

Female workers' association in Pula during Austro-Hungarian Monarchy; networks, solidarity and gender

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Introduction

Historical Perspectives on Transnationalism and Intercultural Dialogue in the Austro-Hungarian Empire (TIDA) - principal investigator Prof. dr. sc. Anita Sujoldžić:

- explores the interconnections between hegemonic discourses and the patterns of transnational interactions and mobility that shapes intercultural dialogue in the south-eastern periphery of the late Austro-Hungarian Empire
- special attention is given to an alternative approach to national historiographies, multiple allegiances and belongings and the role of translational practices in the life of “ordinary people”

PhD Project

- focused on international women labour migrations and transnational and national paid domestic and care work (Pula and Rijeka)
- change and continuity in paid domestic and care work
- how definitions of paid domestic work have changed in different historical and cultural contexts

Introduction

- 1) how network theory was used in social anthropology;
- 2) social and cultural context in the city of Pula at the end of the XIX century
- 3) establishment of the female section of the labour association and its status in relation to the male section

SNA and social anthropology

- However there is a long history of network approaches in social anthropology in addressing different accounts of social life (kinship and exchange studies; urban studies)
- British structural functionalists: network as a way of characterizing social relations and move from local small scale communities to questions about relatedness and interconnection at a much greater level and broader scale; beyond ethnic and group identity
- SNA as a metaphor for understanding forms of relations and as descriptors of social forms - rearticulation of an ongoing concern with forms of social relatedness

SNA and social anthropology

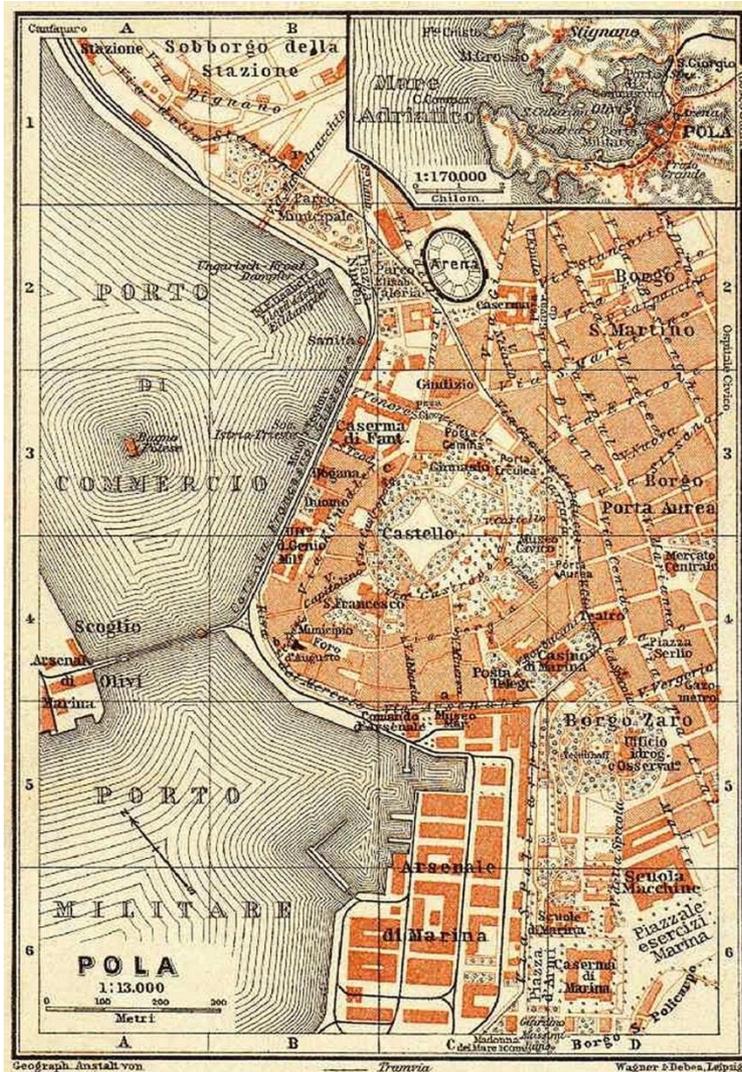
Recent development:

- network as a device that allows discovering latent structure
- art and aesthetics of networking in addressing the inherent mobility and complexity of social systems

Pula: a dynamic context

- Military and industrial harbour (1856)
- In 1857 - 3628 inhabitants - 1910 total of 58 562 inhabitants
1614% growth
- Multi-ethnic city with multiple cultural circles coexisted with continuously changing strategic alliances through which “different dimensions of identity became salient” (Sujoldžić 2009)

Pula: a dynamic context



- rapid expansion reflected in the blooming construction development: new residential quarters, cinemas, theaters, markets, casinos, schools, museums, flats, hotels, cafes, trams, hospitals and traffic connections sprang up
- array of functional and powerfully symbolic buildings that magnified and glorified the Austrian navy

Pula: a dynamic context



- clear demarcation between the old and new parts of the town, displayed distinct visual aesthetics while actually reflecting two separate systems – civil and military



Labour associations: unthreatening solidarity



- vast amount of skilled and unskilled migrant labour force
- Private vs. State employment
- 8000 workers in the Arsenal

Labour associations: unthreatening solidarity

3 workers associations

- 1869: Società operaia Polese (1045 members)
- 1876: Associazione fra gli Artieri Pola (623 members)
- 1881: Fratellanza Polense (90 members)

Labour associations: unthreatening solidarity

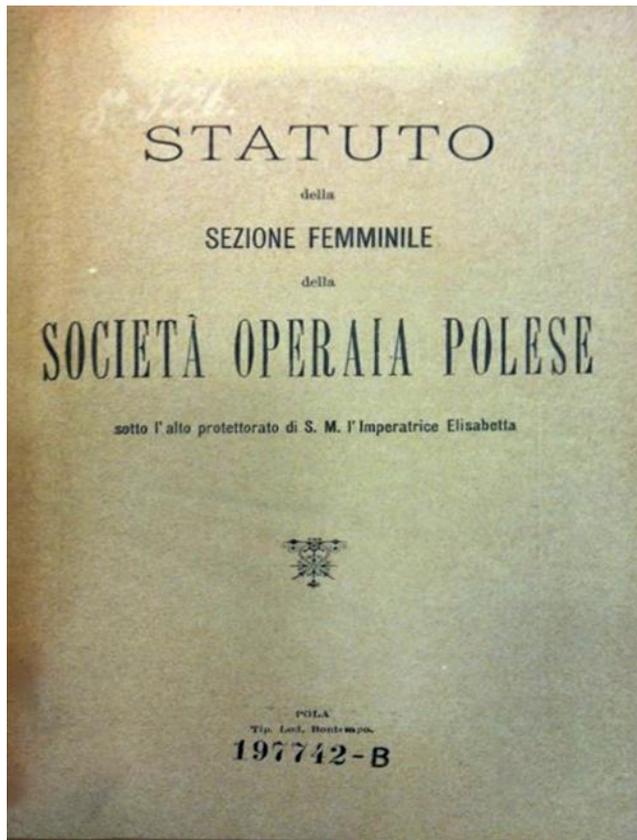
- civil and military identity
- migrant labour force with different cultural and social backgrounds disabled a fast process of solidarity among workers
- significant delay in labour movements in Pula

First women, than workers



- Informal household work: low paid, often in harmful and unsanitary working conditions
- structural transformation of female employment started to accelerate from 1880 on
- 19 of 1000 women worked “in the modern sectors” (Nagy 2016: 373)

First women, than workers



- Workers association of Pula – female section established in 1881 under the patronage of the empress Elisabeth
- The main goal to financially assist women in the event of need of medical care and medicines
- promote moral and education, control and supervise “immoral members and those which harshly neglect their familial duties”
- 225 members (mostly women employed in the Arsenal), between the age of 14 and 40 years

First women, than workers

- association not based on class consciousness but instead maintained a very paternalistic relations towards its female section
- Male section's motto – *Fratellanza e lavoro* (Brotherhood and Labour) – female section's motto *Onestà e lavoro* (Honesty and Labour) – clearly suggesting values around which female workers identity was constructed
- Solidarity and control: subordination to the male section of the association, but control among female members as well suggesting a clear element of social control

Conclusion

- first workers associations established in Pula were mostly articulated around elements of mutual solidarity and financial help rather than class consciousness and mobilization
- establishment of the first female section of the worker association, shows clear resistance to conceiving the autonomous action of the working classes but also articulation and control over the acceptable social and ideological presence of women in the public space as well as values around which female workers identity should be constructed

Thank you for your attention!

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