Summary

Identities at the Crossroads of Crises is the result of work carried out within the programme group "Problems of Autonomy and Identities in the Time of Globalization." The group members are conducting research into various topics, the common denominator of this research being that of connecting the question of the (in)stability of identities and of autonomy in a nation-state context and how they confront processes affecting the global sphere. The research work covers five areas, focussing on the intersectional effects of these areas: autonomy and identity, migration, intimacy, religion, and culture. These areas also make up the thematic frameworks found in this monograph, even if we have divided the book into four sections: the introductory text discusses identity in the contemporary world in the relationship between the nation state and processes of (de)globalization; the second section deals with majority collective identities – both national and European identities; the third section deals with minority identities in the political, legal, and sociological context of human rights and equality policies; and the final section considers identities specifically within the context of culture and cultural representations.

The starting point for the discussion is this: through the workings of economics, politics, and culture, globalization processes have necessarily influenced the self-understanding and representation of various social groups. The information revolution, which has virtually abolished physical distance, has further stoked cultural globalization processes. At the same time, we are faced with opposite processes of deglobalization, which in recent years have been stimulated by various crises – from financial and security crises, to the crisis of European integration that, at the time of this writing, is being epitomized by Brexit. These instabilities have shaken the firmly held beliefs some theorists have about globalization and the multicultural future of the world. Once again, nationally conditioned answers to global questions are coming to the fore; once again, visions of cosmopolitan solidarity and the rise of non-territorial identities seem utopian, as leaders of large European countries have proclaimed multiculturalism to be a failed project without a future. "National identity has again become an important variable in the equations of political elites" (p. 49). All of these contexts "drag a significant segment of society into outdated narratives that are exclusively conceived of ideas about a monocultural, threatened national space" (p. 21).

The authors included in this monograph describe the friction between processes of globalization and deglobalization in the emergence of new forms of nationalisms, populisms, processes of "retraditionalization," neoconservative movements, anti-EU and anti-establishment policies, politics of protectionism, and so on. It

is within these frameworks that we address the matter of what is happening with collective national and transnational – as well as minority – identities in times of contemporary crises that have spurred and revitalized processes of deglobalization.

We argue that, especially in the case of minority identities, various forms of social exclusion have been conditioned by and grounded in re-awakened nationalist discourses about ethnic concepts of national identities. Today, "pure" national identities not only threaten other ethnic and religious identities, they also threaten transnational conceiving of post-identity positions and non-normative identity positions within a national identity – not least those identities that are not grounded in heteronormative models of gender relations.

Through various analyses – from analyses of politics to discursive analyses – we find that the current (nationalistically based) language of social exclusion is significantly more perfidious than it once was. Seemingly less radical than it was in the past, such language often speaks in terms of human rights, and its form is populist and anti-establishment. In this way, "what used to lie on the margins has become a part of 'acceptable' political terrain" (p. 44).

It is interesting that these processes, when addressed through the optics of minority identities, have also produced elements of solidarity. One example of this is the fight against the establishment during the financial crisis in Slovenia, when, at least at times, the previous exclusionary logic of Slovenian independence was replaced by a so-called horizontal solidarity with the "Balkan other" – that is, with those migrant workers from the former Yugoslavia working in the construction sector, which was hit hardest by the crisis. However, this solidarity did not prevent the subsequent installing of barbed wire along Slovenia's border. All of this made it possible to repeat the earlier episode with the Aliens Act, which allowed people to be "erased" in the years after Slovenia's independence. In 2016 – in the context of references to the security crisis – it became possible to create a "forced choice between human rights" in terms of "us" and "them" (p. 87).

This false dilemma also appears in the treatment of other minorities, whose identities are based on their gender, sexual orientation, and religious affiliation, since traditionally these identities are always set in a binary relationship between "us" and "them." Current crises have cut off the space for equality politics, since it is precisely "equality" that threatens the existing power relations. This is reproduced also in media representations – be it in the form of reproducing a reigning ideology or, to speak in Gramscian terms, through the reproduction of the frame of consensus.

And yet, the concluding text of this monograph, on the representation of minorities in art, provides some hope of the possibility of conceiving a different social reality. It seems that the realm of art is more open to conceiving a multicultural, contemporary Slovenian identity. At the same time, as we argue, also the reception of these works is, for the most part, positive, which means that this sort of "conceiving is not impossible to realize and to live out" (p. 173). Not only in fiction but also in the reality of everyday life.