

Constructing “New” Boundary: Slovenia and Croatia¹

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Newly established boundary between Croatia and Slovenia in 1991, considerably changed the functions of thus formed borderland. Previously local areas turned into national peripheries, while due to current European integration they're also becoming parts of extensive 'Schengen periphery' at the entrance to Europe. This article argues that new Slovene-Croatian boundary has been turning into one of the significant selective mechanisms in this part of the region. In addition, this boundary is an example of a non-border turning into an electronic and mental wall separating two different parts of Europe. In this perspective, the Schengen border can be disputed within the context of societies in transition, which found themselves at the Schengen periphery. This new image of Europe can be defined by at least three highly relevant emphases pertaining to post-modern boundaries, identity and mobility: 1. Construction of new type of borders (the shift from “stone to electronic walls”, from Berlin wall to 'e-borders'), 2. Schengen e-border as an instrument of identity borderlines, and 3. Issue of social mobility and its restrictions in global networking of societies.

Key words: BOUNDARIES, SLOVENIA, CROATIA, SCHENGEN BORDER, EUROPEAN INTEGRATION, THE BALKANS, IDENTITY

Introduction

The Slovene-Croatian border that was set up in 1991 has been turning into one of the significant selective mechanisms in this region. It is the point at which different local micro-cosmoses, sub-regional and regional borderland peripheries, national systems and European superstructures meet. Within a mere decade this border assumed essentially new functions: primary an internal and socially entirely permeable border between two federal units, which never functioned as demarcation line obstructing social interactions, it was turned into an external border separating two sovereign states. This in the first place meant the formalisation of life in the borderland regions including a new border regime as the most distinguishing feature of the change. Research, both sociological and anthropological, revealed identical tendencies: the new boundary brought declining of most various cross-border contacts in terms of both dynamics and structure (Knežević Hočevar, 1999; Kržišnik-Bukić, 1999). The most obvious decrease has been observed in institutional contacts, while informal contacts (networks of relatives and friends), which are rooted in intimate traditional links between locals living on “both sides of the border” demonstrated somewhat higher stability. Undoubtedly the setting up of the state border implied the establishment of a firm, impermeable rather than permeable physical line of division that delimits formerly uniform or at least strongly interconnected region.

With the milestone event of 1991 this until-then-non-borderline turned into a rigid partition wall between two post-socialist nation-states. Along with it various types of the natures

¹ Some of the very first ideas discussed in this article has been presented during two courses “On Divided Societies”, IUC Dubrovnik in 1998 and 2001.

of border became even more evident - particularly on the level of big national discourses on identity - whenever some "suspicious" resemblance, a vestige of historical and traditional links, came to light. While in some parts of Europe the traditional geo-political borderlines began to disappear from geographical and road maps and public discourses, certain more indistinct and sensitive borders, although not more friendly to the "ordinary man", began to emerge in the background.

So one Europe pulled down the stone wall and instead surrounded itself with electronic, e-borders - the Schengen border in the first place. The Schengen regime, designed as a method of protection, introduces new dynamics into the social reality of two small European countries, which is a phenomenon that extends beyond the local Slovene-Croatian significance because it introduces the confrontation of the EU integrating models and the EU peripheral border regimes into this region.

Starting from the micro-social perspective, and from individual perceptions of everyday life in borderline regions, I find it necessary to stress that the nature of a boundary importantly influences the quality of life in the region including the cross-border contacts. Multifold cross-border communication is necessary and even vital for borderland regions, so the problem is even more serious when communication begins to die away within a region which is (was) traditionally strongly interconnected. Moreover, the field research has shown that before the state border was set up, this region functioned locally as an integral whole despite the former border between the two republics.

Schengen border and local border

Even though the borderline between Slovenia and Croatia has not yet been drawn along its entire length (f.e. the sea boundary in bay of Piran), the political dilemma over the kind of the future border revolves around two options: the firm "Schengen" border, or a border with a number of local crossings that would be more friendly to the local people. In fact, the dilemma is as follows: shall we set up a "real" Schengen border, or use a combination of the Schengen principles and local border regime. And, since Schengen cannot be circumvented for reasons of political realism, endeavouring to achieve the combination of both seems to be even more important. To support this view I can give at least two reasons: first, in the era of globalisation and "network society" (Castells) closed-type borders are an farce and can not be real policy solution, and second, Slovenia has know-how and almost half century of experience with the local border regime and local crossings. The system was functional during the period of east-west block division, not solely on, say, the Slovene-Hungarian border, that is to say, between two communist countries, but also on the Slovene-Austrian and Slovene-Italian border. We can conclude that from a local perspective the system was indisputably successful.

Given the efforts to achieve open geo-political borders and maximum mobility possible, the Schengen type border cannot be any real reward for Slovenia. Or for anybody else for that matter including the obliging EU candidates. Arguments pointing to the European security policy are offset by many arguments that point to its limitations, including radical restructuring of local practices within new borderlands, like those along the Slovene-Croatian or some other post-socialist national border, and more (equal) opportunity for movement for any inhabitant of the globe. The logic of enclosing national territories within the electronic partition walls, or restricting access to citizenship can by no means lead to the global society in which transnational mobility would be treated as a free choice and would be bi-directional above all. The choice that Europe made is clear: form walls and establish control to protect ourselves from the "foreigners", third countries nationals. As Andreas suggested, new "walls around the west" were created "along the geographic fault lines dividing rich and poor regions: most notably the southern border of the United States and the eastern and southern borders of the European union" (2000:1).

This is the context in which we should consider the most recent application of the Schengen regime to the southern Slovene borderlands. In effect it is a new type of fence (hence delimitation) based on modern technologies, which is why we use the term "e-borders". In practice, the implementation of the "Schengen regime" implies restrictive border control at the external EU frontiers supported primarily by high information technologies enabling a high level of e-control. The ambivalence of new technologies, which on the one hand expand space - remember the popular catch phrase of globalisation "contracting space and time" - while on the other they radically curtail mobility by means of electronically closed borders, is more than obvious.

The historical cross-section of the past decade at the southern Slovene border yields the picture of a non-border prior to 1991, and the delimiting barrier following 1991. The Schengen frontier regime, seen as a system of electronic borders that is conspicuously based on the concept of control, brings up a number of new issues. We will try to eliminate some of these discussion-provoking dilemmas on the fly:

- Schengen border vs. Globalisation. Does Schengen border - understood as a product of globalisation somehow protect from globalisation itself? In fact it disqualifies globalisation in its most fundamental sense: it prevents free movement of people.

- Schengen borders and the EU vs. migrations. What will be the future of the European migration policies that are primarily focused on controlling migration (see: Brochmann and Hammar, 1999), that is to say, supervision of the mobility of people coming from the "third countries" situated outside the EU? The increasingly more universal fear of "intractable" global migration flows is probably the biggest threat to Europe after the bi-polar division into the "east-west" has been eliminated. Also, it is the foundation on which thrive increasingly more explicit identity panics and racist and xenophobic manifestations of hate-speech directed against foreigners. We should ask ourselves whether the putting up of impermeable electronic walls in the globalisation era could be regarded reasonable if we leave aside manipulative references to the EU security politics? Or perhaps what we have here is an extremely pragmatic behaviour of Europe which uses the southern Slovene border to implement its "new security policy" protecting itself from the Balkans, by which we mean identity delimitations of the type "EU, or rather EU proper vs. the Balkans".

- The Schengen borders and local space. What kind of electronic wall shall we put up along the southern Slovene border? Shall we install an impermeable electronic Schengen wall on the Slovene-Croatian border, meaning a strong isolationist demarcation line separating us from neighbouring (local and national) regions, even though it is evident that various forms of cross-border co-operation and communication will continue in the future as well? One thing is certain though - the border regime decisively determines communication. Accordingly, it is very likely that a potential isolationist Schengen wall will soon compel us to "mitigate" the consequences, at least as far as local contact areas are concerned, say, through European-style cross-border or regional programs. An alternative to such co-operation across borders would be to build up on the traditions and practices that existed in these regions for years. The starting point should be openness in all directions, while orientation towards Brussels as a new power center should not mislead us as much as to overlook people living in the borderland strip approx. 600 km long, either on the Slovene or Croatian side of the border. If we briefly look at other regions of "Schengen periphery" that includes Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland and so on, the feeling of uneasiness only grows.

Some of the mentioned topics entered various public discourses as questions, theses or political projects, others as more or less individual opinions. And all began with the story of transition and societies in transition.

Societies in transition and "Schengen periphery"

Two synchronous stories were unfolding on the old continent at the end of the 20th century: on the one hand, integration processes were gaining momentum - they were limited to western Europe with the addition of the Balkan situated Greece - while on the other the disintegration of the communist block was taking place and was of even greater intensity. Newly formed countries were called post-communist, post-socialist, and states in transition. But states in transition were also societies in transition. We understand this umbrella term as covering a wide range of social changes that transcend the understanding of the traditional political definition of the state which in international community personifies the subject that brings together territory, people and power. Societies in transition also imply, in addition to political realisation of the state, explicit changes, for example in social stratification, such as the breakdown of traditional "classless society", the setting up of by no means uniform civil society functioning as various forms of democratic discourse, and challenging of concepts such as social exclusion and integration, minority issues, marginal groups, access, equal opportunity, social equality etc.

Idea, frequently mentioned, that new subjects of history are migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and urban homeless people, points to marginalised "down" and "out" segments as new protagonists who replaced big stories and stronger actors on the stage of the social. Societies in transition cannot evade this shift, even though it often seems that specific target groups with recognisable "marginal" identities in societies in transition penetrate the space of public politics only with difficulty. One has an impression that in the sphere of the political they still have to "earn" their place, which amounts to convincing the majority about their (justified) existence.

One of the most strongly articulated targeted political actions within almost entire contingent of societies in transition was strong aspiration to join the European integration processes. This type of almost mythological glorification of the image of singular Europe, which the East, Central, South, and even some other sub-Europe strive to join, was named "European idolatry" by Kuzmanić (2001). The criticism of integration processes, which in the public discourse of European bureaucracy figure as a synonym for real Europe, has been expressed by Judt (1998) among others, who wrote that Europe was a myth that was born out of the promise of pan-European unity on which was based the expected prosperity of member countries. The myth however, disintegrated with the collapse of communism. Once the Europe split into two blocks disintegrated, the EU assumed the role of the "prosperity myth" - a synonym for real Europe that is defined by membership. Europe has been changed with the removal of block divisions, but it simultaneously revealed its predicament when faced with the virtually only other possible alternative, that is, an accession to the EU or remaining outside the EU. Incidentally or not, this contributed to the persistence of the old, or formation of new mental boundaries of the type "European Union - who is in, who is out".

The Schengen border should at this point be disputed primarily within the context of the mentioned societies in transition, which found them selves - rather than in the EU as was their political ambition - at the Schengen periphery. Right on the doorstep of Europe the idol, beyond the fortress whose protective walls are, regrettably, precisely the "Schengen periphery", which is a new manifestation of "plural Europes". At least since the Amsterdam Treaty it has been clear what the function of the region called Schengen periphery is: it is a security zone, a safety wall defending it from the south and the east. This new image of "fortress Europe" (see more: Geddens, 2000) is - let me try identify it from the sociological perspective - defined by at least three highly relevant emphases pertaining to post-modern borders, identity and mobility:

- 1) The construction of new borders: under the influence of new technologies a shift has happened within the area of geo-political borders, the shift from "stone to electronic walls" where the latter are nothing short of the messengers of global "isolationist politics".

2) Schengen e-border as an instrument of identity boundaries: the meeting and encounters of "counter-identities" of the Balkans and Europe.

3) The issue of curtailed mobility in modern network society: we live in plural electronic world that expands space, but at the same time we live in an era of global migrations surrounded by electronic partition walls that shrink this same space, while some (geo-political) borders are increasingly more impermeable or only conditionally passable.

The construction of new "electronic" borders

A shift towards electronic walls

Thesis 1. New technologies contributed to the emergence of new types of borders i.e. electronic or e-borders.

This thesis has currency in Europe where in the past decade the hard, geo-political borders have been radically changed and simultaneously replaced with two new types of borders: enduring mental borders of the type "Who is in, who is out?", that is, the borders along the traditional demarcation lines of inclusion and exclusion, or members vs. non-members (which point to the still persistent old borders arising from bi-polar divisions), and electronic borders, "invented" by the EU to protect its periphery. The latter is the Schengen border.

Which arguments can be used to support the thesis that a new type of European geo-political borders is being constructed and turned into modern electronic walls whose primary function is supposedly to protect, but in reality they implement selective policies of the EU? It seems to me, the answer can be found in social and political events of the past decade. With the fall of the Berlin wall Europe removed one of the firmest borderlines that separated European people and nations into the eastern and western block. At the end of the century the European integration that was taking place in the west coincided with the crumbling of multi-national states in the east, where within the newly formed societies in transition joining the EU was given the highest priority.

In this context the European integration story becomes significant as a coquetry of various stories, of old and new geo-political borders and "mental boundaries" that gave rise to them. But it is not only the mental boundaries of the EU that are at issue, because the EU obviously delimited its territory with electronic borders as well. Therefore it seems that the challenge for both the east and the west is precisely a confrontation, that is, transcending communication that is absorbed in the exclusivist discourse, or rather the discourse of "walling off". The biggest challenge for the west is to transcend isolationism, or the closed-type EU, and include the south and the east. Without this, the EU will (accidentally or not) contribute to the maintenance of the old and formation of new borders of the type "members vs. non-members".

To summarise the idea of the relations between the new technologies and new boundaries, it could be suggested that two dimensions in particular are important, and both rely on the concept of globalisation:

The shift towards electronic borders²: it seems that modern technologies find expression through two aspects of electronic border construction. One aspect is technical equipment for the supervision of the borders and border checkpoints³, while the other consists of

² The electronic borders were made possible only by high technologies. However, we should take into account the fact that the borders were always protected using the best equipment available including technological. The specific feature of electronic borders is that they no longer coincide with the territorial borders since "digital signals" penetrate also inside the country.

³ The technical equipment includes for example the tools for the supervision of the so-called green or blue borderline and the equipment for border checkpoints.

software components, that is databases, or the Schengen information System (SIS) which Brinar (2001) named the spine of the Schengen agreement. The author concludes that the emphasis introduced with the Schengen Agreement represent a shift from the concept of free movement to the concept of supervision. She also exposes the view of some legal experts according to whom the entire Schengen package or Schengen *acquis* is in contravention of the very law of the Union in various areas relating to human freedoms (*ibid.*).

The European-style electronic walling communicates the message of global isolationist politics. The Schengen e-border is a realisation of the global isolationist politics and it is simultaneously an example of acceptable globalisation and acceptable isolationism. When considering electronic walling off of Europe we should take into account its fear of migration flows, regional security policies and resulting mobility policies. Or rather, curtailed mobility policies, which is an especially challenge after the acts of 11 September in USA. But even before that at least two extensive and long-lasting crisis (relevant for the EU) occurred: one in the Balkans and the other in Chechnya. I mention them because both contributed to the development of the "feeling of uncertainty and fear" in these regions. The Balkan crisis affected South-East Europe and triggered massive forced migrations which in turn brought about new manifestations of the issue of mobility and immigration in Europe. It seems that the answer is identical in all situation: glorification of security on the basis of state-of-the-art technologies. The implications are, of course, multifold. Among other things they are related to the concept of the supervision of persons, inevitably implying intrusion into the delicate sphere of human rights, of privacy, freedoms and humanity.

Schengen demarcation line as a line separating EU from the Balkans

Thesis 2: The Schengen e-border should be understood as an instrument of delimitation the "second" and the "third" world.

This theses points to the identity demarcation line running along the southern border. By "third world" I mean non-European space, and by "second" world (from the local Slovenian perspective) the geographically closer Balkans.

In this context the Schengen border should be disputed from the perspective of the mentioned societies in transition that became the Schengen periphery. It seems that the Slovene transition or Slovene "European nature" has been tested on the southern Slovene border. It is the future frontier of the EU, therefore it will become a formal Schengen border to which applies the agreement on the implementation of control at the shared external EU borders. When considering the Slovene-Croatian border, the key aspect of the protection of the European periphery is the prospective Schengen wall, and the reason is most topical and "practical" - it introduces into this part of Europe a new type of the wall designed to enclose Europe. The strict rules regulating the (im)permeability of the external EU borders are here interpreted as elements of protection, or of the European security policy. The diction of the agreement is predominantly governed by the outstanding argument of national security and public order, while the third concept of central importance seems to be a foreigner.

From the perspective of sociology we are obliged to call in question the instrumentalization of the Schengen e-border in the construction of identity borders. In Slovene-Croatian example this translates into the meeting and confrontation of "counter-identities" of the Balkans, Europe and non-European areas. This is the sense in which I present the thesis about the delimitation with regard to the "second" and "third" world. The Schengen e-border as an instrument of delimitation with regard to the third world pertains to the transnational migration flows that the EU wants to prevent as efficiently as possible save for the cases when the European labour market identifies the need for the "import of some specific profile".

The Schengen border also appears to be an instrument of delimitation with regard to the Balkans, where the images of European and Balkan identities as a rule appear as contrapositive. Močnik's analysis of identity institutions of the Balkans and Europe shows that the image of the Balkans is being realised as a servitude in the vertical relations and animosity in the horizontal relations, which means a servile attitude towards Europe and scornful attitude towards an unequal other, that is the Balkans (1999:149). But whatever approach we choose the Balkans remains a part of Europe. "Inasmuch as Europe is a synonym for international community, the myth about Europe is a part of the myth about the Balkans. The Balkans does not consist of horizontal relations of distrust and animosity only, but an entire matrix is involved: it is the Balkan horizontal plus European vertical." (Močnik, 1999:154)

The consideration of the Schengen borders in the context of confrontation of Balkan and European identity institutions thus transcends "solely" the local character of the southern Slovene border. It seems that the pondering about this particular Schengen border can be directed towards at least three starting points:

1. Looked at from the perspective of geo-politics, the border running across the Balkans will in the first place imply inclusion and exclusion, in political terms.

2. Looked at from the perspective of time, the Schengen border is very likely to become the demarcation line dividing the Balkans into the "European" and "non-European" part. Even though it will eventually be shifted further towards the south, to the Croatian-Bosnian border, it will still significantly, apparently in a new way, divide the Balkans in our mental images.

3. The Schengen border will after all influence also the internal delimitations, especially from the aspect of the locals living along the Schengen borders. The mental delimitations that will be formed on this micro-level and maintained in local "shared space" may be less interesting from the top down geo-political aspect, but given the social, bottom up interaction and the dimension of everyday life, we cannot afford to neglect it.

I would like to just mention the negligent presence of the Balkans in European integrations in which the Balkan regions, as Morokvasić-Müller (2001) has suggested, figure as an "excluded enclave". I can only join them in their questioning of what could possibly mean the constituting of Europe, respectively European Union, without the Balkans.

Fear of the migration inflow and electronic supervision

Thesis 3: In modern network society the international mobility is being curtailed. The period that was characterised by turbulent international migrations has been followed in Europe by an isolationist walling off policy.

The impermeability of the Schengen electronic border rests to a large extent on computer supported control, which includes the checks on the movement of people and various instruments to restrict and prohibit the crossing of the security line.

I have already stressed several times that the entire migration politics of the EU is founded on the principle of control relating to the protection of borders and the wider issue of the security in the region. An analysis of international migrations, which relate to the southern Slovene border precisely through the introduction of the Schengen border into the European periphery, would be beyond the scope of this essay, but it is not possible to neglect this issue completely either. Mass migrations are by no means a modern phenomenon. On the contrary, people moved from time immemorial, only the dynamics and forms of migration flows were radically different and ranged from various forced migrations to imperial, economic and political motives for migration. As Papastergiadis (2000) show, the early historical forms of human migrations were slavery and colonialism, followed by the migration of

country people into the urban centers in the period of industrialisation, while in the era of post-modern globalisation we are the witnesses of hybridisation of cultures and de-territorialisation. The author uses the term turbulent to denote modern global migration processes, which is primarily a metaphor for the interaction of a number of influencing factors in the modern world.

Another aspect of cultural contacts - that is a relation of cultural superiority - is reflected in the well-known refugees' statements of the type "I came because you were there. We are here because you were there." During the period of European imperialism, the expansion to non-European areas caused economic, political and cultural dependence of many of these regions. The conquering was carried out on the premises of long-term effects. And some individuals from these areas today want to earn something in certain west-European states. Indeed this appears most practical as they already know the language of the country and in some cases even administration is almost identical to that at home.

When talking about Schengen we must especially clearly stress the viewpoint that the "management" of transnational migration flows is a much wider issue than can be regulated by the Schengen agreement focused on the concept of security policy. In this perspective the Schengen border is understood as a self-defensive attitude of Europe and European cultural identity, where one may justifiably ask what the latter really is. But we again have to stress the obvious farce when in the era of globalisation we erect electronic Schengen wall to protect us from the so-called third world. It means from those who bring to this borders the migratory waves from non-European environments and which the Schengen Europe consciously wants to leave out or return to the environments of their origin. And finally, from that third world towards which flows unidirectional and entirely unobstructed intellectual and capital power of the EU.

On the one hand, globalisation created extraordinary technical possibilities for the flow of people, but it also developed a series of other supervising measures that function as almost "tracing systems". Looked at from this aspect, the pluralist post-modern societies are conspicuously based on the concept of supervision (this reveals modern faith in supervision and the primacy of technology) which is legitimised through its alleged being in the service of security policy.

This is the context in which we should consider undocumented migration flows as well. The question that is opened here is of the structural criminalisation of one part of migration. This is the part that is described as irregular immigration. People will of course always move, illegally or legally. Any type of policy cannot alter this fact, since this is simply not the domain of the collective political arena, but of individual human motives, wishes and longings. The migration policy based on closed-type border confines a part of this migration flows almost a priori to the area of illegality. More open and more permeable borders are related to the elimination of this type of security visions, which are governed in the first place by fear of not being able to control migration flows. This option today appears to be rather a non-option.

Concluding remark: Slovenian southern "e-border"

Finally, let's see what Slovene Schengen story looks like. Speaking in loose terms it seems that the Slovene vision of Schengen is determined by two goals: to open the border facing the north, the EU, and to close the border facing the south, the Balkans.

The restrictive implementation of the Schengen principles concentrates on the Slovene-Croatian border, which is generally perceived as a space of undocumented migrations and related criminal offences. The social scientific research consistently refutes such a conviction, while some other representations rather maintain this image than not (especially the

media). In support of this assertion let me just mention the developments from the beginning of 2001 when the cause-and-effect linking of migration flows across the Slovene-Croatian border to a supposed threat to the nation or better, to national identity triggered a wider public response known as "immigration crisis", in which the cultural i.e. identity difference of "others" was strongly emphasised. As Jalušič (2002) pointed out, the self-defensive attitude towards this specific group of migrants was presented through hate-speech whose basic characteristic is precisely denial of xenophobia and racism.

Through these events the Slovene-Croatian border already posed as an instrument of demarcation, whereby Slovenia already assumed the role of European Schengen border and also quite clearly identified with the role of "protective zone". Today it seems that the Slovene government is concerned primarily with the technical organisational aspect of this border, that is, the police-supervised border that should be a safety mechanism. Other aspects, however, are being omitted. These are aspects that could be called the socialisation of the border under which we understand the enabling of more or less unobstructed contacts between people on the two sides of the electronic border as well as dignified and respectful communication when crossing any border.

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USPOSTAVLJANJE SCHENGENSKE PERIFERIJE: PERSPEKTIVE "NOVE" SLOVENSKO-HRVATSKE GRANICE

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Uspostavljanje slovensko-hrvatske granice 1991. godine znatno je promijenilo funkcije novih graničnih područja. Ona su se iz lokalnih pretvorila u područja periferija dotičnih zemalja, a slijedom tekućih evropskih integracija u opsežnu schengensku periferiju na ulazu u Europu. Poanta članka je u tome da se slovensko-hrvatska granica pretvara u jedan od značajnih selektivnih mehanizama regije, a istovremeno je i primjer ne-granice koja se pretvara u elektronički i mentalni zid koji odvaja dvije različite Europe. Takva je granica diskutabilna, kako u perspektivi, tako i u kontekstu tranzicijskih društava koja su se našla na schengenskoj periferiji. Ta nova slika Europe može se definirati najmanje trima naglascima iz područja postmodernih granica, identiteta i mobilnosti. To su: konstrukcija novog tipa granice (prijelaz iz zidanoga na elektronički zid, s Berlinskog zida na e-granicu); 2. schengenska e-granica kao instrument ograničavanja identiteta, i 3. socijalna pokretljivost unutar globalno umreženih društava.

Ključne riječi: GRANICE, SLOVENIJA, HRVATSKA, SCHENGENSKA GRANICA, EUROPSKA INTEGRACIJA, BALKAN, IDENTITET