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## **DISCURSIVE CATEGORISATION OF EUROPEAN SUBREGIONS IN THE CROATIAN AND SERBIAN PRESS AFTER 2007**

Keywords: Croatian media discourse, Serbian media discourse, corpus-assisted discourse analysis, political discourse.

### **ABSTRACT**

The paper analyses categorisation of the semantic field ‘Europe’ in Croatian and Serbian daily newspapers between 2007 and 2017. A large corpus of articles is used to select keywords and examples for analysis. Random samples of concordances featuring the syntagms ‘Eastern Europe’ and ‘Central Europe’ are then analysed to reconstruct their semantic extensions and connotations. The widespread use of metonyms ‘EU’ – ‘Europe’ is evidenced, as well as strong synonymy of these collocations and ‘post-socialist countries’. The analysed examples also suggest that the choice between binary (East – West) and ternary categorisation (East – Centre – West) is heavily dependent on the semantic domain and genre of a given text.

The issue of Europe’s historical or cultural regional subdivisions has been widely discussed in various disciplines, including history, political sciences, and cultural studies. Reflections on the (sub)categorisation of European regions constitutes a significant part of diverse geopolitical discourses. Especially since the post-structural turn in humanities and the emergence of post-colonial studies, the concept of an East-West division ceased to be perceived as transparent and started to be criticised as an instrument for the construction of alterity-derived power hierarchies. The ‘discovery’ of the Orient was lucidly exposed by Edward W. Saïd (1979). This inspired a series of works discussing the possibility of transferring the notion of Orientalism – an imagological strategy constituting Western dominance over the non-European East – onto the east of Europe. Among the most successful works, one has to mention Larry Wolff’s detailed insight into mechanisms in the creation of the notion ‘Eastern Europe’ (Wolff 1994), and Maria Todorova’s oeuvre *Imagining the Balkans* (Todorova 1997), crucial for the topic of this paper. The following research concerning the opposition of Europe and the Balkans was abundant, but its methodology was prevalingly derived from cultural studies, while the studied corpora consisted mostly of the previously selected, most extreme examples,

demonstrating how power hierarchies were constructed and how pragmatic political goals were achieved via reinforcement of the Europe-Balkans opposition (c.f. e.g. Šarić 2010; Zambelli 2010; Luketić 2013).

However, all the mental geographies are, in the end, constituted through the means of discourse. Given the fact that the regional subdivisions, including the subdivisions of Europe, are rooted in language, they can be studied with the help of specifically linguistic methodologies (cf. Chlebeda 2002). Such an endeavour is by no means exotic, as phenomena of semantic categorisation belong, for instance, to the most fundamental components of cognitive grammar (Langacker 2009, 2–5).

The goal of this paper will be, thus, to investigate what discursive means are employed in order to categorise Europe not in the pre-selected, most representative or most extreme manifestations of political ideologies, but rather in the media discourses that Croatian and Serbian audiences are confronted with on a daily basis. In order to achieve this goal, a large corpus of 20,000 articles collected from daily newspapers from both countries will be used, which will enable a corpus-assisted discourse analysis to be performed, leading to a relatively unbiased reconstruction of categories used to divide the notion Europe (Croat. *Europa*, Serb. *Evropa*) into such subregions as Eastern (Croat./Serb. *Istočna*) or Central (Croat./Serb. *Srednja*, Serb. *Centralna*) Europe.

Among the factors that can possibly play a role in the discursive construction of regional boundaries, one can expect an ideological profile of a given daily newspaper – therefore, media representing various profiles were selected – and its country of origin. However, in the scope of this paper a more unexpected hypothesis will be also tested, namely, one claiming that the categorisation of the notion ‘Europe’ employed in the discourse and the extensions of its subdivisions is dependent on the semantic domain represented in a given text.

#### CORPUS

The analysed texts come from four Croatian and Serbian daily newspapers, while the temporal range of their publication spans from 2007 until 2017. It was also decided that the study would be limited to so-called quality press<sup>1</sup>. This term is hard to define; the most precise definition is probably provided by its contrast to tabloids, i.e. quality press would be characterised by its modest design, more complex language and its tendency to present its content as generalised knowledge about politics, as well as social events and movements in a distanced, dematerialised way. Given the fact that this kind of media tends to be perceived as authoritative and their reporting as more moderate and

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<sup>1</sup> The choice of two newspapers per country seems to be sufficient for tracking the variation between the main ideological orientations, especially in such a large corpus. While analysis of other dailies, including tabloids, as well as of internet portals, may bring valuable results, interpretation of such diverse findings would demand a much longer study.

lacking tabloid features, it may be reasonable to analyse this very format of the press in order to reconstruct such authorised discourses.

Representativeness was treated as another criterion to choose the newspapers from Croatian and Serbian media markets. On the one hand, it was assumed that diverse ideological profiles should be represented; on the other hand, data on readership was treated as a hint. As a result, from Croatia, the conservative *Večernji list* (VL) and left-liberal *Novi list* (NL) were selected; from Serbian newspapers, the centre-right *Politika* (P) was taken into account. Less widely read, but the only liberal position – *Danas* (D) – was also included in the corpus.

In the following steps, almost 20,000 randomly selected articles were taken from national and international columns in the online issues of the respective newspapers: from each title 300 per year between 2007–2011 and 700 per year for 2012–2017. The text database was then lemmatised with the use of ReLDI Tagger (Ljubešić et al. 2016). All data was stored in a corpus manager, NoSketchEngine (Rychlý 2007), which enabled parallel access to lemmatised and original data. Neglecting natural, non-processed textual data was one of the criticisms towards the use of lemmatisers in discourse analysis (Brookes and McEnery 2019, 6), so this seemed to be a good compromise when dealing with highly-inflective Slavic languages, because simultaneous consultation of both textual words and lemmas was possible during the whole procedure.

Last but not least, it has to be mentioned that the temporal limits of the corpus were set rather arbitrarily: its end was dictated by the beginning of the work on the project, while the 10-year-span enabled an observation of the impact of numerous extra-linguistic factors (EU integration, various crises etc.) on the studied discourses.

## METHODOLOGY

The research was inspired by a theoretical framework and practical tools elaborated in a so-called corpus-driven discourse analysis<sup>2</sup>. According to its name, it makes use of large collections of texts – corpora. On the other hand, the goal of such studies is to reveal the order of discourse understood not only as groups of signs, but also “as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak” (Focault 1972, 49).

Such a method enables the researcher to achieve a number of results unavailable using other approaches. One of the advantages, stressed by various researchers, is a significant

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<sup>2</sup> There has been a discussion about the exact meaning of the terms *corpus-driven* and *corpus-based*. The first approach is sometimes said to make use of corpus annotation schemes based on a pre-conceived theory. The latter, on the other hand, would aim at research uninfluenced by pre-existing frameworks and, for the sake of this, would use unannotated corpora, without making distinctions between the lexis and the data (McEnery and Gabrielatos 2006, 35–36). However, in practice “[t]his distinction is not acknowledged by all corpus linguists, and it has been felt by some to be overstated” (McEnery and Gabrielatos 2006, 35). This study may be said to share features of both approaches, as it commences with statistical collocation analysis. Classification of the collocates is derived from the empirical reality of the texts, while analysis of random-generated concordances constitutes the most effective method to determine precise meanings of the observed structures.

reduction in bias (Baker 2006, 10–12). Another advantage resulting from the adopted approach is derived from an incremental effect connected to the use of large text collections. Results concerning recurrent discursive structures in representative corpora may also be of interest to those looking for certain cultural or ideological trends occurring in a given society or group (cf. e.g. Stubbs 2001, 215).

The particular methods employed in this paper consisted of keyword, collocation, and concordance analysis. Keyword and collocation analysis were technically performed as one step. A strategy undertaken by Lancaster University researchers was mimicked, i.e. knowledge of the context was used to select a lexeme particularly important for the studied subject (Baker et al. 2008, 277, 298) – in this case it was ‘Europe’.

As has already been pointed out, collocation analysis was technically identical with keyword analysis. Collocations – which can be defined as “cooccurrence relationship[s] between two words”, occurring when “one [word] is more likely to occur in the presence of the other than elsewhere” (McEnery and Hardie 2012, 240) – are determined with the use of a number of statistical measures. In this paper, the most popular method was used – log-likelihood ratio, which generates a good deal of synsemantic collocates, but enables the avoidance of very untypical collocations<sup>3</sup>.

When dealing with collocations, a question about the meaning of the generated results arises. As Susan Hunston states, “it [i.e. discourse prosody originating from the collocating lexemes] accounts for ‘connotation’: the sense that a word carries a meaning in addition to its ‘real’ meaning. The connotation is usually one of evaluation, that is, the semantic prosody is usually negative or, less frequently, positive” (Hunston 2002, 142). It is worth noting that this seems to be in accordance with the understanding of connotation elaborated by the Moscow Semantic School (cf. e.g. Apresân 1995, 67).

The method which is least dependent on the statistical calculations and presents most similarities to the instruments of qualitative discourse study is concordance analysis. Concordance can be defined as a “list of all of the occurrences of a particular search term in a corpus, presented within the context that they occur in; usually a few words to the left and right of the search term” (Baker 2006, 71). Such lists provide an opportunity to interpret the contexts of the analysed lexemes in more detail, as well as to reconstruct their contextually determined meanings. On the other hand, in the case of large corpora and frequently occurring terms, the number of resulting concordances may be too large to be analysed by the researcher, even after sorting through them. In such cases, generating random subsets of concordances may be helpful, which was a strategy applied in this paper.

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<sup>3</sup> Mathematical foundations behind the log-likelihood algorithm provided by the corpus manager NoSketch-Engine are outside of the scope of this paper, but they are explained in detail by the team of researchers from Brighton and Brno (Kilgarriff et al. 2014).

## RESULTS

The first part of the study was an analysis of collocations of the lexeme ‘Europe’, perceived as the main keyword in this research. It revealed certain important trends in the categorisation of European subregions depending on the country from where a given newspaper originates.

First of all, there exists a consistent trend among Croatian and Serbian newspaper to address their own region prevalingly as ‘Southeastern Europe’ (Croat./Serb. *Jugoistočna Europa/Evropa*) – it is the highest-ranked subregion of Europe among its collocates, apart from the Serbian centre-right *Politika*, where it was still the second-most-popular collocation of this kind<sup>4</sup>. This proves that, generally speaking, journalism in both Croatia and Serbia conveys an idea of both countries belonging to the same European region.

Another observed tendency concerned the following most-frequent collocates, i.e. ‘Eastern Europe’ and ‘Central/Middle Europe’. A larger frequency of the term ‘Eastern Europe’ can probably be explained by a number of extensions it can denote. However, discursively constructed boundaries of ‘Eastern’ and ‘Central/Middle Europe’ need to be studied in more detail through concordance analysis, paying special attention to national and genre-specific differences.

It is worth noting that, while Central European self-identification is not as pronounced in the Croatian press as would be expected given the results of imagological researches, it seems that the collocation analysis reveals certain traces of *Central Europe* : *Balkans* opposition. Namely, in some cases, Croatian authors use the term *središnja Europa* ‘Central Europe’ in order to distinguish it from *srednja Europa*, which then starts to denote exclusively ‘Middle Europe / *Mittleuropa*’. The term *Balkan* is extremely rare in both Croatian newspapers, with its relatively larger share in the conservative *Večernji list*. In the Serbian press the proportions are opposite, i.e. the lexeme ‘Balkans’ is more frequently collocated by ‘Europe’, while the phrase *srednja Evropa* ‘Middle Europe’, ruling out more geographical and less cultural interpretation of *centralna Evropa* ‘Central/Middle Europe’, is extremely rare.

In this paper, collocations concerning ‘Eastern’ and ‘Central/Middle Europe’ – Croat./Serb. *Istočna Europa/Evropa* and *Srednja Europa* / *Centralna Evropa* – were selected for a more detailed inspection, given that they also give sufficient hints about the remaining elements of the categorisation of the notion ‘Europe’.

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<sup>4</sup> Collocates of the lexeme ‘Europe’ occurring in a 5-words-to-the-left, 5-words-to-the-right window and denoting its regional subcategories in the analysed newspapers ranked on a list sorted by their log-likelihood ratio – “Novi list”: 6. *jugoistočni* ‘Southeastern’, 11. *istočni* ‘Eastern’, 16. *srednji* ‘Middle/Central’, 21. *zapadni* ‘Western’, 38. *središnji* ‘Central’, 236. *Balkan* ‘Balkans’; “Večernji list”: 6. *jugoistočni*, 9. *istočni*, 17. *srednji*, 29. *zapadni*, 52. *središnji*, 143. *Balkan*; “Danas”: 6. *jugoistočni*, 13. *istočni*, 17. *centralni* ‘Central/Middle’, 22. *zapadni*, 29. *Balkan*, 118. *srednji* ‘Middle/Central’; “Politika”: 9. *istočni*, 10. *jugoistočni*, 13. *centralni*, 21. *zapadni*, 82. *Balkan*, 118. *srednji*.

*ISTOČNA EUROPA / EVROPA* 'EASTERN EUROPE'

From the selected collocates, 50 random concordances were generated for each of the newspapers. In the samples, the ambiguous phrase 'Central and Eastern Europe' was ignored, while the extensions of the syntagms with one attribute were interpreted based on the provided enumerative definitions and/or extralinguistic context.

In the Croatian liberal newspaper *Novi list*, a significant semantic aspect of the phrase *Istočna Europa* 'Eastern Europe' is constituted by the meaning of the eastern European Union, e.g.:

[Mađarska] trenutno zadovoljava samo jedan od kriterija za usvajanje jedinstvene europske valute i, poput drugih zemalja u **istočnoj Europi**, već je odgodila plan za priključenje tom valutnom bloku. [NL12]<sup>5</sup>

'[Hungary] currently satisfies only one of the criteria for accepting the common European currency and, as other countries in **Eastern Europe**, it has already postponed the plan for joining this currency union.'

Such an extension is a consequence of another semantic drift, namely, a metonymic identification of the signifier 'Europe' with the denotation 'European Union'.

On the other hand, these new member-states of the EU are sometimes perceived as only some part of the broader region of Eastern Europe. In this case, one has to look for other criteria for delimitation of this set; however, it is rather plausible to accept a hypothesis that an old East-West boundary is at play here, the one reinforced in the Cold War, and originating in the Early Modern period (cf. Wolff 1994). 'Eastern Europe' is, thus, the former real-socialist part of the continent. Such a divide is sometimes conserved in institutional contexts, e.g. Eastern Europe Group of United Nation countries, for instance:

Rivalska utrka za tu dužnost – između šefa srbijanske diplomacije Vuka Jeremića i veleposlanika Litve u UN-u Daliusa Cekuolis – potaknula je pravu diplomatsku svađu u **Istočnoj Europi**. [NL12]

'Rivalry for this post – between the Serbian diplomacy leader, Vuk Jeremić, and the Lithuanian ambassador to the UN, Dalius Cekuolis – were an impulse for a real diplomatic quarrel in **Eastern Europe**.'

As can be seen here, 'Eastern Europe' denotes a region including Serbia, Lithuania, and, probably, Croatia. It may also be significant that this East-West opposition is often evoked in the context of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), i.e. questions of geopolitics and military power, as well as the very alliance at the start of the Cold War.

Concepts of the former Eastern Bloc also seem to be employed in economic discourses, and it appears in classifications of such organisations as the German Committee for Eastern European Relations or the International Monetary Fund:

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<sup>5</sup> Citations from the corpus will not be referenced: instead, the abbreviation of the newspaper title and two last digits of their publication year are noted, e.g. [NL12] for an article from 2012 published in *Novi list*.

[...] izjav[*a*] izvršne direktorice Međunarodnog monetarnog fonda (MMF) Christine Lagarde kako će od zemalja **istočne Europe** u recesiji ove godine biti samo Hrvatska i Slovenija [...]. [NL13]

‘[...] the statement of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Director, Christine Lagarde, that from among **Eastern European** countries this year only Croatia and Slovenia will experience recession.’

Interestingly enough, the conservative *Večernji list* exhibits the concept of ‘Eastern Europe’ as the ‘eastern EU’ even more frequently than NL. It may be surprising that a conservative newspaper does not avoid referring to Croatia as an Eastern European country and does not always insist on its Central European identity. However, it may be proof of the deep-rootedness of the ‘Europe’ – ‘EU’ metonymy and acceptance of the pragmatic usage of the collocation *Istočna Europa* with regard to oppositional new members of the Union.

Military context of the NATO alliance is also represented in VL, e.g.:

Unatoč formalnoj pripadnosti NATO-u i EU, ni zemlje **istočne Europe** nisu sasvim bez ruskog utjecaja, ističe Banac, navodeći da valja imati u vidu tzv. polumjesec ruskog utjecaja, u Mađarskoj, Slovačkoj, Rumunjskoj, Bugarskoj. [VL14]

‘Despite a formal NATO and EU membership, also **Eastern European** countries are not free from Russian influence, stresses Banac, claiming that a so-called half-moon of the Russian influence in Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria is worth mentioning.’

Given this evidence, it can be hypothesised that in both conservative and liberal Croatian media discourses in the semantic domain of NATO and military, post-Cold War categorisation into former Western and Eastern Blocs is more important than considerations connected to, for instance, Central European community between Croatia and Visegrad countries.

However, self-identification as Eastern Europe occurs not only in such contexts. It also emerges in domains closer to economic and macroeconomic statistics, e.g.:

Dok se s jedne strane rast i ekonomski oporavak prije svega mogu zahvaliti dobrim izvedbama velikih gospodarstava kao što su poljsko, rusko i tursko, Hrvatska se našla među četiri od trideset zemalja **istočne Europe** i srednje Azije u kojima je zabilježen gospodarski pad. [VL10]

‘While, on one hand, economic growth and recovery occur mostly thanks to good results of large economies such as Polish, Russian and Turkish ones, Croatia is among four of thirty countries of **Eastern Europe** and Central Asia where an economic loss was noted.’

In such cases, one can assume that economic discourses are less prone to cultural polemics about regional identity of a given country and more open to pragmatic *ad hoc* categorisations of countries, depending on the needs of various organisations and statistical constructs.

The denotation ‘Eastern part of the European Union’ is also central in most of the unambiguous usages in the Serbian centre-right daily newspaper *Politika*. The illustrating quote comes from the economic domain. However, such a semantic aspect is also present in more politically oriented texts:

Drastičan pad akcija zabeležile su juče i vodeće globalne rudarske kompanije, američke investicione banke, ali i mađarska forinta – nakon odbijenice EU da u novonastaloj finansijskoj krizi „grupno” pomogne **Istočnoj Evropi**. [P09]

‘Yesterday a drastical fall of stock rates was also noted for leading global mining companies, American investment banks, but also for the Hungarian forint – after the EU’s refusal to provide a “group” aid for **Eastern Europe** in the new crisis.’

It also seems, therefore, that Serbian media discourses accepted the metonymy of the ‘EU’ as *the Europe*, despite the fact that *Politika* is a rather right-wing medium and the fact that Serbia stays outside of the Union’s borders.

Another important semantic aspect of the notion ‘Eastern Europe’ in *Politika* concerns the geopolitical domain and the context of NATO, for instance:

Vojne vežbe u Poljskoj i Estoniji će trajati oko dve nedelje, ali će se slične vežbe održavati i posle toga, pa će američka vojska takođe razmotriti učešće u vežbama u drugim zemljama **istočne Evrope**, rekao je neimenovani zvaničnik. [P14]

‘Military exercises in Poland and Estonia will last for about two weeks, but similar exercises will take place also later, so the American army will also reconsider taking part in exercises in other countries of **Eastern Europe**, said an anonymous official.’

As in the Croatian media discourses, in this domain *Istočna Evropa* denotes an area of the former Eastern Bloc, perpetuating the old East-West opposition. This is especially important in the case of *Politika*, as it seems to devote a lot of attention to military issues. Probably for this reason, more pragmatic, *ad hoc* definitions of ‘Eastern Europe’ are used in this context, e.g. excluding the Balkans (in a phrase *prema istočnoj Evropi i Balkanu* ‘towards Eastern Europe and the Balkans’) or countries belonging to the so-called Euro-Atlantic institutions (*zemlje [...] u istočnoj Evropi, koje “gledaju ka Zapadu” i žele da bude partneri NATO-a* ‘countries [...] in Eastern Europe, which “look toward the West” and want to be NATO’s partners’).

The perspective represented by *Politika* differs in many respects from the definitions of ‘Eastern Europe’ proposed in the liberal Serbian daily newspaper *Danas*. Firstly, the phrase seems not to be used here with respect to the ‘new member states of the EU’. Instead, it is being a ‘post-socialist country’ and, probably, having an experience of political and economic transition that determines boundaries in *Danas*. For instance, in an article on the break-up of Yugoslavia it is explicitly stated:

Zbog tadašnje globalne klime i tranzicije koja se odvijala u **Istočnoj Evropi** raspad Jugoslavije bio je neminovan. [D10]

‘Due to a global climate by then and on-going transition in **Eastern Europe**, the break-up of Yugoslavia was unavoidable.’

Another semantic aspect of the notion ‘Eastern Europe’ in the discourses represented by *Danas* can be defined as ‘new member states of the European Union’, e.g.:

Otvaranje države i demokratizacija kroz političke reforme, modernizacija ustanova, unapređenje državne uprave i lokalne samouprave bili su relativno brzi i uspješni i moguće je porediti ih s reformama u **istočnoj Evropi**“ [...]. [D10]

‘Opening of the state and democratisation through political reforms, modernisation of institutions, advancement of state administration and local self-administration were relatively quick and successful and they can be compared to the reforms in **Eastern Europe**’ [...].’

However, such boundaries often exclude all Southeastern European countries, sometimes subsuming them under a label of the Balkans, for instance:

Evropska periferija bi mogla da je [EU] protrese do korena, od **Istočne Evrope** i Balkana do Centralne Azije i Sirije. [D16]

‘European peripheries could shake it [EU] to its core, from **Eastern Europe** and the Balkans to Central Asia and Syria.’

What are the reasons for such peculiar definitions of the inspected concept? The aforementioned quote could hint at an explanation that this kind of discourse tends to avoid introducing a new label for an already named entity. This would be also true for the utterance cited beneath:

Avramopulos je to rekao nakon što je Evropska komisija danas usvojila prvi izveštaj o funkcionisanju bezviznog režima za osam zemalja zapadnog Balkana i **istočne Evrope**. [D17]

‘Avramopoulos said that after the European Commission accepted today the first report on the functioning of a visa-free regime for eight countries of the Western Balkans and **Eastern Europe**.’

The discourse of *Danas* seems to be very much attached to the official classifications of European and international institutions. For this reason, Southeastern Europe and the Western Balkans may be here more often separated from the rest of the European East.

#### **SREDNJA EUROPA/CENTRALNA EVROPA ‘CENTRAL/MIDDLE EUROPE’**

The concept of ‘Eastern Europe’ could potentially introduce a binary categorisation of Europe into West and East, and investigation of its discursively constructed semantics showed that it really does that. In the case of ‘Central/Middle Europe’, the most plausible hypothesis would be that now a ternary categorisation is at play. To verify this claim, a number of random samples from the corpus will be analysed for their extensions and connotations.

For instance, in the inspected timespan, NL seems to devote a lot of focus to ‘Central Europe’ in the context of the so-called Initiative of Three Seas (Croat. *Inicijativa tri mora*). While such instances do not necessarily define an exhaustive extension of ‘Central Europe’, however, they undoubtedly contribute to its connotation. Also, examples from other contexts prove that ‘Central Europe’ in NL would mostly coincide with the ‘new EU members’, e.g.:

[...] država sličnog povijesnog iskustva i snage, bivših komunističkih republika koje su kao neovisne države postale članice europskih i euroatlanskih integracija. Sva trojica visokih dužnosnika smatraju da se [...] može ojačati glas **srednje Europe** u europskim i transatlanskim savezima. [NL12]

‘[...] countries of similar historical experiences and power, former communist republics, which, as independent states, became members of the European and Euro-Atlantic integrations. All three high officials think that [...] the voice of **Central Europe** in European and Transatlantic alliances can become stronger’.

This quote demonstrates what connotative features are often associated with ‘Central Europe’ – the experience of real socialism, being a relatively small state, but also participation in the EU and NATO structures.

However, less central usages present a more ambiguous understanding of ‘Central Europe’, for instance, as a cultural community (probably closely related to the Habsburg legacy). In some of these atypical definitions, it is unclear whether Southeastern Europe is included in ‘Central Europe’. More rarely, these regions are clearly separated:

[...] što je bilo najizraženije u Bosni i velikom broju prognanika iz te zemlje, dok je **srednja Europa** tada doživljavala mirnu tranziciju i demokratizaciju« [...]. [NL15]

‘what was most expressed in Bosnia and in a large number of exiles from that country, while **Central Europe** was experiencing peaceful transition and democratisation by then’ [...].’

It has been noted that such usages are relatively infrequent compared to those discussed previously. On the other hand, a tendency to employ non-prototypical definitions of ‘Central Europe’ is more pronounced in economic discourses. For example, in one of the articles from the NL corpus, we find such an enumerative definition in the context of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development:

U regiji **srednje Europe** i baltičkih zemalja, u koju, uz Hrvatsku, EBRD još uključuje Estoniju, Mađarsku, Latviju, Litvu, Poljsku, Slovačku i Sloveniju, za ovu i iduću godinu u prosjeku je prognoziran gospodarski rast. [NL12]

‘For the region of **Central Europe** and the Baltics, in which, apart from Croatia, EBRD includes also Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia, economic growth is prognosed in this and the next year.’

In this case, most probably an idea of Central European cultural community, distinct from Southeastern Europe – coextensive with the Balkans – was responsible for such a categorisation of Croatia and Slovenia. On the other hand, in other utterances from economic discourses represented in the corpus, one can also find such pragmatic definitions of ‘Central Europe’ that extend the Visegrad, Baltic and Southeastern European core e.g. with Moldavia.

In VL, ‘Central Europe’ is also frequently mentioned in the context of the Initiative of Three Seas and, therefore, connotes the new EU member states. Such an extension also seems to be widespread in other contexts. However, what seems to be typical for this medium is a relatively significant focus devoted to ‘Central Europe’ as a diversely

defined cultural community. When this is the case, this region is rather sharply contrasted with the Balkans, which in this case proves the lasting effect of the opposition between these two concepts, a point described by numerous scholars (i.a. Todorova 1997; Luketić 2013; Zambelli 2010):

[...] nije slučajno rekao da se turske serije ne mogu probiti do Beča, upravo onako kako je svojedobno i osmanska vojska ostala pred vratima “glavnog grada” **Srednje Europe**. Njihova se prijemčivost i popularnost gotovo navlas poklapa s granicama bivšega Osmanskog Carstva – od Bliskog istoka do Balkana. [VL12]

[...] didn't say by accident that Turkish series can't make their way to Vienna just as the Ottoman army once stayed at the gates of the **Central European** “capital”. Their attractiveness and popularity almost completely coincide with the boundaries of the former Ottoman Empire – from the Middle East to the Balkans.'

On the other hand, VL also features many discourses where ‘Central Europe’ is defined in a rather ambiguous way, but apparently it does not coincide with an imagined community bound to its Habsburg legacy. They thrive especially in the domain of economics – cooperation with China, transport, or energy policy. Here, either *ad hoc* definitions are adopted, or the ‘centrality’ of ‘Central Europe’ is understood in a very geometrical way, e.g:

Želimo da se azerski plin dovede u Hrvatsku i dalje u **srednju Evropu**. [VL13]

‘We want to bring Azeri gas to Croatia and further on to **Central Europe**.’

The ambiguity of such usages is well-illustrated in the quote above: ultimately, it cannot be decided if Croatia is part of the “Central Europe” mentioned in the citation.

A comparison with the discourse of *Danas* may be interesting, as the use we find here is less diverse. Again, the most central extension can be reconstructed as ‘new members of the EU’, however, the textual certification is often indirect, e.g.:

Imamo potencijal da dostignemo **Centralnu Evropu**, ali Jeremić napominje da „tako nešto možemo da dostignemo samo ako postoji istinski demokratski društveni okvir“. [D17]

‘We have the potential to catch up with **Central Europe**, but Jeremić points out that “we can manage that only if a real democratic social framework exists”.’

What is implied in this quote is that Serbia does not belong to ‘Central Europe’, and that ‘Central Europe’ is more developed than Serbia. Such indirect evidence can be found in a number of other quotes from the *Danas* corpus.

On the other hand, this newspaper also eagerly reports various political and economic initiatives that define ‘Central Europe’ more broadly – most often, as a sum of the Visegrad countries, Baltics and Southeastern Europe, e.g.:

Novi Sad izabran je za domaćina ovogodišnjeg Samita šefova država **centralne Evrope** na predlog predsjednika Tadića, „u sklopu zalaganja za regionalizaciju i decentralizaciju i kao grad-simbol multietničnosti i multikonfesionalnosti kroz koji protiče Dunav koji spaja većinu zemalja učesnica” [...] [D09]

'Novi Sad is chosen as the host of this year's Summit of **Central European** leaders at the request of President Tadić, "as part of the engagement for regionalisation and decentralisation and as a city-symbol of multiethnicity and multiconfessionalism, crossed by the Danube, the river connecting most of the participating countries" [...].'

In comparison, the number of various semantic aspects of 'Central Europe' represented in *Politika* is larger. The new EU members still constitute an important core of the extension of this notion. Yet a military perspective starts to play a more significant role in this medium. In the context of the NATO alliance, its new members are also referred to as 'Central European':

Nedavni pokušaj Poljske da [...] podstakne uspostavljanje u **centralnoj Evropi** stalnog američkog prisustva, naišao je tako na prilično hladan prijem mnogih od članica alijanse [P14].

'Last, Poland's attempt [...] to provoke the establishment of a constant American presence in **Central Europe** was met, therefore, with a particularly cold reaction by many of the alliance members.'

This extension coincides with the previous one, i.e. referring to the new EU member states. However, it is worth noting that this syntagm is also sometimes used in the military context, where an old East-West division seems to prevail.

Among the less prototypical usages of the notion of 'Central Europe' in *Politika*, we can mostly find similar ones to those from *Danas*. More rarely, it is *ad hoc* extended on the occasion of various political events (a Central European summit, a meeting with the Hungarian president, etc.).

#### SUMMARY

To sum up, the extension of 'Eastern Europe' is similar in both of the analysed Croatian newspapers – the liberal *Novi list* (NL) and the conservative *Večernji list* (VL). They define it prototypically either as the 'Eastern European Union' (due to the 'EU' – 'Europe' metonymy), or as the 'post-socialist European countries'. The latter classification is especially relevant in military discourses, e.g. on the NATO. *Ad hoc* definitions are featured in economic discourses. All in all, the classification of Croatia as Eastern Europe does not seem to be questioned in the analysed examples, which is probably the case due to the presence of a much more common syntagm denoting its regional identity, i.e. 'Southeastern Europe'.

The Serbian centre-right daily *Politika* prototypically features the denotation of 'Eastern Europe' as 'post-socialist countries', devoting a lot of attention to geopolitical issues connected to the activity of the NATO. Interestingly, the metonymy 'EU' – 'Europe' is also present. This is not the case in the liberal *Danas*, which most often limits possible denotations to the 'former Eastern Bloc', sometimes excluding the Balkans, which can be explained by a larger influence of categorisations used by international institutions.

In NL, 'Central Europe' is most often defined as the 'new member states of the EU' (i.e. synonymous to 'Eastern Europe'). In economic discourses, less typical extensions

occur. The situation is similar in VL, however: peripherally, it also features the understanding of ‘Central Europe’ as a cultural community excluding the Balkans. Therefore, while the definitions in the first medium are influenced by various regional initiatives, the latter are directly affected by discourses on the cultural identity of Croatia, too.

*Danas* also defined ‘Central Europe’ as coextensive with the ‘new members of the EU’, as well as, although less frequently, the sum of the Visegrad, Baltic, and South-eastern European countries, which is a result of various regional initiatives. *Politika* seems to follow similar tendencies; however, it places much more stress on geopolitics.

Briefly speaking, it can be stated that syntagms denoting regional categorisations of Europe are often pragmatically defined in economical discourses, especially ‘Eastern Europe’ in the Croatian subcorpus. This can be interpreted as genre-specific categorisation of the notion ‘Europe’, given the fact that economic journalism can be treated as a genre on its own, featuring some particular semantic relations (cf. e.g. Anderson 2008). Every genre can be perceived as a semiotic signifier by itself (cf. Czerwiński 2010), and here, one of its denotations is a specific, pragmatic, mental geography of Europe.

Besides, quantitative methods demonstrated that Croatia and Serbia are still most often perceived as parts of the same region in both countries – ‘Southeastern Europe’, while Balkanist discourses occur rarely even in the conservative Croatian press. Categorisation of the European subregions depends less on the ideological profile of a newspaper and more on the general usage in national political discourses. It also seems to be highly dependent on a semantic domain or topic prevailing in a given text. Extralinguistic factors exert a significant impact on the semantic prosody given to the analysed syntagms. However, political circumstances – such as changes in power after the 2012 Serbian parliamentary elections or Croatia’s EU accession in 2013 – do not seem to influence preferences in the usage of the studied terms and their denotations in the way that used to happen in political discourses in the 1990s (Šarić 2010). Instead, their semantic prosodies may slowly evolve and should be subject of further study.

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### Dyskursywna kategoryzacja subregionów Europy w prasie chorwackiej i serbskiej po 2007 roku

Słowa kluczowe: chorwacki dyskurs medialny, serbski dyskurs medialny, korpusowo wspierana analiza dyskursu, dyskurs polityczny.

### STRESZCZENIE

Niniejszy artykuł stanowi analizę kategoryzacji pola semantycznego 'Europa' w chorwackich i serbskich dziennikach w latach 2007–2017. Duży korpus artykułów został użyty do wyłonienia słów kluczowych i przykładów do badań. Losowe próbki konkordancji zawierających syntagmy 'Europa Wschodnia' i 'Środkowa' były następnie analizowane w celu rekonstrukcji ich ekstensji znaczeniowych oraz konotacji. Udowodniona została powszechność metonimii 'UE' – 'Europa', jak i znaczna synonimiczność tychże kolokacji i 'państw postsocjalistycznych'. Analizowane przykłady sugerują też, że wybór między dwu- (Wschód – Zachód) i trójczłonową kategoryzacją (Wschód – Środek – Zachód) jest silnie zależny od domeny semantycznej i gatunku tekstu.