

Transnational and Intercultural Practices in the Adriatic Littoral of the Late Habsburg Empire

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ABSTRACT

The paper describes the strategy of an interdisciplinary project on the patterns of transnational interactions and mobility that shaped intercultural dialogue in the south-eastern periphery of the late Austro-Hungarian Empire. Methodologically, it is structured around three interconnected analytic levels of institutions, associations and everyday life, that are mutually constitutive, and the exploration of three dimensions characterizing social spaces: social practices in different domains of life, symbolic system (focusing on language) and the use of artifacts, or material life. Based on secondary sources, the imperial naval port of Pula is analyzed within the methodological frame that goes beyond methodological nationalism.

Key words: transnational, intercultural, Habsburg Empire, Adriatic

Research of historical cosmopolitan and intercultural practices

Historical legacies of transnational practices have an impact on the concerns about European identity and intercultural dialogue in present Europe. The acceleration of socioeconomic processes of change that changed living environments of different regions and cities and dynamics of communication represents a past period of globalization between 1880s-1914 that can be usefully compared to the intensive recent globalization. During that period there were also widespread migrations and social struggles, and intense nation-state building, with competing paradigms between the desirability of transnational connections and the world as a space of flows, and nationalist rhetoric. From the period of World-War One these transnational perspectives were suppressed by reinforced national imaginaries and neglected within national narratives. A historical legacy is also a useful analytical category because it does not exclude the advantages of spatial analysis but adds to it the dimension of time.¹

Overcoming methodological nationalism therefore represents a major challenge for social sciences and historiographies in Europe. Many scholars worked within non-national spatial frameworks and wrote urban histories, histories of villages, histories about smaller or larger regions and did that in the context of national, European or global history. However, as historians have increasingly

found, such regional histories were not so much alternative frameworks to national history but, rather to the contrary, were often seen as contributing to the foundations of the 'greater' national history in as much as diverse regional histories made up the mosaic of the national history.² Especially where large cities were concerned, histories about such urban spaces were often focused on the location of the city within the national space. The primary aim of many social historians across Europe was to rewrite the national history in societal terms, not to abandon the national framework entirely. Thus, a number of scholars have pointed out the need to overcome the national analytical framework in studying past and present globalization processes through the concepts of transnationalism and cosmopolitanism.

As cosmopolitanism has been suggested as a source of identity for the EU by recent academic discourses, its study stands much to gain by bringing history back into research agenda as a counterpoint to mono-cultural narratives. Although there is no academic consensus over the exact definition of cosmopolitanism it can be generally viewed as an allegiance to humankind, recognition of diversity, openness towards divergent cultural experiences and a willingness to engage with the other.³ When conceptualized less as a kind of philosophy or as political project towards building transnational institutions, but rather as an attitudinal or dispositional orientation and/or a mode of practice or competence,⁴ cosmopolitanism can be used

as an analytical tool to deal with the question of social or political conflicts and as a way of coping with them by challenging particularisms and conventional notions of belonging, identity and citizenship.

To explore spaces of intensive cultural exchange and economic mobility in terms of people's 'real life' struggles to bridge boundaries between self and other,³ cultural cosmopolitanism approaches that are concerned with the problem of the recognition of difference, plural belongings and hybrid identities are particularly fruitful. In contrast to the stereotype distinction between geographically and socially immobile locals and ever-mobile elite cosmopolitans, scholars of cultural cosmopolitanism have proposed pluralised and particularised accounts of non-elite 'discrepant cosmopolitanisms', 'vernacular cosmopolitanism' 'rooted cosmopolitanism', and 'actually-existing cosmopolitanism as a reality of multiple attachments' that are geographically grounded, historically and socio-economically situated, and embedded in material everyday practices.^{5,6} As such cosmopolitan practices presuppose a mutual understanding and an ability to manage and create a shared meaning out of diverse cultural meanings, the key mechanisms that reveal them are multilingualism (including code-switching and creolization) and communicative competence of social scripts and behaviour.

Current methodological strategies used for the research on transnational practices are also based on the criticism of nation-bounded research ways and their methodological consequences. Wimmer and Glick Schiller⁷ are among the first researchers to criticize the so-called methodological nationalism as a research modus that restricts theoretical and empirical analyses to the borders of nation states and which main assumption is that social reality consists solely of nation states founded around nation collectives with common history and traits. This criticism has stimulated the formation of the cosmopolitan approach and the development of the concept of methodological cosmopolitanism⁸. The methodological principle of cosmopolitanism refers to the ambivalence of multiple identities and acknowledges that, under global conditions, individuals hold several memberships in different spheres to which they affiliate themselves with multiple ethnic, national or religious belongings. The methodological recognition of the „both/and“-principle refuses the old-fashioned „either/or“-principle of methodological nationalism, which reflects the nation bounded perception of a social world.

The criticism of methodological nationalism has also stimulated further analytical refinement in terms of the relational concept of transnational space. Pries⁹ uses analytical differentiation between the relational and absolutistic understanding of social space and defines transnational units of analysis as „transnational social relation[s],“ which can be understood as „relatively dense and durable configurations of transnational social practices, symbols and artefacts“.⁹ Because the quality of space can only be described as relational and discontinuous, the socio-spatial references of analysis have been transformed into pluri-locally situated topographies which are produced by transnational practices. In contrast to a pure description

of different kinds of transnational practices, the proposed methodology provides explanatory advantages by disclosing different cultural schemes that actors are confronted with and by shedding light on the ways actors manage cultural ambivalence. A pluri-local spanning of societal spaces could be the *glocal societal space*, which is an outcome of social practices, symbols and artefacts concentrated on the dialectics between global and local everyday life, organisations or institutions. Global tendencies and processes are related to and interconnected with local concentrations of power, technology, knowledge, money and other resources and occurrences.⁹

The multicultural and multilingual composition of the Habsburg Empire in the late 19th and early 20th century represents a challenging historical legacy of a set of multiple and alternate allegiances which deserve to be reconsidered from the present point of view and on the basis of a more empirically grounded research. While abundant existing scholarship engaged in the Habsburg Empire has been predominantly concerned with nationalism as juxtaposed to elite cosmopolitanism, this focus on the nation has deflected attention from other significant levels of analysis (supranational and sub-national), and has not paid due attention to what were, well into the 1900s, still firmly connected social spaces that cut across anachronistically drawn linguistic, „ethno-national“ lines, and in which multiple allegiances (imperial, national, provincial or local) with both cosmopolitan and culturally contingent loyalties could be found. Also, the role of transnational practices in the life of „ordinary people“ has been largely overlooked, although the Empire was clearly a contact zone of migrants and travelers. To uncover such past lived forms requires an alternative approach to national historiographies and the re-creation of intercultural identities that were denied by the modernity discourse of national, linguistic, and religious hierarchies.

The South-Eastern part of the Habsburg Monarchy, including the Adriatic Littoral is a perfect example of a multilingual imperial space of intensive cultural exchange and economic mobility. In this largely neglected part of the Empire, multitude of hegemonic cultural, linguistic and political dependencies shaped this space through a pluralized reality of multiple attachments. Whereas the cosmopolitan dynamism has been usually observed in Trieste, the productive interaction of equally heterogeneous and multilingual cultural spaces of other eastern Adriatic port towns and tourist resorts (Pula and Rijeka, Opatija, Rovinj, etc.) fusing regional Slav, Italian, German and Magyar cultural production, have been often ignored by the nationalist historiographies along with the resilience of non-national traditions and the complexity of social change and language use in these settings. The constitutional era after 1867 was marked by the division of this region into two different political spheres, one bound directly to Vienna (Istria and the Adriatic Littoral), and the other to Budapest (Rijeka and northern Croatia with its capital of Zagreb) with different cultural and language policies. However, it also brought vibrant urbanization and industrialization to this area that facilitated mobility

and immigration of military, civil servants and other professions from diverse parts of the Empire while better access to schooling led to urbanization of the populations coming from the nearby villages. They introduced languages (German, Hungarian, Czech) that had until then not belonged to the linguistic environment, but also religious rites and unknown social practices (theater, ball, horse races). The urban life became much more diverse, while this mixture of people drew on the practices of their various places of origin, in order to organize social relations, labor and trade. Contests, but also intercultural dialogue, took place among these people over their multiple languages and sometimes contradictory cultural logics. At the same time, the agency in such transnational practices was framed by variable political and discursive structures of mutually constitutive power relations and a triple Italian, German and Hungarian hegemony.

Additionally, questions of language rights and even more so of linguistic justice, especially in the educational system, are and will remain for a long time on the European political agenda. In this context we can also benefit from a look back at the Austrian Monarchy, which – other than most of the European States – never succeeded in enforcing one official state language. This was due to the principle of equality of languages, formulated first in the *Bohemian Charter* of 1848 and later guaranteed by the Article 19 of the Constitution of December 1867. The principle of equality of languages was not only protected via the constitution but was in fact deeply seated in the people's understanding of rights. However, the growing „politization“ of languages, turning them into the primary identity-marker of individuals and groups, became an obstacle for the unification and modernisation of the administration as setting common standards was interpreted as an attempt, to produce national dominance of one group over the others.¹⁰

Although an increasing number of scholars have responded to the criticisms of methodological nationalism, they rarely use it to transform their research strategies. However, following a new trend in historiographical research that breaks with the practice of treating nations „as real entities and substantial collectivities“¹¹ (Judson, 2005), and tries to recapture the contours of a still non-nationalized world of *fin de siècle*, several studies on national indifference in different culturally plural and multilingual areas of the Habsburg Empire have recently appeared that situate this category neither as a backward pre-industrial phenomenon nor as a clear refusal to nationalize, but rather as a set of alternate allegiances which continued to appeal to specific populations in spite of nationalization processes.^{12,13,14,15} Since communicative practices constitute a primary dimension of intercultural exchange, multilingualism and hybrid urban varieties defying national standard languages represent major signifiers for non-national or multiple attachments. Moreover, language as social practice also provides access to ideologies and the ways people draw on knowledge, create it or reproduce it. A historical insight reveals the urban space of social processes reflected in paradoxes and an-

tagonisms, while language represents a primary lenses through which tensions of different realities and modernities are articulated.^{16,17}

Transnational spaces of the Austria-Hungary

The paper is part of a wider project aimed at exploring the interactions between hegemonic discourses and the patterns of transnational interactions and mobility that shaped intercultural dialogue in the south-eastern periphery of the late Austro-Hungarian Empire. Its specific objective is to provide a contrastive reading of Austro-German, Italian and Slavic sources illuminating both the established discourses of knowledge production and the counter-discourses, and their reception by common people. Exploring language in public urban spaces with an emphasis on multilingualism, the project will try to outline its connection to social practices and processes, particularly the way in which language use contributes to the construction of social reality, and at the same time is shaped by it. The second objective is to demonstrate the inadequacy of ethnic categories for historical analysis and to uncover the fluid cultural identities and multiple loyalties that were characteristic of the urban population in this period.

To address these objectives the project will conduct a comparative study of intercultural communication from a historical and a wide regional perspective including both parts of the Dual Monarchy. It seeks to address the complexity of the Austria-Hungary in a new way, from its internal and marginalized peripheries, and through the interconnectedness of discursive practices and cultural encounters.

The project will cover spatially and regionally confined patterns of interaction in the Croatian part of Istria with the city of Pula (main Austrian naval port), the city of Zadar (the capital of the province of Dalmatia), the city of Rijeka (with the status of *corpus separatum*) and the city of Zagreb (the capital of Croatia and Slavonia) during 1870-1918. It will investigate diversity management, from above and from below, to analyze the interaction of discourses emanating from the metropolis into the regions and situate them with respect to their multiple local contexts of production and reception. The macro-analysis will be directed at the comparison of different cultural policies and their effects between the Austrian and Hungarian part of the Monarchy. Inspired by poststructuralist and postcolonial interest in the deconstruction of foundationalist national narratives, and *histoire croisée* or transnational histories, it will look very closely at the three ideal transnational spaces, i.e. institutions, associations and everyday life. The project is structured around these interconnected analytic levels, that are mutually constitutive, and the exploration of three dimensions characterizing social spaces: social *practices* in different domains of life, *symbolic system* (focusing on language) and the use of artifacts, or *material life*. By looking into the dynamic processes in which cultural resources and linguistic repertoires were used as mediators in social interaction with-

in various urban contexts it will provide insight into how these choices arise from internalized norms and values, and how people position themselves toward received categories, stereotypes and hegemonic ideologies. Particular attention will be given to defining what concepts migrated as translations between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic discourses, and also between the counter-hegemonic ones themselves. By exploring how multilingualism was manifested in different cities and how language contact was negotiated, along with issues of gender, class, ethnicity and religion, this part of research will provide insights into the effects of transnational practices on intercultural dialogue and identification processes of the urban inhabitants. We may assume that this cross-boundary interdiscursivity was possible not only through migration, but also through the common use of the Italian and/or German language, and multilingualism as a form of communication, making it possible in the first place.

In what follows, the situation in Istria and in the urban life of the naval port of Pula during the late Austro-Hungarian Empire is analyzed based on available secondary sources that will direct further search and analyses of primary archival sources to be collected.

The Imperial Port of Pula and Istria during 1870-1918

The period of the late Austro-Hungarian Empire in Istria only became a subject of systematic historiographical research in the Southern Slavic language area following the inclusion of the region in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia after World War II.¹⁸ Unfortunately, both the Slavic and the Italian research traditions have tended to be nationally „autistic” with regard to Istria, focusing primarily on the history of their own respective nation and rarely referencing or taking into account research from the „other” national tradition.¹⁸ This is to an extent still the case today, although nationally „disinterested” work is more common. The scope of historiographical research is also limited in terms of the spheres of life which are covered. Until recently, historians have focused mainly on political and economic relations and activities, the school system and the Croatian press.¹⁹

It is also important to keep in mind that the different spheres of life covered by the literature in this summary were all intensely intertwined. The Croatian national movement had as one of its main goals the realisation of the right to education in one’s native language for Croatian and Slovenian children in Istria. The schools, in turn, were often focal points around which social networks were formed, since teachers were important and influential figures, especially in small local communities. Teachers would often also be active members of various, mostly nationally affiliated local associations. These associations had a key role in the organisation of educational, entertainment, arts and sport activities, which meant that they were important centres of everyday social life. Since the educated bourgeoisie in Istria was relatively small in num-

ber (and this was the class that founders and leaders of associations usually came from), it was common for the same people to be at the head of several different types of associations (including loan banks and mutual aid organisations, which were very important for the relief of the economically struggling rural population), as well as editors or frequent contributors to the local press. Of course, these different spheres can be distinguished for the purposes of research, but it must be kept in mind that all of the social and cultural phenomena and tendencies described in the literature can usually be observed more or less equally on all of these levels and that therefore the distinction between the levels must be made carefully and not be taken too seriously. Another important thing to note is that from today’s perspective of the Republic of Croatia, conceived as a nation-state, it may seem striking how multicultural Istria was during this period, primarily due to the presence of Italian and German-Austrian culture, as well as cultures from other parts of the Empire, as opposed to today’s dominantly Croatian culture. However, if we were to consider one of the towns on the western Istrian coast or Pula for example, towns where the Italian culture was predominant for most of the 19th century, we would see that it was actually the coming to prominence (with the development of a Croatian bourgeoisie) of the *Croatian* culture and the slowing down of the process of Italianisation which created a more heterogeneous cultural situation in these urban milieus.

Education and the school system in Istria

Schooling in Istria, above all the primary school system, during the late Austro-Hungarian period has been extensively written about in the Croatian language area by people involved in the system itself (teachers, school supervisors), writing at the time when the system was still in place, as well as historians throughout the 20th century. The general approach is to frame an analysis of the development and functioning of the school system within the broader theme of the Croatian and Slovenian national movement in Istria. This is hardly surprising, since „the struggle for Croatian and Slovenian schooling in Istria often acquired such dramatic proportions, that it seemed as though the struggle for the native language as the language of teaching in schools was the main concern of the national movement of Istrian Croats and Slovenes”.²⁰ The focus of Croatian language sources dealing with this topic is therefore primarily the development of Croatian language schooling in Istria during this period and the various hindrances it met with, mainly as a result of the intense activity of Italian organisations (above all the Lega Nazionale) and the fact that political and economic power was mainly in the hands of Italians, as well as a frequent lack of sufficient support from the Austrian authorities. The Croatian literature clearly takes the side of the proponents of the Croatian and Slovenian national movement and it must be taken into account that, with varying degrees of partiality and objectivity, facts tend to be represented in this light.

For example, Cukrov²¹ writes specifically about the activities of the Lega Nazionale in establishing Italian language schools and generally promoting, by often dubious means, the Italian language and culture in Istria and he shows the influence of the Risorgimento and Irredentist rhetoric and ideas on this organisation. He does say however that, as a result of geographical distances and a lack of good traffic connections, the Italian communities living in the different towns (and a smaller number in rural areas) were, in the mid-19th century, relatively isolated from each other and there was no strong feeling of unity and common belonging among Istrian Italians. It was then primarily a small number of educated intellectuals who took it on themselves to develop strategies to build up this unity in order to promote the Italian national cause in Istria²¹ (p. 78). The same was the case on the Croatian and Slovenian side, except that there were even fewer educated people in this population and their economic and political position was much less privileged, so the process of national consolidation started somewhat later. The fact that so much effort and conscious strategising was required on both the Italian and the Croatian and Slovenian side in order to stimulate the development of a national consciousness in the population clearly shows that for the great majority of people national identity didn't play a significant role in everyday life.

What is generally stated as the main problem in the Croatian literature on schooling in Istria in this period is that there was a great lack of primary schools with classes taught in Croatian. As a result of this, many Croatian-speaking peasant families sent their children to Italian- or German-language schools. However, this was not exclusively because they had no choice. As Cukrov says, the schools of the Lega Nazionale were often more spacious and better equipped and staffed than public schools (Ibid.: 161). Apart from this, Italian teachers and Lega Nazionale members would sometimes attempt to convince non-Italian parents to send their children to an Italian school by offering them free clothing, school accessories and food for the children, promising them they wouldn't need to pay taxes if they became members of the Lega or even buying them drinks at the tavern. For poor peasants burdened by debt and taxes and without a particularly strong feeling of dedication to their national identity, this was obviously often a welcome solution. The Lega would also provide ample scholarships for gifted students. This list of students funded by the Lega in 1905 and 1910/1911 (Ibid.: 158) clearly shows Slavic surnames, most of them partly or fully Italianised: Cociancich, Fergacich, Francovich, Buglianiović, Rumić, Gregorović, Preschern, Bassich, Paulitch, Jug, Spincich etc. (There are also a few German-sounding names in the list: Craizer, Drobner, Spangher, Wagnest.) Several of the Croatian- or Slovenian-speaking students funded by the Lega went on to become teachers in Italian schools or even presidents of local Lega groups.

Apart from direct financial or other gain, it was simply a fact that Italian was the main language of urban life in Istria, the language of institutions and commerce. From about the mid-19th century, with the abolishment of the

feudal system and the development of industry, trade and commerce based on goods and money, people from rural areas started coming into more intense contact with urban centres, which created a more pressing need for literacy and knowledge of the Italian language.²⁰ Demarin²² writes that Italians would sometimes say to Croatian parents that it would be good for their children to go to Italian schools, because they will need Italian in their everyday life and since they already speak Croatian at home anyway, they don't need to go to a Croatian school as well. These parents are here of course presented as being manipulated, but it was certainly a fact that knowledge of Italian would have definitely been useful for Istrians at the time and many parents were obviously aware of this and they were pragmatically thinking of their children's future prosperity rather than of affirming and maintaining Croatian culture and national identity. All of this shows how economic conditions often much more strongly determined people's cultural and linguistic associations than their traditional cultural background and family ties.

Apart from single-language schools, it is important to note that there was also a number of so-called *utraquist* schools in Istria during this period, which were intended for children from two language communities (usually Italian and Croatian).¹ In these schools, in the first 2 or 3 years classes would be taught in one language, with the other language present as an obligatory subject, and then the languages would switch, and the other language would then be the main teaching language, with the first language as an obligatory subject. According to Cukrov²¹ (2001: 97), there were 10 such schools in Istria in 1880/1881, most of them in the town of Poreč. (According to Demarin,²³ there were 4 mixed-language schools in 1864, 20 in 1871, 19 in 1890 and 15 in 1899.) He also adds that the teachers appointed to these schools usually did not actually speak Croatian or Slovenian and that the schools would therefore basically be Italian. However, Barbalić²⁴ regards *utraquist* schools as Croatian, except for one, where he says there were 40 Croatian-speaking and 51 Italian-speaking students. This seems to imply that at least some Croatian was spoken in most of the *utraquist* schools.

Cukrov²¹ also provides a statistic (probably from around 1900) which shows the diversity of the languages that primary school students in Istria speak: there is no district in Istria, apart from the town of Rovinj, where all of the students have the same native language (the greatest diversity is in the district of Volosko: Croatian, Slovenian, Italian and German) and in every district (apart from Rovinj) at least 7% of the students are multilingual (with the largest percentage in Pula and Lošinj: 18,8% and 15,9%, respectively). As far as language teaching is concerned, according to data from 1902, Italian was an obligatory subject in many Croatian schools, starting from second or third or even from first grade. Also in 1902, seven Croatian schools had Italian as an elective subject,

¹ There were trilingual schools as well, like the crafts school in Pula, where classes were taught in Italian, German and Croatian.²²

while four Italian schools had Croatian as an elective subject. Demarin²² also mentions that in 1882 many Croatian-language schools were actually using schoolbooks in Italian, because those sent by the educational authorities and Croatian ones were not always readily available.

Since there were not enough sufficiently educated Croatian-speaking teachers to staff the required number of Croatian-language schools once they started opening in greater numbers, Dalmatian, Slovenian, Czech, Moravian and Slovak teachers were „imported” into Istria, since they spoke or could easily learn Croatian.²¹ Many of them eventually identified completely with the area and with the Croatian people and considered themselves to be Croats from Istria.²¹ It would however be far-fetched to assume that they assimilated completely; rather, even if they came to explicitly identify as Istrian Croats (or Slovenes), they must have brought with them and kept elements of their specific local and ethnic cultures, which in turn must have had an effect on their new local communities (especially their students), since teachers were influential figures at the time.

Barbalić,²⁴ a school supervisor for the Pula district, provides information on the number and type of schools in Istria in 1913 (he is writing in 1918) and, comparing information on the number of students in schools of each language with demographic information from the 1910 census and his own knowledge about the population, he produces estimates of the numbers of students whose native language is not the teaching language of the school they are attending. Since the number of Croatian- and Slovenian-speaking school-age children (he takes 16% of a particular population as the estimate of the number of school-age children in that population) in many districts is higher than the number of children listed as attending Croatian- or Slovenian-language schools and since for the Italian- and/or German-speaking population the opposite is often the case (apparently less children in the population than the number of children attending Italian- or German-language schools), he concludes that in many districts a certain number of Croatian- and Slovenian-speaking children either do not attend school at all or attend Italian- or German-language schools.² In several cases, Italian-language schools were operating in areas with very few Italian-speaking children, which would imply that the majority of the students were Croatian- or Slovenian-speaking. Based on the census data, he also mentions a certain number of foreign citizens in every district (even in districts with no larger urban centres). In most cases he doesn't explicitly state their native language or nationality, but he often assumes that they are subjects of the Kingdom of Italy and, even if they aren't, that their children probably attend Italian schools. On the other hand, in the district of Pula, he estimates that as many as 656 Italian-speaking children attend German-

language schools²⁴ and that in the city of Pula about 2/3 of the students in German-language schools are not native speakers of German³. It must be taken into account that these are very rough and often questionable estimates and also presented in such a way as to support the cause of the Croatian and Slovenian national movement, but even so it is clear that the linguistic and cultural situation in Istrian schools was very complex and that a mix of students with different native languages in the same school, as well as students being taught in a language which wasn't their native language, was commonplace. How this was experienced and interpreted at the time by the students themselves and their wider communities and how we approach it today is, of course, a different matter.

Civil associations in Istria

Both Dobrić²⁵ and D'Alessio²⁶ point out the key role of civil associations in the process of formation of the bourgeoisie as a self-conscious and powerful political subject in Istria, one which developed through attributing great importance to education and circulation of information and through intense social interaction and organisation. As the Croatian- and Slovenian-speaking bourgeoisie slowly developed, they gradually came to perceive their own culture, no longer mainly oral and traditional, as equal to Italian and German culture, which led to a gradual decline in the italianisation of ethnic Croats and Slovenes, creating a more heterogeneous cultural situation in urban milieus.²⁶ However, like the school system, in most cases civil associations also acted as vehicles for the formation and promotion of national awareness and the consolidation of national communities, a process which is also inseparable from the bourgeois class. As the national movements (primarily the Italian and Croatian one) grew in strength and influence, the conflicts and animosity between them became more intense and the role of cultural, social and sports associations in these conflicts became more pronounced. However, not all associations were based on nationality (although the great majority of them were) and some of those that nominally were actually

³ Dobrić²⁵ writes the following about the German public gymnasium in Pula (my translation): „The aforementioned division of the bourgeoisie [in Pula] on a national basis wasn't fully reflected in the school system, primarily owing to the German state gymnasium, founded in 1890. This school, staffed with very good teachers, was, apart from the children of Germans (mostly officers and clerks working for the Navy and the state), attended by children of other nationalities. This fostered the development of patriotic feelings and tolerance towards people of other nationalities and religions in the students, isolating most of them from the influence of radical nationalists in their national communities. Students of this gymnasium, after completing their education and studies at German universities in Vienna and Graz or at the Naval academy in Rijeka, would become the bourgeois elite, that is, officers of the Navy. Some of them would get involved in the few cultural associations which weren't organised on a national basis (Verein „Austria“, for example).“ Regarding Istrian high schools in general, D'Alessio²⁷ (2008: 248) writes that „initially, their relatively scarce number made the high schools an important site of integration for the different linguistic groups“. However, eventually „the creation of separate linguistic and national groupings among high school students and teachers also occurred in Istria“.

² D'Alessio²⁷ notes that „the opposition of the Italian political party to Croatian and Slovene schools meant that the German schools sometimes became a meeting place for the Slavic groups“ (meaning for groups of Slavic students).

played, at least in the period before the escalation of national conflicts, a wider social and cultural role and brought together people of different cultural, linguistic and social backgrounds.

Dobrić²⁵ provides a very interesting and nationally unbiased account of the development of reading clubs and other, mostly cultural-educational associations in Pula, which, as he says, is a very underresearched topic in Croatian scholarship. He mentions the important fact that civil associations as such are in fact a social practice which was quite well established in Central Europe at the time, but not at all native to Istria. It was therefore through the cultural and social influence of primarily the German and Czech immigrant populations that this particular form of social life gradually took root, which means that, regardless of their national affiliation, associations as such were initially a „foreign” cultural element which was appropriated by the local population.²⁵

Of course, the largest and most important non-national associations were those of the Navy, like the Marine-Kasino-Verein, the Turnverein and the Wissenschaftliche Verein der k. u. k. Kriegsmarine in Pola. They were mainly intended for officers, clerks and other higher-ranking Navy and state personnel (although civilians could also ask to be admitted as members to the Marine-Kasino-Verein, which would be decided on by a vote among existing members.²⁵ The non-national, cosmopolitan character of these associations reflects the official ideology of imperial military and state institutions: state patriotism, loyalty to imperial authority and avoidance of any kind of national ideology. This was enforced by a ban on officers joining any kind of political society or a society suspected of harbouring political goals (such as the Italian reading club „*Gabinetto di lettura*”).²⁵ The fact that this was explicitly banned shows that Navy authorities were aware of a potential interest in these associations among their personnel, which means that there were different levels of loyalty among them and that loyalty to one’s nation or ethnic culture must have co-existed to a certain extent with state patriotism. Some officers were members of the civilian state-patriotic association Verein „Austria”, which promoted a supranational and cosmopolitan ideology very similar to that of the Navy. It is easy to see this just by looking at the names of members of the board of directors: August Milovan, Josef Usmani, Severin Wängler, Franz Dreslar, Anton Alzich, Karl Trolis, Josef Spetić.⁴ Interestingly, in spite of a very strong Italian national and (more or less covertly) Irredentist movement in Pula, it was not uncommon for Italian citizens to attend social events organised by associations loyal to the state. This is apparent from the fiercely accusative stance taken towards such occurrences by the Italian paper *Giornaleto di Pola*, which declared such individuals „traitors”.²⁵

Another type of association which in many cases wasn’t nationally based were workers’ associations, which were

quite strong, given the large number of workers in Pula, who lived in very difficult conditions.²⁸ These associations offered material, moral and intellectual support to workers, regardless of their nationality.²⁵ Even Italian⁵ workers’ associations (some of which were officially sponsored by the emperor and empress, such as the „*Società operaia polesa*”) were not nationally affiliated, although Italians made up the majority of their membership.²⁵ It is quite likely that socialist ideas were a key influence in the formation of the supranational attitudes of these associations.⁶ D’Alessio²⁶ also mentions religious and family organisations which used the Italian language but were not linked to the social and political networks of Italian national-liberals and therefore weren’t used as vehicles for the promotion of nationalist ideas. In his book about the rise of nationalism in Istria, D’Alessio²⁹ lists all associations in the Pazin District, most of which are nationally affiliated, but he also mentions six supranational associations in the town of Pazin: three military-related associations, one workers’ association, a section of the aforementioned Verein „Austria” and a German-language hiking club without an explicit national affiliation. Another example of a *de facto* multicultural association is from Lovran, where the upper classes which used Italian and German (and many of whom were people of Croatian native language who had italianised) socialised at the German „Casino”, speaking mainly Italian. Italian was also often used in the German „Club Adria” in Opatija, frequented by the aristocracy and the upper classes, as well as in the „*Leserverein – Casa di lettura*” (reading club).²⁷ It is also important to mention the regionally affiliated association „*Dalmatinski skup*”, founded in 1904 by about 60 Dalmatians in Pula and criticised by the leadership of the Croatian-Slovenian political party, because of the foregrounding of regional, instead of (Croatian) national identity.²⁵

The Croatian reading club „*Čitaonica*”, was intended to be a gathering place for citizens with a Slavic cultural background and a means of consolidating and affirming the identity and presence of the Slavic community in Pula. However, since it was probably the first association to be founded in Pula (in 1869), it quickly became the central social gathering place for the bourgeois elite, regardless of nationality. Apparently all higher-ranking officers of the Navy were members, as well as some individuals who later represented Italian interests in the political life of Pula (G. A. Wassermann, elected mayor of Pula in 1884 as a representative of the Italian liberal party, and F.

⁵ According to Wiggermann,³⁰ whoever joined an Italian association, even a cultural or educational one with no apparent connection to politics, was basically acknowledging the historical legacy of Italian hegemony in the southern regions of the Monarchy.

⁶ D’Alessio²⁶ “The complexity of the linguistic and national question and of the political strategies in Istria is evident. A variegated reality proved to be an obstacle to clear-cut nationalist policies. The internationalist working class movement addressed these discrepancies and promoted an anti-nationalist approach, but the scarce industrialization, the indecisive policy in the rural areas, and the capacities of the two national parties to control the mechanisms of the provincial electoral system relegated the socialist party to a marginal position.”²⁶

⁴ D’Alessio²⁷ also writes that “some German clubs recruited their members on the basis of social status and profession rather than ethnolinguistic ones (sic)”, but he doesn’t specify which clubs he’s referring to.

Glezer, later a radical Italian nationalist).²⁵ After a „crisis” in the activity of the association, it was re-established in 1879, mainly due to the support of the Czech community, which resulted in the Czech cultural element and a Panslavic orientation becoming more pronounced.²⁵ Subsequently, in the 1880's, it was the Slovenian community which supported the „*Čitaonica*” when it was going through hard times again.²⁵ Their small numbers and insufficient economic and political power were, presumes Dobrić, some of the reasons why the Croatian bourgeois elite joined forces with other Slavic peoples in the first phases of the activity of the reading club. In the 1890's, however, a stronger Croatian bourgeoisie emerged and took over the „*Čitaonica*”, which was from then on much more explicitly labelled as Croatian.²⁵

In 1894, the Croatian newspaper *Naša sloga*, which promoted the Croatian national movement, openly scolded some unnamed young women for speaking Italian and German at the „*Čitaonica*” and threatened to publicly shame them by revealing their names, if their husbands didn't take the necessary disciplinary steps to prevent this from happening again.²⁵ In 1909, the association organised Croatian language lessons for people of Croatian ethnic origin who spoke Italian at home and were not proficient in what was nominally their mother tongue. This was especially the case for many young women, who the language classes were primarily intended for.²⁵ Since reading clubs were primarily a „male domain” (Ibid.: 63), it is not surprising that women, especially younger women and girls, weren't as active in them and were therefore less exposed to the Croatian language and culture, which these clubs were the main centres of (although more reasons for this apparently gender-related differentiation could be assumed). This hints at a potentially interesting avenue of research, namely the role of gender in relation to participation in the Croatian national movement and to attitudes towards language and (national) culture(s).

In a collection of primary sources (mainly newspaper articles) relating to the „*Čitaonica*”, Dobrić¹⁹ provides some more interesting information. For example, when the association organised a dance in 1890, some of the distinguished guests were the Head of District, the Knight Conti, municipal prefect Dr. Rizzi, I.R. judge Prenzo etc. and on a similar occasion in 1894, an article states that the I.R. Head of District, the Knight Rossetti-Scander, was present „as usual”, and that, when welcomed, as was the custom, with the usual Croatian greeting, he replied in Croatian as well.¹⁹ This shows that, at least up until the early 1890's, the Croatian-Italian national conflict had not escalated to such an extent yet and that respectful and (at least) diplomatic relations were still maintained. As opposed to the aforementioned young women, it was obviously not a problem if these distinguished gentlemen spoke Italian or German at the reading club (it's not likely that they spoke any more Croatian beyond the customary reply to the greeting). Interestingly, in 1909 the German-language paper *Polaer Tagblatt* carried an announcement about dance classes at the reading club, open to both members and non-members.¹⁹ Of course, the

announcement was also in German and this was not a paper particularly directed at German-speaking Croats. It is not quite clear which segment of the population this announcement was intended to attract, but in any case it shows that a more or less multilingual and multicultural situation was not entirely uncommon even at the explicitly Croatian and emphatically patriotic „*Čitaonica*” at the start of the 20th century.

Everyday social and cultural life in Istrian cities

As already mentioned, until recently, everyday life and cultural activity were not among the topics which have most interested historians researching the late Austro-Hungarian period in Istria and its main urban centre Pula. Balota³¹ was the only one to write a socio-cultural analysis of the Pula bourgeoisie during this period, so this text represents one of our main sources for the section on everyday life in Pula.

After it was designated as the main port of the Austrian navy in the 1850's, the previously small town of Pula, which had seen better days, started growing and developing at a fast pace, attracting a steady flow of immigrants from different parts of the Empire and from other countries. An Italian-speaking bourgeoisie formed out of the town's old residents and newly arrived Italians from the islands Cres and Lošinj, from Istrian towns Rovinj, Poreč, Izola and Kopar and from the Kingdom of Italy.³¹ Croatian- and Slovenian-speaking people came from rural parts of Istria, where the economic situation was generally quite difficult, and upon coming into more extended contact with the mainly Italian culture of the town, many of them would adapt and accept to a greater or lesser extent the language and way of life of the Italian population. As Balota says, „Many of them acquired a double identity (*mnogi su postajali dvojnici*): Italian civilisation seemed to them like something good, useful and human, but on the other hand, although they felt they were becoming a part of it, it wasn't a part of them. Others went ahead, burning bridges behind them. Others still, and this was the majority, stayed for two and three more generations what they were and accepted Italianness only nominally (*kao firmu*).”³¹

Balota describes the Italian bourgeoisie as hard-working, persistent and competent and mentions that they sided with the Germans when it suited them, only to then form a united front against them when the situation changed, and they were even prepared to side with the Croats when they had no other choice.³¹ It seems that an initial solidarity between Italians and Croats in Pula existed, based on a common feeling of being the original, rightful inhabitants of the region. The purpose of this solidarity was to be a defence against the German „new-comers”, „against the intrusion of militarism in public life and social relations, against germanisation and the growing strength of the Austrian-German colony”.³¹ However, after having „lured” them in this way to come to „their side”, the Italians subsequently used the same rhetoric and ideology of „Istrian provincialism” (regionalism) against the Croats, claiming that Istria is Italian. But

Irredentism was also often merely tactical and rhetorical, according to Balota, and there were few real and true Irredentists in Istria, since, when it came to that, few were prepared to actually give their lives for Italy.³¹

The majority of the German immigrants in Pula were employed by the military or the state and to an extent they remained a foreign colony, with few of them putting down roots in Istria.⁷ Initially, before the animosity between the Italian population and the navy became more pronounced, marriages between navy officers and girls from local Italian families were viewed approvingly by many, since they seemed to promise a better co-existence in the near future – which, however, did not turn out to be the case.³² In fact, Balota³¹ mentions that complaints would sometimes appear in German-language newspapers about German state clerks who would, over a fairly short period of time after arriving in Pula, actually become Italian Irredentists. A German who married an Italian or Italian-speaking woman, says Balota, was as likely to become estranged from his culture of origin as a Croat was. Several Germans supported the Italian national-liberal party as well, rather than the German party (for example the already mentioned Wassermann and Glezer).³¹

It seems that German immigrants were relatively detached with regard to the local population, but they generally accepted Italian as the language of local communication and many families became so close to the Italian Istrian community that they identified with it.²⁷ This had already been the case before in those parts of Istria which were under the Habsburg rule before the 19th century (the central and north-eastern part of the peninsula), where „several families of Germanic origins with time assimilated into the Italian language and culture. For example, the Richter, Prinz, Erdfeld and Niederkorn families [in Pazin] were considered well established local Italian families in the 19th century. Their integration in a purely Italian circuit, with active members also of the local nationalist movement, was confirmed by their participation in demonstrations and nationalist associations such as the *Pro Patria* and the *Lega Nazionale*. From the Italian Istrian point of view these families were as Italian as the local De Franceschi, the Costantini from Rovigno/Rovinj, the Mrach from Carniola or the Camus, who settled in Istria probably from France or Piedmont via Fiume/Rijeka.”³¹ Toward the end of the 19th century, some Germans established close connections with the new Croatian bourgeois elite, but they usually would not assimilate culturally, although there were cases of „Croatization of German speaking immigrants (as happened to the 1870s director of the railway station in Pisino Wrischer, whose family was di-

rectly involved in the local Croatian nationalist circuit and was transcribed often with Croatian letters as Vrišer)”.³¹

According to D'Alessio, immigrants in Pula would generally assimilate into one of the main national groups in the town, German, Croatian or Italian. People of Slavic origins (Czech, Polish, Slovakian, Serbian, Bosnian, Montenegrin...) would mostly join the Croatian group and D'Alessio says that they could, particularly the Southern Slavs, fit in very well and „identify perfectly” with the Croats.^{26,27}

The navy arsenal was the main and most desirable employer for the working class in Pula and arsenal workers gradually developed a strong collective identity, becoming like a family of sorts.²⁸ Their national structure was very heterogeneous: in 1911, of the 22 *Obermeisters* 11 were Italians, 7 Germans, 2 Czech, 1 Croat and 1 Slovene. Of the 58 *Meisters* 30 were Italians, 9 Germans, 9 Slovenes, 4 Czech, 4 Croats and 2 Hungarians.²⁸ Among the civil workers (a category below *Meisters* and *Obermeisters*) 459 were Italian, 184 Slovenian, 140 Croatian, 28 German, 12 Czech and 4 Hungarian.⁸ The official language of the arsenal was German, but it seems that Italian was commonly spoken among the workers, including the Croats. As the Croatian national movement gained strength, some of the Croatian workers started feeling more free to speak Croatian at work, which would sometimes provoke reactions from Italian workers, who disapproved (according to Balota³¹, because they didn't like their co-workers using a language they did not understand). The highest commanding positions in the arsenal were strategically assigned to people of different nationalities, in order for them to „control each other” and to each represent and control („reign in”) workers of their respective nationality, with the intention of preventing the workers from consolidating into a unified front.³¹ By 1914, groups based on nationality had formed among the workers and the Croatian group was also supported by the Czech, Slovenes and Poles.³¹

Another interesting piece of information is that police officers in Pula were mainly Czech, Germans, Slovenes and italianized Croats, but the presence of people of Slavic origins „didn't make the police any better”: they behaved „like Austrian policemen”, there was no particular solidarity between the officers and the people they had authority over and there were incidents of unnecessary police violence. The situation was similar with guards at the navy prison.

According to Balota, Pula was more of a cosmopolitan city (*velegrad*) than Trieste, Rijeka or Venice.³¹ The multicultural and multilingual character of the city is evidenced for example in the fact that the first issue of the *Polaer Tagblatt* carried an ad looking for a Japanese language teacher. There was also a Berlitz foreign language school in town advertised in local newspapers, where English, German, French, Croatian and Italian were taught

⁷ A new, modern neighbourhood called “New Pula”, spatially clearly separate from the old part of town, was built for navy officers, clerks, engineers and other navy employees and it emphasized and contributed to their socially somewhat detached status.³¹ However, Dukovski²⁸ writes, surprisingly, that “most officers” lived in rented apartments “in the city”, which would seem to imply that they weren't all physically displaced with regard to city life and that they probably had regular dealings with their (most likely Italian) landlords and other city residents.

⁸ Balota³¹ mentions a few surnames of workers who „considered themselves [Croats], but bore an Italian or seemingly Italian surname”: Vižintin, Albaneže, Kompare. This would seem to imply either croatisation of people of Italian origin or „re-croatisation” of previously italianised Croats.

(James Joyce was an English teacher there for a couple of months). An interesting fact is that a certain I. Z. Gjurin came to Pula in 1907 as a „Viennese hairdresser”, who advertised his salon by stating, among other things, that German, Croatian and Italian were spoken there.³¹ In the winter months the Viennese variété would often perform in town, as well as theatre troupes from German towns, and these events were well attended. On Sunday mornings, navy music would be played on the seafront by the navy headquarters. The musical repertoire was selected with the intention of satisfying members of the navy of different nationalities, including the Southern Slavs, so parts of Croatian operas were also played, as well as plenty of Czech compositions.³¹

Tourism, with attractive neighbouring islands of Briuni and the famously popular aristocratic resort in Opatija, contributed greatly to everyday multicultural practices in the Adriatic Littoral, although it was also a sphere where national and nationalist ambitions played an important role. Judson³³ writes about the attempt by German nationalists to promote the Adriatic coast as the Austrian Riviera in order to develop an Austrian outlet to the Mediterranean – an attempt which failed due to the competition of France, Spain, and Italy, which already had a well-established seaside tourism. On the other hand, Hametz³⁴ shows how the iconography of Venetian and Roman heritage was used in Italian narratives in order to represent the eastern Adriatic to tourists as fundamentally Italian, a representation which was often bolstered by Western European travel narratives. However, says Hametz (Ibid.: 107), these attempts „could not successfully ascribe Italianness to the coastland nor could the Adriatic Sea be accepted as Italian. For tourists, the eastern coastlands retained a multi-ethnic maritime flavor reflective of the variety of peoples that inhabited Adriatic shores.”

Concluding remarks

Based on this review of existing knowledge on life in Croatian cities and regions during the late Austro-Hun-

garian period, it seems that the questions of hybrid identities of people who were exposed to different cultural influences in different spheres or periods of their lives, as well as multiple linguistic and intercultural practices have been largely neglected as a research topic. While historiographical research takes these acculturation processes for granted to a certain extent, the contribution of an anthropological perspective to this topic could be in the form of a sensibility more tuned to the complexities, ambiguities and dynamics of the subjective everyday experience of one's identity and position in relation to various collectives and symbolic values.

Further research should go beyond the state-of-the-art by combining the study of imperial legacies with the study of transnational practices and intercultural communication at the level of both ordinary people and the level of policies that largely remain two separate fields of study. It should use linguistic analogy to intercultural dialogue by supposing that plurilingual skills imply cultural skills and the competence to behave appropriately in a number of different social arenas. The most fruitful areas for such studies are the borderlands such as those found in Southeast Europe, where imperial legacies overlap and may consequently be prone to particularly intense usages in identity politics. The transnational perspective could enable an appropriate comparative design in which both the contextual and discursive-structural similarities or differences between regional traditions are highlighted. These phenomena become visible only in a comparative framework which can provide an insight into communalities and discrepancies of diversity management, power and knowledge.

Acknowledgements

The research for this paper was supported by funding from the Croatian Science Foundation under grant IP-11-2013-3914 for the project *Historical Perspectives on Transnationalism and Intercultural Dialogue in the Austro-Hungarian Empire* (TIDA).

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TRANSNACIONALNE I INTERKULTURNE PRAKSE U JADRANSKOM PROSTORU U VRIJEME AUSTRO-UGARSKE

SAŽETAK

U radu se iznosi strategija interdisciplinarnog projekta usmjerenog na proučavanje transnacionalne prakse i načina prevladavanja društvenih napetosti u vrijeme austrougarskog carstva, kao potencijalnom nasljeđu interkulturalnog dijaloga u sadašnjem europskom kontekstu. Istraživanje je usmjereno na otkrivanje diskursâ proizvedenih u okvirima tri tipa društvenih prostora: institucija (obrazovnih), građanskih udruženja i svakodnevnog života, kao i analizu društvene prakse u različitim područjima života, simboličkih sutava (kroz uporabu jezika) i materijalnih oblika egzistencije. Kao dio preliminarnih istraživanja, a na temelju sekundarne literature analiziraju se multikulturalni odnosi u gradu Puli te iznose temeljne teorijske i metodološke odrednice kojim se nastoji nadvladati metodološki nacionalizam.

