

# **Cosmopolitanism and parochialism throughout history**

The tale of a peripheral Adriatic city

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## Introduction

- intercultural relations in Pula
- comparison of late Austro-Hungarian Empire (1867-1914) and present
- *Historical Perspectives on Transnationalism and Intercultural Dialogue in the Austro-Hungarian Empire* – 2014-2018
- qualitative research (interviews) – 2007-2009

## History of Pula/Istria

- border region – Mediterranean & Central Europe; Romanic, Germanic & Slavic peoples
- 12<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> c.: close ties with Republic of Venice
- repeated immigration, changing ethnic structure
- **1813-1918: Austro-Hungarian Empire**
  - 1850's: main naval port of the Empire, immigration
  - Italian and Croatian/Slovenian national movements
- 1918-1943: Italy – emigration of Slavic population, italianisation
- 1945-1991: Yugoslavia – emigration of Italian population, immigration from Yugoslavia
- **1991: Republic of Croatia – tourism, regionalism, multiculturalism**

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## Austro-Hungarian Empire (1867 to 1918)



## Pula (Pola)



## Pula: ethnic composition in 1910

Census by language of use	
German	9,064
Italian	26,816
Croatian	9,511
Slovenian	3,293
Other	9,878
<b>Total</b>	<b>58,562</b>

Navy composition	
German	24.5%
Italian	18.3%
Croatian	29.8%
Slovenian	3.6%
Hungarian	12.6%
Czech & Slovak	7.1%
Other	4.1%

## Austrian presence

- employed by the navy and the state, higher social class
- supranational ideology
- partly common social life with other elites
- influence of Italian culture
- Germanisation
- relatively detached from other city inhabitants

## Italian presence

- bourgeoisie + working class
- political power, growing nationalism
- prestige of Italian language and culture  
> assimilation
- supranational socialist movement

## Croatian and Slovenian presence

- peasants, working class
- low level of education, no bourgeoisie
- Italianisation
- gradual development of a bourgeoisie, resistance to Italianisation
- different degrees and aspects of assimilation and re-Croatisation

## Austro-Hungarian period: conclusion

- national groups overlap with socioeconomic strata - social mobility involves “cultural mobility”
- acculturation to varying degrees, two-way influences
- socioeconomic stratification – cosmopolitan elites + supranational workers’ movement
- cosmopolitanism + acculturation + national movements

## Contemporary period

- 1990's: nationalist narratives, centralisation
- Istria: orientation towards the "West"/EU
- strong regional identity
- multiculturalism, multilingualism

## Contemporary period

- Pula – culturally heterogeneous city
- Croats, Italians, Serbs, Albanians, Hungarians, Bosniacs, Macedonians, Slovenes...
- non-Croatian Yugoslav citizens became national minorities
- special status of the Italian minority
- Croatian-Italian bilingualism, mixed families

## Research results: Istrian language practices

- 80 in-depth interviews
- important role of local speech varieties
- Italian interference in Slavic varieties
- code-switching, receptive multilingualism
- linguistic distinction from monolingual neighbours

## Language and “Istrian mentality”

- affectionate relationship to language-mixing practices
- multiple and shifting ethnic identities

*“You greet an Italian ‘Buon giorno’, and he says ‘Dobar dan’. It’s a sign of respect. My mom can’t speak Italian, and her next door neighbours know only a few words of Croatian. But they get along well, because they are good people.”*

## *Convivenza* – distinction from non-Istrians

- *convivenza* = co-existence and mutual respect and acceptance of Slavic and Italian people
- seen as difficult to understand for non-Istrians

“They often think that we are Italians. I do have an Italian name and I speak Italian, but I am Istrian Croatian...”

## *Convivenza*

*“If there is anything that is autochthonous here, it is asparagus, truffles and Croatian, Slovenian and Italian people living in this region... Those who know, those who have lived with us in this region for many decades, even centuries, do not ask themselves this question. We are all part of this milieu. Those who come from the outside, without the basic information, they will need a certain amount of time to get used to the idea.”*

## Limits of Istrian diversity

- linguistic practices of non-Istrians excluded from the open and accepting attitude
- distinction between “true Istrians” and other communities

*“If they [the newcomers] spoke Chakavian, it would be easier to accept them as Istrians. For me it is inconceivable to consider someone an Istrian if he doesn’t speak Chakavian.”*

*“Well, I feel, actually, because I don't feel like an Istrian in the sense of... indigenous, which means that I don't speak the dialect... so I don't have my roots here.”*

## Perception of immigrants

*“I don’t go to pubs and restaurants where waiters don’t know what biska is... Newcomers exploit this openness and tolerance [of Istrians] and don't accept it as a value.”*

*“They just stubbornly stick to their ways, they do not learn our dialects and should adapt to our ways...”*

## Immigrants' view

*"It's an unwritten rule... Here you have to eat three bags of salt [to become Istrian] and in one life you can't eat three bags. They will accept you only after it becomes certain that you live wholeheartedly here, which means being integrated in the whole system, and not just formal integration in different institutions and so forth, but also in communication with people and in private communication."*

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## Limits of openness

- *"This multiculturalism, it is an outside word which we don't experience on the inside. We don't have a feeling of multiculturalism..."*
- Differences between official regional discourses and vernacular ones
- Homogenized heterogeneity
- Selective diversity

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## Conclusion

- Italian-Slavic conflict resolved
- *convivenza* – shows the historical contingency of intercultural relations
- mixed families – acculturation doesn't necessarily occur anymore
- bilingualism, receptive multilingualism
- specific intercultural mix – development of regional identity

## Conclusion

- status of Other shifted to more recent immigrants
- orientation to the “West”/EU – encourages discrimination against ex-Yugoslav ethnic groups, expecting them to assimilate
- socio-economic aspect – parallel to position of Croats and Slovenes in 19<sup>th</sup> c. Pula
- high criteria for assimilation – discouraging

## Conclusion

- *convivenza* as legitimation of regional-patriotism
- Italian-Croatian-Slovenian cultural mix as the only “true Istrianity”
- superiority to cultures of recent immigrants
- equivalent to nationalist Italian tendencies in 19<sup>th</sup> C.
- critique of idealising “cosmopolitan past” and of narratives of progress from nationalism to *convivenza*

Thank you for your attention!