RESEARCH ON MIGRATION IN SLOVENIAN MEDIA: THE "OTHER" IN THE PERIOD OF "CRISIS"

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ABSTRACT

The article presents the results of the first systematic literature review on migration in Slovenian media from the perspective of the hybrid media system. The mass media coverage of refugees and migrants is determined by the process of construction of the "other" in the Slovenian society. Stereotypical negative reporting prevails, portraying refugees and migrants as a security and cultural threat. The social media research notes the prevalence of an extremely xenophobic and racist discourse tacitly supported by the political elite and serving as a legitimisation for the government's security policy.

Keywords: refugees, migrants, mass media, social media, hybrid media system, crisis

IL TEMA DELLE MIGRAZIONI NEI MEDIA SLOVENI: «GLI ALTRI» NEL PERIODO DI «CRISI»

SINTESI

Il contributo presenta i risultati della prima disamina sistematica della letteratura sulla copertura informativa del tema delle migrazioni dal punto di vista del sistema mediale ibrido. La cronaca sui rifugiati e migranti determina il processo della costruzione de «l'altro» nella società slovena. Prevale la cronaca stereotipata e negativa che presenta i rifugiati e i migranti come una minaccia alla sicurezza e alla cultura. Le indagini sui social rilevano la prevalenza di un discorso altamente xenofobico e razzista, che gode del tacito sostegno dell'élite politica e funge da legittimatore delle misure securitarie del governo.

Parole chiave: rifugiati, migranti, mass media, social media, sistema mediale ibrido, crisi

INTRODUCTION

"Migration in the media" and "media in migration" are two research directions within the broader field of media and migration studies (Wood & King, 2001; Pogliano, 2017). While the field of "migration in the media" is generally characterised by the examination of media representations of refugees and migrants[1] in the mass media and social media, the field of "media in migration" mostly takes into consideration ethnographic and anthropological research on the use of new media technologies in the migration process (Pogliano, 2017). The first field is dominated by the finding that mass media most often portrays refugees and migrants as the "other", "criminals" and "undesirables" (Wood & King, 2001; Consterdine, 2018; Eberl et al., 2018). However, the fundamental contribution of the second field is that new media technologies are a significant factor in the integration of refugees and migrants into the environment of the destination country (Redecker et al., 2010; Laanpere et al., 2011). In addition, contemporary digital technologies (e.g., smartphones) have an ambivalent role in the migration process. On the one hand, they are an important means through which refugees and migrants obtain information on their way to destination countries, but on the other hand, they jeopardise their status by recording activities (e.g., stops, movements, communication with others) and thus exposing them to state surveillance (Zavratnik & Cukut Krilić, 2018, 2020).

In this article,[2] I do not discuss "media in migration",[3] but "migration in the media" in the period 1991–2020 in Slovenia. Namely, I present the results of the first systematic literature review on migration in the Slovenian media from the "hybrid media system" perspective (Chadwick, 2013). I intend to shed light on a relatively well-established research field in Slovenia that has not yet been systematically and comprehensively reflected on.

The hybrid media system perspective, a framework I applied in the present research, is defined as the broadest empirical framework for understanding the contemporary media landscape. Its key element is the online digital context, which dictates the forms of intertwining "old" and "new" media institutions, practices, and content. In other words, the hybrid media system is defined by the interaction of mass media and social media. Mass media refers to traditional mass media and their news content, while social media refers to "new" media platforms determined by user-generated content.[4]

Numerous studies in the field of "migration in the media" have confirmed that mass media and social media have a significant role in shaping citizens' attitudes towards refugees and migrants. Both types of media normalise and reproduce the selection and hierarchy of key issues in the public sphere and influence their understanding (Chauzy & Appave, 2014; Consterdine, 2018; Eberl et al., 2018).

The roles of mass media and social media in shaping citizens' attitudes towards refugees and migrants are also important because most European citizens are not in direct contact with refugees and migrants. Media representations of them are thus their primary sources of information about refugees and migrants. For example, in one of the first Slovenian studies on migration in the media (Doupona et al., 1998 [2001], 16), it was observed that although the presence of Bosnian refugees had been relatively strong in the Slovenian public consciousness in the 1990s, few citizens had had personal contacts with them. Furthermore, Kogovšek Šalamon & Bajt (2016, 9) noted, in the context of the 2015–2016 refugee crisis, that the majority of the Slovenian population would not have even known that refugees and migrants had come to Slovenia if they had not been reported on by the media.

The above observations confirm the significance of addressing migration through the analysis of media content. Although media discourse is not the only one and independent of other discourses that generate the context of political consensus in the public sphere, it is the leading creator of the general framework that determines attitudes towards marginalised groups (Jalušič, 2001 [2002], 14). In the contemporary social context, mediated reality matters much more than any other form of reality (Strömbäck, 2008, 239), especially in the case of deprived social groups with whom the dominant society is not usually in direct contact (Medica, 2017, 79). Due to the central role of the media in shaping public attitudes towards the migrant issues, the question also arises whether the media discourse represents the migrant issues autonomously or is it just a "mouthpiece of political parties or other powerful groups" (Wood & King, 2001, 2). Who controls the dominant public image of a refugee and migrant in a hybrid media system?

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1   I do not distinguish between the terms "refugee" and "migrant". I use them interchangeably to refer to all persons traveling, regardless of the reason for departure or arrival. Introducing more neutral hypernym into the discussion, e.g., "people on the move" (King, 2010), seems awkward and unfitting, given the studies in focus use the terms "refugee" and "migrant". On the other hand, I reveal the implicit ideological assumptions of the established labels for travellers in the prevailing media discourse.

2   This research work was conducted as part of the research programme Problems of Autonomy and Identities at the Time of Globalisation P6-0194 (funded by the Slovenian Research Agency) and as part of the activites funded by the eng. Milan Lenarčič University Foundation. I express my gratitude to Roman Kuhar for his comments on an earlier version of this article.

3   For examples of Slovenian studies on "media in migration", see Erjavec, 2015; Zavratnik & Cukut Krilić, 2018; 2020; Perner & Zavratnik, 2019; Lenarčič, 2020.

4   When I use the term "media" without adjectives, I refer to both mass media and social media.

The article is divided into four sections. First, I focus on the general features of Slovenian research dynamics in the field of "migration in the media" in the period 1991–2020. I define the principal object of the analysis, the frequency of occurrence of the studies, the predominant sample and method, and some other peculiarities in the research dynamics Although the Slovenian research context is in focus, in some cases, I highlight the similarities or differences with broader European research trends. In the second section, I address the constants and changes in the media representations of refugees and migrants in mass media, and in the third section, I do likewise in the area of social media. In both sections, I also answer the question of whose discourse is privileged by the contemporary media. In the concluding section, I reflect on the main findings and clarify further research perspectives.

GENERAL FEATURES OF THE FIELD

Object of analysis

The principal object of the analysis in the research field of "migration in the media" in Slovenia is one of the three mass arrivals of refugees and migrants in Slovenia in the periods 1992–1993, 1999–2001, and 2015–2016.[5] In the prevailing media and political discourse, these arrivals were labelled by the ideological term "crisis" (Žagar, 2018, 103), which presupposes how to understand the mass arrival of refugees and migrants and how to act in such a situation: as in the case of an epidemic or natural disaster, which requires immediate emergency measures and the activation of the repressive state apparatus. The creation of a problem, a moral panic and a crisis (Jalušič, 2001 [2002]; Drolc, 2003; Erjavec, 2003; Kralj, 2008; Esses et al., 2013; Berry et al., 2016; Milharčič Hladnik, 2016), which in political practice leads to the tightening of the asylum legislation and the closure of Slovenia's state borders, is a constant prevailing political and media attitude in all three periods (Doupona et al., 1998 [2001]; Mihelj, 2004a; Kralj, 2008; Malešič, 2017; Pajnik, 2017; Vezovnik, 2018b; Žagar, 2018).

In the first period, as a result of the war on the territory of the former SFRY in the summer of 1991, Croatian refugees were the first to arrive (most of them from Vukovar and Osijek in eastern Croatia and some also from Karlovac and Krajina). They stayed in Slovenia for a brief time and did not attract much public attention. A massive influx of Bosnian refugees followed, which was the subject of media attention, mainly between April and June 1992 (Doupona et al., 1998 [2001], 14–15). The second period was dominated first by the arrival of Kosovo refugees in spring 1999 (Erjavec, 2003, 84) and later by migrants from the former Soviet republics, Asia,

Middle East, and Africa (Žagar, 2018, 103). They were reported in the media, mainly between autumn 2000 and the first three months of 2001 (Jalušič, 2001 [2002], 16–21). The third period encompasses the arrival of refugees and migrants from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq in the second half of 2015, especially in October and November, when the number of arrivals peaked, and were accompanied by an intense media coverage (Eurostat, 2019; Migracije v številkah, 2016).

It should be noted that while Bosnian refugees stayed longer in Slovenia, for most of the arriving refugees and migrants in the second and third periods, Slovenia was only one of the transit countries on the way to the destinations in the Western and Northern Europe. Furthermore, all three mass arrivals were shaped by different socio-historical contexts. While the first period is characterised by the immediate proximity of Slovenian independence and the disintegration of the SFRY, which led to wars and the arrival of Croatian and Bosnian refugees (Erjavec, 2003), the later migrations to Slovenia are coupled with broader global processes. Namely, in the second period, people migrated mainly due to the desolate economic situation in the countries of origin (Pajnik et al., 2001), while in the third period the emergence of the "Arab Spring" and the volatile military and social situation in the region dictated the pattern of migration dynamics around the world (Kogovšek Šalamon & Bajt, 2016; Zadnikar, 2017).

The third period is characterised by a radically different media landscape compared to the first and second periods, which were mainly covered by traditional mass media, while the third period was shaped by both mass media and social media (Wright, 2014, 461–462). In 1992 and 2000, most information was accessible through mass media, while in 2015, much of the information was also provided through social media, especially Facebook and Twitter (Žagar, 2018, 120). The change in the media landscape and the use of new media technologies affect not only the dominant media portrait of the contemporary refugee and migrant (Wright, 2014), but also a migration process that is not only tied to physical space, but also cyberspace (Lenarčič, 2020).

One of the three mass arrivals in Slovenia as the principal object of analysis in the research field of "migration in the media" requires a brief critical comment. A migration is a complex phenomenon consisting not only of the *arrival* of individuals, but also of their *departure* (Lukšič Hacin, 2017). It seems that the existing studies—by choosing the object of study in focus—implicitly reproduce the image of a refugee and migrant who comes to Slovenia and does not belong to the Slovenian ethnic national community. On the one hand, the studies mostly focus on the media representations of Bosnian refugees, migrants from Eastern European countries and refugees and migrants from the Middle

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5   In the article, I call them the first, second and third periods.

Eastern countries. On the other hand, the studies do not tackle media representations of other travelling groups, e.g., "Slovenes from Sarajevo" (Šumi, 2001; Klavora, 2012) or "Slovenes from Argentina" (Lukšič Hacin, 2004), who also arrived to Slovenia but were recognised as part of the Slovene ethnic community and, therefore, did not have the status of foreigners. In other words, the studies focus on media representations of the "other", a foreigner excluded from the Slovene ethnic community and not welcome in Slovenia. Simultaneously, they do not address *the invited*, especially the members of the Slovenian ethnic diaspora, who after Slovenia's independence participated in the process of imagining the Slovenian nation, not through *exclusion*, as in the case of foreigners, but through *inclusion* in the Slovenian nation (Štiks, 2010), based on the idea of Slovenia as a country of all blood-related Slovenians and not as a country of all its inhabitants (Mihelj, 2004a). To understand more comprehensively the narratives of exclusion and inclusion in the prevailing media discourse in Slovenia, further research should also focus on refugees and migrants who do not have the status of the "other".

Frequency

The studies in focus were collected through the Slovenian national bibliographic system Cobiss under the keywords "refugees" and "migrants". Besides, I checked the volumes in the Peace Institute's book series MediaWatch, all issues of the Intolerance Monitor Report and the Monitor ISH, as well as some hits in the Google search engine. I focused on journal articles, chapters in monographs, and other scientific texts that chose media depictions of refugees and migrants as their object of study and appeared in the period 1991–2020 in Slovenia.

In terms of the number of studies, periods of continuity and discontinuity could be discerned. In the period 1991–1997, no studies appeared. Later, in the period 1998–2012, 19 studies were published, focusing mainly on the first and the second mass arrival.[6] In the years 2013 and 2014, again no studies could be found. The turning point comes after 2015 when the number of studies increases rapidly. In the period

2015–2020, 24 studies were published, focusing mainly on the third mass arrival.[7] However, the first period is the least researched, while the last received the most research attention.[8]

The same trend can be observed in the broader European research dynamics. The so-called 2015–2016 European refugee crisis, referred to in this article as the third period, represents the dominant research topic in the broader field of media and migration research in Europe, especially in 2017 and 2018, when most studies were published compared to previous years (Eberl et al., 2018, 208). The situation is similar in Slovenia, where most of the studies published in the last five years appeared in 2017 and 2018.

Sample, method and some other peculiarities

Most studies focus on mass media coverage, among which the daily or weekly newspapers dominate (e.g., Doupona et al., 1998 [2001]; Kuzmanić, 1998 [1999]; Jalušič, 2001 [2002]; Kuhar, 2001; Bassin et al., 2002; Erjavec, 2003; Mihelj, 2004a; 2004b; Pajnik, 2007; 2008; 2017; Kralj, 2008; Vezovnik, 2015a [2015b]; 2017b [2018a]; Jontes, 2017; Pušnik, 2017; Šaina & Turnšek, 2017). Research on television media coverage is also present in the field (e.g., Erjavec, 2003; Mihelj, 2004a; 2004b; Hrvatin, 2017; Luthar, 2017; Vezovnik, 2018b; Smrdelj & Vogrinc, 2020). The content of social media is less frequently analysed compared to mass media (e.g., Kuzmanić, 2001; Bajt, 2016; 2018; Malešič, 2017; Velikonja, 2017; Žagar, 2018; Vehovar et al., 2020). A similar situation is evident in the broader field of media and migration research in Europe. Traditional printed mass media are most frequently analysed, while social media content, online news, and interpersonal communication are covered less frequently, despite being an important segment of the contemporary media landscape (Eberl et al., 2018, 218).

Methodologically, approaches related to discourse analysis (e.g., Doupona et al., 1998 [2001]; Jalušič, 2001 [2002]; Kuhar, 2001; Pajnik, 2007; Kralj, 2008; Vezovnik, 2015a [2015b]; 2017b [2018a]; 2018b; Pajnik, 2017; Šaina & Turnšek, 2017) and frame analysis (e.g., Jontes, 2017; Malešič, 2017) predominate. On

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6   These are: Doupona et al., 1998 [2001]; Kuzmanić, 1998 [1999]; Jalušič, 2001 [2002]; Kuhar, 2001; Kuzmanić, 2001; Bassin et al., 2002; Drolc, 2003; Erjavec, 2003; Mihelj, 2004a; 2004b; Mlekuž 2006; 2007 [2011]; 2008 [2009a; 2009b; 2016]; Pajnik, 2007; 2008; Kralj, 2008; Žagar, 2002a [2002b; 2004; 2006], 2009; Vidmar Horvat & Učakar, 2012 (N.b. identical studies—unchanged or slightly modified—republished elsewhere are listed in square brackets.)

7   These are: Vezovnik, 2015a [2015b]; 2017b [2018a]; 2018b; Bajt, 2016; 2018; Pajnik, 2016; 2017; 2018; Vidmar Horvat, 2016; 2017; 2020; Hrvatin, 2017; Jontes, 2017; Luthar, 2017; Malešič, 2017; Pušnik, 2017; Šaina & Turnšek, 2017; Velikonja, 2017; Arnejčič, 2018; Vezovnik & Šarić, 2018; Žagar, 2018; Jalušič & Bajt 2020; Smrdelj & Vogrinc, 2020; Vehovar et al., 2020 (N.b. identical studies—unchanged or slightly modified—republished elsewhere are listed in square brackets.)

8   The reasons for this situation are probably systemic and have nothing to do with research affinity. It is not that the third period is more relevant and interesting than the second or the first one. The crucial reason most likely lies in the fact that the conditions of production of academic work in the first and second periods were quite different from those in the third period, since they were not determined by the Sicris hyperproduction imperative that demands the quantitative accumulation of scientific texts. This could be one of the possible reasons which explains the low volume of studies in the first period and the large production in the third period.

the one hand, most studies focus on mass media and social media content separately. Although mass media and social media interact in the contemporary hybrid media system, they are very rarely studied in their hybridity. On the other hand, studies dealing with different media (e.g., Žagar, 2018) do not make theoretical and methodological distinctions in relation to different media content, as it is analysed with the same approach, regardless of the type of media that produced it. For example, the traditional mass media content is usually treated in the same way as the social media content without taking into account the specifics of the contemporary media landscape determined by the online digital context that influences the (re) production, circulation and reception of the media content (see Klinger & Svensson, 2015).

Most studies focus on the periods of most extensive media coverage coinciding with the periods of mass arrivals in Slovenia. The analysis of media portrayal of refugees and migrants is most interesting for researchers in the cases of the most extensive media coverage. Exceptions are Kuzmanić (1998 [1999]), Mlekuž (2006; 2007 [2011]; 2008 [2009a, 2009b, 2016]), Pajnik (2007), Vidmar Horvat & Učakar (2012), and Vezovnik (2015a [2015b]) who analyse a sample of media texts outside the periods of mass arrivals in Slovenia. Some of these studies also aimed at different objects of analysis. For example, Mlekuž (2006; 2007 [2011]; 2008 [2009a, 2009b, 2016]) analyses the media representations of immigrants and their descendants from the countries of the former Yugoslavia through the discourse on *burek*, a dish with a distinctly immigrant and "Balkan" connotation in Slovenian media and culture. On the other hand, Vidmar Horvat & Učakar (2012) and Vezovnik (2015a [2015b]) focus on the media representation of ex-Yugoslav immigrant workers, which attracts media attention mainly due to the events related to the 2009 economic crisis leading to bankruptcy of numerous enterprises, especially in the construction sector, where hundreds of immigrant workers lost their jobs and social security (see the author's studies).[9]

The research focus is on analysing media content, while the study of media effects on the audience is largely neglected. Such lack of study is also a specific feature of the broader field of media and migration research in Europe (Eberl et al., 2018, 215–217). An exception in Slovenia is Malešič (2017), who analyses media and political discourse from the perspective of securitisation in the third period. The author finds that the results of public opinion polls confirm the influence of media and political discourse on public opinion,

with print media being relatively neutral in portraying migrants as a security problem and even opposing excessive securitisation, while political representatives were biased. The most biased was the largest opposition party at the time, the right-wing SDS, which disseminated the discourse on migrant securitisation based on selective information, simplifications, and exaggerations.

In the broader field of media and migration research in Europe, comparative research between selected states is very rare, indicating a need for more comparative studies, as migration is an international issue and it is usually not confined only to one country (Lecheler et al., 2019, 698). Even when studies do involve a comparative approach, they are often limited to describing results, without the intention of clarifying differences between the countries (Eberl et al., 2018, 215–217). Although comparative studies are also rare in Slovenia, they can still be found. Mihelj (2004a) and Žagar (2018) deal comparatively with different periods of mass arrivals in Slovenia. Furthermore, Šaina & Turnšek (2017) present a discursive analysis of metaphors in dailies *Večernji list* in Croatia and *Slovenske novice* in Slovenia. Vezovnik & Šarić (2018) discuss visual representations of migrants on Slovenian and Croatian online public portals, and finally, Jalušič & Bajt (2020) discuss changes in attitudes towards refugees and migrants in public debates on migration and integration in Austria, Denmark, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

Although I argue below that negative stereotypical coverage predominates in the media, traces of positive media coverage can also be detected in some studies. In the case of the second arrival, Jalušič (2001 [2002]) and Mihelj (2004a) discuss the switch to a more positive media reporting, which came as a result of the condemnation of the public's xenophobic reaction by some politicians, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and scholars. Based on the analysis of the Slovenian mainstream print media in the period 2003–2005, Pajnik (2007) notes the emergence of stories, albeit few, in which refugees speak of or report on their difficulties in finding work, housing, etc. However, as the author stresses, even the seemingly positive coverage has its pitfalls. For example, although a refugee voice is included in a particular media reporting, their stories are a prop for content that understands integration processes as the adaptation of "them" to "us". Also, a lack of reflection exists on the integration policy and approaches that do not shift responsibility for integration solely onto the refugees.

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9 Although Komac (2005) does not directly address the refugee and migrant issue, as he discusses the role of the media from the perspective of the national minority, his contribution should also be mentioned here. The author focuses on the issue of the right of members of national minority communities to access the media and consequently to participate in cultural life. He develops a theoretical starting point for addressing three issues: 1) media in the language of the dominant ethnic group and minority issues; 2) media production by minorities themselves in their own language; and 3) access to media by members of national minorities from their "mother country". Although the author's paper was written before the emergence of social media, it can still be applied to research from the hybrid media system perspective.

MASS MEDIA

Based on the results of the collected studies appeared in the period 1991–2020, I find that the mass media coverage of refugees and migrants is initially determined by the process of construction of the "other" in Slovenian society, which is also a constitutive feature of the media coverage of marginalised social groups in post-socialist Slovenia (Pajnik, 2003; Petković et al., 2006; Vezovnik, 2017a). The "other" in the media coverage of refugees and migrants is built on a complex interweaving of nationalist discourse, security discourse, criminalisation discourse, and humanitarian discourse. These discourses have different manifestations in the first, second and third periods of mass arrivals, and they dictate a predominantly xenophobic and stereotypically negative media coverage. The position of the "other" in relation to media coverage of refugees and migrants manifests most explicitly at the level of 1) naming, 2) the dualism of "us" vs. "them" and the natural disaster metaphors, 3) the privileging of the voice of the parliamentary political elite, and 4) the marginalisation of the refugees' voice (see references below).

The nationalist discourse that was strongly present in the first period is related to the establishment of the new state and the idea of Slovenia as a country of all blood-related Slovenians and not as a country of all its inhabitants (Kuzmanić, 1998 [1999]; Mihelj, 2004a). Like other former Yugoslav republics, Slovenia built its national identity on ethnic antagonism that manifested not in bloody interethnic wars but the construction of moral panic or "crisis" related to incoming Bosnian refugees in the first period and migrants later in the second period (Erjavec, 2003). Both were presented as a cultural and security threat to the Slovenian nation (Jalušič, 2001 [2002]; Kuhar, 2001; Kralj, 2008). In the media coverage, they appeared as a distinct social group or as part of all "southerners" or "Balkans" (Kuzmanić, 1998 [1999]). In the first period, Bosnian refugees in particular were portrayed in a nationalistic manner as dirty, lazy, uncultured, nationalistic, non-European, Balkan, prone to violence and crime. Simultaneously, a positive self-image of the Slovenes was established. Implicit features of the media texts (e.g., specific categorisation of texts in newspapers or television reports within daily news broadcasts, selection of interviewees and use of metaphors and symbols) reinforced these negative images (Mihelj, 2004a, 432).

In the first period, an explicit association existed of the Bosnian refugees with the Balkans and of the Slovenes with Europe. The idea of the Balkans symbolised something backward and negative, associated with the former socialist Yugoslav regime, and opposed to the Western democracies that Slovenia was supposed to follow after its declaration of independence in 1991. Since the Bosnian refugees were part of the former common Yugoslav state, they were associated with the idea of the Balkans. In the second period, when migrants from Eastern European countries, Asia and elsewhere arrived, Slovenia was no longer located in Europe or the West, but was recognised as an area separating "West" and "East", that is, "wealth" and "poverty". Slovenia declared itself as the defender of Europe associated with the idea of "wealth". The restriction of migration was interpreted in the light of the defence of "wealth" against "poverty" (Mihelj, 2004a, 434–435). In the third period, Slovenia similarly took over the role of the guardian of the Schengen border on its own initiative. This role was, however, filtered through memories of the 20th century, especially the allegedly traumatic connection to the socialist Eastern Bloc (Vidmar Horvat, 2017).[10]

Parallelly to the nationalist discourse, the security discourse and the criminalisation discourse also intensified. The security discourse combined with the rhetoric of exceptionalism, the criminalisation discourse and the idea of risk and imminent danger created the so-called securitisation of migration (Malešič, 2017; Šaina in Turnšek, 2017; Učakar, 2017; Vidmar Horvat, 2017; Vezovnik, 2018b; Smrdelj & Vogrinc, 2020).[11] In the first period, Bosnian refugees were presented as a threat to public order and security and as potential criminals (Doupona et al., 1998 [2001], 23). At the beginning of the second period, migrants were reported in the news related to crime, illegal crossing of the state border being the most commonly reported on. The media coverage was dominated by succinct police reports comprising information about the number and the place where migrants were apprehended. Later, in the second period of the mass arrivals, the topic expanded to other sections in the media but remained in the context of crime news (Bassin et al., 2002, 161; Erjavec, 2003, 88–89). Compared to Bosnian refugees, migrants in the second period were more often referred to as "illegal migrants" and the "illegals", which further emphasised their illegality and criminality. They were portrayed as exploiters of the asylum process justifying

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10 Nationalist discourse is also closely linked to the media construction of the "border", which has different meanings in different periods and geographical regions. For example, Zavratnik (2003) analyses various forms of intolerance in the case of the media discourse at the Slovenian-Croatian state border. Moreover, using the example of media and political discourse at the Italian-Slovenian state border during the first wave of the SARS-CoV-2 epidemic, Jurić-Pahor (2020) shows that border discourse is associated with the fear of contagion, which on the one hand implies exclusion, but on the other hand it also establishes awareness of the need for empathic and cross-border European integration.

11 Trends related to the increasing intertwining of criminal and immigration proceedings are also defined as "crimmigration" (see Bajt & Frelih, 2019, and Kogovšek Šalamon, Frett & Stark Ketchum, 2020).

deportations and the tightening of the asylum legislation (Žagar, 2018, 105). Furthermore, the securitisation of migration was also present in the media discourse of the third period. It resulted in the implementation of many concrete political measures, such as the instalment of a razor wire fence along the border with Croatia, tightening of the asylum legislation, strict border controls, "militarisation" of the state border through conferring additional power upon the army, etc. (Malešič, 2017, 965; Vezovnik, 2018b).

Humanitarian discourse also plays an important role, referring to the dynamics between "here" and "there". When refugees are "there", far away from "our" country, they are recognised as victims of a humanitarian and war catastrophe, but when they are "here", they threaten "our" security and culture (Wright, 2014, 461). In Slovenia, the humanitarian discourse is documented on the example of Slovenian national television, where the coverage before the third mass arrival focused on tragic news about travelling refugees and migrants in overcrowded boats, rescuing them and collecting their bodies from the Mediterranean Sea between Libya and Italy. The coverage during this period is defined by the humanitarian discourse, which allowed the existence of the refugee and migrant voice and offered the media consumers the possibility of identification with their unfortunate fate. In Slovenia, the change occurred in September 2015, when the first larger group of refugees and migrants crossed the Croatian-Slovenian border by train to continue their journey to Germany. As long as the refugees were far from Slovenia, they were occasionally reported on as a humanitarian problem abroad. However, when Slovenia became their transitional country on their way to the West, the focus shifted from the prevailing humanitarian discourse to the prevailing security discourse (Smrdelj & Vogrinc, 2020, 293–294). Moreover, the discursive shift tied to the dynamics between "here" and "there" is not only a peculiarity of the Slovenian national television reports, but it is also a feature of the mass media in other European countries (Georgiou & Zaborowski, 2017; Consterdine, 2018).

Finally, Jalušič & Bajt (2020), discussing changes in the treatment of migration policy in political and media discourse, also noted a significant move from the previous proclamation of more liberal and democratic values that sought equal rights for refugees and immigrants to a stricter approach to immigration and integration.

Naming

The naming of refugees and migrants is usually determined by the distinction between "genuine refugees" and "economic migrants"—a constant feature of the media coverage in Slovenia and other European countries (see Kaye, 2001; Wood & King, 2001; Crawley, 2005; Nickels, 2007; Szczepanik, 2016; Consterdine, 2018). The distinction is very noticeable in the second period

when a distinction between Bosnian refugees from the first period and migrants from the second period was introduced. In the first period, the term "temporary refugees" prevailed, in the second one "illegal migrants". The former were recognised as having the desire to stay in Slovenia for some time, while the latter were assumed to be only crossing Slovenia because they were leaving their home country for economic reasons and, therefore, their lives were not in danger as was the case with Bosnian refugees (Žagar, 2018, 111–112). Labelling assuming the migrants came to Slovenia with the intention of remaining here for a long time was very rarely chosen (Mihelj, 2004a, 434).

The term "illegals"—explicitly defining foreigners as criminals—was also often used for migrants in the second period. This term reduced their status to mere violators of the law while obscuring the complexity and authenticity of the migratory experience (Žagar, 2018, 114). As a result, migrants in the second period were most often referred to as thugs and criminals associated with the police and criminal activity (e.g., drugs, prostitution). Besides, they were portrayed as dirty, unhygienic, and as potential carriers of communicable diseases (Bassin et al., 2002, 164; Erjavec, 2003, 86; Mihelj, 2004a, 436). Compared to Bosnian refugees, they were less often the object of sympathy (Mihelj, 2004a, 436).

Also in the third period, the goal of the Slovenian political elite was to categorise as many people as possible as economic migrants, i.e. as indivduals who could be more easily rejected and deported (Velikonja, 2017, 112–113; Vezovnik, 2017b [2018a], 128–129; Žagar, 2018, 121). When politicians and the media wanted to emphasise the humanitarian dimension, they referred to them as refugees (especially women and children). But when border controls were tightened, they argued for a separation of refugees and supposedly undeserving economic migrants, especially young men, who should have stayed at home and defended their homeland. Later, when a new border regime with a razor wire fence was introduced, the supposedly undeserving economic migrants became potential terrorists (Pajnik, 2016, 67; Pajnik, 2018, 190–191). Moreover, Pušnik (2017) demonstrated that refugees were doubly degraded in the right-wing press: first, they were portrayed as economic migrants attacking the economy of "our" country, and then their status was further reduced to a Muslims assaulting not only the economic but also the cultural foundations of Slovenia.

The dualism of "us" vs. "them" and the natural disaster metaphors

The natural disaster metaphors illustrating the "amount" of arriving refugees (e.g., wave, river, flood) was another constant in the media coverage of refugees and migrants in Slovenia (Doupona et al., 1998 [2001]; Mihelj 2004a; Pajnik, 2017; Pušnik, 2017;

Arnejčič, 2018; Žagar 2018). In the broader European research dynamics, the representation of migrants as masses and hordes was also recognised as negative manner of reporting (Eberl et al., 2018, 213–214). The metaphor of natural phenomena implied that migrations are unpredictable, they could only be curbed by force and aggression, their causes were independent of human action, and the role of politics and social causes of migration were not reflected. Such a narrative was a prerequisite for the establishment of the "other", for its homogenisation and differentiation. Velikonja (2017) explains that homogenisation is about the lack of reflection of any intra-group heterogeneity and the representation of refugees and migrants as de-individualised, ahistorised and apolitical subjects. Homogenisation is complementary to differentiation, which is associated with the persistent emphasis on differences between "us", the members of the dominant society, and "them", the refugees and migrants. The dualism of "us" vs. "them" manifests itself in many different discursive contexts. Vezovnik (2017b [2018a]), for example, shows that tabloid news in the third period primarily creates binary dichotomies between "us" as those who embody victims, heroes, and heroized victims, and "them" who embody a cultural and security threat to the majority population.[12]

The privileging of the voice of the parliamentary political elite

The research notes the privileging of the voice of the parliamentary political elite (e.g., the government and ministry representatives, the MPs) and the marginalisation of other voices (e.g., NGO representatives, academics, refugees and migrants). Representatives of the political mainstream are given the most space in media coverage of refugees and migrants. Their voice appears not as one of the possible explanations, but as the central and most normal interpretation of what is happening. The mass media fail to distance themselves from the voice of the parliamentary political elite and establish their own perspective on the refugee issues by presenting the position of the political elite as one of many and not as the only and most self-evident one. Journalists uncritically adopt their discourse, which is evident at the level of word choice, selection of interviewees, categorisation of news, and quoting mainly official government sources while neglecting alternative sources (see references below).

The example of privileging the voice of the parliamentary political elite was already documented in the first period. Doupona et al. (1998 [2001], 20–23) argued that journalists were seriously concerned with the maximum number of Bosnian refugees Slovenia could have accepted. The issue, initially launched by the political elite, was taken over by the journalists and presented as a legitimate national problem, rather than stressing that this was only one of the numerous possible ways of addressing the refugee topic and that it stemmed from the discourse of the parliamentary political elite. Consequently, the refugee "wave" metaphor prevailed, illustrating the number of Bosnian refugees arriving.

At the beginning of the second period, brief news reports appeared regularly in the media focusing on the migrants apprehended while crossing the state border. News releases provided to the media by police representatives were published or broadcast almost unaltered. Journalists normalised the government's xenophobic views by faithfully and uncritically mirroring the police definition of "illegal migrants" (Erjavec, 2003, 88–89). Later, in January and February 2001, two positions were established in the media—the "voice of the people" position and the position against xenophobia (Jalušič, 2001 [2002]; Erjavec 2003; Mihelj, 2004a). The "voice of the people" represented the views of residents and civic groups who spoke out against migrant accommodation centres in their respective neighbourhoods. Journalists normalised xenophobia by faithfully and uncritically mirroring their views (Erjavec, 2003). The victim statuses were attributed to locals rather than migrants (Jalušič, 2001 [2002], 23). In response to xenophobic rhetoric, appeals for more tolerant media coverage started to emerge, demanded by some intellectuals, NGOs and even politicians. Journalists were divided into two sides: the majority supported the "people" over the "state", while the minority labelled these protests as xenophobic (Mihelj, 2004a, 436). According to Jalušič (2001 [2002], 24), the position of the "voice of the people" redefined Slovenian national identity, which was no longer derived from the opposition Slovenia vs. the Balkans, but the "local community" vs. the "state". On the other hand, Mihelj (2004a, 436–437) argues that media support for the "people" and opposition to the "state" was based on the notion of Slovenia as a country of all blood-related Slovenes, and not as a country of all its inhabitants. According to the author, the call for less xenophobic media coverage could have shaken the dominant national imagination, but was met with general resistance as the media defended the "people". As a result, political representatives changed their tactics. They took into account some of the NGOs demands for a more liberal immigration policy, but simultaneously, they considered the will of the "people" and introduced more restrictive legislation (e.g., limiting the right to

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12 Although in Slovenia, the dualism of "us" vs. "them" is predominant in the research field of "migration in the media", some authors, e.g. Jurić Pahor (2015), reveal an erosion of traditional binary (op)positions (e.g., whites/blacks, we/others, centre/periphery) through the examples from the arts (music and literature), which have emerged mainly in the multi-ethnic and border societies.

free movement). However, although some political representatives attempted to deny the "voice of the people", Erjavec (2003, 97) emphasises that they were primarily responsible for establishing xenophobia in the prevailing media discourse at the beginning of the second period when mirroring the police discourse.

In the third period, the privileging of the voice of the parliamentary political elite is documented in many cases. Pajnik (2016, 67–69) demonstrated how journalists did not reflect on the meanings of the terms they used. Just as politicians did not want to discuss the "razor wire", and preferred to use the "technical barrier" euphemism, so did the journalists. Similarly, the journalists uncritically adopted the definitions mentioned above of refugee and migrant rather than drawing attention to their implicit ideological assumptions. The voice of the parliamentary political elite also predominated in the *Odmevi*, the current affairs broadcast on the Slovenian national television. Although *Odmevi* allowed the topic to be examined from many angles, Luthar (2017) showed that the selection of guests in the interviews and their discursive treatment led to a narrowing of the debate to the perspective of the parliamentary political elite. Politicians appeared most frequently as guests in the studio or as the authors of statements in the news, most often from the right-wing political party SDS, while left-wing parties (ZL and SD) appeared less frequently. Furthermore, based on the analysis of the journalistic commentaries in *Delo* daily newspaper, Pajnik (2017) concluded that their content was placed in the prevailing political context. They addressed the European migration policy in the context of current political debates and omitted the NGO sources. Moreover, Jontes (2017) found that journalistic articles in the main Slovenian dailies (*Delo*, *Dnevnik* and *Večer*) most frequently cited official government sources, while representatives of the NGOs, volunteers, refugees and migrants rarely appeared as sources.

Marginalisation of the refugee voice

The marginalisation of the "refugee voice" (Sigona, 2014) refers to the neglect or absence of refugees and migrants in the prevailing media coverage at the verbal level (written or spoken text) and at the visual level (photos, videos). Such marginalisation has been documented both in Slovenia media representations (see references below) and in the print media of some other European countries (see Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017; Georgiou & Zaborowski, 2017).

Hrvatin (2017) addresses the media representation of female refugees in Slovenian television coverage during the third period. The author finds that male refugees appeared most frequently (89%), while female refugees appeared very rarely (11%). The television news in which refugees appeared as interviewees included brief statements from multiple people or people appeared in a group and complemented each other. However, when white individuals appeared in the news, the opportunity to speak was left only to them and was not fragmented as in the case of the refugees. Furthermore, in the case of the news programme *Dnevnik* broadcast on the Slovenian public television, Smrdelj & Vogrinc (2020) note that migrants were prevented from being one of the instances involved in the television communication process about them. Instead, they were reduced to a topic that others speak about (politicians, concerned villagers, police officers).

Bassin et al. (2002, 161–162) found that newspaper photographs from the second period depicted migrants at border crossings, in the basements of police stations, and in the private spaces of people who helped them cross the Slovenian border. Such locations in which migrants appeared emphasised their illegality. The migrants in the photographs squatted or lied on the ground, covering their faces or hiding them between their legs. The faceless representation reinforced their dehumanisation, undifferentiation, and loss of individual identity. Vezovnik & Šarić (2018)—using the example of Slovenian and Croatian public online portals in the third period—addressed a specific category of photographs dubbed "subjectless images" and depicting migrants and migrations, but not as subjects. Subjects were replaced by objects (e.g., fences, garbage, razor wires, vehicles, boundary fences) that stand metaphorically, metonymically, or symbolically behind migrants and migrations. There were photographs in which migrants were present but obscured, shown as a crowd or blurred, and photographs in which migrants were not shown at all.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Research on migration in social media uncovered a prevalence of an extremely xenophobic and racist discourse driven by the rapid flow of hostile and false information, where the opinions of (anonymous) individuals acquire a public character (Vogrinc, 2019, 145–147). Moreover, the highly negative stereotypical discourse on social media has the tacit support of the parliamentary political elite and consequently serves to legitimise the government security policy (see references below).

Although most studies focus on the third period, the first analysis appeared already in the second period. Kuzmanić (2001) discussed the so-called hate-page that was active at *http://bojkot.muba-bk.si/begunci* and published approximately 900 hateful graffiti during its existence. The webpage was introduced with the rhetorical question "How to get rid of refugees and asylum seekers?" followed by the answer "Give vent to your anger!". Anonymous users posted comments under pseudonyms calling migrants thugs, sloths, shirkers, criminals, stalkers, rapists, etc. The

comments also contained references to Hitler and Nazism. There were explicit tendencies to exterminate migrants and open concentration camps.

Fifteen years later, the same rhetoric was present in social media. Žagar (2018, 120–123) identified extremely explicit racist and xenophobic hate speech. As at the beginning of the millennium, there were incredibly dehumanising terms for refugees and migrants in the third period, and many allusions to Hitler and Nazism reappeared. Also, Vehovar et al. (2020) revealed a relatively high and stable proportion of online comments on the Facebook pages of selected Slovenian news portals containing the elements of the so-called "socially unacceptable discourse (SUD)".

The most comprehensive analysis of social media was conducted by Bajt (2016; 2018). The author notes that in the third period, several *pro et contra* groups were formed on Facebook, as action against those who spread hate speech was not taken by Facebook. When public condemnations of hate speech emerged (e.g., Zlovenia, ibid., 56), a subtler articulation of the same views appeared. In the case of Twitter, the author highlighted the post by Sebastian Erlah, which called for the shooting of all arriving refugees and migrants. In addition to the highly inappropriate content of this post, a lack of response from the Slovenian political elite, police, and prosecutors was notable. Many organisations (e.g., the Alternative Academy [*Društvo alternativna akademija*] and the Slovenian Association of Journalists [*Društvo novinarjev Slovenije*]) spoke out and warned that online hate speech could lead to actual anti-migrant actions and hate crimes. Bajt (ibid.) argued that the lack of political condemnation in this and similar cases led to tacit support to the inappropriate content on social media, which simultaneously represented support to restrictive anti-migration securitisation measures. The author concluded that political actors and representatives at local, national and European levels were most responsible for the rise of hate speech about migration on social media. Similarly, Velikonja (2017) found that the hate speech and exclusionary activities of Slovenian politicians are no different from those of right-wing extremists, expressed in graffiti, at protests and rallies.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

I present the research field of "migration in the media" in Slovenia from the hybrid media system perspective. The object of analysis of most studies was one of the three periods of the mass arrival of refugees and migrants in Slovenia. A large part of the existing studies focuses on mass media, among which daily or weekly newspapers dominate. In addition, research on television coverage also appeared. Social media are analysed less frequently than mass media. Methodologically, approaches related to discourse analysis and frame analysis predominate.

Media coverage of refugees and migrants is determined by the process of constructing the "other" in Slovenian society, which is established on a complex interweaving of nationalist discourse, security discourse, criminalisation discourse and humanitarian discourse. These discourses have different manifestations in the first, second and third periods of mass arrivals, and they dictate a predominantly xenophobic and stereotypically negative coverage. Moreover, refugees and migrants are often portrayed in the mass media as a security and cultural threat.

Research on social media reveals an extraordinarily xenophobic and racist discourse driven by the rapid flow of hostile and false information. Moreover, the extremely negative stereotypical discourse on social media has the tacit support of the parliamentary political elite and consequently serves to legitimise government security policy.

The social media content seems to be driven by hostile reactions to incoming refugees and migrants, which have support in the prevailing political rhetoric, which also guides mass media reporting. From this perspective, social media reinforces the prevailing mass media discourse privileging the voice of the parliamentary political elite and marginalising all other voices.

The central finding of the studies in focus—namely, a predominantly negative, stereotypical media discourse determined by the dominance of the voice of the parliamentary political elite—is in accordance with broader European research trends (see Pogliano, 2017; Consterdine, 2018; Eberl et al., 2018). But how should this key finding be contextualised in the research field of "migration in the media" in Slovenia? One possible explanation, however, could be in the fact that Slovenian studies mostly focus on the periods of most intense media coverage of refugees and migrants, which coincide with the periods of their mass arrivals. When the refugee and migrant issues are the central media topic, they are also interesting for researchers, but otherwise, they are not. It is rare that the object of an analysis are the periods of media coverage when the refugee and migrant issues are not the most exposed media topic (for exceptions see Kuzmanić, 1998 [1999]; Mlekuž (2006; 2007 [2011]; 2008 [2009a, 2009b, 2016]); Pajnik, 2007; Vidmar Horvat & Učakar, 2012; Vezovnik, 2015a [2015b]). In addition, Pajnik (2007; 2008) argues that in the media, a particular topic appears depending on the current social relevance and the occurrence of events related to it (e.g., the mass arrivals of refugees and migrants influence the fact that refugees and migrants are the most exposed media topic). It seems that the research dynamics in the field of "migration in the media" in Slovenia depends on a similar principle, as

the analysis of media representations of refugees and migrants focus on the periods of the greatest media exposure. However, it is important to note that the most intense media coverage is usually characterised by the most negative reporting. Drolc (2003, 164) explains that intense media coverage turns the issues of refugees and migrants into a "problem", "scandal", "crisis", etc. This influences the reaction of politicians and other involved, which is why the issue needs to be reported again. The so-called panic circle (van Dijk, 1991, 88) is created, which negatively affects the image of the group reported on in the media (van Dijk, 1991, 113). Therefore, since the predominant object of the analysis are the periods of the most intense media reporting of refugees and migrants in Slovenia, the finding of negative media coverage consequently prevails.

To ensure more diverse and representative contributions in the research field of "migration in the media" in Slovenia, it is necessary to study media representations of refugees and migrants more continuously in the future and not only during periods of the greatest media exposure when the reporting is the most negative. Moreover, the prevailing definition of refugee and migrant, which is mostly equated with a foreigner and the "other" in Slovenian society, needs to be broadened. Instead, the focus must also be placed on other groups of refugees and migrants.

Although the contemporary media landscape is defined by the online digital context, print mass media are still most frequently discussed, while online media content (online news, social media and interpersonal communication) is less frequently addressed. Considering that contemporary reality is highly mediatised (see Couldry & Hepp, 2017), the still predominant preoccupation with traditional media does not seem to be a productive choice for further research. All types of media should be considered, and different media should be treated with different theoretical and methodological approaches.

Furthermore, in the studies in focus, mass media and social media are usually studied separately, although they are intertwined in the contemporary hybrid media system. The emergence of the Internet and new media technologies is responsible not only for the emergence and rapid penetration of social media, but also for the fundamental transformation of traditional mass media, whose content is available not only through traditional newspapers, radio and television but also through new media technologies. The transformation of the functioning of traditional mass media, the emergence of new media and communication technologies and their interaction is made possible by the online digital context, which determines the hybrid character of the contemporary media. The latter are hybrid media (see Chadwick, 2013). Therefore, they should be addressed in their interaction and not separately.

The next research step is to examine mass media and social media together from the perspective of the (re)production, circulation, and reception of their contents. Wright (2014, 462) argues that social media has the potential to subvert the hierarchy of traditional mass media and allow refugees and migrants to create and control their own media image. But why does existing research on "migration in the media" in Slovenia find the opposite? How does the mass media in the hybrid media system still maintain the dominance of the voice of the political parliamentary elite? Why are refugees and migrants unable to establish an autonomous position in the public space through social media, from which they can speak for themselves, on their own behalf? It seems that despite earlier overly optimistic predictions about their democratic potential (Vehovar et al., 2020, 622–624), social media cannot shake the existing media hierarchy. I argue that the reasons for the hegemony of the political parliamentary elite should be addressed in research, which should be based on the interaction of different types of media, i.e., both mass and social media, in relation to the (re)production, circulation and reception of media content (see Klinger & Svensson, 2015).

In addition to the above research proposal, any gaps identified in this article should be addressed in further research. For example, the first mass arrival of refugees in Slovenia, namely Bosnian refugees, is subject of the least research attention, so it should be included in future analysis. Moreover, there is a lack of systematic and comprehensive comparative research between the first, second and third periods of most mass arrivals of refugees and migrants in Slovenia that should be conducted in the future. On the other hand, further research should focus on periods that do not coincide with mass arrivals and focus not only on foreigners but also on other people, such as "Slovenes from Sarajevo" and "Slovenes from Argentina". Research can also examine journalistic routine practices and their influence on obtaining official and alternative sources. Finally, there is also a lack of comparative research between the prevailing media discourse in Slovenia and other countries. The inclusion of the Slovenian case in comparative foreign studies would shed additional light on the similarities and its peculiarities compared to broader trends worldwide.

RAZISKOVANJE MIGRACIJ V SLOVENSKIH MEDIJIH: "DRUGI" V OBDOBJU "KRIZE"

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POVZETEK

V članku predstavim rezultate prvega sistematičnega pregleda literature na temo migracij v slovenskih medijih z vidika hibridnega medijskega sistema. Predmet analize večine raziskav je eno od treh obdobij množičnih prihodov beguncev in migrantov v Slovenijo v letih 1992–1993, 1999–2001 in 2015–2016. Raziskave običajno tematizirajo množične medije, med katerimi prevladujejo dnevni ali tedenski časopisi, nekoliko manj pa je prisotno raziskovanje televizijskega poročanja. Družbeni mediji so v primerjavi z množičnimi mediji obravnavani redkeje. Metodološko prevladujejo pristopi, povezani z analizo diskurza in analizo okvirov. Poročanje množičnih medijev o beguncih in migrantih določa proces konstrukcije "drugega" v slovenski družbi, ki se vzpostavlja na kompleksnem prepletu nacionalističnega diskurza, varnostnega diskurza, diskurza kriminalizacije in humanitarnega diskurza. Ti diskurzi imajo v obdobju posameznih množičnih prihodov različne izrazne oblike, ki določajo pretežno ksenofobno in stereotipno negativno medijsko poročanje. Raziskave na temo družbenih medijev ugotavljajo prevlado zelo ksenofobnega in rasističnega diskurza, ki uživa tiho podporo politične elite in nastopa v funkciji legitimacije sekuritizacijskih vladnih ukrepov.

Ključne besede: begunci, migranti, množični mediji, družbeni mediji, hibridni medijski sistem, kriza

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