
WHERE DO WE BELONG? IMPACT OF EXPLICIT LOCALISATION OF SLOVAKIA ON ITS IMAGE IN BRITISH DAILIES

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Abstract: *EASTERN EUROPE IS NOT ONLY A GEOGRAPHICAL REGION. IT IS MORE FREQUENTLY VIEWED AS A CULTURAL ZONE, DEFINED BY A COMMON COMMUNIST HISTORY. DESPITE THE FAST ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT, ITS IMAGE ABROAD, ESPECIALLY IN POPULAR CULTURE, IS STILL PREDOMINANTLY NEGATIVE. SLOVAKIA – A SMALL AND YOUNG CENTRAL EUROPEAN COUNTRY IS OFTEN PLACED VAGUELY ON THE IMAGERY MAP OF EUROPE. THE PAPER PRESENTS THE RESULTS OF CONTENT ANALYSIS DETERMINING THE PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF EXPLICIT PLACEMENT (LOCALISATION) OF SLOVAKIA IN THE REGIONS OF CENTRAL EUROPE, EASTERN EUROPE, CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE (CEE), IN NEWSPAPER ARTICLES IN FIVE ONLINE BRITISH DAILIES IN 2010-2014. ITS THEORETICAL PART SPECIFIES VARIOUS FACTORS INFLUENCING AN IMAGE OF A COUNTRY ABROAD. THE EXAMINED PERIODICALS INCLUDED POPULAR ELITE (THE DAILY TELEGRAPH, THE GUARDIAN, THE FINANCIAL TIMES) AND TABLOID (DAILY MIRROR, DAILY STAR) DAILIES. THE MAIN FOCUS IS THE POSSIBLE CORRELATION OF THE EXPLICIT LOCALISATION OF SLOVAKIA WITH THE TONE OF THE ARTICLE (POSITIVE, NEGATIVE OR NEUTRAL). TO CONFIRM THE RESULT VALIDITY, THE CHI-SQUARE STATISTICAL TEST WAS APPLIED HERE. MOREOVER, THE PAPER FOCUSED ON THE PRESENCE OF EASTERN EUROPEAN STEREOTYPES IN THE RESEARCH SAMPLE, AS IDENTIFIED BY N. KANEVA (2012) AND R. SAUNDERS (2012).*

Keywords: *COUNTRY IMAGE, EASTERN EUROPE, CENTRAL EUROPE, CONTENT ANALYSIS, BRITISH ONLINE DAILIES*

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INTRODUCTION

The predecessor of Slovakia - the Czechoslovak Republic always paid great respect to its relations with Great Britain as a global political leader. The significant events in their common history include the role of Britain in the Munich agreement appeasement, the Czechoslovak government-in-exile, and the support of the dissident initiatives until 1989.

Nowadays, according to Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, David Davis, in 2017, there were around 90,000 Slovaks living in the UK and approximately 2,000 Britons living in Slovakia. Besides that, the two countries have formed tight industrial and commercial links, e.g. the UK is among the top five export destinations for Slovakia. They both develop thriving automotive industries (Slovakia is a world leader in car production) and are members of NATO.

Even nowadays, after Brexit, cooperation will continue. Its forms will be reshaped by various treaties and agreements, with some expected and unexpected modifications compared with the situation before January 1, 2021. Political affairs, research and development, culture, travelling, sports, economic partnerships as well as various social issues will be reflected in the media reality. That means that an image or brand of Slovakia will thus become even more crucial in the near future.

Despite costly and extensive country branding campaigns in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, presenting them, for example, as *work in progress* and *country of passionate idealists* – Poland (Surowiec, 2012, in Kaneva, 2012, pp. 136-138), *Carpathian garden*, ideal for adventure travellers – Romania (Bardan&Imre, 2012, in Kaneva, 2012, pp. 169-187), country of spas and superb gastronomy – Hungary (Kulcsár&Yum, 2012, in Kaneva, 2012, p. 207), country of inventive and creative people – Slovakia (campaign Good Idea Slovakia); their media image is often predominantly negative.

Approximately 21% of examined media texts (101 out of 481) contained explicit localisation of Slovakia in Eastern Europe, Central Europe, in CEE (Central and Eastern Europe) or their combination. Some authors (e.g. Tesař, 2003) noticed the preference of the inhabitants of the CEE region to be considered part of Central and not Eastern Europe, due to its negative image of the latter.

In regard to the findings above, we decided to determine whether the localisation of a country is related to the tone of the news article. Based on the research of country image experts N. Kaneva (2012) and R. Saunders (2012), we also attempted to identify the presence of the most frequent stereotypes related to Eastern Europe: nationalism, mysterious and unknown, violence, underdevelopment and poverty, migration and sexualisation in our research sample.

1. Country image development

The ability of branding campaigns to modify the country image, the durability and impact of these changes seem to appear highly disputable. N. Kaneva (2012, p. 10) distinguishes between optimistic, branding-based approaches and critical approaches studying the ideological background of respective experts. One of the central issues here is the value of independence and the uniqueness of national culture that might be distorted and misrepresented by these attempts. As D. McQuail (2009, p. 277) asserts, national culture is considered a valuable property of a nation often susceptible to foreign influences.

The leading branding expert S. Anholt (2009, pp. 169 - 179) established six reasons why countries are not worthy of attention:

1. they are the countries of minor interest and there is little chance of getting into contact with their culture, representatives or products;
2. they are only a few globally well-known or famous country representatives;
3. “culture of modesty“, standing out in the crowd is suppressed;



4. being “low-profile countries“ in “high-profile regions“, which means there are strong stereotypes and prejudices related to these countries or cultures, e.g. Eastern Europe;
5. absent or low attempts to increase the country reputation abroad;
6. boring country presentation.

Based on his findings (2009, pp. 5-6), there are six factors influencing the country image (brand), namely: tourism (one of the strongest tools), products and brands, government politics, trade and investors, culture, country citizens.

In line with S. Anholt, D. McQuail (2009, pp. 273–274) implied that the news in the so-called developed countries does not often report on events in small, globally less important countries, with the exception of the elite or specialized periodicals. A significant factor for the choice of content here seems to be their imaginary consumers and the assumption that they will not be interested in certain types of news.

The media texts focus on, apply, challenge and confirm various national stereotypes. This notion seems to be the central one in understanding the country reflection in the media. Stereotypes are immensely powerful in forming an image of a country, as “about two-thirds of human behaviour forms are dictated by stereotypes” (Sadokhin, 2014, p. 66). A. P. Sadokhin (2014) further highlights the pros and cons of stereotypes and their everyday usage. The pros, for example, include certain “truthfulness” of the stereotype as it is based on real-life first-hand experience. However, the cons of stereotypes seem to appear more significant. They can excess generalization and prejudice, preserve misconceptions, and distort reality. W. Lippmann (2008) stresses the pervasive nature of these stereotypes, derived culturally. They can frequently be passed by generations and thus resistant to change.

Several authors (Galani-Moutafi, 2000; Phalet&Poppe, 1997; Kleppe&Mossberg, 2005) indicate that the stereotypical perception of another country is inversely proportional to our knowledge about it. the first definition of a stereotype, which he designated as an image that exists in a person’s head, whic

2. Imaginative geographies

The influential orientalism theory of E. W. Said (1978) assumes that in assessing other countries we apply the *Us* and *Other* binary categories, where negative qualities are attributed to the latter one. E. Said originally applied these concepts in explaining the Western world vs. Orient/the Middle East relations and inherent cultural concepts. The Orient, predominantly the Middle East in Western thinking can be characterized by clichéd images of violent, primitive, irrational, fanatic and generally inferior society. The cultural representations of the West are seen as a source of progress and development. Based on this theory, the western attitude is deeply rooted in an attempt to establish Eurocentric imperial domination.

A concept related to orientalism, also defined by Said, is the notion of imaginative geography. It can be understood as a set of beliefs on a geographical unit – a country or a region, often created without any real experience with the respective place. R. Nikischer (2013, pp. 147-161) asserts that imaginative geographies play a significant role in developing the country image abroad. The imaginative geographies are highly subjective, often affected by fear, bias, etc. A European would typically characterise an Oriental as naive, wild, underdeveloped, unrefined, barbarian, and dishonest.

The binary character of West-East relations can also be applied to the relations of Western Europe vs. Eastern Europe and the Balkans. M. Bakić-Hayden (2017) further develops Said's concept of orientalism explaining that in every culture there is a tendency to view other cultures to the South and East as less developed and more conservative.

As M. Karásek (2012, pp. 83– 96) implies, the Balkans can be seen as “a metageographical metaphor, alter-ego of the West, border region of Europe and the Orient“. The people in the Balkans are often portrayed as passive, overly emotional, violent, and dirty. This can be confirmed by the ideas of the Bulgarian historian M. Todorova (1997, p. 14), who claims the Balkans are considered the “darker side of Europe“. A remarkable view of this theory was expanded in the work of T. Petrović (2009), who applied this binary relationship to the countries of the European Union and the countries outside it.

In the context of imaginative geographies, Eastern Europe is a rather artificial concept, mainly characterised by countries struggling with underdevelopment and poverty. F. Tesař (2003, pp. 70 –71) asserts that being perceived as a part of Central Europe is favoured by these countries because it is a chance to be viewed as a part of developed, democratic Europe.

If we adopt the perspective of I. Dichev (2000, p. 93 in Kaneva, 2012, p. 7) of the much-desired transition from “shameful identity to the desired identity“ in the countries of former Soviet block, the preference to be placed in Central rather than Eastern Europe seems to be of great importance.

Several authors attribute this binary relationship to cultural stereotypes which developed during the era of Enlightenment – the period of travel diaries. According to L. Wolff (1994), the cultural North/South division of Europe was replaced by the East/West axis, where the Easterners took up a role previously reserved for the barbarians of the North. Moreover, the role of Eastern Europe as the *Other* to the Western civilisation served for its validation.

Thirty years after the fall of communism, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are still perceived as underdeveloped. A typical Central/Eastern European city features grey dilapidated concrete buildings and gloomy people. M. Phillips (2010, pp. 43– 47) points out a void in information and images depicting the Eastern European realia in the present popular culture, claiming that, 150 years after Byron, the British fiction is still dominated by "vampires, romantic bandits, postfeudal aristocracy and endless communal conflicts."

Figure 1 *Portraying Slovakia in the road movie Eurotrip (2004)*



3. Stereotyping Eastern Europe

As mentioned above, the term Eastern Europe is not geographical but historical, political and social. The countries of Eastern Europe are thus frequently identified with the countries of the former Ostbloc, frequently including also the Balkans and even some countries of Central Asia, such as Kazakhstan. Moreover, the term Europe before 2004, i.e. the so far most extensive enlargement of the European Union, was in the British press often associated with only the countries of the European Union (Azarova, 2017).



The present image of (Central and) Eastern Europe is rooted in still lively historical stereotypes, some dating to the age of Enlightenment, especially, as mentioned previously, to the era of popular travel diaries. The following part briefly summarises the most prominent stereotypes, based on the findings of N. Kaneva (2012) and R. Saunders (2012).

a. Nationalism

Eastern European countries are generally considered cultures with a high prevalence of nationalist tendencies. Some authors (e.g. J. Rupnik, 1996 in Kaneva, 2012, p. 62) attribute this phenomenon to the ideological void after the fall of communism as well as accompanying economic and social changes. L. Kulcsár and Y. Yum (2012, pp. 169 – 193) noticed high sensitivity concerning the national identity in this region, stemming from the “constant state of inadequacy“, which (besides other aspects of everyday life) also affects political decision-making.

b. Mysterious and unknown

In line with M. Todorova (2007), we can assume that Eastern Europe and the Balkans have been in Western Europe interpreted as the *Other*, in terms of binary contrast – different and complementary, mysterious and unpredictable. However, based on C. Lévy-Strauss (2006, in Sedláková, 2014, pp. 451 – 452), the application of binary opposites in human thinking is a natural and inevitable process that helps us acquire basic orientation in a complex world.

For example, travel diaries inspired B. Stoker in portraying the Slovaks as loyal helpers of the infamous count Dracula (1897). However, he never visited neither Slovakia, Eastern Europe, n-or the Balkans. D. Light (2005, pp. 42 – 43) explained that B. Stoker used mysterious Slovaks to emphasise the otherness of Transylvania and its people. B. Korte (2010, pp. 8 – 9) assumes that Dracula can be interpreted as a fear of the West from the East, affected by the unstable development in the former Ottoman empire and also settling of poor Eastern European Jews in London's East End.

c. Violence

Considering its volatile borders, swift political regime changes and its blood-soaked soil (Snyder, 2010), Eastern Europe has always been a politically unstable region. R. Saunders (2012) characterised it as an eternal zone of conflicts and unstable politics. This imagery can be confirmed by the setting of many films and literary works in Slovakia, for example, the 2005 horror film *Hostel* by Eli Roth, 2005, portraying Slovaks as violent and malicious inhabitants of a primitive and mysterious country. Eli Roth (PRI, 2006 in Saunders, 2012, p. 61) admitted he chose Slovakia because it was an unknown country.

d. Underdevelopment and poverty

The current pop culture is a rich resource of images of poor and underdeveloped Eastern Europe, with humour being a factor of emphasis. N. Kaneva (2012, p. 50) noticed a trend of creating a generic Eastern European country, usually a strange and underdeveloped, often dictator-led entity, for example, *Molvania*, *Brutopia*, *Latveria*, *Borovia*, *Borduria*, M. Bradbury's *Republic of Slaka*, or *Krakozhia* from S. Spielberg's *The Terminal*.

Some authors used actual countries to represent specific, predominantly negative values, e.g. as in the above-mentioned cases of Slovakia - *The Hostel* or *Eurotrip*, Albania in J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1998) and many others.



e. Migration

High migration from a particular country frequently indicates poor living conditions of the people of the country they migrate from (Juráková, 2003 in Krokusová, 2007, online). After the fall of the Iron Curtain, Great Britain had to face several migration waves from Eastern Europe and the Balkans. As B. Korte (2010, pp. 2–3) puts it, the influx of immigrants has highly influenced the public discussion on integration, human rights, national and cultural identity. After the 2004 territorial expansion of the EU, the British public started to demonstrate deep concern about Eastern Europeans stealing jobs from the locals.

According to V. Veličković (2010, pp. 195 – 197), the images of flooding and swamping have been historically very typical of the British public discussion on migration, also frequently applied to African and Asian migrants. The Eastern European migrants are usually depicted as Polish plumbers and construction workers, confirming the classic stereotype of an uneducated, hard-working male migrant from Eastern Europe. Female migrants – cleaners, waitresses, au-pairs, etc. are almost invisible. In general, Eastern European migrants are seen as unsophisticated and old-fashioned, lacking style and finesse.

The extensive research of P. Baker et al. (2008, in Tarasheva, 2016, pp. 16–18), which studied the representations of refugees and migrants in the British press, confirmed deep concerns of the British public in terms of immigrants who are planning to stay in Great Britain. Also, they notice the high incidence of water metaphors, comparing migrants to natural disasters.

A specific phenomenon related to Slovak immigration to Great Britain is the influx of Eastern European (including Slovak) Roma. J. Krokusová (2007) noticed critical reporting on Slovakia after 2000 in terms of its treatment of the Roma minority in several European countries, e.g. Belgium or Finland. This topic was depicted as significant in the Slovak media in the respective period, too. The Roma migration started spontaneously but later evolved in organised departures, causing many related issues, including usury, human trafficking and ID forgery.

Sexualisation

Another typical representation of Eastern Europeans is viewing them as sexual objects, especially the Eastern European females, depicting them as immoral and promiscuous. R. Hall (2007b, in Saunders, 2010, p. 56) attributes this to the image of Eastern European gymnasts from the 1980s. Moreover, Eastern Europe is considered a haven for pornography producers (Saunders, 2012, p. 56).

Methodology

Our descriptive and relational research applied a combined method of quantitative and qualitative content analysis. The sample included 481 articles published from January 1, 2010, to December 31, 2014, in five British online dailies – The Financial Times, The Guardian, The Daily Telegraph, Daily Mirror and Daily Star. In accordance with the guidelines of C. Newbold et al. (2002, pp. 80-81), the criteria for the selection of periodicals were their variety, periodicity as well as availability of the articles. As one of our aims was the comprehensive media image of Slovakia in the selected period, we applied the simplest sampling method – census. The texts were considered relevant if they contained the words: *Slovak*, *Slovakia*, *Slovakian*.

Our codebook included 12 variables. Besides the conventional variables of the article date, author, periodical, and the title, it also contained the analytical variables article topic, genre, tonality, presence of adjectives, frame, and the localisation of Slovakia.

The acquired data were processed and evaluated using statistical methods, especially the chi-square test. This paper presents our results that focus on the country localisation and the presence of cultural stereotypes. Cultural stereotypes can be perceived as collective symbols able to interpret social

events and phenomena (Cingerová& Motyková, 2014). Key elements that assisted in the stereotype detection were the present adjectives and adjective collocations, metaphors, points of view, verbal aspect, message tonality, emotional language, binary oppositions, visual images, narrator's stance and the cited resources (comp. Macnamara, p. 17), as well as identification of the present frames. We relied on the most common predetermined frames: conflict, economic consequences, human interest and morality (DeVreese, 2005, p. 54), character and performance frame in sports news (Lewis&Weaver, 2015, pp. 219-242). Besides them, we identified 18 other frames: growth and development, discrimination, David and Goliath, economic advantage, innovation, populism, corruption, threat, change, crime and punishment, cruelty, sadness and loss, indignation, apathy, unknown, assessment, sustainable development and concern.

Results and Discussion

Topic versus tonality

A significant analytical codebook variable was the article *topic*. We identified sixteen particular topics and the category *Other*, as demonstrated in Table 1. In an attempt to determine whether the article topics and their tonality are related, we performed the chi-square statistical test.

Table 1 Topic and tonality in the examined articles

Topic	Tonality		
	Positive	Negative	Neutral
sport	55	13	95
EU economy	47	7	25
Slovak economy	7	2	5
EFSF – European Financial Stability Facility	8	9	16
EU politics	5	10	11
Slovak politics	1	17	6
global politics	0	1	1
nationalism	0	2	5
tourism	14	2	1
migration	2	6	8
Roma	0	8	1
crime	1	24	7
education	1	0	2
healthcare	3	0	0
arts and culture	3	2	6
environment	0	1	4

When applying the statistical chi-square test, all standard levels of significance were higher than the p-value ($2,5526 \times 10^{-10}$), confirming the interdependence of the article tonality and the topic. In our context, it means that the tone of the article including a reference to Slovakia will depend on the respective topic. As demonstrated in Table 1, articles with certain topics were markedly positive, e.g. sport, European economy, or tourism, whereas some were notably negative – Roma, migration, crime and Slovak politics.

Localisation of Slovakia

The perception of Slovakia as an Eastern European country can be understood as a highly symptomatic characteristic of its image because we assume that this localisation can express or bear certain cultural stereotypes. Our codebook contained the variable *explicit localisation of Slovakia*. Applying this variable, we aimed to determine whether Slovakia is openly viewed as a part of Central Europe, Eastern Europe or a combination of both.

Table 2 *Localising Slovakia in British dailies (2010-2014)*

Slovakia placed in:	Central Europe	Eastern Europe	CEE or Central and Eastern Europe	No localisation	Central Europe + CEE	Central Europe + Eastern Europe
FT	20	9	46	81	1	2
Daily Telegraph	3	2	0	45	0	0
Guardian	1	7	1	92	0	0
Daily Mirror	0	1	0	42	0	0
Daily Star	2	8	0	120	0	0
Total	26	27	47	380	1	2

Table 1 demonstrated that the majority of articles (380 out of 481) did not include any localisation. The analysis revealed the frequent use of the abbreviation CEE – Central and Eastern Europe, occurring almost exclusively in The Financial Times (1 case in The Guardian). Concerning the regions of Central Europe and Eastern Europe, the incidence rate was almost identical – 26 and 27 cases, respectively. In 3 cases, Slovakia was placed in both regions in the same article.

Applying the statistical chi-square test, we aimed to establish a possible dependency of the article tonality and the explicit localisation of Slovakia. As the p-variable value was higher than 0.05 ($p = 0.145$), we cannot claim that the localisation and tonality are dependent. We assume that certain arbitrariness in placing Slovakia on the map of Europe may indicate vagueness in its perception abroad.

Identifying the stereotypes

Some articles in our sample explicitly admit gradually changing paradigms in representing Eastern Europe. For example, by Jan Cienski (FT, 2013): “*For decades, the traditional image of central Europe was of a backward place where peasant farmers ploughed tiny plots with the help of a horse. Today, a symbol of the region is a low office building packed with young, well-educated outsourcing workers.*”

Tony Barber (FT, 2011) in the same periodical expressed it similarly: “*The days of crumbling concrete, surly staff and crippling inferiority complexes are over. ...They know they are back in their rightful place on the map of Europe.*”

Despite challenging the stereotypes, their presence in our research sample was confirmed.



In most examined texts, **nationalism** in Slovakia is related to Slovak-Hungarian relationships. It indicates persisting stereotypes from the 1990s about nationalist and extremist Eastern European politicians. It seems that this issue still involves a present, lively narrative. The used expressions are expressive and often negative e.g. *fascist state*, *teenage country*, etc. The issue of Slovak – Hungarian relations was noticeable with other topics, such as the discussion on the independence of Kosovo. Here the Slovak reluctance to recognize is attributed to the possible precedence in relation to the Hungarian minority in Slovakia.

Mysterious and unknown – mentions of Slovakia indicating this characteristic were not dominant but appeared mainly in articles related to tourism. Many of them touched on the lack of information about Slovakia, there were no associations and images that the reader could connect with Slovakia, so it was often necessary to present basic information. Tourist reportages had the character of a discovery journey, which is generally typical of them, but, in this case, it was necessary to clarify the basic information, e.g. geographical location. The ignorance of well-known representatives of Slovakia is characteristic, we believe that Andy Warhol, although his name undoubtedly resonates in Anglo-Saxon culture, is not a typical representative of Slovakia (he has was not born there and never visited the country).

Violence

We believe that based on the examination of our research sample, it is not possible to generally perceive Slovakia as a country with a high rate of violence and crime. The number of articles on crime is not high (6,7% of the total number of articles), there were no explicit concerns about crime or the level of violence in Slovakia. On the contrary, the narrative frame of a country that peacefully broke up with the Czech Republic (*Velvet Divorce*), even though it happened in a relatively non-standard way, evokes the image of a country whose representatives can solve problems non-violently, by agreement.

When describing the mass shooting in Devínská Nová Ves, The Daily Telegraph (2010) explicitly stated that Slovakia had had experience with shootings of criminal gangs in the 1990s but did not experience any such large-scale shootings at present.

T. Nicholson's article in FT (2010), which presents the first Gay Pride march in Slovakia, deviates from this narrative. The images present evoke primitive violence directed at a peaceful crowd with families with children, including neo-Nazis throwing stones and tear gas canisters and shouting hateful slogans. According to the article, the police underestimated the situation. The article cites the statements of two foreign participants, the Austrian politician Ulrika Lunacek and Maria Cornellis – a Dutch MEP who attributes such reactions to the conservative religious society in the former communist countries (she mentions the example of Lithuania).

Underdevelopment and poverty

The images, narratives and frames in our sample indicate a positively perceived economic development of Slovakia, presenting numerous images of growth and prosperity. The narrative present is a picture of a small country that has experienced painful reforms, with responsible and hard-working people. We believe that this narrative bears the hallmarks of a narrative frame according to Ch. Booker's (2004) theory of primary narrative plots – Rags to Riches, the story of a small country that went from poverty to wealth and success. In the discourse on the EFSF 2011 controversy, where the issues of justice and the common good were raised, we noticed signs of the narrative Overcoming the Monster – victory over the monster (Booker, 2004). It is a struggle of a small, insignificant opponent against the big and strong fighter, while the small one has courage and determination. It is likely that



framing events with strong and emotionally saturated stories significantly increases the potential for media response to events. In this type of discourse, however, there is an assessment of Slovakia as a poor country - it is often described as the poorest or the second poorest in the Eurozone. Similar attributes are understandable in the narrative on justice, especially in relation to the contrast with Greece as a wasteful country, and to justify Slovakia's reluctance to contribute to the EFSF.

The references to poverty and backwardness were frequently related to mentions of Slovakia's communist past, and a few images of shabby, decrepit buildings appeared, but overall it can be stated that Slovakia's narrative frame as a poor and backward country is not significantly present in the monitored dailies and is of a rather declining tendency. This trend is especially prominent with broadsheets.

The topic of **migration and migrants** was also detected in our research sample. Here, we noticed a significant difference between the image of a migrant abusing the British welfare system in tabloid newspapers and the dominant image of a hard-working Eastern European migrant in elite dailies. The topic of migration also touched on the problem of Roma and their migration, where Slovakia was portrayed highly negatively, articles in the research sample presented images of a country that discriminates against its Roma fellow citizens, and Roma living in the UK were portrayed as anti-social abusers of social benefits.

References directly indicating the **sexualisation of Slovak women**, i.e. their perception primarily as sexual objects, with emphasis on their country of origin, were not explicitly present. Certain signs of such perception of women were present in tabloid periodicals, in articles on the Eurovision Song Contest, Slovak contestants Daniela and Veronika Nízlová were described as "sexy sisters" (Daily Star, 2011). Other similar mentions concerned a twerking competition with a Slovak participant (Daily Star, 2014), as well as the case of the murder of an elderly British businessman by a young Slovak woman. The Briton is presented in some articles as a *sugar daddy*, which indicates the immoral nature of their relationship, and also, almost without exception, the articles on this case also contain revealing photographs of the defendant in a swimsuit on the beach. The revealing photographs also accompanied the article about M. Škrtel and his wife, typical of the tabloid press (Daily Star, 2014). However, these mentions were rather marginal and concerned the nature of the activities of selected women and did not focus on their origin.

Conclusion

Slovaks and other inhabitants of Central and Eastern Europe frequently demonstrate high sensitivity in terms of placing their country in the respective region. Their attitudes can be explained by the fact that the localisation of their country is also a carrier of certain cultural stereotypes associated with these regions. In this context, we attempted to determine whether Slovakia is in British dailies considered a part of Central or Eastern Europe and whether its localisation depends on the article tonality. The content analysis in combination with a chi-square statistical test did not confirm this dependence. The placement of Slovakia into the respective regions did not depend on the type of periodical. However, there was a noticeable arbitrariness in localising Slovakia on the map of Europe, with an almost equal number of cases of placing Slovakia in Central or Eastern Europe. The most used region was a compromise term CEE (Central and Eastern Europe). Its high frequency can be explained by the number of articles mentioning Slovakia in The Financial Times. We suppose that this term and its abbreviation can be considered most suitable and neutral and recommend its use. The article topics and their tonality are dependent, so the image of Slovakia in the British dailies depends on the context it is presented in.

The national stereotypes, as identified by N. Kaneva (2012) and R. Saunders (2012) were not equally distributed and their presence can be only partially confirmed. The most significant stereotypes



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– in terms of their quantity and expressiveness were migration, unknown and mysterious, nationalism. Backwardness and poverty, violence and sexualisation of women were not strongly represented in our sample.

Based on our research, Slovakia would be most appropriately characterized by two idioms – *underdogs* and *work in progress*. In the national branding strategy, the lack of information and absent associations can be understood as an opportunity rather than a weakness. The post-factual reality calls for filling blank spaces with authentic content, rediscovered national myths and original stories.

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