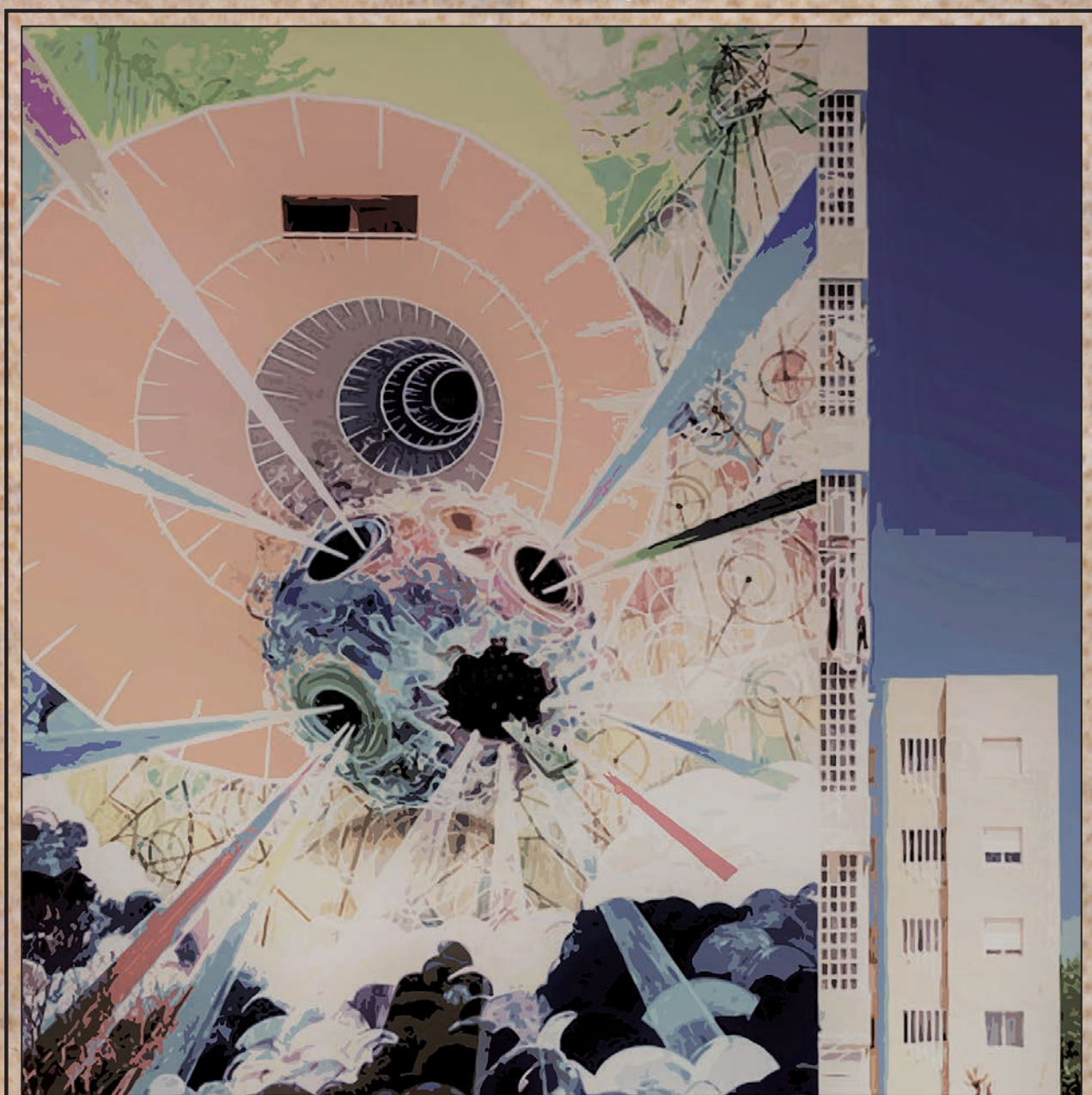


ANNALES

Anali za istrske in mediteranske študije
Annali di Studi istriani e mediterranee
Annals for Istrian and Mediterranean Studies
Series Historia et Sociologia, 34, 2024, 4





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THEMATIC EXPLORATION OF SLOVENIA'S PATH TO INDEPENDENCE IN SLOVENIAN SCOPUS-INDEXED HISTORY JOURNALS: A BIBLIOMETRIC AND SOCIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This article explores how Slovenian history journals have portrayed Slovenia's path to independence. The analysis of 3,759 articles and other journal contributions from 12 Scopus-indexed journals, using select digital humanities tools and methods, reveals that themes concerning Slovenia's path to independence, though less frequent overall, exhibit a dynamic pattern of regular occurrence, influenced by commemorations and special issues of journals. This suggests growing scholarly interest over time. The analysis identified four key thematic groups: Socio-cultural, Political, Religious, and Yugoslavia themes. Furthermore, metadata analysis indicates a balanced distribution of male and female first authors and equitable thematic accessibility across publication languages. These findings contribute to a nuanced understanding of how Slovenian Scopus-indexed history journals engage with this critical topic.

Keywords: bibliometric and sociometric analysis, digital humanities tools and methods, democratization processes, independent Slovenia, content analysis, thematic analysis of Slovenian history journals

ESPLORAZIONE TEMATICA DEL PERCORSO DELLA SLOVENIA VERSO L'INDIPENDENZA NELLE RIVISTE STORICHE SLOVENE INDEXATE SU SCOPUS: UN'ANALISI BIBLIOMETRICA E SOCIOMETRICA

SINTESI

Il presente lavoro analizza il modo in cui le riviste storiche slovene indicizzate nel database Scopus hanno rappresentato il percorso sloveno verso l'indipendenza. L'analisi di 3.759 articoli e altri contributi di 12 riviste indicizzate da Scopus, utilizzando strumenti e metodi scelti delle scienze umane digitali, rivela che i temi riguardanti il percorso della Slovenia verso l'indipendenza, sebbene meno frequenti in generale, mostrano un modello dinamico di ricorrenza regolare, influenzato dalle commemorazioni e dai numeri speciali delle riviste. L'analisi ha identificato quattro gruppi tematici chiave: argomenti socio-culturali, politici, religiosi e jugoslavi. Inoltre, l'analisi dei metadati mostra una distribuzione equilibrata dei primi autori, uomini e donne, e una copertura tematica uniforme nelle diverse lingue delle pubblicazioni. Questi risultati contribuiscono a una comprensione sfumata del modo in cui le riviste di storia slovene indicizzate in Scopus affrontano questo argomento critico.

Parole chiave: analisi bibliometrica e sociometrica, strumenti e metodi delle scienze umane digitali, processi di democratizzazione, Slovenia indipendente, analisi del contenuto, analisi tematica delle riviste storiche slovene

INTRODUCTION¹

Over three decades ago, Slovenia entered the defining stage of its transformative journey towards independence. This process, marked by the declaration of independence on June 25, 1991, and the subsequent Ten-Day War, culminated in the establishment of the independent Republic of Slovenia. It unfolded through multiple stages, intricately linked to democratic principles. Initially, critiques of the existing one-party political system emerged, reflecting a desire for a pluralistic political landscape. These sentiments evolved into tangible independence aspirations, expressed through active political engagement. Key milestones include the formulation of the Slovenian national program, impactful amendments to the constitution, the establishment of political parties, and the consequential democratic elections that marked a crucial chapter in Slovenia's pursuit of self-determination.

Since then, scholars have meticulously examined and documented Slovenia's pursuit of independence, with a rich array of scholarly works, conferences, and events contributing to a deeper understanding of this complex historical period.²

In this period, the role of Slovenian history journals in facilitating the exchange of scholarly insights about Slovenia's path to independence has been significant. The past two decades have witnessed considerable development in Slovenian academia, with 12 such history journals indexed in this time frame in the reputable international Scopus abstract and citation database. By becoming part of this database, journals showcase their scholarly excellence and contribute to a worldwide scholarly dialogue.³ In this context, the Scopus database is an essential gateway for Slovenian historiography to engage with the global academic community.

Utilizing select digital humanities tools and methods, our research addresses two primary research questions, with the initial inquiry focused on determining the number of Slovenian history journals indexed in the Scopus database in 2023. This initial investigation involves identifying the

number of such journals and quantifying the size of the cumulative corpus. Subsequently, through the analysis of the thematic field in journal article metadata, we employed a combined bibliometric and socio-humanistic approach to explore how themes related to Slovenia's path to independence coexist with other significant emergent themes within these journals.

Our research is based on two foundational assumptions:

1. Themes exist in articles as separate, specific, and distinctive entities, functioning in correspondence with other themes and supporting the core ideas of the articles within which they emerge.
2. Themes can be extracted from key elements of the publications, primarily titles, keywords, and abstracts.

By identifying key themes, thematic clusters, trends, and platforms regarding Slovenia's path to independence in Slovenian Scopus-indexed history journals, this interdisciplinary approach will contribute to a more nuanced and interconnected understanding of this pivotal moment in Slovenian history, enhancing the accuracy and depth of thematic analysis and offering valuable, previously unavailable bibliometric and sociometric insights.

METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE

Our study is based on a bibliometric and sociometric analysis of a refined corpus of scholarly works published in domestic (Slovenian) periodical publications (journals) indexed in the Scopus database. Scopus is one of the most extensive and internationally recognized multidisciplinary abstract and citation databases, encompassing bibliographic data of articles, conference papers, monographs, patents, and other forms of scholarly production. Launched by Elsevier in 2004, leveraging advancements in digital technology, it is a crucial digital research tool for searching, analyzing, and tracking research worldwide. Its significance lies in its broad coverage across various

¹ This article was written in the framework of the research programme P6-0138 (A): *The past of north-eastern Slovenia among Slovenian historical lands and in interaction with the European neighbourhood*, project J6-4603: *Facing Foreigners Between the Medieval and Early Modern Period in the North Adriatic Towns*, and the programme core: *Heritage science and climate change: new research through an interdisciplinary approach and the use of artificial intelligence (AI)*, funded by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS).

² For a more comprehensive understanding of the historical and scholarly perspectives on Slovenia's path to independence, the following monographs provide valuable insights cf. Bennett (1998); Drnovšek (1996); Fischer et al. (2005); Gabrič (2012); Hribar (2010); Jambreč (2014; 2018); Janša (2013); Lusa (2012); Meier (1996); Osojnik (2022a); Perovšek (2002); Pesek (2007; 2008; 2012); Pirjevec (1995; 2003); Ramet (2002; 2011); Repe (2001; 2002a; 2002b; 2003; 2004); Repe & Kerec (2017); Rupel (1992); and Valič Zver (2013). This list is by no means exhaustive. In recent years, several scholarly papers have been published that explore novel nuanced perspectives, several of which are presented in our analysis.

³ While the debate persists on whether Scopus represents the "gold standard," it is of the foremost global databases, granting access to discussions from Slovenian journals internationally.

Table 1: List of Slovenian Scopus-indexed History journals with source record ID, number of items, and % in the sample (Source: Own elaboration).

Title of the journal	Sourcerecord ID	Number of items (articles, notes, and reviews) in the sample	Total percent
<i>Acta Historiae Artis Slovenica</i>	19700180507	169	4.5 %
<i>Acta Histriae</i>	21100286403	566	15.1 %
<i>Annales, Series Historia et Sociologia</i>	5600155299	575	15.3 %
<i>Asian Studies</i>	21100780471	305	8.1 %
<i>Etnolog</i>	21100199530	495	13.2 %
<i>International Journal of Euro-Mediterranean Studies</i>	21100265696	71	1.9 %
<i>Kronika</i>	20768	298	7.9 %
<i>Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino</i>	19900192007	398	10.9 %
<i>Studia Historica Slovenica</i>	21100348975	536	14.3 %
<i>Zbornik za umetnostno zgodovino</i>	21100212328	106	2.8 %
<i>Zgodovina za vse</i>	21100789032	87	2.3 %
<i>Zgodovinski časopis</i>	23612	153	4.1 %
TOTAL		3,759	100 %

disciplines, providing researchers and industries access to the latest information and research.⁴ Scopus offers a comprehensive view of scholarly production, enables the measurement of research impact through citation indicators, and promotes collaboration and communication among researchers. As such, it contributes to advancing science and innovation, playing a vital role in the global scientific community ecosystem (Elsevier, 2023a). The choice of this database is justified not only by the facts highlighted in the introduction but also by the acknowledgment from the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS, formerly ARRS), which not only recognizes Scopus indexes in the quantitative assessment (scoring) of scholarly excellence but also assigns more (typically higher quality) points for publications in social sciences (code d) and humanities (code h) journals included in the database compared to publications in field-comparable journals that are not indexed in Scopus or the Web of Science⁵ (ARRS, 2023).

All Slovenian journals with the Scopus All Science Journal Classification Code (ASJC) 1202 - History – were considered. This code categorizes the journals within the larger field of Social Sciences and Humanities (Elsevier, 2023b). While some of these journals may also be included in other disciplinary categories, our analysis focuses explicitly on their classification under the History code.⁶ A two-step verification process was employed to determine their inclusion. Initially, we analyzed the Slovenian journal index report *Seznam slovenskih revij, ki so vključene v mednarodno bazo podatkov Scopus (h) 2023*, compiled annually by the Institute of Information Science (IZUM) in Maribor – the central information service for Slovenian science, culture, and education (IZUM, 2023). Twelve such journals were identified: *Acta Histriae*, *Acta Historiae Artis Slovenica*, *Annales, Series Historia et Sociologia*, *Asian Studies*, *Etnolog*, *International Journal of Euro-Mediterranean Studies*, *Kronika*, *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, *Studia Historica Slovenica*, *Zbornik za umetnostno zgodovino*, *Zgodovina za vse* and *Zgodovinski časopis*.

⁴ Scopus also includes bibliographic data of relevant articles of indexed journals that predate the launch of the database.

⁵ The phrase “Web of Science” is often used synonymously with the Web of Science Core Collection database in academia. Web of Science is a research platform that provides access to the Core Collection, which itself combines several subbases or indexes. The Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) and the Arts & Humanities Citation Index (AHCI) are particularly important subbases for the social sciences and humanities.

⁶ It is noteworthy that while this approach ensures our analysis is centred on historical research within History journals, it is possible that some historical research might be published in journals without the 1202 code. Exploring such publications following the same methodology could be an interesting avenue for future research.

However, since IZUM extracts bibliometric data directly from the database provider, in this case, from Elsevier, we conducted a second verification step to confirm the inclusion of Slovenian journals there. Each journal selected for indexation in the Scopus database undergoes a rigorous process and is assigned a journal code or Sourcerecord ID. The analysis showed that all Slovenian journals identified in the first step possess such a signature (cf. Table 1).

The corpus of journal contributions consists of 3,978 items. These are categorized into six types: articles, review items, reviews (which in Slovenian encompass both review articles and reviews of books and other scholarly works), notes, conference papers, and short surveys. We further refined this corpus by removing book reviews, conference contributions, and short surveys. Given that Slovenia's path to independence spanned roughly the 1980s and early 1990s, we limited our study to the time frame from 1990 to 2022. Publications from 2023 were excluded from the study since numerous volumes of the selected journals have yet to be published or are awaiting indexing in the Scopus database at the time of the conducting of this study. The final version of the refined corpus consists of 3,759 items, distributed across journals as depicted in Table 1.

Employing categorization models (*dictionaries*), we applied content analysis, a classical qualitative research method, to reduce and analyze material. The roots of the modern approach can be traced back to the mid-twentieth century (Berelson, 1952), and numerous contemporary and specialized versions have been developed since then (Flick, 2014; Drisko & Maschi, 2016). We followed Krippendorff's conception (2013, in: Drisko & Maschi, 2016, 2), defining content analysis as a "research technique for creating replicable and valid inferences tied to texts (or other forms of relevant material) and the contexts of their use." This conception enables analysis beyond the manifest level of the text, offering other advantages. This approach is suitable because it allows the analysis of a broad range of textual material, a high level of independence from source (Bauer, 2000), and the formulation or adaptation of a categorization model enabling thematic analysis of a large amount of collected material (Flick, 2014).

Our approach is based on that of Naterer and Efendić (2022), who demonstrated the potential and strengths of content analysis in their meticulous analysis of 1,707

articles from four representative Slovenian history journals, spanning the period from 2009 to 2021. Employing content analysis, they outlined 18 distinct thematic clusters in Slovenian history, organized into four main categories: National topics, Military topics, Local topics, and Church-biographical topics. Their findings underscored anthropology's integral role in exploring Slovenian history. Given the alignment of their research question, sample selection, and analytical methodology with our own, we recognized their approach as well-suited for informing our research objective.

To achieve the research objective, the content analysis process was based on the following protocol:

1. Formulation of specific research questions.
2. Selection of relevant textual material and sources from the Scopus database (1996–2022; no relevant indexed sources found for 1990–1995).
3. Formation of the initial categorization model – the initial model was designed for data capture and defined key parameters for analysis: journal title, year of publication, issue number, article title, name and surname of author/authors, gender of the first author,⁷ author's affiliation, author's area of specialization, country of author's affiliation, publication classification (original research article, review article, professional article), author keywords (English), and abstract (English).
4. Segmentation of collected data according to the initial categorization model.⁸

Analysis of collected data was performed using a purposely built analytical categorization model or dictionary and included three levels: title of the article, author keywords, and abstract⁹. The model was developed through the following steps:

- a. Review of the frequency distribution of phrases comprising 2 to 5 words with a minimum frequency of 3 occurrences in the text (these phrases were used to build initial structure of the categorization model – the initial model had 379 keywords).
- b. Review of the frequency distribution of all relevant words (these words were used in a two-step refinement process – the final categorization model had 1,127 keywords).
- c. Review of the frequency distribution of main themes (initial review of topics using *topic modelling*).

⁷ We focused our analysis of gender aspects solely on the first author, assuming that the first author has the majority of the control over the article's topic, content, and structure.

⁸ Dissection is an essential step in analyzing extensive material, as it allows for a clearer, more focused, and faster analysis of content. The dissection involved segmenting the structural parts of entire texts into separate sections of a specially designed table (a section in the text containing the author's keywords was relocated to a separate Keywords section, the Abstract section was moved from the entire text to a separate Abstract section, and so forth).

⁹ Here it is important to note that while the included sample was complete on the title and author keywords levels, there were 382 (10.1%) items missing on the level of abstracts. These items were not available in any format and from any database and are considered missing values within our analysis.

Table 2: Structure of the categorization model with examples of keywords (Source: Own elaboration).

Thematic category ¹²	Examples of keywords
Independent Slovenia ¹³	attainment_of_independence, independent_slovenia, neodvisnosti, samostojnosti, slovenia_s_independence slovenian_independence
Economic themes	davčni, davek, economic, econometric, economia, economic, economica, economical, economically, economico, economics, economic_activities...
Yugoslavia themes	Federal_Republic_of_Yugoslavia, Jugonostalgicnimi, Jugoslave, Jugoslavenske, Yugoslavia
Social themes	družbeni, družbenih, družbeno, družbenokritičnega, družbenopolitične, družbenosti, družbi, družbo, družboslovne, social, society, local_identity, local_level, local_people
Cultural themes	cultural, cultural_activities, cultural_and_historical, cultural_and_linguistic, cultural_and_political, cultural_and_social, cultural_context, cultural_heritage, cultural_history, cultural_identity, cultural_institutions, cultural_landscape, cultural_life, cultural_memory, kulturno, kultura, kultur
Political themes	politics, politikita, foreign_affairs, foreign_minister foreign_policy, human_rights, ideological_and_political, ideological_political, intelligence_service, intelligence_services, internal_affairs, internal_political, international_community, international_law, komunista, komunisti
Biographical themes	Anton_Korošec, Anton_Martin_Slomšek, Jože_Plecnik, Avguštin_Stegenšek, Boris_Pahor, Edo_Mihevc, Edvard_Kardelj
Educational themes	high_school, higher_education, history_textbooks, izobrazba, izobraziti, izobraževalnega, pouk, izobraževalnem, education, school
Ethnic themes	emigrations, emigrazione, ethnic, ethnically_mixed, ethnic_groups, ethnic_identity, ethnic_territory, ethnographic_museum, etnica
European themes	Europe, europea, european, europeanisation, europeanism, europeanization, europeans, european_context, European_countries, European_integration, European_union
War and Military themes	armada, armed, armed_forces, armee, armies, armija, arming, armoured, army, military, war, JNA, Jugoslovanska narodna armija, JL, Jugoslovanska ljudska armada
Church and Religious themes	catholic_church, catholic_church_in_Slovenia, catholic_political, catholic_side, christian_social, church, churches, church_architecture
Law and Justice	court, criminal_justice, criminal_law, criminal_offences, criminal_proceedings, judicial_proceedings, judicial_system, justice, sodišče
Intelligence and Security	intelligence_service, kgb, sabotage, sabotages, intelligence_services, SS, UDBA, state_security

Field-specific words, phrases, and themes were used to build the analytical categorization model¹⁰ enabling the location of main themes and their components, as well as mapping the disciplinary field through an analysis of

their connections (link analysis).¹¹ The final version of the analytical categorization model included 1,127 specific keywords used for thematic mapping categorized into 14 themes or thematic categories (see Table 2).

10 A categorization model (also known as a categorization dictionary or dictionary) is a model that includes words, phrases, and expressions extracted from textual material and are understood in relation to the material's content as keywords. These keywords are categorized according to the theoretical framework, research goals, or other relevant criteria (co-occurrence factors). Such a categorization model enables (1) the reduction of collected material, (2) the quantification of qualitative content, and (3) statistical analysis.

11 In bibliometric studies, researchers are not necessarily required to adopt a predefined categorization model. This flexibility allows for more tailored approaches to analyzing publication trends, as seen in the study on Slovenian diplomatic studies by Udovič, Brglez & Arbeiter titled "Kdo (kaj) piše o/v slovenskih diplomatskih študijah?: primerjalna analiza izbranih slovenskih znanstvenih revij" (2021). Rather than embedding publications into preset categories, the authors examined articles across select Slovenian journals, analyzing the scope and frequency of topics related to Slovenian diplomatic studies. Their use of the COBISS+ database to extract publications with keywords like "diplomac*" and "diplomat*" reflects a pragmatic, data-driven approach to corpus selection.

12 Also referred to in this study as themes.

13 The thematic category Independent Slovenia within this analysis encompasses the entire historical path leading to the establishment of the Republic of Slovenia. This includes, but is not limited to, pre-independence movements and aspirations, relevant political developments during the dissolution of Yugoslavia, and the declaration of independence and its aftermath.

The sample consisted of 2,473 (65.8%) original articles, 1,230 (32.7%) review articles, and 56 (1.5%) notes (commentary or discussion on a specific topic), distributed over time as depicted in Chart 1.

Analyzing the sample structure over time reveals a notable increase in the number of articles published in Scopus-indexed journals, particularly from 2005 onwards. This increase can be primarily attributed to the consistent growth in the number of Slovenian history journals indexed in Scopus following the establishment of the database in 2004. Additionally, the overall surge in year-on-year scholarly production across various disciplines may have also been contributing to this trend since (Powell & Dusdal, 2017). These observations suggest a positive correlation between the expansion of Slovenian-indexed journals and overall scholarly output. It reflects a dynamic and evolving academic disciplinary landscape, highlighting the increasing prominence of Slovenian historical research in the global scholarly community relative to the size of Slovenia.

ANALYSIS OF THE THEMATIC FIELD

The first step in our analysis of the thematic field involved cluster analysis of themes extracted from the sample using a purposefully developed categorization model. We opted for a clustering method based on keyword co-occurrence profiles

(second-order clustering) when deciding the clustering type. In contrast to the method using direct keyword co-occurrence (first-order clustering), this approach considers co-occurrence not only because the keywords directly co-occur but also because they both occur in similar contexts. We chose this method because of the specific focus of our research question – the thematic category Independent Slovenia. This approach allowed us to consider semantically related words that often appear in alternating forms, such as synonymous keywords like “neodvisnost”, “samostojnost”, or “odcepitev”, all indicating the process of gaining independence. The cluster analysis is presented in Chart 2.

Chart 2 presents the frequency of themes (bars on the left) and their clustering within the analyzed sample (dendrogram on the right). Political, War and Military, Ethnic, Social, and Cultural themes are the most frequent. These dominant themes form the core of four key clusters or thematic groups:

1. *Socio-cultural cluster* (blue): This cluster is characterized by thematic pairs like (1) Social and European, (2) Cultural and Educational, and (3) Economic and Legislative, with an association of Ethnic themes.
2. *Political cluster* (green): This cluster centers on themes of Politics, and War and Military, with an association to Independent Slovenia.

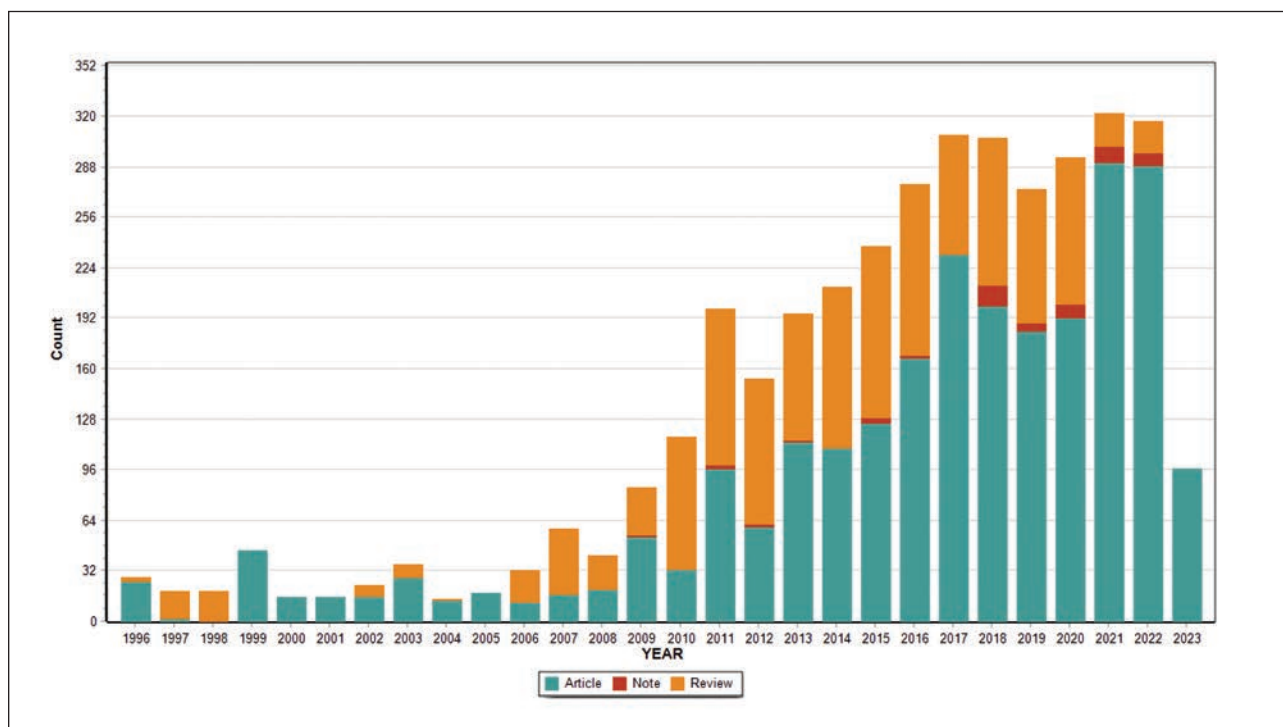


Chart 1: Sample structure over time (Source: Own elaboration).

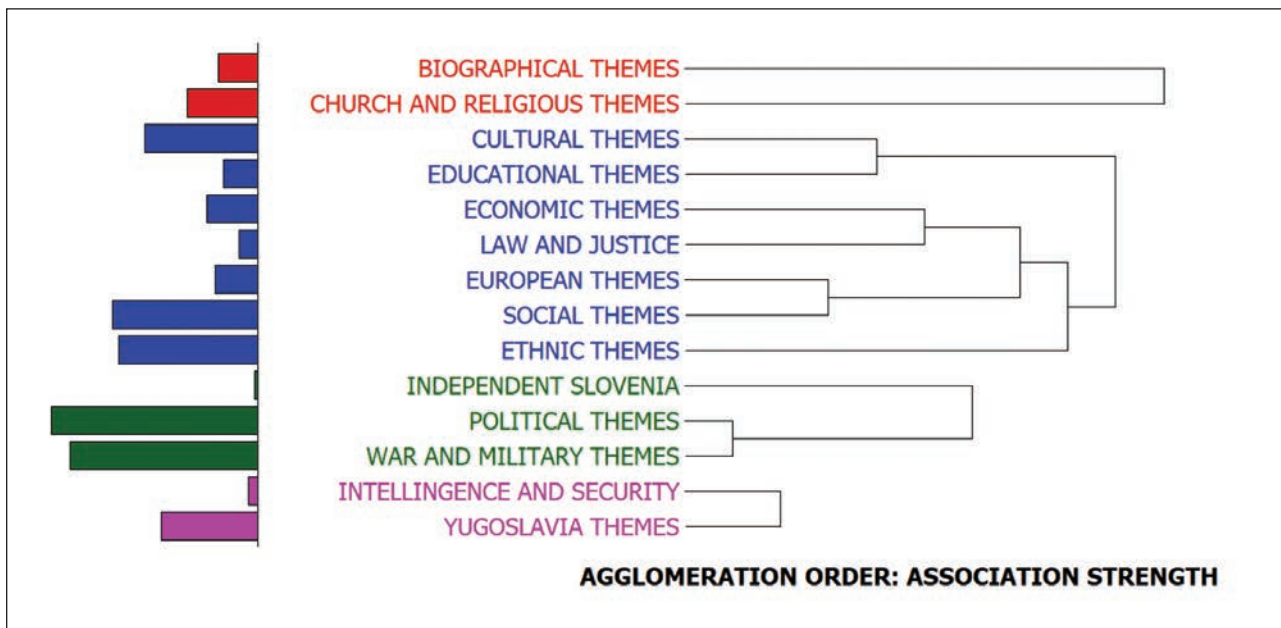


Chart 2: Cluster analysis of the sample (Source: Own elaboration).

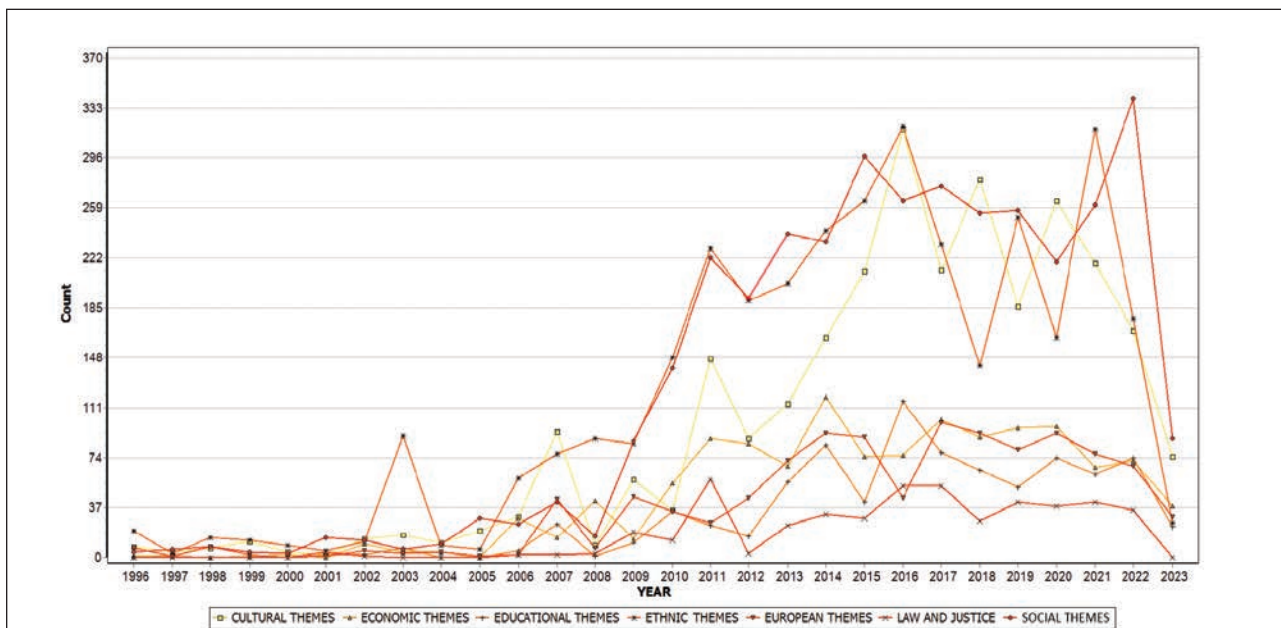


Chart 3: Socio-cultural cluster in time perspective (Source: Own elaboration).

3. *Religious cluster* (red): This cluster focuses on Church and Religious, and Biographical themes.
4. *Yugoslav cluster* (purple): encompassing Yugoslavia themes and Intelligence and Security themes.

To assess the stability of these thematic clusters beyond their frequencies, we analyzed their presence within the sample over time. Guided by the

assumption that themes present over an extended period could be considered core themes, we evaluated the thematic stability of the sample.

Chart 3 illustrates Cultural, Economic, Educational, Ethnic, European, Law and Justice, and Social themes from 1996 to 2023. A modest but discernible upward trend for all themes becomes evident starting in 2005, with the first significant boost occurring from

2008 to 2011. This trend is particularly pronounced in Social, Ethnic, and Cultural themes, although it extends to other thematic categories to a lesser extent. The increase can be attributed primarily to growth in the number of Slovenian journals indexed in Scopus during that period. The trend reached its first peak in 2015 and 2016, when social, cultural, and ethnic themes significantly surged, creating a distinct division from other themes within this group. A second peak occurred in 2021 and 2022 when Social and Ethnic themes increased again in several journals. For example, *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* (2021, issue 3) issued a special thematic edition dedicated to social, cultural, and ethnic aspects of diseases. The following year saw another special thematic issue of the same journal, focusing on the social, cultural, and ethnic aspects of media and journalism in Socialist Yugoslavia. In 2022, a cluster of articles in *Annales, Series Historia et Sociologia* (2022, issue 4) concentrated on the social-cultural dynamics and social politics of the Habsburg Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the upper Adriatic region, contributing to the spike in these themes. These results show that Social, Cultural, and Ethnic themes are crucial pillars of stability for this thematic cluster due to their high frequency and continuous and increasing presence. The driving forces behind this trend are journals with a permanent focus on these topics, such as *Etnolog* (2023), and thematic issues of various journals.

Chart 4 illustrates Political themes, War and Military themes, and Independent Slovenia themes from 1996 to 2023. Political and War and Military themes slightly increased in 2002 and 2003, but the trend gained significant momentum in 2006. The initial peak is linked to War and Military themes in 2009, followed by two peaks of Political themes in 2011 and 2014. Two subsequent peaks emerge, one related to War and Military themes in 2015 and another regarding Political themes in 2017. An analysis of the trends in War and Military themes suggests that this increase can be largely explained by two thematic issues of *Studia Historica Slovenica* (issues 2 and 3 in 2017) focusing on World War I. The occurrence of articles including War and Military themes in regular issues of *Acta Histriae* and *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* also contributes to this pattern. A similar situation explains the peak of Political themes in 2017 when *Annales, Series Historia et Sociologia* dedicated three out of four issues to political questions (issues 2, 3, and 4). In other journals, Political themes emerge within regular issues. After that, the general trend manifests a slight decrease in both significant themes within this group. The chart also shows Independent Slovenia themes as peripheral yet continuously present. There are slight increases in 2007, 2012, 2016, and 2022, but beyond these, there are no apparent peaks in the trend, pointing to the conclusion of the relative continuity and stability of

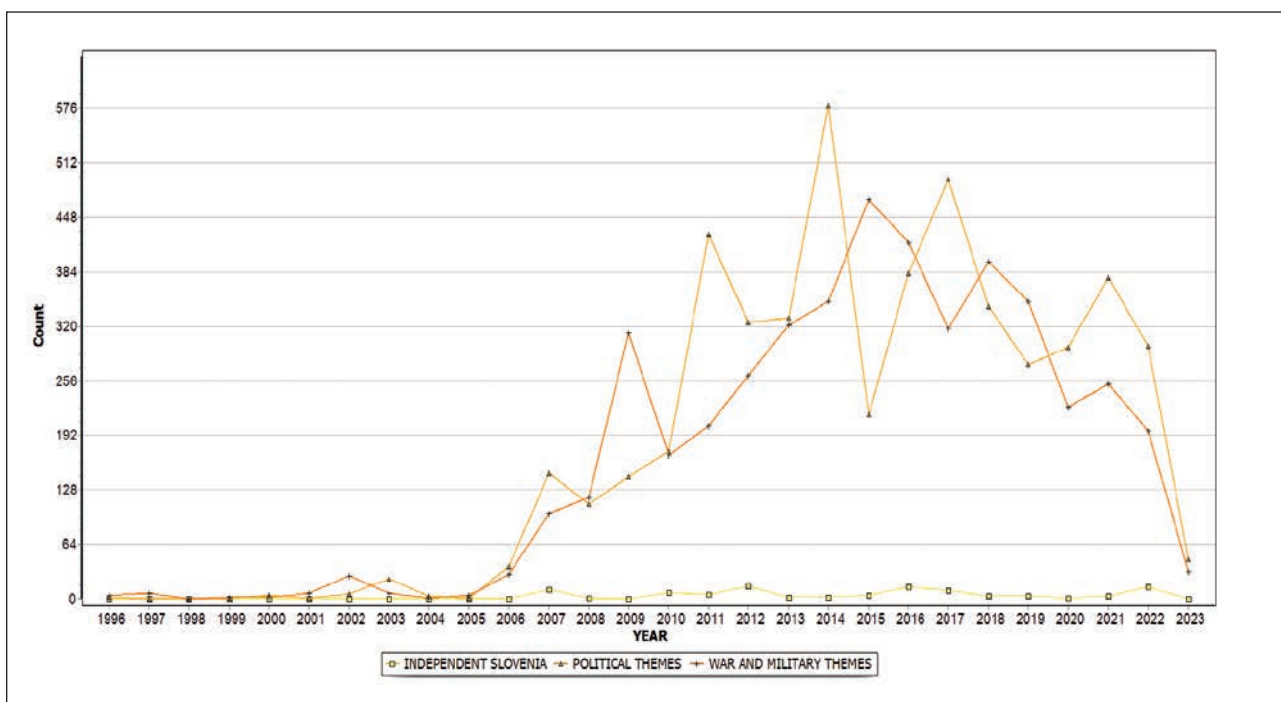


Chart 4: Political cluster in time perspective (Source: Own elaboration).

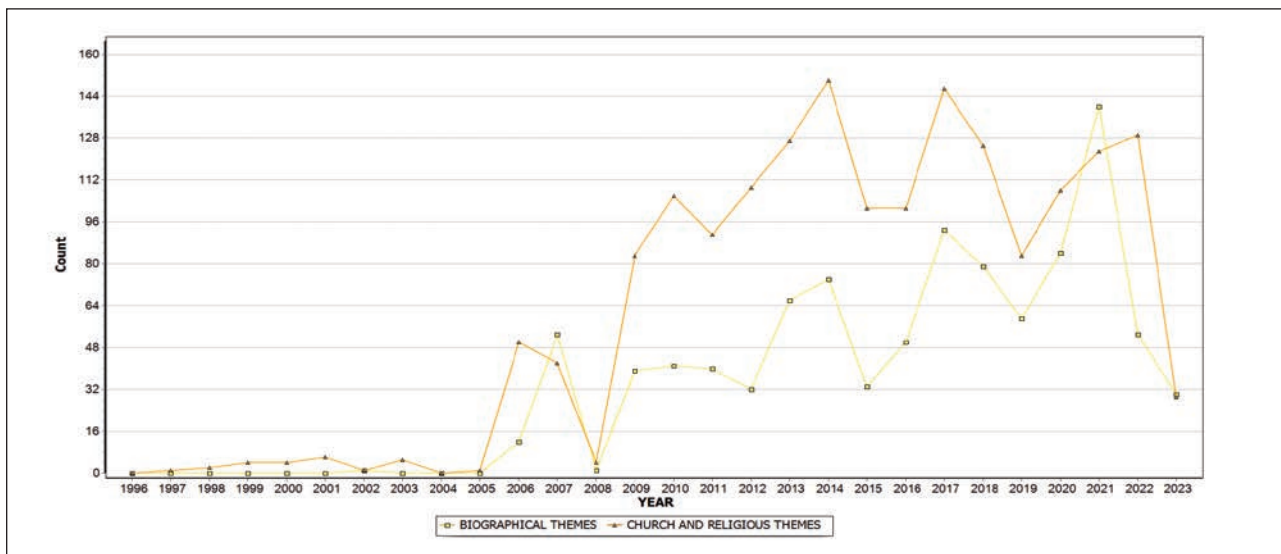


Chart 5: Religious cluster in time perspective (Source: Own elaboration).

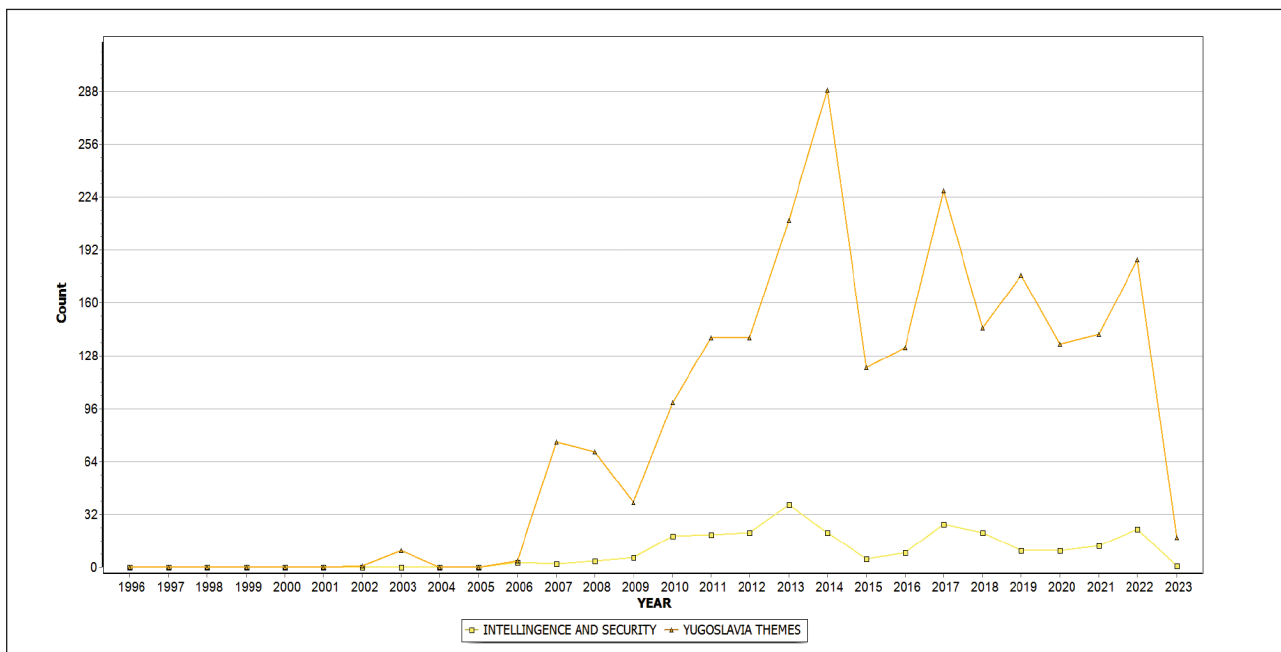


Chart 6: Yugoslavia cluster in time perspective (Source: Own elaboration).

the theme. Several important factors should be considered when explaining these trends, above all, the 20th anniversary of Slovenia's independence and the subsequent increase of academic interest and thematic issues intended to commemorate this occasion.

Chart 5 presents Biographical, and Church and Religious themes from 1996 until 2023. There is a clear increasing trend for these themes in 2005, lasting until 2007 when a significant drop occurred.

The trend resumed with a substantial increase in 2009 and 2010. A 2009 symposium organized by the Franc Kovačič Historical Society and the Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor, can explain this. The symposium was dedicated to the Slovenian bishop Anton Martin Slomšek, resulting in subsequent relevant publications in 2009 and 2010. Similar circumstances also contributed to the peak of these themes in 2014, when the same organizers held a symposium on cities, with several articles focusing



Chart 6 illustrates the emergence of Yugoslavia, and Intelligence and Security themes in our sample from 1996 to 2023. We observe the Yugoslavia themes beginning to surface in 2007, experiencing a brief decline in 2008 and 2009, followed by a substantial increase peaking in 2014. A special issue of *Annales, Series Historia et Sociologia* (2014, issue 4), dedicated to the Yugoslavia themes, can explain this peak. While the trend experienced a decline in 2015, it recovered slightly in 2016 before increasing again to peaks in 2017, which again, can be attributed to a special issue of *Annales, Series Historia et Sociologia* (2017, issue 4), dedicated to the same thematic category. The last two somewhat smaller peaks in 2019 and 2022 cannot be attributed to any particular issue or event. On the other hand, Intelligence and Security themes are presented as peripheral within this group, characterized by low frequency and relatively stable yet subtle dynamics. These themes are closely related to Yugoslavia themes, and their co-occurrence makes the dynamics largely dependent on Yugoslavia themes, described above.

subsequent placement of themes in a multidimensional space. Chart 7 illustrates a thematic field map, showcasing the main thematic groups (following the color scheme described in the cluster analysis), themes, and their corresponding co-occurrence factors. The results reveal the presence of closely related thematic groups that are internally cohesive yet externally distinct, forming unique units with distinctive characteristics. Additionally, the results demonstrate relatively high co-occurrence factors within thematic groups and between them. The themes exhibit strong interconnectivity, and the absence of clear outliers suggests a strongly integrated field. Even peripheral themes, such as Biographical themes and the less represented Intelligence and Security themes, display noteworthy co-occurrence factors with their neighbors, indicating their integration into the thematic field. The analyzed field emerges as thematically plentiful and heterogeneous yet well-connected and integrated.

Our analysis provided additional results, particularly highlighting (1) the relationship between extracted themes and the gender of the first author and (2) the accessibility and range of themes. In the final sample of 3,759 items, 1792 (47.7%) were authored by female scholars, and 1,967 (52.3%) were authored by male scholars. We extended this information to the level of analyzed themes:

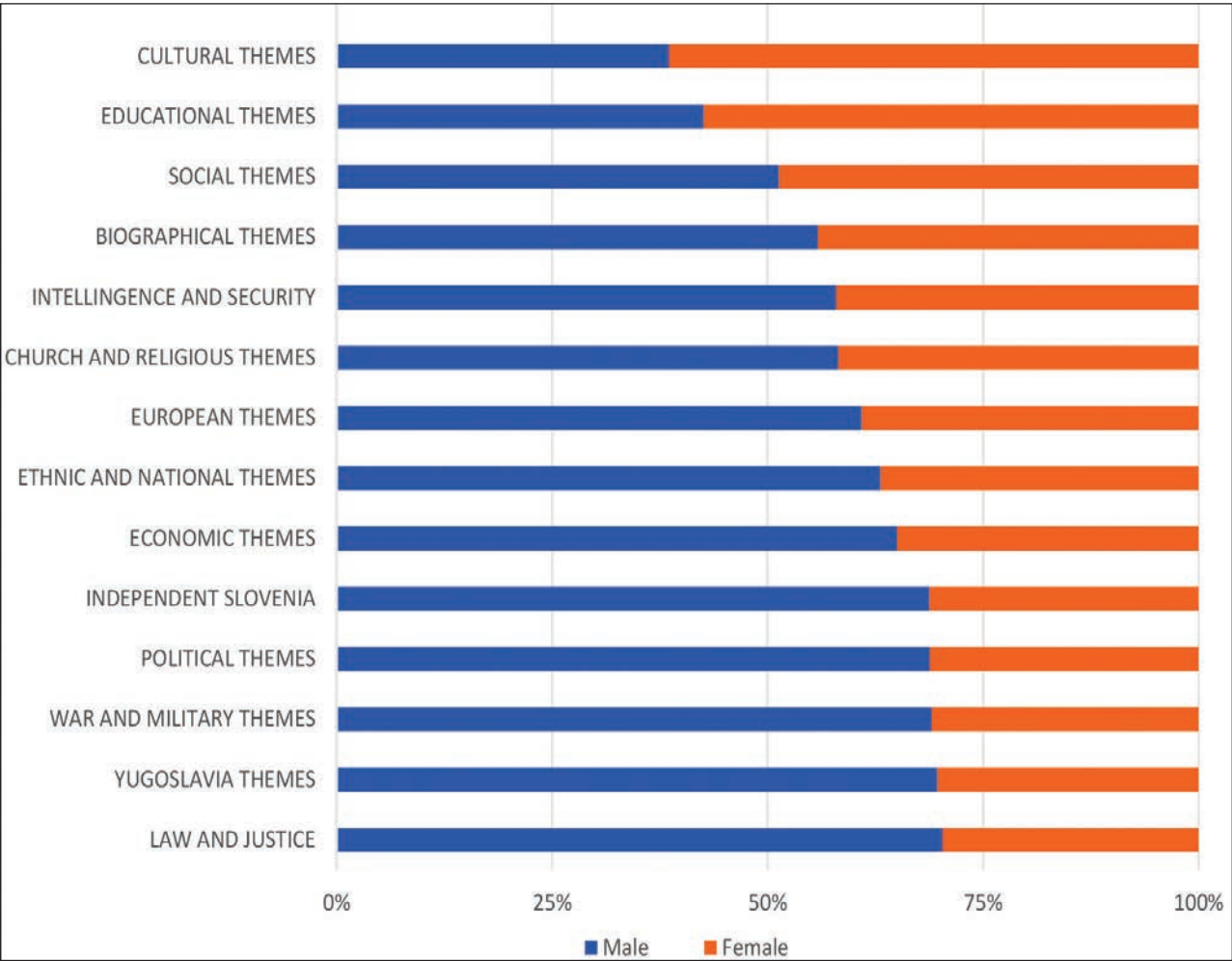


Chart 8: Composition of themes regarding first author's gender (Source: Own elaboration).



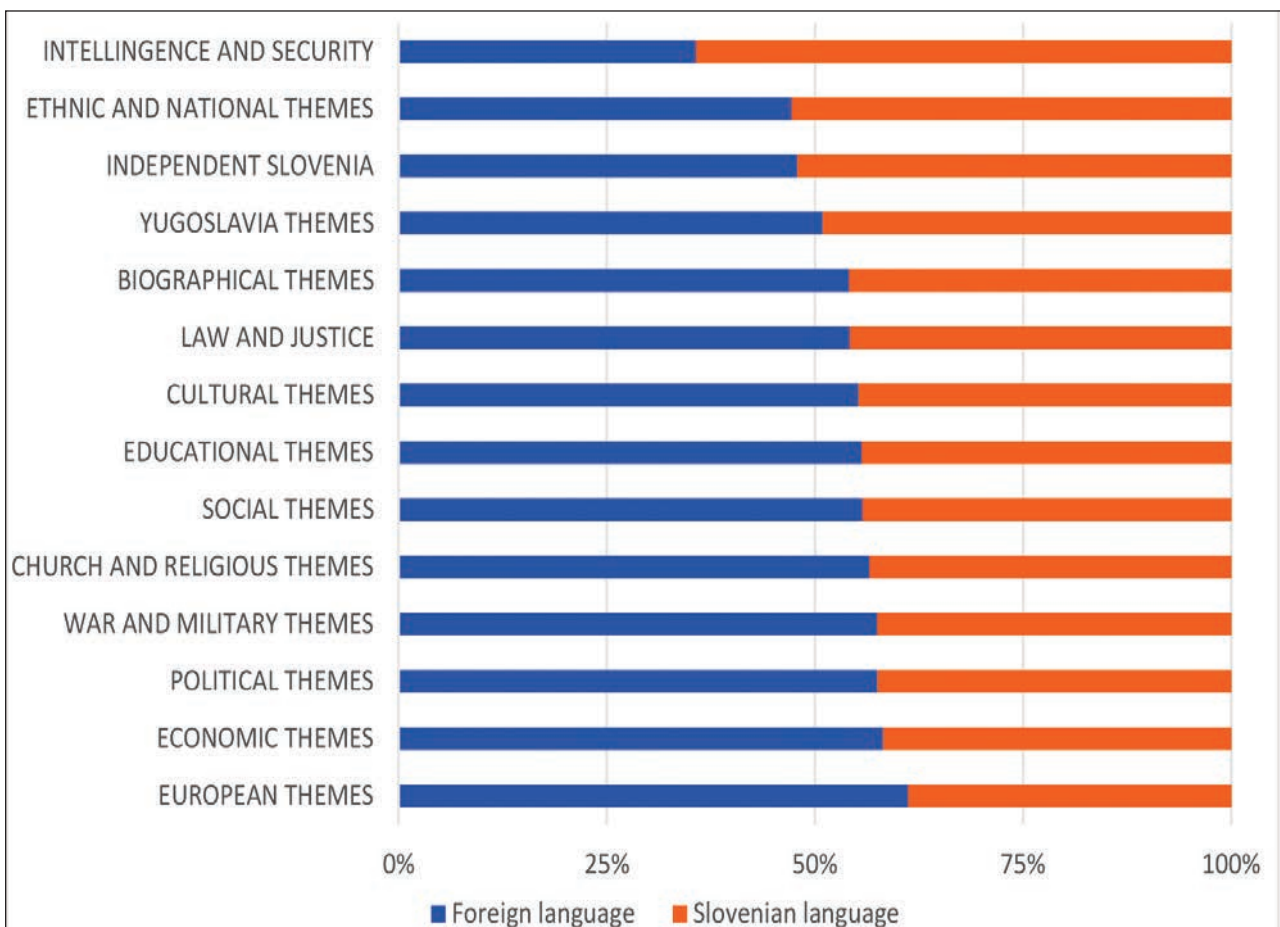
Chart 9: Multiple correspondence analysis of themes in the gender (male-female) space (Source: Own elaboration).

Table 3: Language of the sample (Source: Own elaboration).

Value	Frequency	Total percent
Slovenian	1,702	45.30%
English	1,691	45.00%
Italian	157	4.20%
Slovak	61	1.60%
German	50	1.30%
Bosnian	42	1.10%
Croatian	21	0.60%
Czech	18	0.50%
French	6	0.20%
Spanish	3	0.10%
Japanese	3	0.10%
Polish	2	0.10%
Korean	1	0.00%
Chinese	1	0.00%
Turkish	1	0.00%

Chart 8 illustrates the composition of themes regarding the gender of the first author. The results reveal different shares of male and female first authors across all themes, with Cultural themes being predominantly authored by female scholars on one end of the spectrum and Law and Justice being dominated by male authors on the other.

To investigate the potential existence of typically “male” and “female” themes, we conducted a multiple correspondence analysis based on the “masculinity” level of themes. Chart 9 depicts the positioning of themes in a two-dimensional space representing the first author’s gender. The results indicate that themes more closely associated with male authors include Law and Justice, Yugoslavia, War and Military, Politics, and Independent Slovenia. Economic, Ethnic, and European themes also show a predominant association with male authors. On the opposite end of the spectrum are Cultural themes, closely followed by Educational themes, which female authors more often examine. Social themes appear to be the most balanced in terms of gender association.

**Chart 10: Composition of themes with regards to items language (Source: Own elaboration).**

Another crucial aspect of our investigation of the thematic field is the reach of the themes. Articles within our sample were written in 15 different languages, with Slovenian (45.30%) and English (45%) being predominant (see Table 3).

The language composition of our sample is wide-ranging; however, it raises a question about the accessibility of the content to Slovenian-speaking and international audiences. To explore this issue, we (1) categorized all languages used into two groups, Slovenian and foreign, and (2) analyzed the composition of thematic categories regarding these two dimensions.

Chart 10 illustrates the language composition of themes, and it is evident that all themes have a particular share of both Slovenian and foreign languages, indicating the degree to which these themes are accessible to different audiences. On one end of the spectrum, Intelligence and Security themes are predominant in Slovenian, thus making them more accessible to the domestic audience. On the other side of the spectrum, European themes usually emerge in a foreign language, predominantly English; as such, they are more accessible to an international audience. To outline this kind of accessibility, we conducted a multiple correspondence analysis based on the calculated level of internationalization (see Chart 11).

Chart 11 shows the placement of themes in a two-dimensional space, where one end of the spectrum indicates the international (left), and the other represents the national space (right). Results show that European themes have the highest language accessibility, followed by Economic, Political, War and Military, and Church and Religious themes. Themes of Intelligence and Security are mainly accessible to Slovenian-speaking audience, followed by Ethnic themes and Independent Slovenia themes. Concerning language, themes that are relatively

equally accessible to both Slovenian-speaking and international audiences are those tied to Yugoslavia, followed by Biographical themes, Law and Justice, and Social, Cultural, and Educational themes.

INDEPENDENT SLOVENIA THEMES

The following section will focus on Independent Slovenia themes. Having already outlined the frequency of the themes and their position in the Political cluster, we decided to analyze the presence of these themes over time to assess their longitudinal stability (see Chart 12).

Chart 12 depicts a dynamic trend of the themes from 2006 until 2023. The trend remained dormant up until the first peak in 2007. The prominence of this peak can be largely attributed to the contributions made within the 2007 special issue of the journal *Studia Historica Slovenica*, which was dedicated to Slovenia's path to independence. Following a profound fall in 2008 and 2009, there was a slight increase in these themes in 2010 and a stronger one in 2012. Several factors contribute to this trend. Firstly, this period coincides with the 20th anniversary of Slovenia's independence, resulting in increased interest among authors across the spectrum in these themes. We also witnessed a rise in relevant publications. Additionally, there was an increase in special issues dedicated to these themes. For example, in 2012, there was a double-volume thematic issue of *Studia Historica Slovenica* (issues 1–2), with contributions covering Slovenia's path to independence. After a sharp decline in 2013 and 2014, these themes peaked again in 2016. Several factors influenced this event; among them, a special issue of *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* (issue 3) titled "Quarter of a Century," contributed the most. In the words of the special issue's editors, Gašparič & Šorn (2016, 7):

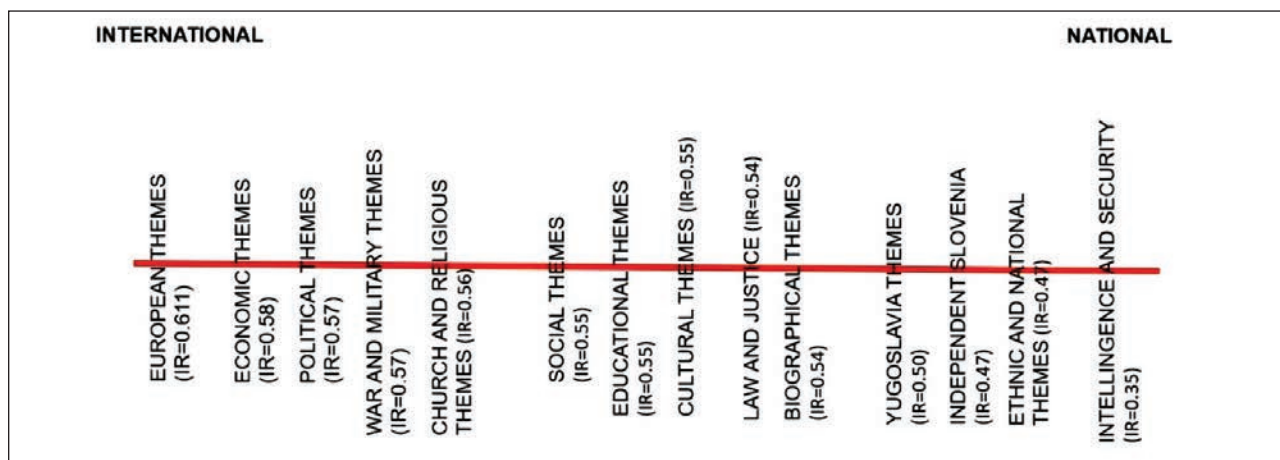


Chart 11: Multiple correspondence analysis of themes in the national-international space (Source: Own elaboration).

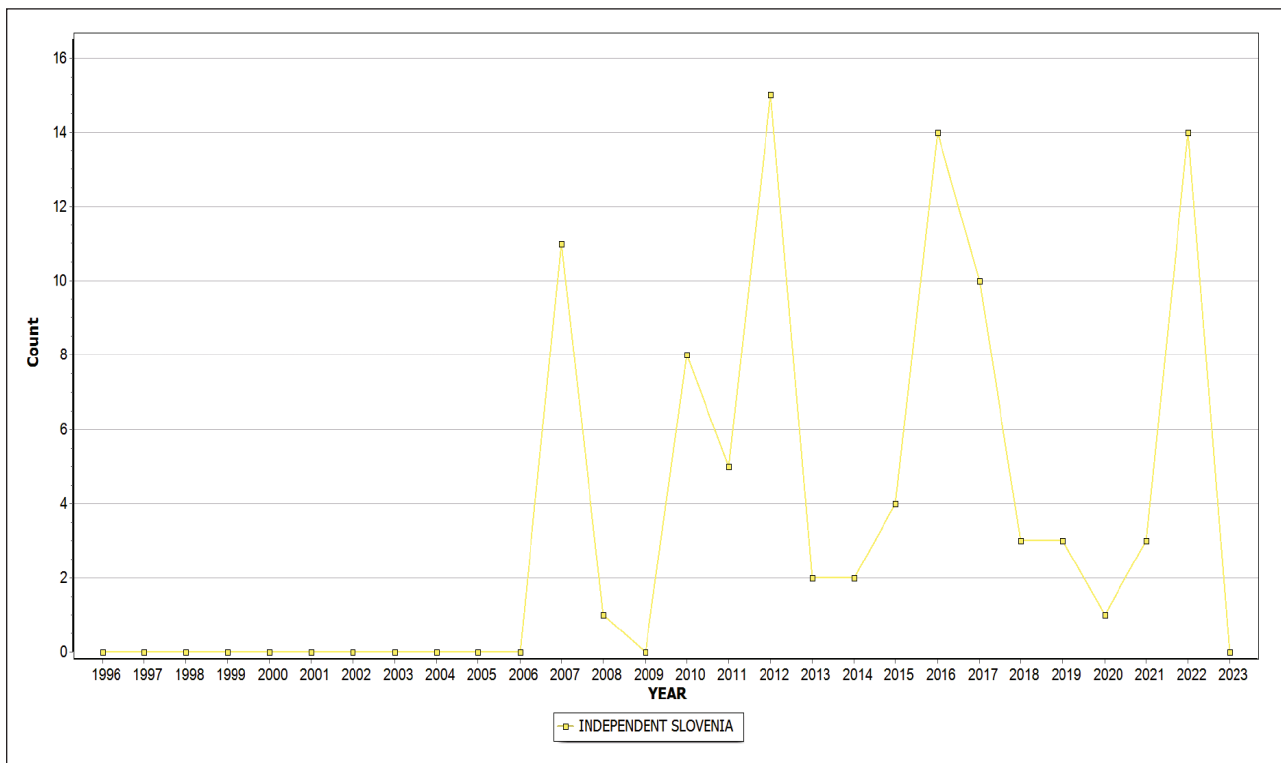


Chart 12: Independent Slovenia themes over time (Source: Own elaboration).

For many, the quarter of a century of the Republic of Slovenia (1991–2016) is a relative concept. Some do not think that the anniversary is anything special, others do not want to celebrate it at all at this time due to the many wasted opportunities, while the rest would like to honour the memory of the 25 years since the establishment of the state very conscientiously. The anniversary is also relative for historians and the Slovenian historiography: on the one hand the year 2016 does not represent any significant milestone in history, while on the other hand 25 years of the independent Slovenian state certainly encourages us to start facing the research challenges posed by this period more actively. There are many reasons for this – apart from the aforementioned anniversary.

Once again, a deep fall occurred, lasting from 2018 until 2021, followed by another sharp increase in 2022. Following the already established pattern of this trend, we can interpret the spike similarly. 2021 marked the 30th anniversary of Slovenia's independence, with numerous articles and thematic journal issues in our sample dedicated to the event. While some were published in 2021, a significant portion

appeared in the following year. In addition, several commemorative academic events, like the thematic symposium organized by the Franc Kovačič Historical Society at the University of Maribor added to the increasing dynamics of these themes in publications.

In addition to time-related analysis, we narrowed our focus on the relationship of these themes to other themes within the thematic field. We developed a proximity plot of all extracted themes concerning the themes of Independent Slovenia as depicted in Chart 13.

Chart 13 shows War and Military, Politics, Yugoslavia, and Ethnic themes to be close to the themes of Independent Slovenia, in contrast to themes related to Culture, Education, and Church and Religious themes. This confirms the findings in Chart 2 and suggests an inter-thematic relationship between these themes.

To analyze these relations, we performed link analysis on the thematic neighborhood of the themes of Independent Slovenia themes, using multidimensional scaling (see Chart 14). Link analysis presented in Chart 14 reveals several significant findings. Firstly, the themes of Independent Slovenia are closely related to other themes within the Political cluster, supported by a relatively high co-occurrence factor and closeness within a multidimensional space. Secondly, Independent Slovenia

themes are related to the Socio-cultural cluster (blue) and Yugoslav cluster (pink), making them an essential functional connection between other themes and thematic groups. Thirdly, relatively high co-occurrence between themes from different thematic groups indicates that themes of Independent Slovenia are an integral part of bi-thematic and multi-thematic articles.

Bi- and multi-thematic articles incorporate various themes that work in tandem to reinforce the central argument. To illustrate the former, we highlight four examples. The first demonstrates the interplay between the themes of Independent Slovenia and War and Military, both integral components of the Political cluster. Tomaž Kladnik's "Patriotism and the Slovenian Army" (2014) examines the decisive measures taken by General Maister at the end of World War I. Kladnik associates these historical events, almost a century old, with the formation of the armed forces and military activities during the Ten-Day War. He also discusses the transformation of the Slovenian Territorial Defence from a second-class reserve army (Kladnik, 2014, 244). Kladnik's "Maribor in nastanek oboroženih sil samostojne in demokratične Slovenije" (2022), is another example. Further exploring wartime dynamics, Kladnik

describes the situation in the town of Maribor, where the armed forces were established based on republican regulations while also considering the specificities of the broader local community.

Several bi-thematic articles center on Slovenia's transition from being a part of Yugoslavia to becoming an independent state. Notable examples of these interconnected themes are found in "We told the truth about Yugoslavia...: Slovenian (para) diplomats in 1990–1992" by Boštjan Udovič (2017) and "Osamosvojitve držav in "pozaba" zgodovinskih dosežkov: primer ne-nadaljevanja gospodarske diplomacije Jugoslavije v Sloveniji in Črni gori po njuni osamosvojitvi" by Boštjan Udovič & Danijela Vojinović Jačimović (2019). In the former, Udovič examines the establishment of an independent diplomatic apparatus for the Republic of Slovenia, aiming to "shed light on the role of Slovenian paradiplomats (particularly business representatives) in the country's independence process, as well as highlight the importance of diplomats who worked in the Yugoslav service and helped lay the foundations for the diplomacy of independent Slovenia" (Udovič, 2017, 713). In the latter, the authors investigate the (dis)continuation of the Yugoslav commercial diplomacy in Slovenia

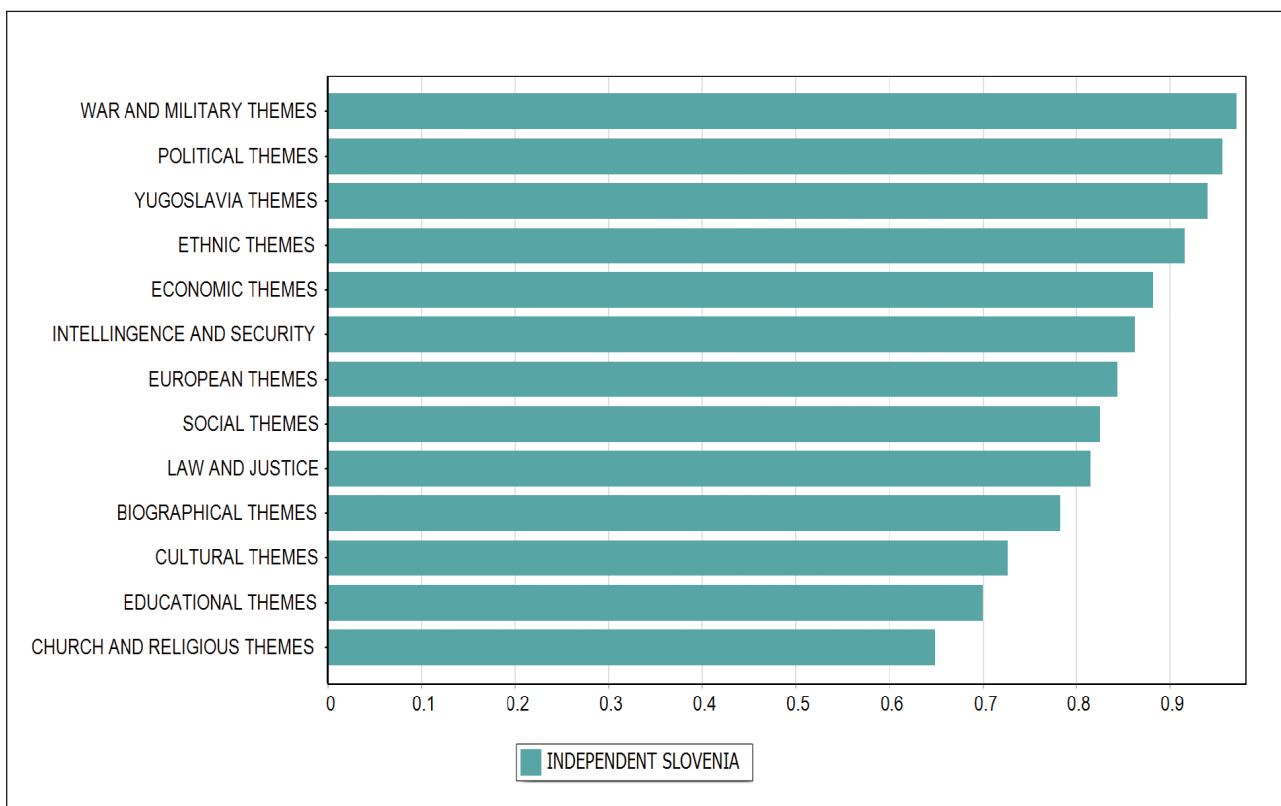


Chart 13: Proximity plot of all themes concerning the themes of Independent Slovenia (Source: Own elaboration).

and Montenegro (Udovič & Vojinović Jačimović, 2019). Both articles show how themes related to the transition to independence and diplomatic efforts during that period are intricately interwoven in scholarly discourse.

Several other articles within our sample exhibit bi-thematic characteristics outlined above (cf. Zajc, 2020; Šela & Hazemali, 2020; Šela, 2023). While these encompass an additional theme, their primary focus revolves around Independent Slovenia, War and Military, Political, and/or Yugoslavia themes.

Some articles are founded on three or more thematic categories, inherently making them multi-thematic. One such example is Jože Možina's article titled "The Slovenian Plebiscite of 1990" (2007). In it, Možina examines the implementation of the Slovenian Plebiscite in 1990, a pivotal event in establishing Slovenian state sovereignty. Možina shows that, during the conceptualization and preparations, the plebiscite was not a unified project of all Slovenian political forces and parties (2007, 145). Similarly, Janez Osojnik's case study, "Predlog Socialistične stranke Slovenije oktobra 1990 za izvedbo plebiscita o samostojnosti Republike Slovenije in odzivi nanj v Sloveniji" (2022b), explores multiple themes and intersects with the topics covered by Možina. These articles weave together Independent Slovenia, Political, Ethnic, and Yugoslavia themes, supporting the analysis of democratization during the early stages of Slovenia's path to independence.

Another article illustrating a similar interplay of Independent Slovenia themes, along with Political, War and Military, and Yugoslavia themes, is Boštjan Udovič's "'Danke Deutschland!': The Political and Diplomatic Contribution of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Creation of Independent Slovenia" (2022). Udovič examines aspects of democratization from 1990–1991, with a focus on Slovenian-German relations. Udovič reveals that as late as the spring of 1991, official German policy aimed at preserving the integrity of Yugoslavia. However, recognizing the impracticality of this stance, Germany foresaw Slovenian and Croatian independence as viable possibilities. With the outbreak of war in Slovenia, Germany shifted its position dramatically, actively engaging in the swift international recognition of Slovenia and Croatia (Udovič, 2022, 535).

Our final example highlighting the interplay of multiple thematic categories is the article "The Role of Milan Kučan in Slovenian Foreign Policy" by Božo Repe (2017). Repe's central focus is on Milan Kučan, the first president of the independent Republic of Slovenia. In this article, he explores Kučan's diplomatic challenges during the independence process and examines the broader national and international events of that era, particularly the

regional conflicts stemming from the dissolution of Yugoslavia (Repe, 2017, 743).

As illustrated above, examples of themes interplaying, overlapping, and complementing each other are diverse and numerous. It is crucial to acknowledge these instances as affirmations of our findings, reinforcing the conclusion that themes related to Slovenia's independence constitute an integral component of the thematic landscape in academic research among Slovenian historians.

The final phase of our analysis involved identifying the platforms where the themes of Independent Slovenia are prevalent. To achieve this, we performed cross-tabulation, aligning the extracted themes with metadata from our sample, specifically focusing on the source journals (see Chart 15).

Chart 15 shows the dominance of the journal *Studia Historica Slovenica* as the primary Slovenian Scopus-indexed platform for articles focusing on Independent Slovenia themes. This journal accounts for 44.8% of the total occurrence of these themes, followed by *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, contributing 25% to the overall occurrence of the themes. *Acta Histriae*, with 17.7% of the total occurrence, is another notable journal in our sample, while other journals play a lesser role.

Given that *Studia Historica Slovenica* serves as the most comprehensive Scopus-indexed Slovenian journal for these themes, a closer examination of the journal is warranted. Relevant themes have consistently appeared in *Studia Historica Slovenica* since 2007. A pivotal contribution is the thematic issue from 2022 (issue 1), dedicated to Slovenia's independence. Within this issue, nine articles explore crucial aspects of social, political, and economic issues in the region, examining Yugoslavia's influence on Slovenia's independence processes, direct and indirect factors impacting Slovenia's democratic transition, and significant social and cultural aspects of everyday life. In line with the thematic model developed here, this special issue exemplifies thematic interplay, as depicted in Chart 14. To illustrate this, we highlight three examples.

In his article titled "Slovensko-srbski konflikt v osemdesetih letih" Božo Repe (2022) explores the dynamics of Slovenian-Serbian relations during the 1980s within the context of the Yugoslav Federation. He focuses on various federal authorities' disputes, such as those between the party leadership and Milan Kučan and Slobodan Milošević. Repe explores conflicts over education, involving common program cores, and the support and disputes among Slovenian and Serbian intellectuals. He investigates their roles in all-Yugoslav ideological campaigns, the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts' memorandum, the Slovenian response to it, Slovenian rallies and "calls", the Serbian economic measures

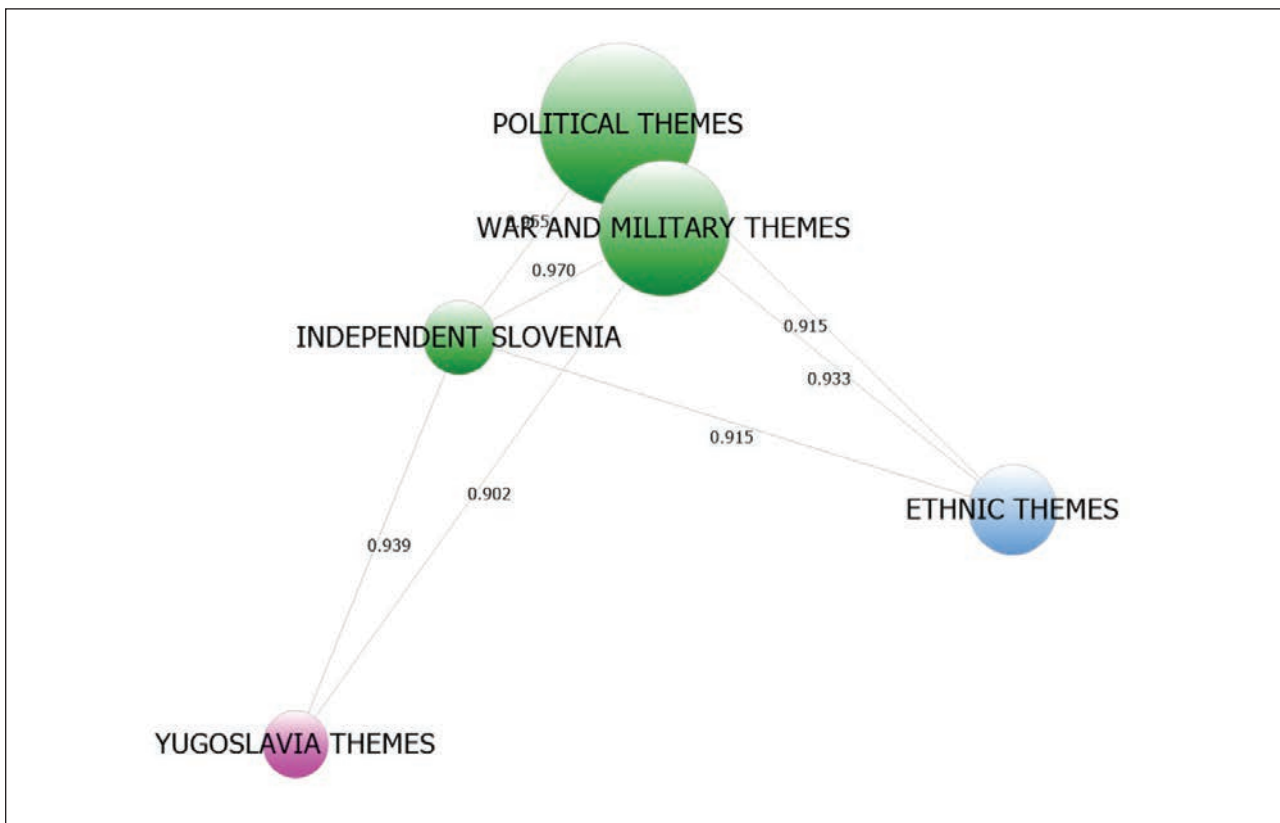


Chart 14: Link analysis of the thematic neighborhood of the themes of Independent Slovenia (Source: Own elaboration).

against Slovenia, and the alleged Slovenian-Serbian pact on Slovenia's secession. Repe provides a compelling example of the intricate interplay among core Independent Slovenia themes, including Political, Ethnic, and Yugoslavia themes, while also encompassing War and Military, Educational, Economic, Social and Cultural themes.

A second instance demonstrating a comparable interplay can be observed in Jure Gašparič & Tjaša Konovšek's "Transformation of the Political System: From the Tripartite Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia to the National Assembly and National Council of the Republic of Slovenia" (2022). Gašparič & Konovšek examine the transition from state socialism to parliamentary democracy in the context of Slovenia, focusing on constitutional changes during the establishment of the new Slovenian constitution and the functioning of the Slovenian National Assembly post-1991. Despite its primary emphasis on political systems, it serves as an excellent illustration of the interplay among themes related to Political, Yugoslavia, and Ethnic themes, all contributing to the overarching argument concerning the democratization and independence of Slovenia.

The final example is Darja Kerec's article titled "Slovenian Society in a Maelstrom of Cultural Change, New Trends and Technologies in the 1980s and 1990s" (2022). Examining shifts and patterns in Slovenia from the 1980s to the end of the 1990s, Kerec employs Cultural, Social, Ethnic, Political, and Economic themes to address critical issues during Slovenia's move toward independence. A pivotal aspect lies in the intricate connections among culture, art, media, technology, politics, ethnicity, society, and state, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of this multifaceted phenomenon:

Culture and art, especially music, served as a vital unifying force among nations in Yugoslavia during the 1980s. The Eurovision music contest enjoyed significant popularity. In the latter half of the 1990s, Slovenia witnessed the establishment of its first commercial television stations. A few weeks before gaining independence, Slovenia became one of only 16 countries with its own Internet connection. Widespread Internet access didn't materialize until the late 1990s and

on a large scale since 2000. [...] Post-2000, baby names trended towards brevity, often with a foreign 'non-Slovenian overtone.' This trend, along with peculiar fixations on world records and tractors, constitutes three noteworthy and somewhat amusing cultural shifts. (Kerec, 2022, 606)

CONCLUSION

This bibliometric and sociometric analysis of Scopus-indexed Slovenian history journals revealed several key findings:

- The thematic analysis identifies four key thematic groups or clusters – Socio-cultural, Political, Religious, and Yugoslavia – providing a structured understanding of the diverse content within the sample.
- Most themes exhibit an increasing trend in occurrence, particularly evident in Social, Cultural, Ethnic, Political, War and Military, Church and Religious, and Yugoslavia themes.
- The thematic field represented in the sample is vibrant, diverse, well-integrated, and longitudinally stable, indicating a robust and enduring scholarly landscape.
- The sample reflects a relatively balanced distribution of male (52.3%) and female (47.7%) first authors contributing to Slovenian history journals indexed in Scopus, showcasing inclusivity in scholarly participation.
- Themes demonstrate gender balance, with exceptions such as Cultural and Educational themes predominating among female authors, while Yugoslavia and Law and Justice themes predominate among male authors.
- Themes generally appear relatively equally accessible through language, with exceptions like Intelligence and Security themes being more prevalent in Slovenian and European themes being more accessible in foreign languages, predominantly English.
- Themes related to Slovenia's independence, while relatively scarce compared to other themes, occur regularly with dynamic frequency. They are closely related to War and Military and Political themes, acting as integral components in multi-thematic studies and connecting different thematic groups.
- Three Scopus-indexed Slovenian history journals – *Studia Historica Slovenica*, *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, and *Acta Histriae* – emerge as major platforms for articles containing Independent Slovenia themes.

By focusing on Scopus-indexed Slovenian history journals, this study has identified key thematic groups, explored their upward trends, and nuanced author gender preferences. The results provide a valuable foundation for scholars and researchers interested in the history of Slovenia's path to independence and bibliometrics.

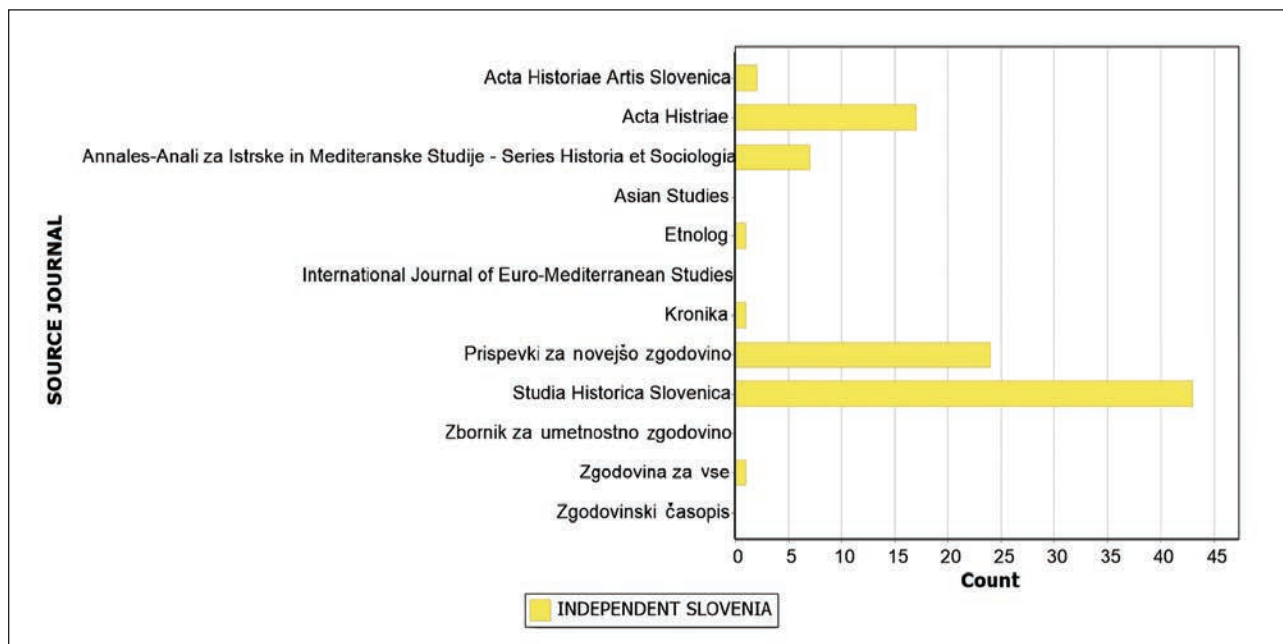


Chart 15: Distribution of Independent Slovenia themes within source journals (Source: Own elaboration).

Although our research effectively addresses its objectives, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations. Firstly, challenges related to metadata accuracy and the completeness of the sample are recognized, potentially impacting the overall robustness of the study. Secondly, limitations are inherent in our sampling method, as we relied exclusively on the Scopus database, limiting the generalizability of results. To enhance the comprehensiveness of future studies, expanding data sources to include databases like the Web of Science Core Collection in a controlled, integrated, and holistic manner is suggested.

Moreover, our findings are rooted in a categorization model that is, to some extent, influenced by our academic affiliation and profile. The adoption of an alternative categorization model could

potentially influence results and reshape the presented map of thematic fields.

Building on the insights gained from this analysis, future studies could broaden the thematic scope to encompass a more extensive range of historical topics within Slovenian historiography. An exploration of the intersectionality of dynamics with analyzed themes can provide a deeper understanding of gender and authorship trends. Further investigations into regional variations and the impact of language on thematic accessibility have the potential to enhance our comprehension of the broader historical discourse. Additionally, considering the implications of these themes within the international context could open avenues for comparative analyses, contributing to and enriching the ongoing scholarly conversation within the global historical community.

TEMATSKO PROUČEVANJE SLOVENSKE OSAMOSVOJITVENE POTI V SLOVENSКИH ZGODOVINSKIH REVIJAH, UVRŠČENIH V BAZO PODATKOV SCOPUS: BIBLIOMETRIČNA IN SOCIOMETRIČNA ANALIZA

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POVZETEK

*V članku je predstavljena analiza raziskovanja tem, ki se nanašajo na osamosvajanje Slovenije, v 12 slovenskih znanstvenih zgodovinskih revijah, indeksiranih v bazi podatkov Scopus. Z uporabo izbranih orodij in metod digitalne humanistike smo preučili bibliometrične in sociometrične vidike člankov ter tako skušali ugotoviti, kako te teme sobivajo z drugimi pomembnimi temami. Vsebinska analiza temelji na naslednjih predpostavkah: 1.) Teme v člankih obstajajo kot ločene, specifične in izrazite entitete, ki pa kljub temu delujejo v korespondenci z drugimi temami in podpirajo glavne ideje člankov, v katerih se pojavljajo. 2.) Teme je mogoče izluščiti iz ključnih elementov člankov, in sicer naslovov, ključnih besed in povzetkov. Analiza 3.759 člankov (naslovi, ključne besede, povzetki) je pokazala štiri glavne tematske skupine: družbeno-kulturne, politične, verske in teme povezane z Jugoslavijo. Predvsem je bilo opaziti porast družbeno-kulturnih, etničnih, političnih, vojnih in vojaških, cerkvenih in verskih tem ter tem, povezanih z Jugoslavijo. Tematsko polje deluje živahno, obsežno, dobro integrirano in dolgoročno stabilno. Spola prvopodpisanih avtorjev sta bila uravnotežena, razen pri kulturnih in izobraževalnih temah, kjer so prednjačile ženske avtorice, ter pri temah o Jugoslaviji ter pravu in pravosodju, kjer so prednjačili moški avtorji. Jezikovna dostopnost se je nagibala k nacionalni/mednarodni, z nekaterimi izjemami (obveščevalne in varnostne teme v slovenščini, evropske teme v angleščini). Teme, povezane z osamosvajanjem Slovenije, so se sicer pojavljale redkeje, vendar so se pojavljale dosledno in se povezovala z drugimi temami ter delovale kot mostovi med njimi. Te teme so tesno povezane s tistimi, ki se osredotočajo na vojno in vojsko, ter političnimi temami, hkrati pa vzpostavljajo pomembne povezave z etničnimi temami in tistimi, ki se nanašajo na Jugoslavijo. Dinamika teh tem, povezanih z osamosvajanjem, je zelo odvisna od zunanjih vplivov, vključno z obletnicami, simpoziji in spominskimi dogodki v akademski skupnosti. V tem kontekstu se tri revije v našem vzorcu – *Studia Historica Slovenica*, *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* in *Acta Histriae* – pojavljajo kot pomembne platforme za članke, ki vključujejo teme, povezane z osamosvajanjem Slovenije.*

Ključne besede: bibliometrična in sociometrična analiza, orodja in metode digitalne humanistike, demokratizacijski procesi, samostojna Slovenija, vsebinska analiza, tematska analiza slovenskih zgodovinskih revij

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