1</sup> Names, labels and phrases commonly appearing in media are among the aspects of media representations analysed further on in the article. In order to distinguish them from analytical categories introduced later, all such common labels are cited in quotation marks.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Hechter appertains to the range of authors who take distinct cultures (and with this nations) as given, or at least do not deal with the question of how these cultural distinctions were formed in the first place, and thus take an importantly different epistemological position compared to the one chosen in the paper. Therefore, his typology is employed with a reservation; rather than seeing it as a typology of nationalisms developed according to the process of their historical formation, it is taken as a typology of nationalist representations of these processes – representations that are in function of geopolitical structures established at the time of the formation of these narratives themselves.

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