METAPHOR CHANGE AND PERSISTENCE: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL METAPHORS IN SLOVENIA AND YUGOSLAVIA

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> *"The greatest thing by far is to be the master of metaphor. It is the one thing that cannot be learned from the others; and it also is a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilarities."*[2]

The aim of the paper is to compare construction metaphors and political discourses, and their trajectories of change in the cases of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Slovenia. The paper examines how the political appeared and functioned through the use of metaphor in Yugoslavia and Slovenia. A repetitive structure of metaphorical thought in both state formations was and is positioned along the axis of building connections/unity versus independence/diversity. In the first section of the paper, five major theoretical considerations relevant to a study of metaphor in political science are considered. In the second section, the paper focuses on construction metaphors of binding/connection, bridge, container and block. It evaluates the role, extension, influence and effectiveness of metaphors in their historical contexts.

Key words: political metaphor; metaphor theory; political discourse; Slovenia; Yugoslavia.

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[2] Aristotle, *Poetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 1459a.

1 Introduction

Construction metaphors have historically played an important role in the political imagination.[3] They have been used in various contexts to generate perceptions and images of politics that have necessarily changed as conceptions of nature and construction have become altered. Politics has usually been viewed as being on the receiving end of the relationship, borrowing imagery and vocabulary from construction. However, some studies[4] have shown that there is a relationship of mutual construction, and that concepts from the natural sciences are themselves affected by political, technological and informational (mental) images and discourses.

In this paper, I aim to investigate the relationship between construction metaphors and political discourses, and their trajectories of change in the cases of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Slovenia. The main question I want to ask in this paper is *how* the political appeared and functioned via metaphor in Yugoslavia and Slovenia. I am *not* interested in contents of the metaphors in various historical periods, in what metaphors mean or in metaphors in general. What I am interested in, however, is how and why a certain view of the political and its components appears in a certain way at certain times, by using certain metaphors. I am interested in how, by uttering and imagining in metaphorical expressions, we impose knowledge of the political on the political.

By way of example, the case of metaphor usage in Yugoslavia and, subsequently, in independent Slovenia will be used. We hope to show that a recurring structure of metaphorical thought (in both state formations) is positioned along the axis of building connections/unity versus independence/diversity. The pattern of political thinking seems to be repetitive; both Yugoslav and Slovenian political discourses show metaphorical political creativity, conceptual use of metaphors to steer public opinion and, in the most tragic consequence, to start wars. It is a story of a new political rhetoric, evoking background images to serve metaphorical purposes, but above all it is a story of real political power and the potential of political metaphors, a story of *how* the political appears and functions via metaphor. We begin by outlining some major theoretical considerations relevant to a study of metaphor in political science, and then move on to focus interpretatively on discovering and recovering the relationship between construction and political metaphors.

2 Political metaphor: main issues

2.1 One: Metaphor just a literary device?

Political metaphors have a long history. One of the most persistent questions about the nature and role of political metaphors has been the distinction between the metaphorical and literal meanings of political concepts. In its 1771 edition, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* states:

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[3] Jan Brochner, "Construction metaphors in Aristotle: knowledge, purpose, process," *Construction Management and Economics*, 27, 5 (2009), 515–523.

[4] E. g. Evelyn Fox Keller, *Refiguring Life: Metaphors of the Twentieth-Century Biology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); Iina Hellsten, *The Politics of Metaphor: Biotechnology and Biodiversity in the Media* (Tampere: University of Tampere, 2002); Dimitris E. Akrivoulis, *The 'Quantum Politics' Metaphor in International Relations: Towards a Hermeneutics of Political Metaphoricity* (Bath: PSA UK Annual Conference, 2007).

Metaphor, in rhetoric, a trope, by which we put a strange word for a proper word, by reason of its resemblance to it; a simile or comparison intended to enforce or illustrate the thing we speak of, without the signs or forms of comparison.[5]

A metaphor can be a number of things. It can simply be a rhetorical device, a figure of speech, a tool in language, a device of poetic imagination or a deviant linguistic expression; in each case, it is a matter of words rather than thought or action, the primary role for which is the depiction of social reality with a word used outside of its usual literal meaning. Alternately, as we have come to know it since the linguistic turn in social sciences and its accompanying linguistic-based methodologies, a metaphor can be considered something 'more' than just an ornament of language.

When seen as a strange word that substitutes for a proper word, several questions appear instantaneously: What is literal and what is metaphorical? Is the distinction between the literal and the metaphorical transcultural and transhistorical? Is the literal supposed to have privileged and direct access to the 'right' meaning of a concept, and the metaphorical only indirect access via the literal? Who defines what the 'right' meaning of the concept is? And, last but not least, what is the 'reality' that language-users so eagerly want their words to describe? What *Weltanschauung* is presupposed by this particular vision of 'the metaphorical'?

The Greek roots of the word 'metaphor' have, however, nothing to do with metaphor as a corrupting device in language. Metaphor, literally meaning 'to carry over', is in the Aristotelian tradition characteristically defined in terms of movement, change with respect to location, mainly indicating movement 'from … to.'[6] Aristotle applies the word 'metaphor' to every transposition in terms. We could suppose, therefore, that metaphor is a kind of borrowing, that borrowed meaning is contrasted with 'proper' meaning, that one resorts to metaphors to fill a semantic void and that a borrowed word takes the place of an absent proper word where such a place exists.[7]

But no such thing occurs. Metaphors may disturb an already established logical order of language where transposition operates, but this does not mean that metaphors have an ontologically creative function in the Aristotelian tradition. Since the transposition operates within this established order, metaphors do not bring a new order upon an already established one. Aristotle's process of *epiphora* (movement from … to) rests on a perception of resemblance, established ontologically prior to metaphor itself. Metaphors merely add meanings, fill semantic voids and substitute where necessary, but they do not have a creative function. Aristotle's ontological assumption is that language is transparent to reality and that metaphors are operating within this already established order.

The classical perception of metaphor as having a merely substitutive function was challenged by Max Black in the seminal 1962 study *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*.[8] According to Black,

[5] Charles A. Miller, *Ship of State: The Nautical Metaphors of Thomas Jefferson* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2003), 3.
[6] Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 17.
[7] Ibid., 17–18.
[8] Max Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962).

metaphor does more than just substitute for a literal term[9], in particular when a speaker chooses to replace it with another expression different from a supposed 'normal', 'proper' meaning. Mere substitution introduces no new information and has therefore no cognitive function. Black's 'interaction view' of metaphor, on the other hand, goes beyond a merely decorative function for metaphor. It emphasises cognitive function by stressing re-organisation and transformation of the original term. Metaphor operates by describing one phenomenon in terms of the other. In doing so, it evokes re-organisation of meanings in both domains, and reciprocity of impact.

Metaphor also has a function of depicting certain views as prominent by emphasising some details and de-emphasising others. As such, it functions almost like a pair of tinted glasses, through which a re-organisation of the observed object is viewed. Successful metaphor establishes a privileged perspective on the object and thus becomes normalised; in so doing, it disappears as metaphor.[10]

In both the classical and the interaction view of metaphor, reality is seen as ontologically objective. It is considered to be something lying outside of a narrative that relates descriptively to the world, which is itself beyond the reach of discursive structures and is ontologically foundational. Although the interaction view of metaphor does allow for some details to be emphasised and others to be omitted, this does not mean that thought is considered to be ontologically prior to reality; rather, thought is viewed as taking a posterior position and is therefore *dependent* upon reality, reflecting it. Reality is thus an objective entity not susceptible to the creative power of thought. Putnam has criticised this position at length as a common philosophical error, because it presumes that reality is one single super-thing, whereas an examination of the ways in which we endlessly renegotiate reality, as our language and life develop, leads to quite another philosophically significant conclusion.[11]

Putnam's argument (and similar arguments by other constructivists) can be developed even further, since the question of the nature of reality is also a question about the privileged position of those who define reality through speaking and acting; a question of who is authorised to speak and act and in what way; and a question about 'regimes of truth', knowledgeable practices, emotional states of utterances and so forth. In short, it is a question about the creative and constitutive power and potential that creates the world in an ontological sense. Shapiro, for example, echoes the tradition of social theory after the linguistic turn by arguing 'that there are no "things" that have meaning apart from the human practices that are implicit in what we regard as things and that our discursive practices are vehicles for the production of subjects and objects that participate in what are generally regarded as forms of knowledge.'[12]

[9] Elliot Zashin and Philip C. Chapman, "The Uses of Metaphor and Analogy: Toward a Renewal of Political Language," *The Journal of Politics,* 36 (1974), 296–297; Paul Ricouer, *The Rule of Metaphor* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 83–90; Sabine Maasen, "Who is Afraid of Metaphors?," in *Biology as Society, Society as Biology: Metaphors*, eds. Sabine Maasen, Everett Mendelsohn and Peter Weingart (Dodrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1995), 14–15.

[10] Sabine Maasen, "Who is Afraid of Metaphors?," in *Biology as Society, Society as Biology: Metaphors*, eds. Sabine Maasen, Everett Mendelsohn and Peter Weingart (Dodrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1995), 14–15.

[11] Hilary Putnam, "Sense, Nonsense and the Senses: An Inquiry into the Powers of the Human Mind", *The Journal of Philosophy*, 91 (1994), 452.

[12] Michael J. Shapiro, "Metaphor in the Philosophy of the Social Sciences", *Culture and Critique,* 2, (1985–86), 193–194.

2.2 Two: Ontologically creative function of metaphors

Metaphors can therefore perform functions other than just corrupting language. They are also creative of the world and reality. This does not, however, mean that there must be an unequivocal, linear or singular relationship between the language and the world. Social theory and twentieth-century social science methodologies have offered numerous insights and solutions for this question; most post-positivist theories reject the notion that writing and thinking are transparent activities[13] performed by historically and socially 'cleansed' or 'disembedded' subjects. Non-empirical and non-positivist political studies rely heavily on the narrative form of explanation, thereby rejecting the view of language as literal, static and intersubjectively and transhistorically uniform. They argue instead for a multifaceted view of language that includes paradoxes and antitheses as *constructive* elements of the world-creating process.[14] Incoherence in language may thus lead to coherence in reality, if coherence in the form of an 'objective' explanation can be established, as post-positivist methodologies would predict.

The way we organise our perceptions of the world (and the world itself) is very much dependent upon the ways through which we form knowledge about the world. These may be called traditions, cultures, discourses or epistemic realities, the key point being that knowledge is dependent upon the structures that govern its production. Metaphors are therefore dependent upon the same structures, functioning in this respect as myths, rendering the unintelligible intelligible and the non-empirical empirical. It is through metaphor that the abstract field of 'the political' *becomes* empirical as a matter of reality, and thus becomes a world that political science can purport to explain.

If we look upon metaphors in the classical sense of 'carrying over' together with these new, post-positivist methodological insights, metaphor becomes the bridge, the concept that connects the unconnected or the concept whose mission is to bridge the unbridgeable gap between words and reality. As such, metaphor is exercising its liberating potential to free 'the political' (and not just political science) from conceiving of the relationship between words and reality in positivist, linear or singular terms. Thus, in meta-metaphorical terms, metaphor defies the logical relation of self-identity (which, in any case, implies the possibility of literal, i.e. non-metaphorical, thought).

Thought processes that create the world are irreducibly metaphorical in their structure; the world is rendered intelligible through metaphor.[15] Political metaphors are manifestations of these thought processes, through which the political world and its processes become intelligible. In this way, metaphors inscribe meanings and produce political realities that stretch the limits of our imaginations.

This poetic function of metaphor presents a potential for construction and creativity in politics and political science. It is closely connected with the transference of meanings from one domain to the other. As such it is a

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[13] Thinking as a transparent activity is itself based on a metaphor of language as a tool, something that directly translates inputs coming to the senses from the 'outside' world into linguistic outputs 'about' that world.

[14] Elliot Zashin and Philip C. Chapman, "The Uses of Metaphor and Analogy: Toward a Renewal of Political Language," *The Journal of Politics,* 36 (1974), 294.

[15] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980/2003).

challenge as well as a potential avenue for the transformation of meanings across any number of domains. One result of these processes may be that grids of intelligibility themselves become unstable, requiring a re-articulation of knowledge and identity not just epistemically, but also ontologically.

2.3 Three: Contextualisation of metaphors

Isolated statements or utterances are the usual units of metaphorical analysis for cognitive linguists. This is also the path that most analysts of political metaphors have taken. That approach is somewhat problematic for political scientists, because it fails to take into account the wider contexts of statements and discourses and the circumstances of their production.[16] Social and political contexts play a major role in how the metaphors of political science are defined, how they function and what their meanings are. Analysing the contextual embeddedness of a text is a necessary, though not completely satisfactory, way to analyse its metaphors. The contingency of historical contexts should be taken into account in order to situate metaphors within political, social and scientific relations of power. Since contexts are texts as well, they should not be objectified as if they had an ontological foundation prior to and independent of texts themselves. Metaphors develop their meanings in this interplay of texts and contexts, albeit not by means of a linear causality between the two.

The principal weakness of analysing metaphors in text-context hermeneutical fashion is the neglect for power relations and institutions that structure the context in question. The aim of research related to metaphors in political sciences (and social sciences in general) should be to locate metaphors in wider contexts, beyond mere statements and their meanings. We should be interested in discursive relations and epistemic realities that permit or forbid the emergence of political metaphors and, consequently, metaphorically-induced knowledge of the political. The analysis should question the *mode* of existence of political metaphors – what it means for them to have appeared when and where they did. They and not the others.

Research of political metaphors should strive to determine the methods and efforts necessary to stabilize and fix dominant meanings with metaphors. Current studies should also aim to identify how knowledge of the political (problem, system, etc.) was structured and changed through the use of metaphor, as well as how knowledge was ordered and 'othered' due to metaphors. Grids of intelligibility in a given discourse (e.g. political discourse) are inherently unstable, requiring constant and repeated re-articulation of knowledge and identity. Intelligibility through 'regime of truth' is not done once and for all; rather, historical transformations and discontinuities are regular. Historical contexts are contingent, and authorised speakers are required to produce and reproduce knowledge in order to maintain it. This requires them to be situated in wider epistemic realities. In short, the analysis of metaphors in political science should be about what metaphors *do* to the systems of representation and meaning, and *how* they do it.

Metaphors are not ontologically prior to historical contexts or discourses as 'regimes of truth'. They are not external to historical contexts, instead emerging in the very field of the battle for meaning, and playing their roles. They signify the political, and order and reorder it. Their specific potential is

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[16] Veronique Mottier, "Metaphors, Mini-Narratives and Foucauldian Discourse Theory," in *Political Language and Metaphor: Interpreting and Changing the World*, eds. Terrell Carver and Jernej Pikalo (London: Routledge, 2008), 182–194.

in their poetic power, in their innovative potential, in their bridging power and in their structuring as usually partial, not total, standing for a laboriously fixed and normalised concept, also referred to as dead metaphor.

Metaphors as narratives are spelled out only against tacit knowledge of the audience. Without tacit knowledge, metaphors have none of their cognitive functions. The knowledge is usually informed by the political, historical or social context of the audience. Contexts include several texts, each of which can give the text (i.e. metaphor) a different meaning. Contexts are contingent and therefore open for change. The mode of being of metaphor is established in the interplay between texts and contexts, authors and their intentions, and wider historical and linguistic contexts. Bevir's position of weak intentionalism in the approach to the study of history of political ideas is important because it emphasises the possibility of authorial innovations through procedural individualism.[17] Bevir is not siding with either of the two sides of the Cambridge School – contextualists and conventionalists – instead arguing for weak intentionalism, whereby one does not limit explanation of meaning to the field of unsubjective intention coming from the context (as so-called strong intentionalism does). Weak intentionalism argues for research that looks into meanings of political ideas for specific individuals and not in general, with specific individuals comprising both readers and authors. In analysis of political metaphors, this means that the researcher must look into individual usages and meanings of metaphors for authors as their cognitive schemes.

2.4 Four: The role of audience(s)

The role of the reader/audience in the process of the decoding of meaning is largely neglected in the Cambridge School. Readers, each with their own tacit knowledge structures and cognitive schemata, are important elements in the analysis of historical and contemporary political metaphors. Double hermeneutics, whereby a researcher (i.e. reader) also questions and takes into account his or her cognitive structures and tacit contextual knowledge during an analysis of someone else's text, is essential in researching metaphors.

Which metaphors will come into play and become dominant is dependent not only upon discursive, but also non-discursive backgrounds. Foucault has described non-discursive background in terms of 'an institutional field, a set of events, practices and political decisions, a sequence of economic processes that involve demographic fluctuations, techniques of public assistance, manpower needs, different levels of unemployment, etc.'[18] Discourses in themselves cannot force; instead, they acquire force through their influence on human actors in the form of research agendas, funding opportunities, political issues, arising social questions, vogue, ... The success of metaphors as cognitive schemata, which organize our world, is dependent upon discursive and non-discursive factors. Contextual research of metaphors should thus take both into account.

Non-discursive background is central for determining the meaning of metaphors for the audience/reader. Ethos, pathos and logos are components of an argument in classic Aristotelian rhetoric, but are far from enough to determine the meaning of a metaphor. Meaning is not given by ethos, logos and pathos, but is rather negotiated in the process of meaning creation

[17] Mark Bevir, *The Logic of the History of Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
[18] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1972), 157.

between interlocutor and audience. By employing political metaphor one does not just convince the audience/reader about the appropriateness of seeing an issue in certain way, but is also structuring it. As a result, the process of meaning determination and meaning creation is mutually productive.

2.5 Five: Metaphor effectiveness

Not all metaphors are equally effective. Their effectiveness depends on shared social conventions, on the authority granted to those that use it and on shared dominant background knowledge. A 'wrong' metaphor in the 'wrong' time period has no effect, and not all metaphors have the same productive effects. With the example of the process of fertilization, Fox Keller has effectively demonstrated how a change in the ideology of gender has prompted a change in the use of metaphors of biological fertilization.[19]

3 BRIDGES OF MY COUNT(R)Y: FROM BROTHERHOOD AND UNITY TO INDEPENDENCE TO BRIDGES

Political metaphors are products of their time. The knowledge about 'the political' that they produce, and the production of knowledge about them, are both embedded in the epistemic frame of an epoch. Thinking about 'the political' is informed and structured by metaphors included in various discourses. The transfer of meanings and imagery from these discourses enables the poetic function of metaphor to work, and creativity and innovation can thus take place.

This part of my paper has several purposes: to identify metaphors governing political discourse in the Socialist Yugoslavia and subsequently in the Slovenian political usage, to discuss their sources and to show the contextual embeddedness of metaphors. I argue that metaphors are not just rhetorical devices, but rather serve as imagery for thought processes. The locus of metaphor is not language, but thought. Metaphors (present or dead) are ways of conceptualising the world and our (political) behaviour. They are ontologically creative and constitutive for political realities. Most of the metaphors as structures of thought are 'silent' or even 'dead' metaphors – they are not present in the political language as a language element, but rather as ways of thinking. For most of the most prominent political metaphors – such as 'branches of government' or 'political system', for example – most people do not even notice that they are dealing with metaphors. Such metaphors have been normalised to an extent that they structure the only view and knowledge people have about these issues.

Narratives, images, symbolism and thinking in day-to-day post-1945 Yugoslavia used to be ideologically structured around the axis of building connections, unity and brotherhood versus independence and diversity.[20] There were times in the 45-year history of Yugoslavia when a particular

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[19] Evelyn Fox Keller, *Refiguring Life: Metaphors of the Twentieth-Century Biology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), xiii.

[20] This axis is not there just since 1945, but since a very long time. For the Ottomans, as well as Western colonial cultures, the Balkans is the BRIDGE between the East and the West. The metaphor was immortalised in Ivo Andrić's *The Bridge on the Drina*, where transformation from a BRIDGE as a connection of two sides to a WALL as separation occurs. For Todorova the BRIDGE metaphor is central for understanding the Balkans' position between the East and the West, a position that Todorova calls »in-betweenness«. Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). See also Dušan I. Bijelić, "*Introduction: Blowing Up the 'Bridge',"* in *Balkan as Metaphor*, eds. Dušan I. Bijelić and Obrad Savić (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 16.

ideology or imagery was stronger and other times when it was weaker. In political terms, this meant either stronger centralistic and unionist tendencies, or more federative or even confederative ideals in favour of constitutive republics. The prevailing structure oscillated between the two, with each side prevailing at different times. The ideological and metaphorical structure came to an end with President's Tito death, when the processes of independence and diversity started to grow stronger by the day until Yugoslavia fell apart in 1991.

In terms of metaphorical structure of political ideas the axis could be described as a constant tension between CONTAINER and BINDING/CONNECTION.

The concept of CONTAINER metaphor is well known in literature on political metaphors.[21] It functions by way of identity building, by setting up identity borders and by 'othering'. By employing metaphors, 'we experience ourselves as entities, separate from the rest of the world – CONTAINERS with an inside and outside. We also experience things external to us as entities – often also CONTAINERS with insides and outsides. [...] And when things have no distinct boundaries, we often project boundaries upon them - conceptualizing them as entities and often as containers.'[22]

Since 1945, the official ideology of Yugoslavia was brotherhood and unity.[23] Yugoslavia was a multi-national society with a history of violent (political) conflicts between nations even before 1945. Nationalistic tensions had been a source of major political disputes in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians, so it is not surprising that one of the goals of the new post-WWII politics was to try to overcome these rivalries with new ethnic policies. A new socialist political system also had, *inter alia*, a goal of overcoming ethnic and national tensions by masking and replacing them with new socialist economic and political policies. The ideology of brotherhood and unity was the most direct expression of this approach to ethnic relations. On the ground, this meant voluntary work brigades of young people rebuilding Yugoslavia in the 1950s and 1960s (mainly involving roads, bridges and train lines, but also work in the fields). Youth from all republics worked together on common assignments. The goal was to rebuild the war-torn country and to get the socialist economy running through voluntary work. The work brigades also had a function of deepening mutual understanding among the youth and extending socialist ideology. In so doing, brotherhood and unity among individuals and nations was strengthened. 'Štafeta mladosti', a relay run of youth throughout Yugoslavia that lasted several months and finished on Tito's birthday, with celebrations at an athletic stadium in Belgrade, was another way of metaphorically strengthening the values of brotherhood and unity. As such, towns, villages and cities in the country were invisibly and metaphorically linked to each other by a passing torch, whose journey culminated at the all-Yugoslav celebration on Tito's birthday. The concept of brotherhood and unity also meant that the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) had, in addition to its security function, an ideological function of being a

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[21] For a pioneering article on conceptual metaphors that also deals with CONTAINER metaphor, see George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, "Conceptual Metaphor in Everyday Language," *The Journal of Philosophy*, 77, 8 (1980), 45 –486.
[22] Ibid., 477.
[23] Among numerous works that deal with the history of Yugoslavia, see Leslie Benson, *Yugoslavia: A Concise History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001); Sabrina P. Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia, 1962–1991* (Bloomingdale: Indiana University Press, 1992); Lenard J. Cohen, *Broken Bonds: Yugoslavia's Disintegration and Balkan Politics in Transition* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995).

guardian of the brotherhood and unity project. The underlying metaphorical structure of this ideological operation was building BINDING/CONNECTION.

At times, however, another mental political structure prevailed that could be identified with the CONTAINER metaphor. In the years post-1945, when national and nationalistic forces were at their strongest (for example, in the seventies with economic liberalism, or in the eighties after Tito's death), republics were increasingly open, seen as CONTAINERS in terms of economy culture, linguistics, ethnicity, nationalism, security and wealth. It meant they were guardians of these various peculiarities and, politically, this meant that they were playing against each other, certainly not in keeping with the sense of brotherhood and unity. Thus, they each had the idea of retaining what was theirs, making increasingly visible distinctions between 'us and them', shielding their citizens from other republics or even the JNA by not sending their recruits to other republics to serve in the JNA, and by increasingly employing their national languages in the federal assembly (their constitutional right, though not always exercised). There was a constant tension between these two metaphorical thought structures.

In the interplay between the BINDING/CONNECTION and CONTAINER metaphors, we may say how effectively metaphor can depict certain views as prominent – by emphasising certain details and de-emphasising others. Depending on the historical decade in Yugoslav history, one metaphor or the other was successful in establishing the privileged perspective on political reality, thus rendering it normal at that time.

Remarkably, one can see that the pattern of political thought is being repeated in one of the successor republics of Yugoslavia. The underlying mental structure of Slovenian politics is in many ways similar to that of Yugoslavia, including tension between CONTAINER and BINDING/CONNECTION. In Slovenia's case, CONTAINERS are replaced by BLOCKS or PILLARS of society, while BINDINGS/CONNECTIONS are replaced by BRIDGES.

Slovenia is a pluralistic society with a number of political cultures functioning as the PILLARS of society.[24] The Catholic political culture or BLOCK is the most cohesive and organized societal segment, followed by the socialist and the liberal blocs. Members of the Catholic PILLAR are located mostly on the periphery, while members of the liberal and socialist PILLARS tend to be found in urban centres. The first two BLOCKS operate in a much more corporative manner than the liberal BLOCKS.

Slovenian political culture contains strong elements of corporatism. A living being that organizes all the main concepts of the body politic and determines political behaviour is the best metaphor for corporate political behaviour. According to this concept, the state, politics and society are not and cannot be separated. It is because of the tradition of corporatism that the self-management system in its various ideological forms gained so much credence in Slovenia. The fundamental objective of the corporative culture is the survival of the nation because only through the survival of the nation can the lower or sub-communities survive and, indirectly, the individual as well.

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[24] See Igor Lukšič, *Politična kultura: Političnost morale* (Ljubljana: Faculty of social sciences, 2006); Igor Lukšič, "Corporatism packaged in pluralist ideology: the case of Slovenia," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies,* 36, (2003), 509–525.

In the pluralist Slovenia of the nineties, the three vying camps of political culture formed even more prominent blocs than they had in the last fifty years of socialism.

The Catholic bloc established its own political party along with many new interest groups. It founded a daily newspaper, Slovenec (The Slovenian) along with its own radio and television programs. It has also established a grammar school, several kindergartens and has made attempts to penetrate the public school system. The arena of political parties is split on the dividing line between Catholic and non-Catholic; this line is most prominent in the case of the two social-democratic parties, Social Democrats and Slovenian Democratic Party, one being Catholic and the other non-Catholic. Indeed, every fundamental doctrine with which major Slovenian parties identify themselves is split by Catholicism. Nevertheless, the Catholic bloc does not operate as a single political entity.

The socialist bloc is not as well structured as its Catholic counterpart. In contrast, it is organized politically under Social Democrats, who have close ties to the biggest trade union organization. The socialist bloc has no other interest groups or associations, and therefore functions primarily according to the voluntary initiatives of various individuals and groups. In the same way that the Catholic bloc is divided into factions, so too are adherents of the Socialist bloc scattered among a number of political parties, namely the Christian Socialists, Social Democrats, the Liberal Democratic Party, the Pensioners' Party and the Slovene National Party. This political bloc became somewhat demoralized in the 1990s and, as a result, often seemed weak.

The liberal bloc has the weakest organizational structure of all. However, throughout the nineties, up until the 2004 general elections, it hardly needed a cohesive organization, since liberal ideas under the system of the market economy and liberal democracy were a hegemonic ideology. Politically, the liberal bloc is organized under the Liberal Democracy Party.

The fear that one of the political blocs would, through totalitarian means, overcome the other blocs or pillars of Slovenian political cultures faded towards the end of the nineties. The success of grand political coalitions on the one hand, and the political failure of one-bloc coalitions on the other, served to diminish this fear. The success of grand coalitions revealed that old models of intolerance and unwillingness to cooperate, and of forcing whole political movements out of public life, enjoys no support in Slovenian politics.

The fear that one block would overcome the other began fading with the 1996 elections. At the time, it was clear that one-block coalitions did not enjoy the support of the people. People were fed up with politicking across the Catholic-Socialist divide. Opinion polls showed that the electorate was looking for moderate political parties that would be able to cross the deep-running historical and political cleavages.[25]

The Slovenian People's Party (SPP) was, after independence, one of the first political parties to re-establish its operations. It was founded at the beginning of the 20th century and was prohibited from working between 1945-1989.[26] After 1990, it positioned itself as a moderate right wing party and was part of

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[25] See Ali H. Žerdin. *Apokalipsa politične krize.* Available at http://www.mladina.si/92312/apokalipsa-politicne-krize (28 May 2012).
[26] Marjan Brezovšek, Miro Haček and Milan Zver, *Democratic Praxis in Slovenia* (Plzen: Aleš Čenek Publishing, 2007), 134. For a comprehensive overview of genealogy of political parties in Slovenia, see Danica Fink-Hafner, *Politične stranke* (Ljubljana: Faculty of social sciences, 2001).

the Catholic block. In the elections of the 1990s, it was not particularly successful, so when a new generation of politicians took over in the mid-1990s, they changed their political strategy. They aimed to be more of a centre-right political party than any other, and also saw that the key to electoral success is bridging the divide between left and right. In the preparations for the 1996 elections, and in line with advice from the opinion pollsters and political strategists, the party developed the metaphor of a BRIDGE as a way of metaphorically creating a new political reality. BRIDGE in their policy proposals mainly meant bridging the gap between left and right, working together, getting rid of the BLOCK structure of Slovenian politics, joining forces, bridging bridges and so forth.[27] By employing this metaphor, they became the second-largest party at the 1996 elections with nearly a 20% share of the seats in the parliament.[28]

When we analyse the use of the BRIDGE metaphor, we see that it was not only used as a literary device, as the stand-in for another word, but that it had creative potential. By employing it, the strategists and politicians of the SPP were able to ontologically create a new understanding of the political space in Slovenia. No longer was political space described as consisting of two BLOCKS, but there was instead a BRIDGE that connected those two BLOCKS. Beforehand, politics had been about playing against each other, and now a new and bold vision was to connect. For the SPP, which had not played a role of the hegemon in any of the BLOCKS, being a BRIDGE meant acquiring a new (ontologically creative) role in Slovenian politics. Consequently, the SPP invented a new position and role in Slovenian politics, which in turn led to electoral success.

Contextualisation and analysis of non-discursive background is essential for understanding the success and effectiveness of this metaphor. Metaphor appeared at exactly the right time, when the older generation of SPP politicians had left the political scene. They were, in comparison with the new generation, more entrenched in the block position. The new generation needed something to differentiate itself from the older one, and the metaphor provided an ideal opportunity. This metaphor also proved successful because the electorate in a newly established democracy was fed up with political in-fighting and petty bickering from both the left and right. The polls at the time showed that they preferred a political party with moderate ideas and the ability to co-operate with both sides of the political spectrum. In this sense, the new metaphor performed its integrative function, not just within the party, but also across the political space.

The BRIDGE metaphor also had its distortive function. One of the policies of the SPP was to be nationalistic in terms of defending disputed territories in the unresolved border issue with neighbouring Croatia.[29] As they were building bridges on the inside, they were trying to tear down or at least limit the chance of passage for those existing to the outside.[30] The electorate

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[27] Later this strategic position would be taken by Borut Pahor of Social Democrats. See Ali H. Žerdin. *Pahor gre v center.* Available at http://www.mladina.si/94907/pahor-gre-v-center (28 May 2012).
[28] See *Decision – Making by Citizens.* Available at http://volitve.gov.si/en/index.html (27 May 2012).
[29] SPP has politically used best the new »orientalist paradigm« that attained a hegemonic position in Slovenian political rhetoric towards former Yugoslavia. See review of statements of Slovene intellectuals in Milica Bakic-Hayden and Robert M. Hayden, "Orientalist Variations on the Theme 'Balkans': Symbolic Geography in Recent Yugoslav Cultural Politics," *Slavic Review,* 51, 1 (1992), 1–15. See also Patrick Hyder Patterson, "On the Edge of Reason: The Boundaries of Balkanism in Slovenian, Austrian, and Italian Discourse," *Slavic Review,* 62, 1 (2003), 110–141.
[30] See analysis of Slovenian identity building through differentiation with the Balkans by Lene Hansen, "Slovenian Identity: State-Building on the Balkan Border," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political,* 21, 4 (1996), 473–495.

welcomed such positions throughout the 1990s and 2000s[31], their idea being that Slovenia would not give up 'its' parts of the disputed land and access to the sea, and was ready to block Croatia in their negotiations to join the European Union.[32] During those two decades, there were several very tense periods, usually around election times. By constructing political tension, the right hoped to mobilize nationalistic sentiments before elections. Usually, the story would revolve around a disputed house on the border with Croatia, where a Slovenian citizen had first to cross Slovenian customs and passport control, then pass a small bridge across the bordering river and finally go through Croatian customs and passport control just to be able to reach their home. Underneath the old stone bridge, the bordering river Dragonja barely flows, and the SPP was of the opinion that a Slovenian citizen does not need to report to the Croatian authorities for customs and passport checks, and is able to bring home any goods he likes duty-free.

Several political manifestations were held on the border bridge, usually before the elections, all led by the leaders of SPP or its prominent members. The last time the SPP organised political rally there was on the 22nd September 2004, just before the general elections. Protests turned mildly violent and police from both sides intervened, taking care not to clash with each other. This caused a general panic in which the president of the SPP fell from the bridge into the river.[33] causing a minor injury to his arm. Was this irony or poetic justice? In any case, on this bridge, the story and political potential of the BRIDGE metaphor ended.

4 CONCLUSION

In this article, we wanted to show the recurring structure of metaphorical thought in the former Yugoslavia and Slovenia. The pattern of political thinking seems to be both integrative and disintegrative in both countries, depending on the historical era. Comparatively speaking, the two political discourses more or less successfully employed different political metaphors with the same functions for structuring of the political reality. The success and effectiveness of the metaphors was dependent upon the background of historical, political and societal conditions.

The comparative analysis of Yugoslav and Slovenian political metaphors shows their ontologically creative potential. Politicians and political strategists were able to ontologically (re)create new understandings of political spaces and politics by employing metaphors such as BINDING/CONNECTION, BRIDGE, CONTAINER, or BLOCK. In terms of the structure of political thought, all of them used similar linguistic and political strategies for attaining similar results, albeit at very different levels and under different historical circumstances. The integrative versus disintegrative function of politics seems to have been a major concern in multi-national and multi-ethnic Yugoslavia, and multi-party Slovenia. An intriguing question for political

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[31] SPP got second largest share of votes at the 1996 general elections with 19,38% of votes, at the 2000 general elections it was 4th with 9,54% of votes, and won 11,38% at the 1998 local elections. For more detailed results see See *Decision – Making by Citizens*. Available at http://volitve.gov.si/en/index.html (27 May 2012).

[32] The issue was not resolved until the »Pahor-Kosor« Agreement in 2009. For a history of negotiations between Slovenia and Croatia on the border issue, see Vasilka Sancin, "Slovenia-Croatia Border Dispute: From »Drnovšek-Račan« to »Pahor-Kosor« Agreement," *European Perspectives – Journal on European Perspectives of the Western Balkans*, 2, 2 (2010), 93–111.

[33] See Ali H. Žerdin. *Zdrs nekdanjega graditelja mostov*. Dnevnik, 10 March 2007. Available at http://moj.dnevnik.si/objektiv/233178 (28 May 2012).

comparativists is whether these patterns of political thinking can also be found and applied in other political entities.

In researching the effectiveness of either of the metaphors in a comparative perspective, one must take into account the role of the audiences. Underlying metaphorical thought structure may be similar, but if metaphors do not evoke background imagery shared by the audiences, they will fail to achieve their goal. Being sensitive to the historical, societal or political backgrounds of audiences is therefore of prime importance.

The case presented is a story of the real political power and potential of political metaphors. Metaphors allow language to free itself from the function of direct description and to set up a contingent relationship between words and reality. As such, imagination is freed from the constraints of objectivism, and new creations of the world can occur. The relationship between metaphors and objects is then a reciprocal construction; in other words, to say it with a metaphor, metaphors are the prose of the world we create in their image.

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