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Analysis of Inaugural Presidential Addresses in Croatia and Slovenia from 1997 to 2014

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Inaugural addresses are important tools in political communication because, unlike other presidential addresses, inaugural addresses are given at the beginning of the term and are considered programmatic. Since their secession from Yugoslavia, Croatia and Slovenia have followed different paths of democratic consolidation. The purpose of this paper is to compare the topics emphasized in recent Croatian and Slovenian presidential inaugural addresses to gain a better perspective of the events and topics considered most relevant by the main political leaders in these countries. Using an inductive qualitative approach, this paper determined that presidents of both countries referred mostly to the economy, domestic policy, democracy, regional relations, national history, national elements, international relations, the European Union and NATO. Furthermore, the qualitative content analysis showed that, due to the countries' different socio-political situations, the presidents referred to each topic differently, with different foci and notions.

Keywords: presidential inaugural speech, Slovenia, Croatia, content analysis, inductive qualitative approach

1. Introduction

From their declaration of independence in the early 1990s to their accession to the European Union, Slovenia and Croatia experienced regime change, war, and long and demanding accession negotiations with the European Union. While both countries had different socio-political contexts following their separation from Yugoslavia, today, both are consolidated democracies (Freedom House, 2016a, 2016b). Although the importance and role of the president in both countries is formally reduced via the parliamentary political system, the president is still an important national and political figure, who derives authority from direct popular election.

Once a politician is elected, his communication and acts become important areas of interest for political communication researchers. Analyses of political speeches as important tools of political communication have been conducted in extensive empirical research. Political campaign speeches are deemed influential for winning people's minds and votes (Lagerwerf et al., 2015: 273). Furthermore, Lagerwerf (2015) noted that language is an important tool for spreading mediated messages. He argued that public speakers can vary both the formulation and delivery of speeches, producing changes in the affective, cognitive, and behavioral responses of their audiences (Lagerwerf, 2015: 274).

The purpose of this paper is to compare the topics emphasized in presidential inaugural addresses from 1997 to 2014 in Croatia and Slovenia, and to reveal which events and topics the heads of state in these countries considered the most relevant during their terms. This research provides a significant contribution to the study of presidential inaugural addresses in the context of the topic and issue analysis throughout 17 years in two neighboring nations. In addition, this analysis of presidential inaugural addresses will indicate changes in the socio-political context through topics and sub-topics accentuated by Slovenian and Croatian presidents as being the most important and relevant for their terms. This research will not focus on the differences in presidents' rhetoric or on the discourse of the text, but will instead detect the main topics and issues mentioned in their political speech. By analyzing inaugural addresses as the first public addresses of newly elected presidents, this study aims to examine and detect the evolution of issues over the years to gain better insight into the socio-political contexts of Slovenia and Croatia. Since their secession from Yugoslavia, both nations have sought to establish themselves as modern, democratic, and European countries. In the last two decades, both countries have followed different paths of democratization, and Croatia has evolved its political system from a semi-presidential one to a parliamentary one. By detecting and analyzing the issues and topics in inaugural presidential addresses, this paper seeks to examine the ways in which different presidents refer to important topics and events in their countries. Furthermore, the paper seeks to explore how often presidents mention topics and to determine whether there is a significant difference between Slovenian and Croatian presidents with respect to their references to certain prominent topics and sub-topics. To answer these questions, this study employed a twofold analysis, involving inductive qualitative approach and qualitative content analysis. In the inductive qualitative approach, our goal was to detect the main topics and sub-topics of the inaugural addresses of Slovenian and Croatian presidents. Further, with the qualitative content analysis we sought to examine the form, focus and way in which each president mentioned specific topics in his (or her) address.

In the first part of the paper, we will provide a theoretical background of the inaugural address as a form of political speech and an important tool of political communication. Then, in the empirical part, we will first introduce the methods used in the research and then interpret the results.

2. Presidential inaugural addresses as tools of political communication

One important use of language is political discourse, which is a form of discursive dominance involving the reproduction and abuse of power and often confronted with various forms of resistance (Chilton, 2004: 3, cited in Maalej, 2012: 680; Van Dijk, 1997: 11, cited in Maalej, 2012: 680). Political discourse is designed primarily to engineer consent or approval about a given worldview or ideology and to discourage dissent and disapproval by persuading those who resist the mainstream ideology to adopt a different and sometimes opposing belief system (Maalej, 2012: 680). From an ethno-methodological perspective (Garfinkel, 1994, cited in Fetzer and Bull, 2012: 128), politicians “do” politics in and through their acts of communication. Fetzer and Bull argued that politicians “do” more than simply “talk politics in the media” by explaining that, by speaking in public or via the media, politicians present their multiple roles and functions, and, even more importantly for success, “do leadership in context” (2012: 128). Politicians’ direct addresses to their nations are not only powerful instances of political communication, but also important factors in the transmission of the politician’s values, policies and attitudes to the citizens.

In her analysis of the rhetoric of remembrance in presidential Memorial Day speeches, Tess Slavičkova (2013) noted that speeches and memorable phrases uttered by charismatic leaders resonate in American political culture. In addition, she argued that leaders’ illustrious texts are quoted, misquoted, misattributed, sampled and reworked into the contemporary rhetorical fabric (Slavičkova, 2013: 361). Through her analysis, Slavičkova (2013) concluded that political speeches not only provide historical evidence of the development of the USA as a sovereign state with its own oratorical style, but are also part of the country’s everyday discursive landscape (Slavičkova, 2013: 377). Her work confirms that political speeches and political rhetoric are important parts of political communication. First, they are directed toward the audience and the citizens, and second, they set the form of politics and transmit the values and ideologies of the politician.

While many types of activities fall under the umbrella of presidential public relations, the most important appear to be major national addresses (Schaefer, 1999: 516). One type of address given by a political leader is the presidential inaugural address, which has become a great rhetorical tool for sharing the nation’s thoughts, attitudes and vision. The importance of this address lies in the fact that the presidential inaugural address is the first speech made by a new elected president.

Inaugural, according to *The Oxford English Dictionary* (2000: 776), means ‘first, and marking the beginning of something important, for example the time when a new leader or parliament starts work, when a new organization is formed or when something is used for a first time’. An inaugural speech is a common type of ceremonial speech delivered on certain social or ceremonial occasions. According to

Wolvin, Berko and Wolvin (1999), ceremonial speeches have three functions: first, to explain a social world to listeners, as in commencement addresses; second, to display the speaker's eloquence, as in entertaining speeches; and third, to shape and share community ideals, as in inaugurals and keynotes.

In Campbell and Jamieson's (1990) view, an inaugural speech is designed to set the tone for new beginnings when a new officeholder assumes his or her responsibilities. It seeks to unify the audience by reconstituting its members as the people who can witness and ratify the ceremony; rehearsing communal values drawn from the past; setting forth the political principles that will govern the new administration; demonstrating through enactment that the president appreciates the requirements and limitations of the executive functions; and, finally, achieving each of these ends through means appropriate to the address (Campbell and Jamieson, 1990: 14-15). As Graber (1981: 196, cited in Cheng, 2006: 585) mentioned, an inaugural speech meets all functions of political language: information dissemination, agenda setting, interpretation and linkage, projection of the future and the past and action and stimulation. Cheng (2006) argued that, in Western democracies, the presidential inaugural address is delivered by tradition to ease the transition of power and unite the country following an election. Furthermore, Cheng (2006: 585) suggested that, by addressing the public, the newly elected president sets goals and provides solutions for national problems. This means that inaugural addresses represent a nation's political and social situation with respect to national and international issues. Furthermore, such addresses also indicate the direction of the nation from its earliest days to the present. As Denton and Hahn (1986: 10, cited in Cheng, 2006: 585) described, the presidency is a rhetorical and persuasive institution that constitutes social action, provides a context for collective action and contributes to the oral history and definition of the nation.

Over time, the presidential inauguration has become a political, national and media event comprising many smaller ceremonies and traditions. As the head of the government, the president delivers an inaugural address outlining the intended course of the new administration. When a president is first elected, citizens often see the inaugural address as an opportunity to gain a sense of the tone the new president will set for the administration and the nation (Mio et al., 2005). Inaugural addresses take various tones, themes and forms. Some have been reflective and instructive, while others have sought to challenge and inspire (Ford, 1989). Analyzing these addresses can contribute to an understanding of political systems (Ford, 1989).

In her research, Cheng (2006) explored how the Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian used political language rhetoric as a powerful tool to defuse dangerously tense relations with China, repair relations with the US government and gain public support within his own country. In her work, Cheng (2006) analyzed the 2000 and 2004 inaugural addresses of President Shui-bian and argued that everything a president does and says has implications for and communicates "something". In addition, every act, word and phrase is calculated and measured to achieve a desired response. Cheng's (2006) research suggests that presidential power is the power to persuade and that, through speeches, a president leads his country and seeks to persuade the nation and society. Cheng (2006) concluded that the rhetorical style of a president's speech could directly affect the political speaker's aims and successes.

Karwat (1982) argued that the purpose of public addresses is to transmit certain values and attitudes on special occasions. According to Karwat (1982), values are powerful tools in political discourse that can be used for persuasion, legitimization and, most notably, coercion. Evaluating public addresses is important because it enables us to read political actors' minds, examine the ways in which politicians project their expectations and assumptions onto their audiences and determine the dominant outlook of a society. Karwat (1982) concluded that recognizing the audience's needs and values in any political speech might help secure political power.

Speaking about the need for scholars to examine the impact and importance of broadcast speeches, Claire Lidgren Lerman (1985: 185) noted the importance of publicly spoken words. She claimed that broadcast speeches of the political head of the state represent one of the most significant forms of mass communication: the only form of "direct" communication between the symbol of political power and authority and the people. Furthermore, in the US, presidential speeches provide the basic data for news and news commentary broadcasts, which echo or interpret the meanings and significance of the speeches and are primary sources of public understanding or misunderstanding of political reality (Lerman, 1985).

3. From socialism to democracy

Croatia and Slovenia, two former Yugoslav states, framed their so-called "exit from the Balkans" and "return to Europe" throughout the 1990s (Lindstrom, 2003). In 1867, Croatia and Slovenia came together as part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Their secession from Yugoslavia in 1990 ended their joint role in political history. At the time of their secession, all Central and Eastern European countries transitioning from communism to democracy faced doubts regarding the introduction of a parliamentary or a semi-presidential political system (v. Marko, 1991: 45-50, cited in Cerar, 2005: 46; Kaučič, 1992: 737, cited in Cerar, 2005: 46; Trócsányi, 1995: 19-21, cited in Cerar, 2005: 46). These same doubts were present in Slovenia and Croatia. While Croatia introduced a semi-presidential political system in 1992 and switched to a parliamentary system in 2000, Slovenia has remained a parliamentary democracy since its independence.

In 1991, Slovenia became an independent country and adopted a new constitution (Cerar, 2005). Though, at the time, it was common practice to introduce a semi-presidential political system to facilitate the transition from communism to democracy, Slovenia introduced a parliamentary political system. Parliamentary political systems are considered more democratic than semi-presidential systems (Krivic, 1990: 1186, cited in Cerar, 2005: 46). One significant element of the semi-presidential system that Slovenia introduced in its parliamentary system was the direct and multiple election of the president (Cerar, 2005: 46). The first Slovenian president was Milan Kučan, who was also the only Slovenian president who achieved reelection. During his first term, in addition to fulfilling regular state, protocol and representative duties, Kučan participated in important meetings, during which he identified with the real problems and needs of his citizens (Lukšič, 1993: 23, cited in Cerar, 2005: 48). Through such actions, Kučan set the standard of the president as an important figure not only in regular duties, but also in social events and activities. He continued this policy during his second term. In its 25 years of

independence, Slovenia has had five elections and four presidents: Milan Kučan (1990-2002), Janez Drnovšek (2002-2007), Danilo Türk (2007-2012) and Borut Pahor (since 2012).

Croatia followed a very different path than Slovenia. For Croatia, the 1990s were turbulent. Since its secession from Yugoslavia, Croatia experienced transitions, war and long and demanding EU accession negotiations before finally becoming a consolidated democracy. Since the country's independence, Croatian citizens have participated in six presidential elections and elected four presidents: Franjo Tuđman and Stjepan Mesić (two times each), Ivo Josipović and Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović (elected in the most recent election). The first Croatian president, Franjo Tuđman, won the first free elections in Croatia on a program that exploited common places of a nationalist interpretation of Croatian history (Zakošek, 2007). Since the country's separation from Yugoslavia and establishment as a new democracy, the Croatian Democratic Union has played the main role in the political landscape. The first head of the party was also the first Croatian president: Franjo Tuđman. His semi-presidential system regulated the nation's policy and built the charismatic and powerful figure of the Croatian president. The semi-presidential system was introduced during the transition from communism to democracy and was designed to establish a functional and stable authority to contrast the parliamentary system, which was deemed a burden due to its fragmented party system, unstable parliamentary majority and unstable governments (Sokol and Smerdel, 1998: 260-265). Tuđman was the head of the state until his death in 1999. Thus, Croatia entered the new millennium with a complete political turnover: a new president, Stjepan Mesić, and a new political system. The new government believed that a parliamentary political system would reduce the impact of the transition on the arrangement of other political institutions and institutes (Kasapović, 2001: 25). By the end of the first decade of the new millennium, Croatia had a very high human development index (UNDP, 2010). In addition, it held its fifth presidential election (Vrljević Šarić and Zgrabljić Rotar, 2010: 90). In 2013, Croatia became a member of European Union, and in 2014, it elected its first female president, Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović.

4. Methodology

Since the purpose of this study is to detect the most common topics and sub-topics of presidential inaugural addresses and to measure the frequency of mentions of specific content in textual materials, this research will follow a twofold approach: inductive qualitative approach and qualitative content analysis.

The aim of an inductive qualitative analysis is to conclude a general theory or concept from less general parts of the text. Thus, this method was considered particularly suitable for extracting main topics and sub-topics from the presidential addresses. The inductive approach is used to (a) condense raw textual data into a summary format; (b) establish clear links between the evaluation or research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data; and (c) develop a framework of the underlying structure of experiences or processes evident in the raw data (Thomas, 2006: 237). Therefore, this approach is the best method for detecting and then interpreting topics in presidential inaugural addresses.

Content analysis, on the other hand, is a data collection method, whose aim is the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication (Berelson, 1952). In content

analysis, the aim is to gain insight into the incidence of certain topics and sub-issues, as well as to detect changes in topics over the years and across presidential terms.

The purpose of the inductive qualitative approach employed in this study is to determine and interpret the main thematic categories in presidential addresses, while the purpose of qualitative content analysis is to detect the context of mentioning of a certain topic but also the form, primary focus and length of each address.

The aim of this study is to monitor trends and changes in issues highlighted by inaugural presidential addresses in response to the prevailing social context of each term. Thus, the main objective of this study is to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the main topics of inaugural presidential addresses in Slovenia and Croatia?

RQ2: In what contexts were particular topics mentioned?

RQ3: Is there a difference between the two countries with respect to the topics and issues mentioned throughout the years?

Sample: Analyses were conducted on nine inaugural addresses of eight presidents (four Croatian and four Slovenian) elected since independence from Yugoslavia. The 1992 inaugural addresses of Presidents Tuđman and Kučan were excluded from the analysis due to problems related to data collection.

Research plan: The analysis was divided in two parts. The first part of the research refers to the inductive qualitative approach, through which, by analyzing the text, we detected the main topics and sub-topics of the inaugural presidential address. This produced an overview of key issues and events that have marked the 24-year histories of the Croatian and Slovenian governments. The second part of the research refers to the information categorization on the representation of specific issues and to detect differences between the countries in relation to the importance of certain issues over the years. The matrix in the content analysis was divided into two main parts. In the first part of the matrix, our goal was to detect the main characteristics of the speeches: their length, initial salutations, directionality (i.e. towards the past, present or future) and main focus. The other part of the matrix was designed to detect characteristics of specific topics within the presidential inaugural speeches by examining specific sub-topics.

5. Inductive qualitative approach

The main purpose of the first part of the research was to detect the main topics and sub-topics mentioned in the inaugural Croatian and Slovenian presidential addresses. The qualitative analysis conducted via an inductive qualitative approach detected nine main topics in Croatian and Slovenian inaugural addresses: the economy, domestic policy, democracy, regional relations, national history, referring to national elements, international relations, the European Union and NATO. *Tables 1* and *2* present an overview of the specific topics and sub-topics, as well as the contexts in which each president mentions certain issues. *Table 1* presents the sub-topics of Slovenian presidents, and *Table 2*, presents the sub-topics of Croatian presidents.

Table 1: Sub-topics within thematic categories in Slovenia

Topic	Milan Kučan	Janez Drnovšek	Danilo Türk	Borut Pahor
Economy	Tension towards change; Slovenia achieving conditions for development; the State's social system is still unfinished	Economic growth comparable to other European countries; growing economic development; working on a better social system	Successful national economy; reduced unemployment; encouragement for youth economic competitiveness; reduced state ownership	Consequences of the economic crisis; return to foundations; economic growth is determined by reducing consumption and attracting investment
Domestic policy	A better legal system; holding governments accountable; tension for an equal and harmonized local government	Armed forces crucial for better national and European security; coherence with other EU countries	Tendency toward constructive, stable and balanced government cooperation; building a foundation between civil society and government; armed forces are crucial for national and international peace-keeping	Political system has become less detrimental and more focused on the common good; cooperation between the government and the opposition
Democracy	European Union as an opportunity for a better and more equal social system; establishment of a free and equal social order; establishment of democratic law and governance; politic legitimacy	Common values of prosperity, cooperation and pluralism with other European countries; modern and dynamic nation open and equal to all members of society; commitment to human rights and freedom; the prevention of intolerance towards diversity	Achievement of peace through the help of the UN; acceptance of Slovenia as successful by the international community; Slovenia as the one of the founders of the UN; continuation of human rights and equal development; the main value is social solidarity; Christian values and equal opportunities are the grounds for the development.	The law as the only national way forward; successful law functioning leads to reforms crucial for development
Regional relations		Productive relations with neighboring nations; active political, economic and safety-oriented relations with south-eastern European nations; regional relations as a strategic interest	Regional relations as a strategic interest; common identity; cooperation based on common trust, understanding and respect	Good and friendly relations with neighboring nations

Topic	Milan Kučan	Janez Drnovšek	Danilo Türk	Borut Pahor
National history	EU accession as the crown of a long and rich history; plebiscites as a new beginning; resistance to Yugoslav aggression as enabling an independent nation.	National history of independence as a 10-year transition; historic experience as an important lesson; poetic style	History throughout different political contexts; the future will be better than the past; heroic history as a basis for the self-respect needed today; historical events as an entrance to the EU	Struggles in the past encourage and motivate the nation's future
National elements		National culture and art; national poets; common achievements in Europe and the world; national identity	National pride; national identity and culture; national identity within a European identity	The nation is better when all act together; Slovenia needs its citizens as much as the citizens need the nation
International relations	Slovenia has significant international trust and a positive reputation; international problems can be solved only within national boundaries	Slovenia is equal in the international market; international position confirmed by the hosting of a US-Russia summit; international obligations as an entrance to democratic dialogue	Slovenia as one of the most tolerant nations in the world; international relations as a sovereignty; international union confirmation of the nation's success	Slovenia is known and recognized in the international community due to peacekeeping efforts
European Union	Optimism regarding accessing the EU; the EU as a confirmation of development and good policy; EU accession as an opportunity for equal competitiveness in the European market	EU accession making it possible to create a better European frame and opportunities; Slovenia is equal to other EU nations; EU and NATO as main goals of foreign policy	Opportunities for EU chairmanship; EU cannot replace national identity; Slovenia is sovereign within the EU	Slovenia as an active nation within European Union; EU as a national solution to economic crisis
NATO		NATO membership as a confirmation of security and European integration; cooperation with NATO; EU and NATO as main goals of foreign policy	Achieving NATO standards within urgent tasks	

Table 2: Sub-topics within thematic categories in Croatia

Topic	Franjo Tuđman	Stjepan Mesić	Ivo Josipović	Kolinda Grabar - Kitarović
Economy	Weak economy due to the Independence war; nation has become interesting for investors; national currency; tourism as a main economic generator; the need to encourage employment; economic progress in the context of rural development	Establishing a stable and permanent market economy; the possibility of earning one's bread in Croatia	Encouraging entrepreneurship; workers' rights; economic crisis; tourism, agronomy and industry as main economic generators; economic reforms	Economic crisis; economy above ideology; agronomy as a key generator of economy; employment and investors as key economic areas requiring strategy improvements; exports and the ability to conquer new markets
Domestic policy		Government cooperation; moral and respectful policies; managing the government reform plan	Government cooperation; encouraging institutions to be responsible in national development	The need for national consensus on several key issues; government responsibility to encourage investment; Croatian armed forces as a key security factor; establishing a national community on key issues; national minorities as Croatia's advantage
Democracy	The need to follow the constitution; democracy as an important factor in economic, social, cultural and scientific development; democratic stability for all citizens	The need to develop law institutions; human and minorities rights; media freedom; Croatia's national social responsibility; Croatia's role as a democratic and advanced nation; the rule of law; tolerance	Affirmation of the democratic society; systems of democracy and equality as factors in national development; rule of law; equal human rights; religious tolerance; government transparency; cultural tolerance; corruption and criminals as tumors of modern society.	The president as the leader of all citizens, regardless of ethnic, religious or sexual determination; social vulnerability; female president for equal sex rights; no tolerance for corruption

Topic	Franjo Tuđman	Stjepan Mesić	Ivo Josipović	Kolinda Grabar - Kitarović
Regional relations		Peace and cooperation with neighboring nations; stability of the geographic and political region; Croatian support for Bosnia and Hercegovina nations and citizens; normalization of regional relations; rights for refugees; region of peace and tranquility despite diversity	Good regional relations as positive strategies for Croatia; good relations with neighboring nations as promoting peace, security and stability; regional relations regarding tourism and cultural growth.	The need to integrate south-eastern European countries as part of the European family; addressing border issues, especially with Serbia; addressing the issue of missing persons from the Independence war with Serbia
National history	The accomplishment of the 20-year-old Croatian dream; a long, turbulent and uncertain history; the beginning of the Croatian nation in 7th century	From the 'Croatian spring' to Croatian independence; from the first democratic elections to the new millennium; a nation unencumbered by historical or war-related consequences		
National elements	Independence and the creation of a free and sovereign nation; Croatians as one of the older European populations; a thousand-year-old Croatian dream come true	Decent lives for defenders and their families as the heroes of the Independence war; refugees and missing persons	Serving the beautiful nation of Croatia; patriotism confirmed with work and results	'Your president'; 'one of you'; true patriotism; responsibility towards descendants; Independence war; victorious nation
International relations	Success in influencing international factions that did not approve of Croatian independence; Croatia's friendly relations with most of the world's nations; full cooperation with Middle European nations; Croatia has become a participant in international relations	International support for Croatia's democratic policy; being welcomed into the developed world and the group of European nations; Croatia as a friend and a partner in international relations; danger of global terrorism; creating a global antiterrorist association; Croatia's coordination of the UN charter; openness	Croatia as a responsible member of the UN; establishing a mechanism for political and economic networks; global peace; friendly political, economic and cultural relations; the importance of diaspora	Cooperation with EU and NATO allies; neighborhood relations; international cooperation, peace and the preservation of security in south-eastern Europe, especially in Bosnia and Hercegovina, as one of the most important international goals; the importance of diaspora

Topic	Franjo Tuđman	Stjepan Mesić	Ivo Josipović	Kolinda Grabar - Kitarović
European Union	International co-operation with EU nations	Work on partnerships and accessing the greater family of European nations	Membership as a serious challenge; the tension to succeed in the large and demanding European market; full acceptance of the democratic values of the united Europe; EU as a challenge concerning the development of national identity	Better usage of EU membership; living the life of an EU member nation; open trade and new markets; intensification of efforts to secure European fund resources
NATO		Work on partnerships and memberships; work towards joining European and Atlantic integrations	Membership as a factor in the promotion of democracy and Western values; incorporation in NATO as an important military and political task	NATO membership means security, but Croatian armed forces are the main factor in security

Sub-topic analysis for both nations

Over the course of the last two decades, during which Slovenia and Croatia witnessed different socio-political frames and national paths, the presidents of the two countries addressed different topics and sub-topics in their inaugural presidential addresses. In 1997, the first Slovenian president, Milan Kučan, referred to the economy in his inaugural address by discussing the market economy and Slovenian opportunities on the European market. That same year, Croatian president Franjo Tuđman referred to the economy by discussing the War of Independence and national unity. Tuđman also mentioned the countryside and agriculture as the main economic foci, whereas Kučan focused on economic opportunities in the broader international context. The market economy first became a topic in Croatia during the 2000 inaugural presidential address of Stjepan Mesić. In 2002, the Slovenian president Janez Drnovšek discussed the national pursuit of European economic standards and the creation of new opportunities for further national progress. Meanwhile, Croatia had not even started EU accession negotiations. In 2008, a global economic crisis hit Europe, including Slovenia and Croatia. Subsequently, in 2010, the new Croatian president Ivo Josipović referred to the problems caused by the crisis, discussing the nationwide challenges of unemployment, economic reform and entrepreneurship. Interestingly, while Josipović was discussing new economic reforms in Croatia, Slovenia's 2012-elected president, Borut Pahor, was calling for a return to traditional values, arguing that the key to economic recovery lay in spending cuts and new investments. A similar approach to the economy was mentioned two years later by Croatian president Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, who pushed for a focus on investments and young entrepreneurs.

Croatian President Tuđman did not mention the topic of important and crucial international associations, such as the European Union and NATO. In fact, the first Croatian president to refer to membership in these associations and the need to achieve the conditions and standards necessary for participation was Stjepan Mesić. By contrast, in Slovenia, President Kučan was talking about participation in the European Union and creating a common policy with other European countries as early as 1997. In addition, Slovenian president Drnovšek set membership in the European Union and NATO as two main foreign policy goals, positioning these associations as pathways to economic success. Later, in 2007, President Türk referred to the European Union as a national topic: not something that must be achieved, but as an association of nations within which Slovenia must remain sovereign. In Croatia, President Josipović devoted a significant portion of his 2010 inaugural address to the topic of the European Union and NATO. At the time of his election, Croatia was already a NATO member and was at the end of its EU accession negotiations. Pahor, the current president of Slovenia, focused his 2012 inaugural address on the problems with the European common market caused by the global economic crisis. Finally, President Grabar-Kitarović, the former NATO Assistant Secretary General for Public Diplomacy, took an interesting approach of referring to NATO only in the context of supporting the Croatian army and to the European Union only in the context of achieving a better, more effective utilization of EU funds.

With respect to the topic of democracy, in 1997 Croatian president Tuđman focused on the national context: equal human rights and respect for the constitution. That same year, in Slovenia, President Kučan discussed the need to create opportunities on the EU market. Similarly, achieving equal rights and equal dialogues with other European countries was the main point of the inaugural addresses of Slovenian presidents Drnovšek and Türk. In his 2000 and 2005 inaugural addresses, President Mesić continued Tuđman's emphasis on the importance of national, minority and human rights. In 2010, his successor President Josipović, a professor of law, discussed legal regulation and the creation of better laws to support and consolidate Croatian democracy. Two years later, Slovenian president Borut Pahor also mentioned the law as crucial for furthering the development of the nation. Finally, the first female president of Croatia focused on sexual and gender equality, mentioning that, though she would serve as the president of all Croats, she was proud to see that Croatia was ready for its first female president.

With respect to international relations, President Tuđman in 1997 referenced Croatia's history of war and the importance of international support, but did not refer to state or regional relations. Subsequently, in 2000, President Mesić referred particularly to regional relations, noting high aspirations for peace and political and economic stability throughout the region. He also called for an end to the isolation policy and expressed high wishes for accession to the European Union. Like President Mesić, President Josipović discussed the importance of making international friends, with a great emphasis on diaspora. Developing good relations with neighboring nations is crucial for Croatian development, and this was among Josipović's priorities. By contrast, in Slovenia, President Kučan mentioned in 1997 that national problems could no longer be solved inside national boundaries; instead, they were part of an international context. President Drnovšek, five years later, described Slovenia as equal in international relations and as playing an important peacekeeping role in the region of Southeastern Europe due to its geographical location. In 2007, President Türk's inaugural address summarized international relations

through a single factor: the importance of sovereignty. He referred to international collaboration as a confirmation of national maturity and the consolidation of democracy. He also mentioned regional collaboration as crucial for Slovenia's progress and strategic interests. Whereas presidents Kučan, Drnovšek and Türk emphasized regional and international relations as crucial for national improvement, the current President Pahor, like President Grabar-Kitarović in Croatia two years later, mentioned only good international and regional collaboration.

In 1997, President Tuđman discussed domestic relations by referring only to education. That same year, in Slovenia, President Kučan referred to the need for laws and legislatures to establish internal political stability. These choices indicate the first obvious difference between the two countries related to their socio-political contexts: whereas Kučan indicated that Slovenia is internationally open, Croatia was still nationally oriented. Subsequently, Slovenian President Drnovšek compared domestic policy to the contexts of other European countries and cited education as a main force for greater national progress. By contrast, Croatian Presidents Mesić in 2000 and Josipović in 2010 mentioned government collaborations as crucial for national functioning and development, a topic that no Slovenian president except President Türk mentioned in their inaugural addresses. President Pahor of Slovenia discussed the political system as the right solution for pursuing the common good. Finally, in 2014, President Grabar-Kitarović in Croatia referred to the army as crucial for keeping the nation in order and maintaining order and peace. These foci differ significantly from those of other presidents, who were more oriented toward the sub topics of education, minorities, collaboration, etc.

Due to the turbulent political and national histories of both countries, the first presidents in Slovenia and Croatia referred to Yugoslavia and the achievement of sovereignty as a long-desired dream. President Tuđman mentioned the victims of the Independence war as the price for freedom and independency. Later, in 2000, President Mesić disassociated his focus from the War of Independence and mentioned the broader Croatian history, but then returned to the topic of the war and the battle for freedom in 2005. Croatian President Josipović did not referring to history in his inaugural address; instead, he mentioned only national and patriotic elements, such as 'serving my beautiful country', etc. The Croatian president with the most national elements in his addresses was the first president: President Tuđman. Later, President Grabar-Kitarović, while referring to Croatian history, referred most often to the time of President Tuđman and the glorious victory in the War of Independence. Whereas, in the context of history, Croatian presidents were focused mostly on the period after the War of Independence, due to the years of war, its many victims and the devastated economy, Slovenian presidents were focused mostly on national history or on Slovenia's national identity as a part of the European identity. In Slovenia, after President Kučan, the focus was on national history in general, with an emphasis on culture as an important element in maintaining and transferring tradition and history. When talking about national elements, President Türk referred to Slovenia's national identity, which he argued needed to be maintained within the European Union. In other words, Türk felt that national identity must be above European identity.

6. Qualitative content analysis

The second part of the analysis examined the form and focus of the inaugural addresses of the Slovenian and Croatian presidents. In addition, with the content analysis, our goal was to categorize and examine each topic and sub-topic and to detect the ways in which each president referred to different issues.

The first part of the coding sheet referred to the size and form of the salutations in the inaugural addresses. The analysis showed that Slovenian presidents in general had longer addresses than Croatian presidents did. The first Croatian president, Franjo Tuđman, and the current president, Ivo Josipović, had longer addresses, but they were still no longer than 2500 words. In his two addresses, President Mesić presented shorter speeches of 1500 words each. The same was true of President Kitarović, who also had a shorter address than that of the first Croatian president. We must keep in mind that the first Croatian president had more authority under the semi-presidential system and, thus, more responsibility towards the citizens. By contrast, Slovenian presidents had much longer addresses, ranging from 3500 words to more than 4500 words. The only exception was President Pahor, who offered a 2500-word address.

The salutations were similar across all presidents in both countries. Nevertheless, the analyses showed some differences in the ways in which each president saluted. Interestingly, both of the first Croatian and Slovenian presidents (Tuđman and Kučan) saluted their citizens using their national identity. Since Tuđman and Kučan were the first presidents of newly established democracies, such an approach could be expected. However, in 2014 in Croatia, President Grabar-Kitarović also referred to the citizens by their national identity, even though, at that time, Croatia was already a part of the European Union. Her predecessors Mesić and Josipović used the terms 'citizens' or 'European citizens', referencing their identity as citizens; however, in Slovenia, this practice was used only by President Pahor. The common salutation for all presidents, except for President Tuđman in Croatia, was to the foreign guests and the special interest groups.

With respect to the foci of the inaugural addresses, it was typically not possible to detect the exact focus or tone. Presidents Mesić and Josipović in Croatia and President Pahor in Slovenia referred to the future in a positive tone in most of their addresses, and the analysis suggested that this future orientation was their focus. However, such data were not possible to detect for the other presidents, since they referred frequently to past and present events as being important for the future of the nation. In addition, it was not possible to detect the exact topic of a presidential inaugural address when the president referred to more than one topic as being crucial for national development. The only exception to this multiple focus was the address of Grabar-Kitarović, who referred mostly to national elements: the national identity, the Croatian family and veterans of the Croatian War of Independence.

The analysis of specific topics in the inaugural addresses of Croatian and Slovenian presidents showed that presidents of both countries mentioned mostly the same topics in their inaugural addresses, though in different contexts and different periods. The analysis of the inaugural addresses of both Slovenian and Croatian presidents revealed that certain topics were mentioned by presidents in both countries: the economy, domestic policy, international relations and the European Union. However, these topics were mentioned in different contexts and different foci. When discussing the economy, Croatian President Tuđman focused on economic restriction, the national currency and the war burden. Due to the War

of Independence and his role in the semi-presidential system, his responsibility was to refer deeply to economic issues and to explain the reasons behind the country's post-war economic devastation. On the other hand, the Slovenian presidents were focused more on the market economy. Their country was not as affected by the war or independence, and their policy was oriented towards Europe. Following the establishment of the parliamentary political system in Croatia, the presidents of both countries referred to the government as being responsible for the state of the nation; however, both also mentioned the importance of collaboration for improving the state of the nation. Interestingly, only the first Croatian and Slovenian presidents mentioned the ambition the president co-creating national decisions; however, due to the political system, these presidents had more power in leading their countries. At the end of the first decade of the new millennium, the economic crisis devastated the European economy, including the economies of Slovenia and Croatia. President Josipović in Croatia and President Pahor in Slovenia were focused on the economic crisis and the role of the president in domestic policy. It is interesting that, in 2012, President Pahor was still referring to the economic crisis and its consequences for the economy; by contrast, in 2014, President Grabar-Kitarović in Croatia mentioned the economic crisis only in the context of eliminating its impacts on the economy. Education, science and youth policy were issues for all presidents in both countries. Slovenian presidents were focused more on particularly vulnerable groups of citizens, such as the socially vulnerable, users of the health system, etc., whereas Croatian presidents were more focused on defenders, refugees and victims of diaspora as citizens of special needs. All presidents mentioned international relations in the context of their country's international position. The one exception was President Tuđman of Croatia, who discussed accession to such international organizations as the UN while other presidents were mentioning policies of opening up the country and cooperating with other European countries. Furthermore, with respect to international relations, the topic of the European Union also showed interesting data. While all presidents in both Slovenia and Croatia mentioned the European Union, they mentioned it in different contexts. In 1997, Croatian president Tuđman talked about collaborating with other European countries without indicating any goal of reaching European standards or of seeing the collaboration as an opportunity for better national development (as was the case in Slovenia in the same year). After Presidents Tuđman and Mesić in Croatia focused on the European Union as a strategic foreign policy goal, President Josipović referred to the end of accession negotiations, and President Kitarović discussed the context of European funds usage. In Slovenia, accession negotiations were a primary topic for Presidents Kučan and Drnovšek, while Presidents Türk and Pahor were focused on the equality of decision making in the Union.

NATO was a topic of interest for Presidents Mesić and Josipović in Croatia and Presidents Drnovšek and Türk in Slovenia. Mesić referred to the importance of accession, while Josipović focused on opportunities of foreign policy. In Slovenia, the presidents also mentioned NATO as an important foreign policy goal (though this was also in the context of European and global security).

Democracy was an important topic for every president. While the first two Slovenian presidents discussed the political transition, this was not case in Croatia. Whereas Slovenian presidents were focused on legislation and justice in terms of democracy, the first Croatian president was focused solely on pluralism and human and minorities rights.

7. Conclusion

Politicians' direct addresses are considered a very important political tool in the political communication literature. Particularly, in presidential inaugural addresses, politicians are able to directly address the public. The main purpose of this research was to determine the main topics of inaugural presidential addresses in two neighboring countries that shared a similar history and political union prior to their independence. To examine this context, the present study analyzed the inaugural addresses of Slovenian and Croatian presidents. The goal was to detect the topics and their contexts in the address and to identify any differences between the two countries with respect to their mentions of topics and issues over the years. The research was conducted at two levels: first, an inductive qualitative approach of presidential inaugural addresses was conducted to detect main topics, and secondly, a qualitative content analysis produced more specific data of the mentions of certain topics and sub-topics and the contexts of particular issues.

An indicative qualitative approach was used to detect the main topics of the inaugural addresses. The presidents of both countries referred to the economy, domestic policy, democracy, regional relations, national history, national elements, international relations, the European Union and the NATO. The analysis showed that, due to the countries' different socio-political situations, the presidents referred to each topic differently. In this context, despite the significant differences across presidential addresses within each country (due to the long period of analysis), the most obvious difference is between the presidential addresses of the Croatian and Slovenian presidents.

Whereas Croatia was occupied with the War of Independence and the establishment of a nation affected by the war, Slovenia was internationally open and oriented from the beginning of its independence. While the first Croatian president was more focused on establishing peace and national stability, the Slovenian president was already discussing equal opportunities in Europe and opening and competing in the European market. Furthermore, while Croatian presidents were focused on achieving European standards and accessing the European Union, Slovenian presidents were oriented toward sovereignty and the national identity of Slovenia as a part of the European Union. By detecting specific topics over the years, this research indicates that it is possible to monitor national development and policy. Further, by analyzing the topics of inaugural addresses, this analysis detects important issues for each nation over time. Finally, this research offers a significant contribution to the analysis of inaugural addresses as important tools of political communication in the context of analyzing and separating issues and topics addressed by leading politicians. This data offer a reflection of the important issues or topics of the nation at a given time and politician decision or solution to these issues for the better future. This research was not oriented to the discourse or the tone of the address but to the important topics and issues mentioned by the elected presidents of neighboring countries.

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Analiza inauguracijskih predsjedničkih govora u Hrvatskoj i Sloveniji od 1997. do 2014.

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Inauguracijski govori važan su alat političke komunikacije jer se izlažu na početku mandata, za razliku od ostalih javnih obraćanja političara, te su smatrani programskima. Od odcjepljenja od Jugoslavije, Hrvatska i Slovenija prolazile su kroz različite puteve demokratske konsolidacije. Cilj ovog rada je usporediti teme koje su hrvatski i slovenski predsjednici isticali u svojim inauguracijskim govorima da bi se dobio uvid u događanja i teme koje su bile najrelevantnije za predsjednike u pojedinoj zemlji u određenom vremenu. Koristeći induktivni kvalitativni pristup, ovo istraživanje pokazalo je da se su se predsjednici obiju zemalja referirali na teme: ekonomije, unutarnje politike, demokracije, odnosa s regijom, nacionalne povijesti, nacionalnih elementa, međunarodne politike, Europske unije i NATO-a. Nadalje, kvalitativna metoda analize sadržaja pokazala je da su se predsjednici obiju zemalja referirali na svaku temu s drukčijim fokusom i namjerom zbog različitih društveno-političkih situacija u kojem su se zemlje nalazile.

Ključne riječi: predsjednički inauguracijski govor, Slovenija, Hrvatska, kvalitativna analiza sadržaja, induktivni kvalitativni pristup